



Daily Report

Thursday, 2 December 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 December 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:41 P.M., 02 December 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Prosecutions: Gambling

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[81969\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of criminal prosecutions in which gambling is a relevant factor.

Alex Chalk:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not maintain a central record of criminal prosecutions involving gambling or in which gambling has been a factor. This information could only be obtained by an examination of CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Babcock International: CHC Helicopter

Alex Cunningham:

[\[80984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Competition and Markets Authority plans to reach a decision on whether to launch a phase two investigation of CHC's takeover of Babcock International's offshore oil and gas crew transportation services.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[80987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Civil Aviation Authority has participated in the investigation into CHC's takeover of Babcock International's offshore oil and gas crew transportation service which was launched by the Competition and Markets Authority in March 2021.

Paul Scully:

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which is responsible for assessing the risks and benefits of mergers and acquisitions in relation to competition in the UK, is a non-ministerial department which works independently from BEIS.

■ Bulb Energy: Insolvency

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[82262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether costs associated with Bulb Energy Ltd entering the special administration regime will be passed on to billpayers.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: The Government will recover costs either by the special administration regime administrator realising the value of Bulb's assets, or

through the established shortfall recovery mechanism, which will see a levy charged on industry. The details of this levy will be decided by the Government in consultation with Ofgem and industry.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[82263]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the options are for exiting the Special Administration Regime undertaken with Bulb Energy Ltd.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: Bulb Energy Ltd will only remain in the Special Administration Regime for as long as necessary. There are various options to exit this regime.

The Government will work closely with the Energy Administrators to ensure that the exit from the Special Administration Regime achieves the best results for customers and taxpayers.

■ **Business: Carbon Emissions**

Alex Sobel:

[83455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of businesses using company AGMs to consult with wider stakeholders beyond shareholders, to encourage greater stewardship and adoption of transition policies towards net-zero.

Paul Scully:

Since 2019 we have required all large companies to report annually on how their directors have had regard in their decision-making to the interests of employees, customers, suppliers, the environment and other matters. Companies are free to invite stakeholders to AGMs as a way to understand and consider stakeholder interests.

The UK Corporate Governance Code further provides that premium listed companies should ensure effective engagement with, and encourage participation from, both shareholders and stakeholders.

The Government's 'Roadmap to Sustainable Investing', published in October, set out how we will enable and expect business to address the challenge of climate change, including by disclosing climate change transition plans. (

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greening-finance-a-roadmap-to-sustainable-investing>). From April 2022, large public interest entities will be required to report in line with the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures.

■ Business: Research**Chi Onwurah:****[80189]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish the final report on the innovation loans pilot programme; and with reference to the press release of 21 November 2021, what criteria were used to assess that programme.

George Freeman:

The Follow-On Interim Evaluation of the Pilot Innovation Loans Programme will be published shortly.

The pilot programme's interim evaluation has focused on:

1. What is the interest in, and demand for, Innovation Loans?
2. What is the nature of the businesses applying, and the projects which form the focus of the applications for funding?
3. What would have happened to the innovation projects supported if they had not been offered these loans?
4. How effective are the processes of implementation and what are the experiences of the customer journey?
5. What evidence is there of progress towards the achievement of intended outputs, outcomes, and impacts?

■ Class Actions: Consumers**Patricia Gibson:****[82334]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will enable collective redress in consumer cases in line with competition cases.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: The UK has an established regime for addressing collective consumer harm and enabling consumers to gain collective redress when consumer law has been broken. This covers both public collective redress procedures, whereby regulators and the CMA can seek redress on behalf of consumers under Part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002, and, to a certain extent, private collective redress, for example through Group Litigation Orders.

In July 2021, the Department published the *Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy* consultation. We sought evidence on whether there is a case for strengthening the UK's collective redress regime, to make it easier to gather many individual claims together into a single lawsuit that can support the cost of litigation. The Department will respond to the consultation in due course.

■ Counterfeit Manufacturing

Martyn Day:

[81070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to work with private industry to raise people's awareness of the risks associated with the purchase of counterfeit goods in the run up to Christmas 2021.

George Freeman:

The Intellectual Property Office works with industry, law enforcement and government partners to raise the awareness to consumers of the social, economic and personal risks posed by counterfeit goods. It is presently working with Local Authority Trading Standards teams to support their seasonal campaigns highlighting the dangers of purchasing counterfeit goods this Christmas.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Summit Resorts & Developments

Justin Madders:

[80341]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish all details of meetings between Ministers and officials from his Department and representatives of Summit Resorts and Developments Limited, or its predecessor David Lloyd Developments Limited, since January 2019.

George Freeman:

Departments publish quarterly details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations on GOV.UK. Details for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

Data for July to September 2021 will be published in due course.

Details of meetings held by officials are not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Dispute Resolution

Patricia Gibson:

[82335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to extend dispute resolution to sectors other than second hand car sales and servicing and home improvement.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: The Government considers that a number of factors are relevant in assessing whether to extend mandatory business participation in ADR to new sectors. These include the volume or value of consumer problems, the overall consumer experience, and the structure of the market.

The Government consulted on this matter in its *Reforming Consumer and Competition Policy* command paper and will set out next steps on dispute resolution in its response.

■ Electronic Commerce: Regulation

Patricia Gibson:

[82333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that online marketplaces take greater responsibility for the safety of consumers using their platforms, including proactive measures to protect consumers from scams, fake reviews and unsafe products.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: There is already robust legislation in place that protects consumers when purchasing goods and services online. The Consumer Rights Act 2015 and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 set out the rights consumers enjoy while shopping online and in store.

The Department consulted in July of this year on advancing online consumer rights in its "Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy" consultation. A copy of the consultation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-competition-and-consumer-policy>. The consultation closed on 1 October and the department will publish a response in due course.

Existing laws also require that all consumer products, including those sold online, are safe before they can be placed on the UK market. The Office for Product Safety and Standards is currently reviewing the UK's product safety framework, including the impact of changes brought by eCommerce, to ensure that it remains robust and is future proofed. The Government published its response to a recent Call for Evidence on 11 November at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-product-safety-review-call-for-evidence>. We intend to publish a consultation outlining proposals for reform in due course.

■ Energy Supply: Regulation

Julian Sturdy:

[81945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to recent bankruptcies of energy companies, if his Department will review the current framework of regulation for the consumer energy market.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem, as indicated in its open letter to energy retail suppliers on 29 October, will shortly be consulting on the regulatory frameworks for the energy retail market to ensure ongoing stability.

■ Energy: Costs

Fleur Anderson:

[82389]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to tackle rising energy costs for households.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: Rising energy costs are the result of unprecedented increases in the wholesale price of gas in global energy markets. The Energy Price Cap will continue to protect households, ensuring they pay a fair price for their energy.

The Government will continue to support low income and fuel poor households with their energy bills through the Warm Home Discount which provides eligible households with a £140 discount. Further, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments, ensure that the most vulnerable are better able to heat their homes over the colder months.

■ Fossil Fuels: Carbon Emissions

Caroline Lucas:

[81920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Answers of 10 November to Questions 69042 to 69061, if he will publish the evidence base for the Government's conclusion that all previously licenced fields can be developed, as the UK seeks to achieve its commitment to net zero by 2050.

Caroline Lucas:

[81924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answers of 10 November 2021 to Questions 68176 to 68187, if he will publish the evidence base for the Government's conclusion that all previously licenced fields can be developed, as the UK seeks to achieve its commitment to net zero by 2050.

Caroline Lucas:

[81925]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answers of 9 November 2021 to Questions 67118, 67119 and 67120, if he will publish the evidence base for the Government's conclusion that all previously licensed fields can be developed as the UK seeks to achieve its commitment to net zero by 2050.

Greg Hands:

The OGA's published production projections can be found on the OGA website at the following weblink: www.ogauthority.co.uk/data-centre/data-downloads-and-publications/production-projections/.

Caroline Lucas:

[81921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answers of 3 November to Questions 69042 to 69061, whether his Department's assessment of all previously licensed fields included scope 3 emissions.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[81922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answers of 2 November 2021 to Questions 68176 - 68187, whether his Department's assessment of all previously licensed fields included scope 3 emissions.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[81923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answers of 1 November 2021 to Questions 67118 to 67120, whether his Department's assessment of all previously licensed fields included scope 3 emissions.

Greg Hands:

Downstream scope 3 emissions of oil and gas production (the emissions released from the end-use combustion of the oil or gas product) are accounted for within the UK's carbon budget under the sectors that consume oil and gas.

■ Future Fund and Life Sciences

Chi Onwurah:

[\[79368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the National Science and Technology Council's letter to the Prime Minister dated 23 September 2021, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the £100 million funding gap for the Future Fund: Breakthrough programme and Life Sciences Investment Programme as identified in that letter.

George Freeman:

Future Fund: Breakthrough is a £375 million, UK-wide programme that invests alongside private investors to increase the size of later-stage funding rounds. On 17 November 2021, British Patient Capital announced the first investment under this programme, as part of a £60 million Series D funding round for Bristol-based company Ultraleap. There is no upper limit for round size and hence future investments may be in rounds above the £100 million threshold identified by the Council for Science and Technology.

The Life Sciences Investment Programme is a £200 million government commitment, aiming to attract at least £600 million of investment in total to be deployed within 10-15 years. It is a targeted, sectoral intervention to address the sector-specific funding gap faced by growth-stage life sciences companies in the UK. The programme will invest in funds rather than individual companies, with the aim of enabling the emergence and development of specialist UK-based fund managers.

Both Future Fund: Breakthrough and the Life Sciences Investment Programme are administered by British Patient Capital, a commercial subsidiary of the government-owned British Business Bank.

In addition to these specific programmes, the Government is considering the analysis and recommendations made by the Council for Science and Technology and is engaging with institutional investors to explore the scope for an increased allocation of investment capital to research-intensive UK companies, particularly for scale-up

investments over £100 million. This builds on the actions set out in the Government's Innovation Strategy, published in July, to support access to scale-up finance for innovative science and technology companies.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Local Government

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[81852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding each local authority received for the Local Authority Delivery element of the green homes grant scheme.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 30 November 2021]: Attached is a list of the total funding allocated to each English Local Authority across Phase 1 of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme.

Attachments:

1. Total funding allocation England - LAD Phase 1 [UIN81852 - Total funding allocated to each English LA across Phase 1 of the LAD Scheme.docx]

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[83254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 1 November 2021 from the Chair of JFSA.

Paul Scully:

I wrote to the Chair of Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance on 1 December about financial redress.

■ Shipping: Costs

Emily Thornberry:

[\[82276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of increased shipping costs on (a) supply chains for UK manufacturers and (b) the availability of imported goods in the weeks leading up to Christmas 2021.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: The Department is working closely with businesses and key industry groups to understand the key supply chain risks and shortages that they are facing. Due to the commercial sensitivity of this type of information we do not routinely make this information public.

■ Trading Standards

Patricia Gibson:

[\[82332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) adequacy of the (i) structure, (ii) powers

and (iii) resources of Trading Standards and (b) ability of that organisation to effectively protect consumers from scams, rogue traders and other potential harms.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: Local authorities are responsible for determining their spending priorities, including with respect for trading standards, and are accountable to their local electorate. Funding is not ringfenced, so local authorities make decisions according to their individual needs.

In July 2021, the Department published the *Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy* consultation. We sought evidence on how national and local enforcement bodies can work better together to ensure consumers are best protected against unscrupulous rogue traders. The Department will respond to the consultation in due course.

■ **Utilities: Insolvency**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[82264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using the (a) Supplier of Last Resort or (b) Special Administration Regime process for energy companies that go out of business as a result of increases in wholesale energy prices.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: This is a judgment for Ofgem, who assess the circumstances of the failed supplier and the supply market at the time. If Ofgem considers a Special Administration Regime appropriate, Ofgem will make an application, with the consent of the Secretary of State, to the Court for a decision to place a company into special administration.

■ **Warm Home Discount Scheme**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[82266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Warm Homes Discount scheme to a wider range of low income and vulnerable households.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: The Government is committed to tackling fuel poverty and supporting low income and vulnerable households to heat their homes at an affordable cost. In the Energy White Paper published in December 2020, the Government committed to consult on the Warm Home Discount scheme up to 2025/26. The Government will increase the total spending to £475 million per year (in 2020 prices).

CABINET OFFICE**■ Attorney General: Supply Chains**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83316\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Office of the Attorney General to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83317\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83318\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83319\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Education to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83320\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83321\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for International Trade to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83322\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83323\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Transport to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83324\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83325\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83326\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83327\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with HM Treasury to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83328\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Home Office to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83329\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Ministry of Defence to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83330\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Ministry of Justice to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83331\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Northern Ireland Office to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[83332\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Scotland Office to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[83333\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking with the Wales Office to ensure supply chain resilience for that Department.

Michael Ellis:

The resilience of our Supply Chains is a key priority for the Government. We have already put in place a raft of measures to deal with the extraordinary set of circumstances brought on by the pandemic and the global economy rebounding.

These include:

- increasing HGV testing capacity by 90% to help get new drivers into the sector quickly;
- extending cabotage rights;
- making available bootcamp places to train up to 5,000 HGV drivers, and
- making available temporary visas for poultry workers and butchers.

In October, the Prime Minister appointed Sir Dave Lewis to advise HM Government on supply chains and to identify both immediate improvements and any necessary long-term changes. He has spoken with over 100 businesses from across 14 sectors since his appointment. In order that we can continue to monitor supply chain risks and coordinate work across government, we have also established a new Supply Chains Unit within the Cabinet Office.

■ **Coronavirus: Children**

Emma Hardy:

[\[82055\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish data on the number of covid-19 deaths in children in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021 to date.

Michael Ellis:

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have, therefore, asked the Authority to respond.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [Response to PQ82055.pdf]

■ **Coronavirus: Public Inquiries**

Justin Madders:

[\[81035\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the publication of the timetable for the covid-19 inquiry.

Michael Ellis:

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

Travel: Civil Servants and Ministers**Helen Hayes:**[\[81080\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2121 to Question 75043 on Travel: Civil Servants and Ministers, if he will publish a breakdown of the Government spending on (a) domestic flights and (b) trains for business trips undertaken by (i) Ministers and (ii) civil servants in each of the last five years.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the hon. Member to [PQ 75043](#).

Details of business expenses for senior officials are published quarterly on GOV.UK. The Government does not plan to publish a breakdown of Ministers' domestic travel costs for previous years in routine transparency data.

DEFENCE**Army: Reorganisation****John Healey:**[\[83229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the army restructure on the number of personnel in the infantry.

Leo Docherty:

The small reduction in the size of the Army will ensure a force that will be more effectively matched to current and future threats. The significant reorganisation of force structures and re-balancing between arms and services will result in a small reduction in the numbers of the Infantry. There will be no redundancies to military personnel and the workforce will be re-apportioned to other roles in the Army.

John Healey:[\[83231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the army restructure will result in the closure of any British armed forces bases overseas.

James Heappey:

There are no plans to close any British Armed Forces overseas bases as a result of Future Soldier.

John Healey:

[\[83232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral contribution of the Secretary of State for Defence of 25 November 2021, Official Report, column 487, what assessment he has made of what those capability gaps will be.

Jeremy Quin:

The Integrated Review has set the Armed Forces on a course of transformation to meet the threats of the future. As part of this process equipment will be retired and, as appropriate, replaced. There is also the constant process of monitoring and development of technology to ensure that our threat assessment remains appropriate. Defence conducts environmental Capability Audits annually with the force being tested against a range of scenarios.

■ **Army: Research**

John Healey:

[\[83233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of his Department's £6.6 billion research and development budget will be spent on the army.

Jeremy Quin:

Over the four-year period (2021-2024) of the Spending Review, the Army has been allocated a Research & Development (R&D) budget totalling £729 million. This represents 11% of Defence's £6.6 billion R&D budget. However, it is important to note that R&D is often commissioned centrally to provide support to multiple Front Line Commands (FLCs) or that funding allocated to other FLCs provides Defence-wide benefits to more than one Service.

One example is the centrally commissioned Science and Technology programme, that has commissioned new projects on Artificial Intelligence (£59 million), Machine Speed Command and Control (£23 million), Digital Battlespace (£22 million) and Novel Electronics and Computing (£8 million), all of which will generate benefits for the Army if realised. Another example is the £150 million Gamechanger project on Directed Energy Weapons commissioned by Defence Innovation. This will provide a number of demonstrators including Ground Based Air Defence and Counter-UAS, projects that again if successful would provide benefit to the Army.

■ **Glencorse Barracks**

Owen Thompson:

[\[83437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Disposal database: House of Commons report, for what reason his Department plans to dispose of seven garages and a playpark at Glencorse Barracks from 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

The decision to dispose of the garages and playpark is separate from the recent decision to retain Glencorse Barracks

These seven garages at Glencorse Barracks have been declared surplus by the Department (and similarly the “playpark” which is already empty, the equipment having already been removed). As such they are being disposed of in accordance with Ministry of Defence policy and HM Treasury guidelines.

■ **Merlin Helicopters: Early Warning Systems**

Mr Mark Francois:

[81890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 12 of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority Annual Report on Major Projects 2020-21 and its grading of the Crowsnest Programme as red, what assessment he has made of the viability of the Crowsnest AEW system.

Jeremy Quin:

The CROWSNEST Airborne Surveillance and Control system was graded as Red due to not meeting its approved Initial Operating Capability date. This assessment was based on timing rather than cost or performance standards.

The CROWSNEST programme has successfully delivered a baseline capability to support the Carrier Strike Group deployment in 2021. A full assessment of its performance will take place once the operational deployment of CSG21 concludes.

■ **Military Bases: Closures**

John Healey:

[83230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish a list of armed forces bases in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland that will close in the next 24 months.

Jeremy Quin:

A list of all Ministry of Defence (MOD) assets for sale and those coming up for sale are published on the Defence Disposal Database, which can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disposal-database-house-of-commons-report>

■ **Veterans: Employment**

John Healey:

[80912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date the current contract with Risk Management Ltd for running the Career Transition Partnership ends; and whether he plans to extend that contract to 2025.

Leo Docherty:

The contract was awarded in 2015 to Right Management Ltd for a total of 10 years, which includes two potential options to extend (six years + two years + two years format). The first option to extend was exercised in September 2021 and has extended the contract for two years to September 2023. Relet preparations and

stakeholder engagement are ongoing and a decision on exercising the further extension option to 2025 will be made in due course.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Football Governance Fan-led Review

Dan Jarvis:

[\[83382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to establish an independent regulator for English football as recommended in the Independent Fan Led Review of English Football.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has endorsed in principle the primary recommendation of the review, that football requires a strong, independent regulator to secure the future of our national game.

The Government will now work at pace to review the report in full, including determining the most effective way to deliver an independent regulator, including any powers it may need.

The Government will continue to engage with stakeholders as we work towards issuing a full response to the report in Spring 2022.

■ Museums and Galleries: Art Works

Robert Jenrick:

[\[81013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether it is Government policy that (a) works of art held in the national collections, including the British Museum, should be retained by those institutions in the UK in perpetuity and not gifted to other nations and their institutions and (b) the Government will intervene should any such institution propose an alternative approach.

Nigel Huddleston:

National museums and galleries in the UK, including the British Museum, operate independently of the Government, but some are prevented by law from “deaccessioning” objects in their collections unless, broadly, they are duplicates or unfit for retention. The two exceptions to this are when the objects are human remains that are less than 1000 years old, and objects that were spoliated during the Nazi era. The Government has no plans to change this law.

■ Parkrun: Coronavirus

Nick Smith:

[\[81916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what criteria her Department plans to use to assess whether Parkrun events would be able to continue in the event that further covid-19 restrictions are introduced in response to increases in covid-19 cases.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health and all generations and communities should be able to enjoy the health, wellbeing, social and other benefits of being active. This includes ParkRun which the government supported the safe return of between March and June 2021.

We knew the coming months would be challenging, which is why the government set out our Autumn and Winter plan earlier this year. However, the data does not currently show Plan B is necessary. Plan B does not include proposals to prevent physical activity.

Vaccines will continue to be our first line of defence and our focus remains on delivering boosters, vaccinating 12-15 year olds, mass testing to identify and isolate positive cases, and developing new treatments through our Antiviral Taskforce. The Government will continue to support and work with local authorities and local areas directly to reduce the spread and minimise the impact of COVID-19.

■ Telecommunications: International Cooperation**Chi Onwurah:**[\[83373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2021 to Question 79366, what the (a) budget and (b) FTE staffing is of the UK US Tech Partnership; with which UK organisations that Partnership (i) works and (ii) has engaged with; to whom that Partnership reports; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The US-UK Tech Partnership aims to strengthen and structure new and our bilateral 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. The partnership provides the framework for existing and new work between the UK and US on digital and tech.

DCMS and HMG Departments are working with multiple departments and agencies in the US Government to progress key priority policies under the Tech partnership including the US Office for Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Department for Commerce.

EDUCATION**■ Breakfast Clubs: Finance****Justin Madders:**[\[81036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on (a) the reach of additional funding for breakfast clubs announced in July 2021 as of 24 November 2021 and (b) improving that reach to more children.

Will Quince:

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

The focus of the programme is to target the most disadvantaged areas of the country, including the department's Opportunity Areas. Schools' eligibility for the programme is based on the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) deprivation scale, a nationally recognised indicator of need, to ensure provision is directed where it is most needed. Schools will be eligible for the programme if they have 50% or more pupils within bands A to F of the IDACI scale.

The enrolment process for schools joining the programme is currently ongoing, and we have seen a strong interest so far from eligible schools since we invited the expressions of interest. Throughout the current contract we will be working with our provider, Family Action, to monitor different aspects of the current programme, including the reach the programme is having in relation to pupil attendance at the breakfast provision in schools. We will consider the best opportunities to share information on the programme as it progresses.

■ Children and Young People: Mental Capacity**Rachael Maskell:****[83418]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking with local authorities to ensure that children and young people under deprivation of liberty safeguards are found appropriate placements in social care.

Will Quince:

All children should live in settings that meet their needs and keep them safe. This is particularly important for looked after children who have been deprived of their liberty for their own safety or the safety of others. These children and young people are often some of the most vulnerable in society and we must do all that we can to keep them safe.

The department is clear that where a looked after child is deprived of their liberty, they are very likely to require a placement providing care and accommodation. Such accommodation must be registered as a children's home, as required by the Care Standards Act 2000. Children's homes are subject to robust registration and inspection requirements by Ofsted to ensure that they meet the needs of the children they accommodate, and they must follow the national standards. Ofsted can take action against children's homes where they are not delivering the quality of care and accommodation for children that the department expects.

Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 22G of the Children Act 1989 to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation

within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty').

However, the department recognises that local authorities sometimes find it difficult to identify suitable placements for looked after children, particularly for those with more complex needs. In July 2021, the government launched a new capital funding programme to support local authorities to establish new children's homes provision via expansion, refurbishment or new building work. The department will contribute up to £19.5 million over two years, with the funding to be matched by local authorities. In addition, as part of Spending Review 2021, the government announced a further investment of £259 million to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure and open residential children's homes. We will announce more details on this funding shortly.

The department has been working closely with Ofsted, which has taken a number of steps to support local authorities in establishing and registering new provision swiftly, for instance, prioritising applications for registering children's homes in an emergency. Further detail on Ofsted's approach to prioritising applications can be found in their guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/registering-childrens-homes-in-an-emergency-as-a-direct-result-of-covid-19-pandemic-fast-track-applications>.

■ Children in Care: Foster Care

Helen Hayes: [83441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked after children were cared for in a family and friends foster placement, broken down by local authority, as of 31 March 2021.

Helen Hayes: [83442]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked after children were cared for in a family and friends foster placement as of 31 March (a) 2021, (b) 2020, (c) 2019, (d) 2018 and in each preceding year for which comparable statistical information is available.

Helen Hayes: [83443]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked after children there were as of 31 March 2021 and in each preceding year for which comparable statistical information is available.

Helen Hayes: [83444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked after children who were placed in a foster placement with a family or friend as of 31 March 2021 had previously been in (a) an unrelated foster placement, (b) another family and friends care placement, (c) a children's home and (d) other provision for looked after children, broken down by (i) national, (ii) regional and (iii) local authority area.

Will Quince:

The latest figures on looked after children who were cared for in a relative or friend foster placement at national and local authority level are shown in the attached tables.

National figures on relative or friend foster placements from 2018 to 2021 were also published in the table 'CLA on 31 March by characteristics' in the 'Children looked after in England including adoptions' statistical release at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2021>. The department does not routinely publish this breakdown at local authority level. However, figures for all foster placements by local authority are published in the underlying data table 'CLA on 31 March by characteristics – LA' in the same statistical release.

The latest figures on all looked after children are published at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/2633329b-cbbf-448a-8c3d-39091a1c5aa5>.

Full information on the former placement arrangements of children looked after who are in a relative or friend foster placement is not held in the form requested and would incur a disproportionate cost to provide this.

Attachments:

1. 83441_83442_83443_83444_table
[83441_83442_83443_83444_looked_after_children_table.xls]

■ Cryptocurrencies: Education**Justin Tomlinson:****[83362]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to educate young people on crypto currencies.

Mr Robin Walker:

Education on financial matters helps to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed. Pupils receive financial education through the national curriculum for mathematics and citizenship which, for secondary school-aged pupils, includes compulsory content covering the functions and uses of money, financial products and services, and the need to understand financial risk.

Schools have flexibility over how they design their curricula, and can tailor it to the needs of their pupils. The Money and Pensions Service published financial education guidance for primary and secondary schools in England during Talk Money Week (8-12 November 2021), an annual event that encourages people of all ages to talk about money. I provided a supportive foreword for the guidance, which was developed in consultation with financial education experts and is designed to support school leaders and education decision makers to enhance the financial education currently delivered in their schools. The guidance includes links to quality assured resources for schools, including specific content and activities on cryptocurrencies. It also sets

out the knowledge and skills pupils need to protect their personal data, critically evaluate online content and identify scams. The guidance is available to view here: <https://maps.org.uk/2021/11/11/financial-education-guidance-for-primary-and-secondary-schools-in-england/>.

There are also other opportunities across the national curriculum to teach pupils about cryptocurrencies. For example, the computing curriculum teaches the fundamental knowledge and skills that support pupils to make well-informed choices about technology. It covers the principles of e-safety at all key stages, with progression in the content to reflect the different and escalating risks that young people face. The computing curriculum is available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-computing-programmes-of-study>.

The department will continue to work closely with the Money and Pensions Service and other stakeholders such as Her Majesty's Treasury, to support the teaching of financial education to children and young people, including novel financial products.

■ Higher Education: Coronavirus

Navendu Mishra: [83511]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support is available to protect clinically vulnerable students from covid-19 in higher education.

Navendu Mishra: [83512]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether clinically vulnerable students are able to request remote learning in higher education during high infection rates of covid-19.

Michelle Donelan:

The government's priority remains to keep students and staff as safe as possible and minimise disruption to university life. We continue to work with the higher education sector to deliver this, ensuring students are able to receive a full, enriching and enjoyable experience.

The shielding programme has ended and adults previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) should follow the same guidance as everyone else on staying safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do?priority-taxonomy=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>. It is important that everyone adheres to this guidance, but people previously considered CEV may wish to consider taking extra precautions. There is guidance for people previously considered CEV, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>. In some circumstances, people may have received personal advice from their specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and they should continue to follow that advice.

All employers are required to take steps to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace and higher education providers should be able to explain what measures they have put in place to keep staff and students safe on campus. We would expect them to discuss any concerns that people previously considered CEV may have, including any request to change the way in which their teaching and learning is delivered.

■ Schools: Defibrillators

Stuart Anderson:

[\[79483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of defibrillators at school sites.

Will Quince:

All new and refurbished state funded schools are required to have at least one defibrillator installed on their premises, and we encourage all other schools to include defibrillators as part of their first aid equipment.

Defibrillators are currently available for schools and other education providers in the UK to purchase through the NHS Supply Chain's defibs4schools programme at a reduced cost. These arrangements are available to all UK schools, including academies and independent schools, sixth-form colleges, further education institutions and early years settings.

The department wants as many schools as possible to have this equipment and we are exploring all available options to see what more we can do.

■ Schools: Finance

Navendu Mishra:

[\[83513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has provided additional funding to schools to help implement covid-19-safe environments.

Mr Robin Walker:

The measures in place in education settings to tackle COVID-19 are based on the latest scientific advice and strike a balance between managing transmission risk and reducing disruption to children and young people's education.

The priority is for education and childcare settings to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils and students. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, and mental and physical health. To manage COVID-19 transmission, nurseries, schools and colleges should continue to ensure good hygiene for everyone, maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, keep occupied spaces well ventilated and follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation, face coverings and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

In order to support schools with these measures, CO₂ monitors have been provided to all state-funded schools starting from September, so staff can quickly identify where ventilation needs to be improved. The department has also made over £100

million of funding available to secondary schools, colleges and specialist settings to support them with the workforce costs associated with delivering on-site testing, and continue to do so, in line with departmental testing policy.

More generally, throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the department has ensured that all schools continued to receive their core funding as normal, regardless of any periods of reduced attendance. This year, mainstream school funding is increasing by 3.5% overall, and all schools are receiving at least a 2% increase to pupil-led per pupil funding.

As a result of the recent Spending Review, the department will be investing a further £4.7 billion by financial year 2024-25 for the core schools budget in England, over and above the Spending Review 2019 settlement for schools in 2022-23.

This investment includes a further £1.6 billion in financial year 2022-23, on top of year on year increases already announced. This additional funding will help the school sector respond to the pressures we know they are facing. The department will make announcements on the distribution of this additional funding shortly.

School leaders have the flexibility to make their own decisions on how to prioritise their spending to invest in a range of resources that will best support their staff and pupils.

■ Special Educational Needs

Justin Madders: [\[81029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to tackle delays to education and health plans.

Justin Madders: [\[81030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of delays progressing Education and Health Care Plans on the well-being of children with special educational needs.

Will Quince:

The special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice makes clear that local authorities must give their decision in response to any request for an education, health and care needs assessment within a maximum of 6 weeks from when the request was received or the point at which a child or young person was brought to the local authority's attention. The department is aware of the evidence in recently published reports by Ofsted and the Disabled Children's Partnership that the COVID-19 outbreak disproportionately affected children with disabilities and had a detrimental effect on the well-being of their families. The department recognises that improvement is needed so that the system works better for children and their families.

Steps that the department are taking to tackle delays include:

- Providing support and challenge to those local authorities where there are long-standing delays.

- The department's team of SEND advisers and colleagues in NHS England continuing to work with local areas where delays are identified through the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection programme.
- For some local authorities, the department commissions specialist support from our delivery partners, such as the Council for Disabled Children.
- The department delivers training programmes to local authorities, health and social care staff across the country on their statutory assessment duties.

The government's review of the SEND system is making progress in identifying improvements needed to secure lasting and tangible change, drawing on significant input from a wide range of organisations, children, young people and parents. Proposals for consultation will be published in the first three months of 2022.

■ Turing Scheme

Munira Wilson:

[83500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students are on placements on the Turing Scheme for year 2021-2; and how much his Department will spend on that Scheme in 2021-2.

Michelle Donelan:

The Turing Scheme has a total budget of £110 million for delivery and grant funding this academic year. Funding has been allocated for more than 40,000 participants from schools, colleges and universities to do study and work placements across the globe during the 2021/22 academic year.

A list of all funded organisations in higher education, further education and schools, as well as all destination countries and territories, can be found on the Turing Scheme website: <https://www.turing-scheme.org.uk/project-community/funding-results/>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Biodiversity Target Advisory Group: Meetings

Caroline Lucas:

[80957]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the minutes from the Biodiversity Target Advisory Group meetings that have taken place since 26 October 2020; and for what reason there has been a delay in publishing those minutes.

Caroline Lucas:

[80958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the minutes from the Water Targets Expert Advisory Group meetings that have taken place since 8 February 2021; and for what reason there has been a delay in publishing those minutes.

Caroline Lucas: [80959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the minutes from the Resources and Waste Targets Expert Group that have taken place since 13 November 2020; and for what reason there has been a delay in publishing those minutes.

Caroline Lucas: [80960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to make it his Department's policy to require expert groups to publish meeting minutes within a certain timeframe following the date of the meeting.

Victoria Prentis:

Expert groups have been invaluable in helping inform environmental target development. They have provided guidance on evidence processes and best available evidence bespoke to individual proposed targets. The discussions held by these groups, such as the Biodiversity Target Advisory Group, Water Expert Advisory Group and Resources & Waste Targets Expert Group, have been informative and complex. We are seeking to publish the minutes of all expert meetings as part of a package of information that explains how target proposals have been developed. This will be published alongside a public consultation on proposed targets in early 2022.

The minutes of all expert group meetings will be made publicly available via the Gov.uk website alongside all existing minutes, and expert group Secretariats will continue to maintain oversight of the drafting and publication of minutes. Given the systems approach to target development, we consider that publishing all the minutes in a tranche will best inform the consultation process.

■ Controlled Burning: Licensing

Olivia Blake: [83526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will conduct a review at the conclusion of the burning season of the new licensing system for heather burning in the context of extending that system to cover all peatlands.

Rebecca Pow:

[The Heather and Grass etc. Burning \(England\) Regulations 2021](#) came into force on 1 May 2021, affording additional protections to approximately 142,000 hectares of England's upland deep peat from further damage by managed burning.

At the end of the current burning season, we will assess how the new regime has worked in practice.

■ Fishing Catches

Virginia Crosbie: [83522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to reduce the incidence of dolphin and other sensitive species bycatch; and

whether he has plans to ban supertrawlers from UK waters in order to reduce the bycatch from unsustainable fishing practices.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is fully committed to tackling the issue of accidental bycatch of sensitive marine species, as seen in the Fisheries Act through the ecosystem objective which seeks to ensure “incidental catches of sensitive marine species are minimised and, where possible, eliminated”. The Joint Fisheries Statement and UK Bycatch Mitigation Initiative will set out policies in more detail to help achieve this objective, including improving our understanding of where and how much bycatch occurs and effective mitigation measures to reduce bycatch of sensitive marine species.

We are currently examining our wider policy on supertrawlers . Any action needs to be evidence-based and in line with the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The Marine Management Organisation continues to monitor fishing activity in English waters with dedicated enforcement and surveillance work to protect fisheries, including offshore patrol vessels for at-sea surveillance.

■ **Food: Waste**

Jim Shannon:

[\[80996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to reduce food waste throughout the country.

Jo Churchill:

Food waste prevention policy is devolved.

We support the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and the Courtauld 2030 commitment which aims to halve UK food waste by 2030. This will be achieved through cross-sector programmes including consumer campaigns, such as *Love Food Hate Waste*, and working closely with business signatories on whole supply chain resource efficiency approaches.

The Food Waste Reduction Roadmap sets out a journey for UK businesses to reduce their food waste by utilising the Target, Measure, Act approach.

WRAP has also developed a new online learning programme called *Guardians of Grub* to help UK hospitality and food service businesses put food waste reduction and associated cost savings right at the heart of their operations.

The most recent milestone report for Courtauld showed a reduction of 480,000 tonnes of food waste 2015-2018, equating to a 7% reduction per person.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[80239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will provide a substantive response to the letter dated 13 June 2021 from the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet on the challenges faced by agricultural shows following the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

I apologise for the delay in responding. A reply will be sent next week.

River Wye: Phosphates**Jesse Norman:****[80973]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Nutrient Taskforce on phosphate pollution in the river Wye.

Rebecca Pow:

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

A cross border taskforce focussing on the Wye Catchment was convened by Herefordshire Council in September. The taskforce further supports the ongoing work of the Nutrient Management Board and its associated Technical Advisory Group to find effective solutions.

The board meets quarterly to identify and review actions that achieve the phosphorus conservation target of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation. The primary mechanism for achieving this will be through the delivery of the Nutrient Management Plan, the first draft of which has been published.

In the short term, and alongside the work of the Nutrient Pollution Taskforce, Natural England has been working with Herefordshire Council to enable housing projects that can demonstrate nutrient neutrality to be able to proceed. This has included funding put in place by the Council for both a wetlands scheme, which will have a series of eight interconnected wetlands to support approx. 1500 houses, and the commissioning of the 'Interim Delivery Plan' which includes a Phosphate Calculator, thus enabling small scale developments to be unlocked.

I also attended a productive roundtable meeting on 13 July with Minister Pincher of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and local staff from the Environment Agency, Natural England and Herefordshire County Council to discuss this issue.

Soil**Virginia Crosbie:****[83524]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits for soil health of banning the use of ammonium nitrate and urea fertiliser; and what steps he is taking to promote the improvement of soil health with farmers.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 23 November 2021: PQ UIN [76872](#).

■ **Veterinary Medicine: Recruitment and Training**

Tim Farron:

[\[83294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many new vets have been trained and recruited to help process animal health export certificates prior to consignment since 31 January 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Over this period the net increase in Official Veterinarians (OVs) qualified to sign Animal Health Certificates was 308. In January 2021 the total number of OVs authorised to sign Animal Health Certificates for the export of dogs, cats and ferrets was 7,588 rising to 7,896 in November 2021.

■ **Water Charges**

Liz Twist:

[\[81095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the level of stakeholder support for the introduction of the single social tariff scheme proposed by the CCW independent affordability review; and if he will bring forward legislative proposals to implement that scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

Initial stakeholder reaction to a single social tariff scheme has been positive. However, further analysis is needed to understand the implications, costs and benefits of a possible new scheme. Legislation will be required to implement any such scheme.

■ **Water Charges: Private Rented Housing**

Liz Twist:

[\[81096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make (a) an assessment of the role of the Landlord TAP scheme in helping water companies to identify financially vulnerable tenants before they fall into debt and (b) the Landlord TAP scheme mandatory in England, in line with existing arrangements in Wales.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 24 November 2021, PQ UIN [75976](#).

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Overseas Aid****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[83450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much of the £286 million allocated in aid to Afghanistan in 2021 has been dispersed as of 27 November 2021; and what her timetable is for the remaining aid to be dispersed.

James Cleverly:

We are doubling our humanitarian and development assistance for Afghanistan this year, taking this up to £286 million. In all, between April and November 2021, we disbursed over £70 million for life-saving humanitarian support for Afghanistan, including for emergency food, health, nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation, and mine action. This includes £10 million for countries at risk of increased refugee flows from Afghanistan.

We are developing firm plans for the allocation of the remainder of the £286 million and will make further announcements in due course.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Arrests**Sarah Champion:**[\[81010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2021 to Question 72465 on British Nationals Abroad: Arrests, what criteria are used for assessing vulnerability and humanitarian concerns of British dual nationals detained in the country of their other nationality.

Amanda Milling:

We offer help appropriate to the individual circumstances of each case. Our staff make an assessment of vulnerability and needs, based on the individual, where they are and the situation they are facing. We aim to offer assistance which helps meet these needs. Normally, we do not provide consular assistance to dual nationals in the country of their other nationality. We can offer consular assistance to a British dual national in the country of their other nationality if we consider them vulnerable and we have humanitarian or human rights concerns, such as the possibility of facing the death penalty, corporal punishment, or fair trial concerns. However, the help we can provide will depend on what the host government will agree. If a dual British national is detained in a third country we offer the same support as we would for mono-British nationals.

■ CDC**Caroline Lucas:**[\[80961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason the CDC Group are not consulting with (a) civil society and (b) the public on its Code of Responsible Investing.

James Cleverly:

CDC drives up environmental, social and governance standards in the markets where it invests. It has a published Code of Responsible Investment which sets out these standards. With input from FCDO and other external technical experts, CDC is updating the code. As a Public Limited Company, CDC is not required to undertake formal public consultations on its policies.

China: Olympic Games**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**[\[83412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials from the diplomatic service, including ambassadors and civil servants, were present at the diplomatic briefing on the Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games held on 26 November 2021.

Amanda Milling:

Officials from British Embassy Beijing attended the briefing on 26 November, alongside diplomats from a range of countries.

Coronavirus: Vaccination**Stephen Farry:**[\[81158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many covid-19 vaccines the UK Government has distributed to other countries, by country of receipt.

Wendy Morton:

To date, the UK has delivered 16.1 million doses to recipients, either bilaterally or through COVAX. A breakdown of the figures has been included in our response to the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC), which will be published shortly. A further 5.8 million vaccine doses are with COVAX and in the process of being allocated and delivered, with additional 9 million will be delivered to COVAX in the coming weeks direct from Astra Zeneca.

Eritrea: Armed Conflict**Tim Farron:**[\[81915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in her Department have had discussion with their US counterparts on entities and individuals that have contributed to the crisis and conflict in Eritrea.

Vicky Ford:

We continue to closely engage with the US and other partners in the international community on the full range of human rights issues in Ethiopia.

On 6 November we issued a joint statement with the US and 15 other countries welcoming the joint investigation report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Ethiopia Human Rights Commission on Human Rights

violations and abuses in Tigray. All parties to the conflict should accept and implement the findings and recommendations. It is critical that all those responsible for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law referenced in the report are held to account, and the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea should ensure there are credible investigations.

■ Eritrea: Sanctions

Brendan O'Hara: [\[83395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is coordinating with the US, and other key strategic partners, on the use of Magnitsky sanctions against Eritrean individuals and organisations responsible for a destabilising presence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.

Vicky Ford:

We are deeply concerned by Eritrean involvement in the conflict in Tigray. The UK continues to consider the full range of policy tools at our disposal to protect human rights and deter violations of international humanitarian law. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations.

We note the statement on 12 November by the US Treasury that they have sanctioned four entities and two individuals. Sanctions are most effective when countries act together. International cooperation is at the heart of UK sanctions policy, and the UK will continue to work with the US and other international partners to tackle shared global challenges.

■ Ethiopia: Armed Conflict

Stephen Farry: [\[81155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the regional impact of the conflict in Ethiopia.

Vicky Ford:

We are extremely concerned by the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia and the impact it has on the region.. We have already seen over 80,000 refugees cross into eastern Sudan. We have consistently called on all warring parties to end hostilities and seek a political dialogue and peaceful solution. We are fully supportive of the African Union (AU)'s mediation efforts. I spoke with AU Special Envoy Obasanjo on 4 November, with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole on 8 November, and with President Kenyatta of Kenya on 1 November.

■ Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid

Stephen Farry: [\[81156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what humanitarian assistance the UK Government is providing to Ethiopia.

Stephen Farry:

[81157]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has developed contingency plans to increase humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia.

Vicky Ford:

The humanitarian context in Tigray is catastrophic. In September, our Special Envoy for famine prevention and humanitarian affairs, Nick Dyer, visited Tigray and saw the devastating consequences of this conflict and the de facto blockade imposed by the Ethiopian Government since late June. I have called on all parties in Ethiopia to urgently agree a ceasefire and to allow humanitarian aid through.

The humanitarian crisis now extends beyond Tigray impacting millions of people in Afar and Amhara following attacks by the Tigray Defence Force (TDF). All parties must allow humanitarian supplies and commercial goods to reach all areas of need. An escalation of violence has grave implications for vulnerable populations across Ethiopia impacting at least 20 million people reliant on humanitarian aid and the 31 million people assessed as living below the poverty line. The UK has committed £76 million to the crises response- making the UK the second largest donor globally. This includes £6.1 million in funding to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Danish Refugee Council to address urgent needs arising from the Tigray crisis in Sudan.

FCDO officials speak regularly with representatives from the UN and other humanitarian agencies on contingency planning for an increase in needs inside Ethiopia as well as for further displacement of refugees into neighbouring states. Our priority is to ensure that all Ethiopians in need receive life-saving aid and that humanitarian access to areas affected by insecurity is maintained.

■ **Iran: Detainees**

Lisa Nandy:

[83353]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations she has made to her Iranian counterpart on the return to the UK of the detained British nationals (a) Anoosheh Ashoori, (b) Morad Tahbaz and (c) Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary recently discussed the cases of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Anoosheh Ashoori and Morad Tahbaz with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on 8 November. I raised their cases with my Iranian counterpart Deputy Foreign Minister, Bagheri Kani when he visited the FCDO on 11 November. Our Ambassador in Tehran also continues to regularly raise these cases with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

■ Israel: Overseas Trade**Emily Thornberry:****[83277]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the new Trade and Defence Pact she signed with Israel on 29 November 2021 will permit manufacturers in UK freeports making tariff-free imports of raw materials to utilise tariff reductions when exporting their finished products to Israel.

James Cleverly:

On 29 November, the Foreign Secretary and Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid signed a joint memorandum of understanding - accessible here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-israel-strategic-partnership-memorandum-of-understanding-2021> - committing to the development of a new, bespoke UK-Israel Bilateral Roadmap. This Roadmap will define UK-Israel cooperation for the next decade across the breadth of the bilateral relationship. No trade regulations have been changed as a result of this memorandum of understanding.

Emily Thornberry:**[83278]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the provisions on trade in the new Trade and Defence Pact she signed with Israel on 29 November 2021 will remove or supersede the prohibitions to duty drawback in the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement signed on 18 February 2019.

James Cleverly:

On 29 November, the Foreign Secretary and Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid signed a joint memorandum of understanding - accessible here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-israel-strategic-partnership-memorandum-of-understanding-2021> - committing to the development of a new, bespoke UK-Israel Bilateral Roadmap. This Roadmap will define UK-Israel cooperation for the next decade across the breadth of the bilateral relationship. This memorandum of understanding does not amend any provision in the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement.

■ Jagtar Singh Johal**Stephen Kinnock:****[83389]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations she has made personally to her Indian counterpart on the four-year incarceration of British citizen Jagtar Singh Johal; and whether officials in her Department have, in any of their communication with the Indian authorities, have described the incarceration as arbitrary detention.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government takes all allegations of human rights violations very seriously, and we regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India at official and Ministerial level. The Foreign Secretary last raised Mr Johal's case with the

Indian Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 22 October 2021. This Government will continue to look to raise our concerns, including allegations that Mr Johal's detention is arbitrary, at all appropriate opportunities.

■ **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**

Sarah Owen:

[\[83501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations her Department has made to her Iranian counterpart on the continued detention of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe since her husband's hunger strike.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary recently discussed the cases of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Anoosheh Ashoori and Morad Tahbaz with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on 8 November. I raised their cases with my Iranian counterpart Deputy Foreign Minister, Bagheri Kani when he visited the FCDO on 11 November. Our Ambassador in Tehran also continues to regularly raise these cases with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

■ **Preventing Sexual Violence against Women Summit**

Patrick Grady:

[\[83409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she will confirm the (a) dates of and 9b) the application process for delegates and observers to the Preventing Sexual Violence Against Women Summit she announced at the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council on 17 November 2021.

James Cleverly:

In 2022, the UK plans to host an international conference to mark 10 years since the launch of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative. This will be an important opportunity to review progress, identify challenges and agree further action on sexual violence in conflict as well as wider gender and conflict issues. Further information on the conference will be available in due course next year.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[82383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her German counterpart on the designation of the UK as a high risk travel destination for covid-19.

Wendy Morton:

There have been no representations made to German ministers on this issue.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021**Ruth Jones:****[80465]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2021 to Question 75126 on UN Climate Conference 2021: Government, how many Ministers in her Department travelled to COP26 by airplane.

Vicky Ford:

Ministers took the train to COP26 in Glasgow, unless there were exceptional circumstances that meant travelling by train was not an option. Travel disruption due to adverse weather on 31 October resulted in train cancellations, meaning some Ministers had to pursue alternative means of transport. The Foreign Secretary was the only FCDO minister who flew to Glasgow to attend COP26. As referenced in PQ 68451, this was due to the cancellation of her train; she then travelled back by train from the event.

Any unavoidable carbon emissions from COP26 will be offset, including those associated with travel.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Alfred Bean Hospital****Sir Greg Knight:****[80919]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to (a) develop and (b) improve the services available at the Alfred Bean Hospital in Driffield.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with East Riding Council and Driffield Town Council, local partner agencies and communities to understand, develop and improve local services. This includes reviewing services available at the Alfred Bean Hospital.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments**Ian Blackford:****[83399]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent comparative assessment he has made of the risks of prescribing (a) medicinal cannabis and (b) treatments for drug addiction including methadone and diamorphine; and for what reasons prescription of medical cannabis is required to be prescribed by clinicians listed on the Specialist Register of the General Medical Council.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department has not made a comparative assessment of the risks of prescribing medicinal cannabis versus methadone and diamorphine. Methadone and diamorphine are licensed medicines, whereas the vast majority of cannabis-based

medicines are unlicensed, which means they have not been assessed for their safety, quality and efficacy by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. Whilst the evidence-base remains limited, the decision to prescribe unlicensed products remains with specialist doctors who have expert knowledge and take responsibility for prescribing.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[80364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of local authorities continuing with (a) administering (i) lateral flow and (ii) PCR covid-19 tests and (b) contact tracing.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency and local authorities already work within a joint framework focused on preventing, identifying and managing local outbreaks and engaging with local communities to support effective testing, contact tracing and self-isolation. Within this framework, local Directors of Public Health and public health teams lead key elements of the COVID-19 response through community-led testing, expanded local tracing partnerships and the sharing of data, insight and analysis used to identify clusters of new infections and potential local outbreaks.

■ **Coronavirus: Public Health**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[80367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans for the UK Health Security Agency to take forward the public health approach to covid-19 management.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency will operate as an integral part of the public health system and national security infrastructure to tackle COVID-19 and future threats locally, nationally and globally.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[80369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that local directors of public health are able to determine the local management of covid-19 in 2022.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency and local authorities already work within a joint framework focused on preventing, identifying and managing local outbreaks and engaging with local communities to support effective testing, contact tracing and self-isolation. Within this framework, local Directors of Public Health and public health teams lead key elements of the COVID-19 response through community-led testing, expanded local tracing partnerships and the sharing of data, insight and analysis used to identify clusters of new infections and potential local outbreaks.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Justin Madders: [\[80349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the CTDA approval process for Lateral Flow Tests will be concluded.

Maggie Throup:

The CTDA approval process is an ongoing regulatory regime. There is no current end date and new applications for approval may be made at any time.

Rachael Maskell: [\[80368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to scale down capacity for testing for covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

Asymptomatic testing continues to be an important tool to help reduce spread of the virus, while supporting people to manage their own risk and the risks of others. We will therefore continue to provide the public with access to free lateral flow tests. Decisions on the continuation of the service will be made in due course.

Carla Lockhart: [\[80516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many rapid lateral flow kits have been dispatched to addresses in Northern Ireland since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Maggie Throup:

To 26 November 2021, 19,472,441 lateral flow devices have been dispatched to addresses in Northern Ireland.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[56621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that people who have received their first and second doses of the covid-19 vaccine in different nations of the UK can prove their vaccination status using the NHS Covid app.

Maggie Throup:

For a NHS COVID Pass to be issued, both vaccine doses must be recorded in national vaccine databases. NHS Digital has established bi-directional live data flows between England and Wales and England and Scotland. The NHS App can demonstrate vaccines administered in England, Wales and Scotland for residents registered with a general practitioner in England. Data flows will be established with Northern Ireland shortly.

Sam Tarry: [\[58560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the covid-19 passports of (a) students and (b) other people who have had

their first and second dose of the covid-19 vaccine administered in different nations of the UK are (i) valid and (ii) do not require longer waits to be verified.

Maggie Throup:

All United Kingdom certification systems are fully recognised in all four nations and do not require longer waits to be verified.

For a NHS COVID Pass to be issued, both vaccine doses must be recorded in national vaccine databases. NHS Digital has established bi-directional live data flows between England and Wales and England and Scotland. The NHS App can demonstrate vaccines administered in England, Wales and Scotland for residents registered with a general practitioner in England. Data flows will be established with Northern Ireland shortly.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[80283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that people without access to online services can prove their covid-19 vaccination status.

Maggie Throup:

Individuals can request an NHS COVID Pass post-vaccination letter which can be used for international travel. The letter can be requested free of charge by calling 119 or ordered online on their behalf via NHS.UK.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[80491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether vaccines approved and administered by the medical authorities in Barbados be recognised by the NHS COVID pass.

Maggie Throup:

AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna and Janssen vaccines administered in most countries, including Barbados, can generate a NHS COVID Pass. Closed pilots are available at selected vaccination centres for residents to request their overseas vaccines are uploaded to the national database. The service will be deployed nationally in December to support online bookings and further vaccination sites.

■ **Dementia: Diagnosis**

Damian Green:

[\[80895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, how the £2.3 billion funding announced for diagnostic services will be used to help tackle the dementia diagnosis backlog.

Gillian Keegan:

This funding will be used to increase the availability and capacity of services and equipment to diagnose a range of conditions. However, funding will not be specifically allocated for individual conditions. Earlier this year we made £17 million available to NHS England and NHS Improvement to address dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses. This funding was made available to clinical commissioning

groups in June 2021. We will be setting out our plans for dementia services in England for future years in 2022.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**

Derek Twigg: [\[83248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 75821 tabled by the hon. Member for Halton on 16 November 2021.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 29 November to Question [75821](#).

■ **Disability: Respite Care**

Damien Moore: [\[80448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to create more spaces in respite centres for adults with disabilities in the North West; and what further support he will make available for people for whom there is not space.

Gillian Keegan:

Local authorities have a duty under the Care Act 2014 to shape their local care markets to ensure there is a diverse range of high-quality services, available to meet the needs of the local population, including respite care. Responsibility for the provision of respite services in the North West is a matter for the local authorities in that region.

To support local authorities, we are providing £1.6 billion of new grant funding per year in this Spending Review period for social care and other services. We are also providing support to local authorities to help them fulfil their market shaping duties through collaborative work with partners such as the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Local Government Association.

■ **Drugs: Misuse**

Mike Amesbury: [\[80441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of support available for prescription medication for people addicted to drugs who wish to withdraw.

Maggie Throup:

Local authorities are responsible for assessing the need for drug and alcohol services in their area and the adequacy of the services they provide. Local authorities fund these services through the Public Health Grant. In 2021/22, the total Grant provided is £3.324 billion, representing a £45 million increase from 2019/2020.

Dame Carol Black published Part Two of her independent review of drugs on 8 July 2021. This review assessed the adequacy of the drug and alcohol treatment system, providing the Government with 32 recommendations to improve the effectiveness of

drug prevention and treatment and to help more people recover from dependence. The Government published an initial response to the review on 27 July 2021 and has committed to publishing a long-term drug strategy by the end of the year.

■ **Drugs: Rehabilitation**

Rachael Maskell: [\[64673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of pilot drug consumption rooms as part of his drugs strategy.

Maggie Throup:

The drugs strategy is currently under development. There is no legal framework for the provision of drug consumption rooms (DCRs) in the United Kingdom and there are no plans to introduce them. While we have no plans to change the law regarding DCRs, we support a range of evidence-based approaches to reduce the health-related harms associated with drug misuse. The strategy will be published by the end of the year and will present a cross-Government approach to combatting drug misuse and reducing supply and demand.

■ **General Practitioners**

Rachael Maskell: [\[83415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason Integrated Care Systems are required to review the 20 per cent of GPs with the lowest level of face-to-face patient appointments; and what assessment he has made of the effect of increasing the average number patients seen by a GP during a face-to-face appointment on the overall number of GP appointments that take place.

Maria Caulfield:

On 14 October, NHS England and NHS Improvement published 'Our plan for improving access for patients and supporting general practice'. As part of this work, integrated care systems (ICSs) are asked to evaluate information on their individual practices, including face to face appointments to ensure that general practice has the support, technology and time to deliver the appropriate care for patients.

No specific assessment has been made as data on the number of patients seen during a given appointment is not collected centrally.

■ **General Practitioners: Recruitment**

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[57044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made against the Government's commitments to deliver (a) 6,000 more doctors in general practice by 2024-25, (b) 50 million extra general practice appointments a year and (c) 50,000 more nurses by 2024-25.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 20 October 2021]: The latest comparable general practice workforce data available for June 2021 shows that there were 34,726 full time equivalent (FTE) doctors in general practice, 1,218 more FTE doctors compared to June 2019.

The latest available data for general practice appointments is from August 2021 excluding COVID-19 vaccination appointments, shows that there were an estimated 23.9 million appointments in August 2021, 510,000 more than in August 2019. Including COVID-19 vaccinations, there were 25.5 million appointments in August 2021, 2 million more than August 2019.

The number of nurses employed in National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups in the last year increased by over 9,900 FTE, as at July 2021.

Health Services and Social Services: Children and Young People**Rachael Maskell:**[\[83417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is an adequate number of placements in health and social care for children and young people with (a) neurodiversity conditions, (b) mental health conditions, (c) learning difficulties and (d) other acute or chronic complex needs.

Gillian Keegan:

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Children and Families Act 2014 sets out that commissioners are responsible for ensuring the provision of services based on the local needs of their population, including the appropriate services for children and young people. Commissioners should consider assessments of local need and any relevant guidance, such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's clinical guidelines. While the guidelines are not mandatory, we expect commissioners to take this into account alongside local priorities in the design of services. In 2021/2022, we have invested over £31 million through the COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan to increase access to services for autistic people and people with a learning disability, with £79 million to expand children's mental health services.

Learning Disability and Mental Health Services: Nurses**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[81894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) mental health nurses and (b) learning disability nurses are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; and how many of those nurses were newly registered in the years (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020 and 2021.

Edward Argar:

The following table shows the number of mental health and learning disability nurses registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council in the 12 months to September of each year.

YEAR	MENTAL HEALTH NURSES	LEARNING DISABILITY NURSES
September 2018	88,980	17,311
September 2019	89,831	17,383
September 2020	91,215	17,494
September 2021	92,107	17,288

Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

Note:

These figures show the total number of registered mental health and learning disability nurses at the end of each year. This includes newly registered nurses in each field, those returning to practice less those who have left. It should also be noted that some professionals are registered in more than one field and therefore some of these nurses may also be registered adult or children's nurses.

The following table shows the number of initial registrations in the field of practice of mental health and learning disabilities by the Nursing and Midwifery Council in the 12 months to September of each year.

YEAR	MENTAL HEALTH	LEARNING DISABILITIES
September 2018	3,396	627
September 2019	3,695	640
September 2020	3,827	670
September 2021	3,694	451
Total	14,612	2,388

Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

Notes:

The data on numbers of initial registrations in the requested fields of practice does not include those who add either field of practice as a subsequent registration. If they have initially registered in another field such as adult or children's services, it will not be recorded in this data will not demonstrate this. However, the total numbers of people in all these fields are shown in the total column.

■ Loneliness: Costs**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[76713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of loneliness and social isolation amongst (a) elderly and (b) vulnerable people in (i) each of the last five years and (ii) during the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 22 November 2021]: The Department has made no such estimate.

■ Members: Correspondence**Gerald Jones:** [\[83439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 16 September 2021 from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, reference GJ13377.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 30 November 2021.

■ MSC Virtuosa: Coronavirus**Justin Madders:** [\[80334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many positive covid-19 cases have been linked to the MSC Virtuosa outbreak.

Maggie Throup:

On 4 September 2021, Public Health England (PHE) was made aware of 21 positive COVID-19 cases onboard MSC Virtuosa by the Southampton Port Health team. PHE supported Port Health with onboard control measures.

The Virtuosa docked in Liverpool on 7 September and PHE was informed by the Port Health team of 22 crew members and 14 passengers who had tested positive. PHE worked with the port health team and the vessel to manage these cases.

■ Odevixibat**Jesse Norman:** [\[80971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of Odevixibat for treating proressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis.

Edward Argar:

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

NICE is currently appraising odeixibat for the treatment of progressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis through its highly specialised technologies programme and expects to publish final guidance in January 2022.

■ Opiates: North East

Mr Kevan Jones:

[80221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of opioid-related deaths in the North East in each of the last five years.

Maggie Throup:

The Office for National Statistics publish data on drug-related deaths through annual drug poisoning statistics. The following table shows opioid-related deaths in the North East in each of the last five years.

REGISTRATION

YEAR	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of deaths	160	164	187	172	191

Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsrelatedtodrugpoisoninginenglandandwales/2020>

■ Pharmacy

Feryal Clark:

[81153]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure better representation of community pharmacy within Integrated Care Systems and at the primary care level.

Edward Argar:

The Health and Care Bill establishes integrated care boards and integrated care partnerships (ICPs) in England. The ICP is intended to bring together health, social care and public health services to develop strategies to address local needs. The legislation allows local areas to develop specific models but we would expect community pharmacy to play a key role.

■ Public Health

Rachael Maskell:

[80363]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for the future delivery of health protection measures.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) was established on 1 October, with responsibility for preparedness, prevention and responding to external health threats. Its immediate priority is tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the NHS Test and Trace service and surveillance of new variants. The UKHSA is a science-led organisation providing intellectual, scientific and operational leadership on health protection, covering infectious disease, chemical, radiation and environmental hazards. The UKHSA plays a leadership role at national and local level and supports the preparedness of the wider health protection system to respond to future threats.

■ Social Security: Fees and Charges**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[82024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of how many current service users of working age are expected to reach the social care cap.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government's assessment of how many working age people will reach the £86,000 cap on personal care costs will be set out in an impact assessment in due course.

Vicky Foxcroft:[\[82025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of (a) the social care cap or (b) raising capital thresholds on working age disabled people with complex needs who are not able to work.

Gillian Keegan:

Working age disabled people will benefit from the same cap on the amount they need to pay for personal care and the same increase in capital thresholds, as older adults. An equalities impact assessment on the planned reform of social care charging was published on 17 November and an economic impact assessment will be published in due course.

Vicky Foxcroft:[\[82027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many local authorities operate charging policies that leave people with the amounts set out in his Department's Circular entitled Charging for care and support: local authority circular LAC(DHSC)(2021)1, published on 28 January 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

All 151 local authorities in England are legally obliged under Section 78 of the Care Act 2014 to implement charging policies which allow people to retain at least the amounts set out in the circular LAC(DHSC)(2021)1. Information on decisions made by local authorities that leave individuals with higher amounts than set out in the guidance is not held centrally.

■ Social Services: Enfield North

Feryal Clark:

[81150]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to (a) help improve recruitment to social care jobs and (b) protect retention levels for social care staff in Enfield North.

Gillian Keegan:

On 3 November 2021, we published details of a new £162.5 million Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund to support local authorities to work with providers to recruit and retain social care staff this winter. This includes £879,284 for Enfield.

A new phase of our national recruitment campaign to highlight adult social care as a rewarding and stimulating place to work was launched on 3 November across broadcast and social media, running until March 2022.

■ Social Services: Fees and Charges

Dan Jarvis:

[83380]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential economic impact of the social care cost cap on pensioners in Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government has undertaken a full economic impact assessment on its charging reform proposals. This will be published in due course. That assessment considers the impact of the reforms on people with different levels of wealth. However, as this varies between and within regions, the impact assessment will not, therefore, consider the impact on people living in specific local authority areas.

■ Social Services: Newcastle upon Tyne

Chi Onwurah:

[76684]

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

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 22 November 2021]: No assessment has been made. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a duty to assess the care needs of their local populations.

■ Vaccination

Bob Blackman:

[80282]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the Government's Vaccine Strategy.

Maggie Throup:

The publication of England's national Vaccine Strategy has been delayed as a result of the Department's ongoing focus on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the Strategy is being kept under review, including new developments from the COVID-19 vaccine and extended National Health Service flu programme.

HOME OFFICE**■ Alcoholic Drinks: Drugs****Janet Daby:**[\[81124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the pilot led by Devon and Cornwall police on tackling drink spiking.

Rachel Maclean:

Reports of spiking, whether that is adding substances to drinks or injecting people with needles, are extremely concerning. We have every sympathy with victims and anyone who might feel unable to enjoy a night out without fear. No one should feel frightened or vulnerable when they go out. We utterly condemn the people who perpetrated those attacks, and they should be brought to justice. This is an issue that the Government takes very seriously.

Devon and Cornwall Police are the first police service in the country to introduce a force-wide strategy to obtain a more detailed picture of the issue around drink spiking. This is in partnership with other agencies and the licensing trade. Officers are able to utilise drink testing and urine testing to get immediate results when allegations are made. This has been in place since 1st August and has reassured many individuals as well as providing the basis for a more effective and immediate investigation into offences.

My officials are engaging with Devon and Cornwall police to understand more about the pilot and how the lessons learned could be applied to other areas of England and Wales.

More widely, the Home Secretary has already asked the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to urgently review the extent and scale of the issue, and we are receiving regular updates from the police. The police are working locally, regionally and nationally, including with our partners in the National Crime Agency.

The abhorrent crimes of spiking also speak to broader issues of violence against women and girls. We published our new cross-Government tackling violence against women and girls strategy this summer, to help to ensure that women and girls are safe everywhere. We are delivering a pilot £5 million safety of women at night fund, focused on preventing violence against women and girls in public spaces at night, particularly in the night-time economy. That is in addition to the £25 million safer streets fund, which focuses on improving public safety, with an emphasis on the safety of women and girls, and their feelings of safety in public spaces.

■ Antisocial Behaviour: Enfield North

Feryal Clark:

[81144]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (a) what steps she is taking to tackle antisocial behaviour and (b) whether she plans to increase funding to (i) Enfield and Haringey Metropolitan Police Service, (ii) Enfield Council and (iii) grassroots community organisations in Enfield North constituency to help tackle antisocial behaviour.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour (ASB). We provided the police, local authorities, and other local agencies with a range of tools and powers that they can flexibly use to respond quickly and effectively to ASB through the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014*.

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

The Government has given policing the biggest funding increase in a decade. Metropolitan Police funding will be up to £3,072.3m in 2021/22, an increase of up to £132.4m on the 2020/21 police funding settlement. Decisions about the allocation of police resources are for Chief Constables and democratically accountable PCCs.

In addition, the Home Office's *Safer Streets Fund* has now allocated over £70m to support areas deliver crime prevention measures, such as improved streetlighting and CCTV, which also help to tackle ASB.

Local authorities have the flexibility to use their funding to respond to local needs. The Government is providing around £1.6 billion additional grant funding within the Local Government Central Grant (LGDEL) each year. This will allow councils to increase their spending on the vital public services. It includes an additional £200 million investment to expand the Supporting Families programme, which helps to tackle ASB.

■ Asylum

Patrick Grady:

[83410]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people applying for asylum in the UK for whom the UK was the first safe country of arrival, in each year since 2015.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

Data on the number of asylum applications which received a third country refusal (where the applicant is believed to have reached a safe third country prior to claiming

in the UK) are published in table ASY_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. The latest data cover up to the end of September 2021.

From 1 January 2021, following the UK's departure from the EU, strengthened [inadmissibility rules](#) came into effect. Prior to the UK leaving the EU, most inadmissibility decisions were made according to the [Dublin Regulation](#), which for the cases in its remit, established the criteria and mechanisms for determining which state was responsible for examining an application for international protection.

Data on the number of cases considered under inadmissibility rules since 1 January 2021 are published in table Asy_09a, and data on transfers into and out of the UK under the Dublin Regulation (prior to 2021) are available in Dub_01 of the '[asylum and resettlement summary tables](#)'.

Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbooks.

■ Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Neil Coyle: [\[83390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her statement of 22 November 2021 on Channel crossings in small boats, what plans she has for the role of the military in building accommodation centres for people seeking asylum; and what estimate she has made of the cost of using the military for that purpose.

Neil Coyle: [\[83391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which geographic locations her Department has identified as suitable for building accommodation centres for people seeking asylum.

Neil Coyle: [\[83392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many accommodation centres for people seeking asylum her Department plans to build; and what estimate she has made of the cost of building those centres.

Neil Coyle: [\[83393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Public Health England on the design of accommodation centres for people seeking asylum.

Neil Coyle: [\[83394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to use existing military sites as accommodation centres for people seeking asylum.

Tom Pursglove:

We have a statutory obligation to provide support to destitute asylum seekers. Under the Nationality and Borders Bill, we intend to end the use of hotels and introduce accommodation centres for these individuals. The use of accommodation centres will

build on the existing asylum estate and will enable asylum claims to be handled more expediently and facilitate the removal of those whose application has been refused or deemed as inadmissible.

This government is committed to the objectives set out in the New Plan for Immigration and we are exploring with all Government Departments, the role that they can play in enabling the Home Office to meet this urgent need.

■ Counterfeit Manufacturing

Martyn Day:

[81069]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with HMRC on encouraging the sharing of real time information on counterfeit seizures with private companies to support law enforcement prevention.

Damian Hinds:

It is not Home Office Policy to publish operational discussions between government departments.

However, Border Force work closely with HMRC to enforce the Intellectual Property Rights regime through checks and seizures to prevent suspected counterfeit goods from reaching the UK market. Border Force, together with HMRC, liaise closely with rights holders and other law enforcement agencies to maximise targeting opportunities to tackle organised crime and prevent societal harm.

■ Domestic Abuse: Enfield North

Feryal Clark:

[81142]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (a) what steps she is taking to tackle domestic abuse and (b) whether she plans to increase funding to (i) Enfield and Haringey Metropolitan Police Service, (ii) Enfield Council and (iii) grassroots community organisations in Enfield North constituency to help tackle domestic abuse.

Rachel Maclean:

Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime and the Government continues to take action tackle it. Our Domestic Abuse Act became law this April. This is a truly game changing piece of legislation which will transform our response to victims in every region in England and Wales and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice.

Early in the new year, we will publish a strategy dedicated to tackling domestic abuse. It will be informed by the 180,000 responses we received to our Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence. The strategy will seek to transform the whole of society's response to domestic abuse in order to prevent offending, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the systems in place needed to deliver these goals.

Producing a strategy dedicated to tackling domestic abuse is in recognition of its pervasiveness and the devastating harm it is having on millions of lives.

The strategy will seek to build on the spotlight the pandemic has shone on domestic abuse, putting it front and centre of the public's minds, in order to make tackling it everyone's business.

Last year we announced an additional £2 million in funding for domestic abuse organisations to ensure that vital helplines and online services continue to be easily accessible throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This year (2021-22) we will be investing £25m towards preventing and combatting perpetrators.

We are also investing £5 million for a 'Safety of Women at Night' fund, in addition to the £25 million Safer Streets fund that focuses on the prevention of violence against women and girls in public spaces at night, including in the night-time economy. In addition to this, Metropolitan Police funding will be up to £3,072.3m in 2021/22, an increase of up to £132.4m on the 2020/21 police funding settlement.

We will continue to fund organisations providing support to victims of these heinous crimes, including those from minoritized backgrounds, children and those requiring bespoke support for a range of abilities. Allocation of funding to specific organisations for 2022-23 has not yet been determined.

■ Emergency Services: Safety

Stephen Morgan:

[\[81116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the feasibility of the fire service supporting the ambulance service in moving and handling people safely.

Kit Malthouse:

We want collaboration between the emergency services to go further and faster.

To this end we have introduced a statutory collaboration duty on police, fire and emergency ambulance services. Collaborative working is also supported by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and the Home Office intends to shortly publish a fire reform white paper which will provide and explore the role that services can play in partnership.

I am pleased that during the COVID-19 pandemic the fire and rescue service showed that it was able to support the Ambulance service response including by driving ambulances.

■ Gender Based Violence and Hate Crime

Rachael Maskell:

[\[80356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding her Department has allocated to partnerships of the police with other agencies to tackle misogyny and violence against women and girls.

Rachel Maclean:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: This year, we have allocated approximately £43m to supporting victims and tackling perpetrators of violence against women and

girls (VAWG) including domestic abuse. This includes £11.2m funding for stalking perpetrator interventions and funding for research into perpetrators and £2.1m funding for frontline support and activity for sexual violence and other forms of violence against women and girls. The Home Office has also provided £1.28m funding for seven helplines (including the national domestic abuse helpline as well as helplines for victims of 'honour'-based abuse, revenge porn and for male and LGBT+ victims).

The Home Office part-funds the National Stalking Helpline, run by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, and has recently tripled its funding, such that it will now provide up to £155,000 this year. The extra funding is enabling the helpline to answer more calls and to expand its advocacy service outside London.

The Home Office provided a total of £211,000 of additional funding to stalking-focused charities The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service and the Hollie Gazzard Trust to help them to deal with the pressures of the coronavirus pandemic.

Through the VAWG Strategy we are investing:

- £3 million for a national communications campaign with a focus on targeting perpetrators and harmful misogynistic attitudes, educating young people about healthy relationships and ensuring victims can access support
- £5 million for a 'Safety of Women at Night' fund, in addition to the £25 million Safer Streets fund that focuses on the prevention of violence against women and girls in public spaces at night, including in the night-time economy.
- £1.5 million for vital specialist support services and to increase our funding for helplines, such as the Revenge Porn Helpline and the national stalking helpline.
- £3 million to better understand what works to prevent violence against women and girls – to invest in high quality, evidence-informed prevention projects, including in schools, aiming to educate and inform children and young people about violence against women and girls, healthy relationships and the consequences of abuse.

In addition to this, on 2 September we also launched the pilot on an online tool, StreetSafe, that enables the public to anonymously report areas where they feel unsafe and identify what about the location made them feel this way. The data will be used to inform local decision-making on street safety.

■ Home Office: Working Hours

Rachel Hopkins:

[81160]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what records relating to staff working times are kept by her Department under Regulation 9 of the Working Time Regulations 1998; and how long those records are kept for.

Damian Hinds:

HO staff are recorded on payroll to work the hours agreed within their contract. For the majority of staff this will be standard FTE of 37 hours per week.

Standard HO contracts do not require staff to work unsocial hours. When staff are required to work unsocial hours as part of a rostered shift pattern for example, they will receive the appropriate allowance for doing so e.g. annualised hours working (AHW).

This is also recorded through payroll data and maintained for a minimum of seven years.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[81165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the compliance of her Department's staff working from home with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Damian Hinds:

The department's assessment is that those employees working from home continue to comply with working time regulations just as they would if they were working in Home Office buildings / workplaces. Working from home also offers employees greater flexibility over their working times and their ability to manage their work / life balance.

As a department, we will continue to remind employees of their obligation to comply with the regulations for example by taking regular breaks, using annual leave etc, and not accessing work mobile devices once they have stopped working.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Catherine West: [\[81086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she provide EU citizens with Settled Status a physical copy of their immigration status.

Kevin Foster:

Everyone granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme receives written notification of their immigration status, which they can retain for their own records; and can access a digital version of their immigration status information at any time via the online 'view and prove' service, and which, unlike a physical document, cannot be lost or stolen.

We have also extended this approach to some other cohorts including those on the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route and those granted status under some of the UK's points-based immigration routes, such as the Graduate Route. We will add other routes on an incremental basis as part of the journey to a fully digital system by 2025.

For those who struggle to use online services, there is a non-digital alternative. Individuals can contact the UKVI Resolution Centre, including by phone, who are able to share status on the individual's behalf, if they are unable to do so themselves.

■ Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service

Holly Lynch: [82014]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children have been supported by Independent Child Trafficking Direct Workers in each year since that service came into existence.

Holly Lynch: [82015]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children have been supported by Independent Child Trafficking Regional Co-ordinators in each year since that service came into existence.

Rachel Maclean:

The Home Office has rolled out Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs), an independent source of advice for trafficked children, in two thirds of local authorities across England and Wales.

ICTGs provide one-to-one support for children who have no one with parental responsibility for them in the UK via an ICTG Direct Worker. They also provide an expert ICTG Regional Practice Co-ordinator, first introduced in October 2018, for children where there is someone with parental responsibility for them in the UK.

A staggered approach has been adopted in the delivery of ICTGs, together with built-in evaluations to ensure the ICTG service meets the needs of the children it supports. ICTGs were first introduced to three initial adopter sites in January 2017. Following the findings of the interim evaluation published in 2018, ICTGs were expanded to a further three sites in 2018 and 2019. In May 2021, ICTGs were rolled out to eleven additional areas extending the service to cover two thirds of local authorities across England and Wales.

Data tables published in October 2020 as part of the Assessment of Independent Child Trafficking Guardians – Regional Practice Co-ordinators:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/an-analysis-of-independent-child-trafficking-guardians> show the number of ICTG referrals for Direct Workers and Regional Practice Coordinators since 2017, split by local authority area. This data covers the period from Q1 2017 – Q4 2019.

Data tables published in November 2021 in the UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery: [2021 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) show the numbers of children referred to Direct Workers and Regional Practice Coordinators, broken down by region, in 2019 and 2020. This shows an overall increase in referrals between 2019 and 2020.

■ Nationality and Borders Bill

Mr Kevan Jones: [83251]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has held with maritime organisations on the Nationality and Borders Bill and its potential effect on maritime workers fulfilling their obligations under international maritime law.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[83252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the Nationality and Borders Bill on the likelihood of maritime workers fulfilling their obligations under international maritime law being prosecuted.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[83253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has plans to amend the Nationality and Borders Bill to avoid the potential prosecution of maritime workers fulfilling their obligations under international maritime law.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government has laid an amendment to the Nationality and Borders Bill which allows maritime workers to fulfil their obligations under international maritime law, and puts this matter beyond doubt.

■ **Police: Newport West**

Ruth Jones: [\[81126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the number of police in Newport West constituency.

Kit Malthouse:

We are increasing the number of police officers in England and Wales by 20,000 by the end of March 2023 and I am pleased to say excellent progress is being made in delivering against this target.

Due to their hard work and commitment, police forces in England and Wales have already recruited 11,053 additional officers, 55% of the 20,000-officer target.

As at 30 September 2021, Gwent police had recruited 78 additional officers against a combined allocation of 123 additional officers for years one and two of the uplift programme, providing a total headcount of 1,378 officers. These officers are tackling crime and keeping the communities of Gwent, including of Newport West, safe.

The deployment of officers is a decision for operationally independent Chief Constables.

■ **Refugees: Afghanistan**

Robert Jenrick: [\[81014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individuals have (a) arrived in the UK, (b) are currently in temporary accommodation; (c) are currently in holiday camp accommodation, and (d) been resettled in permanent housing since the fall of Kabul on 15 August 2021; and what estimate she has made of the average number of days individuals wait on the UK before they are resettled.

Robert Jenrick:

[81015]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many individuals are currently (a) in temporary accommodation of any form, or (b) resettled in permanent accommodation, (i) by local authority; and (ii) Strategic Migration Partnership area have entered the UK since 15 August under the ARAP scheme or associated schemes for the safe passage of individuals from Afghanistan.

Victoria Atkins:

Between 15th and 29th August, the UK evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan. Under 'Operation Warm Welcome', we are taking a cross-government approach to supporting Afghans to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate with their local communities. We are working at pace with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation for Afghan families who were evacuated to the UK.

Data on relocation will be published as part of our quarterly release which can be found at this link: [Asylum and resettlement datasets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets). The length of time that a family will remain in bridging hotels is dependent on a number of factors including the availability of appropriate housing. Over 300 Local Authorities have pledged housing, helping to provide the long term support required by these families.

Robert Jenrick:

[81016]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Afghan Refugee Scheme will open for applications, and when the first refugees under this scheme is expected to arrive in the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme is not yet open and remains under development. Officials are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme. However, the first to be resettled through this scheme will be some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk.

There will not be a formal Home Office owned application process for the ACRS. Instead, eligible people will be prioritised and referred for resettlement to the UK.

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

Ruth Jones:

[82098]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she last discussed the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme with Ministers of the Welsh Government.

Victoria Atkins:

Following Operation Pitting, in which the UK evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan, Home Office officials are in regular contact with the devolved nations.

This engagement includes Ministerial and officials meetings with Welsh government to ensure coordinated work on resettlement policy.

■ **Refugees: Housing****Philip Davies:**[\[83279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which local authorities have (a) offered and (b) refused to provide accommodation for asylum seekers in each of the last three years.

Kevin Foster:

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

Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 25 November 2021. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in February 2022.

■ **Rescue Services: English Channel****Margaret Greenwood:**[\[83406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with (a) HM Coastguard, (b) the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, (c) the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and stakeholders involved in English Channel search and rescue; and if she will publish minutes and topics of discussion of those meetings.

Tom Pursglove:

Border Force officials have regular discussions with both HM Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, holding frequent strategic and tactical meetings to discuss the ongoing response to small boats in the Channel.

There are no plans to publish the minutes from these meetings.

■ **Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[81104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many assaults made against retail workers were recorded in (a) Slough, (b) the South East and (c) England in each year from 2015 to 2021.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects data relating to assaults and threats against retail staff working in premises in England and Wales via the 'Commercial Victimisation Survey' (CVS). This includes information on assaults and threats experienced by staff working in Wholesale and Retail premises, these figures cannot be broken down to

lower geographical areas. The latest estimates are from the 2018 CVS (available in the link below).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2018-commercial-victimisation-survey>.

The next CVS results will be available in March 2022.

■ Slavery: Enfield North

Feryal Clark:

[81143]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (a) what steps she is taking to tackle modern slavery offences and (b) whether she plans to increase funding to (i) Enfield and Haringey Metropolitan Police Service, (ii) Enfield Council and (iii) grassroots community organisations in Enfield North constituency to help tackle modern slavery.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has given policing the biggest funding increase in a decade and funding for the Metropolitan Police will be up to £3,072.3m in 2021/22, an increase of up to £132.4m on the 2020/21 police funding settlement.

Tackling modern slavery is a key priority for this Government and we have invested £15 million since October 2016, including £1.4m this year (2021/22) to strengthen the police response through the police Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme.

This funding has enabled us to support the police to develop bespoke capabilities to improve forces' understanding of modern slavery and drive forward work to increase modern slavery prosecutions, as well as building new capability for forces to respond to organised immigration crime. Through the lifetime of the Programme, we have seen an increase in the number of live police operations from 188 police operations in December 2016 to over 3,869 in October 2021.

As part of the New Plan for Immigration, the Home Office announced the creation of a Modern Slavery Prevention Fund, which closed for bids, including from local authorities and NGOs, on 8 November 2021. Over the next year, the Home Office intends to use that fund to support organisations to deliver targeted prevention interventions.

The Government is also currently reviewing its Modern Slavery Strategy and will consider whether there are further opportunities to strengthen the law enforcement response to modern slavery, building on the considerable progress we have made to date.

■ Slavery: Victims

Holly Lynch:

[82010]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the number of individuals who were identified as being victims of modern

slavery, who had been exploited as children, and were subject to immigration controls, in each year since 2016.

Holly Lynch: [82011]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many victims of modern slavery with a positive Conclusive Grounds decision were subsequently (a) granted and (b) not granted Discretionary Leave, by age at the time of exploitation, in each year from 2016 to 2021.

Holly Lynch: [82012]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many victims of modern slavery with a positive Conclusive Grounds decision were subsequently (a) granted and (b) not granted asylum, by age at the time of exploitation, in each year from 2016 to 2021.

Holly Lynch: [82016]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate the Government has made of the number of children affected by child criminal exploitation as of 25 November 2021.

Holly Lynch: [82017]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many victims of modern slavery with a positive Conclusive Grounds decision were subsequently (a) granted and (b) not granted humanitarian protection, by age at the time of exploitation, in each year from 2016 to 2021.

Holly Lynch: [82018]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many victims of modern slavery exploited as adults have been subject to immigration control in each year from 2016 to 2021.

Rachel Maclean:

Statistics on the number of individuals referred into the National Referral Mechanism can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>. The data includes breakdowns of the number of positive conclusive grounds decisions made per quarter for victims who were exploited as children. The data also contains figures for the number of potential victims who were referred on the basis of criminal exploitation when a child.

Statistics on immigration outcomes including figures for grants of asylum, humanitarian protection and discretionary leave can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021>

Statistics on the immigration status and immigration outcomes for victims of modern slavery are not currently published.

■ Visas: Married People

Ruth Cadbury:

[81028]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has made to airlines on ensuring that they follow the correct procedures when processing inbound individuals with Settlement Scheme Spousal visas who are attempting to re-enter the UK.

Kevin Foster:

EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who have obtained pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme only hold a digital status and are not issued with physical documentation.

Carriers are not required to check this status although holders of EU Settlement Scheme status can use the online 'View and Prove' service to demonstrate their status. If passengers wish to share their status with a carrier, they need to log onto the service and generate a 'share code', which can be given to the carrier. The carrier can then use the 'share code' (and the individual's date of birth) to enable them to check the passenger's status information, using the 'Check someone's immigration status' service.

Non-EEA nationals who have obtained pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme will hold physical evidence in the form of a UK-issued Biometric Residence Card, EUSS Family Permit or EUSS Travel Permit.

The usual obligations to check the validity of passengers' documentation remain in place, and standard carrier removal obligations continue to apply.

We are reinforcing this message in our communications with carriers.

■ Windrush Compensation Scheme

Ruth Jones:

[81130]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of eligible claimants have applied to the Windrush compensation scheme.

Priti Patel:

The Home Office publishes data relating to the Windrush Compensation Scheme on a quarterly basis. This data is available at: [Windrush Compensation Scheme data: October 2021](#).

In July, the Home Office announced it had updated its planning assumption of the number of eligible claims it was likely to receive. The department's current planning assumption is that it will receive between 4000-6000 eligible claims.

Ruth Jones:

[81132]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people eligible for the Windrush Compensation Scheme have died before being compensated as of 24 November 2021.

Priti Patel:

It is very regrettable that a claimant passes away before a compensation award can be made or an apology sent to them.

The Windrush Compensation Scheme staff are working hard to ensure that where they are aware of claimants with critical or life shortening illnesses, that their cases are prioritised.

In the deeply unfortunate circumstances where a claimant has passed away after submitting a compensation claim, but before the claim is fully resolved, the team continues to work closely with the appointed representative, usually members of the family, to ensure the compensation payment is made as quickly as possible to that family member.

Out of the 3022 applications made to the Windrush Compensation Scheme, we are aware of 24 cases to date where unfortunately the claimant has passed away after having submitted a claim but before receiving compensation. We are working closely with the families and legal representatives to determine the right person to whom the compensation can be paid as quickly as possible.

It must be noted that this data is manually recorded and is reliant on the person receiving the information on an applicant notifying the Windrush Compensation Scheme to record this information. The data isn't recorded in a reportable field in the casework system.

■ Windrush Compensation Scheme: Wales**Ruth Jones:****[81131]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she last discussed the Windrush Compensation Scheme with the Welsh Government.

Priti Patel:

Home Office officials wrote to the Devolved Administrations, including the Welsh Government, to inform them of significant changes we made to the Windrush Compensation Scheme in December. We have also engaged with the Welsh Government to encourage the promotion of engagement events we have held in Swansea, Newport and Cardiff.

We have also raised awareness of the Windrush Schemes in Wales. Our national advertising campaign, launched in August 2020, included radio stations, digital channels and local press in Wales. Campaign materials were also made available in Welsh.

In addition, the Windrush Community Fund, which is a £500k fund to promote awareness of Windrush Schemes to affected communities, was promoted across the UK, including in Wales. We are delighted to have awarded over £24,000 in funding to Butetown Community Association who are a longstanding organisation in Cardiff, to deliver a series of engaging projects to reach their local communities.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ India: Overseas Trade

Jim Shannon:

[\[80994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with her Indian counterpart on increasing bilateral trade and strengthening economic ties.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Strengthening the United Kingdom-India bilateral trade relationship to support jobs and economic growth across the country is a priority for HM Government.

Ministers are in regular contact with our counterparts to make progress on a future bilateral Free Trade Agreement, building on our Enhanced Trade Partnership announced by my Rt Hon. Friend the Prime Minister in May 2021, as well as wider trade ambitions set out in the United Kingdom-India 2030 Roadmap.

■ Liquefied Natural Gas: Mozambique

Caroline Lucas:

[\[80962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what temperature goal scenario was used in the climate assessment for UK Export Finance support of the Mozambique LNG.

Mike Freer:

UK Export Finance's climate change report considered, among many other factors, the project's alignment to the Paris Agreement.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[80963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the estimated breakeven price is for gas from the Mozambique LNG project, supported by UK Export Finance.

Mike Freer:

UK Export Finance is unable to provide this information for reasons of commercial sensitivity.

Luke Pollard:

[\[82082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the (a) level of greenhouse gas emissions that will be generated and (b) impact on the UK's commitments on climate change as a result of the financial support provided by UK Export Finance to the natural gas project in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.

Mike Freer:

We are unable to provide the information requested because UK Export Finance's support for the Mozambique LNG project in Cabo Delgado is currently the subject of judicial review proceedings.

■ Shipping: Trade Fairs**Ruth Jones:** [81125]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans her Department has to provide SMEs in the maritime sector with grants to support their attendance at international trade shows.

Mike Freer:

The Department for International Trade recently launched its new Export Strategy which included announcing the UK Tradeshow Programme. The scheme provides eligible UK businesses in all sectors, including Maritime, with bespoke trade show educational support to help maximise their potential and optimise their exhibition experience. Some applicants will also be offered financial assistance towards eligible costs.

Applications opened on 30 November 2021 with the aim of supporting businesses who are looking to exhibit. The programme will expand from January 2022, offering support to businesses to attend a show as a precursor to deciding whether to exhibit in the future. Further information, including details on how companies can apply for the programme, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-tradeshow-programme>.

■ Teesside Freeport: Canada**Emily Thornberry:** [78373]

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

Penny Mordaunt:

In certain cases, businesses will need to choose between the duty drawback or the preferential rates. This is the case for the UK-Canada Trade Continuity Agreement.

The UK has plans to renegotiate its agreement with Canada and will carefully assess its position on such restrictions.

■ Teesside Freeport: Israel**Emily Thornberry:** [78375]

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-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement when exporting their finished products to Israel.

Penny Mordaunt:

In certain cases, businesses will need to choose between the duty drawback or the preferential rates. This is the case for UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement.

The UK-Israel relationship is already strong and growing and we are planning to start work on upgrading our trade agreement next year.

■ **Teesside Freeport: Mexico**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[78376\]](#)

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

Penny Mordaunt:

In certain cases, businesses will need to choose between the duty drawback or the preferential rates. This is the case for UK-Mexico Trade Continuity Agreement.

The UK has plans to renegotiate its agreement with Mexico and will carefully assess its position on such restrictions.

■ **Teesside Freeport: Singapore**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[78374\]](#)

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

Penny Mordaunt:

In certain cases, businesses will need to choose between the duty drawback or the preferential rates.

However, in the case of the UK-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, traders would not be affected by this in practice because Singapore applies a zero Most Favoured Nation (MFN) rate to most tariff lines.

■ **Trade Agreements**

Shaun Bailey:

[\[82570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress her Department has made on securing free trade agreements with countries around the world.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

I refer my Hon. Friend for West Bromwich West to my previous answer to my Hon. Friend for Hendon on 30th November (UIN: 79331).

■ **Trade Agreements: Job Creation**

Chris Loder:

[\[84481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of the number of UK jobs created each time the UK signs a new free trade agreement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government publishes scoping assessments to provide a preliminary assessment of a free trade agreement (FTA) in advance of negotiations. Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full Impact Assessment is published.

These set out HM Government's current assessment of a new FTA, including the impact on wages and composition of employment across sectors.

■ Trade Barriers**Emily Thornberry:** [\[82271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many of the 787 market access barriers reported to the Government's Digital Market Access Service between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 were (a) fully resolved or (b) partly resolved within that same period.

Emily Thornberry: [\[82272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many of the 217 market access barriers fully or partly resolved in financial year 2020-21 were reported to the Government's Digital Market Access Service prior to 1 April 2020.

Emily Thornberry: [\[82273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many of the market access barriers fully or partly resolved by her Department between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 were reported to the Government's Digital Market Access Service (a) between those two dates or (b) prior to 1 April 2019.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

133 of the barriers fully or partially resolved in the financial year 2020-21 were reported to the Digital Market Access Service (DMAS) during the year. 84 of the market access barriers marked as fully or partially resolved in the year were reported to DMAS in a previous year.

161 of the barriers fully or partially resolved in the financial year 2019-20 were reported to DMAS during the year. 20 of the market access barriers marked as fully or partially resolved in the year were reported to DMAS in a previous year.

Emily Thornberry: [\[82274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reason the figure of 1,238 published in her Department's Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 on 16 July 2020 for the number of market access barriers reported to the Digital Market Access Service in financial year 2019-20 is different to the figure of 1,099 published in Market Access Barrier Statistics: financial year 2020-21 on 25 November 2021 for the same figure.

Emily Thornberry: [\[82275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reason the figure of 175 published in her Department's Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 on 16 July 2020 for the number of market access barriers fully or partly resolved in financial year 2019-20 is

different to the revised figure of 181 published in Market Access Barrier Statistics: financial year 2020-21 on 25 November 2021 for the same figure.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Barriers reported refers to the number of cases identified as being registered on the Digital Market Access Service (DMAS) over a given time period, based on the data at the point of extraction. DMAS is an operational database used by government officials to assist in the removal of market access barriers.

As such, entries on DMAS are subject to ongoing revision to reflect activity and regular system administration updates are made to make sure the database is kept accurate. This can involve archiving cases established to be duplicates or identified not to be market access barriers after further investigation. This means that an extract taken from the live database on different occasions covering the same time period can return different figures.

Figures published in the Department for International Trade (DIT) Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) 2019-20 on the number of market access resolved barriers in that financial year were based on the number of barriers reported and resolved within the year. For the DIT ARA 2020-21, this measure was changed to include barriers resolved regardless of when they were reported.

This makes sure the full range of resolution activity is measured, rather than only barrier resolutions soon after identification and reflects that, for some barriers, resolution will take longer because of the complexities involved.

JUSTICE

■ Administration of Justice: Trade Unions

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[83449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of relations between trade unions and (a) HMPPS and (b) HMCTS.

James Cartlidge:

The MoJ has well-established, robust employee relations frameworks in place within HMPPS and HMCTS to ensure regular and meaningful engagement with all our recognised trade unions at the appropriate level, both nationally and regionally.

Relations between both HMPPS and HMCTS and its recognised trade unions continue to be professional and constructive; a strong example of this is the continuing collaborative working to support safe operational delivery during the pandemic in prisons, probation and courts. The size and complexity of the HMCTS Reform Programme presents some challenges, but both sides continue to work together to seek swift resolution to issues.

I have recently had positive introductory meetings with representatives of their respective recognised trade unions as has the Minister for Probation. Additionally,

both the MoJ Permanent Secretary and Chief People Officer have also had positive introductory meetings with the relevant senior HMCTS national trade union officials.

■ Burial and Cremation

Sir John Hayes: [80903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if the Government will make an assessment of the potential effect of implementing similar legislation to the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 in England and Wales.

Tom Pursglove:

As set out in my response on 25 November (UIN 76571 and 76572), the reuse of burial space is a sensitive issue and any changes need careful consideration. 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.

The Law Commission, as part of its programme of law reform, will be considering the modernising and streamlining of 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/>

■ Chelmsford Prison: Inspections

Ms Lyn Brown: [80930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI Chelmsford by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, published on 24 November 2021, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the steps taken in response to past HM Inspectorate of Prisons reports into HMP & YOI Chelmsford since 2018.

Ms Lyn Brown: [80931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI Chelmsford by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, published on 24 November 2021, if he will set a timescale for improvement at HMP & YOI Chelmsford to reach a rating of Reasonably Good against the healthy prison tests of (a) safety, (b) respect, (c) purposeful activity and (d) rehabilitation and release planning.

Victoria Atkins:

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons provides invaluable independent scrutiny and found that insufficient progress had been made in improving HMP & YOI Chelmsford since 2018. Following an unacceptable inspection in August, urgent measures to accelerate improvements were announced, including more staff training, increased use of the body scanner to detect illicit items, a reduction in the prison's population and improvements to cells.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will publish a full Action Plan by 16th December 2021, addressing the key concerns and recommendations raised

by the Inspectorate in its recent report. HMPPS would also welcome an Independent Review of Progress in line with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons' standard 8–12-month timescales. Whilst this would not result in revised ratings against the healthy prison tests, this would provide an independent judgement of progress against the key recommendations.

■ Civil Partnerships: Public Consultation

Luke Pollard: [\[81123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish the consultation on outdoors civil marriages.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government will publish a consultation very shortly to consider the practical impacts of this policy in detail, with a view to making a further amending Statutory Instrument which is not time limited.

■ Marriage: Humanism

Luke Pollard: [\[81121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the judgment in *R (Harrison and others) v Secretary of State for Justice* 2020, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals for humanist marriages after the conclusion of the Law Commission marriage review.

Tom Pursglove:

The Law Commission report is expected to present options for wholesale reform to the law governing marriage ceremonies, which the Government will consider carefully. Options being explored by the Law Commission include offering couples greater flexibility to form their own ceremonies, allowing the ceremony to take place in a much broader range of locations and to provide a framework that could allow non-religious belief organisations (such as Humanists) and/or independent celebrants to conduct legally binding weddings.

Luke Pollard: [\[81122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his timeline is for responding to the Law Commission marriage review following its publication.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government will carefully consider the Law Commission's recommendations when received. The Government will be able to advise further on a timetable to respond to the Law Commission's proposals once it has received these and assessed the breadth and complexity of the proposals.

■ Ministry of Justice: Complaints

Justin Madders: [\[81034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many complaints his Department has received in relation to the Single Justice Procedure Notice in the last two years.

James Cartlidge:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) does not record complaints by any classifications that can be used to identify whether a complaint relates to Single Justice Procedure Notices.

HMCTS records complaints that relate to the Single Justice Service (SJS) jurisdiction, for which the following complaints were recorded:

YEAR	1 JAN TO 25 Nov 2021	2020	2019
SJS complaints	30	19	14

Source: Data extracted from OPTIC: 25/11/2021 15:28

■ Ministry of Justice: Working Hours

Rachel Hopkins: [\[81162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what records relating to staff working times are kept by his Department under Regulation 9 of the Working Time Regulations 1998; and how long those records are kept for.

James Cartlidge:

Records relating to staff working times under the Working Times Regulations 1998 are locally managed in the Department's business areas, Agencies and ALBs, and the 2 year retention of these records under the Regulations will be managed locally also.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[81167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the compliance of his Department's staff working from home with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

James Cartlidge:

For staff working from home the Working Time Regulations 1998 will apply in the same way as for staff in a workplace environment. Line Managers will look to ensure that their members of staff manage their working time to meet their contracted hours.

Central records are not held of hours worked, so it is not possible to assess compliance with the Regulations formally, but MoJ's smarter working guidance supports flexibility in local ways of working whilst meeting the requirements of the role, and seeks to ensure better wellbeing and a more inclusive culture.

■ Prison Officers: Medals

Shabana Mahmood: [\[80942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with (a) officials in his Department and (b) Cabinet colleagues on the eligibility of prison officers who have worked in privately-run prisons to receive a Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[80943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of discrepancy between (a) prison officers who have worked in privately-run prisons and (b) those who have worked in publicly-run prisons, when assessing eligibility for a Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[80944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has plans to ensure that prison officers are recognised for their contribution through a Platinum Jubilee Medal, regardless of whether they work in a private- or publicly-run prison.

Victoria Atkins:

The basis upon which the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal is being awarded to prison officers is the same as for the Armed Forces and the Emergency Services.

The decision about who should be eligible for the medal was made by a cross-government committee and had to reflect the eligible grades from the other services.

Medals are traditionally awarded for Royal Jubilees to recognise and reward the service and dedication of key front line uniformed services in the public sector and in particular to those who are exposed regularly to difficult, often emergency situations and who potentially risk their lives.

Official medals awarded by HM The Queen are restricted to public sector employees, in line with the existing criteria used for the award of previous Jubilee Medals.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Affordable Housing

Caroline Lucas: [\[80951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the average household income is of owners of homes purchased through the Affordable Homes Programme.

Christopher Pincher:

We do not currently collect this information centrally.

■ Electoral Register: British Nationals Abroad

Cat Smith:

[\[81041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many overseas electors will be eligible to register to vote in the event that the 15 year rule is removed under the proposals set out in the Elections Bill.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Elections Bill Impact Assessment estimates the removal of the 15 year rule will increase the number of British citizens abroad who are eligible to register to vote from 0.9 million - 1.1 million people to 3.2 million - 3.4 million people in 2023/24. It is not possible to accurately estimate the future numbers of overseas electors, due to the uncertainty over what proportion of the newly enfranchised will choose to register. The central estimate in the Impact Assessment for the Elections Bill considers the scenario in which 550,000 overseas electors are registered to vote in 2024 (by way of context, there were 47.6 million UK Parliamentary electors registered at the 2019 general election).

This suggests a potential uplift in the Parliamentary electoral register in the region of 1%, and such numbers would be distributed across the country according to their last constituency in which they resided.

■ Evictions

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[83451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of abolishing no fault evictions on frequency of rent increases intended to instigate an eviction.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to bringing in a Better Deal for Renters to deliver a fairer and more effective rental market that works for both tenants and landlords. This will enhance renters' security and improve protections for tenants by abolishing so-called "no-fault" evictions through removing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 and by ensuring the grounds for possession are fit for purpose. This represents a generational change in the law that governs private renting, so landlords will always have to provide a reason for ending a tenancy, such as breach of contract or wanting to move into the property.

This will provide tenants with more stability, protecting them from having to move at short notice, and allow them to put down roots and challenge poor standards where they exist, short notice moves, and plan for the future.

The Government is keen to avoid any unintended negative consequences related with abolishing Section 21. As part of this, we are clear that there should not be any mechanism for landlords to force a tenant to leave the property by including clauses in fixed term tenancy agreements which hike up the rent by excessive or unreasonable amounts just before the agreement is due to expire.

■ High Rise Flats: Bethnal Green and Bow

Rushanara Ali: [\[81000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answers of 25 October 2021 to Question 57038 on Social Rented Housing: Bethnal Green and Bow and 57041 on High Rise Flats: Safety, if he will ask Clarion Housing Group to report its reasons for withholding the structural condition survey that was peer reviewed by Arup in August and September 2021 and which resulted in its Board deciding to urgently decant 122 tenants and leaseholders from Clare House on 29 September 2021.

Rushanara Ali: [\[81001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answers of 25 October 2021 to Question 57038 on Social Rented Housing: Bethnal Green and Bow and 57041 on High Rise Flats: Safety, if he will ask Clarion Housing Group to report on the length of time it estimates the 122 tenants and leaseholders decanted from Clare House will have to spend in temporary accommodation before they are made offers of permanent accommodation.

Rushanara Ali: [\[81002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2021 to Question 60421 on Housing: Bethnal Green and Bow, whether tenants decanted from Clare House on an emergency basis by Clarion Housing Group will have to right to specify the area within Tower Hamlets they would be willing to accept as one of its three direct offers.

Rushanara Ali: [\[81003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will meet with tenants and leaseholders of Clare House to discuss their concerns on Clarion Housing Group's handling of the fire safety issues in their block and their subsequent decant into emergency accommodation.

Christopher Pincher:

Clarion Housing Group are the owners of Clare House and have responsibility for the safety of residents in the building. Clarion also has responsibility for providing residents with appropriate alternative accommodation in the event of an evacuation of the building. They have confirmed to the Department that they have released the information relied upon to evacuate the building. Clarion have also confirmed that they meet regularly with affected residents and have made a comprehensive offer of support which will include permanent alternative accommodation, along with interim support, for as long as it is required.

■ Housing: Refugees

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[81141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to provide extra funds to local authorities which commit to rehousing and offering support to refugees.

Victoria Atkins:

Councils who support people through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) or Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme will receive £20,520 per person, over 3 years, for resettlement and integration costs. Local councils and health partners who resettle families will also receive up to £4,500 per child for education, £850 to cover English language provision for adults requiring this support and £2,600 to cover healthcare.

A further £20 million of flexible funding will be made available to support local authorities with higher cost bases with any additional costs in the provision of services. In addition, the previously announced Afghan Housing Costs Fund will increase from £5 million to £17 million and run for 2 extra years to help local authorities provide housing and give certainty that funding will be available in the future.

■ Landlords: Licensing

Grahame Morris:

[\[83312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2021 to Question 56975 on Landlords: Licensing, how many days on average it takes to determine a selective licensing application.

Eddie Hughes:

Since 2015, the average number of days to respond to a selective licensing application is 195 days. The length of time can vary due to the complexity of applications and delays to applications during the COVID-19 pandemic have affected overall timelines. We will communicate decisions on current applications shortly.

■ Local Government: Meetings

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[83383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to publish the response to his Department's consultation on local authority remote meetings.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Department is reviewing the responses to the consultation and the Government will respond shortly.

■ Local Housing Allowance: Homelessness

Caroline Lucas:

[\[80956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the potential effect of the Local Housing Allowance rate freeze on the number of people who are homeless; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to reducing homelessness and we are spending more than £800 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year alone. We work closely with colleagues across government on these issues, including DWP.

In April 2020 we increased the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to the 30th percentile of market rents. This investment of nearly £1 billion provided 1.5 million claimants of Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit with around £600 more housing support in 2020/21 than they would otherwise have received. For 2021/22, Local Housing Allowance rates have been maintained at the same cash level, and will remain at those levels for 2022/23, meaning claimants renting in the private rented sector continue to benefit from the significant increase in the rates applied in April 2020.

For those who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available. Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in DHPs to local authorities to support households with their housing costs.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper:

[\[80926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 22 September 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire regarding surprise charges imposed by housing developers, reference ZA57294.

Christopher Pincher:

A response to the letter has been issued.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[80928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he intends to respond to a letter dated 06 October 2021 from the hon. member for West Lancashire reference ZA57872 regarding disposal of housing stock.

Christopher Pincher:

A response to the letter has been issued.

■ Rented Housing: Reform**Caroline Lucas:** [\[80954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to publish a white paper for the Renters' Reform Bill as announced in the Queen's Speech in May 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government remains committed to building back fairer and having a better deal for renters. We will publish a White Paper in 2022 that will set out Government's plans to introduce once-in-a-generation reforms to create a fairer private rented sector that works for both landlords and tenants. This will allow the requisite time for robust and structured stakeholder engagement with the sector.

■ Rents: Arrears**Caroline Lucas:** [\[80953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate his Department has made of the (a) number of households in England that have rent arrears as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and (b) proportion of those households that will be supported through the £65 million funding his Department announced on 23 October 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN 73864 on 22 November 2021.

■ Sleeping Rough**Caroline Lucas:** [\[80955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to publish a strategy on ending rough sleeping by 2024.

Eddie Hughes:

We have made excellent progress on our manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping. Rough sleeping levels reduced 37% between 2019 and 2020, the third consecutive yearly decrease.

The Government will be spending over £2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years, demonstrating our commitment to build on recent progress. Multi-year funding will enable local partners to plan services more effectively and efficiently.

The Secretary of State is understandably taking the time to consider carefully his strategic priorities.

■ Social Rented Housing

Caroline Lucas:

[80952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he plans to take to help ensure that the number of social homes being sold and demolished does not exceed the number of social homes being built.

Christopher Pincher:

Since 2010, we've delivered over 395,300 affordable homes for rent, of which over 153,400 homes are for social rent. Our new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) will deliver more than double the social rent than the current programme, with around 32,000 social rented dwellings due to be delivered. Following a consultation on the use of Right to Buy receipts, the Government introduced a package of reforms this year to help local authorities build more homes. This set of reforms, combined with the abolition of the borrowing cap in 2018, gives councils substantially increased flexibilities to build the homes England needs.

■ Social Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance

Rushanara Ali:

[81004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Housing Ombudsman's adjudication on Complaint 202015630 about Clarion Housing Group's handling of a repair for a disabled tenant and the recommendation that the organisation review its whole process and practice for dealing with the repairs of vulnerable tenants, if he will ask the Regulator for Social Housing (a) for what reason it didn't identify those service failings in its own investigation in 2020 and 2021 and (b) whether vulnerable tenants were potentially incurring serious detriment as a result of Clarion's flawed classification of their repairs as routine to be completed within 28 days.

Christopher Pincher:

The Regulator of Social Housing's investigations in 2020 and 2021 did not identify systemic failures by Clarion and therefore did not find a breach of the regulatory standards or serious detriment. However, the Regulator has acknowledged and notified Clarion that it had identified individual incidents of service failure for Clarion to resolve. The Regulator does not have a role in resolving individual disputes between tenants and their landlords. Where the Regulator receives a referral from a tenant or representative for an individual matter, the Regulator will always signpost the tenant or representative to the Housing Ombudsman.

The Housing Ombudsman's role is to adjudicate on individual complaints from tenants about their landlords, and its investigation and adjudication on Complaint 202015630 was a resolution to an individual complaint.

Service failures can have a significant effect on tenants, and such failures should be remedied promptly and effectively by the landlord. Where a registered provider does not resolve the issues for the tenant, it is for the Housing Ombudsman to make orders and recommendations to put things right for the individual affected.

■ UK Community Renewal Fund

Steve Reed: [\[83386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 26 November 2021 to Question 80317 on UK Community Renewal Fund, what assessment he has made of the impact on the roll out of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund of delays to and the deadline extension to 30 June 2022 for the delivery of projects under the Community Renewal Fund.

Neil O'Brien:

To ensure that successful applicants still have the same delivery window as set out in the fund prospectus, we have extended the delivery timeline for the UKCRF by three months to 30 June 2022. Later this year we will publish an Investment Framework for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will commence in 2022.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[82008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of locating his Department in York.

Mr Alister Jack:

As part of Budget 2020, the Government committed to relocating 22,000 Civil Service roles from Greater London to locations across the UK, including York, with the Places for Growth Portfolio delivering on this commitment.

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland, is a Territorial Office with specific responsibility for representing Scotland. The Office is based in London and Edinburgh. We have no plans to relocate to York.

TRANSPORT

■ Bridges and Tunnels: Northern Ireland and Scotland

Brendan O'Hara: [\[83396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost has been to the public purse of the Union Connectivity Review and Fixed Link Feasibility Study into the potential merits of a bridge or tunnel between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Trudy Harrison:

The Fixed Link Feasibility Study forms part of the Union Connectivity Review, independently chaired by Sir Peter Hendy CBE. Final invoices are yet to be received.

■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions

Navendu Mishra:

[\[83508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of the zero emission buses announced by the Prime Minister in February 2020 have been delivered (a) nationally and (b) in Greater Manchester.

Trudy Harrison:

As set out in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 £355 million of new funding has been made available for zero emission buses. £150 million of this funding has been made available for 2021-22 with the remaining funding available over the Spending Review period.

In addition, up to 900 zero emission buses and associated infrastructure will be supported through existing funding made available since February 2020 from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme, the All Electric Bus Town or City scheme and the Ultra Low Emission Bus scheme.

My Department's has estimated that of these over 50 are already on the road. For example, 32 electric buses and charging infrastructure have been introduced in Greater Manchester as a result of funding provided through the Ultra Low Emission Bus scheme since February 2020.

In addition, Transport for Greater Manchester is developing a business case under the standard process of the ZEBRA scheme to introduce electric buses in Stockport. In total, 17 local transport authorities are working to produce business cases under the standard process of the scheme. The Department will award funding to successful business cases in Spring 2022.

■ Cycling: Accidents

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[83275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of cyclist deaths per annum.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

This Government is committed to increasing walking and cycling and making our roads safer for vulnerable road users including cyclists and pedestrians. The Government is investing £2bn of funding for cycling and walking over this Parliament to deliver the commitments outlined in the Prime Minister's Gear Change Cycling and walking plan. These include providing hundreds of miles of new safe and fully segregated cycle routes as well as policy changes to improve safety for people cycling such as updating the Highway Code.

■ Driving Tests: Hemel Hempstead

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[83274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects to reopen the driving test centre in Hemel Hempstead; and will he make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has no current plans to re-open a driving test centre in Hemel Hempstead. Previously, Hemel Hempstead was a part time test centre with a very low demand.

There is adequate testing provision at the surrounding centres in Luton, Watford and St Albans.

If the Council or local Government now have potentially suitable locations for the DVSA to operate a limited service from and share details of those with the agency, it will consider all options. Any potential location would need to broadly mirror the terms shared previously.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Dr Luke Evans:****[82378]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that rural and remote areas, including farms and on-street locations, will be included in plans to extend electric car charge point installation to homes and workplaces.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government is investing over £1.3 billion in accelerating the roll out of charging infrastructure, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major A roads to dash any anxiety around long journeys, and supporting the installation of chargepoints near homes and workplaces to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car.

The Government's forthcoming Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy will define our vision for the continued roll-out of a world-leading charging infrastructure network across the UK. The strategy will focus on how we will unlock the chargepoint rollout needed to enable the transition from early adoption to mass market uptake of EVs. We will set out our next steps to address barriers to private investment, and level up charge point provision across all areas of the country, including rural and remote areas.

The Government already provides support for chargepoint installations at homes and workplaces across the UK. In 2022, the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme will be reformed to provide additional help for people living in rented and leasehold accommodation and the Workplace Charging Scheme will be opened to small accommodation business and the charity sector. This will help to accelerate electric vehicle uptake in rural areas and support the UK tourist industry.

To future proof homes, the Government has announced that it will require new homes and buildings undergoing major renovation with associated parking to have a charge point installed.

For those without access to off-street parking, the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme, which is available to all UK local authorities will help to provide public

chargepoints for their residents. This year, £20 million is available under the scheme to ensure more local authorities and residents can benefit.

Theresa Villiers:

[83268]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 21 November 2021 that all new homes must include electric charging points, whether that policy applies to properties without designate onsite parking spaces.

Trudy Harrison:

This policy will ensure that new and existing buildings undergoing major renovation which have associated parking within the site boundary will have a chargepoint. Alongside these regulations the Government is investing over £1.3 billion to accelerate the roll out of charging infrastructure, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major A roads to dash any anxiety around long journeys, and supporting the installation of chargepoints near homes and workplaces to make charging easier than refuelling a petrol or diesel car. This includes the £20m per year On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) which is available to all UK local authorities to provide public chargepoints for their residents without access to private parking. The ORCS has so far awarded funding to over 135 different local authorities, to install more than 4,600 chargepoints for residents who do not have off-street parking.

Theresa Villiers:

[83269]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 21 November 2021 that all new homes must include electric charging points, whether that policy applies to properties which already have planning permission but which have not yet been built.

Trudy Harrison:

This requirement is triggered by building notices under the Building Regulations regime rather than planning permission. Properties which have their initial building notices or full plans deposited by the coming into force date will not be legally required to meet the new regulations. However, they must begin building work by no later than 12 months after the coming into force date, otherwise the new regulations will need to be met. This applies to all work under the same building notice/plans.

This is the typical way that transitional arrangements have been applied in the past.

Theresa Villiers:

[83270]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 21 November 2021 that all new homes must include electric charging points, what steps he will take to ensure new homes without on-site parking bays have access to parking spaces with charging points.

Trudy Harrison:

This policy applies not only to new homes but also to new or existing buildings undergoing major renovation. This will help ensure drivers without off-street parking

at home charge have access to a range of charging options and can charge conveniently as they go about their lives at offices and shops.

Alongside these regulations the Government is investing over £1.3 billion to accelerate the roll out of charging infrastructure, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major A roads to dash any anxiety around long journeys, and supporting the installation of chargepoints near homes and workplaces to make charging easier than refuelling a petrol or diesel car. This includes the £20m per year On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) which is available to all UK local authorities to provide public chargepoints for their residents without access to private parking. The ORCS has so far awarded funding to over 135 different local authorities, to install more than 4,600 chargepoints for residents who do not have off-street parking.

Government and industry have supported the installation of over 26,000 publicly available charging devices, including more than 4,900 rapid devices – one of the largest networks in Europe.

Theresa Villiers:

[83271]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 21 November 2021 that all new homes must include electric charging points, if he will ask the Mayor of London to amend the London Plan to accommodate the new policy.

Trudy Harrison:

The requirements to be set out in law that all new homes must include electric charging points will be a requirement for England, including London.

Theresa Villiers:

[83272]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 21 November 2021, that all new homes must include electric vehicle charging points, if he will ask the Mayor of London to amend the London Plan so that it does not discourage the provision of on-site parking bays.

Trudy Harrison:

The requirements to be set out in law that all new homes must include electric charging points will be a requirement for England, including London.

■ Railways: Sheffield

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [83381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic impact on Sheffield of his proposals for connectivity to that city as part of 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. Electrification of the Midland Mainline along with HS2 East will deliver the same journey time improvements between Sheffield and London as the previously planned HS2 Eastern leg and will cut the journey from Sheffield to Birmingham by 13 minutes. In addition, completing upgrades to the Hope Valley Line could bring improved provision for rail freight in the longer term.

■ Roads: Accidents

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[83276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the number of deaths on the roads of under 16 year olds in (a) England and (b) the Humberside region.

Trudy Harrison:

The number of under 16 years old deaths in reported road accidents in England and Humberside police force between 2010 and 2020 can be found in the table below.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Humberside	0	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
England	47	47	55	38	46	45	56	43	42	36	33

STATS19

■ Trams: Greater Manchester

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[82287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 24 March 2021 to Question 172052, on Trams: Greater Manchester, what steps he has taken to progress the feasibility study and work on the Bolton-Bury tramline.

Trudy Harrison:

In November 2020, this Government awarded up to £50,000 of Restoring Your Railway Ideas funding to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case to reinstate passenger services on the Bolton-Radcliffe/Bolton-Bury line. As with all Ideas Fund projects the Department has been working with the promoters and we expect the SOBC to be submitted in January 2022.

■ Transport: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry:

[\[82393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much money his Department spent on assessing the feasibility of constructing a fixed transport link between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Trudy Harrison:

The Fixed Link Feasibility Study forms part of the Union Connectivity Review, independently chaired by Sir Peter Hendy CBE.

Final invoices are yet to be received.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**Martyn Day:**[\[83438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Maritime and Coastguard Agency received a call for help from any person aboard the boat carrying migrants that sank in the English Channel on 24 November 2021.

Robert Courts:

Her Majesty's Coastguard is committed to safeguarding life around the seas and coastal areas of the United Kingdom.

On Wednesday 24 November 2021, the Coastguard received over 90 alerts from the English Channel area including 999 emergency calls. Every call was answered, assessed and acted upon, including the timely deployment of search and rescue resources where appropriate.

In response to calls received in the early hours of Wednesday 24 November 2021, Her Majesty's Coastguard launched a search and rescue operation including UK Border Force, a UK Coastguard Helicopter and passing ships were asked to keep a lookout for small boats in the area. Three small boats were located and those onboard rescued. No other small boats or people in the water were identified in the search area.

TREASURY**■ Bellwin Scheme****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[82312\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities on the fitness for purpose of the Bellwin scheme in respect of claims from local authorities for costs arising from winter flooding.

Mr Simon Clarke:

HM Treasury ministers are in regular contact with ministers in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on a wide range of issues, including those relating to local authority funding.

■ Civil Service: Pensions**Drew Hendry:**[\[83413\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the impact on members trust in the Civil Service Pension Scheme of defining the

remedy costs to the 2016 valuation of that scheme as a member cost and (b) option of sharing remedy costs with scheme members.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Treasury directions confirm that schemes, including the Civil Service Pension Scheme, must take into account the expected impact of the Government's proposal to remedy the discrimination identified by the Courts in the McCloud and Sargeant judgments when completing the cost control element of the 2016 valuations.

The remedy will give members a choice of scheme benefits for the remedy period. This represents an increase in the value of schemes to members. As the cost control mechanism was designed to assess changes in the value of schemes to members, it is right for this to be taken into account in the cost control element of the 2016 valuations.

The Government has not made a formal assessment of the impact of this on members' trust.

The Government has announced its intention to waive any ceiling breaches that arise from the 2016 valuations, which means that no member will see a reduction to their benefits. This will be implemented through the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill.

As this relates to live litigation, it would be not be appropriate to comment further.

■ **Companies: Environment Protection**

Alex Sobel:

[\[83456\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Net Zero Strategy published in October 2021, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of asking companies to report on steps they have taken to help ensure a just transition to a green economy in their transition plans.

John Glen:

At COP26 Finance Day the Chancellor announced that the UK will move towards making transition plans mandatory. Initially, asset managers, regulated asset owners and listed companies will need to publish a transition plan or provide an explanation if they have not done so.

Recognising that there is not yet an agreed standard for transition plans, the Chancellor also announced that the Government will set up a Transition Plan Taskforce. This will bring together the best of British industry and academia with regulators and the third sector to develop recommendations on transition plan disclosures in the UK. It will consider relevant Government policy in its work, such as the Net Zero Strategy, and report initially by the end of 2022.

■ Debit Cards

Chi Onwurah:

[83371]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2021 to Question 77446 on Debit Cards, what rights consumers have to be informed of the amount of recurring payments being (a) debited and (b) changed.

John Glen:

Where a customer grants standing authority to a merchant, both parties agree to the terms under which recurring payments can be taken from the customer's account. The FCA encourages merchants to ensure that the continuous payment authority agreement sets out clearly the amount that will be taken in each transaction, and encourages merchants to give the range within which the amount may vary. Under the Payment Services Regulations 2017, if the amount of a payment transaction exceeds the amount the customer could reasonably have expected in the circumstances, the customer is entitled to a refund of the full amount of the transaction from their Payment Service Provider.

As for recurring Direct Debit payments, the Direct Debit Guarantee provides for advance notice to be given to customers for any changes to the amount, date, or frequency of a Direct Debit as instructed by the customer. Notice periods can be agreed between individual customers and merchants. The Direct Debit Guarantee is not a statutory protection, but part of the Bacs Direct Debit scheme rules, operated by Pay.UK.

More broadly, the Government is committed to tackling so-called subscriptions traps and other business practices that harm consumers. In response to growing concerns on this matter, the Government published a consultation which closed on 1 October 2021. It sets out our commitment to tackling problems encountered by consumers when taking out a subscription contract, including making it easier for a consumer to cancel an unwanted subscription. For further information the proposals can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-competition-and-consumer-policy>

■ Economic Situation

Fleur Anderson:

[82106]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a Genuine Progress Indicator as a method of measuring economic and social progress in the UK.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The department has made no such assessment. HM Treasury makes use of a range of data and indicators when analysing the economy and setting economic policy.

■ Film: Taxation

Dr Julian Lewis:

[83222]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will list the grounds on which HMRC determines which Film Partnership investors were (a) genuine and (b) engaged in exploitation of tax reliefs for the purpose of tax avoidance; what consideration was given to the latter possibility when Film relief was introduced in 1997; what protection is currently offered to people who invested in Film Partnership schemes (i) primarily to support the UK film industry and (ii) in good faith after obtaining advice from qualified financial experts; what the typical time-lapse has been between an individual having made an investment in a Film Partnership scheme and the commencement of a tax recovery initiative by HMRC in respect of that investment; and if he will make it his policy to discriminate between those investors who can be proved to have abused the Film Partnership tax relief concession and those who sought to use it for its ostensible purpose.

Lucy Frazer:

In 1997, the Government introduced a form of relief for investment in films, which has since been repealed. Whilst many partnerships sought to invest in British films and take advantage of the relief afforded, there were also many which sought to use the relief in ways not intended, often trying to obtain tax relief well in excess of the amount that they put in.

Significant legislative action was taken over a number of years to try and prevent these various forms of abuse, and HMRC continues to actively investigate and counter those schemes where it has concerns. As reliefs are typically generated via partnership structures, HMRC enquiries are made into the tax returns of the partnerships. Enquiries are opened into partnership returns within 12 months of them being submitted, as permitted by legislation, and the outcome of these enquiries is determined on the facts of each individual case.

HMRC continues to settle and litigate these complicated schemes which have typically taken years to unpick and prepare for litigation. HMRC settles disputes with taxpayers in line with its published Litigation and Settlement Strategy.

■ National Insurance: Employers' Contributions

Owen Thompson:

[81068]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has commissioned research within his Department on the potential effect of the rise in Employer National Insurance 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 Health and Social Care Levy on the UK economy, including the impact on labour supply and wages, in their latest Economic and Fiscal Outlook. This can be found here: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-october-2021/>

■ Property Development: Taxation

Bob Blackman: [\[80974\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether BTR developments will be affected by the Residential Property Developer Tax in the event that such developments are transferred or sold within a group for accounting purposes.

Lucy Frazer:

The Residential Property Developer Tax will apply to companies that make trading profits from residential property development activities and are part of a group that is generating relevant profits in excess of £25 million.

This means the tax will not apply to companies that construct properties to hold as investments.

It will, however, apply to companies that make trading profits from selling residential property, including where the purchaser is a member of the same group or is acquiring the property for investment purposes.

As with all other taxes, the Government will keep this under review.

■ Tax Avoidance

Andrea Leadsom: [\[83363\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) make a statement on his assessment of the impact of the loan charge on families and (b) make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a right of court appeal for people experiencing significant contested charges.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government takes concerns about the wellbeing of all taxpayers very seriously and recognises that the Loan Charge can add a significant pressure for some taxpayers.

The impact of the Loan Charge on those affected was assessed ahead of the introduction of the policy and was considered as part of the Independent Loan Charge Review, led by Lord Morse in 2019.

The November 2017 Tax Information and Impact Note which covered the Loan Charge stated that it was not expected to have a material impact on family formation, stability, or breakdown, because the impact was assessed across the entire UK population, of which users of affected avoidance schemes make up a very small minority.

In his independent review, Lord Morse recommended that future published Government impact notes of tax changes should consider the direct impact on the affected population, rather than looking at the impact across the entire UK population. This is one of the 19 recommendations that the Government accepted to mitigate the impact of the Loan Charge and to ensure that the right support is in place for those who need it.

HMRC's powers are balanced by a comprehensive suite of safeguards for taxpayers, and the Loan Charge follows these. All taxpayers have the right to appeal tax decisions made by HMRC, and that right includes the opportunity to appeal to an independent tribunal. Where someone disagrees with HMRC's assessment that the Loan Charge applies, they are able to appeal that decision.

■ **Treasury: Darlington**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[83334\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the logo for the Darlington Economic Campus was designed by staff in his Department or commissioned from an external source.

Helen Whately:

The branding for the Darlington Economic Campus was designed in-house by HM Treasury.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[83335\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many cubic metres of space were being heated each day, on average, in the week commencing 22 November 2021 at the Darlington Economic campus.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[83351\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many car parking spaces were available for (a) all staff and (b) his Department's staff at the Darlington Economic Campus in the week commencing 22 November 2021.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[83352\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will place in the Library a copy of the advice given to staff working at the Darlington Economic Campus on convenient public transport connections from the Campus.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury staff working at the Darlington Economic Campus are currently sharing space on one floor of Bishopsgate House, as an interim office with the Department for International Trade, the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities, and the Office for National Statistics.

There are 4 carparking spaces available at Bishopsgate House for Darlington Economic Campus staff. HM Treasury does have access to the parking provision, but no reserved spaces. There are spaces available in public car parks that are a short walk from Bishopsgate House.

All HMT Treasury staff, including those in the Darlington Economic Campus, are strongly encouraged to use public transport for official journeys, and we talk about this as part of the corporate induction for new starters. The Darlington Economic Campus is conveniently located in walking distance of local amenities within the town, bus stops and the train station.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[83336\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many days and on what dates in the last month he has been working from the Darlington Economic Campus.

Helen Whately:

All HM Treasury offices are open and available for use. HM Treasury Ministers are working from the Darlington office on a regular basis, including the Chancellor.

■ Treasury: Working Hours

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[81163\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what records relating to staff working times are kept by his Department under Regulation 9 of the Working Time Regulations 1998; and how long those records are kept for.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury keeps records of staff's working hours. Working hours are recorded by the HMT employee on their 'working hours spreadsheet', the data recorded in these spreadsheets are stored centrally by the Management Information Team.

Records of staff's working hours are kept for two years after which they are deleted, in line with Regulation 9 of the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[81168\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the compliance of his Department's staff working from home with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury collects monthly compliance data on how many HMT staff have completed their working hours spreadsheet log, this spreadsheet is designed to be completed daily, including when staff are working from home.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carer's Allowance

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[81107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of carer's allowance for unpaid carers.

Chloe Smith:

Carer's Allowance is uprated each April in line with inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index for the previous September.

The weekly rate of Carer's Allowance will increase to £69.70 in April 2022. This means that since 2010 it will have increased from £53.90 to £69.70 a week, providing an additional £800 a year for carers.

By 2026/27, the Government is forecast to spend just under £4.4bn a year on Carer's Allowance.

As well as Carer's Allowance, carers have access to the full range of social security benefits. For example, around 360,000 carer households on Universal Credit can receive an additional £1,965 a year through the Carer Element, ensuring support is targeted where it is needed most.

■ Child Maintenance Service: Staff

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[83368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the current level of staffing of the Child Maintenance Service.

Guy Opperman:

The number of people working within the Child Maintenance Service is reviewed regularly to ensure we have sufficient resources to answer customer calls and progress cases. Since 2020, we have recruited 790 people into the Child Maintenance Service on temporary contracts, this has been to backfill against resource lost to Universal Credit and other primary benefits. We have a very robust demand model and will continue to review the volumes of work against that model to ensure that we adjust staffing levels as required.

■ Children: Maintenance

Mark Tami:

[\[80920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential (a) fairness and (b) sustainability of the Child Maintenance scheme in calculating payments from self-employed paying parents whose businesses had a short-term, exceptional increase in profit in tax year 2020-21 due to deferred costs and government grants relating to the outbreak of covid-19; and what assessment she has made of the effect on those paying parent's (i) finances and (ii) mental health where their business may have subsequently experienced a downturn.

Mark Tami:

[\[80921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the equity of the proportion of a self-employed parent's income that is payable as Child Maintenance.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance calculation is designed to be fair and affordable, while ensuring that the paying parent contributes a significant proportion of their income to support their children.

For self-employed paying parents the income used to calculate child maintenance payments is usually provided by HMRC and is the gross taxable profit of the parent's business, for the latest tax-year HMRC hold a complete record. The taxable profits of

a business represent the amount from which a business owner can support themselves and meet their outgoings.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Working Hours

Rachel Hopkins: [\[81159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what records relating to staff working times are kept by her Department under Regulation 9 of the Working Time Regulations 1998; and how long those records are kept for.

Guy Opperman:

Each employee's record of daily working times and aggregated hours over four-weekly periods is retained for three years.

A record of any employee's exceptional decision under the Working Time Regulations 1998 voluntarily to disapply the 48-hour maximum working time is retained as part of their employment record for 85 years.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[81164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the compliance of her Department's staff working from home with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Guy Opperman:

DWP agreed a Flexible Working Hours Scheme with its trade unions to manage employees' daily working hours and breaks. This conforms to the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Under the Scheme, all employees are required to keep a daily record of the times they work. This is monitored and checked by their line manager to ensure that on a four-weekly basis the aggregated hours worked are within the limits of the Scheme.

The size and national spread of the DWP's workforce and current recording method require compliance to be assessed by line managers as a core part of their job.

■ Food Poverty: Children

Fleur Anderson: [\[82107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what fiscal steps she is taking to reduce child food poverty.

David Rutley:

This Government is wholly 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.

As our recovery gathers pace and with record vacancies, our focus now is on continuing to support parents into, and to progress in, 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.

Given clear evidence that parental employment, particularly where it is full-time, substantially reduces the risks of child poverty, we are focusing on supporting employment. With record vacancies in the economy, there are opportunities available across the UK and our multi-billion-pound Plan for Jobs, which has recently been expanded by £500 million, is helping people to access them.

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, for the lowest paid in society, an effective tax cut 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.

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

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, and we are also investing over £200m 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 LAs.

■ Household Support Fund

Ms Karen Buck:

[79264]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the guidance issued to local authorities in England on 11 November 2021 on the use of the Household Support Fund emphasises that that funding should be used to provide in-kind donations of food or food vouchers instead of cash for people experiencing financial difficulties as a result of poverty and covid-19 outbreak.

David Rutley:

Local Authorities have the flexibility to design local schemes under the Household Support Fund that best meet local needs within the parameters set out in the guidance.

[Household Support Fund: final guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002121/Household-Support-Fund-final-guidance-for-County-Councils-and-Unitary-Authorities-in-England.pdf) (paragraph 90).

The guidance does not prevent Councils from issuing cash to households in need of emergency support.

■ Job Entry Targeted Support

Jonathan Reynolds: [\[83367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people who were receiving support from the Job Entry Support Scheme have been subsequently referred to the Restart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Information on the number of Restart participants who previously received support from the Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) programme is not readily available.

Notes regarding which programmes a claimant has taken part in may be noted on the Universal Credit system, however aggregating data on those who have participated in multiple programmes would incur disproportionate costs.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Ms Karen Buck: [\[79262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Equality Impact Assessment carried out by her Department in 2020 on the uprating of Local Housing Allowance rates to the thirtieth percentile of local market rents, whether she has commissioned an equality impact assessment of freezing Local Housing Allowance rates at 2020-21 levels for (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23.

David Rutley:

The Secretary of State has considered the equality impacts in line with her duties under the Equalities Act 2010.

Ms Karen Buck: [\[79263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the consultation undertaken by her Department in advance of the Rent Officers (Housing Benefit and Universal Credit functions) (Local Housing Allowance Amendments) Order 2013, if she will seek the views of (a) the Social Security Advisory Committee, (b) local authorities and (c) the Valuation Office Agency on the potential effect of the proposed freeze on Local Housing Allowance rates at 2020-21 levels from 1 April 2022 on private tenants.

David Rutley:

We consult with rent officers from the Valuation Office Agency and the Rent Services in Scotland and Wales throughout the year.

The Social Security Advisory Committee will be advised of any legislation changes to the Rent Officers (Housing Benefit Functions) Order 1997, the Rent Officers (Housing Benefit Functions) Scotland Order 1997 and the Rent Officers (Universal Credit Functions) Order 2013 and local authorities will be advised of the Local Housing Allowance rates for 2022/23 in due course.

■ Offshore Industry: North Sea

Alex Cunningham:

[\[80981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of redundancies proposed by the PBS consortium on the contract with TotalEnergies on offshore safety standards in the North Sea.

Chloe Smith:

The UK Continental Shelf (UKSC) safety case regime requires Total to demonstrate to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) that it can comply with the offshore legislation. Total has accepted safety cases for all its offshore installations and HSE has a targeted intervention plan which involves the testing of assertions made in safety cases. Total must continue to demonstrate that it is operating in compliance with the accepted safety case in the event of changing its contractors or when contractors themselves make changes, such as decreasing staff numbers etc.

■ Older People: Government Assistance

Ruth Jones:

[\[81128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of financial support to pensioners in Newport West constituency for winter 2021-22.

Guy Opperman:

We spend over £129bn on benefits for pensioners in GB - 5.7% of GDP. This figure has never been higher. This includes spending on the State Pension which is forecast to be over £105bn in this financial year.

Pension Credit provides invaluable financial support for vulnerable pensioners. Around 1.4 million eligible pensioners across Great Britain receive some £5bn in Pension Credit, which tops up their retirement income and is a passport to other financial help such as support with housing costs, council tax, heating bills and a free TV licence for those over 75.

In addition, we also make Winter Fuel Payments worth £2 billion every year – £200 for households with somebody who has reached State Pension age and is under age 80; or £300 for households with somebody aged 80 and over.

The Warm Home Discount Scheme provides short-term support with energy bills through rebates, helping households stay warm and healthy in winter. The scheme currently provides those on Pension Credit Guarantee Credit with a £140 rebate off their winter energy bill.

Cold Weather Payments help vulnerable people in receipt of certain income-related benefits to meet additional heating costs during periods of unseasonably cold weather between 1st November and 31st March. This includes older people in receipt of Pension Credit. Those eligible will continue to automatically receive £25 when the average temperature has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0°C or below over seven consecutive days

The latest available data indicates that in Newport West constituency there are 2,423 pensioners claiming Pension Credit and 15,729 in receipt of a State Pension. In addition, in 2019/20 15,890 customers in Newport West received a winter fuel payment.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[80406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are waiting to attend a Personal Independence Payment assessment.

Chloe Smith:

The total number of cases held with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment providers at the end of October 2021 is 296,320. However, not all these cases will require the claimant to attend an assessment.

Where possible, claims will be assessed on the basis of paper evidence. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, we worked at pace with providers to deliver telephone assessments alongside introducing a small number of video assessments, to ensure assessments could continue whilst face to face contact was limited.

We are committed to assessing people as quickly as possible and are working with providers to ensure claimants receive the support to which they are entitled as quickly as possible.

Please Note:

The number of cases has been rounded to the nearest 10.

This figure is derived from contractual management information produced by the assessment providers.

This figure is unpublished management information which is collected for internal departmental use only and has not been quality assured to Official Statistics Publication standards.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[80408]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what is the current average length of time an individual must wait to attend a Personal Independence Payment assessment.

Chloe Smith:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimant journey times, from referral to assessment provider to the return from the assessment provider, are published in Table 2A of the PIP

Statistics tables which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016795/tables-pip-statistics-to-july-2021.xlsx

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-statistics-to-july-2021>

DWP is committed to assessing people as quickly as possible in order that they receive the benefit(s) and support they are entitled to in a timely manner. DWP is always looking at ways to improve the assessment process and how this impacts on overall processing times. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, DWP worked at pace with providers to deliver telephone assessments alongside introducing a small number of video assessments.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[80409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time is that a person must wait to receive the outcome of their Personal Independence Payment assessment.

Chloe Smith:

Data on average processing times from the assessment to a decision being made for all Personal Independence Payment (PIP) normal rules New Claims to July 2021 (the latest available data) is published in Table 2A of the PIP Statistics tables which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016795/tables-pip-statistics-to-july-2021.xlsx “

The end to end average clearance times for new special rules claims are 3 working days (4 days for reassessments).

Processing times can vary reflecting factors including customer demand, operational resource and timescales for different parts of the process. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused distortion and work is ongoing to manage the recovery. This includes allowing a longer deadline for return of the PIP2 questionnaire for claims made between late February and late May 2021; these claims have now started to reach clearance.

We are always looking at ways to improve the assessment process. In addition to face-to-face, we will continue to conduct paper-based, telephone and video assessments where appropriate.

PIP analytical data held by the Department does not contain the date the assessment takes place. As a proxy, we use the date an assessment was returned from the Assessment Providers to the Department. This is usually a few days following the assessment.

■ Post Office Card Account

Ronnie Cowan:

[81987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) information and (b) support his Department plans to provide to people who use the Post Office card account in the context of the pending closure of that account.

Guy Opperman:

The Department is writing to all Post Office card account customers to inform them that Post Office card accounts are ending and asking them to update their payment

method to a transactional bank, building society, credit union or internet-based account. Those who are unable to access or use a bank account will receive a payment card for the Payment Exception Service along with information which explains how the service works. DWP's Financial Inclusion Customer Contact Centre are also available to support and answer queries from claimants and pensioners, and arrange a home visit where required.

DWP's most vulnerable customers have successfully been using the Payment Exception Service since it replaced the Simple Payment Service in 2018. It is a basic cash-in cash-out service and is easy for customers to use. For Post Office card account customers migrating to the Payment Exception Service they will be able to continue to collect their payments using a payment card at their local Post Office.

Ronnie Cowan: [81988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to migrate customers from the Post Office card account.

Guy Opperman:

This process has been ongoing for some time. The Department is writing to all Post Office card account customers to inform them that Post Office card accounts are ending and asking them to update their payment method to a transactional bank, building society, credit union or internet-based account. All Post Office card account customers receive two letters during the phased migration. Post Office card account customers who do not update their payment method to a transactional account are being migrated on a month-by-month basis to the new Payment Exception Service.

Ronnie Cowan: [81989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department plans to allocate funding for the replacement of the Post Office card account.

Guy Opperman:

Yes.

■ Restart Scheme

Jonathan Reynolds: [83365]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have successfully moved into employment after a referral to the Restart scheme.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is currently unavailable. Detailed statistics on Restart, including moves into employment, are currently under development.

Jonathan Reynolds: [83366]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are currently receiving support from the Restart scheme.

Mims Davies:

As of Sunday 14 November 2021, 70,155 people are recorded as having started on the Restart programme since it began in July 2021.

Please note that the management information above has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with Official Statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency.

Sanitary Protection: Waste Disposal**Rosie Cooper:**[\[82281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her timeframe is for updating the Workplace (Health and Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 to accommodate the provision of suitable bins for men to dispose of sanitary products.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 1 December 2021]: The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 ('Workplace Regulations') do not explicitly require the provision of a disposal method for sanitary products in toilets, it is the guidance which supports the law Workplace health, safety and welfare - L24 (hse.gov.uk) Approved Code of Practice and guidance which makes reference to this requirement.

Regulation 2(3) of the Workplace Regulations aims to ensure that workplaces meet the health, safety and welfare needs of each member of the workforce. The Health and Safety Executive has informed me that they intend to consider whether the guidance regarding disposal of sanitary dressings in toilets fulfils that aim.

Social Security Benefits: Reciprocal Arrangements**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[83264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to negotiate new reciprocal social security agreements with (a) Australia, (b) Canada and (c) other countries to prevent British pensioners facing poverty in their retirement.

Guy Opperman:

The policy on the up-rating of UK State Pensions paid overseas is longstanding and has been supported by successive post-war governments for over 70 years.

The Government has no plans to change this policy.

State Retirement Pensions**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[82317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the 12 month limit for back-payments to those couples affected by the underpayment of their state pension where the wife of a man who turned 65 before 17 March 2008 did not initially make a claim for their basic pension.

Guy Opperman:

Prior to 17 March 2008 a married woman who reached State Pension age could qualify for a *Category BL basic State Pension* based on her husband's National Insurance contributions once he had reached State Pension age and claimed his State Pension, if she had insufficient National Insurance contributions herself to qualify for a *basic State Pension*.

Under section 1(1) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, no one could be entitled to category BL without first having made a claim for it.

The law provides backdating for a maximum period of up to 12 months from when a claim is made. That remains the position today. There are no plans to change this.

Jonathan Reynolds:[\[83364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the recent Thanksgiving holiday in the United States on the ability of pensioners abroad to receive their weekly state pension.

Guy Opperman:

We wish all Americans a happy Thanksgiving.

Payments to British citizens living overseas in countries other than the United States were not impacted by the recent Thanksgiving Holiday.

Payment dates will only be impacted where they land on a Bank Holiday in the country of residence and in this instance payment is made on the next available working day.

■ State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[82316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the appropriateness of exclusively using an American company to process payments of the state pension to British citizens living overseas which leaves claimants without payment in weeks of American state holidays.

Guy Opperman:

DWP utilise services provided by the pan-government Money Transmission Services (Lot 3) contract, owned by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to make payment to entitled customers who reside abroad. The contract was awarded in 2015 following procurement in compliance with Public Contract Regulations.

Citibank is a global provider of international payments and provides a reliable and secure payment route for DWP customers in over 200 countries.

Claimant payments are only affected by bank holidays in the country of residence and the payment is available for the customer on that country's next working day.

Payments to British citizens living overseas are not impacted by American state holidays.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

Navendu Mishra:

[\[83506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to have discussions with (a) campaigning groups and (b) the APPG on State Pension Inequality for Women on the recent findings of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's report entitled Women's State Pension Age: our findings on the Department for Work and Pensions' communication of changes.

Guy Opperman:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has not completed his investigation. This a multi staged process and the report published on 20 July 2021 concluded stage-one of the three-stage investigation.

It would not be appropriate to comment on the PHSO's report whilst the investigation is ongoing; and section 7(2) of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 states that Ombudsman investigations "shall be conducted in private".

■ State Retirement Pensions: Weaver Vale

Mike Amesbury:

[\[82064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the number of pensionable age people in Weaver Vale constituency who are still awaiting payment of their state pension.

Guy Opperman:

DWP does not have any claims outstanding. Those where we are awaiting additional information to process a customer's claim are actioned on receipt of the required information, in the usual way.

■ Universal Credit

Drew Hendry:

[\[83414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of excluding (a) Lifetime ISA's, and (b) private pension savings mechanisms from universal credit capital rules.

David Rutley:

The value of any right to receive pension under an occupational or personal pension scheme or any other pension scheme registered under section 153 of the Finance Act 2004, is already disregarded under Universal Credit capital rules.

The Lifetime ISA is primarily a savings vehicle rather than a pension scheme. That is why money invested in a Lifetime ISA will be treated as capital in Universal Credit.

Universal Credit capital rules strike a balance between protecting less well-off people and protecting the taxpayer, whilst at the same time recognising the hard work of people who have built up capital. They ensure that the help which comes from

taxpayers, many of whom are themselves on low incomes and have limited capital, is directed to people who need it most.

■ Winter Fuel Payments

Justin Madders: [81033]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many of people eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment in 2020 did not receive payment as a result of a computer upgrade.

Guy Opperman:

All eligible payments for the 20/21 year were issued based on the information DWP held, or subsequently reported by citizens.

■ Work Capability Assessment

Vicky Foxcroft: [80405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are currently waiting in the backlog of applicants who need to attend a Work Capability Assessment.

Chloe Smith:

The information requested is not available.

DWP and its provider, Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA), remain committed to ensuring claimants receive an efficient service and takes all steps possible to ensure claimants are assessed as quickly as possible.

Vicky Foxcroft: [80407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time is that a person must wait to attend a Work Capability Assessment.

Chloe Smith:

DWP publishes Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessment (WCA) processing times for initial claims on gov.uk, which can be found [here](#). We are currently unable to provide Universal Credit (UC) WCA statistics as these could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

DWP is committed to assessing people as quickly as possible in order that they receive the benefit(s) and support they are entitled to in a timely manner. It is important to remember that claimants will receive the Assessment Rate of ESA/Standard Rate of UC whilst they are awaiting their WCA. Any additional amounts the claimant may qualify for after their assessment, will be backdated where appropriate.

Vicky Foxcroft: [80410]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what is the current average length of time an individual must wait to receive the outcome of their Work Capability Assessment.

Chloe Smith:

The full information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

DWP publishes Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessment (WCA) processing times for initial claims on gov.uk, which can be found [here](#). We are currently unable to provide Universal Credit (UC) WCA statistics as these could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

DWP is committed to assessing people as quickly as possible in order that they receive the benefit(s) and support they are entitled to in a timely manner. It is important to remember that claimants will receive the Assessment Rate of ESA/Standard Rate of UC whilst they await their WCA. Any additional amounts the claimant may qualify for after their assessment, will be backdated where appropriate.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ An update on the agricultural transition

Secretary of State (George Eustice):

[\[HCWS437\]](#)

We are almost one year into the agricultural transition. Farming in England is moving away from the arbitrary land-based subsidies and top-down bureaucracy that epitomised the EU era, towards schemes that recognise the work that farmers do as stewards of our natural environment. Our reforms will support productive and profitable farming and food production alongside environmental, climate and animal welfare outcomes.

Since January, we have increased the money going to Countryside Stewardship and seen a 40% increase in applications compared with the previous years, launched the farming in protected landscapes scheme, consulted on a voluntary exit scheme, launched the Farming Investment Fund to boost farm profitability and started a pilot of our new Sustainable Farming Incentive.

I would like to update the House on the progress that we have made, working with English farmers to co-design our new systems and support the choices that they make for their own holdings. By the end of the transition, we expect spending to be evenly split across farm-level, locally tailored, and landscape-scale investment.

Sustainable Farming Incentive

The Sustainable Farming Incentive will fund sustainable farming activities alongside food production, and it will eventually be open to all farmers. It will open in 2022 with the first payments being made before the end of the year. Today I am publishing more detail on how it will operate in 2022 and how the offer will be expanded from 2023-2025.

Local Nature Recovery

Local Nature Recovery is the improved and more ambitious successor to the existing Countryside Stewardship scheme. Its focus will be on making space for nature in the farmed landscape and the wider countryside. As with Countryside Stewardship, it will comprise a menu of options. The options will be broader and more ambitious, focusing on biodiversity, climate, water quality and other co-benefits alongside food production. It will fairly pay farmers for using perhaps less productive areas of their farms for those purposes. We will support collaboration between farmers such as in the way that cluster farms currently operate.

Landscape Recovery

Landscape Recovery will create at least 20,000ha of wilder landscapes, habitats, rewetted peat and afforestation at a landscape scale, and we are ambitious in going even further in harnessing our landscapes for the natural environment. This option will reward landowners or managers who want to take a more radical and large-scale approach to producing environmental and climate outcomes on their land. Industry engagement has

confirmed that there is demand for this scheme, and we will launch the application process – and further details of this and the local nature recovery scheme – in the New Year.

Whilst we roll out our new schemes, we are encouraging farmers to enter into Countryside Stewardship. Today I am also confirming that we will be updating Countryside Stewardship payment rates from January 2022, which will be published in the new year. We will help farmers in Countryside Stewardship and other schemes make the transition to our new schemes from 2024 onwards.

We are also investing in animal health and welfare. The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway will drive continual improvement in farm animal health and welfare across our national flocks and herds.

I also want to set out the high-level environmental priorities for our programme: climate change mitigation and adaptation; species abundance; water quality; and soil health. Farmers and land managers are central to delivering these priorities, to reach our commitments in the Net Zero Strategy and the statutory targets that will be set under the Environment Act 2021, including to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030.

We will set out high level priorities and design incentives for actions that will contribute to them. Within this overall framework, it will be for farmers to choose how they want to get involved, whether that's by sparing small areas of unproductive land, changing to a more regenerative approach, or pursuing more radical land use change.

We will pay farmers for the actions that they take in these areas, and activities that provide co-benefits in other areas, such as building the resilience of the environment to climate change, improving air quality, natural flood management and coastal erosion risk mitigation. We will also continue to pay for heritage, access and engagement through our existing schemes and we will consider how to maintain investment in these areas as part of future schemes.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Health update

Minister of State (Minister for Care and Mental Health) (Gillian Keegan):

[[HCWS438](#)]

The Government is committed to supporting all people living with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) and those living with other neurological conditions and seeks to prevent Acquired Brain Injuries wherever possible.

The Government recognises the strength of support for a more collaborative and cross-departmental approach to ensuring that people with ABI receive the support that they need from statutory services. I would like to express my gratitude to both the Right Honourable Member for South Holland and the Deepings and the Honourable Member for Rhondda for continuing to champion this important cause and recognise their significant contributions to improving services for people living with an ABI. As the Prime

Minister announced on 24 November 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care will be leading work to develop a cross government strategy on ABI. I am pleased to confirm today some further details regarding the strategy.

The content of the strategy will be informed by a Call for Evidence which will be launched early in 2022, inviting stakeholders nationwide, including healthcare professionals, people living with an acquired brain injury, their families and carers, to put forward their views about what should be prioritised within the strategy. These priorities could include guidance on action to prevent acquired brain injury, including through concussion in sport; on research into the societal, congenital, medical and environmental causes of ABI; on the provision of relevant services for the purpose of diagnosing ABI, including in prisons, schools and the armed forces; on the identification of adults and children with ABI; on the assessment of their needs; and on the planning of relevant services. We will also ask for feedback on whether there are other related neurological conditions which should be considered for inclusion.

Development of the strategy will be overseen by a dedicated Programme Board, which, in my capacity as Minister of State for Care and Mental Health, I will co-chair with the Honourable Member for Rhondda. Senior officials in all relevant government departments will be invited to join the board to ensure that the strategy addresses the wide range of issues that affect the day to day lives of those living with an ABI. This will include representatives from the Welsh government and other devolved administrations, as appropriate.

Following publication, the strategy will be kept under review and may be revised periodically to ensure that it continues to reflect the priority areas and actions needed to best support people living with ABI and their families.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Machinery of Government

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS439\]](#)

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change. The Government has committed to legislation to ban public bodies from imposing their own direct or indirect boycotts, disinvestment or sanctions campaigns against foreign countries. Responsibility for this will transfer from the Cabinet Office to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This change will take effect on 8 December 2021.