



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 November 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:37 P.M., 24 November 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	6		
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	6	■ Liquefied Petroleum Gas: Wales	11
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Meetings	6	■ National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research: Finance	12
■ Electricity Generation	6	■ National Grid: Solar Events	12
■ Energy Supply	7	■ Postal Services: Standards	12
■ Environment Protection: Employment	7	■ Research	13
■ Fracking	7	■ Shipbuilding: Credit	13
■ Fuel Poverty	8	■ Shipping: Freight	14
■ Fuel Poverty: Older People	8	■ SME Climate Hub	14
■ Green Homes Grant Scheme	9	■ UN Climate Conference 2021	14
■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Boilers	9	■ Weetabix: Re-employment	15
■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Standards	10	■ Wind Power: Celtic Sea	15
■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Yorkshire and Humberside	10	■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans	16
■ Heat Batteries: Renewable Energy	10	CABINET OFFICE	16
■ Historic Buildings: Carbon Emissions	10	■ Cabinet Office: Freedom of Information	16
■ Iron and Steel: South Yorkshire	11	■ Cabinet Office: Stonewall	17
		■ Civil Servants: Location	17
		■ Coronavirus: Public Appointments	18
		■ Electronic Government	18

■ Government Departments: Databases	18	■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control	31
■ Government Departments: Land	19	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Radox Laboratories	32
■ Home Office: Procurement	19	■ Fossil Fuels	32
DEFENCE	21	■ Rivers: Safety	33
■ Air Force: Military Exercises	21	■ Water Charges	33
■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	22	■ Water Charges: Private Rented Housing	33
■ Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Conditions of Employment	23	■ Water Companies: Data Protection	34
■ Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Working Hours	24	■ Water Direct Scheme	34
■ Unmanned Air Vehicles: Finance	24	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	35
■ Weeton Barracks	25	■ Afghanistan: Refugees	35
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	25	■ Department for International Development: Radox Laboratories	35
■ 5G	25	■ Environment Protection: Human Rights	35
■ Businesses: Data Protection	25	■ Ethiopia: Violence	36
■ Charity Commission: Public Appointments	26	■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Performance Related Pay	37
■ Digital Technology: Disadvantaged	27	■ GCHQ: Amazon Web Services	38
■ Semiconductor Devices: Exports	27	■ Ghana: LGBT People	39
■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure	28	■ Land Mines	40
EDUCATION	28	■ Members: Correspondence	40
■ Pupils: Sanitary Protection	28	■ Qatar: Migrant Workers	41
■ Skilled Workers	29	■ Slovakia: Human Rights and Religious Freedom	41
■ Special Educational Needs	30	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	41
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	31	■ Ambulance Services: Staff	41
■ Air Pollution	31	■ Artificial Insemination	42
		■ Cancer: Health Education	43

■ Carers: Recruitment	43	■ Primary Health Care	54
■ Coronavirus and Influenza: Vaccination	43	■ Primary Health Care: Health and Social Care Levy	54
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	44	■ Remote Working: Mental Health	54
■ Cystic Fibrosis: Community Diagnostic Centres	45	■ Social Services: Vacancies	54
■ Dental Services: Fees and Charges	46	■ Tobacco: Regulation	55
■ Disability: Children	46	■ Tourette's Syndrome: Health Services	55
■ Earwax: Medical Treatments	46	■ Travel: Coronavirus	55
■ Fractures: Radiology	47	HOME OFFICE	56
■ General Practitioners: North West	48	■ Animal Experiments: Animal Welfare	56
■ General Practitioners: Pharmacy	48	■ Animals in Science Regulation Unit: Annual Reports	57
■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control	48	■ Asylum: Appeals	57
■ Mental Health Services: Babies	49	■ Asylum: Deportation	57
■ Mental Health: Research	49	■ Asylum: Local Government	58
■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Health Services	50	■ Community Safety Partnerships: Hertfordshire	58
■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Mental Health Services	50	■ Entry Clearances: Ethiopia	59
■ NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts	50	■ Judicial Review	59
■ NHS: Migrant Workers	51	■ Members: Correspondence	59
■ NHS: Private Sector	51	■ Nationality and Borders Bill	60
■ NHS: Procurement	51	■ Protest: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles	60
■ Ophthalmic Services: Digital Technology	52	■ Refugees: Afghanistan	61
■ Osteoporosis: Disadvantaged	52	■ Refugees: Resettlement	62
■ Osteoporosis: Research	52	■ Schools: EU Countries	62
■ Osteoporosis: Screening	53	■ TNT Express: Passports	62
■ Pregnancy: Mental Health Services	53	■ UK Visas and Immigration: Asylum	64
		■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel	64
		■ Undocumented Migrants: Housing	65

INTERNATIONAL TRADE	66	PRIME MINISTER	77
■ Department for International Trade: Telephone Services	66	■ WAG First Minister	77
■ Healthcare UK: Radox Laboratories and SEEK	66	TRANSPORT	77
■ UK Export Finance: Recruitment	66	■ Aviation: Fuels	77
JUSTICE	67	■ Crossrail Line	78
■ Bronzefield Prison: Self-harm	67	■ Department for Transport: Staff	78
■ Dic Penderyn	67	■ Driving Licences	80
■ Offenders: Behaviour Disorders	68	■ East Coast Railway Line: Finance	82
■ Prisoners' Release: Homelessness	68	■ High Speed Two: Compulsory Purchase	82
■ Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles	69	■ Hydrogen: Charging Stations	83
■ Women's Prisons: Security	70	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences	83
■ Young Offenders: Sanitary Protection	70	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies	84
LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	71	■ Leeds-York Railway Line	85
■ Affordable Housing	71	■ Minibuses: Driving Licences	86
■ Buildings: Carbon Emissions	71	■ Ports: Road Traffic	86
■ Companies: Political Parties	72	■ Railways: Freight	86
■ Construction: Materials	72	■ Railways: North East	87
■ Elections: Campaigns	73	■ Railways: North of England	87
■ Housing: Construction	74	■ Railways: Yorkshire and the Humber	88
■ Housing: Sandymoor	74	■ Supply Chains: Labour Turnover	89
■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus	75	TREASURY	89
■ Organisations: Political Parties	75	■ Annual Investment Allowance	89
■ Political Parties: Finance	76	■ Banks: Corporation Tax	90
NORTHERN IRELAND	76	■ Business: Taxation	90
■ Northern Ireland Office: Meetings	76	■ Capital Gains Tax	90
■ Northern Ireland Office: Staff	76	■ Child Benefit	91
		■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	91

■ Corporation Tax	92	■ Females: Harassment	100
■ International Monetary System	92	WORK AND PENSIONS	100
■ Liverpool Victoria	93	■ Long Covid: Disability	100
■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus	95	■ Private Rented Housing	101
■ Office of Tax Simplification	95	■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification	102
■ Office of Tax Simplification: Equality	95	■ State Retirement Pensions	102
■ Police and Crime Commissioners: Cleveland	96	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	103
■ Property Development: Taxation	96	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	103
■ Railways: Wales	97	■ Mozambique: Politics and Government	103
■ Revenue and Customs: Finance	97	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	104
■ Sanitary Protection: VAT	98	DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	104
■ Taxation	99	■ National Data Strategy Mission 1 Policy Framework	104
WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	99	JUSTICE	104
■ Equality: Artificial Intelligence	99	■ Sentencing update	104
■ Females: Coronavirus	100		

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

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Meetings

Owen Thompson:[\[76746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's process is for (a) recording and (b) keeping minutes of all meetings relating to Government business.

George Freeman:

Any information concerning the core business of the Department or which has a continuing value should be retained as a record. Typically records will be submissions, contract documents, minutes and agendas of important meetings, letters, emails, working papers, discussion documents and reports that contribute to decision making and activity in pursuit of the Department's business objectives. It is the responsibility of anyone that creates such information to ensure it is retained as part of the official record, by saving it in our shared system.

■ Electricity Generation

Hilary Benn:[\[74894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Licence Lite applications have been made in each year since 2009; and how many were awarded by Ofgem in each of those years.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem have provided the following information on the number of Licence Lite applications received each year since 2009, and how many were granted a licence.

YEAR	NUMBER OF LICENCE LITE APPLICATIONS	NUMBER OF LICENCE LITE GRANTED
2009 - 2015	0	0
2016	1	0
2017	2	3
2018	1	0

From 2019 to present, Ofgem have not received any applications for a Licence Lite.

■ Energy Supply

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[77442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that there is no energy supplier restrictions or rationing of industrial, business or individual energy use over the next six months; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 23 November 2021]: Energy security is an absolute priority for this government. We have highly diverse sources of gas supply and a diverse electricity mix, which ensures that households, businesses and heavy industry get the energy they need.

■ Environment Protection: Employment

Jim Shannon:

[\[74984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether Northern Ireland will be included in the distribution of employment in the creation of two million green jobs under the Green Jobs Task Force.

Greg Hands:

The Government's Net Zero Strategy is a strategy for the whole of the UK.

The Government is supporting up to 440,000 jobs across net zero industries in 2030, contributing towards a pivot to a greener economy which could support 2 million jobs in green sectors or by greening existing sectors. The Government is working with business to grow green industries and supply chains and support green skills in the UK, whilst also ensuring our resilience to international changes in supply chains.

The map on page 331 of the Net Zero Strategy highlights the potential locations of these opportunities, including in Northern Ireland.

■ Fracking

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[77441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will (a) lift the moratorium on shale gas and (b) take steps to support the safe extraction of the UK's shale gas resources.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 23 November 2021]: The Government has been clear that shale gas development must be safe and sustainable – both for local communities and the environment.

It remains government policy to be guided by the evidence, as demonstrated by BEIS' Written Ministerial Statement of 4 November 2019, where BEIS confirmed the decision to take a presumption against issuing any further Hydraulic Fracturing Consents, which are required before hydraulic fracturing operations can take place.

Please see: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-11-04/HCWS68/>.

This position, an effective moratorium, will be maintained unless compelling new evidence is provided which addresses the concerns around the prediction and management of induced seismicity.

■ Fuel Poverty

Wes Streeting: [77476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the potential change in the number of households experiencing fuel poverty over winter 2021-22.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 23 November 2021]: The Government has made these estimates which are available in the annual fuel poverty statistics projections report.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics>

■ Fuel Poverty: Older People

Dr Rupa Huq: [77478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of pensioners in Ealing Central and Acton constituency live in fuel poverty; and what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of that proportion.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 23 November 2021]: In 2019, an estimated 13.2% of all households in the Ealing Central and Acton Parliamentary Constituency were estimated to be in fuel poverty.

Government is committed to tackling fuel poverty, reducing energy bills and delivering warmer, safer homes for the most vulnerable. We consider improving the energy efficiency of homes to be the best long-term method of tackling of fuel poverty. Energy efficiency schemes include the Energy Company Obligation and the Sustainable Warmth Competition.

Since 2011, the Warm Home Discount has helped over 2 million low-income and vulnerable households each year with their energy costs. In the 2019/20 scheme year, which is the latest we have data for, around 1 million low-income pensioners in receipt of the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit received a £140 Warm Home Discount as an automatic rebate on their energy bills. Support is also available through the Winter Fuel Payment: £200 for households with somebody who has reached State Pension age and is under age 80; or £300 for households with somebody aged 80 and over. The Cold Weather Payment is also available to eligible households if the average temperature in their area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees celsius or below over 7 consecutive days.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Andrew Lewer:

[\[75118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to extend to March 2022 or extend indefinitely the validity of already issued Green Homes Grant vouchers in response to supply chain problems in the construction industry.

Greg Hands:

Officials are working with industry representatives to better understand the global supply chain issues which are affecting various sectors.

This will allow continuity of support to installers, while also informing future Government energy efficiency schemes.

Following the closure of the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme the Government is refocussing efforts and funding towards alternative approaches that will both maximise the delivery of home retrofits for consumers who are most in need, and support the supply chain to keep delivering.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Boilers

Judith Cummins:

[\[73886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications were successful in their bids to the Green Homes Grant Schemes for new biomass boilers.

Greg Hands:

As of 7 October 2021, there were eight live voucher applications for biomass boilers – these are vouchers that were not rejected or withdrawn following the initial application.

Of these eight live applications, six had a voucher issued with all six subsequently installed. Two vouchers have expired.

Judith Cummins:

[\[73888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications were unsuccessful in their bids to the Green Homes Grant scheme for new biomass boilers.

Greg Hands:

The official statistics published to date do not include a breakdown of all voucher applications by type but instead focus on those that are active within the system for work to be completed.

As of 7 October 2021, there were eight live voucher applications for biomass boilers – these are vouchers that were not rejected or withdrawn following the initial application.

Of these eight live applications, six had a voucher issued with all six subsequently installed.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Standards

Judith Cummins: [\[73887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average time taken was to decide an application to the Green Homes Grant scheme.

Greg Hands:

The UK Government worked closely with the scheme administrator to ensure voucher applications were processed as quickly as possible.

The average time between homeowners applying for a Green Homes Grant voucher and the voucher being issued was 89 days.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Yorkshire and Humberside

Judith Cummins: [\[73889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications were successful in their bids to the Green Homes Grant Schemes from Yorkshire and the Humber for new biomass boilers.

Greg Hands:

The published official statistics to date do not include a breakdown of applications by region and type of measure.

However, the latest official statistics release shows that as of 7 October 2021, no biomass boilers were installed in Yorkshire and the Humber.

■ Heat Batteries: Renewable Energy

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[76543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment has made of the potential merits of the use of heat batteries to absorb surplus renewable generation that may otherwise be wasted.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 22 November 2021]: In July 2021, the Government published analysis as part of our Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, which concluded that by managing the UK's energy more flexibly, the UK could reduce the investment required in the electricity network and in new electricity generation capacity. In particular, the flexible use of heat – using technologies like heat batteries – could make an important contribution to this objective.

■ Historic Buildings: Carbon Emissions

Stuart Anderson: [\[75131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to help support historical buildings to become carbon neutral.

Greg Hands:

As set out in the recent Heat and Buildings Strategy, the Government is committed to decarbonising all homes and buildings in line with the Government's Net Zero emissions target.

The Government recognises this includes ensuring that more historic buildings have the right energy efficiency measures and low carbon heat. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, recently published the Planning for the Future White Paper, committing to reviewing and updating the planning framework for listed buildings and conservation areas, to ensure their significance is conserved while allowing, where appropriate, sympathetic changes to support their continued use and address climate change.

■ Iron and Steel: South Yorkshire**Dan Jarvis:****[R] [77461]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the sustainability of the steel sector in South Yorkshire.

Lee Rowley:

The Government recognises the vital role that steel plays in our economy across all areas of the UK, and will continue to work with the sector to support its decarbonisation.

On 28 July, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) announced its intention to acquire Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited to secure its unique capability to supply large scale high integrity steel components into existing and future defence programmes. This acquisition was completed on 19 August. The MOD also intends to spend up to £400 million for defence critical plant, equipment and infrastructure in SFIL over the next 10 years to support defence outputs.

■ Liquefied Petroleum Gas: Wales**Liz Saville Roberts:****[75076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a price-cap on liquified petroleum gas for people (a) lacking a grid-connection and (b) living in fuel poverty in Wales.

Greg Hands:

The Government has no plans to control prices or set a price-cap for liquified petroleum gas (LPG).

The LPG market operates under normal competition and consumer protection law supplemented by the Domestic Bulk LPG Market Investigation Orders (which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/liquefied-petroleum-gas-lpg-market-orders-and-calculator>). The Orders enable easier switching of domestic bulk LPG supplier by domestic customers.

Fuel poverty is a devolved matter for the Welsh Government.

■ National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research: Finance

Ruth Jones: [76012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the £10 million of annual funding provided to NC3Rs has been spent on (a) replacing the use of animals, (b) refining the use of animals and (c) reducing the number of animals used.

George Freeman:

The National Centre for the 3Rs (NC3Rs) works nationally and internationally to drive the uptake of replacement, reduction and refinement of animal use technologies and ensure that advances in them are reflected in policy, practice and regulations on animal research.

As funding is committed to projects that may involve more than one of the 3Rs, it is not possible to provide exact proportions. However, a searchable database with details of every NC3R funded project is available at [NC3Rs](#).

■ National Grid: Solar Events

Fabian Hamilton: [78364]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government plans to take in response to the impact of potential solar storms on the UK's energy infrastructure.

George Freeman:

On the 27th September 2021, the Government published the Severe Space Weather Preparedness Strategy. This sets out a 5-year roadmap to enhance our understanding of severe space weather, its impacts to UK energy infrastructure, and the UK's ability to forecast events, respond and recover from them quickly. The Strategy is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-severe-space-weather-preparedness-strategy>

■ Postal Services: Standards

Helen Hayes: [78467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Universal Service Obligation for letters is being met consistently, in the context of Royal Mail's announcement of a £400 million payout to shareholders.

Paul Scully:

The Government has no role in operational or commercial decisions by Royal Mail which is a fully private business.

The Government sets the minimum requirements and service standards for the UK postal service in the Postal Services Act 2011 which designates the Office of

Communications (Ofcom) as the independent regulator for the sector with the responsibility and powers to regulate postal services.

Ofcom has a duty to ensure the provision of a financially sustainable and efficient universal postal service. It monitors Royal Mail's provision of the universal service and has powers to investigate and take enforcement action if Royal Mail fails to achieve its performance targets, taking account of all relevant factors.

■ Research

Chi Onwurah:

[77450]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) increase overall R&D intensity, (b) meet the R&D spending target of £22 billion per year by 2026-27 and (c) obtain private investment to contribute to the target of 2.4 per cent of GDP spent on R&D by 2027.

George Freeman:

[Holding answer 23 November 2021]: The government is providing the fastest ever sustained uplift in R&D funding, reaching £20bn per annum by the end of the SR period – £5bn more than 2021/22.

The significant rise in public R&D spending to £20bn by 2024/25, with a clear commitment to £22bn by 2026/27, provides a firm foundation for us to reach the target, but we cannot achieve it alone: it is only by working with innovative businesses and funders from the private sector that we will reach 2.4%. The government is doing its bit to reach the target, with record levels of public sector investment and a generous R&D tax credits scheme. Total government support for R&D (expenditure and R&D tax credits) is forecast to rise from 0.7% of GDP in 2018 to 1.1% in 2024-25, which is well above the latest OECD average of 0.7%.

We have set out our approach to attract increased private investment, for example in the R&D Roadmap last year and in the Innovation Strategy this year.

■ Shipbuilding: Credit

Luke Pollard:

[76008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department has made on implementing proposals to introduce a Home shipbuilding credit guarantee scheme to support the development of UK shipbuilding.

Lee Rowley:

The Department has consulted upon the reintroduction of a Home Shipbuilding Credit Guarantee Scheme as a potential contribution to a refreshed National Shipbuilding Strategy. The case for the scheme is currently under consideration and a final decision will be announced in due course.

The Government already offers a range of financial support instruments to businesses through the British Business Bank and through UK Export Finance.

■ Shipping: Freight

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[77443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of container shipping prices on UK businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Lee Rowley:

[Holding answer 23 November 2021]: The situation faced by UK businesses and others across the globe is a result of high consumer demand, and the ongoing disruption caused by Covid-19 pressures. We are aware this is a global problem, and the UK is not uniquely disadvantaged as the container supply system and freight markets across the world are being impacted.

In fact, at present the position for UK freight is more positive than other locations globally who have experienced continued severe operations difficulties.

Government continues to work with the freight sector, including ports to manage the impacts of a surge in container demand and HGV driver shortages.

■ SME Climate Hub

Seema Malhotra:

[\[78413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the proportion of UK SMEs that have signed up to the SME Climate Hub.

Greg Hands:

Currently, 2446 UK SMEs have made the SME Climate Commitment (including 14 in overseas territories, and 26 awaiting approval).

The UK has the largest number of companies signed-up. The total constitutes just under 80% of global SME Climate Commitments.

Since May 2021 when the UK Business Climate Hub was launched, an average of 65 businesses per week have made the commitment. This number has accelerated to an average of 95 per week over November.

UK commitments span every devolved nation and region in the country, and 26 different sectors.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021

Ruth Jones:

[\[73959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how he travelled to COP26 in Glasgow.

Greg Hands:

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Kwasi Kwarteng, travelled by train to COP26.

■ Weetabix: Re-employment

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[76584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives of Weetabix on the company's alleged use of the practice of fire and rehire.

Paul Scully:

This Government has been consistently clear that we do not accept the inappropriate use by some employers of fire and rehire as a negotiation tactic.

Earlier this year we asked Acas to produce more comprehensive, clearer guidance to help all employers explore all the options before considering 'fire and rehire' and encourage good employment relations practice. This guidance was published on 11 November and is available from: <http://www.acas.org.uk/changecontract>.

The Secretary of State meets regularly with a diverse range of stakeholders including trade unions and employers to discuss various policy matters, across the sectors covered by the Department.

■ Wind Power: Celtic Sea

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[74871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of developing floating wind energy projects in the Celtic Sea.

Greg Hands:

Government sees floating offshore wind as a vital component of the UK's energy mix as the UK moves towards net zero. The Government has committed to delivering at least 1GW floating capacity by 2030 as a steppingstone to larger scale deployment through the 2030s. In the draft budget notice for the 4th Contracts for Difference round, the Government announced ringfenced support for floating offshore wind.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[74872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to use public funding to stimulate the development of floating wind energy projects in the Celtic Sea.

Greg Hands:

The Government is committed to delivering up to 1GW of floating offshore wind capacity by 2030. The Government recently announced up to £160 million to support large-scale floating offshore wind ports and factories to be built across the UK. Further, the draft parameters for the fourth Contracts for Difference allocation round, published in September, included ring-fenced support for floating offshore wind projects.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[74870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will increase the ring-fence for funding allocated to offshore floating wind in the forthcoming Contracts for Difference allocation round 4.

Greg Hands:

The draft parameters for the fourth Contracts for Difference (CfD) allocation round published on 13 September 2021 included ring-fenced support for floating offshore wind projects. The statutory notices confirming the parameters for the fourth allocation round will be published shortly, ahead of the round opening to applications on 13 December.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[74873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the viability of creating a UK-based supply chain for floating wind technology.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[74874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of whether the funding in Contracts for Difference allocation round 4 will be sufficient to cover floating wind projects in both the North Sea and the Celtic Sea.

Greg Hands:

Government sees floating wind as a vital component of the UK's energy mix as the UK moves towards net zero. Therefore, it has committed to delivering at least 1GW floating capacity by 2030. In the draft budget notice for the 4th Contracts for Difference round, the Government announced ringfenced support for floating offshore wind.

The UK is a global leader in this technology, with more installed capacity than any other country in the world. The Government believes there is a real opportunity to develop this position to create a strong domestic industry, generating high-skilled jobs and driving investment. The Government has committed up to £160m to develop UK ports and the floating wind supply chain, part of a £380m package over the next four years to support the development of the offshore wind industry in the UK.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Cabinet Office: Freedom of Information****Angela Rayner:** [\[78416\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what Freedom of Information requests his Department has received in respect of correspondence between the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and David

Meller in respect of the procurement of personal protective equipment from Meller Designs; when those requests were submitted; and whether his Department plans to release the information requested.

Angela Rayner:

[\[78417\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what costs have been incurred by the public purse as a result of his Department contesting Freedom of Information requests relating to procurement received by his Department during the covid-19 outbreak, to date.

Angela Rayner:

[\[78419\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, on how many occasions his Department has been ordered by the Information Commissioner to release information in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 since 24 July 2019.

Michael Ellis:

Responses to all FOI requests are handled in line with the legislation, including applying relevant exemptions where applicable.

The costs of resourcing Freedom of Information requests are met within departmental budgets.

Decision notices issued by the Information Commissioner's Office, including those about the Cabinet Office's handling of Freedom of Information requests, can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website at www.ico.org.uk.

■ **Cabinet Office: Stonewall**

Sir Peter Bottomley:

[\[77356\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department's departmental and public agency spending on (a) services provided by and (b) contracts with Stonewall reconcile with the figures given in that charity's accounts.

Michael Ellis:

There are currently no publicly available accounts from Stonewall for 2020/21 which we can compare with the Cabinet Office published accounts.

■ **Civil Servants: Location**

John McDonnell:

[\[79259\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of (a) civil and (b) public servant roles will move out of London under the Places for Growth programme.

Michael Ellis:

As part of the Budget in 2020, the Government made a commitment to relocate 22,000 Civil Service roles from Greater London to locations across the UK by 2030,

with commitments from departments and public bodies to relocate up to 15,000 by 2025. The Places for Growth Portfolio is at the heart of delivering this agenda working with departments and public bodies to ensure local voices are taken into account when making policy. As of 31st March 2021 there were 101,930 civil servants in London which represents 21% of the total.

The Government has made it clear that the Civil Service and its public bodies should have a truly national footprint. Whilst the majority of public bodies are already fairly regionally/nationally dispersed, those with a presence in London are still a key part of our Places for Growth work.

■ **Coronavirus: Public Appointments**

Jack Dromey: [\[78380\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2021 to Question 73818, on Coronavirus: Public Inquiries, whether there will be a consultative process for the selection of chair of the covid-19 public inquiry; and what the timeframe for the selection of that chair will be.

Michael Ellis:

On 12 May, the Prime Minister confirmed that a public inquiry into COVID-19 will be established on a statutory basis, with full formal powers, and that it will begin its work in spring 2022. The Prime Minister has committed to appointing an independent chair by the end of the year. The inquiry will be established on a statutory basis and the chair will be appointed in accordance with the Inquiries Act 2005.

■ **Electronic Government**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77420\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that people who do not use online resources are able to access Government services easily.

Michael Ellis:

Government has committed to ensuring that assistance is always available for those who need it. Departments are required by the Service Standard to provide support via alternative channels for their services, where it is required, and the Central Digital and Data Office assures this via a service assessment process.

■ **Government Departments: Databases**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77419\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that other Government departments use data to inform policy decisions.

Michael Ellis:

The Government Analysis Function, led by the National Statistician, is developing the Government Analysis Functional Standard. This sets expectations of analysis as a collaborative activity, with analysts working in partnership with policy makers and wider professions to support well informed decision making and the development and delivery of policy.

Through its functions and professions, the Civil Service is improving its ability to advise ministers using data through a number of work streams including developing the Government Analysis Functional Standard and ensuring policy professionals use data at all stages of decision making.

■ Government Departments: Land**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[75961\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress has been made on the Government's review of central Government land.

Michael Ellis:

Following the Spending Review 2021, we plan to update the Government Estate Strategy to reflect our vision and objectives for the government estate. We expect the strategy will continue to focus on disposal of government land and property and on reducing the size of the estate - albeit with more focus on divesting of property with high operating costs and maintenance liabilities than capital receipts. Work is already underway and we anticipate that this work will be completed by spring/summer 2022.

■ Home Office: Procurement**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[77421\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Home Office.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[77422\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Ministry of Defence.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[77423\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Attorney General's Office.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[77424\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77425\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77426\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department for Education.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77427\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77428\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department for International Trade.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77429\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77430\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department for Transport.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77431\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department for Work and Pensions.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77432\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Department for Health and Social Care.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77433\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[77434\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Treasury.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[77435\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Northern Ireland Office.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[77436\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Ministry of Justice.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[77437\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero through procurement in the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Michael Ellis:

This year, the Government has put in place a new procurement policy which underlines the UK's global leadership in tackling climate change.

Prospective suppliers bidding for contracts above £5million a year must now have committed to the government's target of net zero by 2050 and have published a carbon reduction plan. Firms which fail to do so may be deselected from the procurement.

This policy supports the Government's plan to build back greener, by ensuring that potential government suppliers publish plans to reduce carbon emissions across their operations in order to bid for major government contracts.

In addition, 'Fighting Climate Change' is one of the priority themes of the government's Social Value Model, launched earlier this year. This enables departments to take environmental considerations, such as a reduction in carbon emissions, into account in the award of government contracts, where relevant.

DEFENCE

■ Air Force: Military Exercises

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[78367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many exercises the RAF have completed over the past three years; and what information his Department holds on where those exercises took place.

James Heappey:

The RAF have completed 31 exercises, defined as collective training with Joint and Multinational elements, since November 2018. These exercises took place in France, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Qatar, Oman, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States of America.

■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

David Linden: [\[75982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking along with Department for Work and Pensions to improve the (a) application process for and (b) time taken to determine war pensions.

David Linden: [\[75983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to improve the (a) application process and (b) time taken for pay-outs from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

David Linden: [\[75984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking along with the Department for Work and Pensions to improve the (a) application process and (b) time taken to consider appeals to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence has not discussed these matters with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as the DWP has no responsibility for the War Pension Scheme or the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

Defence Business Service is embarking on a £40 million transformation programme to digitise the existing paper-based processes and to create a single customer portal. This will also include an ability to complete an on-line application in order to further enhance the customer experience whilst also reducing processing times.

David Linden: [\[75985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all evidence from the former Department of Social Security is preserved when deciding upon Armed Forces Compensation Scheme cases.

Leo Docherty:

The Department of Social Security was replaced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in 2001. Any evidence provided by the DWP, its predecessor organisations or any other third party as part of the decision-making process for Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) claims is retained on the case file and stored at the Ministry of Defence record keeping facility in accordance with standard record management policies. As all AFCS decisions carry the right of appeal, the complete case file would be retrieved to undertake a reconsideration or appeal.

■ Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Conditions of Employment

Stephen Morgan: [\[75990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45090, Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Conditions of Employment, how many and what proportion of MGS staff on pre-OMEC contracts would experience a reduction in pay in the event that they were promoted to the next highest (a) grade and (b) band.

Leo Docherty:

No pre-Operational MGS Employment Contract personnel would experience a reduction in guaranteed basic pay in the event of promotion to the next highest shift working grade or band.

Stephen Morgan: [\[75991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45090, Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Conditions of Employment, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Equality Impact Assessments.

Stephen Morgan: [\[75992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45090 on Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Conditions of Employment, if he will make arrangements for trade union representatives to have sight of the Equality Impact Assessments.

Leo Docherty:

A copy of the Equality Impact Assessments in relation to the Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Conditions of Employment, has been placed in the Library of the House.

The Assessments have been shared with Trade Unions.

Attachments:

1. Equality Analysis OMEC [Equality Analysis OMEC 2020 (Redacted).pdf]

Stephen Morgan: [\[75993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45126, Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Conditions of Employment, what conclusions were drawn from the comparative assessment of how OMEC contracts compare with those in the private sector security industry.

Leo Docherty:

External benchmarking completed in 2019 concluded that the Operational MGS Employment Contract OMEC total cash package is between 7% and 32% higher than the equivalent private sector salary. This does not take into account access to the Civil Service defined benefit pension scheme.

■ Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Working Hours

Stephen Morgan: [\[75994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45127, Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Working Hours, how many and what proportion of MGS staff on OMEC contracts have worked at least (a) 60 and (b) 72 hours in a rolling 7-day period since those contracts were introduced.

Leo Docherty:

This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Due diligence is conducted at local management level. As a consequence of routine MGS assessments against UK Working Time Regulations, no Ministry of Defence Guard Service employee will involuntarily work more than 48 hours per week (gross) on average over a 17 week reference period.

Stephen Morgan: [\[75995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45127, Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Working Hours, if he will commit to ensuring that no member of MGS staff on OMEC contracts are required to work more than 48 hours in a rolling 7-day period.

Leo Docherty:

Ministry of Defence Guard Service (MGS) operates within the parameters of UK Working Time Regulations. As part of these regulations, no MGS employee will involuntarily work more than 48 hours per week (gross) on average over a 17 week reference period.

Stephen Morgan: [\[75996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45127, Ministry of Defence Guard Service: Working Hours, whether a fatigue risk management system is in place for MGS staff working (a) up to and (b) more than 48 hours in a rolling 7-day period.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence Guard Service (MGS) adheres to the Defence Joint Service Publication (JSP) 892, which is the mechanism by which wellbeing-related risks and issues, including fatigue, are managed.

Any mitigations to these risks are applied in accordance with the Ministry of Defence Civilian HR Policy, Rules and Guidance.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles: Finance

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[75826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the Watchkeeper's original budget was.

Jeremy Quin:

The original total approved budget was £1.186 billion. This includes planned expenditure out to 31 March 2024.

■ Weeton Barracks**Mark Menzies:**[\[78389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on the establishment of the Army's headquarters in the North West at Weeton Barracks.

Mark Menzies:[\[78390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Army's headquarters in the North West at Weeton Barracks will be (a) completed and (b) operational.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave him on 14 October 2020, to Questions 100945, 100946 and 100947 where I said that, on current plans, HQ North West is scheduled to be re-located from Fulwood Barracks, Preston to Weeton Barracks in the summer of 2025.

However, my hon. Friend will be aware that the Army is working to implement the outcomes of the Integrated Review, including designing a force that is fit to face future threats. The Secretary of State for Defence will be making an announcement in due course which will provide more detail, including how any changes required as part of this transformation may affect current planned relocations.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ 5G****Chi Onwurah:**[\[78405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress she has made on diversifying cloud supply as part of diversifying the 5G supply chain; and if she will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

The 2019 Supply Chain Review found that the most urgent security and resilience risks were within the Radio Access Network (RAN). Since then we have set out our 5G Diversification Strategy and taken advice from the Telecoms Diversification Taskforce. Both identified the need to look at the wider networks beyond the RAN, including in cloud infrastructure, to understand potential risks, issues and how these could potentially be addressed if present.

■ Businesses: Data Protection**Chi Onwurah:**[\[78396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact and cost to businesses, specifically smaller businesses, of the

Information Commissioner's Office's requirement for (a) data service providers and (b) other companies to inform individuals on every occasion that their electoral roll data is used for non-electoral purposes.

Julia Lopez:

Current guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office does not require that companies inform individuals on every occasion that their electoral roll data is used for non-electoral purposes. A version of the electoral roll, known as the 'open register' or 'edited register', may be used by businesses for a wide range of purposes, such as for checking name and address details. Businesses using people's personal information from this register do not have to inform them or seek their consent on every occasion.

A number of safeguards apply to the personal information on this register and its uses, including the opportunity for people to opt-out. Furthermore, processing of this information must comply with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), and organisations that process personal data to send marketing communications must also comply with the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR).

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK's independent regulator for data protection and has published information about use of the electoral register and how people can opt out of the open register, available at: <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/electoral-register>. Guidance for organisations on compliance with the UK's data protection laws can be found at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/>. The ICO also has a web hub for small businesses and other small organisations, available at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/sme-web-hub/>.

■ **Charity Commission: Public Appointments**

Rachael Maskell:

[75930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans she has to ensure that the process for the appointment of the Charity Commission Chair is independent.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS are in the process of appointing a new Chair to the Charity Commission board. The process is being run in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, overseen by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Assessment Panel included a Senior Independent Panel Member (who was agreed in consultation with the Commissioner for Public Appointments) whose responsibility it is to highlight any breaches in the Governance Code.

The candidate will also be required to attend a pre-appointment hearing in front of the DCMS Select Committee.

■ Digital Technology: Disadvantaged

Chi Onwurah:

[78400]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact of digital exclusion in the North East on the ability of individuals to access (a) education, (b) skills and (c) employment; and what steps she is taking to minimise that impact.

Chris Philp:

To gain further understanding of the regional capacities and imbalances in the UK digital economy, DCMS recently published an [Assessing the UK's Regional Ecosystems Report](#). The report notes that whilst household internet access in the North East is in line with the UK (median) average (94%), it is amongst the lowest UK regions for adults using the internet overall (89%) and for internet users finding information online for work / study (36%).

To help improve this, the government has introduced a range of opportunities to access skills training and gain digital skills qualifications. It has introduced the Digital Skills Entitlement for adults with no or low digital skills. Adults can undertake specified digital qualifications, up to level one, free of charge. It also offers access to digital bootcamps as a way for people to undertake digital skills training in skills that are in particularly high demand by industry. From May 2021, the government has been offering 33 free Level 3 digital skills courses to adults aged 19-24 as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

In September 2021, the Government body, the Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP), partnered with industry leaders to launch the Digital Inclusion Impact Group to tackle digital exclusion. One of the pilot programmes is [Dell Donate to Educate](#), which will support children across England with the right access to technology at school and at home.

DCMS's Digital Lifeline fund provided tablets, data and free digital support to over 5,000 people with learning disabilities who would otherwise find it difficult to get online. In the North East, 387 people received devices and data through the scheme.

■ Semiconductor Devices: Exports

Chi Onwurah:

[78398]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade on supporting the semiconductor industry to export.

Chris Philp:

The Department for International Trade have a range of existing support for UK semiconductor exporters, including the Export Support Service and new trade and investment hubs in the UK. DIT will also be supporting UK tech companies at international exhibitions in 2022, such as the Consumer Electronics Show, Mobile World Congress and Photonics West. Such programmes bring benefits of the

government's global trade policy to the whole of the UK, with the semiconductor sector widely dispersed across the UK, including the South Wales Compound Semiconductor and Applications Cluster.

Due to the ongoing semiconductor shortage and the importance of semiconductor technology to the wider digital ecosystem, DCMS are leading a review of our international and domestic approach to semiconductor supply chains. This will include an assessment of measures that could improve long term resilience within the semiconductor supply chain. We will be working closely with DIT as we do this, to establish where closer trade and investment links can add most value.

■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure

Navendu Mishra:

[\[78508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to publish the outcome of the consultation on changes to the Electronic Communications Code.

Julia Lopez:

The response to the consultation on changes to the Electronic Communications Code was published today.

The proposed reforms set out in the response have today been brought forward in the Product Security and Telecommunication Infrastructure Bill, which was introduced in the House of Commons earlier.

EDUCATION

■ Pupils: Sanitary Protection

Laura Farris:

[\[76039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing schools to use unspent budget for period products on other essential items such as emergency underwear.

Will Quince:

The government fully funds access to free period products in schools and colleges across England, for learners that need them. This scheme enables all learners to participate fully in education by making period products available as and when they are needed.

Schools and colleges know their learners best and therefore have the freedom to select the most suitable products for their learners, considering cost and type of product. The scheme provides a wide range of period products for organisations to choose from and the department will keep this range under review. The department knows that many schools use their pupil premium grant for wider strategies to meet their pupils' basic needs, and schools may wish to use this funding to provide clothing

items such as underwear if required. Providers in colleges and other 16-19 provision may wish to use their 16-19 Bursary Fund to provide similar items to their students.

■ Skilled Workers

Margaret Ferrier:

[76723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the likely levels of discrepancy between the (a) skills and geographic location of people looking for work and (b) needs of employers (i) within sectors, (ii) between sectors and (iii) across the whole economy, following the lifting of covid-19 public health measures.

Alex Burghart:

The department undertakes labour market analysis through numerous means to help determine immediate and longer-term skills needs, such as:

- managing the Employer Skills Survey (ESS), which is the only national survey of employers providing comprehensive and robust information on employers' skills needs by sector, occupation and geography, their interaction with the skills system, and their investment in training
- publishing the current Working Futures labour market projections of jobs by sector, occupation, and geography for the UK labour market
- funding Labour Market Information (LMI) for All - an impartial service which connects and standardises existing national sources of high quality and reliable LMI
- establishing the Skills and Productivity Board which provides independent, expert, labour-market analysis on skills, skills mismatches, and their impacts (for 2021, this includes a focus on skills shortages)
- establishing 36 Skills Advisory Panels across the country to undertake analysis of local labour markets and produce Local Skills Reports setting out an area's main skills strengths and needs

We last ran the ESS in 2019, which captured employer reported skill shortages by sector, occupation, location, and skill-type. The ESS showed that construction and manufacturing employers were among the sectors that struggled the most to find applicants with the right skills, experience, or qualifications. The ESS also showed that, within most sectors, employers found it the most difficult to find adequately skilled applicants for occupations classed as 'skilled trades'.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for collecting data on job vacancies, which is a measure of employer skill needs. Since the relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions, official statistics show that the largest proportional increases in vacancies between May-July 2021 to August-October 2021 occurred in the construction sector, transport and storage sector, and manufacturing sector. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/jobsandvacanciesintheuk/november2021>.

We are also working to make the skills system more responsive to employer need.

The 'Skills for Jobs' White Paper launched earlier this year set out our aims to build on the success of our flagship apprenticeships programme by putting employers at the heart of the system so that education and training provision meets their needs. By 2030, almost all technical courses will be aligned to employer-led standards, ensuring that the education and training people receive are directly linked to the skills needed for jobs.

The white paper also set out our plans for local areas to be able to plan what skills they need, with local employers leading the process. We are therefore introducing Local Skills Improvement Plans, starting in a small number of trailblazer areas in 2021 led by established employer representative organisations. The first eight were announced in July 2021. The Plans will bring together colleges and other providers, employers, Job Centres Plus, and other local organisations to identify skills needs and the capacity the area has to deliver them.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the government has provided a total of £352 billion to support the economy. This includes the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Plan for Jobs programmes such as Restart and Kickstart, alongside other measures to boost work search activity, skills and apprenticeships.

As a result, latest figures confirm we are now above pre-COVID-19 outbreak levels of employees on payroll.

We are working across government and across the country to identify sectors with immediate or growing demand and are implementing a range of initiatives to ensure that upskilling programmes meet this demand.

This work includes the sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) where Jobcentre staff work with local employers and tailor training and support packages to help claimants fill local vacancies. DWP is increasing the number of SWAP opportunities to 80,000 over the current financial year 2021/22.

■ Special Educational Needs

Chi Onwurah:

[78406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve the support offered to families whose children have additional learning needs, disability or special educational needs within education; and what steps his Department will take to ensure each eligible child receives consistent and joined-up SEND support.

Will Quince:

I refer the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central to the answer I gave on 25 October 2021 to Question [59784](#).

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Air Pollution****Geraint Davies:****[78321]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government will take to ensure effective collaboration on air quality between councils and other relevant public bodies as laid out in the Environment Bill.

Jo Churchill:

The Environment Act strengthens the Local Air Quality Management Framework in England to enable a more collaborative approach to improving air quality where a local air quality objective is not being met. The Act strengthens requirements for all tiers of local Government to work together to improve air quality and requires neighbouring local authorities to co-operate where this is necessary to ensure local air quality objectives are met.

The Act also provides for a new power for the Secretary of State to designate, after formal consultation, "Relevant Public Authorities". Designated Relevant Public Authorities will be required to collaborate with local authorities where a pollution source in their area of influence contributes to a failure to meet a local air quality objective. We will consult on designating the first Relevant Public Authority – National Highways - early in the new year. This will ensure all highways authorities collaborate where necessary. We are working to identify which further public authorities should be designated.

We will also consult early in the new year on revised Local Air Quality Management statutory guidance which will set out the steps local authorities should take to engage their air quality partners.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control**Andrew Rosindell:****[75830]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of the public purse of the badger cull programme; and whether his Department has conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the badger cull.

Jo Churchill:

Badger culling costs are published annually on Gov.uk and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-government-badger-control-costs>. Costs for the 2021 operations will be published in due course.

A value for money analysis is published annually on Gov.uk and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-badger-control-policy-value-for-money-analysis>.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Randox Laboratories**Owen Thompson:** [78454]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information his Department holds on the value of contracts given by (a) his Department and (b) the Food Standards Agency to Randox since 2010.

Victoria Prentis:

Records of Government contracts above £10,000 in central government and £25,000 in the wider public sector are published on Contracts Finder:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

■ Fossil Fuels**Ruth Jones:** [76015]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether suppliers of (a) lignite, (b) pet coke, (c) coffee logs, (d) wine logs and (e) olive logs are required to prove that those fuels are safe to burn from an environmental and health perspective prior to selling to consumers in (i) domestic premises and (ii) the hospitality industry.

Ruth Jones: [76016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the environmental and health impact of the use of (a) lignite, (b) pet coke, (c) coffee logs, (d) wine logs and (e) olive logs as fuel for burning in (i) domestic premises and (ii) the hospitality industry.

Jo Churchill:

In a Smoke Control Area, under the Clean Air Act 1993, it is only permissible to burn authorised fuels, or “smokeless fuels” (anthracite, semi-anthracite, gas, low volatile steam coal) unless the fuel is being burnt on an exempt appliance. Authorised fuels must emit less than 2% sulphur content and 5g of smoke per hour. In practice, this means that coffee logs, wine logs, and olive logs are not sold in Smoke Control Areas.

The Air Quality (Domestic Solid Fuels Standards) (England) Regulations 2020 apply throughout England, and introduce requirements covering a large proportion of the market for fuels used for domestic burning. They phase out the sale of traditional house coal and wet wood sold in smaller units.

The Government is aware that new fuels, such as coffee logs, are entering the market. As stated in the Clean Air Strategy, the Government wants to encourage innovation, but customers need reassurance that these products are safe to use. The Government is conducting a review of these fuels with a view to setting relevant standards across England, to ensure that health and environmental impacts are minimised. As a first step in that review, we published an invitation to tender for a market study of coffee logs and other new and emerging fuels on 12 November. The invitation states that we are looking for information about the market (including the

hospitality sector) for coffee logs and other emerging waste-based fuels, as well as for lignite and any other emerging fuels such as pet coke.

Air quality policies are devolved, and the relevant administrations have direct policy responsibility for air quality measures in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

■ Rivers: Safety

Rachael Maskell:

[\[75927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding is available to support (a) equipment to improve river safety and (b) organisations who provide support for river safety.

Rebecca Pow:

Responsibility and funding for provision of water safety equipment on regulated inland waterways can be provided by the relevant navigation authority or riparian landowner, often working with local authorities in local water safety partnerships and other safety organisations such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Royal Life Saving Society, and the National Water Safety Forum. On unregulated inland waterways, the responsibility for provision of water safety equipment rests with the riparian landowners or land managers concerned, or local authorities typically in larger urban areas.

■ Water Charges

Liz Twist:

[\[75974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recommendation of the CCW independent affordability review to implement a single social tariff scheme; and if he will bring forward legislative proposals to implement that scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra has established a Development Group, consisting of representatives from the Consumer Council for Water (CCW), Ofwat, water companies and charities to explore the review's recommendations of a single social tariff scheme.

■ Water Charges: Private Rented Housing

Liz Twist:

[\[75976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the role of the Landlord TAP scheme in helping water companies to identify financially vulnerable tenants before they fall into debt; and if he will make that scheme mandatory in England.

Rebecca Pow:

The Consumer Council for Water's (CCW) Affordability Review suggested that Defra should make the Landlord and Tenant Address Portal compulsory in England to raise the visibility of residents who may need help.

Since the publication of CCW's report, Defra has had initial discussions with CCW and Landlord Tap Ltd on this recommendation and look forward to further engagement. Data sharing agreements enabled under the Digital Economy Act 2017 and the pilots that have evolved out of the CCW's report, should also help identify vulnerable tenants. We will work with CCW and industry on how water companies can better identify and support their customers.

■ Water Companies: Data Protection

Liz Twist:

[\[75975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will ensure that the data sharing powers conferred under the Digital Economy Act 2017 are being fully utilised to help ensure that water companies (a) identify and (b) support financially vulnerable households.

Rebecca Pow:

Eight water companies have established data sharing agreements with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The water sector and DWP are working together to roll out agreements with the remaining companies.

Initial feedback from water companies who have secured data sharing agreements has been positive. The data shares have enabled water companies to identify financially vulnerable customers who may benefit from specially discounted and capped water tariffs, and where appropriate, to proactively add eligible customers to these tariffs.

■ Water Direct Scheme

Liz Twist:

[\[75977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of expanding the Water Direct scheme; and if he will ensure that that scheme enables customers to pay water bills through deductions from universal credit regardless of whether they are in debt with water chargers.

Rebecca Pow:

Water Direct is not intended as a budgeting tool or an alternative method of paying bills for those receiving benefit.

All water companies offer WaterSure and social tariffs to help reduce bills for households who struggle to pay their bills in full. Water companies also offer a range of financial support measures to assist households to better manage their budgets including payment holidays, bill matching, benefit entitlement checks and money/debt advice referral arrangements.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Refugees****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[75859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) humanitarian and (b) diplomatic support she is giving to Afghan refugees with links to the UK who have fled Afghanistan and are in (i) Iran, (ii) Pakistan, (iii) India, (iv) Turkey and (v) other states in the region.

James Cleverly:

We have doubled UK aid for Afghanistan to £286 million this year, including £50 million for emergency humanitarian support inside Afghanistan, and £30 million of life-saving aid for Afghans in neighbouring countries to support new and existing refugees and asylum seekers. So far, we have disbursed £10 million to support refugee preparedness and assistance in neighbouring countries as follows:

£4 million to Pakistan

£3 million to Iran

£2 million to Tajikistan

£1 million regional

We continue to support those individuals and families eligible for resettlement in the UK and to this end we have created a new Joint Afghanistan Casework Unit, staffed by officials from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Home Office and Ministry of Defence.

■ Department for International Development: Randox Laboratories**Owen Thompson:**[\[78455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the total value of contracts awarded by the former Department for International Development to Randox has been in each year since 2010.

Wendy Morton:

The former Department for International Development have issued no contracts to Randox in the period 2010 to present.

■ Environment Protection: Human Rights**Patrick Grady:**[\[75912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish a response to EDM 645 on Protection and support for environmental human rights defenders.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office regularly raises freedom of expression with the Government of Guatemala. We work in conjunction with other international partners with the aim of promoting full respect for human rights for all.

The British Embassy in Guatemala has paid close attention to the cases of individual human rights defenders in Guatemala, particularly the case of Bernardo Caal.

Officials from the Embassy virtually attended Mr Caal's hearing in May, following a visit to him in 2018, as well as undertaking a visit in 2017 to the Oxec Hydro Power Complex, located on the river which Mr Caal was defending. The British Embassy has also called on the Presidential Commission for Peace and Human Rights on several occasions. During these calls, the Embassy has raised the issues of freedom of expression, media freedom, human rights and land defenders and progress on the Public Policy for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala.

■ Ethiopia: Violence**Jim Shannon:**[\[76690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help prevent an escalation of religious or belief-based violence in Ethiopia and the surrounding region.

Vicky Ford:

We are extremely concerned by reports of widespread human rights violations and abuses in Ethiopia committed by all sides to the conflict. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Deputy Prime Minister Demeke on 5 November. Our Ambassador in Addis Ababa spoke to Prime Minister Abiy on 28 October. I spoke at a Westminster Hall Debate on 3 November and highlighted the horrific scale and nature of human rights abuses against civilians as reported by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is essential that all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses be held to account. All parties must implement the report's recommendations and ensure that victims have access to support. We have stressed the need for Ethiopia to safeguard its incredible diversity of faith and identity in order to uphold freedom of religion and belief. The Foreign Secretary, our Ambassador in Addis Ababa and I continue to raise human rights issues in our discussions with the Ethiopian Government and more broadly we have reminded all warring parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. I raised our concerns about ethnic profiling and detentions with Ethiopian State Minister Redwan on 18 November. Our priority is to ensure that Ethiopians, irrespective of ethnicity, religion and political affiliation, receive life-saving aid and that humanitarian access to areas affected by conflict and insecurity is restored.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Performance Related Pay

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[75965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many officials in her Department recently received a non-consolidated performance payment, by (a) gender, (b) age and (c) ethnicity.

Amanda Milling:

Performance related pay is one tool to recognise some of the excellent achievements by the FCDO's diverse workforce. In 2020-21 the following received non-consolidated performance pay:

STAFF WHO RECEIVED A NON-CONSOLIDATED PERFORMANCE
PAYMENT IN FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-21

a) Gender

	Banded Headcount	Percentage of total staff in post on 31/03/2021 who received a non consolidated payment in fy 2020-21
Female	2000-2499	Female 60.5%
Male	2000-2499	Male 60.0%

b) Age

	Banded Headcount	Percentage of total staff in post on 31/03/2021 who received a non consolidated payment in fy 2020-21
29 or under	700-719	29 or under 52.3%

STAFF WHO RECEIVED A NON-CONSOLIDATED PERFORMANCE
PAYMENT IN FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-21

30-39	1300-1399	30-39	62.0%
40-49	1100-1199	40-49	60.2%
50-59	1000-1099	50-59	63.8%
60 or over	200-219	60 or over	63.4%

c) Ethnicity

	Banded Headcount		Percentage of total staff in post on 31/03/2021 who received a non consolidated payment in fy 2020-21
White	3000-3499	White	61.2%
BAME	560-579	BAME	55.0%

■ **GCHQ: Amazon Web Services**

Chi Onwurah: [\[74967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the recently reported contract awarded to Amazon Web Services, for what reasons GCHQ did not contract its cloud services with a domestic UK provider.

Elizabeth Truss:

The national security community does not routinely release details of the technology partnerships it enters into. Releasing details concerning national security technology can have significant security implications as would be the case in this scenario. Any contract can be fully scrutinised through the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament.

Chi Onwurah: [\[74971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Court of Justice of the European Union's July 2020 Schrems II judgement and the recently reported cloud computing contract between Amazon Web

Services and GCHQ, what steps she has taken to ensure that data which that company will hold as part of that agreement will not be accessed by US authorities without the knowledge of UK citizens or the Government.

Elizabeth Truss:

The national security community does not routinely release details of the technology partnerships it enters into. Releasing details concerning national security technology can have significant security implications as would be the case in this scenario. Any contract can be fully scrutinised through the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament.

The US are not involved in decisions about the technology we use in our infrastructure. We have a long-standing, 75-year intelligence relationship with the United States, which is invaluable to each country's national security. The alliance has clear guidelines for how we share communication, translation, analysis, and code breaking information, and has helped protect our countries and allies for decades. Any move to cloud does not change this agreement.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[74972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to enable Parliamentary scrutiny of the cloud computing contract between Amazon Web Services and GCHQ.

Elizabeth Truss:

The national security community does not routinely release details of the technology partnerships it enters into. Releasing details concerning national security technology can have significant security implications as would be the case in this scenario. Any contract can be fully scrutinised through the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament. This is the appropriate forum for Parliamentary scrutiny on this matter.

■ **Ghana: LGBT People**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[77376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her counterpart in Ghana on the proposed Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill which would further criminalise LGBT+ people.

Vicky Ford:

The UK stands firm with LGBT+ individuals globally to affirm our commitment to the principle of non-discrimination on all grounds, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. We make regular representations about LGBT+ rights, including to the Government of Ghana. We work through our High Commission in Accra, as well as international organisations, to promote non-discrimination towards LGBT+ people, and to address discriminatory laws.

The UK acknowledges Ghana's democratic reputation and respects Ghana's Parliamentary process. However, we fully support the position of the United Nations

Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in condemning the discriminatory nature of the draft Private Members Bill on the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values.

Ghana has historically been a champion of tolerance, inclusion and human rights. The UK encourages Ghana to reaffirm its opposition to all forms of discrimination and uphold the human rights provisions enshrined in Ghana's Constitution, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the principles of both the African and Commonwealth Charters.

■ Land Mines

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[78486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reversing recent reductions in funding to demining programmes.

James Cleverly:

As noted in my answer to PQ 53321 on 25 October, the FCDO is working towards finalising funding and country allocations for the Global Mine Action Programme 3 (GMAP3), due to begin in 2022.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[78487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact on vulnerable communities of reductions in UK aid for demining efforts.

James Cleverly:

Over the last three years, UK investment has cleared mines from 406 million square metres of land - the equivalent of over 56,850 football pitches - and delivered life-saving risk education to 3.34 million people living in mine-affected communities.

We will build on this work through the Global Mine Action Programme 3 (GMAP3), due to begin in 2022. The precise budget and country allocations are being finalised, but it will involve landmine clearance and risk education to help affected communities keep safe and capacity development for national authorities to help them manage their landmine contamination.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largin: [\[76042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak dated 31 August 2021, reference RL26196.

Amanda Milling:

We are grateful to the Honourable member for bringing this matter to our attention and for re-sending this correspondence on 19 November, of which we had no record

of receiving previously. The Minister of State for South Asia, United Nations and the Commonwealth sent a response to the Honourable Member on 19 November.

■ **Qatar: Migrant Workers**

Jim Shannon:

[\[75888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to the Government of Qatar on ensuring the safety and fair treatment of migrant workers in that country.

James Cleverly:

We welcome the steps Qatar has taken to date to improve the treatment of its migrant workers. The UK stands ready to further assist and support Qatar's continued efforts to implement the recommended reforms. These reforms take time and the Qatari authorities continue to demonstrate that they are raising standards.

The UK engages regularly with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which opened an office in Qatar in 2018. We continue to explore areas of the ILO's work where the UK can add particular value.

■ **Slovakia: Human Rights and Religious Freedom**

Sam Tarry:

[\[76857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking with international partners to ensure that religious liberties and human rights are upheld in Slovakia.

Wendy Morton:

Promoting freedom of religion and human rights is an important part of our work in Slovakia. We continue to promote women's and minority rights, and have regular dialogue with inter-religious groups, local human rights organisations and activists, and international partners. We welcomed Slovakia's appointment of an Ambassador for Human Rights and the convening of a conference on human rights by the Slovak Foreign Ministry in Bratislava on 26 October which was attended by the UK Human Rights Ambassador.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Ambulance Services: Staff**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[76638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support the mental health and wellbeing of ambulance staff in (a) Brighton and Hove and (b) other areas of the UK.

Edward Argar:

In September, NHS England and NHS Improvement provided £1.7 million across all 11 ambulance trusts for health and wellbeing projects. Each trust has identified specific projects to support their staff.

South East Coast Ambulance Service's projects include welfare visits, wellbeing conversations at key sites and the provision of proactive health checks to support general physical health for all staff. This is in addition to the national wellbeing support offer in place for all National Health Service staff. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also allocated an extra £55 million to ambulance trusts to increase staff numbers during the winter, to provide further capacity in control rooms and on the frontline.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[76805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the wellbeing of ambulance staff operating at Resource Escalation Action Plan Level Four long-term for (a) the South Central Ambulance Service and (b) ambulance services throughout the country.

Edward Argar:

Since July 2021, all ambulance services in England have been operating at Resource Escalation Action Plan level four.

In September, NHS England and NHS Improvement provided £1.7 million across 11 ambulance trusts for health and wellbeing packages. Whilst specific to each ambulance trust, it is focused on health and wellbeing and signposting to wellbeing hubs, apps and helplines. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also allocated an extra £55 million to ambulance trusts to increase staff numbers during the winter, providing further capacity in control rooms and on the frontline.

■ Artificial Insemination**Helen Hayes:**[\[78462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with representatives of NICE on aligning English guidance on fertility with that guidance in Scotland and Wales to enable prospective parents who cannot conceive through vaginal intercourse to receive six rounds of IUI with the option of funded donor sperm.

Maria Caulfield:

There have been no specific discussions. However, the Department and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have discussed access to intrauterine insemination and in vitro fertilisation in relation to NICE's review of its fertility guideline.

■ Cancer: Health Education

Stuart Anderson:

[\[76017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) promote awareness of different types of cancer and (b) encourage people to seek early help.

Maria Caulfield:

In October 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the former Public Health England launched the 'Help us help you' campaign to encourage people to come forward with symptoms that could be a sign of cancer and reassure them that the NHS is open.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are planning a new campaign in the first quarter of 2022 to address the barriers to people presenting with symptoms of cancer and are developing plans to raise awareness of key cancer symptoms in 2022/23.

■ Carers: Recruitment

Stephen Morgan:

[\[76817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many carers have been hired by the NHS in each month in the past year.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department does not hold this information.

■ Coronavirus and Influenza: Vaccination

Rachael Maskell:

[\[60452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to coordinate the delivery of flu and covid-19 vaccines to allow people to receive both at the same time.

Maggie Throup:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) have advised that, where operationally expedient, COVID-19 and flu vaccines may be co-administered at the same appointment. Data from the ComFluCOV trial indicate that coadministration of the flu and COVID-19 vaccines is generally well tolerated, with no reduction of vaccine-induced immune responses to either vaccine. Coadministration of COVID-19 and flu vaccines is therefore being offered proactively by clinicians where appropriate.

The JCVI has advised that the COVID-19 vaccine booster dose is offered no earlier than six months after completion of the primary vaccine course. In certain circumstances, the JCVI advise some operational flexibility. Therefore COVID-19 booster vaccine administration may be brought forward to a minimum of five months in some circumstances, such as where an eligible individual presents to receive a flu vaccine.

As well as often offering both vaccines at the same appointment if individuals are eligible, a further step being taken is the co-promotion of both vaccination programmes to ensure eligible patients are aware of the vaccines they should be receiving.

Coadministration is not always possible. For example, seasonal influenza and COVID-19 viruses are different, and therefore the eligibility for vaccination under each programme differs. People may be offered the two vaccines at different times and are encouraged to get their vaccinations as soon as possible rather than waiting for the possibility of getting them together.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Daisy Cooper:

[\[61225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the availability of covid-19 secure transport options for people classed as clinically extremely vulnerable to reach their appointment for a booster covid-19 vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 27 October 2021]: No specific assessment has been made.

Individuals booking COVID-19 booster appointments can choose a site that meets their accessibility needs and transport requirements. This is designed to allow for increased flexibility and choice, with 98% of the population in England now living within 10 miles of a vaccination site. Whilst there is no national policy in relation to providing such transport, we are aware that some local areas do offer this as part of their operating model. Where that is the case, we would expect appropriate safety and infection control measures to in place.

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[68144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what measures are in place to ensure that people who have received the covid-19 booster injection have their vaccine status updated on their NHS electronic record; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

All COVID-19 vaccinations, including boosters, administered by NHS England show on an individual's National Health Service electronic record. Events are recorded in approved COVID-19 Point-of-Care applications. The data of the vaccination events is then shared back into the citizen's medical record.

Jim Shannon:

[\[75886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the vaccination of children on the transmission of covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency's evaluation of the effect of vaccination of children on COVID-19 transmission is ongoing and findings will be published in due course.

Douglas Chapman:

[75908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including confirmation of a third covid-19 booster vaccination on the NHS Covid-19 App for use by UK citizens when accessing venues and for travel overseas.

Maggie Throup:

The NHS COVID-19 App is primarily a contact tracing app. App users are anonymous so it cannot be used as proof of vaccination status. The NHS App provides access to services including vaccination status and the NHS COVID pass. The NHS COVID Pass can now be used to demonstrate proof of a booster or third dose for outbound international travel and available through both the NHS App and on NHS.UK.

Booster vaccinations are currently not recorded in the domestic NHS COVID Pass as they are not required for domestic certification in England.

Catherine West:

[75955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when young people aged 16 and 17 will be offered a second dose of the covid-19 vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

On 15 November 2021, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that young people aged 16 to 17 years old who are not in an at-risk group should be offered a second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccine. The advice states that the second vaccine dose should be given 12 weeks or more following the first vaccine dose. The JCVI's advice is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-in-children-and-young-people-aged-16-to-17-years-jcvi-statement-november-2021>

■ **Cystic Fibrosis: Community Diagnostic Centres**

Olivia Blake:

[77512]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all 100 community diagnostic hubs implement NICE guideline NG78 to include diagnostic tests to detect fibrosis.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 23 November 2021]: Cystic fibrosis is mainly detected in new-born babies as part of the heel prick test. Otherwise, it is normally diagnosed by a combination of gene sequencing from blood tests and a sweat test, which is performed at specialist centres. Long term follow-up of lung function, or spirometry, is similarly performed at specialist centres. As such, this patient group and diagnosis is not in scope for community diagnostic centres.

■ Dental Services: Fees and Charges

Kate Osamor: [\[77480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has had discussions with HM Treasury on the potential merits of introducing free dental care for cancer patients.

Kate Osamor: [\[77481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of cancer patients were (a) eligible for, (b) applied for and (c) received free dental care in each year from 2015.

Maria Caulfield:

There have been no specific discussions and the information requested is not collected centrally.

■ Disability: Children

Damien Moore: [\[76004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle the backlog in disabled children's health services.

Gillian Keegan:

On 6 September 2021 we announced plans to spend more than £8 billion over the Spending Review period 2022/23 to 2024/25 for a programme to assist the NHS to provide elective care delayed by the pandemic. We 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 to over £34 billion in 2021/22. This includes £2 billion to reduce waiting times for patients, including disabled children.

Alexander Stafford: [\[76050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle the backlog in disabled children's health services.

Gillian Keegan:

On 6 September 2021, we announced plans to spend more than £8 billion over the Spending Review period 2022/23 to 2024/25 for a programme to assist the National Health Service to provide elective care delayed by the pandemic. We also announced an additional £5.4 billion over the next six months, bringing the total Government support for health services in response to COVID-19 to over £34 billion in 2021/22. This includes £2 billion to reduce waiting times for patients, including disabled children.

■ Earwax: Medical Treatments

Andrew Selous: [\[75833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the latest NICE guidance is on water syringing for the removal of ear wax.

Edward Argar:

Manual ear syringing is no longer advised by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) due to risks associated, such as trauma to the ear drum or infection.

The NICE guideline on the assessment and management of hearing loss in adults includes recommendations on ear wax removal. The guidance suggests considering ear irrigation using an electronic irrigator, micro suction, or another method of earwax removal such as manual removal using a probe. Pre-treatment wax softeners are advised for use before carrying out ear irrigation. NICE's guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98/chapter/Recommendations#removing-earwax>

Andrew Selous:**[75835]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what provision there is for micro suction for ear wax removal across NHS England; how many micro suction facilities are available in (a) England and (b) Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The information is not collected centrally.

■ Fractures: Radiology**Rachael Maskell:****[75820]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take with relevant medical professionals to assess the potential merits of using bone scans to (a) diagnose the risk of (b) adequately treat bone fractures.

Gillian Keegan:

The RightCare Falls and Fragility Fractures Pathway was developed in 2017 in collaboration with professionals from with the National Health Service, Public Health England, the National Osteoporosis Society and others to provide commissioners with resources to prevent falls, detect and manage osteoporosis, and support people after having fragility fractures.

The Pathway recommends screening for people with higher risk of fractures due to old age and known health diseases, specifying bone scans as a screening tool. The scans help to diagnose osteoporosis in bones which indicates a risk of fracture as the bone is weakened. The benefits of using follow up bone scans when treating a known fracture can show if the bones have weakened further. The results help to manage the patient appropriately in the care pathway. NHS England and NHS Improvement are planning to refresh the toolkit in partnership with the BestMSK Pathway Improvement Programme within the next 12 months.

■ General Practitioners: North West**Navendu Mishra:** [\[76845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the recruitment and integration of staff in GP practices in (a) the Northwest, (b) Greater Manchester and (c) Stockport.

Maria Caulfield:

We have not made a formal assessment. As private contractors, general practitioners (GPs) make their own workforce plans and hiring decisions. However, we encourage recruitment of certain roles through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS). The ARRS currently offers 12 roles and those employed through the Scheme contribute to multi-disciplinary teams.

GP practices also work with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and voluntary services in their local areas through Primary Care Networks (PCNs). PCNs build on existing primary care services and enable greater provision of personalised, coordinated and integrated health and social care closer to home.

■ General Practitioners: Pharmacy**Jane Hunt:** [\[76866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing engagement of GPs in the Community Pharmacy Consultation Service.

Maria Caulfield:

The Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) can alleviate pressures on general practitioner (GP) practices by providing health advice to support self-care and minor illnesses. As part of the 2021/2022 GP Contract Investment and Impact Fund, Primary Care Networks are being incentivised to increase referrals to the CPCS by 31 March 2022. In October 2021, NHS England launched a £250 million winter access fund for general practice. Participation in the CPCS is a condition of a practice benefitting from the fund.

■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control**Caroline Lucas:** [\[56961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the existence of the Report: Exercise Alice Middle East Respiratory Virus Coronavirus (MERS-Cov) 15 February 2016 was first brought to Ministerial attention; which Ministers were (a) told of the existence and (b) sent a copy of that report, and on what dates; if he will list the number of occasions in each of the last five years Ministers have requested an update on pandemic preparedness exercises, and progress on carrying out agreed actions and recommendations; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

Exercise Alice was a tabletop preparedness exercise carried out in 2016 to prepare for a potential outbreak of the high consequence infectious disease Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) in the United Kingdom (UK).

As Ministers receive regular and routine updates on our pandemic preparedness programme, including preparedness exercises for pandemics and high consequence infectious disease outbreaks, such as the 2016 Exercise Alice, we do not hold records of the number of times updates were specifically requested.

According to our records, Ministers were first given a copy of the report when Minister Jo Churchill was provided with a copy of the report, on 1 December 2020, following a request made for the report under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Government has been extremely proactive in implementing lessons learnt around pandemic preparedness from exercises and incident responses to ensure that the UK remains well-prepared for a pandemic infectious disease outbreak. This includes being ready with legislative proposals and improving health sector plans to flex and expand systems beyond normal capacity levels.

The results of Exercise Alice have been incorporated into ongoing planning work conducted by The Department, The United Kingdom Health Security Agency and NHS England and NHS Improvement to respond to potential High Consequence Infectious Disease outbreaks in the UK.

■ Mental Health Services: Babies**Tim Loughton:**[\[74885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the funding announced for parent and infant mental health in the Spending Review 2021 will support the expansion of specialised parent-infant teams.

Gillian Keegan:

We are working with leading academics, clinicians, Health Education England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to determine how this funding should be invested to support existing services. Further details will be confirmed in due course.

■ Mental Health: Research**Kirsten Oswald:**[\[75910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on developing novel, seamless funding mechanisms for programmes of mental health research as recommended in the Framework for Mental Health Research published by his Department in 2017.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is developing funding mechanisms for mental health research through various programmes and initiatives. The NIHR works with the Medical Research Council (MRC) to reduce delays and identify

promising interventions and is funding a number of mental health studies based on earlier investment from the MRC.

We are also funding the Mental Health Research Initiative, which is a substantial investment to expand current mental health research activity. This initiative is working across the NIHR's programmes and infrastructure schemes, to build capacity and capability in mental health research in regions which are currently underrepresented.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Health Services

Helen Hayes: [\[78465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he is having with NHS England on the adoption of the optimum clinical pathway developed by the National Neurosciences Advisory Group.

Edward Argar:

There have been no specific discussions. NHS England and NHS Improvement's Neuroscience Transformation Programme and Neuroscience Clinical Reference Group are continuing to work with the National Neurosciences Advisory Group on the development of optimum clinical pathways.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Mental Health Services

Helen Hayes: [\[78466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the mental health recovery plan will set out specific measures to support access to mental health support for people with neurological conditions.

Gillian Keegan:

We have no plans to do so. However, the NHS RightCare progressive neurological conditions toolkit states that patients with a neurological condition will be offered a regular opportunity to review their emotional and psychological status and supported to access information and services to support their mental health when needed. Commissioners are encouraged to ensure local pathways include an assessment and ongoing support of patients' mental and psychological wellbeing. Health and social care practitioners should also receive ongoing training to understand the emotional, cognitive and psychological needs of patients.

On 27 March 2021 we published our Mental Health Recovery Action Plan, with an additional £500 million investment in 2021/22, to address waiting times for mental health services, including for patients with neurological conditions.

■ NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts

Kate Osamor: [\[77483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his policy to ensure that NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts are the default providers for NHS services.

Edward Argar:

The vast majority of National Health Service care will continue to be provided by public sector organisations. However, we have no plans for a legal requirement that NHS trusts and foundation trusts are the default providers for NHS services. Local commissioners may commission services from any Care Quality Commission-registered provider.

■ NHS: Migrant Workers**Sarah Owen:**[\[78504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of how many NHS staff are eligible to pay the immigration health surcharge.

Sarah Owen:[\[78505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of how many care workers are eligible to pay the immigration health surcharge.

Edward Argar:

The Department has made no such estimate. Since 4 August 2020 health and care staff on a Health and Care Visa are exempt from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). In addition, since 1 October 2020, eligible health and care staff on visas which give them a right to work in the United Kingdom, and who have paid the IHS, are able to claim a reimbursement on a six-monthly basis.

■ NHS: Private Sector**Kate Osamor:**[\[77482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to prevent people with links to private health companies from sitting on NHS decision-making bodies.

Edward Argar:

The Health and Care Bill makes provision to establish statutory integrated care systems, consisting of an integrated care board (ICB) and an integrated care partnership (ICP), together referred to as the ICS.

ICBs will be National Health Service bodies and will not and cannot be controlled by private providers. We have amended the Bill to make it clear that no one who could undermine the independence of the NHS due to their involvement in the private healthcare sector should sit on an ICB. We are allowing ICPs to determine their own membership, to allow local flexibility.

■ NHS: Procurement**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[77383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Health and Care Bill includes adequate provisions to enable the (a) scrutiny and (b) investigation of private companies that bid for NHS tenders.

Edward Argar:

The Bill provides for procurement regulations to be made for health care services. The regulations and associated guidance will include measures on transparency and scrutiny of decisions. The current arrangements for inspecting providers, including independent sector providers, by the Care Quality Commission will remain. Relevant providers, including those in the independent sector, will also continue to be licensed by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

■ **Ophthalmic Services: Digital Technology****Christian Wakeford:**[\[75175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to introduce digital tools for the (a) referral, (b) diagnosis and (c) management of patients with eye conditions in the NHS; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

The Eye Care Electronic Referral and Image Sharing programme has been jointly commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement and NHSX to deliver electronic referral management and image sharing which will facilitate improved management of patients with eye conditions. Implementation is currently being trialled with a small number of 'early adopters'.

■ **Osteoporosis: Disadvantaged****Rachael Maskell:**[\[75021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of levels of osteoporosis among people from lower socio-economic backgrounds; and what public health steps he is taking to tackle that condition among those groups.

Gillian Keegan:

No recent assessment has been made. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities was recently established within the Department to work with the National Health Service, local government, industry and partners to reduce health disparities and drive health improvement. Additionally, NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise the need for improved fracture prevention programmes to reduce regional and social inequalities in fracture incidence and outcome.

Integrated care systems are required to take a quality improvement approach to narrowing such health inequalities, implementing the five strategic priorities outlined in the 2021/22 Priorities and Operational Planning Guidance and aligning with the Core20PLUS strategy.

■ **Osteoporosis: Research****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[75058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to increase research funding for osteoporosis.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department's National Institute for Health Research welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including osteoporosis. However, it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

■ Osteoporosis: Screening**Rachael Maskell:****[75024]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether medical guidelines encourage medical professionals to recommend all people over the age of 50 who suffer a bone fracture to be scanned for osteoporosis.

Gillian Keegan:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published best practice clinical guidance on assessing and managing the risk of fragility fractures in people aged 18 years old and over with osteoporosis. The guidance recommends considering assessment of fracture risk in women aged under 65 years old and men aged under 75 years old in the presence of risk factors, such as a previous fragility fracture. The guidance, 'Osteoporosis: assessing the risk of fragility fracture', is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg146/resources/osteoporosis-assessing-the-risk-of-fragility-fracture-pdf-35109574194373>

NICE guidelines represent best practice and health and care professionals, including commissioners, are expected to take them fully into account in their decisions. However, these guidelines are not mandatory and do not replace the judgement of clinicians in determining the most appropriate treatment for individual patients.

■ Pregnancy: Mental Health Services**Tim Loughton:****[74884]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the £100 million announced for parent and infant mental health in the Spending Review 2021 will be spent on perinatal and/or infant mental health services within the NHS.

Gillian Keegan:

The investment will allow us to invest in a package of support for staff, training and interventions to support the social and emotional development of parents and infants from conception until a child's second birthday. Service provision varies across the country according to need, therefore local areas will be given the opportunity to tailor their perinatal and parent-infant mental health support offer. Provision is likely to be a combination of support for perinatal mental health and infant mental health. Further details on the process for allocating funding for these services will be confirmed in due course.

■ Primary Health Care

Jane Hunt: [\[76865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of further integration between all areas of primary care.

Edward Argar:

The NHS Long Term Plan described the role of Primary Care Networks, which establish a basis for more collaborative working, expanded capability and the ability to proactively co-ordinate care for neighbourhood-based populations. Primary care is an important part of integrated care systems and will continue to deliver care to local communities, in partnership with health and care services in the area. The Health and Care Bill will enable the direct commissioning functions of NHS England to be jointly commissioned, delegated or transferred at an appropriate time to integrated care boards.

■ Primary Health Care: Health and Social Care Levy

Mrs Flick Drummond: [\[75914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of funding raised by the Health and Social Care Levy will be allocated to supporting primary healthcare.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement will set out allocations to local systems through annual planning guidance in due course.

■ Remote Working: Mental Health

Jim Shannon: [\[75887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of increased levels of home working on people's mental health.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department has made no such assessment.

■ Social Services: Vacancies

Stephen Morgan: [\[76818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of vacancies in NHS social care settings.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department has made no such estimate.

■ Tobacco: Regulation

Alexander Stafford:

[\[76048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Office for Health Improvements and Disparities' investigation into possible breaches of the prohibition of characterising flavours in tobacco products, whether the testing of menthol cigarettes has been carried out; whether that investigation is on track for completion by the end of this year; and when he expects to announce the outcome of the investigation.

Maggie Throup:

The Office for Health Improvements and Disparities' testing of selected tobacco products, as part of the Department's investigation of possible breaches of the prohibition of menthol cigarettes, is ongoing. It is expected to continue into early 2022.

■ Tourette's Syndrome: Health Services

Holly Lynch:

[\[75038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve referral pathways and diagnostic rates for people with Tourette's Syndrome in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Gillian Keegan:

The majority of services for people with Tourette's syndrome are commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), who are best placed to plan the provision of services subject to local prioritisation and funding. Decisions on how to improve referral pathways and diagnostic rates for Tourette's syndrome will vary across individual CCGs located in the Yorkshire and Humber region, with each CCG taking into consideration attributes of its local population to assess the level of need.

At a national level, Health Education England is increasing the number of trained clinical psychologists, supporting a 60 per cent expansion in the clinical psychology training intake over the past two years. Clinical psychologists are well placed to develop new services and undertake bespoke development to respond to the needs of patients with Tourette's syndrome.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Andrew Percy:

[\[75864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government intends to add the Sputnik V Gamaleya covid-19 vaccine to the approved list of vaccines for the purposes of quarantine free travel to the United Kingdom.

Maggie Throup:

From 22 November, the United Kingdom will recognise vaccines listed on the World Health Organization's (WHO) Emergency Use Listing for quarantine free travel to the UK. Sputnik V Gamaleya is not currently on the WHO's Emergency Use List.

We continue to explore the expansion of our inbound vaccination policy to more countries and territories where it is safe to do so.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[78343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will update the NHS Covid-19 App with a QR code to enable children between the ages of 12 and 15 to provide evidence of their recent recovery from covid-19 so that they can travel overseas.

Maggie Throup:

The NHS COVID-19 App is primarily a contact tracing app which is available to those aged 16 years old and over. App users are anonymous so it cannot be used as proof of vaccination status. The NHS App provides access to a range of services including vaccination status and the NHS COVID pass.

There are no plans to allow children aged between 12 to 15 years old to provide evidence of their recent recovery for overseas travel. No countries recognise natural immunity as an exclusive qualifier for relaxed border measures. Where natural immunity is recognised, vaccination and/or testing are also always accepted. We are looking at ways for children aged 12 years old and over with two vaccinations to demonstrate their vaccination status for international travel. This will be available shortly, initially via an NHS COVID Pass travel letter. Further information will be made available in due course.

HOME OFFICE

■ Animal Experiments: Animal Welfare

Ruth Jones:

[76011]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of non-compliance cases reported in each of the last five years under the Animal Scientific Procedures Act 1986 were for the failure to provide food and/or water; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 24 November 2021]: The Home Office Regulator's annual reports from 2016 to 2018 are available at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/animals-in-science-regulation-unit-annual-reports.

From these reports, the Home Office can confirm that in 2016, eight cases (18% of total non-compliance cases) were related to the failure to provide appropriate care (including food, water and suitable facilities).

In 2017, eight cases (20% of total non-compliance cases) were related to the failure to provide appropriate care (including food, water and suitable facilities).

In 2018, eight cases (29% of total non-compliance cases) were related to the failure to provide appropriate care (including food, water and suitable facilities).

The data for 2019 and 2020 will soon be published in the Home Office Regulator's annual report.

Failing to provide sufficient food and/or water to animals, as part of basic husbandry and care, is unacceptable. Establishments must have robust procedures in place to ensure the adequate provision of food and water at all times to animals kept under the protection of ASPA.

The Home Office take any allegations regarding potential non-compliance with ASPA, the Code of Practice or individual licence conditions very seriously. The published Compliance Policy, found here: (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-testing-and-research-compliance-with-aspa>) explains how the Regulator identifies and investigates potential incidents of non-compliance and decides on appropriate and proportionate measures and remedies aimed to minimise the risk of recurrence.

■ **Animals in Science Regulation Unit: Annual Reports**

Ruth Jones:

[76010]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Animals in Science Regulation Unit annual reports for 2019 and 2020 will be published.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 24 November 2021]: The Home Office will publish the Animals in Science Regulation Unit annual reports for 2019 and 2020 in due course.

■ **Asylum: Appeals**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[76651]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are waiting to be removed from the UK having exhausted the appeals process in their asylum applications.

Kevin Foster:

Information regarding the number of failed asylum seekers still living in the UK can be found on tables ASY03 and RCM02 of the most recently published immigration and protection transparency data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-protection-data-q2-2021>

■ **Asylum: Deportation**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[76652]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who have been denied asylum have been removed from the UK in each of the last five years.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the number of returns from the UK in each quarter in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly release](#)'. The latest data on Asylum

related returns go to the end of March 2021 and are published in Ret_04 and Ret_05 of the [returns summary tables](#).

The Home Office seeks to return people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK, which includes people who:

- enter, or attempt to enter, the UK illegally (including people entering clandestinely and by means of deception on entry);
- overstay their period of legal right to remain in the UK;
- breach their conditions of leave;
- are subject to deportation action; for example, due to a serious criminal conviction and
- have been refused asylum.

■ Asylum: Local Government

Navendu Mishra:

[\[76844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether additional funding will be made available to local authorities with higher placements of asylum seekers.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office is working on an agreed change plan in partnership with Local Authority Chief Executives through the Home Office Local Government Chief Executive Group.

The plan seeks to achieve a more equitable dispersal of asylum seekers across the UK and seeks to overcome barriers to ensure availability of service provision.

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

■ Community Safety Partnerships: Hertfordshire

Daisy Cooper:

[\[76031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) police officers and (b) total members of staff have been working for each Community Safety Partnership in Hertfordshire for each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the size of the police workforce in England and Wales on a biannual basis in the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, available here: [Police workforce England and Wales statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

However, data are collected at Police Force Area (PFA) level only, and information on officer and staff numbers working in specific Community Safety Partnerships are not held centrally.

■ Entry Clearances: Ethiopia

Caroline Lucas:

[\[76639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of (a) expediting visa applications and (b) reconsidering applications for asylum for Ethiopian nationals in response to the political and security situation in that country.

Kevin Foster:

Visa services in Ethiopia are currently available as usual and visa application centres remain open to accept applications. Individual applications raised which include a compassionate or compelling element will be considered on a case by case basis and may be expedited.

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations. While we do not allow asylum claims from abroad, all asylum claims lodged from within the UK are given full and careful consideration and in line with published policy.

Asylum claims by Ethiopian nationals are considered in the same way as claims from any other nationality. We do not believe it is appropriate to prioritise claims from one nationality over another as many claimants, irrespective of nationality, are potentially vulnerable and no one is expected to leave the UK while they have a claim outstanding.

■ Judicial Review

Stephen Farry:

[\[76046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many judicial review proceedings there are in respect of her Department; and if she will provide a breakdown of the number of judicial reviews being heard in (a) England and Wales's Upper Tribunal, (b) Scotland's Outer House of the Court of Session and (c) Northern Ireland's High Court.

Kit Malthouse:

The total number of cases as a breakdown of cases in different courts is not held centrally for England and Wales

In relation to Scotland there are 95 active Home Office judicial review cases in the Outer House of the Court of Session.

In relation to Northern Ireland there are 46 active Home Office judicial review cases.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largan:

[\[76043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 1 September 2021, referenced RL26044.

Victoria Atkins:

The Minister of State for Afghan Resettlement will respond shortly.

■ **Nationality and Borders Bill**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[77378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the Nationality and Borders Bill on the human rights of those seeking asylum under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

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 Bill complies with the European Convention on Human Rights and the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Gill Furniss:

[\[77493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason it would not be reasonably practicable for notice to be given to a person to be deprived of citizenship under clause 9 of the Nationality and Borders Bill.

Tom Pursglove:

Clause 9 of the Nationality and Borders Bill amends section 40 of the British Nationality Act 1981 to allow a decision to deprive a person of British citizenship to be implemented in the absence of contact with a person, in specified circumstances, including where it is not reasonably practicable to give notice.

The reasons why it may not be reasonably practicable to give notice could include where the Home Office knows the address of an individual, but the postal service in the country does not function, private couriers do not operate, or the security situation prohibits an official serving notice in person.

■ **Protest: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[76794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that (a) if drones are used by the police to monitor protests that protesters are aware that aerial surveillance will be taking place, and (b) should government agencies wish to use drones for covert surveillance that authorisation will only be given when necessary and proportionate.

Kit Malthouse:

Decisions to use drones and in what circumstances, are operational matters for police forces who, when operating drones, are subject to the requirements of the Air Navigation Order and data protection law, including the need to provide data protection impact assessments.

Covert surveillance activities of public authorities are governed by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 and Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act (RIPSA) 2000. Authorisation for using drones for covert surveillance is

therefore considered by agencies on a case by case basis, in accordance with the requirements of RIPA.

■ **Refugees: Afghanistan**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[75850]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that the cases of constituents' family members raised by hon. Members are considered under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[75851]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cases of (a) individuals and (b) family groups with a noted connection to West Ham constituency her Department is monitoring for inclusion within the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme is not yet open and remains under development.

As set out in the 'Dear colleague' letter to MP's in September, the circumstances in Afghanistan are such that information regarding constituents' friends and family members is not possible to obtain or may change very quickly. Regrettably, the Home Office is therefore unable to provide a response to correspondence relating to individuals still in Afghanistan.

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.

Claire Hanna:

[76041]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress she has made on the opening of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme is not yet open and remains under development. Officials are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme. 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.

■ Refugees: Resettlement

Tim Farron:

[73797]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding was allocated to the UK Resettlement Scheme for (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2021-22.

Kevin Foster:

The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) was announced in 2019 and was due to launch in April 2020. However, due to the pandemic and the associated resettlement pause (between March 2020 and December 2020), the scheme launched in March 2021 following the completion of Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

The overall funding package for UKRS includes a year one tariff of £8,520 per refugee resettled, for direct local authority costs. The package also includes additional support for educational and medical needs.

The Government also provides additional ESOL funding to enhance the English language skills of adults to improve their resettlement and integration experience and employability. Funding for years two-five is also allocated on a tariff basis, tapering from £5,000 per refugee in year two, to £1,000 per refugee in year five. Additionally, there is an exceptional cases fund to assist the most vulnerable refugees.

Overall, this is a substantial level of funding which enables local authorities to support the vulnerable refugees they resettle as they rebuild their lives in safe and secure surroundings, among supportive communities in the UK.

■ Schools: EU Countries

Wera Hobhouse:

[76781]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 70295 on Schools: EU Countries, what were the results of the impact assessment of the potential impact of the UK's new immigration rules on the number of school trips from the EU to the UK.

Kevin Foster:

Further to the answer given on 15 November 2021, the Impact Assessment can be viewed here:

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

■ TNT Express: Passports

Daisy Cooper:

[78503]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport deliveries, despatched by her Department's contracted courier service TNT, were not delivered within five days.

Kevin Foster:

The performance of Her Majesty's Passport Office's supplier for UK secure delivery services, FedEx (the parent company of TNT), is measured against a 24-hour service level for urgent services, or a 48-hour service level for standard applications, only.

The attached table provides the data of unsuccessful deliveries against these service levels between January and October 2021:

		% & VOLUMES OUTSIDE OF TARGET
24-hour	48-hour	
Jan 21	0.41 / (204)	0.60 / (2465)
Feb 21	0.10 / (48)	0.49 / (1718)
Mar 21	0.08 / (39)	0.48 / (2423)
Apr 21	0.08 / (34)	0.39 / (1633)
May 21	0.05 / (23)	0.19 / (914)
Jun 21	0.16 / (85)	0.39 / (1455)
Jul 21	0.07 / (34)	0.12 / (469)
Aug 21	0.07 / (41)	0.39 / (5989)
Sep 21	0.39 / (260)	1.61 / (7282)

		% & VOLUMES OUTSIDE OF TARGET
Oct 21	0.10 / (66)	0.17 / (816)

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Asylum

Philip Davies:

[\[76623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason people who have been refused asylum are able to access accommodation and other financial support from UK Visas and Immigration.

Kevin Foster:

In order to fulfil our statutory obligations to meet minimum standards for failed asylum seekers, individuals are eligible to receive support under section 4(2) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 provided they meet conditions set out in the Immigration and Asylum (Provisions of Accommodation to Failed Asylum-Seekers) Regulations 2005.

The regulations require the individuals to show they are destitute and they are taking reasonable steps to leave the UK or face a practical or legal obstacle which prevents their departure.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Tim Farron:

[\[76633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the nationalities of all individuals who have arrived in the UK after crossing the English Channel in small boats since 1 January 2021.

Tom Pursglove:

Home Office statisticians are currently developing systems to publish statistics on small boats and will confirm these plans in the near future.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[76654\]](#)

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

Tom Pursglove:

I refer the Honourable Gentleman to the answer that I gave him on this matter on 28 October. I reiterate that these crossings are dangerous and unnecessary, and that we are determined to bring them to an end and to tackle the criminality behind them.

This is part of a wider European and global migration issue and we expect our international partners to engage with us to stop people making perilous crossings. We continue to work closely with France and other countries to make these crossings unviable, but we are clear that more needs to be done.

We welcome French Interior Minister Darmanin's suggestion that 100% of crossings could be prevented with the help of the UK's recent £54m package of support. That package is strengthening law enforcement deployments along the coast of France, more than doubling again equipped police resource focused on addressing illegal migration; it is enhancing intelligence-sharing and making greater use of surveillance technology; and it is supporting more border security at key transport infrastructure along the Channel coast.

Nearly 20,000 crossings have been prevented this year despite the number of attempts almost trebling. So far this year there have been 46 arrests made by Immigration Enforcement of those involved in facilitating these crossings. There have been 9 convictions, attracting over 17 years in custodial sentences. Recognising that much of the criminality involved lies outside of the UK, we are also supporting wider law enforcement activity to tackle the threat of organised immigration crime. Between July 2020 and October 2021, the Joint Intelligence Cell has been involved in over 400 arrests relating to small boats activity in France, and has seen 17 organised crime groups involved in Channel crossings dismantled.

Tragically, we have seen a number of people lost at sea in recent weeks attempting these crossings. As I have said previously, we must ensure that those involved in people smuggling are punished with the severity it rightly deserves. The Nationality and Borders Bill ([Nationality and Borders Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023) (<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>)) will enable this and will also act as a much stronger deterrent for those tempted to pursue that despicable path. These long overdue reforms will break the business model of the criminal trafficking networks and make their activities unviable.

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

■ Undocumented Migrants: Housing

John Redwood:

[77354]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the 2020-21 budget is for housing illegal migrants.

Tom Pursglove:

Accommodation costs are commercially confidential; therefore, the Home Office does not publish this information.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Department for International Trade: Telephone Services

Emily Thornberry: [\[75846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the contract agreed by her Department on 26 August 2021 for provision of an Export Support Services Contact Centre, how many Perkbox points were awarded to contact centre staff in recognition of their performance against the contract's requirements between 1 October and 12 November 2021.

Mike Freer:

This information is not available to the Department for publication.

Emily Thornberry: [\[75847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the contract agreed by her Department on 26 August 2021 for provision of an Export Support Services Contact Centre, if she will publish (a) the written contents of the knowledge bank used by contact centre staff to assist callers and (b) all prepared scripts and prompts used by staff to handle calls, as of 12 November 2021.

Mike Freer:

All the information used is already publicly available.

■ Healthcare UK: Randox Laboratories and SEEK

Emily Thornberry: [\[78371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether Healthcare UK has provided export-promotion or business services to (a) Randox, (b) Seek Group and (c) PepTCell Ltd since January 2019.

Mike Freer:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 18 November to Question UIN: 74914.

■ UK Export Finance: Recruitment

Emily Thornberry: [\[75849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what public expenditure was allocated for the hiring of (a) interim managers, (b) specialist contractors and (c) temporary members of staff by UK Export Finance through the public sector resourcing framework managed by Alexander Mann Solutions Ltd in financial years (i) 2018-19, (ii) 2019-20, (iii) 2020-21, and (iv) 2021-22 up to the end of October 2021.

Mike Freer:

UKEF has allocated budget for the hiring of (a) interim managers, (b) specialist contractors and (c) temporary members. However, it should be noted that UKEF has not allocated a budget specifically to the public sector resourcing framework, which is managed by Alexander Mann Solutions Ltd.

The table below shows UKEF's total off-payroll staff costs, including those relating to UKEF's engagement via Alexander Mann Solutions Ltd.

FINANCIAL YEAR	(A) INTERIM MANAGERS	(B) SPECIALIST CONTRACTORS	(C) TEMPORARY STAFF
2018/19	£675,168	£1,647,676	£64,008
2019/20	£689,532	£796,051	£141,192
2020/21	£1,342,236	£838,958	£148,836
2021/22 (up to end of Oct 21)	£975,294	£682,955	£70,780

JUSTICE

■ **Bronzefield Prison: Self-harm**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[75857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, published on 16 November 2021, what steps he is taking to reduce levels of self-harm at HMP/YOI Bronzefield.

Victoria Atkins:

As part of the wider Safer Prisons Strategy, HMP Bronzefield has introduced a 'Wellbeing Hub' which enables prisoners to constructively express their emotions and develop self-help coping strategies in a dedicated therapeutic and calming environment.

We are working closely with the provider, Sodexo, and a number of initiatives are due to be introduced as part of their self-harm strategy, including multi-disciplinary psychologically informed case management of prisoners displaying prolific self-harming behaviours, new receptions seen in reception by the safer custody team, and the provision of psychological support for staff to help manage their emotional response to self-harming behaviours.

■ **Dic Penderyn**

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[76058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will conduct a review of the case for recommending a pardon for Dic Penderyn.

Tom Pursglove:

There are no current plans to review this case.

■ Offenders: Behaviour Disorders

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [74907]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the (a) impact of defendant neurodiversity in convictions deemed unsafe on appeal and (b) prevalence of defendant neurodiversity in collapsed trials.

James Cartlidge:

Information on defendant neurodiversity is not collected. Information on trial outcomes can be found at [National statistics overview: Criminal court statistics quarterly: April to June 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-statistics-overview-criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2021)

■ Prisoners' Release: Homelessness

Ms Lyn Brown: [75854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, published on 16 November 2021, what steps he is taking to evaluate the impact of the shift in the model for provision of accommodation support services on (a) rough sleeping, (b) homelessness and (c) housing insecurity for prison leavers.

Ms Lyn Brown: [75856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, published on 16 November 2021, what proportion of sentenced prison leavers from HMP/YOI Bronzefield were released without safe and secure accommodation in (a) February 2020 and (b) July 2021.

Ms Lyn Brown: [75858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, what budget was allocated to housing support services at HMP/YOI Bronzefield in (a) February 2020 and (b) July 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

The new Commissioned Rehabilitative Services went live on 26 June. HMPPS Contract Managers are overseeing the effective embedding of these new contracts and will robustly monitor the performance of providers. Although we are still in the early days of the new contracted provision, we are committed to ensuring that those within our care, including those in custody, receive the support they need to address their rehabilitative and resettlement needs, including through support into Accommodation.

The Probation Service has a new target of housing 90% of prison leavers following their release. We will monitor outcomes and support prison and probation staff to work effectively with other providers to achieve this target. To support this, we have placed a specific focus on improving the consistency and accuracy of data recorded so housing needs can be identified. This includes a new requirement for 'Accommodation Planned on Release' to be recorded three months prior to release, so Community Probation Practitioners and Homelessness Prevention Teams can

take proactive steps before release with prison leavers at risk of homelessness, including Referral to Local Housing Authorities and working with partners and providers.

In terms of the proportion of sentenced prison leavers from HMP & YOI Bronzefield aged 18 years and over released without safe and secure accommodation, the proportion for February 2020 was 58.3%. Accommodation outcomes for July 2021 are due to be published as part of the Community Performance series for 2021/22 and Prison Performance Ratings for 2021/22 both due to be released in July 2022.

A direct financial comparison between accommodation and housing support services at HMP & YOI Bronzefield before and after 26 June 2021 is not possible because of differences in the way that accommodation support is now provided. The new model in place from 26 June onwards is based on a specialist provider of Women's Services offering a holistic service, which includes addressing a wide range of issues women face including meeting their accommodation needs and supporting their transition from custody to community. The previous model made use of accommodation support delivered in the prison which supported women up to the point of release.

Additional resource has been introduced through the new specialist housing advisor role in up to twenty prisons, including HMP & YOI Bronzefield. The new role will strengthen links between prisons, resettlement staff and local authorities to improve accommodation outcomes for those at risk of homelessness.

In relation to HMP & YOI Bronzefield specifically, an additional accommodation support worker is being recruited to provide further support to the significant proportion of women who are released to the London area.

■ Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles

Ms Lyn Brown:

[75852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to amend the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 to enable drone jamming technology to be used in prisons in England and Wales.

Victoria Atkins:

The Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021 gave HMPPS new powers to authorise the use of counter-drone technology, such as electronic radio frequency jamming devices that interfere with property or wireless telegraphy. Jamming' technology is a valuable tool in our security response to tackle the threat of drones to our prisons. We also deploy drone detection equipment in our prisons.

We are working hard to deter, detect and disrupt the illegal use of drones. We conduct assessments across the prison estate to understand risk and implement targeted countermeasures such as improved cell windows that make it harder for items to be smuggled in, netting to stop drones from entering prisons, as well as tech-based solutions.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[75853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) Home Secretary and (b) Secretary of State for Transport on the (i) efficacy and (ii) future development of the Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Strategy in relation to the illicit use of drones around prisons in England and Wales.

Victoria Atkins:

The Ministry of Justice is working hard to deter, detect and disrupt the illegal use of drones around prisons. My department worked with the Home Office and the Department for Transport to develop the UK Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Strategy (2019). The strategy aims to reduce the risk posed by the highest-harm illegal use of drones. In May of this year, we enacted the Air Traffic and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021 (ATUMA). This Act gave new powers to the police including to order a pilot to ground a drone, stop and search people and vehicles, obtain a warrant to search property and, intercept and seize a drone where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting a drone has or is likely to be involved in an offence.

The strategy is due for review next year and, through the cross-government Counter Drones Board, my officials are engaged in ongoing discussions to ensure that the strategy addresses the efficacy of new and existing counter-drone technology, and future options to help tackle the threat posed by drones to our prisons – namely the conveyance of contraband.

■ **Women's Prisons: Security**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[75855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bronzefield, published on 16 November 2021, whether he plans to implement enhanced gate security measures at any women's prison in England.

Victoria Atkins:

There are no immediate plans to introduce Enhanced Gate Security (EGS) in the women's estate. EGS measures provide technical and drug dog aided searching for all staff and visitors to a prison. These have been in place in the high security estate for some years and are now being introduced into 42 adult male prisons under the £100m Security Investment Programme. Sites were prioritised on the basis of conveyance risk associated with prison function, with further prioritisation on the basis of feasibility and value for money.

■ **Young Offenders: Sanitary Protection**

Laura Farris:

[\[76040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of enabling young offender institutions to access free period products.

Victoria Atkins:

All women's prisons provide free sanitary products, however, prisoners can also purchase branded items from the canteen provision. The provision of free sanitary products also extends to any under 18 girls in the Youth Custody Young Offenders Estate. The Early days in custody Prison Service Instruction, 07/2015, also states that prisoners should be given any items required to meet essential personal needs for their first 24 hours in custody.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**Affordable Housing****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[75960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will commit to reforming public sector land policy to ensure that affordable housing can be delivered more quickly.

Christopher Pincher:

Work has begun on a new, ambitious cross-Government Estates strategy to look at how public sector land can be managed and released so it can be put to better use. This will include home building, improving the environment, contributing to net-zero goals and injecting growth opportunities into communities across the country.

National Planning Policy Framework sets out that it is for local authorities to assess the housing needs of different groups, including those who require affordable housing, and to reflect this in their planning policies

Buildings: Carbon Emissions**Rachael Maskell:**[\[75928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps in the forthcoming planning Bill to ensure that all new developments, both domestic and commercial are carbon negative.

Rachael Maskell:[\[75929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will require all local plans to be carbon negative.

Christopher Pincher:

The Secretary of State is currently considering the best way forward on planning reforms and we will announce next steps as soon as possible.

As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, published on 19 October, 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 (NPPF) to make sure it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation as fully as possible. The NPPF already makes clear that plans should take a proactive approach

to mitigating and adapting to climate change in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008.

We are also taking action to ensure the homes we build are fit for the future through the Future Homes Standard and the 2021 interim uplift to the energy efficiency standards for new homes.

■ Companies: Political Parties

Jon Trickett: [\[75809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing measures to require that any private or public company that makes a political donation or loan must be able to demonstrate that it generates sufficient income from UK trading to fund any contribution it makes.

Jon Trickett: [\[75810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing measures to require any private company that makes a political donation or loan to declare their ultimate beneficial ownership and be able to demonstrate that their owners would be permissible donors if they had given the same money directly.

Kemi Badenoch:

Under the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000, political parties and regulated donees have a legal obligation to ensure that they only receive donations from permissible sources – and in the case of companies, that they are properly carrying on business in the UK. Companies must be registered with Companies House and incorporated in the UK. Corporate donations amounting to over £5,000 in any twelve month period must also be authorised via a company resolution.

The Electoral Commission already produces guidance which helps campaigners understand if a donor is permissible. This includes detailed guidance on verifying that a company is legitimately ‘carrying on business’.

Notwithstanding, the Government is supportive of the principle of further guidance to promote best practice and support campaigners in taking a risk-based approach.

■ Construction: Materials

Neil Coyle: [\[75899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the extent of the continued use of combustible materials in building materials.

Neil Coyle:

[75900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many buildings of five storeys or more that have been completed in each of the last four years are known to have combustible cladding and other materials in or on the building.

Christopher Pincher:

Information on the number of high-rise (over 18 metres) residential and publicly-owned buildings with ACM cladding systems unlikely to meet Building Regulations is available in the [Building Safety Programme data release](#).

For high-rise residential buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding, the Department is continuing to work with building owners to progress applications for the Building Safety Fund at pace so more remedial works can begin as swiftly as possible.

Information on the Building Safety Fund can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registration-statistics>

We have begun a pilot data collection project for 11-18 metre residential buildings to identify materials in use and to inform the design of a wider national 11-18 metre data collection exercise. We will publish further details as soon as possible.

In January 2020, we consulted on the proposal to extend the ban of the use of combustible materials in and on the external walls of buildings. We continue to review and analyse the numerous and detailed responses we have received and develop our proposal. We will publish a response to the consultation as soon as possible.

■ Elections: Campaigns

Jon Trickett:

[75813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing measures which extend the imprint rules to digital communications in order for digital campaign material to have an imprint saying who is behind the campaign and who created it.

Kemi Badenoch:

Voters value transparency and that is why the Elections Bill introduces a digital imprints regime so that when voters engage with politics online they are clear who is promoting the campaign material and on whose behalf.

Reflecting positive feedback to the technical consultation *Transparency in digital campaigning* launched by the Cabinet Office last year, the digital imprints regime proposed as part of the Elections Bill will go much further than the current imprint rules for printed material, further increasing transparency and empowering voters to make informed decisions about the digital campaign material they are viewing online.

A digital imprint must include the name and address of the promoter of the material and the name and address of any person or organisation on behalf of whom the material is being promoted. Breaching the digital imprint rules will be an offence and

the Electoral Commission and police will have shared responsibility for the enforcement of the regime.

■ **Housing: Construction**

Richard Fuller:

[\[75861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has plans to encourage the (a) construction of bungalows and (b) increase of the supply of those homes into the new build market; and whether he has plans to undertake an assessment of the impact on the housing market of the lack of bungalows for sale.

Christopher Pincher:

As set out in our National Planning Policy Framework, local authorities should already assess the types of homes needed for different groups within their community and reflect this in their local planning policies.

We continue to drive up the supply of new homes, by diversifying the market, including tenures and types of homes; investing in affordable housing; and increasing land supply for new homes by investing in infrastructure.

■ **Housing: Sandymoor**

Mike Amesbury:

[\[75997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Sandymoor development on local (a) roads, (b) schools, (c) doctors surgeries and (d) other amenities and infrastructure.

Mike Amesbury:

[\[75999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made on the potential flood risk of the Sandymoor development.

Mike Amesbury:

[\[76000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential impact on (a) biodiversity and (b) the wider local environment of the Sandymoor development.

Christopher Pincher:

I am unable to comment on specific cases as to do so may prejudice my position at a later stage should the case be called-in.

Halton Borough Council, as the local planning, highways and lead local flood authority, will consider the impact of any new development on existing infrastructure, potential flood risk management and environmental impacts, including on biodiversity, setting policies through their Local Plan and as part of their role in determining planning applications.

Environmental protection is at the heart of national planning policy, setting clear expectations about biodiversity net gain and the provision of green infrastructure

when new development is planned. Biodiversity net gain will be made mandatory for most new development through the implementation of the 2021 Environment Act.

Homes England, the Government's housing agency, will consider the benefits and impacts of the proposed development at Sandymoor in their planning applications and supporting Flood Risk Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment. The planning application will then be considered by Halton Borough Council following the regular process for planning decisions.

■ **Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus**

Catherine West: [\[77490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to ensure the timely delivery by local authorities of the Covid-19 business rates additional relief fund.

Catherine West: [\[77491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing uniform criteria for the distribution of the Business Rates: Covid-19 additional relief fund.

Catherine West: [\[77492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to publish guidance for local authorities on the Business Rates: Covid-19 additional relief fund; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

[Holding answer 23 November 2021]: The Government announced a £1.5 billion pot of additional business rates relief for properties affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that have not otherwise been eligible for support linked to business rates. 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. Local authorities will use their knowledge of local businesses and the local economy to make awards.

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. The Government will support local authorities to do this as quickly as possible, including through new burdens funding.

■ **Organisations: Political Parties**

Jon Trickett: [\[75811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing measures to require unincorporated associations that make political contributions in a year totalling above £7,500 or above to report gifts received above £7,500.

Kemi Badenoch:

Unincorporated associations making political contributions of more than £25,000 in a calendar year must notify the Electoral Commission and are then subsequently subject to various reporting requirements relating to their own funding. Members' associations (many of which are unincorporated associations) are separately regulated as regulated donees and must report on donations and loans they receive. The rules are outlined at: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/unincorporated-associations>.

■ **Political Parties: Finance****Jon Trickett:**[\[75812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will consult on the maximum fine the Electoral Commission can impose on individuals and organisations for breaking political finance rules.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Electoral Commission may impose monetary penalties of up to £20,000 per offence. Criminal matters can be referred to the police. The courts may levy unlimited fines and custodial sentences for some offences, as laid out in the Political Parties Elections and Referendum Act 2000 (as amended).

NORTHERN IRELAND■ **Northern Ireland Office: Meetings****Owen Thompson:**[\[76761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what his Department's process is for (a) recording and (b) keeping minutes of all meetings relating to Government business.

Conor Burns:

Formal, structured meetings are usually minuted, however, not all meetings need to be minuted. It is expected that the general guidance that departments give to their staff will help officials make judgements as to what meetings need to be minuted, noting their Civil Service Code obligation to 'keep accurate official records.'

Specific procedures are in place for external meetings involving ministers. These are publicly available and can be found in the [Guidance on the management of Private Office Papers](#).

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Staff****Robert Largin:**[\[78534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many civil servants employed by his Department were based in each of the 12 NUTS1 UK regions on (a) 1 March 2021, (b) 1 June 2021 and (c) 1 September 2021.

Conor Burns:

The number of Civil Servants employed by the Northern Ireland Office based in each of the NUTS1 UK regions on (a) 1 March 2021 can be found in the published National Statistics, [Civil Service Statistics](#), as at 31 March 2021.

The numbers for (b) 1 June 2021 and (c) 1 September 2021 are shown below.

	1 JUNE 2021	1 SEPTEMBER 2021
Northern Ireland	88	89
England (London UK1)	80	81
Scotland	0	0
Wales	0	0

PRIME MINISTER**■ WAG First Minister**

Ruth Jones:

[\[79474\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he last met the First Minister of Wales.

Boris Johnson:

I last met the First Minister of Wales on 2 November at the Welcome to Glasgow COP26 event.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Fuels**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[78368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent meetings (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have had with relevant stakeholders at which the phase out of tetraethyl lead as an additive in aviation fuel was discussed.

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[78369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have received on the phase out of tetraethyl lead as an additive in aviation fuel; and from which organisations or companies those representations were made.

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[78370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) representations from or (b) discussions with Innospec Ltd (i) he or (ii) officials in his Department have had about the phase out of tetraethyl lead as an additive in aviation fuel.

Robert Courts:

This is a global issue since nearly all commercial flight training involves fuel incorporating TEL since it reduces the risk of engine misfires with potentially serious consequences for aircraft safety. The use of fuel incorporating TEL is widespread across many countries' GA sectors, including the United States and many European countries, where it is the dominant fuel used for piston engine aircraft.

The Department for the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs leads the development of the UK REACH alongside the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). My officials engaged with them to understand the legal status of TEL in the EU, as well as to understand how the UK REACH regulations would work. No country globally has banned TEL. The HSE recently announced that they would not include TEL in their list of authorised chemicals under the UK REACH as they judged that with intensive efforts already ongoing to find a substitute, additional regulatory pressure is unlikely to speed this up keeping the UK in line with the EU, but would revisit this when substitutes had been tested and certified.

Aside from noting whether TEL would be assessed for inclusion in Annex 14 of UK REACH, neither my officials, myself nor the Secretary of State have engaged either organisation to influence their decision.

In response to an enquiry by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association about the future of 100LL the Secretary of State asked his officials to speed up work on finding safe alternative unleaded fuel such as UL91. This is highly technical safety work involving the FAA, EASA and engine manufacturers in which the UK seeks to play a leading part.

■ Crossrail Line**Sir David Evennett:**[\[77388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Mayor of London and TfL on the timescale for Crossrail being fully operational.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has regular discussions with the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL) on a wide range of transport matters, including Crossrail.

TfL, as future operator of the railway, has stated that Crossrail remains on track to open to the central section of the Elizabeth Line (Paddington to Abbey Wood) in the first half 2022 and that the full introduction of Crossrail services east to west (Heathrow/Reading to Abbey Wood) is expected no later than May 2023.

■ Department for Transport: Staff**Robert Largan:**[\[78526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many civil servants employed by his Department were based in each of the 12 NUTS1 UK regions on (a) 1 March 2021, (b) 1 June 2021 and (c) 1 September 2021.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

DFT and its Agencies have staff located across the country with a commitment to increase our presence outside of London

(a) 1 March 2021

Given the closeness of the 1 March reference date to that used for the published National Statistics, this is the data source used for this request. The full data set can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2021>

and includes information on the regional distribution of civil servants as at 31 March.

REGION	HEADCOUNT
East Midlands	650
East of England	400
London	3440
North East	360
North West	450
Northern Ireland	40
Scotland	460
South East	1490
South West	770
Wales	6900
West Midlands	460
Yorkshire and The Humber	550

(b) 1 June 2021

REGION	HEADCOUNT
East Midlands	591
East of England	396
London	3490
North East	376
North West	461
Northern Ireland	40

REGION	HEADCOUNT
Scotland	458
South East	1490
South West	780
Wales	6811
West Midlands	552
Yorkshire and The Humber	557

(c) 1 September 2021.

REGION	HEADCOUNT
East Midlands	594
East of England	393
London	3494
North East	383
North West	464
Northern Ireland	41
Scotland	475
South East	1482
South West	774
Wales	6800
West Midlands	581
Yorkshire and The Humber	581

■ Driving Licences

Chris Elmore:

[75959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has of the scale of (a) backlogs and (b) processing delays within the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online services are the quickest and easiest way to make an application. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their documents within a few days. However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application and the DVLA receives 60,000 items of mail every day. The latest information on turnaround times for paper applications can be found [here](#).

The DVLA has introduced additional online services, recruited more staff, increased overtime working and has secured extra office space in Swansea and Birmingham to help reduce waiting times while providing future resilience and business continuity.

These measures are having a positive impact. In particular, the focus on vocational driving licence applications to support dealing with the HGV driver shortage has been successful with routine vocational applications now back to normal turnaround times. Backlogs are also reducing in other areas.

Sam Tarry:[\[76860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to help DVLA reduce the backlog of applications for driving licences.

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 and the DVLA receives 60,000 items of mail each day. 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.

These measures are having a positive impact. In particular, the focus on vocational driving licence applications to support the HGV driver shortage has been successful with routine vocational applications now being processed within normal turnaround times. Backlogs are also reducing in other areas.

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.

I am pleased to say that the speed of reducing the number of paper applications awaiting processing will be improved by the recent positive news that the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) did not reach the minimum threshold of a 50 per cent turnout in its recent ballot of members to continue industrial action.

■ East Coast Railway Line: Finance

Andrew Percy: [\[78386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much of the £96 billion Integrated Rail Plan is for upgrading the East Cost Mainline.

Andrew Stephenson:

Within the £96bn set out in the Integrated Rail Plan, up to £3.5 billion has been allowed for upgrading the East Coast Main Line (within the East Core Network figure)

■ High Speed Two: Compulsory Purchase

John Healey: [\[78354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 74893, how many residential properties were acquired through Statutory Discretion Schemes by constituency.

John Healey: [\[78355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 74893, how much HS2 Ltd spent to acquire the 609 residential properties through Statutory and Discretionary Schemes.

Andrew Stephenson:

To date, HS2 Ltd has spent £199,179,925 on all acquisitions for Phase 2b. This figure is based on purchase price only of land and property acquisitions between 2014 and the end of October 2021 acquired through statutory and discretionary schemes. HS2 Ltd does not record how many residential properties have been acquired, as a property can have mixed usage.

Jon Trickett: [\[78356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made for the number of people residing in Hemsworth constituency who sold their homes after receiving a compulsory purchase order relating to HS2.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 Ltd does not have compulsory purchase powers for the Phase 2b scheme. These are conferred by an Act of Parliament authorising the construction of each phase of HS2. Therefore, HS2 Ltd has not acquired, nor is in the process of acquiring, any properties in the Hemsworth constituency under such powers.

Jon Trickett: [\[78357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has made for the provision of legal advice and financial support to people who have already sold their homes after receiving a compulsory purchase order relating to the now cancelled Phase 2b of HS2

Andrew Stephenson:

No compulsory purchase orders have been issued in relation to Phase 2b of HS2. Where property has been acquired for HS2 Phase 2b, we have paid full

compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code and the additional schemes that go beyond what the law requires and which we have set up as part of the HS2 programme. The HS2 Ltd Helpdesk is available to assist anyone who owns property on the route and is uncertain about their next steps.

■ **Hydrogen: Charging Stations**

Mike Kane:

[\[76702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the (a) coverage and (b) accessibility of hydrogen filling stations in the UK.

Trudy Harrison:

Hydrogen is likely to be fundamental to achieving the full decarbonisation of UK transport. Our £23 million Hydrogen Transport Programme has supported the building of three new refuelling stations, with a further three planned; as well as upgrades to two existing stations, with a further four upgrades planned. As of September 2021, there are fifteen publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations across the UK which provide hydrogen suitable for use by vehicles.

Our £20 million Zero Emission Road Freight Trials (ZERFT) are looking at hydrogen refuelling infrastructure in the UK. The trials will inform which technology, or technologies, are best suited for use in the UK and help to clarify our understanding and identify the potential barriers to the installation of refuelling infrastructure, so that these can be addressed before rollout.

■ **Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences**

Royston Smith:

[\[75931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many HGV licence renewal applications his Department has received each month between November 2020 and October 2021.

Royston Smith:

[\[75932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many HGV licence renewal applications were awaiting processing each month between November 2020 and October 2021.

Royston Smith:

[\[75933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many HGV licence renewal applications his Department has processed each month between November 2020 and October 2021.

Royston Smith:

[\[75934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that HGV licence renewals application are processed accurately.

Trudy Harrison:

Information on the number of HGV licence renewal applications received or awaiting processing each month between November 2020 and October 2021 is not held. This

is because it is not possible to distinguish between HGV and other vocational licence applications until they have been processed.

The table below shows the number of HGV licence renewal applications processed each month between November 2020 and October 2021 where full or provisional HGV entitlement (Category C and/or CE) has been renewed. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has focused extra resource on vocational driving licence applications to support the driver shortage. This has been successful with routine applications for vocational driving licences, including for HGVs, now being processed within normal turnaround times of five working days. It may take longer to process cases where medical investigations are needed.

MONTH	VOLUMES
November 2020	12,302
December 2020	10,078
January 2021	15,617
February 2021	13,710
March 2021	13,980
April 2021	11,247
May 2021	11,412
June 2021	11,392
July 2021	13,312
August 2021	12,964
September 2021	15,959
October 2021	25,559

The DVLA has accuracy checking measures in place, including regular supervisory checks on vocational renewal applications. DVLA staff are issued with comprehensive operating instructions which are updated regularly and receive clear communications about any changes to processing requirements.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies

Sam Tarry:

[76859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to provide further support to the DVLA in helping to reduce the shortage of HGV drivers.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency has focused extra resource on vocational driving licence applications to support the driver shortage. This has been successful with routine applications for vocational driving licences, including for HGVs, now being processed within normal turnaround times of five working days. The DVLA has recently processed more than 40,000 applications for vocational licences in just 25 working days. It may take longer to process cases where medical investigations are needed.

On 15 November, legislation came into force to remove the requirement for HGV drivers to obtain entitlement to drive rigid lorries before being able to take a test to drive articulated lorries. This has streamlined the licensing process with the aim of getting fully qualified HGV drivers on the road as soon as possible.

Gerald Jones:[\[78461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to tackle the shortage of HGV drivers; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing drivers to convert HGV licences obtained in Australia, and other countries, for use in the UK.

Trudy Harrison:

We have taken decisive action to address the acute HGV driver shortage, with 30 specific measures taken by the Government already. These include providing support and training for new HGV drivers, expanding HGV driver testing capacity and improving licencing processes. We are also investing £32.5 million in improving roadside facilities for hauliers. We will continue to encourage the road haulage industry to make employment as an HGV driver more attractive.

The exchange of HGV licences for a UK equivalent is dependent on training, testing and licensing standards in the issuing country being equivalent to those in the UK. Applications for recognition are subject to assessment of testing and licensing standards, public consultation, introduction of legislation and agreement of reciprocity. Currently only EU/EEA, Swiss, Crown Dependency and Gibraltar HGV licences are recognised for exchange in the UK.

Our points-based immigration system makes clear that employers should focus on investing in our domestic workforce, rather than relying on labour from abroad.

■ Leeds-York Railway Line**Rachael Maskell:**[\[78429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the increased rail capacity between York and Leeds following his proposed rail improvement works.

Andrew Stephenson:

The plans set out in the Integrated Rail Plan will more than double current capacity between Leeds and York. The number of trains per hour including services via Micklefield will also increase from 5 trains per hour currently to 8 trains per hour

■ Minibuses: Driving Licences

Chris Elmore: [75958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the 101 restriction on D1 licences can be provisionally removed by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority.

Trudy Harrison:

The restriction code 101 on driving licences is a long-standing legal requirement which is applied where the category B (car) driving test was taken before 1 January 1997. The code allows these drivers to drive minibuses up to 16 seats, if not being driven for hire or reward. Drivers who want to drive minibuses on a professional basis are required to take the relevant driving test (category D1) and meet the higher health requirements that apply to the issuing of licences to drive larger vehicles.

There is a provision which allows non-profit-making organisations to employ drivers with a car licence to provide minibus transport for their own members or for the local community. Further information is available on GOV.UK [here](#).

■ Ports: Road Traffic

Jim McMahon: [76775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the likelihood of delays on roads leaving UK ports in December 2021.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department works closely with the Home Office on assessing potential risks from traffic disruption at ports, particularly the impact on roads in Kent arising from disruption to the Short Strait.

There are many factors which affect the likelihood of delays including bad weather affecting sailings from Dover or operational issues affecting the port or Eurotunnel; it is necessary therefore to plan for a range of scenarios. The Kent Resilience Forum is responsible for planning and managing any traffic congestion arising from disruption on the Short Strait and the Department, along with other departments, works closely with the Forum and shares intelligence and any analysis to help it with its planning.

■ Railways: Freight

Rachael Maskell: [78437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish a transport freight strategy on the move of freight from road to rail.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government strongly supports the modal shift of freight from road to rail to reduce congestion and carbon emissions from across the freight sector. This was clearly set out in the recently published Transport Decarbonisation Plan and Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. Additionally, the Government is currently working with industry leaders from all modes to develop the Future of Freight strategy, a long-term strategic plan for the freight sector, which will include modal shift.

The Government continues to incentivise modal shift through the Mode Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) scheme, which supports the carriage of freight by rail and water on routes where road haulage has a financial advantage. In 2021/22, the Department allocated up to £20m for this grant scheme which removes the equivalent of around 900,000 HGV journeys off the road each year. This was recently increased by a further £500,000 to reduce the number of HGV journeys by an additional 29,000.

The Government has also committed to introducing a rail freight growth target which will help galvanise action across the sector and provide a common objective for industry collaboration. Further details about the growth target will be confirmed in due course and the Government will be working closely with industry partners to develop the target.

■ Railways: North East

Rachael Maskell:

[\[78433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of his Integrated Rail Plan on the economy of (a) Yorkshire, (b) York and the (c) the North East compared to his previous proposals on Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Integrated Rail Plan provides benefits sooner to Yorkshire, York, and the North East, compared to previous plans. Under previous plans, places such as Doncaster, Wakefield, Huddersfield would have seen little benefit, or even a worsening in their service, and connectivity benefits from new lines would not have been realised until the early 2040s. Instead, these and other places will see improved, electrified or faster services. Improving these regional connections will have a positive economic impact, unifying labour markets, so people can access a wider range of jobs, and improve access to international markets so they become more attractive locations for businesses.

■ Railways: North of England

Andrew Percy:

[\[78387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Mott MacDonald work referred to in the Integrated Rail Plan.

Andrew Stephenson:

Mott MacDonald were commissioned by the Department for Transport to support the Integrated Rail Plan by assessing strategic alternatives to the previously planned HS2 Eastern Leg. I intend to publish the report soon and will place a copy of this report in the Library.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[78424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will set out how the tunnelling challenges on the Transpennine Route will be addressed to deliver extensive capacity uplifts.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Funding of £625m for the Transpennine Route Upgrade was announced this month, meaning that over £2 billion has now been funded so far. The programme will build a more reliable railway, with more capacity and better connectivity. Development and design work on tunnel modifications are underway and at this stage it is not possible to be specific about the design solutions that will be made on the route's tunnels. Construction decisions are to be taken once TRU's full business case is approved.

Rachael Maskell:[\[78430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason the capacity data on the Transpennine Route was not set out in the Integrated Rail Plan.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Integrated Rail Plan includes graphs which set out the capacity improvements that could be realised across the Northern Powerhouse Rail core network including Transpennine Route. This includes more than doubling capacity between Leeds and Manchester, and more than trebling capacity between Liverpool and Manchester and Liverpool and Leeds.

Rachael Maskell:[\[78432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he will take to ensure the Integrated Rail Project includes sufficiently skilled engineers.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Integrated Rail Plan sets out £96 billion of rail investment. By setting out the work pipeline now, this seeks to provide confidence to the UK supply chain so that the private sector can invest in the skills that will be needed in the future, and plug skills gaps in specific regions and areas of engineering

■ Railways: Yorkshire and the Humber**Andrew Percy:**[\[78385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of how the Humber sub-region (East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire) will benefit from the Transpennine Route Upgrade.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) is enhancing rail infrastructure from Manchester to York. However, it will provide better connectivity across the Pennines for a range of centres beyond these points, by reducing journey times and providing room for extra trains. This includes doubling the frequency of direct trains on the Hull to Leeds route from one to two trains per hour. The Integrated Rail Plan published last week sets out further benefits for the region through other projects.

■ Supply Chains: Labour Turnover

Stuart Anderson:

[\[76829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to support recruitment and retention in the transport logistics industry.

Trudy Harrison:

We have taken decisive action to address the acute HGV driver shortage, with 30 specific measures taken by the Government already. These include providing support and training for new HGV drivers, expanding HGV driver testing capacity and improving licencing processes. We are also investing £32.5 million in improving roadside facilities for hauliers. We will continue to encourage the road haulage industry to make employment as an HGV driver more attractive.

Furthermore, in partnership with the Freight Council and our Future of Freight programme, we are working with industry to identify how recruitment and retention across the entire freight and logistics sector can be improved for the long term.

TREASURY

■ Annual Investment Allowance

Dan Carden:

[\[75107\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of restricting access to the Annual Investment Allowance to investments that support transition to net zero.

Dan Carden:

[\[75108\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will restrict access to the Annual Investment Allowance to bar companies with a history of tax avoidance.

Dan Carden:

[\[75109\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of the temporary increase of Annual Investment Allowance on levels of capital investment.

Lucy Frazer:

The Annual Investment Allowance (AIA) gives 100 per cent tax relief to businesses on their investments in plant and machinery up to a threshold of £1 million. This provides upfront support to encourage businesses to invest in the equipment they need, including more efficient equipment.

At the Autumn Budget 2021, the Government extended the AIA's £1 million limit until April 2023. The AIA and the super-deduction announced at Spring Budget 2021 will support business investment in capital assets across the nation. Over the course of 2021, business surveys have pointed to a strong recovery in forward-looking investment intentions.

■ Banks: Corporation Tax**Alison Thewliss:** [\[76727\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 10 November 2021 to Questions 68337 and 68338 on Banks: Corporation Tax, whether his Department has made an estimate of the potential impact of the increase in corporation tax on receipts solely from banks.

John Glen:

No separate assessment of the increase in corporation tax receipts solely from banks has been made. HMRC does publish statistics on corporation tax receipts from banks, which can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/payee-and-corporation-tax-receipts-from-the-banking-sector>

■ Business: Taxation**Rachael Maskell:** [\[78438\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional resources his Department plans to put in place to enable businesses to talk to representatives of HMRC in person about tax returns and other matters affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Lucy Frazer:

Throughout the pandemic HMRC has looked to protect jobs and incomes, and to provide cash flow boosts for businesses. They deployed more than 5,000 of their customer advisers onto a dedicated Coronavirus helpline and prioritised this service over many of their 'business as usual' services. HMRC has provided an average waiting time of 6 minutes throughout the entire 20-month period on their Coronavirus helpline, with overall customer satisfaction ratings of 94.1 per cent for the 2020-21 tax year and 95.2 per cent so far this year.

The number of advisers deployed to maintain a good service on this line stayed consistently high until recently. There were more than 1,000 at the start of this tax year, which reduced to 350 in September and is dropping off now as the various Government support schemes have wound down.

■ Capital Gains Tax**Chi Onwurah:** [\[77449\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the IPPR recommendation, published 7 September 2021, which noted that raising tax on capital gains to the same level as income tax would raise an estimated £90 billion over 5 years.

Lucy Frazer:

Capital Gains Tax (CGT) is charged on the net profit from the sale of capital assets above the Annual Exempt Amount of £12,300 per year. CGT raised £9.9 billion in the year 2019-20.

Last year, the Chancellor commissioned the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) to carry out a review of CGT. The OTS made a number of recommendations, and the Government will respond to them in due course.

The Government keeps the tax system under constant review.

■ Child Benefit

Patricia Gibson:

[\[78422\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to raise the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) threshold; and what recent assessment she has made of the impact of that threshold on families with one working parent on a low to average income.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government is committed to managing the public finances in a disciplined and responsible way by targeting support where it is most needed.

The adjusted net income threshold of £50,000 only affects a minority of individuals, with comparatively high incomes. Individuals claiming Child Benefit with average and low incomes are not liable to pay HICBC. If a claimant lives with a partner earning above £50,000, their partner will be liable to pay the charge.

The Government therefore believes that the current threshold for HICBC remains the best option at present. As with all elements of tax policy, the Government keeps this under review.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Feryal Clark:

[\[75160\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on the disability employment gap.

Lucy Frazer:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was designed as a temporary measure to support businesses while restrictions were in place. As the economy has reopened, the jobs market has recovered, vacancies are at record highs, and the success of the Government's vaccination programme has allowed us to lift almost all restrictions. That is why it is right that the Government continues to wind down its temporary pandemic support, while continuing to support businesses to invest in the recovery and supporting people into new jobs.

The employment rate gap between people with a disability and those without is 28.1 percentage points, and the Government is committed to reducing the disability employment gap. To support disabled people into work, as part of the Spending Review, the Government confirmed that it is providing specialised disability employment support worth over £1.1 billion over the next three years. This includes an additional £156 million over the Spending Review period for health and disability

support with a focus on additional work coaches. This is alongside the Work and Health Programme, which will continue to provide personal support to disabled people to find jobs that match their employment and health needs, and the Access to Work scheme which will continue to help cover the costs of workplace adaptations, special equipment and travel.

■ Corporation Tax

Sarah Olney: [\[75089\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of bringing forward the planned increase in the level of corporation tax to the start of the next financial year.

Lucy Frazer:

As announced at Spring Budget 2021, and legislated for in the Finance Act 2021, and in order to support the economic recovery, the increase in the rate of Corporation Tax will not take place until April 2023.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[75831\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2021 to Question 58753 on Corporation Tax, whether the Government supports the inclusion of a carve-out for financial services under Pillar 2 of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) framework; and if he will make statement.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government is delighted that a final political agreement has now been reached on the framework for a Two-Pillar Solution.

The regulated financial services and extractives sectors are to be excluded from Pillar One in recognition that the justification for reallocating taxing rights is much weaker, and the practical challenges in doing so are much greater.

There will be no such exclusion for those sectors from Pillar Two.

■ International Monetary System

Liam Byrne: [\[76594\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of rechannelling (a) 10, (b) 25, (c) 50 and (d) 100 per cent of Special Drawing Rights received this year on (i) public sector current spending and (ii) public sector net debt aggregates.

John Glen:

The recent \$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.

SDR channelling does not directly affect public sector current spending or public sector net debt.

Liam Byrne:

[\[76595\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the appropriate fraction of Special Drawing Rights received this year to re-channel into support for poorer countries.

John Glen:

A general allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) equivalent to about \$650bn became effective in August. The Chancellor has committed to channelling up to SDR 4bn to support vulnerable countries, representing circa 20% of the UK's allocation, starting with an additional loan of SDR 1bn to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust which provides zero interest loans to low-income countries.

Liam Byrne:

[\[76596\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the appropriate fraction of UK Special Drawing Rights received this year to re-channel via Multilateral Development Banks.

John Glen:

At their October meeting, G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors welcomed progress made by the IMF to provide options for members with strong external positions to channel a share of their allocated Special Drawing Rights (SDR), including considering viable options to voluntarily channel SDR to Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).

The Chancellor has committed to channelling up to SDR 4bn to support vulnerable countries, starting with an additional loan of SDR 1bn to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust, which provides zero interest loans to low-income countries.

The IMF and MDB partners are developing further channelling options, and we will continue to consider these for UK support.

■ Liverpool Victoria

Gareth Thomas:

[\[77364\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether representatives of the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority have held discussions on the immediate future of the Chairman of Liverpool Victoria; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[77365\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority approved the tender documents issued by Fenchurch Advisory Partners on behalf of the LV Board which invited bids to purchase Liverpool Victoria; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[77366\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many letters of complaint have (a) his Department, (b) the Financial Conduct Authority and (c) the Prudential Regulation Authority received about the proposed demutualisation of Liverpool Victoria and the sale to Bain Capital; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[77367\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the FCA and PRA has made of a potential conflict of interest in the retention of FTI Consulting by LV, to promote their plans for demutualisation, in the context of the employment by FTI Consulting of Simon Grout, Managing Director of FTI, who was appointed by LV and approved as their independent expert for the Part V11 transfer.

Gareth Thomas: [\[77368\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with representatives of the Financial Conduct Authority and the Bank of England on requiring Liverpool Victoria and Bain Capital to publish the fees that their advisers in respect of the takeover are set to be paid; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[77370\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will write to the law firm Clifford Chance urging them to publish how much they have been paid by Liverpool Victoria to advise them on their proposed demutualisation and sale to Bain Capital.

Gareth Thomas: [\[77372\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will write to FTI Consulting urging them to publish in full how much they have received for providing media and lobbying advice during the proposed demutualisation of Liverpool Victoria; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[77374\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will write to Fenchurch Advisory Partners urging them to publish the fees they have or expect to receive from the takeover of Liverpool Victoria by Bain Capital; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

Regarding letters of complaint received on the proposed demutualisation of Liverpool Victoria and the sale to Bain Capital, HM Treasury has had several representations over the last few months on this issue. The exact number is not readily available information.

While the Companies (Disclosure of Auditor Remuneration and Liability Limitation Agreements) Regulations 2008 require companies to disclose fees payable to the auditor for the audit of their financial statements, there is no requirement to disclose fees payable to advisers. These are properly a matter for the company and its members.

The assessment of the proposed demutualisation and sale of Liverpool Victoria is a matter for the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), who are operationally independent from Government. The remaining questions have therefore been passed to the PRA and FCA who will respond directly to the Honourable Member by letter. Copies of the letters will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ **Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus**

Catherine West: [77488]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the monies allocated to the Business Rates: Covid-19 additional relief fund are being distributed in a timely way.

Catherine West: [77489]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans for the Business Rates: Covid-19 additional relief fund to assist suppliers as the economy reopens following the outbreak covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

The Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund will be allocated to Local Authorities (LAs) which will use their knowledge of local businesses and the economy to make the awards.

Formal guidance to LAs will follow in due course, which will set out the specific considerations that they should consider when providing relief.

■ **Office of Tax Simplification**

Dan Carden: [75113]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to widen the remit of the Office of Tax Simplification to allow that office to engage further on issues of (a) fairness, (b) effectiveness and (c) building public understanding of the tax system.

Lucy Frazer:

Finance Act 2016 requires HM Treasury to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) in performing its functions every five years.

HM Treasury will publish the first five-year review of the OTS this Autumn. The review examined the effectiveness of the OTS over the past five years and what further steps should be taken to enhance the effectiveness of the OTS in future. The published terms of reference can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971880/OTS_21_Review_Terms_of_Reference.pdf

■ **Office of Tax Simplification: Equality**

Dan Carden: [75112]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to review of the composition of the Office of Tax Simplification membership to ensure it is diverse and representative.

Lucy Frazer:

The Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) is an independent Office of HM Treasury.

All our appointments are in made in line with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA) principles. Public appointments should reflect the diversity of the society in which we live, and appointments should be made considering the need to appoint boards which include a balance of skills and backgrounds.

The Government has an ambition that by 2022 half of all new appointees should be women and 14 per cent of appointments should be made to those from ethnic minorities.

The Government is also legislating in the 2021-22 Finance Bill to provide the ability to add two additional independent members of the OTS Board ahead of the forthcoming publication of HM Treasury's 5-year review of the effectiveness of the OTS, as required by Finance Act 2016.

■ **Police and Crime Commissioners: Cleveland**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[78393\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 November 2021 to Question 75874, on which dates on and after 1 July 2021 the Chief Secretary to the Treasury has (a) met, and (b) spoken with, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Details of HMT Ministers' official meetings with external organisations are published and can be found on Gov.uk. Details of meetings from 1 July onwards will be published in due course.

■ **Property Development: Taxation**

Stephen Hammond:

[\[74948\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether build-to-rent developments will be exempt from the Residential Property Develop Tax in (a) their entirety and (b) perpetuity.

Lucy Frazer:

The Residential Property Developer Tax will apply to companies that make trading profits from residential property development activities and are part of a group that is generating relevant profits in excess of £25 million.

This means the tax will not apply to companies that construct properties to hold as investments.

It will, however, apply to companies that make trading profits from selling residential property, including where the purchaser is a member of the same group, or is acquiring the property for investment purposes.

As with all other taxes, the Government will keep this under review.

Stephen Hammond:

[\[74949\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether build-to-rent developments which are transferred or sold within a group for accounting purposes will be exempt from the Residential Property Developer Tax in (a) their entirety and (b) perpetuity.

Lucy Frazer:

The Residential Property Developer Tax will apply to companies that make trading profits from residential property development activities and are part of a group that is generating relevant profits in excess of £25 million.

This means the tax will not apply to companies that construct properties to hold as investments.

It will, however, apply to companies that make trading profits from selling residential property, including where the purchaser is a member of the same group, or is acquiring the property for investment purposes.

As with all other taxes, the Government will keep this under review.

■ Railways: Wales

Ben Lake:

[\[78495\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the full Barnett consequential is to Wales of the proposed Integrated Rail Plan.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The UK Government is responsible for much of the rail infrastructure in Wales, and therefore spends money on this infrastructure rather than funding the Welsh Government to do so.

In line with this responsibility, the UK Government is currently delivering an ambitious programme to upgrade Welsh railways, including through the electrification of the Severn Tunnel and building a new station at Bow Street.

The Barnett formula is applied at fiscal events when departmental budgets are set rather than being applied when departments announce how they are spending their budgets. At the recent 2021 Spending Review the UK Government provided the Welsh Government with more than £18 billion on average each year over the Spending Review period. The Welsh Government will determine how to spend this on its devolved responsibilities.

■ Revenue and Customs: Finance

Dan Carden:

[\[75111\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the average additional revenue raised by an additional compliance officer in HMRC.

Lucy Frazer:

It is not possible to provide an exact number given a range of variables that would affect this figure including:

- the natural variability in the work HMRC compliance undertakes including differences in the tax heads, and types of risk compliance officers can be deployed against;
- the difficulty in calculating marginal return from additional resources;
- the productivity and training lags for new starters versus experienced officers, with compliance officers taking up to 5 years of training and experience before being fully productive;
- and timing differences between when work is done, and the resulting yield is scored.

COVID-19 has also impacted these calculations, by reducing overall economic activity and thereby compliance yield, as well as requiring HMRC to reallocate some compliance staff to COVID-19 response work.

It is important to note that the value of compliance work goes beyond generating yield, but also includes mitigating harm, ensuring a level playing field for those who pay their taxes correctly, and deterring non-compliance from taking place.

In this context, there are some indicative figures HMRC can provide to give a sense of scale.

In the financial year 2020-21, HMRC delivered a total of £30.4 billion of compliance yield with an expenditure of £1,166.5 million on Customer Compliance Group (CCG). CCG brings in the majority, but not all, of compliance yield.

The equivalent figures for the financial year 2019-20 were £36.9 billion of yield for a net expenditure of £1,192.2 million. As of April 2020, there were 24,119 full-time equivalent employees working in CCG.

■ Sanitary Protection: VAT

Laura Farris:

[76038]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has plans to include period pants as women's sanitary products for VAT purposes.

Lucy Frazer:

A zero rate of VAT has applied to women's sanitary products since 1 January 2021. This applies to those products which were previously subject to the reduced rate of 5 per cent, such as tampons and pads, and reusable menstrual products, such as keepers.

The relief specifically excludes articles of clothing, such as period pants. Such exclusions are designed to ensure that the relief is properly targeted, since difficulties in policing the scope of the relief create the potential for litigation, erosion of the tax base, and a reduction in revenue. Under existing rules period pants may already qualify for the zero rate, if they have been specifically designed to be worn by a child, meet the sizing criteria, and are held out for sale specifically for use by girls under the age of 14 years old.

Details are provided in VAT Notice 714: zero-rating young children's clothing and footwear: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-notice-714-zero-rating-young-childrens-clothing-and-footwear/vat-notice-714-zero-rating-young-childrens-clothing-and-footwear#items-suitable-only-for-young-children>

■ Taxation

Dan Carden:

[75114]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to increase democratic participation in debates around taxation.

Lucy Frazer:

The Chancellor's annual Budget sets out the Government's taxation plans, which by tradition are closely scrutinised by MPs over the course of four full days of debate before the Budget resolutions are passed.

Tax measures requiring primary legislation are then taken forward in the Finance Bill, which is subject to the full process of legislative scrutiny in the House of Commons. This includes a Committee stage opened by a Committee of the Whole House, where key measures can be debated in the Chamber itself, before concluding in a Public Bill Committee.

These opportunities for MPs to debate and scrutinise tax policy are complemented by the Treasury's established tax policy making process:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-new-budget-timetable-and-the-tax-policy-making-process/the-new-budget-timetable-and-the-tax-policy-making-process>

This ensures stakeholders can feed into policy development where possible. Under this process, tax policy announcements at the Budget are followed by a policy consultation and the publication of draft legislation, before being confirmed and legislated for in Parliament. Ahead of each Budget, the Treasury also welcomes written representations from stakeholders, such as interest groups, individuals, and representative bodies, which are considered as part of decisions which underpin the Budget.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equality: Artificial Intelligence

Chi Onwurah:

[904392]

What steps she is taking to tackle the effect of algorithmic bias on equality.

Kemi Badenoch:

We take this issue very seriously. On Monday my Rt Hon. friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced a review into possible inadvertent bias in medical devices. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has also set tackling the challenges faced by AI as one of the priority work areas in its draft strategic plan for the next three years. It is engaging with key stakeholders in AI, like the Ada

Lovelace Institute and the Alan Turing Institute and is developing guidance on AI and the Public Sector Equality Duty, for government departments and public bodies, which will be published early in the new year.

■ Females: Coronavirus

Cherilyn Mackrory: [\[904390\]](#)

What steps she is taking to support women's participation in the economic recovery from the covid-19 pandemic.

Kemi Badenoch:

Through initiatives like the Rose Review, the Investing in Women Code, the Women in Innovation Awards and the Women in Finance Charter, and through our manifesto commitments on flexible working and carer's leave, we are committed to supporting and promoting the role of women in the economic recovery.

■ Females: Harassment

Virginia Crosbie: [\[904391\]](#)

What assessment she has made of trends in the number of incidents of intimidation and harassment of women in public life.

Kemi Badenoch:

No one should feel afraid to participate in our democracy. Open, fair and safe participation is crucial. However, this freedom can never be an excuse to cause harm or spread hatred, and a line is crossed when disagreement mutates into intimidation, violence or abuse.

Intimidation in public life can stop talented people, particularly women and those from minority backgrounds, from standing for public office.

All of us in public life have a responsibility to challenge and report intimidating behaviour wherever it occurs.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Long Covid: Disability

Mohammad Yasin: [\[75091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of classifying Long Covid as a disability, for the purposes of giving employment protections under the Equality Act 2010 to affected people.

Chloe Smith:

'Long Covid' is not classed as a disability. COVID is still a relatively new condition and work is ongoing to understand its long-term effects. Making such a determination would therefore be premature.

As research into the long-term health symptoms and impacts of COVID-19 is ongoing, we will continue to monitor and consider the Government's support provisions and approach in line with the emerging evidence.

As part of the Government's response to the pandemic, individuals may be eligible for SSP where they are sick or self-isolating due to coronavirus, including where they have tested positive for coronavirus but otherwise feel well. Statutory Sick Pay is payable from the first day of sickness absence from work, rather than the fourth, where an individual is self-isolating due to coronavirus. The usual eligibility criteria continue to apply.

If an individual requires further financial support while off work sick, for example where their income is reduced while on Statutory Sick Pay, they may be able to claim Universal Credit depending on their personal circumstances. Where they are not eligible, for example because they earn below the Lower Earnings Limit, they may also be able to claim New Style Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit.

■ Private Rented Housing

Damien Moore:

[76002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department plans to take to help ensure that (a) managed payments to landlords are paid in full in a timely manner and (b) universal credit claimants do not enter rent arrears as a result of payment delays.

David Rutley:

The Universal Credit payment structure is a fundamental part of its design. It mirrors the world of work, where people are paid money directly which they may then put towards housing costs. Ensuring similarities between paid employment and receiving benefits removes an important barrier which could prevent claimants from moving into paid employment. For those who cannot manage their single monthly payment, Alternative Payment Arrangements, and more specifically a Managed Payment to Landlord, is available at the start, or at any point during a Universal Credit claim. Such arrangements can be requested by either the claimant or the landlord and are considered on a case by case basis.

The vast majority of managed payments to landlords are paid on the same date as the claimant is paid their Universal Credit monthly award. Payment timeliness is usually dependent on claimants completing their commitments within the set time frame as instructed by DWP. Claimants are notified to complete any outstanding action via their preferred choice of communication, i.e. journal message/text, to ensure there are no delays in payment. If claimants have any further concerns, they may phone the Universal Credit helpline or speak to their work coach.

All Universal Credit claimants have the opportunity to discuss any concerns about how to budget their monthly payments with their work coach and/or via their Universal Credit Journal. Work coaches will identify any financial issues the claimant has and

signpost claimants to any relevant local face-to-face provision or support that is available, as appropriate.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

Alex Cunningham:

[77445]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she will publish the Department for Work and Pensions report into the efficacy of benefits sanctions.

Mims Davies:

We do not plan to publish a report on the sanctions evaluation as we were unable to assess the deterrent effect and therefore this research doesn't present a comprehensive picture of sanctions.

■ **State Retirement Pensions**

Darren Jones:

[78492]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent comparative assessment her Department has made of level of monies received by pensioners on (a) the former basic State Pension and (b) receiving the new State Pension.

Guy Opperman:

The published figures can be accessed here - [DWP benefits statistics: November 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-benefits-statistics-november-2021).

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Mozambique: Politics and Government

Stephen Doughty:

[\[72448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the security situation in northern Mozambique; and what Official Development Assistance has been provided to that region in each of the last three years, including the proportion spent on the security sector.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 16 November 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Vicky Ford:

We welcome the news that ~~Rwandan~~ **Mozambican**, Southern African Development Community and ~~Mozambican~~ **Rwandan** Forces have recovered areas of Cabo Delgado, north-east Mozambique, that were previously under insurgent control.

There is still work to be done and we look forward to the Government ~~of~~ **Mozambique** working with international partners to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches affected areas, and reconstruction can take place. We are working with the Government of Mozambique to address the root drivers of conflict and instability, including by providing targeted assistance under the framework of a Defence Memorandum of Understanding. The UK is also working to strengthen international cooperation, and co-chairs with Ireland a high-level international taskforce on Cabo Delgado.

The UK has provided over £22 million in aid to Cabo Delgado through UN agencies, ensuring access to food, shelter, water, sanitation and basic health. ~~(Approximately £12 million 2019/20, £8.05 million in 2020/21 and £2.7 million 2021/22).~~ None of this Official Development Assistance has been spent on the security sector.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ National Data Strategy Mission 1 Policy Framework

Minister for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure (Julia Lopez): [\[HCWS415\]](#)

I am pleased to inform the House that the Government is, today, publishing the [National Data Strategy Mission 1 Policy Framework: Unlocking the Value of Data in the Economy](#), which sets out the government interventions needed to make private and third sector data more usable, accessible and available across the economy, while protecting people's data rights and private enterprises' intellectual property.

A commitment to developing this framework was set out in the National Data Strategy. Published in 2020, the Strategy outlined for the first time in a single publication our ambitions to unlock the power of data. Since then, we have launched a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework against which we will check our progress in delivering these ambitions. We have also begun a public consultation on reforms to the UK's regime for the protection of personal data.

The publication of this framework underlines our commitment to a thriving and responsible data economy where the power of data from the private and third sector is unlocked. The Government now has a set of levers for intervention and principles for when to apply them, as well as seven priority areas for action to take forward. These include making sure we have good data standards, encouraging the use of Privacy Enhancing Technologies and data intermediaries and developing international cooperation to support the UK's data agenda on the world stage.

We will continue to engage widely to implement the National Data Strategy, including working through the National Data Strategy Forum.

A copy of this update will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

JUSTICE

■ Sentencing update

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Dominic Raab): [\[HCWS416\]](#)

I am today announcing the Government's decision to bring forward 'Harper's Law'.

PC Andrew Harper was tragically killed responding to a theft in July 2019. The defendants in the case, two aged 17 and one aged 18, were convicted of the unlawful act manslaughter of PC Harper, with two receiving a sentence of detention of 13 years, and another receiving an extended sentence of 19 years. These sentences correctly reflected the law at the time, but I do not believe the law goes far enough here.

PC Andrew Harper's widow, Lissie Harper, has campaigned tirelessly for justice for her late husband, alongside the Thames Valley Police Federation and with support from other Police Federations across the country and Members across this House.

Following detailed discussion with the Home Secretary, I am today announcing 'Harper's Law'. This measure will extend mandatory life sentences to those convicted of the unlawful act manslaughter of an emergency worker who is exercising their functions as such a worker.

This sentence will apply to 16 and 17 year olds as well as adult offenders. It will include judicial discretion to allow for the imposition of an alternative sentence in truly exceptional circumstances. The minimum term of the life sentence, or the minimum amount of time the offender must spend in custody before being considered by the Parole Board for release on licence, will still be for the courts to determine.

This measure reflects the vital role which our emergency workers fulfil in protecting all of us. It recognises the risks that emergency workers face. I will bring forward this measure at the earliest legislative opportunity.