



## Daily Report

Thursday, 25 November 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 25 November 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:37 P.M., 25 November 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Asthma: Medical Equipment

**Jane Hunt:**

[76868]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the (a) size and (b) contribution of the UK economy of the inhaler production sector.

**George Freeman:**

The [Bioscience and health technology sector statistics 2019](#) shows that in 2019, 3,300 people were employed in businesses primarily involved in the development of anaesthetic and respiratory technology, which includes the production of inhalers. These businesses generated £780m in turnover.

#### ■ Business: Coronavirus

**John McDonnell:**

[76567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the role of medium-sized family businesses in supporting growth as part of the recovery from the covid-19 pandemic.

**Paul Scully:**

Family run businesses make a key economic contribution to the UK economy. 77% of SME employers<sup>1</sup> were defined as family-owned businesses in 2020 (a 3 percentage point increase on 2019<sup>2</sup>) and they have been estimated to contribute 29 percent of UK GDP<sup>3</sup>. Over half of medium-sized businesses<sup>4</sup> are family-owned (58%)<sup>5</sup>. Like other businesses they have been able to benefit from the unprecedented package of support that government continues to offer and we expect them to continue to play a key role in the recovery.

<sup>1</sup> Businesses with 1-249 employees

<sup>2</sup> Longitudinal Small Business Survey – SME employers, 2020 (BEIS)

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Family Business Research Foundation, the UK Family Business Sector 2020-21

<sup>4</sup> Businesses with 50-249 employees

<sup>5</sup> Longitudinal Small Business Survey – SME employers, 2020 (BEIS)

#### ■ Business: Research

**Chi Onwurah:**

[79367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the funding granted through Innovation Loans on

average (a) nationally, (b) in Greater London and (c) in the North East since 2017; and what assessment his Department has made of the regional distribution of Innovation Loan agreements.

**George Freeman:**

All Innovate UK grants and loans are made public via ([Innovate UK funded projects since 2004 – UKRI](#)). Transparency data also includes the location and region that the company is registered in.

Funding decisions by UK Research and Innovation are based on the quality of applications and value for money to the taxpayer.

■ **Carbon Emissions**

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[76862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that the UK meets its carbon reduction targets in conjunction with supporting developing countries reduce overall carbon emissions.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK is taking ambitious action through the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan and landmark Net Zero Strategy to reach net zero, while creating jobs and reinvigorating new industries.

At the same time, the Government will support developing countries to decarbonise. Those efforts are at the heart of the UK's COP Presidency and COP26, that took place in November 2021.

■ **Copyright: Publishing**

**Giles Watling:**

[\[80459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment her Department has made of the potential Americanisation of (a) spelling, (b) vernacular, (c) cultural reference and (d) design in British books in the event that the Intellectual Property Office introduces an international copyright exhaustion regime.

**George Freeman:**

The Government recently held a consultation on the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime. The Government will provide an update on this consultation in due course.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Staff**

**Robert Largan:**

[\[78520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 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.

**George Freeman:**

The Number of Civil Servants employed by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the 01 March 2021, 01 June 2021 & 01 September 2021 by NUTS1 UK regions are presented below:

REGION	01/03/2021	01/06/2021	01/09/2021
East Midlands	11	11	11
East of England	12	13	13
London	4834	5030	5122
North East England	30	31	35
North West England	16	36	84
Northern Ireland	1	1	1
Other	2	1	1
Scotland	96	100	105
South East England	2	2	2
South West England	19	19	17
Wales	76	76	79
West Midlands	155	166	181
<b>Total</b>	<b>5254</b>	<b>5486</b>	<b>5651</b>

■ **Drax Power Station: Carbon Emissions**

**David Warburton:**[\[75086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the transport costs per MWh in terms of carbon dioxide emissions for power generated at Drax from (a) coal and (b) wood pellets.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government does not hold this information. Electricity generators only receive subsidies for biomass where they comply with the UK's stringent sustainability criteria. The criteria requires that electricity generation from biomass does not exceed a set GHG threshold and produces life-cycle GHG emission savings (including transport and supply chain emissions) compared to fossil fuels. Suppliers/generators must demonstrate to the regulator (Ofgem) that they meet the criteria. Their evidence is independently audited.

## ■ Electricity: Renewable Energy

**Sir Gary Streeter:** [\[76568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the National Grid to allow micro producers of electricity to feed their energy supplies into the Grid.

**Greg Hands:**

Electricity network capacity and accommodating new connections are both the responsibility of the licensed electricity network companies overseen by Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator. Generation up to 3.68kW per phase may connect to the network without prior approval. For larger microgeneration projects a connection application would need to be made to the relevant distribution network operator (DNO). The DNO assesses the impact on its network and issues a connection offer, including any necessary network capacity requirements.

## ■ Energy: Billing

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[76052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that energy companies present energy bills to customers that accurately reflect their energy consumption.

**Greg Hands:**

Ofgem regulations require all energy suppliers to bill their customers based on energy usage, taking all reasonable steps to obtain meter readings, at least annually, and reflect these accurately in bills.

Customers with a smart meter can benefit from accurate and timely billing, as energy consumption data is automatically sent to energy suppliers. The In-Home Display (IHD), which households are offered when they have smart meters installed, also provides easily accessible, near real-time information about energy consumption, costs and credit.

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Wes Streeting:** [\[76765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of households in the UK that use prepayment meters.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2021]:* The Secretary of State has set out to the House that protecting customers, particularly the most vulnerable, has been the Government's priority during the peak in wholesale gas prices.

As Ofgem notes in its Autumn 2021 Consumer Protection report, the use of Prepayment Meters has continued to decrease for both gas and electricity customers, representing the lowest recorded proportions since 2012 for electricity customers and a steady decline for gas customers since 2017.

**Wes Streeting:**[\[76766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households with children use pre-payment meters.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2021]:* The Secretary of State has set out to the House that protecting customers, particularly the most vulnerable, has been the Government's priority during the peak in wholesale gas prices.

As Ofgem notes in its Autumn 2021 Consumer Protection report, the use of Prepayment Meters has continued to decrease for both gas and electricity customers, representing the lowest recorded proportions since 2012 for electricity customers and a steady decline for gas customers since 2017.

**Wes Streeting:**[\[76767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households with children using pre-payment meters are in arrears.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2021]:* The Secretary of State has set out to the House that protecting customers, particularly the most vulnerable, has been the Government's priority during the peak in wholesale gas prices.

Households with prepayment meters continue to be protected by the CMA Prepayment Meter Price (PPM) Cap, which was extended in April 2021.

**■ Food Supply: Takeovers****Seema Malhotra:**[\[78409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November to Question 65437, on Morrisons: Takeovers, whether the Government has plans to require the largest private companies to meet higher standards of transparency and oversight.

**Paul Scully:**

On 18 March, the Government published a White Paper, 'Restoring trust in audit and corporate reporting', setting out comprehensive and ambitious plans to strengthen the UK's audit, company reporting and corporate governance framework. It included proposals to bring large private businesses in scope of higher standards of transparency and oversight.

Consultation on the proposals closed on 8 July. The Government is considering the responses carefully and will respond in due course.

**■ Green Homes Grant Scheme****Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[78344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2021 to Question 74867, what alternative approaches are

being considered to maximise the delivery of home retrofits for consumers following the closure of the Green Homes Grant Scheme.

**Greg Hands:**

The Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme was designed as a short-term economic stimulus. It helped raise awareness of green home measures, and improved demand for a range of clean heat and energy saving installations.

In the Heat and Building Strategy, the Government outlines the new £450 million 3-year Boiler Upgrade Scheme which will provide grants of £5,000 from April next year to encourage homeowners to install more efficient, low carbon heating systems, such as heat pumps, that do not emit carbon when used. These grants mean that installing a heat pump will cost a similar amount to installing a traditional gas boiler.

The Government has committed a further £1.8bn over the next 3 years, targeting those in fuel poverty through the Home Upgrade Grant and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

The Government has also expanded the Energy Company Obligation, under which energy companies have already installed 3.3 million measures in 2.3 million homes. We are increasing the amount energy suppliers invest in low-income households and have recently consulted on a new iteration of ECO which will run until 2026 and will see ECO's value boosted from £640 million to £1 billion a year.

■ **Heat Batteries: Finance**

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [76544]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the future funding for the development of heat battery technology.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government continues to make funding available for both the development and deployment of innovative low-carbon heating technologies, such as heat batteries.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Recovery Loan Scheme**

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [79447]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of hospitality businesses that applied for a loan under the Recovery Loan Scheme were successful in their application in (a) Birmingham, (b) the West Midlands and (c) the UK.

**Paul Scully:**

The most recent data published on RLS is available at the following link: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/press-release/recovery-loan-scheme-offers-over-1bn-to-smaller-businesses/>. Lenders are only required to notify the British Business Bank of facilities that have been offered and drawn.

## ■ Housing: Energy

**Damien Moore:**

[\[76001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to introduce further grants to support homeowners in making their homes greener.

**Greg Hands:**

The Heat and Buildings Strategy sets out the Government's actions to reduce emissions from buildings over the forthcoming decades. The package of measures provides £3.9bn of new funding to support the installation of energy efficiency measures and low-carbon heating. This includes a new £450m Boiler Upgrade Scheme providing grants of up to £6,000 from Spring 2022 to encourage homeowners to install more efficient, low-carbon heating systems, such as heat pumps.

The Government has also announced £950m in funding for the Home Upgrade Grant between 2022 – 2025. Through the scheme, the Government is providing grants to low-income households to install energy efficiency measures and low-carbon heating to lower-quality, off gas grid homes in England. This includes insulation measures and a heat pump to tackle fuel poverty and reach the UK's net zero target.

In addition, £800m has been committed to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to improve the energy performance of social rented homes across England. The SHDF will upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below EPC Band C up to that standard.

## ■ Housing: Ilford South

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[76863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional funding to retrofit homes in Ilford South constituency to help improve energy efficiency.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government sees improving the energy efficiency of homes as the best long-term solution to Improving energy efficiency. The UK has various schemes available including the Sustainable Warmth project, which comprises a third phase of the Local Authority Delivery scheme, as well as the first phase of the Home Upgrade Grant, which can be used for low-income households both on and off the gas grid respectively. These schemes form part of a wider package in which the Government is committing a further £3.9 bn over the next three years, taking total investment to over £6.6bn.

Through the recent Sustainable Warmth competition, grant funding has been offered to Local Authorities in every region across England to upgrade low-income households. The Greater London Authority was successful in their consortium bid

and will receive funding to support households living in London Local Authorities, including Redbridge.

### ■ Housing: Insulation

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[75101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to support the insulation of privately owned homes in order that they may achieve EPC band C by 2035.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government's Heat and Buildings Strategy sets out the actions being taken to reduce emissions from homes and buildings, including investing an additional £3.9 billion to support people to make energy efficiency changes, including insulation.

This funding will support the Home Upgrade Grant which will provide grants to low-income households to upgrade the energy performance of the worst quality, off gas grid homes in England.

Alongside this, the Green Home Grants Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD) is also providing financial support to those in low-income households to install measures such as solid wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation and underfloor insulation.

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

### ■ Intellectual Property: Writers

**Giles Watling:**

[\[76822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of an international exhaustion regime on UK author incomes.

**George Freeman:**

The Government recently held a consultation on the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime. The potential impact of an international exhaustion regime on UK authors is likely to form part of the overall assessment, alongside the potential effect on other sectors of the economy. The Government will provide an update on this consultation in due course.

### ■ Publishing: Intellectual Property

**Giles Watling:**

[\[76821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the publishing industry is consulted by the

Intellectual Property Office as part of its review of the UK's future intellectual property exhaustion regime.

**George Freeman:**

The Government recently held a consultation on the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime. During the consultation period, the Intellectual Property Office held constructive discussions with stakeholders across multiple business sectors, including representatives of the publishing industry and wider creative industries.

■ **Recycling: Northwich**

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[76820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to update the criteria for waste sent to Northwich Incinerator so that recyclable items will not be incinerated.

**Greg Hands:**

A public consultation into the application for the proposed expansion of the Lostock Sustainable Energy Plant near Northwich in Cheshire commenced on 4 November 2021 and will close on 2 December 2021. It is not possible to comment on the merits of a live planning application given the Secretary of State's quasi-judicial role in the decision-making process. The Secretary of State will take all relevant matters, including the waste hierarchy, into account when he makes his decision.

■ **Takeovers: Legal Opinion**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[77371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will review the effectiveness of the rules on disclosure of legal advisers' fees during the takeover of a company limited by guarantee; and if she will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[77373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will review the effectiveness of the rules on the disclosure of fees for providing lobbying or media advice during takeovers of companies limited by guarantee; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[77375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will require all firms taking over a financial services business to disclose advisers fees regardless of the corporate structure governing the business; and if he will make a statement.

**Paul Scully:**

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 professional advisers more broadly. These are properly a matter for the company and its members. The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is committed to ensuring that the UK's regulatory approach is proportionate, targeted, consistent, transparent, and optimised to support opportunities for UK businesses. The regulation of takeovers under the Companies Act and associated regulations is designed to protect the interests of shareholders and to safeguard their rights to information that will allow them to make an informed decision. We are confident the system functions effectively.

## ■ Toys and Games: Labelling

**Ed Davey:**

**[79260]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to introduce a labelling system for toys that have flashing lights and make loud noises to better support children who are prone to sensory overload and sensitivity.

**Paul Scully:**

There are no plans to specifically require toy packaging to provide information relating to sensory overload or sensitivity. However, it remains that the safety and labelling requirements of the UK Toys (Safety) Regulations 2011 require manufacturers to provide general information to help consumers identify which toys are most suitable for their particular needs as well as requiring information be provided on the safe use of the toy.

## ■ Trees

**David Warburton:**

**[75085]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a table showing the number of (a) tree equivalents burnt at the Drax power station and (b) trees planted in the UK in each of the last five years.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department does not model tree equivalents of biomass used by power generators. Ofgem reports volumes of biomass fuel, such as wood pellets, used by power generators on a per-tonne basis.

UK tree planting statistics, held by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), are reported in terms of area (hectares). The most recent data was published on 30th September ( <https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/forestry-statistics-2021/1-woodland-area-planting/> and [https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/documents/8144/Ch1\\_Woodland\\_FS2021\\_kRWbQIW.xlsx](https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/documents/8144/Ch1_Woodland_FS2021_kRWbQIW.xlsx) ). UK tree planting over the past five years was as follows: 6,520 ha (2016-17); 9,050 ha (2017-18), 13,540 ha (2018-19), 13,660 ha (2020-21) and 13,290 ha (2020-21)

## ■ Weetabix: Re-employment

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[79433]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will hold discussions with representatives of Weetabix on reports of fire and rehire practices at Weetabix.

**Paul Scully:**

Government has been consistently clear that we do not accept the inappropriate use by any employer of 'fire and rehire' as a negotiation tactic.

When employment disputes arise, the Government wants to ensure that employers and employees are able to resolve them quickly and effectively. Earlier this year, we asked Acas to produce comprehensive, clear guidance so that employers can explore all the options before considering 'fire and rehire', and to encourage good employment relations practice. This guidance was published on 11 November and is available at <http://www.acas.org.uk/changecontract>.

## CABINET OFFICE

## ■ Business Interests

**Angela Rayner:**

**[79397]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department has taken to improve the operation and efficacy of the Business Appointment Rules since the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments met the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution in respect of that matter in April 2021.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Government is working with the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOPA) to improve the operation and efficacy of the Business Appointment Rules. ACOPA has introduced a framework for risk-based consideration of cases, greater transparency and improved reporting of breaches. The Government supports these changes. The Cabinet Office is also leading a programme of work which aims to improve: the scope and clarity of the Rules; the consistency and proportionality of their implementation across government; and enforcement of the Rules.

The recommendations from Nigel Boardman's report into the development and use of supply chain finance in government, as well as the Standards Matter 2 report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, will be considered as a part of this work.

## ■ Cabinet Office: Correspondence

**Angela Rayner:**

**[79394]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 31 August 2021 from Lord Pickles on behalf of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments in respect of Lord Hammond; and

whether he plans to take steps in response to that Committee's findings in respect of Lord Hammond and OakNorth bank.

**Michael Ellis:**

Lord True responded to the letter from the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments on 25 November, noting the Committee's findings in respect of Lord Hammond. The Government has carefully considered this matter and the letter sets out in full its reasoning that, although we concur with the Committee's conclusion, we do not believe further sanctions should be taken given the particular circumstances of this case.

■ **Northern Ireland Protocol**

**Louise Haigh:** [\[79418\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what contingency plans the Government has shared with the Northern Ireland Executive in the event that Article 16 is triggered.

**Louise Haigh:** [\[79419\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what contingency plans the Government has shared with the Northern Ireland Executive in the event that the Trade and Cooperation Agreement is suspended.

**Michael Ellis:**

There is significant ongoing Ministerial and official-level engagement by both the Northern Ireland Office and the Cabinet Office with all the devolved administrations on EU policy issues including the implementation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) and Withdrawal Agreement (WA). Lord Frost, as the Minister responsible for this area, regularly briefs with the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, as well as representatives of the political parties in Northern Ireland.

■ **Ventilation: Public Expenditure**

**Munira Wilson:** [\[79499\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Government has spent on campaigns to encourage better ventilation in buildings across the UK in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

**Michael Ellis:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to [PQ 33512](#) on 23 March 2020.

The Government has promoted the importance of ventilation in homes and businesses in its COVID-19 behaviour change campaigns throughout 2020 and 2021. The fresh air message has been integrated into other important behaviours for individuals and businesses to take and as such it is not possible to identify a specific amount focused solely on ventilation.

## COP26

### ■ Forests

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[76659\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the progress made on tackling deforestation at COP26.

**Alok Sharma:**

At COP26, more than 140 world leaders whose countries contain over 90% of the world's forests endorsed the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, committing to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. This powerful coalition of governments, businesses, Indigenous Peoples and civil society committed to a step-change in global action on forests. The political commitment is backed by almost £14 billion (\$19.2 billion) in public and private funding, including £1.5 billion from the UK, which will support action in developing countries, including restoring degraded land, tackling wildfires and advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

### ■ UN Climate Conference 2021

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[76656\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the main outcomes of COP26.

**Alok Sharma:**

Our key aims for COP26 were to keep alive the possibility of limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5°C (mitigation); help the world to adapt to protect communities and natural habitats (adaptation); to accelerate the delivery of resources needed to fund the transition (finance); to complete the Paris rulebook, and to work together to deliver a safe and inclusive COP (collaboration).

We have delivered against those goals. Over 90% of world GDP is now covered by net zero commitments and 153 countries put forward new 2030 emissions targets. COP26 boosted efforts to deal with climate impacts and 80 countries are now covered by either Adaptation Communications or National Adaptation Plans. COP26 mobilised billions towards delivering the \$100 billion climate finance goal and will reach it by 2023 at the latest. Through the Glasgow Climate Pact we have finalised the Paris Rulebook, and secured amongst other things a route to ambition raising on NDCs, increased funding for adaptation, and progress on action to manage loss and damage. The goal of limiting temperature rises by the end of the century to 1.5°C is still within reach. But this is based on commitments made and relies on concerted and dedicated delivery by all countries.

**■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Access**

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[71400\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of access to all areas of the Scottish Event Campus.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[71401\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, for what reason sign language and subtitles have only been available for the opening ceremony of COP26 and not for every session.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[71402\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he has taken to help prevent a recurrence of the accessibility challenges encountered by Israel's energy minister when attempting to access the Scottish Event Campus on 1 November 2021.

**Alok Sharma:**

Inclusivity and accessibility were key priorities for COP26 and the venue was designed to facilitate that. When officials were made aware of the issue in question, which was a genuine mistake, they worked urgently with the Israeli delegation to resolve this and the UK Government apologised to Minister Elharrar. The permanent structures were fully wheelchair accessible and the venue holds gold level accessibility status. For the temporary structures a complete accessibility audit was completed and they were fully compliant. There were blue badge spaces for the conference, along with two fully accessible shuttle routes.

An accessibility support desk was on hand to help with any requests for assistance, and there were hearing loops available in conference and plenary rooms. During the second week, BSL was provided at the COP26 Presidency and UK Prime Minister press conferences, and key presidency events including the closing plenaries. Officials regularly met with the UNFCCC Disability lead to address any accessibility concerns.

**■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Shell**

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[76662\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, for what reason Shell were not invited to COP26.

**Alok Sharma:**

As COP26 Presidency, we are working to encourage the innovation and commitment of everyone – people, business, countries, cities and regions – as we move the global economy to net zero emissions. This includes a wide range of energy companies.

The COP26 Presidency is working most closely with organisations that have strong climate credentials – that means companies which have committed to achieving net zero by 2050, have published a 5-10 year plan of action on how they will do this, and committed to Science Based Targets or joined the UN-backed Race to Zero.

Every country is responsible for choosing its own delegates and the UNFCCC was responsible for all accreditation to COP26.

**DEFENCE****■ Army: Kenya**

**Kenny MacAskil:** [\[79492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civilians have been (a) killed and (b) injured by unexploded ordnance at British army training grounds in Kenya in each year since 2015.

**James Heappey:**

There have been no civilian fatalities from unexploded ordnance on British army training grounds in Kenya from 2015 to date. The Department has identified records of two incidents where civilians have been injured by unexploded ordnance: one in 2015 and one in 2021. Both incidents were on Archers Post Training Area.

**Kenny MacAskil:** [\[79493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has paid private landowners in Kenya to allow British army training on their estates in the most recent period for which data is available.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The amount the Department has paid private land owners in Kenya to allow training on their estate cannot be released as it is commercially sensitive. To release such information could prejudice relations with landowners and jeopardise future training commitments.

**■ HME Prince of Wales and HMS Queen Elizabeth: Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft**

**John Healey:** [\[79277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK F-35B aircraft are stationed on (a) HMS Queen Elizabeth and (b) HMS Prince of Wales.

**James Heappey:**

HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH embarked 18 F-35Bs for the Carrier Strike Group 2021 operational deployment in two squadrons: eight from the UK's 617 Squadron RAF and 10 from the US Marine Corps squadron VMFA-211. However, one UK F-35B was lost on 17 November 2021 and therefore seven UK F-35B remain currently embarked.

The Lightning Force deployed to HMS PRINCE OF WALES in mid-September 2021, with 207 Squadron undertaking a period of intensive Carrier Qualification training. HMS PRINCE OF WALES is currently alongside in her home port of Portsmouth with all aircraft disembarked.

## ■ Ministry of Defence: Aviation

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[79290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2021 to Question 76876 on Ministry of Defence: Aviation, if he will publish the corresponding figures for (a) 2020, (b) 2019, (c) 2018 and (d) 2017.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Civilian air charter figures for the years 2017-2021 are detailed below.

2021 figures reflect increased charter usage as a result of Op PITTING and the military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

To note: the previous response (Question 76876) is larger as it also accounted for those air charters that are currently booked but not delivered yet i.e. what we anticipate for 2021.

YEAR	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	NO OF FLIGHTS
2021*	£19,473,294	88
2020	£ 2,352,105	9
2019	£ 4,048,316	16
2018	£14,302,236	40
2017	£ 3,790,541	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 43,966,492</b>	<b>194</b>

\* Accurate from 23 November 2021, UK Government has spent £19.5 million on air charter in support of Defence tasking since 1 January 2021. Predicted expenditure until 31 Dec 21: £1.55 million.

## ■ Ministry of Defence: Fines

**John Healey:**

[\[79278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 19 November 2021 to Question 75807, Ministry of Defence: Fines, if he will provide details of the (a) 36 contracts his Department approved retrospectively and (b) total value of each of those contracts.

**Jeremy Quin:**

It will take time to collate the information needed to answer the right hon. Member's question. I will write to him in due course.

## ■ Ministry of Defence: Meetings

**Owen Thompson:**

[76759]

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

**Leo Docherty:**

Formal, structured meetings are usually minuted, however, not all meetings need to be minuted. MOD information and records management policy and guidance assists officials to make judgements as to which 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.

## ■ Ministry of Defence: Staff

**Robert Largan:**

[78532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Headcount of each region is detailed in the below table, please note that figures are published on the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2021>

The latest published data is for 31 March 2021 and that has been provided. The data for the June and September dates is taken from internal sources using the same methodology as the published data.

### GOVERNMENT OFFICE

REGION	31-MAR-21	01 JUNE 2021	01 SEPTEMBER 2021
EAST MIDLANDS	1,830	1,833	1,832
EASTERN	3,825	3,825	3,816
LONDON	4,055	4,091	4,101
NORTH EAST	228	225	225
NORTH WEST	1,867	1,881	1,889
SOUTH EAST	10,336	10,340	10,322
SOUTH WEST	22,276	22,349	22,355
WEST MIDLANDS	2,613	2,630	2,642

## GOVERNMENT OFFICE

REGION	31-MAR-21	01 JUNE 2021	01 SEPTEMBER 2021
YORKS and HUMBER	2,071	2,083	2,083
WALES	1,138	1,121	1,123
SCOTLAND	4,140	4,174	4,181
N.IRELAND	922	914	909
Grand Total	55,301	55,466	55,478

### ■ Multi-role Ocean Surveillance Ship: Procurement

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[76599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has issued an Invitation To Tender for the Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance Ship.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[76874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date the Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance Ship is due to come into service in 2024; and when the tender for that programme will be published.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The new Multi Role Ocean Surveillance programme is in its concept and assessment phase. Options for the procurement strategy and the project schedule are under development, but no firm decisions have yet been made.

No precise date has yet been set for the entry into service of the Multi Role Ocean Surveillance Ship.

### ■ Veterans: Identity Cards

**Justin Madders:** [\[80335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 47041 on Veterans: Identity Cards, what is the timetable for delivery of phase two of the scheme.

**Leo Docherty:**

We are unable to provide a timetable for delivery at this time, but hope to be able to provide an update on this soon.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ BBC: Broadcasting****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[79303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the BBC on the operation of the convention of the Monarch's office being shown footage intended to be broadcast by the BBC.

**Julia Lopez:**

The BBC is an independent body governed by the Royal Charter. It is operationally and editorially independent from the government, and the government cannot intervene in the BBC's day-to-day operations.

**■ Broadband: Housing****Dr Luke Evans:**[\[76840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress she has been made in requiring gigabit capable broadband for new build homes in time for Spring 2022.

**Julia Lopez:**

Following the consultation response which set out our policy proposals last year, we have worked with industry stakeholders and other government departments to develop legislative proposals that will ensure that new homes are future-proofed with gigabit-ready infrastructure and built with gigabit-capable connections.

We will shortly be publishing a statutory technical consultation on our legislative proposals and seek to lay the implementing regulations in Parliament as soon as possible.

**■ Channel Four Television****Kate Osamor:**[\[77485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate his Department has made of the date and year by which Channel 4 will no longer potentially be a profitable broadcaster under its current model.

**Julia Lopez:**

Linear TV broadcasting is facing increasing and unprecedented pressure from competition for viewers from high spending streaming giants, and there is growing pressure on TV advertising revenues too. Ofcom have recognised these challenges in their latest recommendations to the government on the future of public service media, published on 15 July.

Channel 4 is uniquely constrained in its ability to meet these challenges while it remains under public ownership. In comparison to other public service broadcasters, its access to capital is highly constrained. By virtue of the publisher-broadcaster restriction and borrowing restrictions placed upon it, its ability to diversify its income

streams is also limited. These factors restrict Channel 4's ability to respond to changing market dynamics now and into the future.

Recognising this challenge, we are looking at reform to protect Channel 4's long term future so it can continue to be a valued public service broadcaster, serving audiences with great public service content for years to come.

We have consulted on the best model to ensure Channel 4's sustainability. We are analysing all the responses to ensure evidence feeds into the government's policy-making and final decision.

**Kate Osamor:** [\[77486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department plans to publish the results of the consultation on a change of ownership of Channel 4 Television Corporation.

**Julia Lopez:**

We have consulted on the best ownership model to support Channel 4 into the future. We are carefully considering all the views and evidence we have received to inform the government's policy-making and final decision.

The Government's response will be published in due course.

**Kate Osamor:** [\[78326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's Consultation on a change of ownership of Channel 4 Television Corporation, what steps she plans to take if there is public opposition to a change in Channel 4's current operating model.

**Julia Lopez:**

The government is committed to the success and sustainability of public service broadcasting, including the continuing success of Channel 4, and preserving its unique and vital role in UK broadcasting.

We have publicly consulted on the best ownership model to support Channel 4 into the future and have welcomed responses from all stakeholders. We are carefully considering all the views and evidence received to inform the government's policy-making and final decision.

## ■ Channel Four Television: Privatisation

**Kate Osamor:** [\[77484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of the possibility of increasing the borrowing limits available to Channel 4 as an alternative to privatisation.

**Julia Lopez:**

As set out in our consultation document, we are seeking views on the best model to ensure Channel 4's sustainability in an ever-changing and competitive landscape, and we continue to remain open to all options to address this. We are currently

analysing the views and evidence we have received from a broad range of stakeholders to inform the government's policy-making and final decision.

## ■ **Computers: Sales**

**John Healey:**

[\[79274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact of graphics processing unit scalping on UK (a) competition policy and (b) businesses.

**Chris Philp:**

Under UK competition law, responsibility for investigating anticompetitive practices falls to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the UK's competition authority. The government has ensured that the CMA has significant powers and expertise to investigate anti-competitive practices, and as an independent authority, the CMA has discretion to investigate competition cases which, according to its prioritisation principles, it considers most appropriate. The CMA may also carry out detailed examinations of why particular markets may not be working well and take remedial action to address features of markets which restrict competition.

GPUs are used for a number of applications and supply has been impacted by an ongoing global shortage. The current shortage is due to a confluence of unexpected events, including unprecedented pandemic-driven shifts in demand within a global market. HMG recognises the severity of the current chip shortage, the widespread international ramifications and the difficulties it has created for a number of UK firms and individuals. HMG are engaging affected UK sectors and key international partners to identify any available domestic or international mitigations.

## ■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Meetings**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[76747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her Department's process is for (a) recording and (b) keeping minutes of all meetings relating to Government business.

**Julia Lopez:**

Formal, structured meetings are usually minuted, however, not all meetings need to be minuted. For example all DCMS internal decision making Board and Committee meetings, within its formal governance framework, are minuted. In regards to other meetings, the general guidance that DCMS provides officials within the department supports them to 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](#).

Minutes are stored electronically within the department's storage solution, with access granted to appropriate officials as this is required.

## ■ Football Index: Compensation

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[78399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps is she taking to ensure that the victims of the Football Index scandal are compensated for their losses on investments.

**Chris Philp:**

The government appreciates the significant impact that the collapse of the novel gambling product Football Index had on former customers. BetIndex, the company which operated Football Index, went into liquidation on 5 November. The process is continuing and it is likely that this will result in some amounts being reimbursed to creditors. There is no compensation scheme for losses caused by a gambling firm ceasing to operate and the government does not think it would be appropriate to use public funds for these purposes.

## ■ Gambling: Black Economy

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[78449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has plans to remove gambling licences in the UK from operators that are found to be engaged in black market activity.

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[78450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of organisations that claim to uphold gambling standards representing companies that are being investigated for black market activities.

**Chris Philp:**

All gambling companies offering gambling facilities to consumers in Great Britain, wherever they are based, must be licensed by the Gambling Commission and comply with the conditions and codes of practice of their operating licences. Operators are expected to obey the laws of all other jurisdictions in which they operate, and must report any regulatory or criminal investigation into their activities in any jurisdiction to the Commission. Operators must also report the granting, withdrawal or refusal of any application for a licence in another jurisdiction. These requirements, along with the international cooperation the Commission enjoys with other gambling regulators, enable the Commission to make the necessary ongoing assessments of an operator's suitability to hold a GB licence. It is for the responsible authorities in each jurisdiction to determine whether operators' activities comply with the applicable rules.

Further information on what the Gambling Commission expects from its licensed operators regarding their operations in other jurisdictions can be found in the Gambling Commission's Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice:

<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/licensees-and-businesses/lccp/condition/15-2-1-reporting-key-events>

Our Review of the Gambling Act 2005 is looking widely at the framework of gambling regulation in Great Britain, including the powers and resources of the Gambling Commission.

## ■ Telecommunications: International Cooperation

**Chi Onwurah:**

[79366]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what trans-Atlantic technology co-operation her Department is supporting (a) generally and (b) in the field of telecommunications; and how does that support compare with that of the Trade and Technology Council.

**Julia Lopez:**

The US and the UK are the very closest of partners, with cooperation extending from security and defence, to trade and prosperity, to science and technology among many other areas. During President Biden's visit in June this year, he and the Prime Minister announced a landmark UK-US Tech Partnership, which would build on our already strong tech relationship to ensure we are equipped to deal with the biggest challenges we face today. We continue to work closely with both the US and Australia as part of AUKUS, which will include cooperation on artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and cyber capabilities.

The UK-US Tech Partnership is result focused and based on deep and practical technical cooperation. The partnership aims to strengthen UK-US cooperation in areas such as the resilience and security of critical supply chains, and emerging technologies including artificial intelligence and quantum, and to improve the accessibility and flow of data to support economic growth, public safety and scientific and technological progress.

As part of the partnership, we are taking forward collaborative activities to promote a more open and diverse telecoms equipment market, including opportunities for joint research and development and developing proposals on future wireless technology, such as 6G.

This range of cooperation puts us on an extremely strong footing with US collaboration and we intend to deepen it further.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Coronavirus Catch-up Premium: Mental Health

**Louise Haigh:**

[79417]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much of the Covid education recovery funding is dedicated to mental health.

**Will Quince:**

We are investing nearly £5 billion to support recovery for children and young people who need it most. This includes the recovery premium for this academic year worth over £300 million, weighted so that schools with more disadvantaged pupils receive more funding. Schools can use this funding to deliver evidence based approaches to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.

Schools already support the mental wellbeing of their pupils as part of their curriculum provision and pastoral support, which is paid for from schools' core funding. The autumn 2021 Spending Review delivers an additional £4.7 billion for the core schools' budget by the 2024/25 financial year, compared to previous plans. This settlement includes an additional £1.6 billion for schools and high needs in the 2022/23 financial year, on top of the funding we previously announced. It also includes an additional £1 billion for a Recovery Premium over the next two academic years (2022/23 and 2023/24). Schools will have flexibility to target funding towards those pupils who need it most, and we will publish further detail around rates, allocations, and conditions of grant in due course.

In May 2021, we also announced £17 million to build on existing mental health support in schools and colleges. This included £9.5 million to offer senior mental health lead training to around a third of all state schools and colleges in the 2021/22 financial year. This helped to implement effective holistic approaches to mental health and wellbeing, and £7 million to Wellbeing for Education Recovery which enabled local authorities to continue supporting schools and colleges to meet ongoing mental wellbeing needs.

This is in addition to the £79 million announced by the Department of Health and Social Care in March 2021 to significantly expand children's mental health services. This will partly be spent on speeding up and expanding the provision of Mental Health Support Teams in schools and colleges, meaning nearly three million children in England will access school or college-based support by April 2023.

**■ Department for Education: Meetings****Owen Thompson:****[76748]**

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

**Michelle Donelan:**

In the Department for Education formal structured meetings are usually minuted, however, not all meetings need to be minuted.

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', available here:

<https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/popapersguidance2009.pdf>.

In instances where minutes are taken, and to adhere to the obligation in the Civil Service Code to keep accurate official records, the department has in place a retention schedule that advises that minutes of internal operational meetings should be retained for 5 years.

There is a further option to retain minutes, such as those involving external stakeholders and policy development, for up to 20 years, at which point they may be selected for transfer to The National Archives.

## ■ Department for Education: Stonewall

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[78345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 4 November 2021 to Question 61056 on Department for Education: Stonewall, for what reason his Department's Answer is different to the Answer given by his Department in an FOI response in October 2021, reference FOI 2021-0011344; and whether other funding by his Department to Stonewall was omitted in that Answer or the FOI request.

**Michelle Donelan:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2021]:* The inconsistency between the two responses consists of two elements:

- Different time periods covered by the two responses. The Freedom of Information (FOI) response provided detail on the 2019 and 2020 calendar years. The Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ) response provided detail on the 2017-18 financial year through to, and including, 25 October 2021
- The FOI response erroneously included a payment of £48,693.33 on behalf of the Government Equalities Office, dated 01/04/2019

This is set out in the attached table.

The department has looked into the impact that this discrepancy has had on previous FOIs and at this stage we think it is limited to three responses. The department will amend and reissue those FOI responses accordingly.

**Attachments:**

1. 78345\_table [78345\_FOI\_funding\_stonewall.xls]

## ■ Disability History Month

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[76674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support Disability History Month and promote its message across (a) educational settings and (b) Government departments and agencies.

**Will Quince:**

The government is committed to transforming the everyday lives of disabled people. We published the National Disability Strategy in July 2021. This sets out a wide-

ranging set of practical actions to improve the lives of disabled people, including in relation to education.

Individual education settings may make their own arrangements, internally and externally, to recognise Disability History Month. The Department for Education has a long history of celebrating difference, including Disability Awareness Month internally, and is also taking a range of actions to improve the education of disabled children and young people. In particular, we will be consulting in the first three months of 2022 on ways to strengthen the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system through the SEND Review.

We have also increased high needs funding for children and young people with complex SEND. In the summer, we announced a further £780 million for financial year 2022-23, building on an increase of more than £1.5 billion over the two years since 2019-20, and bringing the total high needs budget next year to £8.9 billion. The autumn 2021 Spending Review delivers an additional £4.7 billion for the core schools' budget (schools and high needs) by financial year 2024-25, including an additional £1.6 billion in 2022-23, on top of the funding increases we announced last summer.

We are also investing £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025 to deliver new places and improve existing provision for pupils with SEND or who require alternative provision. This funding represents a transformational investment in new high needs provision and will help deliver tens of thousands of new places.

## ■ Food Poverty: Children

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[76585]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, (a) what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Government's steps to end child food poverty and (b) if he will make it his policy to expand free school meals eligibility to include more children.

**Will Quince:**

This government is committed to supporting those on low incomes and continues to do so through many measures, such as spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

As our recovery gathers pace and with record vacancies, our focus is now on continuing to support parents progressing into work. This is because we know that work, particularly where it is full-time, substantially reduces the risks of child poverty and improves long-term outcomes for families and children. Our multi-billion-pound Plan for Jobs, which has recently been expanded by £500 million, will help people across the UK to find work and to boost their wages and prospects.

We recognise that some people may require extra support over the winter as we enter the final stages of recovery, which is why vulnerable households across the country will be able to access a new £500 million support fund to help them with essentials. The Household Support Fund will provide £421 million to help vulnerable people in England with the cost of food, utilities and wider essentials. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving

almost £80 million (£41 million for the Scottish Government, £25 million for the Welsh Government and £14 million for the Northern Ireland Executive), for a total of £500 million.

To support low income families further, we have increased the value of Healthy Start food vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25, helping eligible low income households buy basic foods like milk, fruit and vitamins. We are also investing over £200 million a year from 2022 to continue our Holiday Activities and Food programme which is already providing enriching activities and healthy meals to children in all English local authorities.

We support over 1.7 million pupils from the lowest income families to concentrate, learn, and achieve in the classroom through the provision of free school meals. An additional 1.3 million infants receive a free meal under the universal infant free school meals policy

Under this government, eligibility for free school meals (FSM) has been extended several times.

In 2018, the government introduced new eligibility criteria for families on Universal Credit, following a consultation in 2017. It was estimated that this will be more generous in its reach by 2022, in comparison to the legacy benefit system. We included generous protections, which mean any family eligible for FSM transitioning to Universal Credit from a legacy benefit will continue to have access to FSM even if they move above the earnings threshold.

## ■ Home Education: Registration

**Andrew Selous:**

[\[76601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the register of children who are home educated will come into force; and if he will ensure that register is in place for the 2022-23 school year.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department remains committed to a form of local authority register for children not in school. We will set out further details on this in the government response to the 'Children Not in School' consultation, which we hope to publish before the end of the year.

## ■ Overseas Students

**Valerie Vaz:**

[\[79360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an estimate of the number of overseas students in the UK, broken down by (a) nationality and (b) university.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes data about students enrolled at UK higher education (HE) providers.

Statistics on the total number of overseas students at each HE provider in the UK can be found in Table 1 of HESA's Open Data tables. This data is available here:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-1>.

Further detail, which includes the country of domicile prior to study, is available in Table 28. This data is available here: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-28>.

The statistics available in HESA's Open Data tables refer to the academic years 2014/15 to 2019/20. Figures for the academic year 2020/21 will be published by HESA in February 2022.

The government fully recognises the important contribution that international students make to the UK's HE sector, both economically and culturally. International students enrich the university experience for all students, including those from the UK themselves. They bring greater diversity to university and college campuses adding an international dimension to the experience of all students. We are proud that so many international students choose to study here each year and look forward to welcoming many more in the future.

The International Education Strategy update published in February 2021, reaffirms the government's commitment to the two key ambitions of the International Education Strategy to increase the value of our education exports to £35 billion per year, and to sustainably increase the number of international HE students hosted in the UK to at least 600,000 per year, both by 2030.

## ■ Pre-school Education

**Barbara Keeley:**

**[79313]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 29 September 2021 to Question 62680, on Pre-school Education, what assessment he has made of the consistency of early years services that are specifically non-childcare for children up to five years old across the UK.

**Will Quince:**

The government is committed to championing family hubs. Local service delivery will vary from place to place, reflecting the needs of the local population. Family hubs bring together a wide range of services, including non-childcare services, for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities, and contain a great Start for Life offer (for children aged 0-2) at their core.

The department has announced a £300 million package to transform services for parents and babies, carers, and children in half of local authorities across England. This will provide thousands of families access to support when they need it, ensuring that babies have the best start in life, as set out in 'Best Start for Life: a vision for the critical 1,001 days', the Early Years Review led by my right hon. Friend, the Member for South Northamptonshire, and delivering on our manifesto commitment to champion family hubs.

We are determined to ensure that family hubs are consistently applying the best evidence on what works in delivering family services. That is why we have established:

- a new National Centre for Family Hubs, run by the Anna Freud Centre, which will support councils with best practice, including how to effectively incorporate a range of 0-5 services into a family hub network;
- an evaluation innovation fund through which we are working with Ecorys UK, Sheffield Hallam University and 6 local authorities to build the evidence base.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Vaccination

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[76586]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of vaccinating the UK's badger population to reduce the spread of bovine tuberculosis in England.

**Jo Churchill:**

In its response to the Godfray Review[1], the Government set out its ambition to move from widespread badger culling to wider deployment of vaccination, with epidemiology-driven culling remaining as an option where epidemiological assessment indicates that it is needed.

We have clear evidence that badger vaccination reduces disease burden in the badger population. Logically, as badgers cause a proportion of cattle breakdowns, badger vaccination would very likely result in a reduction in cattle incidence where badgers are infecting cattle[2].

Modelling of the potential badger control options for post-cull areas was carried out by APHA[3]. Vaccination was found to reduce the number of infected badgers per social group and was comparable with continued culling, indicating that vaccination could be used as an exit strategy from culling to maintain reductions in cattle bTB incidence.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategy-for-achieving-bovine-tuberculosis-free-status-for-england-2018-review-government-response>

[2] [https://tbhub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TB\\_hub\\_badger\\_vaccination\\_powerpoint\\_Sept\\_2021.pdf](https://tbhub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TB_hub_badger_vaccination_powerpoint_Sept_2021.pdf)

[3] Smith, G. C., & Budgey, R. (2021). Simulating the next steps in badger control for bovine tuberculosis in England. *PloSone*, 16(3), e0248426.  
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0248426>

**■ Collier Capital**

**Luke Pollard:** [78500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will release the minutes of the meeting between Collier Capital and Lord Goldsmith on 24 May 2021.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As published in Defra's transparency data for April-June 2021, Lord Goldsmith met Collier Capital and Lord Sarfraz on 24 May to discuss sustainable, plant-based protein and the alignment of agricultural finance with climate and nature. We do not routinely publish the minutes of meetings.

**■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Meetings**

**Owen Thompson:** [76749]

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

**Victoria Prentis:**

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](#).

**Richard Thomson:** [76841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the minutes of the quarterly Board Meetings of his Department have not been uploaded to the gov.uk website since July 2019.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We will publish summaries of Defra board meetings held since July 2019 in due course.

**■ Fluorinated Gases**

**Jane Hunt:** [76871]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to co-ordinate with (a) the Department for Health and Social Care, (b) the NHS and (c) the MHRA on his Department's upcoming F-Gas review.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are engaging with the Department for Health and Social Care, the NHS and the MHRA on considerations for the medical sector as part of our review of the F-gas

regulation. This includes one-to-one engagement and engagement through sector-specific stakeholder groups.

## ■ Food: Labelling

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[76655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of publishing submissions to his Department's call for evidence on reforms to food labelling for animal welfare.

**Victoria Prentis:**

On 13 September the Government published a call for evidence on the impacts of potential animal welfare labelling. The call for evidence closes on 6 December. Following the conclusion of the call for evidence and a period to analyse responses received, the Government will publish a summary of responses. This will include information about the number of responses received and explain the key themes arising from those responses, without infringing upon expected confidentiality or identifying individuals. This approach is in line with the Government Consultation Principles.

## ■ Forests: Environment Protection

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[79291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will consult on the removal of (a) beef, (b) rubber, (c) cocoa and (d) timber from UK supply chains when linked to illegal deforestation as part of the use of forest risk commodities in commercial activity provisions in the Environment Act 2021.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The UK Government has introduced world-leading due diligence legislation through the Environment Act to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains. The new law will make it illegal for larger businesses to use key forest risk commodities produced on land illegally occupied or used in their UK commercial activities. The UK Timber Regulations already prohibit the placing on the market of illegally harvested timber or timber products. To avoid overlapping with this regime, timber and timber products are therefore not in scope of the new provisions.

Secondary legislation is needed to set out key details on how the due diligence provisions will be implemented, including which commodities are regulated. Providing these details in secondary legislation allows us to take a phased approach to the introduction of regulations.

The UK Government will launch a consultation shortly to seek evidence and views to inform how the provisions will be implemented, including which agricultural commodities should be introduced through secondary legislation.

## ■ Low Emission Zones

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[76648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) effectiveness of the Ultra Low Emission Zone in London and (b) environmental and financial benefits that other local authorities could accrue from such a scheme.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Ultra Low Emission Zone was implemented by the Mayor of London, who is responsible for assessing its impacts and effectiveness.

The Government is working with a number of local authorities to bring local roads to within legal limits for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollution, following the actions set out in the 2017 NO<sub>2</sub> plan. A number of these local authorities are implementing Clean Air Zones to achieve this aim, with zones launched in Bath and Birmingham and another launching shortly in Portsmouth. The primary goal of such actions is to safeguard public health from the impacts of air pollution.

Where a local authority identifies a Clean Air Zone is needed, it is required to carry out an assessment of the zone's impacts as part of its initial business case development. These authorities will also undertake ongoing monitoring and analysis to assess the zone's impacts on air quality.

## ■ Meat: Ritual Slaughter

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[76653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of (a) halal and (b) kosher meats exported from the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The 2018 Food Standards Agency's survey into slaughter methods in England and Wales indicates that approximately 24% of meat from sheep slaughtered without stunning was exported to the EU. The Food Standards Agency will be undertaking a further survey in early 2022, which will provide the latest slaughter data.

There is no requirement on meat Export Health Certificates (EHCs) to stipulate if an animal was stunned or not.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[75121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 71453 on Members: Correspondence, how many letters from hon. Members are awaiting responses from Ministers in his Department as of 15 November 2021.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[75122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 71453 on Members: Correspondence, what the (a) target and (b) monthly average response time is for letters sent to him by hon. Members as of 15 November 2021.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[75123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 71453 on Members: Correspondence, what the longest response time has been for a letter sent to him by an hon. Member since January 2021.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[75124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 71453 on Members: Correspondence, what steps he is taking to reduce response times to letters sent to his Department from hon. Members.

**Victoria Prentis:**

There were 1322 letters from hon. Members awaiting responses from Ministers as of 15 November 2021. This year to date Defra has responded to over 9,700 letters from hon. Members.

The target for correspondence sent to the Secretary of State is for 85% to be completed within 20 working days. The monthly average response time for letters sent to him by hon. Members as of 15 November 2021 is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs. We can advise that in the month up until 15 November, 50% of letters sent to Ministers had been responded to within 20 working days.

We are unable to advise what the longest response time has been for a letter sent to the Secretary of State by an hon. Member since January 2021, as this information is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

## ■ **Microplastics: River Tame**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[79297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the study of microplastic pollution in the River Tame, Greater Manchester published by Professor Jamie Woodward, University of Manchester.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[79298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of microplastic pollution in the River Tame, Greater Manchester.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[79299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using a river catchment approach to remove micro plastic pollution from the River Tame.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[79300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will meet with the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish to discuss tackling microplastic pollution in the River Tame.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra and the Environment Agency (EA) are working with academia, National Highways, and the UK water industry to improve our understanding of the scale of the microplastic pollution problem, to identify the key sources, and to evaluate the efficiency of different wastewater treatment processes in removing microplastics from wastewater effluent before it is discharged to the water environment.

My officials met with Professor Jamie Woodward earlier this year to discuss his latest study on microplastics in the River Tame. We will consider the outcomes of this study, alongside other new and emerging research in this field, when developing policy options for tackling microplastic pollution.

The EA has made no assessment of the level of microplastic pollution in the River Tame specifically. There is currently no statutory requirement for the EA to undertake this activity. However, in 2018 the EA undertook an investigation on the River Tame to identify whether there were any permitted activities based in the Tame catchment with the potential to discharge microplastics or plastic into the watercourse, which led to recommendations to an operator in the catchment. This operator has since surrendered its permit and relocated.

I invite the hon. Member to write to me with regard to meeting to discuss microplastic pollution in the River Tame.

■ **Pet Travel Scheme: Dogs**

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[79491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs per vehicle entered the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme in each year from 2017 to 2020 inclusive.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Animal and Plant Health Agency has information on how many dogs have entered the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme but does not have information on how many dogs have entered per vehicle.

## ■ Pigs: Slaughterhouses

**Sir Geoffrey Cox:**

**[74905]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made in tackling the backlog of pigs awaiting slaughter on farms; and what recent discussions he has had with the (a) National Pig Association and (b) National Farmers' Union on issues affecting the pig industry.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We have been working closely with the pig industry to understand how best to support it in response to the challenges it is facing due to the pandemic, disruption to CO2 supplies, a temporary shortage of labour and several processing plants losing access to the Chinese export market. Ministers and officials meet regularly with the National Pig Association and the National Farmers Union to discuss matters of joint interest including the current situation in the pig sector.

On 14 October, the Government announced a package of measures to support the pig industry and to seek to reduce the animal welfare implications of pigs backing up on farms.

These measures include the approval of up to 800 temporary visas for pork butchers, a Private Storage Aid scheme, and a Slaughter Incentive Payment Scheme to increase the throughput of pigs through processors. We also continue to work with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board to identify new export markets for pork, particularly for lightly processed pork.

Furthermore, in England and Scotland, the two meat levy bodies have introduced a suspension on the statutory levy for pig farmers and producers during November 2021 – suspending payments of the levy pig farmers and producers are required to pay. This will amount to savings for the sector of just under £1 million.

The Government will continue to monitor the evolving situation and to work closely with the industry through this challenging period.

## ■ Rivers: Standards

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[76590]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many rivers in England his Department has assessed as having a poor (a) ecological and (b) chemical status; and what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that those rivers are safe for public use.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency's most recent water body classification results taken in 2019 can be found at:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/England/classifications>.

The Government remains committed to bringing at least three quarters of our water to as close as possible to its natural state as soon as is practicable, supported by at least one legally binding water target in the Environment Act.

Rivers are currently managed for ecological quality rather than public health (bacterial) standards. Where a site is designated as a bathing water, these waters are managed to protect the public's health. The Environment Agency will regularly take samples from these waters to measure bacteria levels and will assess what action is needed to improve water quality to meet the standards set by the Bathing Water Regulations.

## ■ Road Traffic Control: Schools

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[76858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if the Government will help promote school street schemes which keep traffic away from schools at drop off and pick up times to reduce air pollution as a health issue for children.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Prime Minister's Cycling and Walking Plan (Gear Change) was published in July 2020 and included a range of commitments to boost the amount of walking and cycling to school. Hundreds of School Streets have been delivered. These have led to local improvements in air quality and improved the safety of pupils, leading to significant rises in the number of children cycling and walking to school.

£338 million has been made available this year through active travel funding. This will enable local authorities to deliver new safe cycling and walking routes in their areas, which could include the delivery of School Streets.

Local authorities have a range of powers to take action to reduce pollution from road vehicles, such as introduce 20mph zones and enforcing anti-idling laws. Local authorities in England can install School Streets restricting vehicle access around schools using standard traffic signing.

## ■ Sugar Beet: Neonicotinoids

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[79258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the approval of the use of Cruiser SB on sugar beet in 2020, whether he plans to grant approval in 2021; and what steps he is taking to help ensure that no harm will be caused to (a) pollinators and (b) other wildlife as a result of its use.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Emergency authorisations for the limited and controlled use of pesticides are only granted where the legal requirements are met, including that use of the pesticide appears necessary because of danger which cannot be contained by any other reasonable means. When considering emergency authorisations, the Government always takes account of the potential risks to people, animals and the environment (including risks to pollinators and other wildlife).

## ■ Veterinary Medicine: Nurses

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[74988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of veterinary nurses.

**Jo Churchill:**

Veterinary nurses are a key part of veterinary teams and the profession undoubtedly provides a rewarding career. Veterinary nurses register with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) who have confirmed there are currently 20,789 Registered Veterinary Nurses in the UK, an increase of around 4,000 from 2018 numbers.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

## ■ Bosnia and Herzegovina: NATO

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[76626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support her Department is providing to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina with joining NATO.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) aspirations to become a NATO member, when it meets the conditions. Working in close cooperation other members of the Alliance, the UK has helped the BiH MoD develop its medical capacities, support to civilian organisations, gender integration, officer training, international interoperability, and assisted in BiH's programme of reforms with NATO. We also support the NATO HQ in Sarajevo, including through the secondment of UK staff officers, who are playing an important role in building the capacity of the BiH Armed Forces.

## ■ Colombia: Environment Protection

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[76709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the recent reports that 65 environmental defenders were murdered in Colombia in 2020.

**Wendy Morton:**

The British Government remains concerned about the persistent level of violence towards human rights defenders and environmental activists in Colombia. Colombia is a UK Government 'Human Rights Priority Country' - UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government, and in multilateral fora. Most recently, as the UK's Minister for Europe and Americas, I spoke to Vice President Ramírez regarding the human rights situation on a visit to Colombia from 22-24 November.

Through our Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which has provided £68 million in support of peace agreement implementation, security, and stability in Colombia since 2015, we will continue to prioritise funding interventions to protect human rights defenders, including environmental activists, and social leaders.

■ **Companies: Treaties**

**Stephen Doughty:**

**[72457]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government took to support steps towards a binding global treaty on corporate responsibility at the recent negotiating round in Geneva.

**James Cleverly:**

We have engaged with the UN Working Group looking at proposals for a new international treaty on business and human rights since 2015 through to the seventh session, which took place on 25-29 October 2021. At the seventh session the UK actively engaged, setting out the UK's position via a statement which built on our substantive statement made during the sixth session, and participating in discussions chaired by Ecuador on next steps.

The UK Government has consistently supported the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on business and human rights, which are widely regarded as the authoritative international framework to steer practical action by Governments and businesses worldwide on this important and pressing agenda. Implementation of the UNGPs will support access to justice and remedy for victims of business-related human rights abuses, wherever these occur, and encourage businesses to voluntarily adopt due diligence approaches to respecting human rights.

The Government is clear that it expects all UK businesses to respect human rights throughout their operations, in line with the UNGPs. In response to the Guidelines, the UK was the first State to produce a National Action Plan ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522805/Good\\_Business\\_Implementing\\_the\\_UN\\_Guiding\\_Principles\\_on\\_Business\\_and\\_Human\\_Rights\\_updated\\_May\\_2016.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522805/Good_Business_Implementing_the_UN_Guiding_Principles_on_Business_and_Human_Rights_updated_May_2016.pdf)). We continue to develop our approach in line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

■ **Cyprus: Travel**

**Drew Hendry:**

**[79413]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of the 17 November 2021 to Question 73901, on Travel; Cyprus, whether her Department has considered putting in place interim measures to enable travellers from Northern Cyprus who are not able to access the EU Digital COVID Certificate (EUDCC) to travel to the UK during the 2021-22 winter holiday period.

**Wendy Morton:**

Whilst we are looking at whether there are ways to address the issue of access to UK-accepted certificates for certain people vaccinated in the north of Cyprus, people

in this group can still travel to England, but will have to take a pre-departure test, a day 2 and day 8 PCR test and self-isolate for 10 days. Under the Test to Release scheme they can choose to pay for a private COVID-19 test on day 5. If the result is negative (and the result of the day 2 test was negative or inconclusive), they can end their quarantine.

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Meetings

**Owen Thompson:**

[76756]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what her Department's process is for (a) recording and (b) keeping minutes of all meetings relating to Government business.

**Amanda Milling:**

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 at: <https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/popapersguidance2009.pdf>

## ■ Human Rights: Overseas Companies

**Neil Coyle:**

[76710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to prohibit British companies profiteering from human rights abuses abroad.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government has consistently supported the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on business and human rights, which are widely regarded as the authoritative international framework to steer practical action by Governments and businesses worldwide on this important and pressing agenda. The UNGPs support access to justice and remedy for victims of business-related human rights abuses, wherever these occur, and encourage businesses to voluntarily adopt 'due diligence' approaches to respecting human rights.

The Government is clear that it expects all UK businesses to respect human rights throughout their operations, in line with the UNGPs. In response to the Guidelines, the UK was the first State to produce a National Action Plan ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522805/Good\\_Business\\_Implementing\\_the\\_UN\\_Guiding\\_Principles\\_on\\_Business\\_and\\_Human\\_Rights\\_updated\\_May\\_2016.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522805/Good_Business_Implementing_the_UN_Guiding_Principles_on_Business_and_Human_Rights_updated_May_2016.pdf)). We continue to develop our approach in line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

## ■ India: Religious Freedom

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[\[77466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with (a) her Indian counterpart and (b) the United Nations on violence against Muslims in the Indian states of Assam and Tripura.

**Amanda Milling:**

We condemn any instances of discrimination because of religion or belief, regardless of the country or faith involved. We look to India to uphold all freedoms and rights guaranteed in its strong constitution and by the international instruments to which India is a party. We engage with India on a range of human rights matters, working with Union and State Governments, and with non-governmental organisations, to build capacity and share expertise to promote human rights for all. Where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at ministerial level. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, discussed UK Parliamentary interest in human rights in India with Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla on 23 July. Lord Ahmad has also previously raised our concerns about the impact of recent legislative and judicial measures on India's minorities with Indian Government Ministers.

The UK will host an international Ministerial conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in 2022 to energise collective efforts on this agenda, demonstrating our enduring commitment to promoting FoRB for all. We also work with the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, G7 and other multilateral fora to promote FoRB.

## ■ Land Mines

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[79287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to assist the UK's allies and international partners with mine clearance.

**James Cleverly:**

The Global Mine Action Programme 3 (GMAP3), is due to begin in 2022. The programme 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. The precise budget and country allocations are being finalised.

## ■ Montenegro: Russia

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[76625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Russian counterparts on Russian interference in religious institutions in Montenegro.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign Secretary has not discussed Montenegrin religious institutions bilaterally with her Russian counterpart Foreign Minister Lavrov. In the context of tensions in September surrounding the inauguration of the new Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, alongside likeminded partners, we strongly condemned all forms of violence. We called for all involved to de-escalate tensions and establish a democratic, inclusive and constructive dialogue, while respecting religious freedoms, freedom of expression, and freedom to peaceful assembly, as well as the need for individuals to be held to account for their actions.

**■ North Macedonia: Politics and Government****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[76627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations her Department has made to the (a) government of North Macedonia on improving prison conditions in that country prior to its application to join the European Union and (b) government of Russia on possible Russian interference in North Macedonian elections.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK supports North Macedonia through a range of projects, including to improve the functioning of prisons and electoral processes. I visited North Macedonia in October and discussed the steps the Government of North Macedonia is taking to achieve greater Euro-Atlantic integration with Deputy Prime Minister Dimitrov. I also discussed security issues, including recent interference from Russia, with Foreign Minister Osmani. The UK's approach to Russia more broadly is set out in the Integrated Review: the UK takes the threat from the Russian State extremely seriously and we will continue to call out Russian aggression.

**■ Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina****Catherine West:**[\[79440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with the UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Wendy Morton:**

The High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Christian Schmidt, has the UK's full support, including for the use of his executive powers should the situation require it. Our Embassy in Sarajevo maintains close contact with Mr Schmidt and his Office (OHR). The High Representative is visiting London in early December, where he will meet UK Ministers. His role, and that of the stabilisation force (EUFOR), remain essential. As agreed by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, completion of the "5+2 agenda" remains necessary for closure of the OHR. We reject any attempts to undermine the High Representative or to close his office prematurely.

**■ Palestinians: Education and Health Services**

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[79430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has conducted an impact assessment of the potential effect of reductions in official development assistance on Palestinian (a) healthcare and (b) education.

**James Cleverly:**

Following Official Development Assistance (ODA) prioritisation exercises undertaken in March 2021, the UK no longer provides direct funding to the Palestinian Authority to support the salaries of education workers and health professionals. We are a longstanding supporter to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides core services, including healthcare and education to Palestinian refugees.

**■ Peng Shuai**

**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[77464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to the Chinese Government on the wellbeing of tennis player Peng Shui.

**Amanda Milling:**

On 20 November, the FCDO called on the Chinese authorities to assure the safety of Peng Shuai. We continue to follow her case closely.

Everyone should be allowed to speak out without fear of repercussions. All reports of sexual assault, anywhere in the world, should be investigated.

**■ Russia: Ukraine**

**Catherine West:** [\[79438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for her policies of reports of Russian military build-up on the Ukraine/Russia border.

**Wendy Morton:**

We are closely monitoring Russia's pattern of military build-ups on Ukraine's border and in illegally-annexed Crimea. The Prime Minister spoke with President Putin on 25 October and President Zelenskyy on 1 November where he underscored UK support for Ukrainian sovereignty.

We need to deter Russia from aggressive actions against Ukraine and we are looking at a package of sanctions to raise the cost of any further aggressive actions. We will back Ukraine in the face of destabilising or threatening behaviour.

We have demonstrated strong support to Ukraine. The UK, alongside allies and partners, stand with Ukraine in opposing Russian threats to Ukraine's security and territorial integrity, and already support Ukrainian military development as well as regularly exercising with their armed forces.

## ■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[77413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment has she made for the implications of her policies of the UN report entitled Sri Lanka on alarming path towards recurrence of grave human rights violations, published 27 January 2021.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government was concerned by the report on Sri Lanka published in January 2021 by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The UK takes allegations of human rights violations very seriously, and we continue to urge the Government of Sri Lanka to improve human rights and deliver justice and accountability for violations committed during and after the conflict. In March 2021, the UK led a new resolution, 46/1, at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka. The resolution provides a continued framework for international engagement on human rights, highlights serious concerns about the situation, and stresses the importance of a comprehensive accountability process for all violations and abuses committed in Sri Lanka.

The Minister for South Asia Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon has raised the importance of these issues on several occasions with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner and the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris, most recently during calls on 10 May and 24 September respectively. The Foreign Secretary raised the importance of upholding human rights when she met with Foreign Minister Peiris on 26 October.

## ■ Turkey: Kurds

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[76587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, on how many occasions since her appointment has she discussed with her Turkish counterpart protection for the rights of the Kurdish minority in Turkey.

**Wendy Morton:**

We enjoy a regular dialogue with Turkey, a valued partner, on a range of issues, including the rights of minority groups. I have consistently raised human rights with my Turkish counterparts, the Turkish Embassy in London and during my visit to Turkey in June this year. The Foreign Secretary and I look forward to engaging further with our Turkish counterparts on a wide range of issues.

## ■ Turkey: Minority Groups

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[76691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken in response to evidence of continued human rights

abuses and persecution of Kurds, Christians, Jews, Armenians, and other minorities in Turkey.

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[76692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the Turkish Government's policies on political pluralism and freedom of association on religious or belief minority groups in that country.

**Wendy Morton:**

We strongly support all minority groups in Turkey and encourage the Turkish authorities to safeguard their welfare and respect their human rights, in line with provisions in the Turkish constitution that protect the rights of religious minorities. We participated in the 2020 UN Universal Periodic Review of Turkey and pressed particularly for removing obstacles to freedom of expression, including freedom of religion or belief. We will continue to engage with Turkey on these important issues and monitor the treatment of minorities, as well as government moves to close down the People's Democratic Party (HDP).

## ■ **Ukraine: Politics and Government**

**Catherine West:**

[\[79439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her European counterparts on the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

**Wendy Morton:**

There has been regular Ministerial and senior official level engagement with the Government of Ukraine and with our allies and partners in the context of Russia's build-up of military forces in illegally-annexed Crimea and near the Ukrainian border. We continue to monitor the situation and are working with international partners to continue to de-escalate and reassure all sides.

The Prime Minister spoke with President Putin on 25 October and President Zelenskyy on 1 November where he underscored the importance of Ukrainian sovereignty. He also spoke with Quad leaders (US, France and Germany) at the G20 summit on 30 October. The Foreign Secretary has recently spoken to her counterparts from Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Turkey on this issue.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ **Accident and Emergency Departments: Admissions**

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[79295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people receiving treatment at A&E departments in England in each year since 2010.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ **Bolton NHS Foundation Trust: Accident and Emergency Departments**

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[79325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many excess deaths as a result of A&E overcrowding have occurred in Bolton NHS trust hospitals in each of the last three years to date.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ **Cancer: Research**

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[79436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of levels of funding available for research into (a) cures, (b) treatments and (c) diagnostic equipment for cancer; and what steps he is taking to increase research funding for those purposes.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No such assessment has been made. The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). However, the NIHR does not categorise research in the format requested. Additionally, not all studies focus on a specific condition and aim to prevent or improve outcomes for multiple conditions.

The NIHR's expenditure on cancer research has increased from £101 million in 2010/11 to £138 million in 2019/20 and the NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including cancer.

■ **Carers: Unpaid Work**

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[76816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of unpaid carers.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department does not collect information about the number of unpaid carers.

■ **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Health Services**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[76583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure high standards of care by the NHS and other healthcare providers to those diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Services for those with chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME), are commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

CCGs are best placed to plan the provision of services subject to local need and ensure high standards of care are maintained.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) publishes guidelines on best practice for the care, treatment and support of patients. NICE published its updated guideline on the diagnosis and management of CFS/ME in adults and children on 29 October 2021.

## ■ Clinical Trials: Coronavirus

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[58850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of impact of the reduction of clinical trials during the covid-19 outbreak on (a) the NHS and (b) medical research; and what step his Department is taking to support clinical trials and research to recover from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2021]:* During the pandemic research continued and there was no reduction in the number of clinical trials. However, non-COVID-19 studies were impacted by reductions in research delivery capacity and NHS services and many sponsors, funders and sites paused their studies. As of 31 March 2021, 81% of paused commercial studies and 77% non-commercial studies on the National Institute for Health Research's Clinical Research Network portfolio had restarted. In June 2021, the Government published The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery: 2021 to 2022 implementation plan to outline how we will support the recovery of research studies.

## ■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[79399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's publication entitled PPE procurement in the early pandemic, published on 17 November 2021, which of the contracts for supply of Personal Protective Equipment referred through the high priority lane pre-dated the eight-stage assurance process to assess and approve offers of support.

**Edward Argar:**

The 'eight stage process' refers to the introduction of a central clearance board on 4 May 2020. Of the contracts for personal protective equipment, 46 were awarded before that date. However, all suppliers who were evaluated by officials prior to the introduction of the central board, were evaluated on the same criteria for financial standing, technical compliance, price and ability to perform the contract as those who were evaluated after the introduction of the central board.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Sir Alan Campbell:**

[\[76593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the proof of the booster jab will be added to the NHS Covid Pass in response to foreign entry requirements requiring evidence of a booster jab.

**Maggie Throup:**

From 19 November the NHS COVID Pass can be used to demonstrate proof of a booster or third dose for outbound international travel. This is available through the NHS App and NHS.UK.

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[76699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of updating the NHS App to allow users to demonstrate their having received a covid-19 booster vaccination.

**Maggie Throup:**

The NHS COVID Pass can now be used to demonstrate proof of a booster or third dose for outbound international travel and is available through both the NHS App and on NHS.UK. Booster vaccinations are not required for domestic certification in England.

**Catherine West:**

[\[76773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the covid-19 booster doses will be added to the NHS Covid pass; and whether that information will appear on the (a) digital and (b) physical pass.

**Maggie Throup:**

From 19 November, the NHS COVID Pass can be used to demonstrate proof of a booster or third dose for outbound international travel. This is available through both the NHS App and on NHS.UK. We are updating the NHS COVID Pass letter to include booster vaccines and this will be available shortly for people who require digital assistance. Booster vaccinations are not required for domestic certification in England.

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[77497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timeframe is for adding booster covid-19 vaccinations to the domestic and travel Covid Pass on the NHS app and website.

**Maggie Throup:**

From 19 November, the NHS COVID Pass can be used to demonstrate proof of a booster or third dose for outbound international travel through the NHS App and on NHS.UK. Booster vaccinations are not required for domestic certification in England.

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[79365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to introduce covid passports for children under 16 years old.

**Maggie Throup:**

The NHS COVID Pass is available to people aged 16 years old and over and can be used to demonstrate vaccination and recovery from COVID-19. We are looking at ways children aged 12 to 15 years old with two vaccinations to demonstrate their vaccination status for international travel. This will be available shortly, initially via a NHS COVID Pass travel letter. Further information will be made available in due course.

**Nickie Aiken:**

[\[79482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to allow vaccines administered in France to be recorded in the UK National Immunisation Management System to allow people vaccinated abroad to access an NHS Covid Pass.

**Maggie Throup:**

Vaccines administered in France can already be recorded in vaccination records and displayed in the NHS COVID Pass. English residents vaccinated in France should contact their general practitioner or 119 to book an appointment at a regional vaccination centre to record their vaccinations through the National Immunisation Management Service. There are currently seven sites capable of reviewing vaccination evidence with an additional 13 pending. Further expansion of the service is planned in due course.

## ■ Dementia: Research

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[76850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the £95m committed to the Office for Life Sciences for the delivery of the Life Sciences Vision will be allocated to dementia research.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Office for Life Sciences has been provided with £95 million for priority healthcare projects on cancer, obesity and mental health and access and uptake of cutting-edge innovations in the National Health Service.

While this will not be directly allocated to research in dementia, funding will continue from the Medical Research Council and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This includes £375 million announced by the NIHR for research into neurodegenerative diseases on 14 November.

**■ Dental Services: Dorset****Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[79267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people seeking access to NHS dental services in Dorset in (a) 2021, (b) 2020 and (c) 2019.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No such estimate has been made. Patients are not required to register with a practice to receive National Health Service dental services and therefore no waiting list data is held for NHS dentistry.

**■ Dentistry: Walsall****Valerie Vaz:** [\[79364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many dentists there are in the (a) Walsall Commissioning group and (b) Walsall South constituency.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department does not hold data in the format requested.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Freedom of Information****Angela Rayner:** [\[78418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the total cost to the public purse of contesting Freedom of Information requests to his Department relating to procurement during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not held in the format requested.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Staff****Robert Largan:** [\[78528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 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.

**Edward Argar:**

As at 31 March 2021, the Department employed 3,520 civil servants in the following NUTS1 United Kingdom regions:

- 30 civil servants in North West;
- 1,040 civil servants in Yorkshire and the Humber;
- 2,440 civil servants in London; and
- 10 civil servants in South East.

As at 30 June 2021, the Department employed 3,940 civil servants in the following NUTS1 regions:

- 30 civil servants in North West;
- 1,120 civil servants in Yorkshire and the Humber; and
- 2,790 civil servants in London.

As at 30 September 2021, the Department employed 4,210 civil servants in the following NUTS1 regions:

- 30 civil servants in North West;
- 1,180 civil servants in Yorkshire and the Humber; and
- 3,000 civil servants in London.

In line with headcount reporting for Annual Civil Service Employment Survey and Quarterly Public Sector Employment Surveys, statistics are provided as at respective month-ends and numbers are rounded to the nearest ten.

#### ■ **Diabetes: Research**

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[76861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help support charities which are researching Type 1 diabetes.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department supports research charities, including those researching type 1 diabetes, through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and Research England's Quality Related Charity Research Support Fund. This includes supporting the charity-funded ADDRESS-2 diabetes research database resource through the NIHR's Clinical Research Network.

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced a £20 million initiative to support medical research charity-funded early career researchers. All fundraising medical research charities in the United Kingdom, including charities researching type 1 diabetes, which have funded an early career researcher in 2021/22 were eligible to apply.

#### ■ **General Practitioners: Recruitment**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[79382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) recruit and (b) retain more GPs.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England and the profession to increase recruitment, address the reasons why doctors leave the profession and encourage them to return to practice.

The updated GP Contract Framework announced a number of new retention schemes alongside continued support for existing schemes for the workforce. These include the GP Retention Scheme, the International Induction Programme, the Return

to Practice Programme, the Fellowship Programme, the New to Partnership Payment and Supporting Mentors Scheme. We have increased the number of general practitioner training places, with 4,000 trainees this year compared to 2,671 in 2014.

#### ■ General Practitioners: Telephone Services

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[79380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential viability of ensuring all GP surgeries have a (a) queue and (b) hold function as part of their booking system for GP appointments.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England has estimated that one quarter of practices have already moved to cloud-based telephony, which can provide automated queuing and a hold function. 'Our plan for improving access for patients and supporting general practice', published 14 October 2021, announced additional funding for NHS England to implement the adoption of cloud-based telephony technology across all practices.

#### ■ General Practitioners: Walsall

**Valerie Vaz:**

[\[79363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GPs are registered in the (a) Walsall Commissioning Group and (b) Walsall South constituency.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The latest available data shows that as at 30 September 2021, there were 847 full time equivalent doctors in general practice working in the Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This CCG was established on 1 April 2021 following the merger of Dudley CCG, Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG, Walsall CCG and Wolverhampton CCG. The data is not held for Walsall South as general practice workforce figures are not collected by constituency.

#### ■ Genetics: Screening

**Chris Green:**

[\[59814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) budget and (b) testing strategy are for each genomic laboratory hub for the most recent year for which data is available.

**Chris Green:**

[\[59815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding was allocated to the NHS Genomic Medicine Service in the most recent financial year for which data is available.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The seven National Health Service Genomic Laboratory Hubs (GLHs) are commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement. The information requested on the budget for each GLH and funding allocated to the NHS Genomic Medicine

Service is not held in the format requested. While NHS England and NHS Improvement allocate some resources through specialised commissioning and highly specialised services, funding is also provided through local commissioning budgets which is not held centrally.

The National Genomic Test Directory currently covers over 3,000 rare and inherited diseases and the majority of solid and haematological cancers. The national genomic testing strategy focuses on implementing comprehensive DNA and RNA testing through to a full repertoire of genomic testing up to the level of whole exome and whole genome sequencing to drive efficiency and productivity. The National Genomic Test Directory is reviewed on an annual basis to keep pace with scientific, clinical and technological advances, while delivering value for money for the NHS. The strategic approach of the NHS Genomic Medicine Service is also informed by the NHS Long Term Plan and the Government's strategy for healthcare genomics, Genome UK.

## ■ Health Services

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[76819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of when the NHS back log will be cleared.

**Edward Argar:**

No formal estimate has been made.

We will publish a delivery plan for the recovery of elective services later this year.

## ■ Health: Homelessness

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[76832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to implement the recommendations of the Kerslake Commission Final Report to introduce guidance that stipulates that Integrated Care Boards, Integrated Care Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards have a dedicated focus on tackling health inequalities for those experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department continues to work with NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop guidance for integrated care boards (ICB). In September 2021, we published our integrated care partnership (ICP) engagement document, setting out that ICPs will be required to develop an integrated care strategy, which we expect to address the wider social determinants that drive health inequalities, including housing. The ICB and local authorities will need to have regard to that strategy when making decisions. We are also working to update guidance for Health and Wellbeing Boards to reflect new legislation in the Health and Care Bill.

## ■ HIV Infection: Mental Health Services

**David Mundell:**

[\[76616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to improve the support Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) mental health services can offer people living with HIV, through better training on HIV issues for IAPT staff; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of developing an IAPT-LTC pathway for HIV.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Under the NHS Long Term Plan, we are investing £2.3 billion each year in mental health services including expanding access to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services to a total of 1.9 million adults a year by 2023/24, including people living with long term conditions such as HIV.

While we have no current plans to make a formal assessment of a potential IAPT pathway for HIV, we would expect that treatment services, such as HIV clinics, would take patients' mental health needs into account as part of their overall care.

We are publishing a HIV Action Plan on 1 December 2021, which will set out plans for HIV services, including on mental health.

## ■ Hospitals: Construction

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[76737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to assess future requirements for new hospital builds from those which have yet to receive Government support.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department is currently assessing applications from National Health Service trusts in England to identify the next eight schemes to form part of the national new hospital building programme. Evidence considered during this process will also inform the ongoing investment in new hospitals, subject to future funding settlements. The recent Spending Review confirmed the initial £3.7 billion for the first four years for the delivery of 40 new hospitals, £1.7 billion for upgrades and committed an additional £5.9 billion capital for diagnostics, technology and elective recovery investments.

## ■ Hospitals: Prisoners

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[60384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Injustice? Towards a better understanding of health care access challenges for prisoners, published by Nuffield Trust on 21 October 2021, what steps he plans to take to improve planning of hospital services to meet the high and specialised needs of prisoners being admitted to hospitals in England.

**Gillian Keegan:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are ensuring prison screening programmes are re-established and effective access to external treatment pathways is made available through telemedicine or in person hospital attendance.

In order to improve the understanding of existing medical conditions and needs of those entering the secure estate, such as drug use, mental health and alcohol-related disorders, NHS England and NHS Improvement are reviewing and updating the reception screening tool across the adult secure estate.

■ **Ivermectin****Mr David Jones:**[\[73754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential therapeutic applications of Ivermectin as a protease inhibitor.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 17 November 2021]:* Protease inhibitors have an important role in the treatment of COVID-19. Therefore, the United Kingdom recently secured 250,000 patient courses of the Pfizer PAXLOVID protease inhibitor, as well as 480,000 patient courses of Merck Sharp Dohme's polymerase inhibitor Lagevrio. Evidence for ivermectin as a treatment of COVID-19 is inconclusive at this stage. However, the Therapeutic Taskforce continues to monitor any emerging evidence for ivermectin as a COVID-19 treatment from clinical trials worldwide. This includes clinical trials considering ivermectin's potential application as a protease inhibitor.

■ **Joint Replacements: Waiting Lists****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[76588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with hospitals in West Yorkshire on reducing the waiting list for joint replacement surgery in the region.

**Edward Argar:**

We have had no specific discussions. National Health Service trusts in West Yorkshire and Harrogate are working together to share waiting list information, good practice and reduce variation in care as part of the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership. Orthopaedic surgeons are collaborating with the network to develop approaches to address the waiting list for joint replacement and other orthopaedic conditions.

A citizen panel has been established to inform the work on elective surgery recovery and the Partnership is recruiting people on the waiting list to include their perspective in discussions.

## ■ Medical Equipment

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[76870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the NHS inhaler switchover policy on the UK inhaler industry.

**Edward Argar:**

We have made no specific assessment. We will continue to engage closely with industry and monitor the impact on businesses and supply chains.

The National Health Service remains committed to reducing the carbon impact of inhalers used in the treatment of respiratory conditions. All inhaler prescriptions, structured medication reviews or planned asthma reviews taking place in primary care should consider moving or facilitating patients to lower carbon options where it is clinically appropriate to do so.

## ■ Mental Health and Suicide: Young People

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[76683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to assess the long-term impact of the covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns on the (a) mental health and (b) suicide rates of young people.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the Department has funded various studies into the impact of COVID-19 on mental health. Three projects will focus on children and young people, including assessing the impact of the pandemic and related social restrictions on the mental health of teenagers.

We will continue to monitor suicide rates, including those of young people, through data published by the Office for National Statistics. The National Child Mortality Database, funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement, also monitors data for all children aged under 18 years old in England. In addition, we will continue to consider the potential impact of the pandemic on groups, including children and young people, through the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group and its COVID-19 sub-group.

## ■ Mental Health Services

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[76589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Serenity Integrated Mentoring on the mental health of patients.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No formal assessment has been made. However, in light of the concerns raised regarding the Serenity Integrated Mentoring model, NHS England and NHS Improvement have written to the Medical Directors of National Health Service mental

health trusts asking them to review the implementation of Serenity Integrated Mentoring and similar models, in partnership with local patient representatives and those who might have been in the care of such models.

NHS England and NHS Improvement intend to gather learning from these local reviews, to inform the expansion and transformation of community and crisis care services for adults and older adults with mental health needs as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[79446]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of levels of unmet demand for multi-morbidity and multi-disabilities facilities in mental health services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We have not made a formal assessment. In line with equalities legislation, support is reasonably adjusted for disabled people to ensure that appropriate care is delivered.

As outlined in the Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 to 2023/24, all local health systems are expected to set out how they will address disparities in access and outcomes for groups with protected characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, poverty, disability and LGBTQ+ communities by 2023/24.

To support local areas to address these disparities, NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioned the Advancing Mental Health Equalities Resource. The Resource is a guide for local commissioners and providers to identify and address inequalities in mental health care, including for people with physical disabilities. The Resource is available at the following link:

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/nccmh/care-pathways/advancing-mental-health-equality>

## ■ Mental Health Services: Autism and Learning Disability

**Barbara Keeley:**

**[53847]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the Government's response to the Health and Social Care Select Committee's report, *The Treatment of Autistic People and People with Learning Disabilities*, published on 13 July 2021.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 18 October 2021]:* We will respond to the Select Committee's report as soon as possible, with full consideration of the recommendations made.

The Department is developing an action plan to implement 'Building the Right Support'. The action plan will set out the actions to improve the treatment of autistic people and people with learning disabilities, and will inform the Government's response to the Committee.

## ■ Motor Neurone Disease

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[76591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) improve support for those with Motor Neurone Disease and (b) increase research in the area of diagnosis and treatment.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Care for patients with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) involves a multi-disciplinary approach from MND specialists. NHS England commissions specialised care from 25 specialised neurological treatment centres across England. NHS England has published a service specification setting out what providers must have in place to deliver specialised neurological care. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline, 'Motor neurone disease: assessment and management', contains guidance for clinicians in the diagnosis of MND. Clinicians and commissioners should continue to take this guidance into account, alongside prioritisation advice provided by the Association of British Neurologists and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

We have committed £50 million for MND research over the next five years. New, innovative projects will help researchers to better understand the disease and its related conditions, develop and test treatments and improve care for those living with MND. We will also establish the National Institute for Health Research's MND Research Unit to coordinate innovative research applications.

## ■ Neurology: Standards

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[78464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the implementation of recommendations made by the Getting it Right First Time programme on reducing variations in neurology services.

**Edward Argar:**

The Getting it Right First Time (GIRFT) national speciality report on neurology was published in September 2021. The report has made recommendations focussing on improving access to care for patients with neurological disorders and bringing treatments closer to home. These recommendations will reduce variations in neurology services across England.

The GIRFT programme is now embedded within NHS England and NHS Improvement programmes to improve quality and productivity, so that best practice is adopted throughout the National Health Service. NHS England and NHS Improvement are encouraging clinicians and trusts to consider the GIRFT recommendations in their work.

## ■ NHS: Pensions

**Drew Hendry:** [\[79414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to question 60443 on NHS: Pensions, what equalities impact assessment his Department has made on the potential effect of not equalising Survivor Pension Benefits rules for people who are unable to enter into new marriages or co-habit with a partner as a result of the pre-2008 NHS Survivor Pension rules without losing their entitlements on pensions for women and men who are seeking to re-marry or co-habit with a new partner.

**Edward Argar:**

Equality Impact Assessments are regularly performed to facilitate and evidence compliance with Government's duties under the Equality Act 2010. However, such assessments are not a statutory requirement. The prospective improvements to survivor benefit terms were implemented in 2008 and so was not subject to this process at the time. Equality Impact Assessments are not usually produced where a policy remains unchanged as in this case.

## ■ NHS: Recruitment

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[76696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to expand the medical workforce.

**Edward Argar:**

We have funded an additional 1,500 undergraduate medical school places each year for domestic students in England or a 25% increase over three years. This expansion was completed in September 2020 and has delivered five new medical schools in England. In addition, we have temporarily lifted the cap on medical school places for students who completed A-Levels in 2020 and in 2021 and who had an offer from a university in England to study medicine, subject to their grades. We have no immediate plans to further increase the number of places.

## ■ Obesity: Children and Young People

**Sir George Howarth:** [\[77386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement of 16 November 2021, what estimate he has made of the (a) total cost of setting up 15 new specialist clinics to support severely obese children and young people, (b) annual running costs of those clinics and (c) financial benefit of those clinics.

**Maggie Throup:**

The National Health Service has committed £3 million in 2021/22 to mobilise complications related to excess weight (CEW) clinics, doubling to £6 million from 2022/23. No formal evaluation of the financial benefit of these clinics has been undertaken. However, the new CEW clinics will be participating in a national evaluation to build the evidence base around impact and cost effectiveness.

## ■ Ophthalmic Services

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[79384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the capacity of the NHS to meet demand for ophthalmology services.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement's National Eye Care Recovery and Transformation programme is assisting local systems to redesign and improve outpatient ophthalmology services and improve the use of technology to support patients outside of hospital and meet future demand.

## ■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[77498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to make prescriptions free for people who suffer from asthma.

**Edward Argar:**

We currently have no plans to do so. Approximately 89% of prescriptions are already dispensed free of charge and extensive arrangements are in place to help those most in need. To support those who do not qualify for an exemption, a prescription pre-payment certificate can be paid for in instalments. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

## ■ Prisoners: Mental Health Services

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[77404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the HMI CFRS report, A joint thematic inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders, published on 17 November 2021, what recent assessment he has made of trends in waiting times for group therapies for people with mental health problems in prisons in England and Wales.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[77405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the HMI CFRS report, A joint thematic inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders, published on 17 November 2021, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for group therapies for people with mental health problems in prisons in England and Wales.

**Gillian Keegan:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement undertook a comprehensive mental health needs analysis was undertaken during summer 2021. It is expected to provide information about the current mental health needs of prisoners as well as the staffing skill mix and resources required to meet these needs. NHS England and NHS Improvement expect to publish the outcomes from this analysis by April 2022.

NHS England and NHS Improvement acknowledge there will continue to be restrictions on accessing group therapies until prisons move into stage one of the COVID-19 recovery regime.

Local recovery plans are in place to address the mental health and well-being of prisoners, which will include both individual and group therapy depending on restrictions. In the interim, telemedicine and digital platforms have been developed to support prisoners' ongoing mental health and wellbeing across the prison estate.

## ■ Smoking

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[77514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the 94 key milestones of the Tobacco Control Delivery Plan 2017-22 with delivery dates by 31 December 2021 have been met.

**Maggie Throup:**

Progress on the current Tobacco Control Delivery Plan was reviewed in June 2021. This review found that there are 82 key milestones with a delivery date by 31 December 2021. Of these, 54 were already complete with the rest making progress although COVID-19 has affected delivery in some cases.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[77515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the 20 key milestones of the Tobacco Control Delivery Plan 2017-22 due for delivery annually will have been delivered in two or more succeeding years by 31 December 2021.

**Maggie Throup:**

Progress on the current Tobacco Control Delivery Plan was reviewed in June 2021. There are 26 milestones with a delivery date which states that delivery should be completed annually. Of these deliverables, the review found that all had been delivered in two or more successive years.

## ■ Social Services

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[76649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish a social care plan.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are working with care users, providers and other partners to develop these plans and will publish further detail in a white paper for reform later this year.

## ■ Social Services: Fees and Charges

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[76815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an estimate of the potential average number of people per year who would have to sell their homes to pay for care after the introduction of the cap on care costs from October 2023.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Government's new £86,000 cap on personal care costs will allow more people to preserve their savings and assets. Nobody will be forced to sell their home to pay for their care in their lifetime. Where people do need to access housing wealth to pay for care, individuals are able to take out a Deferred Payment Agreement so that payments can be deducted from their estate after they die. Even when individuals do choose to access housing wealth, no-one will need to pay more than £86,000 for their personal care over the cost of their lifetime.

**■ Social Services: Newcastle upon Tyne****Chi Onwurah:**[\[76685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the level of unmet care needs among working-age disabled adults in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency and (b) the Newcastle City Council area.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific assessment has been made. Local authorities are responsible for assessing individual's eligibility for care and support under the Care Act 2014 and where the individual is eligible for financial support, for meeting those needs. Where individuals are not eligible for financial support, local authorities may support individuals to make arrangements for care.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[76686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the changes in charging of care to working-age disabled adults in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central and (b) Newcastle City Council in each of the last five years.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific assessment has been made. Local authorities have discretion to implement charging policies to best meet the needs of the local populations they serve, whilst adhering to the existing legislative framework and statutory guidance.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[76689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the number of working-age disabled adults who receive their personal care budgets via direct payments in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central and (b) Newcastle City Council.

**Gillian Keegan:**

This information is not collected in the format requested. However, in the local authority area of Newcastle upon Tyne, 430 adults aged 18 to 64 years old received social care through direct payments in 2020/21.

**■ Social Services: North East****Chi Onwurah:** [\[76688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase recruitment of care staff in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central, (b) Newcastle City Council and (c) the North East.

**Gillian Keegan:**

On 3 November 2021, we published details of a new £162.5 million Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for local authorities to increase adult social care workforce capacity over winter. This includes £9,355,770 for North East across 12 local authorities, including £1,016,187 for Newcastle City Council, for Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency.

**■ Travel: Coronavirus****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[76600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that 12-15 year olds who have only had one covid-19 vaccine are able to enter countries which require two vaccines for entry.

**Maggie Throup:**

Most children aged 12 to 15 years old in England are offered one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine which provides a good level of protection against serious illness.

Each country sets its requirements for entry. However, many countries exempt under 18 year olds from providing evidence of their vaccination status or accept test results instead of vaccination. We are currently 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 a NHS COVID Pass travel letter. Further information will be available in due course.

**■ Wandsworth Prison: Mental Health Services****Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[60378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Wandsworth, published on 21 October 2021, what steps he plans to take to increase mental healthcare resources at HMP Wandsworth in response to the increase in mental health issues.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The service delivery model HMP Wandsworth has been reviewed and an assessment and liaison function is being established within the mental health team. While additional mental health practitioners are recruited, the wider mental health team is providing an assessment, liaison and case management function. This has enabled a review to ensure that referrals into mental health services are dealt with responsively with clear governance and oversight.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are maintaining oversight of these service developments and a number of governance mechanisms are in place to ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation. These include a monthly Quality and Performance Board, regular site visits, attendance at the prison Local Delivery Board and regular meetings between commissioners and the lead healthcare provider at operational and strategic level.

■ **Whistleblowing at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust Independent Review**

**Justin Madders:**

[\[79402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 293, whether the independent rapid review into West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust has now concluded; and when he plans to publish the report on its findings.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The independent review into the West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is nearing completion. NHS England and NHS Improvement will publish the final report in due course.

## HOME OFFICE

■ **Animal Experiments**

**Martyn Day:**

[\[76763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of establishing a Ministerial position dedicated to accelerating the replacement of animal research with human relevant techniques.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Home Office has made no such assessment.

■ **Asylum: Children**

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[79426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has spent on the use of hotels to house asylum-seeking children in Hove since January 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

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

■ **Dublin Regulations**

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[79286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is holding discussions with the EU Commission on a replacement agreement for the Dublin Regulation.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[79339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking with her EU counterparts to negotiate a replacement to the Dublin convention in relation to asylum applications.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The UK is in discussions regarding the returns of asylum seekers to European Member States; it would not be appropriate to provide a running commentary on these negotiations.

We can confirm that work is underway to secure appropriate return agreements with safe countries. Returns may also be agreed with partner countries on a case-by-case basis without formal agreements. This happened historically, outside of the former Dublin arrangements, and will continue to be part of the approach we apply.

Our inadmissibility provisions in the Immigration Rules give us the legal basis to declare an asylum claim as inadmissible where a person has a connection to or has passed through a safe country. The first returns on inadmissible grounds have been successfully carried out.

## ■ Hate Crime

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[79428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has made on her plans to direct police forces to record violent crimes motivated by hostility to a person's sex.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We have asked police forces, on an experimental basis, to record and identify any crimes of violence against the person, including stalking and harassment, and sexual offences where the victim perceives it to have been motivated by a hostility based on their sex .

Each new data requirement incurs an administrative burden on the police and needs close engagement with forces to ensure data recording is accurate and consistent.

We are in consultation with the National Police Chiefs' Council and forces on how to take this forward.

## ■ Heroin: Smuggling

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[76693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to tackle the importation of contaminated heroin.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Drugs devastate lives, ruin families and damage communities. The Government is committed to driving down drugs supply in the UK through tough law enforcement, which is reflected in increases in drug seizures in recent years. Each seizure is

stopping illegal drugs reaching our streets which bring misery to our communities. We support partnership working between the National Crime Agency, Border Force, and local policing, using intelligence and technology to keep our borders safe and secure, prevent drug trafficking and bring those responsible to justice.

In the event that contamination in supply raises the risk that drugs present, the National Crime Agency, police and The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) - formally Public Health England - work together, monitoring the situation to understand the factors involved and deliver a rapid response to reduce harm and help prevent drug related deaths.

In August 2021, Public Health England issued an alert to all public health and drug services, following a number of deaths linked to possible heroin contamination. The NCA worked closely with the National Police Chief's Council, Public Health England and others, to share intelligence, assess the situation and take decisive steps to prevent further loss of life.

## ■ Knives: Crime

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[76873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle knife crime.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Tackling knife crime is a priority and the Government is determined to crack down on the scourge of violence devastating our communities.

We identified a clear need for new primary legislation to respond to public concerns and provide the police with the powers they need. As such, under the provisions of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 we have prohibited the possession of a range of particularly dangerous knives and offensive weapons, and we are introducing further measures to tackle crime involving bladed items. These include stopping bladed items being sent to residential addresses after they are bought online, unless the seller has arrangements in place with the delivery company to ensure that the product would not be delivered into the hands of a person under 18.

Under the same Act we introduced Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPO). These preventative orders enable the courts to place positive requirements as well as restrictive measures on individuals to help the police steer those most at risk away from serious violence.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill includes a duty on public sector bodies to take a joined-up approach to addressing serious violence; the requirement for local agencies to review the circumstances when an adult homicide takes place involving an offensive weapon; and Serious Violence Reduction Orders, which give the police the power to stop and search known knife and offensive weapons carriers.

We have also committed £130.5m to tackle serious violence including knife crime and homicide in 21/22. This includes funding for targeted policing in serious violence

hotspots, as well as our network of Violence Reduction Units, which draw together partners in 18 areas worst affected by serious violence in England and Wales to deliver coordinated action to tackle violence at its root.

In addition, we have invested £200m over 10 years for the Youth Endowment Fund, which is funding projects to support children and young people at risk of violence and exploitation and to steer them away from crime.

## ■ Naturalisation: Applications

**Dan Jarvis:** [79379]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of naturalisation applications received by her Department were decided within six months in England in each of the last five years.

**Kevin Foster:**

All naturalisation applications received by the Home Office are considered and decided by officials located in England.

The Home Office is committed to routinely publishing data as part of the Migration Transparency data quarterly release. The data can be found on Gov.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

The available data includes performance against the six-month service standard for all citizenship application decisions submitted to the Home Office.

## ■ Police: Finance

**Stuart Anderson:** [76830]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the public consultation on the revised national police funding formula will open.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The government recognises that the current police funding formula is out of date and no longer accurately reflects demand on policing.

A review of the funding formula is now underway, and we are working closely with the policing sector and relevant experts to develop proposals for new funding arrangements. A full public consultation will take place before any new funding arrangements are put in place.

We have previously confirmed our intention to complete this work before the next General Election.

## ■ Police: Pensions

**Dan Carden:** [79455]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the changes proposed in the consultation on Public Service Pensions: Police Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 2022 on the (a) value of police

officer pensions and (b) length of service required by an officer to access their pension in full.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The government is committed to ensuring that public servants, including police officers, have access to good pensions that are affordable and sustainable in the long term. That was the basis on which the police pension scheme, alongside the main public sector pension schemes, was reformed in 2015 following the recommendations of the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission.

The government is taking steps to remove discrimination on the grounds of age, associated with the transitional protection arrangements linked to the 2015 pension reforms, which was subsequently identified by the courts during the McCloud and Sargeant litigation. Following a public consultation, it has been decided that eligible members will be offered a choice of scheme benefits for the remedy period. From 1 April 2022, all those in service in the relevant workforces will be members of the reformed pension schemes, ensuring equal treatment from that point on. The government believes this is the most appropriate and proportionate way of ending the age discrimination identified.

The Home Office consultation concerns the amendments to the police pension scheme regulations that are required to enact the first phase of this established policy.

The consultation opened on 8 November 2021 and will close on 2 January 2022. We will consider the responses carefully before confirming the regulation amendments.

Since the reformed schemes were introduced in 2015 many police officers are already members of the 2015 police pension scheme and will continue as such.

The 2015 police pension scheme and the other reformed public sector schemes are some of the most valuable available in the UK: backed by the taxpayer, index-linked and offering guaranteed benefits on retirement, comparing very favourably to the typical private sector scheme.

■ **Police: Social Media**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[76799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers are currently under investigation for (a) being in the possession of or (b) sharing grossly offensive material in (a) Slough, (b) each region of the South East, (c) each borough of London and (d) each region of the UK.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Information on the number of police officers under investigation for being in the possession of or sharing grossly offensive material is not collected centrally by the Home Office.

## ■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[76812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what policing steps her Department is taking to tackle the abuse and assault of retail workers.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[76813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to bring forward legislative proposals for harsher penalties for the assault of retail workers.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government response to the Call for Evidence on Violence and Abuse Towards Shop Staff, published in 2020, sets out the Government's programme of work to tackle violence and abuse in retail settings.

The Home Office is working closely with policing representatives via the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) to help reduce assaults, make it easier for employers to report crimes and support employees who are victims of these crimes. The police-led National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) are closely involved in the work of the NRCSG.

On 5 July at the Commons Report debate of the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill, the then Minister for Safeguarding Victoria Atkins MP committed to actively considering an amendment in the Lords if appropriate. The Home Office Minister Baroness Williams repeated this commitment in the Lords Committee debate on 17 November.

## ■ Schools: Demonstrations

**Peter Kyle:** [\[79427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has held discussions with the Secretary of State for Education on the targeting of schools by anti-vaccine protestors.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Officials at the Home Office have been working closely with counterparts at the Department of Education on the issue of anti-vaccination protests outside of schools.

The Department for Education and the UK Health Security Agency have provided information in guidance for schools on how to handle any misinformation or disruption. Furthermore, the police have comprehensive powers to intervene should protesters contravene the law.

## ■ Sexual Offences: Convictions

**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[68298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of crimes of sexual violence against women and girls in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England; and what assessment her Department

has made of the conviction rate for such crimes in those areas in each of the last five years.

**Rachel Maclean:**

In recent years, the number of sexual offences recorded by the police has increased as forces have improved their recording of these crimes and more victims have come forward to report due to high-profile cases and awareness campaigns.

The Government welcomes the fact that more victims of sexual offences, which are all too often hidden crimes, are coming forward and reporting these crimes to the police. However, it also recognises that there is more to be done to tackle violence against women and girls generally and, in particular, to improve the outcomes in rape and sexual offence cases.

In June 2021, we published our end-to-end review of how the criminal justice system handles rape. It set out a robust programme of work to drive improvements at every stage of the criminal justice system's response to rape. Regularly published scorecards will show how the criminal justice system is performing under a series of key metrics, and regional scorecards will allow us to drill down to see where actions are working well and where improvement is required.

Furthermore, we have recently published a cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy to help ensure that women and girls are safer everywhere – at home, online and in public.

Finally, for 2021/2022, the Ministry of Justice will provide £150.5 million for victim and witness support services, which includes £51 million to increase support for rape and domestic abuse victims. This year's Spending Review will deliver access to justice by continuing to invest across the justice system and expanding the support available for users. It will: bolster support for victims of crime by increasing annual funding for Ministry of Justice victim support services to over £185 million by 2024-25, an uplift of 85% from 2019-20.

■ **Visas: Dependants**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[79431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reviewing Adult Dependent Relative rules.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[79432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people adult dependant visas were applied for in 2020; and how many applications for adult dependant visas were rejected in 2020.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office continues to keep the Immigration Rules for adult dependent relatives under review and makes adjustments in light of feedback on their operation and impact. The adult dependent relative rules were reviewed in 2016 and the report of this review can be seen at:

[Adult dependent relatives: review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/adult-dependent-relatives-review)

However, our overall assessment is the rules represent a fair deal for the UK taxpayer and are helping to ensure public confidence in the immigration system by protecting our public services from the significant NHS and social care costs to which these cases can give rise.

Home Office Migration Statistics capture data on a number of Adult Dependent Relative routes, which are grouped together with other routes under Family: Other (for immediate settlement) in our published data. This includes the number of applications received, granted and refused. The statistics are published at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/962146/entry-clearance-visa-outcomes-datasets-dec-2020.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962146/entry-clearance-visa-outcomes-datasets-dec-2020.xlsx)

Not all Adult Dependent Relative applications are captured under the Adult Dependent Relative route and to capture accurate data would require a manual trawl of cases; to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

## ■ Windrush Compensation Scheme

**Yvette Cooper:**

**[62612]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 183169, on Windrush Generation: Compensation, what estimate she has made of the number of applications to the Windrush Compensation Scheme that remain outstanding more than (a) two years, (b) 18 months and (c) 12 months after the applicants first submitted those applications.

**Priti Patel:**

*[Holding answer 28 October 2021]:* The number of cases being worked through the Windrush Compensation Scheme as of 30th September are 1709. Of these

- 192 have been in the process for 12-18 months.
- 196 have been in the process for between 18 months and 24 months.
- 24 have been in the process for over 24 months.

We continue to process the claims we receive as quickly as possible. Claims are taking longer to resolve than originally anticipated however there are 13 categories and each person's experiences are different. We must ensure these are considered and understood carefully so we can offer people the maximum compensation to which they are entitled.

This holistic approach takes time but is ultimately beneficial to individuals. We are, however, committed to reducing the time between submission and decision significantly over the coming months.

Since April 2019, the Scheme has paid or offered £36.2 million. Of this, more than £30.6 million has been accepted and paid. Data on the number of claims received and the number of payments made is published as part of the regular transparency data release which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-september-2021>

**Yvette Cooper:**

**[62613]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179171, on Windrush Generation: Compensation, what was the average number of calendar days from the date a claim was received to a full and final payment date, as at 31 August 2021.

**Priti Patel:**

*[Holding answer 28 October 2021]:* The average number of calendar days from the date a claim was received to a full and final value or zero entitlement offer being made is 454, at 31 August 2021.

We continue to work at pace to process the claims we have received. All primary and deceased estate claims will have been considered for a preliminary payment of £10,000 within 6 weeks of eligibility being confirmed under the terms of the Scheme.

A preliminary payment is offered as soon as we receive the minimum level of information required to show that they will be entitled to compensation under the Scheme. Some individuals whose claims remain outstanding may also have received an urgent and exceptional payment. Such payments remain available for those who have an urgent and exceptional need that cannot wait for a payment to be made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

**Yvette Cooper:**

**[62614]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter provided to the Home Affairs Committee on 28 April 2020, what percentage of requests for an Urgent and Exceptional Payment submitted from 1 October 2018 up to 31 August 2021 were concluded within ten working days of receipt.

**Priti Patel:**

*[Holding answer 28 October 2021]:* In December 2018, the Home Office established an Urgent and Exceptional Payments process for those members of the Windrush generation who had an urgent and exceptional need in advance of the Windrush Compensation Scheme. The process remains open for those who need it.

191 requests were received from 1 October 2018 up to 31 August 2021. 10% of these requests were decided within 10 working days of receipt. We treat requests for urgent and exceptional support as a high priority and aim to advise applicants of the outcome of their request within 10 working days, and sooner wherever possible. In addition, we aim to make payments within 14 days of a request for support.

Unfortunately, however, it is not always possible to make a decision within 10 days of a request for support, as we need to work with individuals in order to understand the reasons for their request and gather relevant information. Our support in Urgent and Exceptional Circumstances policy was updated in February 2021, in order to make clear to applicants the information that they can provide in order to help us to consider a request as quickly as possible.

We recommend that individuals consider the guide before making a request to us, and if possible, locate any relevant documents ready to share with the Help Team.

#### ■ Windrush Generation: State Retirement Pensions

**Yvette Cooper:** [\[62615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her letter to the Home Affairs Committee dated 16 February 2021, what progress has been made on making arrangements to ensure that those affected by the Windrush Scandal receive the correct amount of State Pension.

**Priti Patel:**

*[Holding answer 28 October 2021]:* Work remains ongoing to put in place arrangements to ensure that where individuals have been denied access to employment, their National Insurance position is corrected so their State Pension entitlement is not affected.

Information about these arrangements will be made available once they are finalised.

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

#### ■ Department for International Trade: Meetings

**Owen Thompson:** [\[76750\]](#)

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

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Formal, structured meetings are usually 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](#).

#### ■ Teesside Freeport: Switzerland

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[78372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether manufacturers in the Teesside Freeport making tariff-free imports of raw materials can utilise the tariff reductions agreed in the UK-Switzerland Trade Agreement when exporting their finished products to Switzerland.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

There are currently prohibitions to duty drawback in the UK-Switzerland free trade agreement. Such restrictions can mean that exporters may not be able to make use

of certain freeport advantages while also using the Free Trade Agreements for their exports.

The UK and Switzerland have just updated their rules of origin provisions, meaning that duty drawback restrictions now apply only to a limited number of products in the textile and apparel sector.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Canada

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[79336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress her Department has made in trade negotiations with Canada.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government ran a successful Call for Input over the summer, which asked businesses, non-governmental organisations and the public for their priorities in trade between the United Kingdom and Canada. We are now developing the British negotiating mandate. Before negotiations begin, we will publish our formal response to the Call for Input and our overarching objectives for the negotiations. HM Government of Canada is currently going through a similar process. We look forward to formally commencing talks next year.

## ■ Trade Barriers

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[75863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many new trade barriers her Department has (a) identified and (b) resolved in (i) 2021 and (ii) since the end of 31 January 2020; if she will issue an annual report on that subject; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

My department publishes statistics about trade barriers in its annual reports and has, today, released further statistics showing that we resolved 217 trade barriers across 74 countries in 2020-21, up 20% from 2019-20.

Statistics for April 2021 onwards will be released in the 2021-22 Annual Report.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Cemeteries

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[76571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the reuse of graves in England and Wales.

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[76572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the number of cemeteries that do not have capacity for new graves.

**Tom Pursglove:**

As set out in our response on 23 June (UIN 16007), the reuse of burial space is a sensitive issue and any changes need careful consideration. We have not made a recent estimate of the number of cemeteries that do not have capacity for new graves, but we continue to work closely with stakeholders to build a national picture and welcome any information from burial providers about the circumstances in their area.

In addition, the Law Commission, as part of its programme of law reform, will be considering the modernising and streamlining the law governing the disposal of human remains, with a view to putting forward a legal framework for the future.

Further information on the project can be found at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/a-modern-framework-for-disposing-of-the-dead/>

**■ Dartmoor Prison****Sir Geoffrey Cox:****[76613]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress the Government has made on discussions with the Duchy of Cornwall on the future of HMP Dartmoor; and what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of retaining that site within the prison estate beyond 2023.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Discussions with the Duchy of Cornwall regarding the future of HMP Dartmoor are ongoing, and it is not possible to provide an update on progress without prejudicing the outcome of those commercial negotiations. The potential for Dartmoor to remain operational as a prison beyond 2023 is similarly dependent on the outcome of the discussions.

**■ Domestic Abuse: Homicide****Anna McMorris:****[79451]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the timetable is for the publication of the outcome of the Domestic homicide sentencing review.

**James Cartlidge:**

The first stage of the review, an analysis of data and relevant sentencing remarks for cases of domestic homicide tried between 2018-2020, has already been completed. Clare Wade QC, the independent expert who is conducting the second and final stage of the review, is expected to produce her report, including potential options for reform, for the Secretary of State before the end of the year.

Her report, together with the findings of the initial case review, will be published shortly thereafter.

The Terms of Reference for the Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review have now been published and can be accessed here: [Guidance overview: Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review: Terms of Reference - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Meetings

**Owen Thompson:** [76760]

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

**James Cartlidge:**

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](#).

## ■ National Offender Management Service: Stonewall

**Tim Loughton:** [76550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the National Offender Management Service to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [76551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Office of the Public Guardian to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [76552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [76553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid under his Department's Welsh Language Scheme to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [76554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Independent Monitoring Authority to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [76555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Probation Board to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Legal Aid Agency to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Judicial Appointments Commission to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Youth Justice Board to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Legal Services Board to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Legal Ombudsman to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by the Criminal Cases Review Commission to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**Tim Loughton:** [\[76564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds have been paid by Government Facility Services Limited to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and to what projects those funds were allocated.

**James Cartlidge:**

In the period covering the last five financial years, National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has paid the following sums to Stonewall.

**2016-17 to 2019-20 Financial Years**

£0

**2020-21 Financial Year**

£837.60 (formally NOMS) Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service conference attendance

**2021-22 Financial Year**

£0

In the period covering the last five financial years, Office of the Public Guardian has paid the following sums to Stonewall.

**2016-17 to 2019-20 Financial Years**

£0

**2019-20 Financial Year**

£552.00 Stonewall Conference Attendance

**2020-21 & 2021-22 Financial Years**

£0

In the period covering the last five financial years, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years, the Department's Welsh Language Scheme has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years, Independent Monitoring Authority has not made any payments to Stonewall.

Please note that MoJ does not have a Probation Board. However, the Parole Board is an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB), sponsored by the MoJ. In the period covering the last five financial years, Parole Board has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years Legal Aid Agency has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years Judicial Appointments Commission has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years Youth Justice Board has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years Legal Services Board has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) has paid the following sums to Stonewall:

**2016-17 to 2019-20 Financial Years**

£0

**2020-21 Financial Year**

£3000 Cafcass Stonewall Diversity Champions Membership

**2021-22 Financial Year**

£0

In the period covering the last five financial years Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years Legal Ombudsman (LeO) has paid the following sums to Stonewall:

**2016-17 to 2020-21 Financial Years**

£0

**2021-22 Financial Year**

£3000 LeO Stonewall Diversity Champions Membership

In the period covering the last five financial years Criminal Case Review Commission has not made any payments to Stonewall.

In the period covering the last five financial years Government Facility Services Limited has not made any payments to Stonewall.

As independent arm's length bodies (ALBs), the decision on whether to allocate resources to a particular membership is one for the Accounting Officers of those ALBs. These decisions are taken within the ALBs' internal systems of governance and control (which include the requirements of Managing Public Money and regard to MoJ and Cabinet Office spending controls) and generally do not require the approval of the Ministry of Justice.

■ **Remand in Custody**

**Sarah Champion:**

**[76700]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government has central funding for support services for people who have been placed in prisons for their own protection under the Bail Act 1976.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) does not provide central funding for support services specifically for individuals who have been remanded into custody for their own protection under the Bail Act 1976.

Individuals remanded into custody (including those remanded for their own protection) have access to standard support services within prisons which may be

relevant to their needs, such as the keyworker scheme and the Samaritans Listener scheme. Prisoners on remand also have additional rights and privileges beyond those afforded to sentenced prisoners, including being able to send and receive additional letters, to access additional visits and, within reasonable expectations, to have limited contact with convicted prisoners, including not sharing a cell with a sentenced prisoner, unless they choose.

Following a commitment from the Government earlier this year, we are reviewing the use of the power in the Bail Act 1976 to remand an individual for their own protection. This work is ongoing.

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### ■ **Leader of the House of Commons: Meetings**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[76762\]](#)

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

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons is part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. member to the response to be given by the Cabinet Office (76745).

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ **Business Premises: Empty Property**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[77472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will ensure that commercial landlords are subject to full business rates in the event that the property is unoccupied.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The business rates system ensures that the owners of most empty buildings pay 100% of the business rates bill once the property has been unoccupied for three months (or six months for industrial buildings). But we recognise that avoidance and evasion of business rates on empty properties are important concerns for local government so we are undertaking further detailed work and will consult on measures next year.

### ■ **Cultural Heritage**

**Jamie Stone:**

[\[75094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in the context of proposed boundary changes, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen the representation of the historic English counties.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Historic counties are an important part of our history and traditions helping to instil community pride and strengthening long lasting ties that have bound our communities together. Whilst the boundary changes we are proposing, which relate to establishing unitary councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire, and Somerset, have no direct impact on historic counties, we are very alive to their significance, and so, for example, in Cumbria we are proposing that the two new unitary councils should be called the Cumberland Council and the Westmorland and Furness Council, reflecting their links with the historic past.

**■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Meetings****Owen Thompson:**[\[76752\]](#)

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

**Eddie Hughes:**

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](#).

**■ Economic Situation: High Wycombe****Mr Steve Baker:**[\[74963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) extent of economic inequality in different areas across High Wycombe and (b) implications of that matter for his policies on levelling up; and if he will make a statement.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Government publishes national economic inequality data, such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and has recently published the methodology used for the Levelling Up Fund and the Community Renewal Fund. Levelling up is about spreading opportunity and boosting living standards across the nation, including addressing local pockets of deprivation. We will be setting out our proposals to deliver on Levelling Up in a White Paper later this year. We have recognised the specific challenges faced in High Wycombe and provided £11.7 million through the Future High Streets Fund to support the area's plans to revitalise the town centre.

**■ Holiday Accommodation: Non-domestic Rates****Caroline Lucas:**[\[77412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the 2018 consultation Business rates treatment of self-catering accommodation; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

In March, the Government announced that it will legislate to require that self-catering accommodation meets an actual lettings threshold before being assessed for business rates. Since then, my Department has been working with Treasury and the Valuation Office Agency to finalise the details of how and when this will be implemented. We will set out further details shortly in the Government's consultation response.

**■ Homelessness: Finance****Neil Coyle:**[\[76708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether the homelessness funding announced in the Autumn Budget 2021 and Comprehensive Spending Review will be a three annual funding settlements or a three-year funding settlement.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Spending Review 2021 set departmental budgets for the next three years. The settlement earmarked over £2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over this period. This includes resource funding rising to £639 million by 2024-25, an increase of 85% in case terms compared to pre-pandemic levels.

This additional funding will enable us to continue to support frontline services through the Rough Sleeping Initiative, support local authorities to fund their statutory duties to prevent homelessness and complete delivery of the 6,000 longer-term homes for rough sleepers under the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme.

The settlement demonstrates the Government's continued commitment to build on recent progress in ending rough sleeping. Multi-year funding will enable local partners to plan services more effectively and efficiently.

**■ Homelessness: Greater London****Catherine West:**[\[79442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional support for London councils to support homeless people during the winter.

**Eddie Hughes:**

We are committed to make sure that rough sleepers will be offered the support they need to get off the streets and are protected from the cold this winter.

We are providing over £70 million to support rough sleeping services in London this year through the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2021/22.

On top of the significant Rough Sleeping Initiative investment, the Winter Pressures Fund (WPF) was announced on 29 October 2021 as part of a wider winter funding announcement. WPF is a £10 million fund targeted to 35 local authorities, 16 of them

in London, who have the highest numbers of rough sleepers, from the 2020 Rough Sleeper Snapshot, or the highest number of un-housed non-UK nationals.

DLUHC have and continue working closely with London councils, and the Greater London Authority, and we are discussing with both of them the provision of pan-London winter capacity.

The Department is providing over £71.5 million across Greater London, this is more than a 100% increase from the £34.6 million provided in 20/21 and is providing over 2,800 bed spaces and more than 700 support staff.

■ **Housing: Sandymoor**

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[75998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for using a greenfield space for the Sandymoor development rather than developing brownfield sites nearby.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN 75997 on 18 November 2021.

■ **Landlords: Registration**

**Catherine West:** [\[77487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a national register of landlords.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government has committed to exploring the merits of introducing a national landlord register in England as part of a commitment to drive up standards in privately rented accommodation. We are engaging with a range of stakeholders and potential users of a register such as private landlords, local authority enforcement officers, letting agents and private tenants to inform this work. We will publish a White Paper in 2022 that will set out our proposals for private rented sector reform.

■ **Levelling Up Fund: Worksop**

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:** [\[76018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether a Levelling Up Fund bid for Worksop was submitted by Bassetlaw District Council on time and with the correct documentation provided; and if he will provide feedback on that bid.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) did not receive a Levelling Up Fund application from Bassetlaw District Council by the application deadline. Following the round 1 Levelling Up Fund announcement of 105 successful bids on the 27 October, Bassetlaw District Council was invited to share its

Levelling Up Fund application form with DLUHC. DLUHC has offered to review that application when it is received and will provide appropriate feedback.

## ■ Mathematics: Education

**Tracey Crouch:**

[\[75865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether upper-tier local authorities will be consulted on the delivery of the Multiply scheme announced in the Autumn Budget 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The first priority for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be a locally delivered new adult numeracy programme, Multiply, to help hundreds of thousands of adults improve their maths, as well as a wider range of local priority programmes. The Government will continue to engage stakeholders as we develop the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. We will publish further details on the fund in due course.

**Tracey Crouch:**

[\[75866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether training providers will be invited to bid to deliver the (a) in-person and (b) at-work elements of the Multiply scheme announced in the Autumn Budget 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Sitting at the heart of UK Shared Prosperity Fund's skills offer, with £560 million allocated over the Spending Review (SR) period, Multiply is the government's new programme for improving adult numeracy, including:

- £430 million across the SR (£130 million in 2022-23, £150 million in 2023-24, £150 million in 2024-25) allocated directly to local areas to deliver local numeracy interventions.
- £129 million across the SR (£49 million in 2022-23, £40 million in 2023-24, and £40 million in 2024-25) will deliver a new digital platform and a programme of Randomised Control Trials to improve evidence and evaluation in the field.

Multiply builds on existing entitlements for funding for maths qualifications up to Level 2 (GCSE) in the Adult Education Budget. Funding will enable delivery of more flexible courses that fit around adult's lives and meet their needs, reaching more people across the UK.

The Government will publish further details on the fund in due course.

## ■ Political Parties: Finance

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[75177\]](#)

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 prevent (a) regulated donees from accepting donations or loans from people who are (i) not

domiciled in the UK and (ii) non-resident for tax purposes and (b) regulated donees and non-party campaigners from accepting donations or loans from people who are not tax compliant.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

There is a long-standing principle – as originally recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in 1998 – that permissible donors are those on the UK electoral register. If one can vote for a party, then one should be able to donate to it. Foreign donations are banned.

Election law already allows for registered British expatriates to vote in UK Parliamentary elections, and also to make donations (up to 15 years from leaving the UK). The Election Bill makes no change to that principle, merely it removes the arbitrary 15 year period.

Since the adoption of universal suffrage, taxation has never been the basis for enfranchisement in our democracy. Some British citizens who work abroad, and who can already vote under the current ‘15 year rule’, only pay tax in the overseas country in which they work. Equally, other British expatriates will currently pay tax on their pensions, property and investments in the UK, but still not have a right to vote.

Within the UK, those who do not pay income tax, such as those earning less than the tax-free personal allowance, rightly remain entitled to vote. Similarly, full-time students are legally exempt from paying council tax, but rightly still have the right to vote in local elections for the local authority which sets that council tax.

I also refer the Hon. Member to the answer of 1 July 2019, Official Report, UIN 268969, on the flaws with provisions in the last Labour Government's Political Parties and Elections Act 2009.

The Elections Bill does provide for separate measures to prevent backdoor foreign spending.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[76579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the potential number of foreign nationals (a) with assets of £1 million or more who would be eligible to donate money to UK political parties under the provisions of the Elections Bill and (b) who are permanently based in countries on which the Government may have placed financial sanctions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Foreign nationals who are based overseas are not eligible to donate to political parties in the United Kingdom. The Elections Bill retains this ban, and further closes loopholes on backdoor foreign spending.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

**[74908]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of defragmenting local government funding on the delivery of the levelling up agenda.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Local authorities are important partners in delivering our levelling up ambitions, and many have already been successful in securing funding for their areas from the Levelling Up Fund, Towns Fund and Community Renewal Fund. The Local Government Finance settlement and the vast majority of local government's Core Spending Power are un-ringfenced, giving local authorities flexibility over their spending decisions.

**Grahame Morris:**

**[78388]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to publish the timescale for (a) Round 2 and (b) Round 3 bidding process of the Levelling Up Fund.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2021]:* The £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

Further information on how future rounds of the Fund will operate from 2022-23 onwards will be set out in due course.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development: Coastal Areas

**Luke Pollard:**

**[76009]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the joint Maritime UK and Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group's Coastal Powerhouse Manifesto, published in September 2021.

**Neil O'Brien:**

We appreciate Maritime UK and the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group's detailed and insightful Coastal Powerhouse manifesto and we recognise the value of the recommendations made. We welcome the continuous engagement of the sector as we are progressing with our levelling up agenda. In this respect, we share the view expressed on the need to continue the strong partnership that exists between Government and key stakeholder groups.

Britain's maritime sector is inextricably linked to our island's rich history - to the exploration, free trade and global exchange which laid the foundations for modern Britain. Our maritime sector, our ports, harbours and coastal towns are extremely important to recovery from the pandemic.

As the Coastal Powerhouse Manifesto has highlighted, there are a number of areas where action must be taken to catalyse investment, level-up coastal communities and capitalise on the potential of the UK's coastal regions. That is why we are working with local leaders to ensure every region including coastal areas, cities and towns will recover from COVID-19 and ultimately level-up. The Levelling Up White Paper will set out ambitious policies to improve living standards, increase opportunity, and grow the private sector in every part of the United Kingdom, from Aberdeen to Aylesbury, Belfast to Brecon.

## ■ Rented Housing: Finance

**Lucy Powell:** [79386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the announcement of a £65 million support package for vulnerable renters on 23 October 2021, what the eligibility criteria will be for a private renter to access support from that fund.

**Lucy Powell:** [79387]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department plans to take to measure the (a) impact and (b) success of the £65 million support package for vulnerable renters announced on 23 October 2021.

**Lucy Powell:** [79388]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to publish details on the way in which each local authority spends funds allocated from the £65 million support package for vulnerable renters announced on 23 October 2021.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government announced a £65 million top up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant in October to help vulnerable renters hit hardest by the pandemic from becoming homeless.

This funding is available for local authorities to support those eligible for statutory homelessness assistance. As with the existing Homelessness Prevention Grant, local authorities have flexibility to use this funding in the most appropriate way to meet local pressures.

The Government publishes statutory homelessness statistics quarterly which provides information about statutory homelessness applications, including those cases following eviction from the private rented sector. The data is available at a national and local authority level and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#live-tables>

## ■ Voting Methods: Visual Impairment

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[75133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October to Question 58512 on Voting Methods: Visual Impairment, what assessment he has made of representations from the Royal National Institution of Blind People and other disability charities, that the responsibility to prescribe a minimum standard of equipment to enable blind and partially sighted people to vote should stay with Government rather than with individual returning officers to ensure an equitable level of support nationally.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government welcomes the engagement from the RNIB and other disability charities in this important area. As noted in the response to Question UIN 58512, the intention of the policy is to improve the support available to voters with disabilities and ensure that Returning Officers are better able to support people with a wider range of disabilities by removing barriers to change and innovation.

This change has arisen following the Government's Call for Evidence on Access to Elections. Responses from disabled people and organisations that represent their interests made clear that the current approach of requiring Returning Officers to solely provide a prescribed device was not the best approach to meet the varied needs of disabled electors. Returning Officers are best placed to respond to the needs of their local communities and ensure that people get the right support.

Our new proposals will be supported by guidance from the Electoral Commission, and will involve a wide range of engagement with relevant stakeholders.

## ■ Voting Rights: Immigration

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[79434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of updating the Elections Bill 2021-22 to extend full voting rights to all UK residents after a qualifying period of residency.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has no intention of extending full voting rights to all UK residents after a qualifying period of residency. Citizenship restrictions are the norm for participating in national elections in most democracies, including the UK.

The right to vote in UK Parliamentary elections is restricted to British citizens and those with the closest historic links to our country.

**SCOTLAND**■ **Scotland Office: Meetings**

**Owen Thompson:** [78451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, if he will provide details of his Department's process for recording and retaining minutes from meetings in respect of Government business.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

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](#).

**TRANSPORT**■ **Automatic Number Plate Recognition: Schools**

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [79409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the use of automatic number-plate recognition cameras in school streets,.

**Trudy Harrison:**

A set of regulations is due to be laid in December. This will allow English local authorities outside London, with civil parking enforcement powers, to apply for a Designation Order granting powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions, based on evidence obtained from CCTV camera equipment that has been certified by the Secretary of State. Local authorities so designated, will then be able to enforce access restrictions for school streets. Local authorities in London have these enforcement powers already. Automatic number-plate recognition technology is not certified for the purpose of moving traffic enforcement.

■ **Aviation: Safety**

**Patrick Grady:** [79406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish a response to Early Day Motion 614 on Aviation safety and licensing.

**Robert Courts:**

The UK Government recognises the essential commitment that aviation professionals have made to help secure the future of the Aviation industry, and that this is a time of uncertainty as the previous ways of working with Europe are changing. We continue to work closely with industry and stakeholders to ensure that we make best use of the

opportunities we now have, to protect and enhance the sector's skills and talent now and in the future as we recover from the Covid19 Pandemic.

The UK has now left the EU and EASA system and has agreed a high level Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), including an Annex on Aviation Safety. We maintain a productive dialogue with EASA and EU member states on aviation matters, and the Specialised Committee on Aviation Safety has been established.

The UK Government places the highest importance on ensuring that the opportunities arising from our exit from the EU are realised. Withdrawing from the EU means we have more autonomy to tailor aviation regulation according to the UK's competitive needs, while also adhering to international standards. Should an agreement in the form of a further Annex on licensing be assessed to be in the UK's overall interest, the Government could pursue this. However such an agreement would also require willingness from the EU, whose interest so far has been in implementing the current details of the TCA.

The UK Government cannot unilaterally commit to work that requires agreement from both parties. We will continue to work to ensure an effective licensing regime that supports UK aviation, to deliver effective implementation of the existing agreement with the EU, and to explore any possible future areas of co-operation.

The Department for Transport launched the Aviation Skills Retention Platform earlier this year, to offer support and help for UK license holders and the aviation sector. This platform will allow both current and former aviation sector workers who are currently out of work to register their skills, so they can be notified of relevant jobs opportunities, advice, and upskilling opportunities. This platform is a tool for the future, which will aim to retain vital skills within the industry and help address the skills gap that existed prior to the pandemic. The scheme is open to anyone from the aviation sector who is looking for a vacancy. More information can be found at: [www.aviationtalent.co.uk](http://www.aviationtalent.co.uk)

## ■ Department for Transport: Meetings

**Owen Thompson:**

**[76751]**

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

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

DfT's Information Management Policy sets out the responsibilities of DfT staff for keeping records of government business. The policy clearly states that meeting minutes and agendas are considered to be information of corporate value and should be saved to DfT's designated system for information management. Staff must ensure that they manage information in accordance with the Information Management Policy at all times.

The Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) team at DfT provides guidance and training to staff on how to manage their information and records and are

supported in this work by a network of Local Information Managers based in business areas.

Compliance with the Information Management Policy is monitored via the annual Management Assurance exercise and Information Management Health Check.

## ■ EGNOS

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** [\[78377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of commercial flights that have not been completed as a result of withdrawal of the UK from EGNOS.

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** [\[78378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timeframe is for implementing a new system in place of EGNOS which has the same functions.

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** [\[78379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the impact on (a) productivity and (b) commercial business of the UK's withdrawal from EGNOS.

**Robert Courts:**

We are monitoring the impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EGNOS programme following the end of the EGNOS Working Agreements on 25 June 2021.

The UK is exploring options to fulfil its needs for secure and resilient position, navigation and timing information. This is considering the aviation sector's long-term needs and requirements.

## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: North East

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[78441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact on the cost of HS2 per mile of the decision not to deliver the Eastern leg.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The impact of progressing a high-speed line to the East Midlands on the cost per mile has not yet been assessed, but is expected to have a minimal impact.

Any impact would likely reflect the different assets make up on each part of the route.

**Jim McMahon:** [\[79443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much additional capacity the cancelled HS2 Eastern Leg and Northern Powerhouse Rail plans would have added to the network, by route.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Integrated Rail Plan sets out the capacity improvements that the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) core network from Liverpool to York will deliver. These

capacity improvements equal those in previous proposals from Transport for the North, with over a 500% increase on journeys from Liverpool to Leeds alone.

The IRP also confirms that a new HS2 line will be built from Birmingham to East Midlands Parkway, which will deliver more capacity to Nottingham and Derby compared to previous plans, and the same capacity uplift to Chesterfield and Sheffield. Upgrades to the East Coast Main Line will deliver similar or more capacity from London and Birmingham to the North East compared to previous plans, and potentially more capacity to places from London that did receive benefit under previous plans, such as Wakefield, Doncaster, Grantham and Peterborough. Leeds capacity will depend on decisions reached following the development work to assess the most effective way to take HS2 trains to Leeds for which the Government is providing £100m.

**Jim McMahon:**

[\[79444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much the Government has spent on the HS2 Eastern Leg to date; and if he will publish a breakdown of that spending.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Since the Prime Minister announced the Integrated Rail Plan in February 2020, development of the Eastern Leg of HS2 has been paused to avoid nugatory spend whilst the Integrated Rail Plan took this work forward. Safeguarding of the Eastern leg route remains in place pending conclusion of work on the most effective way to serve Leeds and towns and cities along the Eastern Leg. Any property that has been acquired already by the Government but is not required for the eventual route will be resold.

**Jim McMahon:**

[\[79445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many homes have been subject to compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) as part of the plans for the Eastern leg of HS2; and how much those CPOs have cost.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd is yet to deposit a Hybrid Bill for Phase 2b, and therefore has not acquired any properties on that part of the route under Compulsory Purchase powers.

## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Wales

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[78479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's latest assessment is of the economic benefit to Wales of the proposed HS2 route detailed in the Integrated Rail Plan.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

By improving regional connectivity, the Integrated Rail Plan will unify labour markets, so that people can access a much wider range of jobs; bring businesses closer together; and improve access to key international gateways and markets so they become even more attractive locations for business investment. Crewe Northern

Connection would improve connections from North Wales to the HS2 network, potentially bringing many passengers within 2 hours 15 minutes of London. Work to progress options on completing the Midlands Rail Hub could give passengers from South Wales easy access to the HS2 network at Birmingham Curzon Street.

### ■ High Speed Two: Compulsory Purchase

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[78358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of residents in Hemsworth constituency who are in the process of selling their properties 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 the company has not acquired, nor is in the process of acquiring, any properties in the Hemsworth constituency under such powers.

### ■ Motor Vehicles: Lighting

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[79254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of motorists being dazzled by the brightness of LED headlights in oncoming vehicles as a factor in causing accidents after dark; what legal limitations are in place on the permitted level of brightness of those headlights, for the purpose of reducing the likelihood of their causing accidents; what (a) rules and (b) guidelines have been issued to car manufacturers on permitted brightness levels for headlights; and if he will make a statement.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Police routinely collect data on road collisions in Great Britain and the officer attending the scene can record up to six contributory factors based on their initial assessment of the incident. Although LED lighting technology is increasingly common, from 2010 to 2020, dazzle from headlamps is recorded in 0.25 percent to 0.34 per cent of accidents and shows no discernible increase over that time period.

Prior to registration, vehicle manufacturers must supply evidence that their vehicles comply with international road vehicle approval requirements. Provisions for vehicle headlamps define maximum and minimum intensity, light pattern and position on the vehicle. Domestic legislation also prohibits the use of headlamps that cause undue dazzle or discomfort for other road users.

There are no current plans to amend these rules but the Department's officials are supporting international activity reviewing the technical standards, and a report is expected early next year.

## ■ Motorway Service Areas: Large Goods Vehicles

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

**[78349]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what data his Department holds on the (a) daytime and (b) night-time occupancy of HGV parking places in motorway service areas.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department does not hold data on the daytime occupancy rates of HGV parking places in Motorway Service Areas (MSAs). The National Survey of Lorry Parking (2018) contains data on night-time occupancy of HGV parking places across all lorry parks, including MSAs, which can be found at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/723349/national-survey-of-lorry-parking-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/723349/national-survey-of-lorry-parking-report.pdf).

The Department is currently tendering to update the National Survey of Lorry Parking to ensure strong and up to date evidence is available on the national picture of lorry parking demand to inform decision making. We expect this to be complete by September 2022.

## ■ Music: Freight

**Valerie Vaz:**

**[79362]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the music industry on the availability of HGVs and specialist concert hauliers in 2022.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department for Transport has been engaging regularly, through meetings and working groups, with representatives of the specialist haulage industry that provides logistics services for the creative sectors. The Department continues to explore ways to support the industry as it adapts to the requirements of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

## ■ Railways: Freight

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[78425]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the proposed change of services for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail, if he will take steps to provide additional support for rail freight.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The plans set out in the Integrated Rail Plan will support greater capacity on parts of the existing network for rail freight across the Midlands and North, and will accelerate modal shift of goods from road to rail. Network Rail's further development of different schemes will take account of needs and benefits of rail freight.

**■ Railways: North West**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[78436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much investment will go into rail enhancements to the North West compared to the North East.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

We will continue to manage Network Rail delivered rail enhancements within the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) as a portfolio in line with the RNEP policy. We want to provide as much clarity and certainty as possible on rail enhancements and will set out our plans shortly.

**■ Rapid Transit Systems: West Yorkshire**

**Jon Trickett:** [\[78359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, published by his Department on 18 November 2021, whether the new rail line expected under the West Yorkshire Mass Transit System are planned to have any stations in Hemsworth constituency.

**Jon Trickett:** [\[78360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for Featherstone and Normanton in the context of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority mass transit scheme document.

**Jon Trickett:** [\[78361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what part of the West Yorkshire Mass Transit System will be the focus of the first phase of the plan.

**Jon Trickett:** [\[78362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether new (a) rail and (b) tram stations will be opened in the Wakefield District, as part of the new West Yorkshire Mass Transit System.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Government wants to work with and support West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) as they further develop and start work on their plans for a West Yorkshire Mass Transit System. The development of route options will be led by WYCA.

**Jon Trickett:** [\[78363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much local taxpayers will be expected to pay to support the capital costs of the West Yorkshire Mass Transit System as set out in the Integrated Rail Plan.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Government wants to work with and support West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) on further developing and starting work on their plans for a West Yorkshire

Mass Transit System. Funding contributions will be considered as plans are further developed.

## TREASURY

### ■ Business: Employment

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[76721\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will make an estimate of the potential number of (a) business exits, (b) insolvencies in 2022-23; and what assessment he has made of (i) the potential extent of business mergers and consolidation in 2022-23 in (ii) the effect of (A) business exits, (B) insolvencies and (C) business consolidation on employment rates.

**Mary Glendon:**

[\[77457\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate his Department has made of the (a) number of business exits, (b) number of insolvencies and (c) extent of consolidation within the business population as Government covid-19 support is phased out; and what assessment he has made of the impact of each of those categories on the employment rate.

**Helen Whately:**

Support schemes such as the CJRS and government-backed loans kept insolvencies and business exits below normal levels throughout much of the pandemic.

To protect businesses from aggressive creditor action during Covid enforced restrictions there was a temporary ban on Winding Up Petitions (WUP) for Covid-19-related debt. As the economy returns to normal trading conditions, it is right that creditor powers are restored.

Insolvencies returned to pre-covid levels in September 2021, coinciding with the end of the WUP ban. It is too early to assess the full impact of support ending on business consolidation as some support schemes, such as the rent moratorium, are still in place.

Vacancy levels are higher than normal. As a result, we expect that the employment rate should remain relatively stable in the face of business exits and consolidation in 2022-23.

### ■ Cryptocurrencies: Children

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[79307\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the risks to children and their families of (a) cryptocurrencies and (b) cryptocurrency trading platforms using imagery, sounds and gamification techniques designed to appeal to children in their marketing.

**John Glen:**

The Government takes the issue seriously, and the Government and the financial regulators are acting to address risks relating to unsuitable marketing.

Last year the Government consulted on a proposal to bring certain cryptoassets into financial promotions regulation. This would ensure that relevant cryptoasset promotions are held to the same high standards for fairness, clarity and accuracy that exist in the financial services industry.

To further protect consumers, the FCA has banned the sale of cryptoasset derivatives to retail consumers, and has issued warnings highlighting that consumers who invest in cryptoassets should be prepared to lose their money. Earlier this year the FCA also launched a new InvestSmart campaign to help new investors understand the risks they may face.

More broadly, financial education was made statutory for 11 to 16-year olds within the national curriculum for citizenship in England in 2014, to ensure that children growing up gain the essential skills in managing money.

The Department for Education and HM Treasury work closely with the Money and Pensions Service on supporting on financial education for children and young people and to meet the goal of the UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing for 2 million more children to have meaningful financial education by 2030. The Money and Pensions Service recently released guidance for schools in England which can be found on their website.

**■ Employers' Contributions****Margaret Ferrier:****[76718]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what research his Department has commissioned on the impact of the rise in Employer National Contributions on (a) the employment rate and (b) wages.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Office for Budget Responsibility set out their assessment of the economic effects of the Levy in their latest Economic and Fiscal Outlook, including the impact on labour supply and wages. This can be found here: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-october-2021/>

**■ Employment Allowance****Margaret Ferrier:****[76719]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on levels of (a) pay and (b) employment of raising employment allowance.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government currently has no plans to increase the Employment Allowance (EA).

Since its introduction in April 2014, the EA has already been significantly increased, including rising from £3,000 to £4,000 in April 2020. This increase benefitted around

510,000 businesses, of which 65,000 businesses were estimated to be taken out of paying National Insurance contributions entirely.

## ■ Government Assistance: Coronavirus

**Theresa Villiers:** [79293]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much public money from covid support schemes has been paid to UK offices of the Iranian Government.

**Theresa Villiers:** [79294]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much money from covid-19 Government support schemes has been paid to UK (a) offices and (b) representatives of the Supreme Leader of Iran.

**Helen Whately:**

HM Treasury does not comment on the commercial or financial matters of private firms.

However, data on the employers who have claimed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is published regularly. For monthly data on the employers who have claimed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) since December 2020, please see the published information at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employers-who-have-claimed-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>. The November 2021 publication provides the data for claim periods from December 2020 to August 2021. These details are correct at the date of publishing.

Similarly, details of facilities made available to businesses under the covid loan schemes where required have either been published, or will be in the future, on the European Commission's transparency database.

## ■ Housing: Valuation

**Bridget Phillipson:** [79351]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the data on rateable properties published by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) on 10 June 2021 on mean and median rateable value by special category, Table SC1.1 of that release, if he will publish the (a) counts, (b) mean and (c) median values by English region for each special category.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [79352]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the data on rateable properties published by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) on 10 June 2021 on mean and median rateable value by property type, Table SOP1.2 of that release, if he will publish the (a) counts, (b) mean and (c) median values by English region for each property type.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) will publish data on counts, mean and median rateable value for both special category and property type by English region in due

course. VOA statistics can be found on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/valuation-office-agency/about/statistics>

## ■ Inflation

**Jim Shannon:**

[79377]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on his policies of the current rate of inflation.

**John Glen:**

In its October Economic and Fiscal Outlook (EFO), the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) set out its assessment of the economic impact of government policies announced at the Budget and Spending Review. The OBR noted that government policies overall had a small effect on inflation, with the price level 0.3% higher at the end of the forecast horizon as a result of Budget and Spending Review measures. The EFO captures the impact of policy measures, specifically referred to in box 2.1 in the October publication.

## ■ Living Wage and National Insurance

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[76720]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the threshold number of full time equivalent employees on the (a) National Living Wage and (b) the average national wage that can be employed before an employer is liable to pay employer National Insurance Contributions from April 2022.

**Mary Glendon:**

[77456]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of how many full time equivalent employees it will be possible to employ on (a) the National Living Wage and (b) the average national wage, before becoming liable to Employer National Insurance Contributions; and if he will make a statement.

**Lucy Frazer:**

An employer which is eligible to claim the Employment Allowance (EA) will be able to hire up to 3 employees on the National Living Wage who work 35 hours a week, for an entire year, before they have an employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs) bill in 2022-23: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

An employer which is eligible to claim the EA will be able to hire up to 1.5 employees on the median national wage in 2021 before they have an employer NICs bill in 2022-23:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2021>

## ■ Medical Equipment: Exports

**Jane Hunt:**

**[76869]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimates she has made of the total value of UK inhaler exports to the rest of the world.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC is responsible for the collection and publication of data on imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC releases this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics (OTS), which is available via their dedicated website: [www.uktradeinfo.com](http://www.uktradeinfo.com). From this website, it is possible to build data tables based upon bespoke search criteria:

<https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/ots-custom-table/>

The Tariff Classification of inhalers differs dependent upon whether medication is dispensed from them and, if so, what type of medicine. Consequently, published statistics applicable to empty inhalers, and medicinal inhalers at an aggregated level, within Harmonised System code 3004, have been provided.

The total value of UK inhaler exports to the rest of the world can be found in the table below:

TABLE 1: TOTAL NON-EU EXPORT TRADE VALUE (£), FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2019 - 21

Commodities	2019	2020	Jan-Sep 2021
All commodities under HS4 3004 -			
Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic use, put up in measured doses "incl. those for transdermal administration" or forms or packings for retail sale (excl. goods of heading 3002, 3005 or 3006)	7,401,780,279	7,517,387,269	5,261,039,814
HS4 9019, CN8s: 90192000 & 90192090 - Mechano-therapy appliances; massage apparatus;	46,136,530	73,847,317	62,942,879

TABLE 1: TOTAL NON-EU EXPORT TRADE VALUE (£), FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2019 - 21

psychological aptitude-  
testing apparatus;  
ozone therapy, oxygen  
therapy, aerosol  
therapy, artificial  
respiration or other  
therapeutic respiration  
apparatus

Total	7,447,916,809	7,591,234,586	5,323,982,693
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Data source: Overseas Trade Statistics

#### ■ Motor Vehicles: Taxation

**Philip Dunne:** [\[76622\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to consult on (a) vehicle taxation reform and (b) road pricing.

**Helen Whately:**

HM Treasury has no current consultations underway on motoring taxes. All taxes, including motoring taxes, are kept under review and any changes are considered and announced by the Chancellor.

#### ■ Music: Production

**Valerie Vaz:** [\[79361\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a further assessment of the potential merits of a tax incentive to encourage music production in the UK.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government keeps all tax policy under review and regularly receives proposals for sector-specific tax reliefs. When considering a new tax relief, the Government must ensure it supports businesses in a fair way and that taxpayer money is effectively targeted. A tax relief to encourage music production is not currently under consideration.

#### ■ National Insurance

**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[76717\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department made, prior to the decision being taken, of the potential impact of the rise in Employer National Insurance Contributions on (a) the employment rate and (b) wages.

**Lucy Frazer:**

I refer the Hon Member to the answer that was given on 19 November 2021 to PQ UIN 75954.

## ■ National Insurance Contributions

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[76722]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the proportion of payroll employee jobs effected by the rise in (a) employee and (b) employer National Insurance Contributions from April 2022.

**Mary Glendon:**

[77458]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of payroll employee jobs that will be impacted by the rise in (a) employee and (b) employer National Insurance Contributions.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government has not made an estimate of the proportion of payroll employee jobs affected by the rise in National Insurance contributions from April 2022 as this information is not available.

Individual employees are not directly impacted by the employer National Insurance rise which is paid by employers.

## ■ Treasury: Aquind

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[79348]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 November 2021 to Question 75875 on Ministerial meetings with Aquind Energy, on which dates Ministers in his Department (a) met and (b) spoke with (i) directors and (ii) other representatives of Aquind Energy since 1 July 2021.

**Helen Whately:**

Details of HMT Ministers' official meetings with external organisations are published and can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel). Details of meetings from 1 July onwards will be published in due course.

## ■ Treasury: Meetings

**Owen Thompson:**

[76757]

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

**Helen Whately:**

All Treasury officials are responsible for reliable record keeping, including meetings relating to Government business, and must use the corporate records system to store these items.

Formal meetings are usually minuted, however, not all meetings need to be minuted.

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](#).

■ **Treasury: Public Consultation**

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[79355\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) reports, (b) consultation responses, (c) formal consultations and (d) other documents his Department plans to publish between 22 November and 31 December 2021.

**Helen Whately:**

Documents published by HM Treasury during this timeframe will be made available on GOV.UK in the usual way at the time of publication.

As set out in a Written Ministerial Statement on 18 November, and as announced in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, the government will bring forward a further set of plans for tax administration and maintenance on 30 November. The Tax Administration and Maintenance Command Paper will outline further steps the government is taking to progress tax simplification, tackle non-compliance and ensure our tax system is fit for the modern world. This follows a similar set of announcements published after the Spring Budget in “*Tax policies and consultations: Spring 2021*” [CP 404]

■ **Treasury: Staff**

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[79347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2021 to Question 73813 on smarter working practices in his department, whether the current project to embed new ways of working scheduled to complete at the end of Q1 in financial year 2021-22 has completed; and whether the planned reassessment has begun.

**Helen Whately:**

It has come to my attention that the information provided in response to Question 73813 contained an error. The current project to embed new ways of working is scheduled to complete at the end of Q1 in financial year 2022-23, not 2021-22 as previously stated. The planned reassessment will begin following this.

**WALES****■ Wales Office: Staff**

**Robert Largan:** [\[78535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, 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.

**Simon Hart:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has offices in Cardiff and London. The workforce split across each location on the dates requested is:

<b>1 MARCH 2021</b>	CARDIFF 21	LONDON 26
<b>1 June 2021</b>	Cardiff 19	London 27
<b>1 September 2021</b>	Cardiff 16	London 24

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Carer's Allowance**

**Dan Carden:** [\[79454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to increase the earnings threshold for carer's allowance; and if she will make a statement.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Secretary of State has today announced an increase in the weekly earnings limit in Carer's Allowance from April 2022. Further details available here: [UIN HCWS420](#)

**■ Children: Maintenance**

**Karin Smyth:** [\[76729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of percentage of deductions of earnings orders put in place by the Child Maintenance Service which are subject to delayed payment to the parent with responsibility for the child due to employer error.

**Guy Opperman:**

The percentage of Deduction from Earnings Orders put in place by Child Maintenance Group which are subject to delayed payments due to employer error amount to 40% of missing payments generated. This equates to 2,360 per month or 5% of all Deduction from Earnings Orders in operation.

## ■ Children: Poverty

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[76679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of trends in child poverty rates throughout the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency and (b) the North East; and what steps the Government is taking to reduce child poverty.

**David Rutley:**

Official child poverty statistics, covering the period 2020/21 in (a) Newcastle-upon-Tyne and (b) the North East, will be published in March 2022, as part of the Department's (a) Children In Low Income Families and (b) Households Below Average Income publications, subject to the usual checks on data quality.

This Government is committed to supporting low-income families, including through spending over £110 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22 and by increasing the National Living Wage by 6.6% to £9.50 from April 2022.

In addition, Universal Credit recipients in work will soon benefit from a reduction in the Universal Credit taper rate from 63% to 55%, while eligible in-work claimants will also benefit from changes to the Work Allowance. These measures represent an effective tax cut for those on low incomes of around £2.2 billion in 2022-23, and will benefit almost two million of the lowest paid workers by £1000 a year on average.

Our multi-billion-pound Plan for Jobs, which has recently been expanded by £500 million, will help people across the UK to find work and to boost their wages and prospects.

We recognise that some people may require extra support over the winter as we continue our recovery from the impacts of the Covid pandemic, which is why vulnerable households will be able to access a new £500 million support fund to help them with essentials. This includes £421 million for the Household Support Fund, which will help vulnerable people in England with the cost of food, utilities and wider essentials. Newcastle Upon Tyne Council are receiving £2,898,403.85 of this funding.

We have also increased the value of Healthy Start Food Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25, helping eligible low income households buy healthy foods such as milk, fruit and vitamins, and are investing over £200m a year from 2022 to extend our successful Holiday Activities and Food programme, which provides enriching activities and healthy meals to children in all Local Authorities in England.

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Meetings

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[76753\]](#)

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

**Guy Opperman:**

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](#).

**■ Employment and Support Allowance: Pensions****Jane Hunt:**[\[76867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of (a) the impact of off-setting private pension income against income-based employment and support allowance earnings for people who have been able to draw their pension early due to ill health and (b) the potential merits of allowing people who have drawn their pension early due to ill health to retain their employment and support allowance earnings.

**Chloe Smith:**

Entitlement to income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA (IR)) is based on financial need and both income and capital will affect entitlement. Any pension income received is deducted from the amount of ESA (IR) payable. Cash lump sums taken from a pension savings are deemed to be capital. Claimants are not entitled to ESA (IR) if their household has capital of more than £16,000. Capital in excess of £6,000 and up to £16,000 reduces the amount of ESA (IR) payable.

**■ Maternity Leave and Maternity Pay: Multiple Births****Janet Daby:**[\[76828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what extra statutory maternity pay and leave provisions are available for parents of multiple births.

**Guy Opperman:**

Statutory Maternity Pay is paid in respect of each pregnancy. This provides a measure of financial security which allows a pregnant working woman to take time off from work towards the end of her pregnancy, and in the months following childbirth in the interest of her own and her babies' health and wellbeing.

**■ Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals****Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[57023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the EU citizens with Settled Status who were recently informed in error that they would lose their benefits have been contacted by her Department and given assurances about their entitlement.

**David Rutley:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* Following the end of the grace period on 30 June 2021, EU, EEA and Swiss citizens have been required to have a valid UK immigration status in order to access non-contributory benefits, such as Universal Credit.

As part of our extensive efforts to contact all those believed to be without status, people naturalised as British citizens, Irish citizens or with an existing valid immigration status may have received letters asking them to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). The letters urged people with an immigration status to contact DWP to confirm their status and no action was taken with respect to their benefit payments as a consequence of receiving these letters.

We have since updated our data lists to ensure people with an existing immigration status do not receive further correspondence. No action will be taken to suspend or terminate the benefits of people with a valid immigration status.

Individuals wishing to evidence their eligibility for benefits should contact DWP and/or HMRC as appropriate to their individual circumstances.

When considering whether or not to suspend a claim, DWP officials will seek information on the customer's immigration status held by the Home Office and contact the customer themselves to determine whether or not an individual holds a valid immigration status, or has applied to the EUSS. These steps are repeated at the termination stage, to ensure that no claims are closed for individuals who hold a valid immigration status.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Migrants****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[57064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that EU citizens with status and British citizens living in the UK who have received letters from the Department stating that they must apply for immigration status, following the UK's departure from the EU, within 28 days or their benefits will stop, do not have their entitlements terminated.

**David Rutley:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* Following the end of the grace period on 30 June 2021, EU, EEA and Swiss citizens have been required to have a valid UK immigration status in order to access non-contributory benefits, such as Universal Credit.

As part of our extensive efforts to contact all those believed to be without status, people naturalised as British citizens, Irish citizens or with an existing valid immigration status may have received letters asking them to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). The letters urged people with an immigration status to contact DWP to confirm their status and no action was taken with respect to their benefit payments as a consequence of receiving these letters.

We have since updated our data lists to ensure people with an existing immigration status do not receive further correspondence. No action will be taken to suspend or terminate the benefits of people with a valid immigration status.

The Department's extensive engagement with this cohort, including targeted letters, outbound calls, SMS text messages, digital journal messages, face to face appointments and home visits, has been to ensure that people acquire the correct status and maintain their benefit entitlement by doing so.

Before suspending a claim, DWP officials will seek information on the customer's immigration status held by the Home Office and contact the customer themselves to determine whether or not an individual holds a valid immigration status, or has applied to the EU Settlement Scheme. These steps are repeated at the termination stage, to ensure claims are not closed for individuals who hold a valid immigration status.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Alison Thewliss:**

[\[79405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the constituent of the hon. Member for Glasgow Central will receive payment of her State Pension as was confirmed via email on 6 October 2021 by DWP Visiting, Central Team 1, reference ZA24802.

**Guy Opperman:**

DWP provided an email response to the office of Alison Thewliss MP on 22 November 2021.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[76582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the effect of ending the £20 uplift to universal credit on the levels of in-work poverty.

**David Rutley:**

It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the impact of removing the temporary £20 uplift on levels of in-work poverty. Projecting the impacts of policies on poverty involves projecting forward the impact of the pandemic on every household's income which is not possible to do with confidence, not least because the latest comprehensive data on net incomes for households is from 2019-20, before the pandemic began.

With the success of the vaccine rollout and in the context of record job vacancies, we are committed to helping people get back into work and to progress in their careers. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. Our multi-billion-pound Plan for Jobs, which has recently been expanded by £500 million, will help people across the UK to find work and to boost their wages and prospects.

We are taking decisive action to make work pay by cutting the Universal Credit taper rate from 63p to 55p, and increasing Universal Credit work allowances by £500 per annum. This is essentially a tax cut for the lowest paid workers, worth around £2.2 billion in 2022-23 and means that 1.9m households will keep, on average, around an extra £1,000 on an annual basis. These changes are combined with a rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

#### ■ **Broadcasting Policy Update**

**Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):**  
[\[HCWS418\]](#)

On 1 February 2021 News UK submitted an application requesting the Secretary of State to release in full the Undertakings accepted in 2019. The 2019 Undertakings were accepted in lieu of the Conditions put in place when the newspapers were acquired by News International in 1981.

The Conditions included provisions relating to the continued publication of The Times and The Sunday Times as separate newspapers, to the number and power of the independent national directors of Times Newspapers Holdings Limited, and to editorial control over the journalists working for, and political comment and opinion published in, each of newspapers.

The Undertakings accepted in 2019 made changes to the Conditions, to allow for sharing of journalistic resources between the two publications and to strengthen the arrangements relating to the independent national directors. News UK now seeks the release of the Undertakings in their entirety.

On 24 June DCMS issued a public 'invitation to comment', which included a redacted copy of the application, and the written views received from the Editors and Independent National Directors. On 30 July, DCMS requested Ofcom and the Competition and Markets Authority to advise by 24 September on the public interest considerations and changes to market circumstances relevant to the case, respectively.

I have now taken into account the reports and all relevant information submitted to the Department. Acting in a quasi-judicial capacity, I am minded to grant the request by News UK and release the Undertakings. I am satisfied that there has been a material change of circumstances since the acceptance of the Undertakings in 2019 and that, having considered the public interest considerations applying to newspapers, the Undertakings are no longer appropriate or necessary for the purpose they were intended to achieve (and so should be released).

In accordance with the Enterprise Act 2002, I will now consult on this minded-to decision and publish the reports commissioned from Ofcom and the CMA. Respondents will have 15 working days to provide representations, after which I will come to a final decision.

#### ■ **Fan-led Review of Football Governance Final Report**

**Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):**  
[\[HCWS417\]](#)

Football clubs are at the heart of our local communities. They have a unique social value and many possess great history and legacy. Fans are at the centre of our national game,

which is why the Government committed to a fan led review of football governance in our manifesto.

In April this year, the Government launched that Review, led by the Chair, the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford.

As the Terms of Reference set out to this House, the Review was a comprehensive examination of the English football system with the aim to explore ways of improving the governance, ownership and financial sustainability of clubs in the football pyramid, building on the strengths and benefits of the game.

Today the Government has published the final Report setting out the recommendations of the Review. This Report is founded on the basis of over 100 hours of engagement with Supporters' Trusts, fan groups, women's football representatives, football authorities, club owners, players representatives, and underrepresented interest groups, alongside over 20,000 fans responding to an online survey. The report is extensive, so we will now be considering the detailed recommendations ahead of a full Government response.

All football stakeholders have had the chance to contribute to the Review and I am very grateful to all those who have given evidence. Most importantly, fan voices were at the heart of the Review and will remain at the heart of the Government's thinking in responding to the recommendations.

I would like to place on record my thanks and appreciation to the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford for her tireless work and for delivering her recommendations so swiftly. She has done a superb job in bringing together such a range of views from across football with such credibility and consideration.

The final report is a thorough and detailed examination of the challenges faced by English football. It is a demonstration of the financial problems being caused by incentives within the game and reckless decision making by some clubs and owners, both of which are unsustainable and threaten the future of the game. It is clear that current oversight of the game is not up to the challenge of solving the structural challenges and action must be taken.

To address this systemic challenge, the Review presents the following ten Strategic Recommendations, which are accompanied in the Report by detailed sub-recommendations:

To ensure the long-term sustainability of football, the Government should create a new Independent Regulator for English Football.

To ensure financial sustainability of the professional game, the Independent Regulator for English Football should oversee financial regulation in football.

New owners' and directors' tests for clubs should be established by the Independent Regulator for English Football replacing the three existing tests and ensuring that only good custodians and qualified directors can run these vital assets.

Football needs a new approach to corporate governance to support a long-term sustainable future of the game.

Football needs to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in clubs with committed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans regularly assessed by the Independent Regulator for English Football.

As a uniquely important stakeholder, supporters should be properly consulted by their clubs in taking key decisions by means of a Shadow Board.

Football clubs are a vital part of their local communities. In recognition of this there should be additional protection for key items of club heritage.

Fair distributions are vital to the long term health of football. The Premier League should guarantee its support to the pyramid and make additional, proportionate contributions to further support football.

Women's football should be treated with parity and given its own dedicated review.

As an urgent matter, the welfare of players exiting the game needs to be better protected - particularly at a young age.

The Government welcomes the work of the Review and will now consider the detailed recommendations ahead of providing a full Government response in Spring 2022.

The Review demonstrates that there are fundamental issues with our national sport, and that this merits radical reform. Fans across the country want and deserve that reform. We have seen in the past how football has been unable to reform itself and to deliver changes that stop the likes of Bury FC or Macclesfield Town FC going out of business, or which stop clubs breaking away to set up the closed shop of a European Super League.

We are at a turning point for football in this country. The Review is a detailed and worthy piece of work that will require a substantive response and plan of action from across Government. But the primary recommendation of the review is clear, and one the Government chooses to endorse in principle today: that football requires a strong, independent regulator to secure the future of our national game. The Government will now work at pace to determine the most effective way to deliver an independent regulator, and any powers that might be needed.

This is an important Review that we hope will lead to change for good in football. The Government will now work at pace on how to make that happen.

I have today deposited a copy of the Report in the Libraries of both Houses.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Update on Early Years Funding

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families (Will Quince):**  
[\[HCWS421\]](#)

Today I am confirming the hourly funding rates for the free early education entitlements in 2022-23 for each local authority.

We have spent over £3.5 billion in each of the past three years on those entitlements to support nurseries and childminders in England to deliver high quality care and education.

At the Spending Review on 27 October the Chancellor announced increases in the funding for the early years entitlements worth £160 million in 2022-23, £180 million in 2023-24 and £170 million in 2024-25, compared to 2021-22. This is for local authorities to increase the hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers and reflects cost pressures, as well as anticipated changes in the number of eligible children.

As a result of this additional funding, we will increase the hourly funding rates for all local authorities for the 2-year-old entitlement by 21 pence an hour. Funding for the 3- and 4-year-old entitlements will also increase by 17 pence an hour in the vast majority of areas. We are increasing the minimum funding floor for the 3- and 4-year-old offer to £4.61 per hour.

Ten local authorities have had their 2021-22 hourly funding rates for 3- and 4-year-olds protected by the "loss cap" in the Early Years National Funding Formula, to ensure that they do not face large drops to their funding rate. Funding for Bristol, Camden, Ealing, Halton, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, and Westminster will be maintained in 2022-23. Funding for Rutland will be increased by 13 pence per hour, in recognition that Rutland's loss cap protection was only worth 4 pence per hour in 2021-22.

I can also confirm today that the supplementary funding hourly rate for Maintained Nursery Schools will increase by 3.5%, equivalent to the increase in the 3- and 4-year-old hourly funding rates.

We are also increasing the early years pupil premium by 7 pence to 60 pence per hour, equivalent to up to £342 per eligible child per year, to support better outcomes for disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds. Funding for the Disability Access Fund - an additional payment made to providers to help to make reasonable adjustments within their provision to support eligible 3- and 4-year-old children with a disability, will also increase by £185 to £800 per eligible child per year.

For 2021-22 we put in place a temporary variation to the way we fund local authorities for the early years entitlements, using a termly rather than annual census, in response to coronavirus (COVID-19). I can confirm that, from 2022-23, we will return to the normal process of allocating funding based on the annual January census.

In addition to the increase in funding rates for the early years entitlements, we have also announced £153 million of recovery funding which will be used to strengthen teaching in early years and ensure our youngest children are given the support they need as we emerge from the pandemic. This includes high quality, online training available to all early years practitioners, access to mentor support for those settings that need it most and opportunities to build innovative practice. We will increase supply of qualified graduates in the sector through a substantial expansion in the number of fully funded early year initial teacher training places, and improve the identification and support of SEND children by increasing the numbers of staff with SENCO qualifications. Through home learning

programmes, early years practitioners will also be better equipped to support parents with their children's development in their own homes.

Further details and guidance on early years entitlements funding will be published on GOV.UK

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Local Government Update

**Secretary of State for Levelling UP, Housing and Communities (Michael Gove):**  
[\[HCWS422\]](#)

On 10 June 2021 my Rt Hon. Friend, the then Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) updated the House that he had appointed a team of four Commissioners to Liverpool City Council. The Commissioners' responsibilities are set out in Directions[1] made under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 and include oversight of the Council's highways, regeneration and property management functions together with the associated audit and governance arrangements. The original Best Value investigation was initiated following a police investigation into allegations of fraud, bribery, corruption and misconduct in public office which involves a significant connection to Liverpool City Council. The wider criminal investigation into corruption is ongoing.

The Commissioners submitted their first report to me on 05 October 2021 and I have discussed it with them. I was pleased to hear about the steps the Council have taken to expose and stop wrong-doing. It is vital for Liverpool's transformation that a clear line is drawn between the Council of the past and the Council of the future. The Commissioners recognise the hard work, ambition, and determination of the Mayor and her Cabinet, as well as the Corporate leadership team. The Commissioners have met dedicated and talented staff across the Council who are working hard to deliver vital public services.

The Commissioners have outlined to me, as they have stated clearly in their report, that the Council is at the beginning of a long improvement journey and has a great deal to do in the next three years. In addition to the precise functions listed in the Directions, the Commissioners have encouraged the Council to take a whole-council approach to improvement, with an expectation that the plans being developed will reflect this position. The Commissioners are working with the Council to develop their strategic improvement plan so they can focus on setting a sustainable long-term financial plan, improve corporate governance, deliver basic services well and meet the requirements of the statutory directions.

The Commissioners shared with me their concerns about the Council's financial resilience and have outlined these in their report. I welcome the forthcoming review of the Council's financial resilience being conducted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) at the request of the Commissioners. This review is expected to be completed before Christmas.

Given the circumstances of the intervention, and legacy of the previous administration, it is not surprising that Commissioners have found that the Council's approach to regeneration and property management lacks rigour and commercial awareness. I welcome Commissioners working with these teams to embed strong commercial principles in these functions. Commissioners are also working with the Planning team to address the lack of strategic policy frameworks and the significant backlog of planning applications which are constraining development in the city. It is likely to take another 12 to 18 months to fully stabilise the highways and transport functions in order to provide a firmer foundation for onward improvement.

Electoral reform in Liverpool is an important part of the intervention. On 22 September, in line with the terms set out in the statutory direction, a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was approved by Full Council. In this the Council proposed a reduction in the number of councillors from 90 to 85; and on 1 October, the LGBCE announced it was 'minded to' accept the proposal. The Council is due to submit its ward pattern proposal in December 2021. In addition, the intervention package includes the use of powers in the Local Government Act 2000 to provide for full council elections for the City of Liverpool from 2023. An Order which delivers these electoral changes was laid before Parliament on 27 September and came into force on 29 October 2021. It provides for all Liverpool City Council councillors, and the directly elected executive Mayor of the City of Liverpool, to be elected and retire together every four years, starting in 2023.

I am mindful of the recent terrorist incident which took place in Liverpool on 14 November and commend the Council for their response efforts. No one can doubt the professionalism and public service shown in the response by local government, the NHS and emergency services. I know that going forward, the Council will draw on the expertise of the Commissioner team as needed as the community pulls together from this event over the coming weeks and months. I am however clear that the parameters of the intervention have not changed, and I expect the Council to continue to prioritise the intervention and transformation work.

The Council has a significant challenge ahead of them to provide the services that the residents of Liverpool City Council deserve. My department stands ready to support Commissioners in any way needed to secure this transformation and enable the Council to contribute to our Levelling Up Agenda.

The Commissioners have agreed to provide their next report to me in April 2022 and I will update the House on further progress with the intervention at that time.

A copy of the Commissioners' first report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/liverpool-city-council-directions-made-under-the-local-government-act-1999>

## TREASURY

### ■ Tax Credits, Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance Update

**The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr Simon Clarke):**

[\[HCWS419\]](#)

The government will bring forward regulations that will increase most tax credits rates, and thresholds, and will increase the Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance rates in line with the general rise in prices as measured by the September 2021 Consumer Price Index (CPI). CPI has been the default inflation measure for the government's statutory annual review of benefits since 2011.

The annual uprating of benefits will take place for tax credits from the start of the new tax year and for Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance in the first full week of the 2021-22 tax year. In 2022, this will be 6 April for tax credits and 11 April for Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance.

The annual up-rating process includes the following measures:

- The majority of elements and thresholds in Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit will be increased by September's CPI figure (3.1%) from April 2022. In line with established practice and the Office for Budget Responsibility's expectations in their welfare forecast, the maximum rate of the childcare element, the family element, the withdrawal rate and the income disregards will remain unchanged.
- The 3.1% increase will be applied to the rate of the Working Tax Credit basic element announced by Written Ministerial Statement on 4 November 2020 (£2,005).
- Child Benefit will be increased in line with September CPI (3.1%) from April 2021.
- As set out in section 49(3) of the Tax Credits Act 2002 (TCA), Guardian's Allowance will be uprated in line with prices, measured by September CPI (3.1%).

The full list of proposed benefit and credit rates will be placed in the Libraries of the House in due course.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Statutory Review of Benefit and Pension Rates: 2022-23

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey):**

[\[HCWS420\]](#)

I have concluded my statutory annual review of benefit and State Pension rates. The new rates will apply in the tax year 2022/23 and come into effect on 11 April 2022.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the relevant reference period (the year to September 2021) was 3.1%, and I can confirm that benefits will increase in line with that. This is consistent with the use of this index since 2011. The weekly earnings limit in Carer's Allowance will also be increased by 3.1%.

In line with the Social Security (Up-rating of Benefits) Act 2021, State Pension rates will rise in line with CPI of 3.1%.

I also confirm that the local housing allowance rates for 2022/23 will be maintained at the elevated cash rates agreed for 2020/21. The Office for Budget Responsibility made this assumption too in its expenditure forecast.

All of these matters are transferred in Northern Ireland, and corresponding provision will be made there.

Some benefits are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, but there are benefits that are still temporarily being delivered by DWP on behalf of the Scottish Ministers under Agency Agreements; these will rise with CPI of 3.1%. The Scottish Government will need to bring forward corresponding up-rating legislation in the Scottish Parliament.

I will place the full list of proposed benefit and pension rates for 2022/23 in the Libraries of both Houses.