



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 December 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 07 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

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Alexander Temerko

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[82328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what correspondence (a) ministers, (b) special advisers and (c) officials in his Department have received from Alexander Temerko since 1 March 2021.

**Greg Hands:**

Department Ministers have received one letter from Alexander Temerko since March 2021, sent on 22 March 2021 to the former Minister of State for Energy, my Rt. Hon. Friend, the Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed.

In line with departmental Propriety Guidance, the then Minister of State for Energy recused herself from the decision for the proposed Aquind interconnector from 8 January.

As a result of this action, she was removed from the process - this means that no discussions were had, nor correspondence entered into by the Minister in respect of the Aquind Interconnector project. This correspondence was not shown to the Minister as a consequence.

There was no correspondence from Alexander Temerko to special advisors or officials during this time.

#### ■ Electric Vehicles: Employment

**Martin Vickers:**

[\[84333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of jobs that could be created by the (a) transition towards electric vehicles and (b) implementation of a zero emissions vehicle mandate.

**Lee Rowley:**

The automotive sector is an important part of the Government's plans for green growth, levelling up across our country and driving emissions to net zero by 2050.

The Government is committed to support the 149,000 jobs in the automotive sector across the UK, as they transition to a zero emission future.

As part of the Government's Net Zero Strategy, we are allocating a further £350 million for the Automotive Transformation Fund, as part of our £1 billion commitment to build an internationally competitive electric vehicle supply chain including gigafactories.

Recent investment announcements by Nissan, Stellantis and Ford will support thousands of highly skilled, green jobs in the UK, and many more across the supply chain.

As set out in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, up to 60,000 jobs are expected to be supported by ZEV manufacturing by 2050. Specific numbers of jobs created by the ZEV mandate would be dependent on the design of the framework. This is something that the Government will be analysing as we develop specific proposals.

## ■ Fuels: Prices

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[84366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of rising UK fuel prices on consumers.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 3 December 2021]:* BEIS analysis is that changes in retail prices of petroleum products such as petrol and diesel are primarily driven by the changes in the global market prices for crude oil and in exchange rates.

Recognising that fuel is a major cost for households and businesses, we have kept fuel duty frozen. This is the twelfth consecutive freeze, saving the average UK car driver a cumulative £1,900, compared to the plans the previous Government set out in 2010.

## ■ Green Deal Scheme: Kilmarnock and Loudoun

**Alan Brown:**

[\[82345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Green Deal Scheme appeal cases from Kilmarnock and Loudoun constituency have been with her Department since referral for (a) one, (b) two, (c) three, (d) four, (e) five, (f) six, (g) seven, (h) eight, (i) nine, (j) 10, (k) 11 and (l) 12 months or longer without a final decision having been made.

**Greg Hands:**

There are currently 15 outstanding complaints about the Green Deal that have been referred to the Secretary of State from households in the Kilmarnock and Loudoun constituency (outstanding is defined as meaning that the Secretary of State's final decision has not been issued or, if it has, there has been a subsequent appeal to the First-tier Tribunal). The table below provides details of the age of these complaints.

MONTHS OUTSTANDING	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
1 or under	0
2	0
3	1

<b>MONTHS OUTSTANDING</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS</b>
4	0
5	1
6	1
7	1
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12	0
Longer than 12 months	11

We are progressing cases as quickly as possible, and looking at ways to speed up the review process.

#### ■ Home Energy and Lifestyle Management: Green Deal Scheme

**Alan Brown:** [\[82342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many appeals to the First-tier Tribunal have been made as a result of sanction notices issued in response to complaints of Green Deal mis-selling by HELMS.

**Alan Brown:** [\[82343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many intention notices have been issued by his Department in response to complaints about the mis-selling of Green Deal loans by HELMS; and how many intention notices remain outstanding.

**Alan Brown:** [\[82344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many new complaints his Department has received on the mis-selling of Green Deal loans by HELMS in each month since January 2020.

**Alan Brown:** [\[82346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many offers of compensation have been made by her Department to consumers as a result of mis-selling by HELMS; and of those offers how many were (a) accepted and settled and (b) rejected by consumers in favour of their original offer of compensation from the Green Deal Finance Company.

**Alan Brown:**[\[82347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Green Deal loan appeals in respect of HELMS his Department has received; and of those how many have been completed.

**Greg Hands:**

As of 30 November 2021, there have been 308 complaints to the Secretary of State about mis-selling by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS). Of these a total of 81 have been completed, defined as meaning that the Secretary of State's final decision has been issued and there has been no subsequent appeal to the First-tier Tribunal, or that the case has been withdrawn. 13 cases have been appealed to the Tribunal and are not yet resolved.

A total of 105 complainants have received Intention Notices. Of these, 85 have also received final decision letters. 20 have received Intention Notices that have not yet been followed by final decision letters (and therefore may be taken as outstanding).

Of the final decisions issued, 81 have been to impose sanctions, these being either the reduction or cancellation of loans. We do not hold data on how many are "rejected" by the complainant in favour of an offer from the Green Deal Finance Company. Once the sanction has been imposed, there is no further action for the Department under the Green Deal Framework Regulations, unless the complainant decides to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal. If there is no such appeal within twenty-eight days of the date of the decision letter, the Department considers the case to be complete.

The table below provides numbers of complaints to the Secretary of State about mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by HELMS in each month since January 2020.

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT MIS-SELLING BY HELMS</b>
2020	
January	7
February	14
March	7
April	1
May	4
June	8
July	7
August	11

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT MIS-SELLING BY HELMS</b>
September	5
October	6
November	3
December	1
2021	
January	7
February	5
March	5
April	6
May	1
June	7
July	2
August	6
September	3
October	3
November	0

We are progressing cases as quickly as possible, and looking at ways to speed up the review process.

#### ■ **Housing: Renewable Energy**

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[82381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the effectiveness of proposals for the supply of energy from renewable or low carbon energy supply systems in new developments in (a) the UK and (b) Leicestershire.

**Greg Hands:**

In the future, the Government expects to see a mix of low carbon technologies used for heating and it is unlikely that there will be a one-size-fits all solution. Low carbon heat networks, equipped with large heat pumps or recovering surplus heat from natural or industrial sources, can provide heating and hot water for new buildings at

very low carbon emissions. There will also be a role, where appropriate, for other low-carbon technologies and renewable electricity generation such as solar photovoltaics. The Building Regulations will continue to set a performance-based standard rather than mandating or banning the use of any technologies.

From 2025, the Future Homes Standard will ensure that new homes produce at least 75% fewer CO2 emissions than those built to current standards. No further energy efficiency retrofit work will be necessary to enable them to become zero-carbon over time as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

## ■ Nuclear Fuels

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[85170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the nuclear fuel required for future plants is produced in the UK.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 6 December 2021]:* The UK is a world leader in the nuclear fuel cycle, and this is testament to the highly skilled workforce currently employed at the Springfields and Capenhurst sites, and the wider UK supply chain. The Government recognises the importance of continued commercial operation of the UK's fuel production facilities to deliver low carbon energy.

As such, in the recent Spending Review we confirmed up to £75 million, to be used alongside sector co-investment, to preserve and develop the UK's nuclear fuel production capability. With this funding we will move a programme forward to address all our fuel-related priorities, helping to develop the UK fuel supply chain to power the reactors of today and advanced nuclear in the future.

## ■ Nuclear Power Stations: Bradwell-on-sea

**Sir Bernard Jenkin:**

[\[82261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with CGN on plans for the construction of a Chinese designed nuclear reactor at Bradwell in Essex; whether it is the Government's policy to facilitate this project; and if he will make a statement.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government regularly speak to a range of developers, including CGN. The Government is not making any decisions on Bradwell at the present time. The proposed project is at an early stage of development, and we are focused on delivering at least one gigawatt scale power plant this Parliament.

## ■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[83263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the long term impact on pubs of covid-19 lockdowns.

**Paul Scully:**

Hospitality businesses, such as pubs, which were asked to close during the pandemic to reduce transmission of the virus have reported reduced trading throughout the pandemic period. Official data indicates economic activity in the sector was 31% lower on average throughout the pandemic, relative to pre-COVID levels.[1] However, in Quarter 3 2021, hospitality sector activity surpassed 2019 levels.[2]

In order to support all businesses across the UK economy, including pubs, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have provided businesses with an unprecedented support package of £400 billion, including grants, loans, business rates relief, VAT cuts and the job retention scheme. This includes a total of over £26bn in business grants. The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) fund is open until March 2022.

*[1] Data represents the average quarterly percentage change in Gross Value Added in each sector from Quarter 1 2020 to Quarter 3 2021 relative to Quarter 4 2019.*

*[2]*

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity/output/datasets/monthlybusinesssurveybturnoverofservicesindustries>.

## ■ Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme

**Darren Jones:**

[\[84454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the application period for the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme beyond its planned closing date on 31 March 2022.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 6 December 2021]:* The Government intends to close the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive to new applications on 31 March 2022. This will be followed by the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS), which is scheduled to launch in April 2022. The BUS will provide a more targeted, accessible, and simpler offer, by providing upfront capital grants to support the installation of low carbon heat technologies.

## ■ Shops: Carbon Emissions

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[86122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to decarbonise shops on high streets.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government encourages all UK businesses with 500 employees or fewer to visit the UK Business Climate Hub and sign up to the globally recognised small business climate commitment. Businesses, including retail, gain access to a range of resources to help them achieve net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.

Part of the commitment is disclosing progress on a yearly basis. To help businesses to report annually, they are now encouraged to use CDP's new Climate Disclosure Framework.

In addition, the Government is also working closely with representatives across these sectors who have industry-wide net zero strategies. These include the British Retail Consortium who have published their Climate Action Roadmap and the industry-led Retail Sector Council who have produced an SME Green Guide.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **Muslim Council of Britain****Ruth Jones:**[\[83476\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, on which date the Prime Minister last met the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain.

**Michael Ellis:**

Formal Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published each quarter on GOV.UK.

The Government, under successive administrations, has a long-standing policy of non-engagement with the Muslim Council of Britain. Previous MCB leaders have taken positions that contradict our fundamental values and these have not been explicitly retracted.

**DEFENCE**■ **Afghanistan: Refugees****John Healey:**[\[83241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many individual Afghan Locally Employed Staff were relocated to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy in each month since April 2021.

**James Heappey:**

The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) has been one of the most generous in the world, under which circa 1,300 Locally Employed Staff (LES) have been relocated to the UK since April 2021, with a large proportion being evacuated on over 100 RAF flights as part of Operation PITTING.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all Afghan nationals who risked their lives working alongside UK forces. For this reason, the ARAP scheme is not time-limited and will endure, facilitating the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families, from third countries if possible.

ARAP eligible principles, including some designated as Category 4, relocated by month are in the table below. This does not include families or dependants:

APRIL	0
May	1
June	24
July	188
August (inc Op PITTING)	981
September	11
October	30
November	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,305</b>

The overall total of Afghans (including families and dependants) who have been relocated to the UK since April 2021 is:

PRIOR TO OP PITTING	1,978
During Op PITTING	Approximately 5,000
Since Op PITTING	514

**Kirsty Blackman:**

[\[83387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy have been received as of 29 November 2021; and of those, how many have received a substantive response.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence has received over 90,000 applications to the ARAP Scheme and receives more every day. Efforts to process those applications to a decision, and to inform applicants of those decisions are a high priority and are being progressed as swiftly as possible. All applications are acknowledged, however, a large number of those applications are sifted out as incomplete or duplicate applications and these will not necessarily receive a substantive response. As such, it is not possible to provide a definitive answer.

**Kirsty Blackman:**[\[83388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy have been received as of 29 November 2021; and of those, how many have not received an acknowledgment response.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence has received over 90,000 applications to the ARAP Scheme and continues to receive new applications daily.

It is not possible to confirm the number of applicants who have received an acknowledgement response; however, I can advise that upon submitting an ARAP application the applicant will receive a notification that the form has been submitted. Contact will then be made directly to the applicant in order to source further information to determine an eligibility decision.

**■ Arctic: Climate Change****John Healey:**[\[83247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the countries that make up the Joint Expeditionary Force on the security implications of climate change in the Arctic region.

**James Heappey:**

I regularly discuss regional security issues, including the implications of climate change in the Arctic and High North, with my counterparts from the countries that make up the Joint Expeditionary Force - collectively as the JEF, but also bilaterally and in the Northern Group format.

**■ Army: Reorganisation****John Healey:**[\[83234\]](#)

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 483, if he will publish a list of his planned network of regional hubs.

**James Heappey:**

Land Regional Hubs will be established as part of the wider Defence Global Hub concept that will support the delivery of regional Military Strategic Objectives. The Army will capitalise on our pre-existing network of overseas bases in Oman, Kenya, Brunei, Belize and Germany, integrating with and augmenting the existing global network for Defence.

**John Healey:**[\[83235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 25 November 2021, Official Report, column 483, when the new deep recce strike brigade combat team will be (a) equipped and (b) operational.

**James Heappey:**

The regiments that will comprise the 1st Deep Recce Strike Brigade Combat Team (BCT) are already equipped and operational; they will be brought together through the merger of 1st Artillery Brigade and 1st Armoured Infantry Brigade in Summer 2022. The Integrated Review has set the Armed Forces on a course of transformation to meet the threats of the future and as part of this process equipment will be retired and, as appropriate, replaced.

**John Healey:**[\[83237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 25 November 2021, Official Report, column 484, if he will publish details of the planned investment in industry and estate for each nation.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence provides regular updates on our expenditure by nation and region with industry and commerce; these are available through gov.uk.

Over the next 10 years the Army is investing £5.853 billion Capital Expenditure and £12.130 billion Resource Expenditure in support of delivering a modernised Army and Training Estate, to support the delivery of the UK's military capabilities.

However providing detailed future expenditure per region would be to pre-judge prospective competitions and their outcomes.

**John Healey:**[\[83238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 25 November 2021, Official Report, column 485, when the new reserve brigade based in York will (a) open and (b) be fully recruited.

**James Heappey:**

The reformed 19th Brigade will be established in 2022. It will be specifically designed to command and force generate Army Reserve combat units which are already part of the Army's structure. Headquarters staff, based in York, will be selected for, and take up their posts in line with normal Army procedures.

**John Healey:**[\[83239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 25 November 2021, Official Report, column 492, if he will make a statement on progress made on Morpheus.

**Jeremy Quin:**

MORPHEUS will deliver a major part of the next generation of Communication and Information Systems for forces operating in the Land Tactical Environment, inclusive of The Royal Marines and elements of the Royal Air Force.

The MORPHEUS Evolve to Open (EvO) Transition Partner contract, placed with General Dynamics Mission Systems UK (GDMS (UK)) in 2017, aims to deliver the foundation of the agreed MOD digital communications strategy. The initial programme was due to complete before April 2021 but this has not been achieved. A

temporary (no cost to MOD) contract extension has been agreed with GDMS (UK) while full consideration is given to the best route to achieve Defence's objectives to deliver capabilities appropriate for an increasingly digital Land environment.

**John Healey:**

[\[83242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 8 of the Future Soldier Guide, what steps his Department taking to help ensure that opportunities for promoting through the ranks of the Armed Forces are increased.

**James Heapey:**

The British Army is taking many steps to ensure the increase of promotion opportunities for its personnel. For example, the delivery of Single Officer Terms of Service means Senior Soldier Entry officers will no longer have a rank ceiling. Furthermore, Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS) policy development is delivering increased flexibility to transfer within the Regular Army and across the whole force, whilst also removing barriers to ensure more personnel filter into qualifying zones for promotion.

**John Healey:**

[\[83244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 20 of the Future Soldier Guide, when the Defence BattleLab is planned to be established.

**James Heapey:**

The Defence Battlelab reached initial operating capability in March 2021 with completion of the phase one build comprising of a core workshop and supporting facilities. The Defence Battlelab will reach full operating capability in early 2022 with the completion of the phase two building, comprising of office spaces, conferencing facilities and other capabilities designed to support Defence collaboration with industry for innovation.

## ■ LE TacCIS Programme

**Mr Mark Francois:**

[\[86058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many units of the Morpheus communications system he plans to order for (a) the British Army, (b) the Royal Navy and Royal Marines and (c) the Royal Air Force.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The MORPHEUS system is not procured as units but instead as a system (comprising hundreds of items). It is planned to resource all of those elements of the Navy, Army and Air Force operating in the Land tactical environment and which have related requirements.

## ■ University Officer Training Corps: Scotland

**Martin Docherty-Hughes:**

[\[85289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has plans to (a) reduce any Officers' Training Corps branches in Scotland and (b) merge existing branches of Officers' Training Corps in Scotland.

**James Heapey:**

Whilst no decisions have yet been made, as part of Future Soldier structures, University Officer Training Corps across the United Kingdom are being reviewed to ensure they continue to deliver value for the Army, whilst contributing to wider Defence objectives. These include supporting the Union and contributing to the future UK workforce.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Cultural Heritage: Havering

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[83262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to protect sites with cultural heritage in the London Borough of Havering.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

One site has been designated (Grade II status) in Romford within the past two years, and I can confirm that there are two Listing applications under review in the London Borough of Havering: Romford Brewery and Hornchurch War Memorial. Designation highlights a building, site or area's special interest and value to this and future generations and gives it protection under law or policy. A listed building may not be demolished, extended, or altered without special permission from the local planning authority. DCMS Arm's Length Bodies have also provided funding and other support in the Borough:

- Historic England continues to provide support to three at-risk sites in this borough, through statutory advice or funding via the Repair Grant and Management Agreement schemes.
- Four cultural organisations receive regular funding from Arts Council England, two organisations have benefited from Culture Recovery Funding.
- Since 1994, The National Lottery Heritage Fund has invested more than £12.5m in 66 projects in the London Borough of Havering. The Fund continues to work in partnership with Arts Council England to deliver project funding in Havering through the National Lottery Project Grants programme.

## ■ Dormant Assets Scheme

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[85275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding has been distributed through the Dormant Assets scheme to each region in England.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Secretary of State issues policy directions to The National Lottery Community Fund for the English portion of dormant assets funds. These directions are high-level and do not go into granular detail over, for example, specific regions where the money should be spent.

Currently, funding in England is distributed to four specialist organisations, independent from government, that work across the areas of youth, financial inclusion, and social investment. To date, over £650 million has been allocated between them: Youth Futures Foundation has been allocated £90 million, Fair4All Finance £96 million, Big Society Capital £425 million, and Access – The Foundation for Social Investment £40 million.

These organisations are responsible for determining the most appropriate way to deliver against their objectives. This includes the evidence-based geographical distribution of their work, and the collation of any associated data.

## ■ Events Industry: Insurance

**Julie Elliott:**

[\[84356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many organisers of live events have applied for coverage through the Live Events Reinsurance Scheme established by the Government since it was announced on 5 August 2021; and how many live events have been provided cover under that scheme to date.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government recognises the important contribution that the Live Events sector makes to the UK's culture and economy, and the significant challenges the Covid-19 pandemic has presented. The Live Events Reinsurance Scheme is designed to provide confidence to event organisers and enable them to plan future events, thereby supporting the economic recovery out of Covid-19.

The scheme is a reinsurance scheme whereby insurers provide cover to purchasers, and eligible policies are then reinsured under a reinsurance contract with the government - the terms of which are publicly available. As such the government does not receive applications to the scheme: policies are either eligible or ineligible. We cannot share specific operational data due to the commercial sensitivity of the information.

## ■ Football Association Premier League: Coronavirus

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[83377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to encourage premier league football players to be vaccinated against covid-19.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As per the statement to the house of 28th November, our vaccines remain our best line of defence against this virus. I welcome the increase in take up of vaccination amongst Premier League players. We encourage everyone - including footballers - to take up the offers of vaccination, and of boosters, for which many more millions of people are eligible following JCVI changes.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Justin Madders:**

[\[85299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston of 20 September 2021 regarding a constituent's case and the music industry.

**Julia Lopez:**

A response was issued on 6 December 2021 under the case reference MC2021/17134. We apologise for the delay in responding.

## ■ Online Dating: Regulation

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[83376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to regulate online dating services to prevent fraud and abuse.

**Chris Philp:**

Online dating services are in scope of the Online Safety Bill. This means that they will have to put in place measures to protect their users from harmful content facilitated via user-generated content, including fraud and abuse. Dating sites will have to assess the risk of harm to their users, and then take steps to mitigate and tackle that risk.

## ■ PRS for Music

**Justin Madders:**

[\[85298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions (a) Ministers and (b) officials in her Department have had with PRS for Music on matters relating to the music industry and artists.

**Julia Lopez:**

DCMS ministers and officials are regularly in contact with a number of stakeholders across the music sector on a range of issues, and this includes PRS for Music.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Children: Immunosuppression

**Justin Madders:**

**[85309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has been made on the potential impact of covid-19 on access to education for child aged under 12 who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Our priority is to maximise the number of children in face-to-face education or childcare.

The latest evidence suggests that children and young people face a very low risk of serious illness from COVID-19. This includes children previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV).

Children and young people previously considered CEV were advised to return to childcare, nurseries, schools and colleges when shielding paused on 1 April 2021, and on 19 July 2021 people previously identified as CEV, including children and young people, were advised to follow the same guidance as the rest of the population. Schools should continue to support pupils who were formerly considered CEV so that they can attend school, in line with the wider population. The guidance can be found here: <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>.

If a child has been advised to isolate or reduce their social contact by their specialist, due to the nature of their medical condition or treatment, they should continue to follow the advice of their specialist.

The department's published operational guidance for nurseries, schools and colleges provides details on the testing, ventilation and hygiene measures that all should have in place to manage the transmission of COVID-19 day to day. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The contingency framework includes the additional measures nurseries, schools and colleges should include in their contingency plans in case they are advised to take extra steps because of a spike in infections: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings>.

If parents, carers or pupils are anxious about attendance, they should speak to the education setting about their concerns and discuss the measures that have been put in place to reduce the risk. Nurseries, schools and colleges should continue to conduct risk assessments for their particular circumstances and take appropriate action in line with our guidance.

The department is committed to protecting education, which is why the safety measures are based on the latest scientific advice and strike a balance between managing transmission risk with measures such as regular testing, enhanced ventilation and hygiene and reducing disruption to face-to-face education.

#### ■ Further Education: Finance

**Judith Cummins:** [\[85293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact that the outbreak of covid-19 has had on the lagged funding mechanism used by the Education and Skills Funding Agency; and what impact that methodology has had on the Further Education sector.

**Judith Cummins:** [\[85294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment he has made of funding allocated via EFSA's lagged funding methodology between the 2021-22 and the 2018-19 academic years.

**Judith Cummins:** [\[85295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to improve the financial sustainability of the further education sector in response to the effect on that sector of Education and Skills Funding Agency lagged funding methodology and the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alex Burghart:**

The potential impact of the COVID-19 outbreak was taken into consideration when making some changes to the lagged funding mechanism for 16 to 19 education. When calculating 16 to 19 education funding allocations for 2021 to 2022, we applied an average retention factor for each provider, rather than using data from 2019 to 2020. Our intention was to provide a retention factor for 2021 to 2022 allocations that was not affected by the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, we changed how we calculated exceptional in year Growth funding, making it more responsive to the increase in students from Autumn 2020. This helped providers with the costs of student number growth, in year.

The department also provided specific interventions to help young people in the circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak. For example, we introduced the 16-19 Tuition Fund aimed at helping colleges and other providers to give prompt support to young people who needed it. It also designed a one year offer for 18- and 19-year-olds who were due to leave school or college in the summer of 2020. This funding helped providers to offer courses of up to one year duration in high value subjects to enable young people, who would otherwise have moved into apprenticeships or employment, to continue in education if work-based opportunities were not available to them.

In the academic year 2018/19, the total amount of 16 to 19 programme funding was £5,132 million, with an average funding per student of £4,504[1]. By the academic

year 2021/22 the total amount 16 to 19 programme funding had increased to £5,881 million with an average funding per student of £4,994<sup>[1]</sup>. This followed an increase in funding rates paid for in the 2019 and 2020 spending rounds.

We are committed to investing in 16 to 19 education to ensure every young person has access to an excellent education, and to ensuring the further education sector can play its part in that and in developing adult skills, which requires it to be financially sustainable. The 2021 Spending Review has made available an extra £1.6 billion per year for 16-19 education in 2024-25 compared with financial year 2021-22. This will fully fund the additional students we anticipate in the system, pay for the increasing take-up of T Levels, maintain funding per student in real terms, and enable increased time in education for all 16 to 19 year-olds. The department will set out details of how this additional funding will be allocated in due course.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency will continue to work with further education and sixth form colleges to monitor and support their financial sustainability.

[1] This calculation is based on published allocations, taking the amount of Total Programme Funding allocated, divided by the total number of students in each academic year, at providers receiving programme funding. Some institutions receive only high needs funding, and their students are not included in this calculation.

## ■ Out-of-school Education

**Chris Loder:**

**[83480]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of pupils being educated in illegal schools; and what steps he is taking to prevent those schools from operating.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Any educational institution which provides full-time provision to five or more pupils of compulsory school age (or one or more pupils of compulsory school age who is 'looked after' or has an education, health and care plan) is required to register with the Secretary of State for Education as a school. It is a criminal offence under Section 96 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to conduct an independent educational institution unless it is registered.

The department has not made any estimate of the number of pupils in unregistered schools. Those conducting an unregistered school are committing a criminal offence and they do not generally inform the department about the school's operation. It is not therefore possible to accurately estimate the number of children attending an unregistered school.

The department and Ofsted continue to investigate any institutions where intelligence or evidence suggest the operation of an unregistered school. Section 97 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 permits no-notice inspections of institutions believed to be operating in breach of the registration requirement.

Between 1 January 2016 and 31 August 2021, 119 settings subject to a Section 97 inspection were identified as operating as an unregistered independent school. Joint work between the department and Ofsted has led to 101 of these settings changing their provision to operate lawfully, and no longer in breach of the 2008 Act. In that time, five successful prosecutions have been brought against those responsible for conducting illegal settings.

The department consulted in 2020 on extending the registration requirement to education institutions that operate full time but only offer a very narrow curriculum, which are currently allowed to operate without registration. The department will respond to this consultation soon, setting out next steps. The department has also committed to taking forward measures to make it easier to investigate and prosecute unregistered schools, including in the 2019 Integrated Communities Action Plan. The department intends to take forward such measures when a suitable legislative opportunity arises.

#### ■ **Pre-school Education: Canterbury**

**Rosie Duffield:**

[\[86167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of available nursery places in (a) Canterbury constituency, (b) Canterbury district, during the (i) 2021-22 and (ii) 2022-23 school year.

**Will Quince:**

Department for Education officials monitor the sufficiency of childcare places in England through a combination of regular surveys, telephone calls and email contact with local authority early years teams. We have not seen councils reporting any substantial place supply issues, and we have not seen a substantial number of parents unable to secure a childcare place this term or since early years settings re-opened fully on 1 June 2020. Kent County Council, which holds the statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare places in Canterbury, is not reporting any issues with childcare places at present.

According to Ofsted data published on 30 November, the number of places offered by non-domestic providers on the Early Years Register in the Kent County Council area has remained broadly stable between August 2015 and August 2021, as is true across England.

#### ■ **Qualifications: Hong Kong**

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[\[83260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what (a) system and (b) support his Department has in place to recognise Hong Kong based qualifications.

**Michelle Donelan:**

On 31 January 2021, the government introduced a new immigration route for British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) status holders in Hong Kong, providing the opportunity for them and their eligible family members to live, work and study in the UK.

Departments across government are working closely together to ensure that the necessary support and guidance is provided for BN(O) status holders who take advantage of the new visa route.

The UK European Network Information Centre (ENIC) provides expert advice on behalf of the government on the comparability of international qualifications, including those from Hong Kong to UK qualifications. UK higher education institutions and other educational institutions use the ENIC database to assess the qualifications of applicants for their courses.

Full details on a range of matters, including education and training, for those arriving from Hong Kong on the BN(O) visa is set out in the government's welcome pack for arrivals from Hong Kong on the BN(O) visa: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/welcome-a-guide-for-hong-kong-british-national-overseas-visa-holders-in-the-uk>.

## ■ Schools: Attendance

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

**[85409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to record school absence as a result of covid-19 isolation requirements.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Educational Setting Status Form (EdSet form) collects information daily from schools and colleges, including on attendance and closures during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes how many pupils or students are absent due to COVID-19 related reasons, including a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

On 30 November, the government introduced targeted measures to prevent the spread of the new COVID-19 Omicron variant, including the requirement for all contacts of a suspected or confirmed Omicron case to self-isolate, regardless of their age or vaccination status, details of which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#what-has-changed>.

In line with these changes, the list of COVID-19 related reasons for absence will be updated in the EdSet form on 7 December 2021 to include 'Required to remain at home or isolate in line with government guidance.' Pupils or students required to self-isolate after coming into contact with a suspected or confirmed Omicron case should be recorded under this category.

Where a pupil has tested positive for COVID-19 schools should record this in their attendance register as Code I (illness). Where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from the UK Health Security Agency or the Department of Health and Social Care, they will be recorded as Code X in the register (not attending in circumstances related to COVID-19).

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Ian Byrne:**

**[86208]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to reduce covid-19 transmission in schools (a) nationally and (b) in Liverpool West Derby constituency.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of COVID-19. We do not yet know how Omicron's mutations will change the behaviour of the COVID-19 virus with regards to vaccines, treatments and transmissibility. Omicron remains a variant of COVID-19 and can be tackled using the same mitigations that have proven effective against previous variants. This includes vaccination, testing, hand hygiene, ventilation and other measures. There is no current evidence to suggest that we need to change our approach to managing variants, including Omicron.

All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters. Vaccines are the best defence against COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch COVID-19 and less likely to pass it on.

The government's testing strategy continues to help to break the chains of transmission of COVID-19 in schools and colleges by identifying asymptomatic positive cases quickly so that those who test positive can self-isolate. This helps to reduce transmission of COVID-19, keeping pupils and students in face-to-face education.

The department has asked all secondary schools to prepare to test their pupils once on-site on return in January. We understand that this is a significant additional ask but testing continues to play a vital role in keeping COVID-19 out of schools. Testing all pupils in school boosts testing participation and will help reduce transmission after a period of social mixing over the school holidays.

In primary schools and early years settings, the department recommends that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in communal areas. In secondary schools and out-of-school settings, the department recommends that face coverings are now worn by all pupils (children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2021), staff and visitors in communal areas unless they are exempt.

The department has started to provide CO2 monitors to state-funded education settings, including early years, schools and colleges, backed by £25 million in government funding. Letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help remove air that contains virus particles and is important in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The new monitors enable staff to identify areas where ventilation needs to be improved and provide reassurance that existing ventilation measures are working, helping balance the need for good ventilation with keeping classrooms warm.

The contingency framework gives directors of public health a range of flexible options for advising temporary measures in certain situations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings>. In all cases, directors of public health should weigh any benefits in managing transmission against any educational drawbacks.

The department expects schools to follow the control measures set out in the guidance, continuing to comply with health and safety law. Schools must regularly review and update their risk assessments.

The measures outlined above apply nationally. There are no additional measures that apply to Liverpool West Derby.

## ■ Schools: Ventilation

**Ian Byrne:**

**[86209]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve ventilation in school settings in England in line with guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the department has emphasised the importance of ventilation and provided guidance to nurseries, schools and colleges on ventilation requirements. We have always said that where a setting is in operation, it is important to ensure that it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

As of 26 November, the department has delivered 329,231 carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors to almost all eligible education and childcare settings, backed by £25 million in government funding.

The new monitors will provide further reassurance that existing ventilation measures are working, helping balance the need for good ventilation with keeping classrooms warm. The department has also provided new information on how to use CO<sub>2</sub> monitors to better manage ventilation, which has been reviewed by the Health and Safety Executive and the UK Health Security Agency.

CO<sub>2</sub> monitors will help prompt nurseries, schools and colleges to take actions to improve ventilation, such as opening windows or through using mechanical ventilation systems, where installed.

If this is not feasible and CO<sub>2</sub> readings cannot be improved, nurseries, schools and colleges should look to undertake further works to address the underlying problem. Remedial works to improve ventilation remain the responsibility of individual settings. Schools receive an annual Devolved Formula Capital Allocation to spend on small capital projects or capital purchases.

For more substantial capital works, schools and those responsible for school buildings have access to funding to improve the condition of their buildings through different routes depending on their size and type. Further details are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding>. Day to day maintenance,

including minor repairs to improve ventilation, should be typically funded from revenue budgets.

In addition, the department is making 1,000 department funded air cleaning units available for poorly ventilated teaching spaces and staff rooms in special educational needs and disability (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) settings, including SEND units in mainstream settings, where quick fixes to improve ventilation are not possible. These settings are being prioritised given the number of vulnerable pupils attending those settings.

An online 'marketplace' will be available from December for those settings not eligible for a department funded unit. This will provide a route to purchasing air cleaning units directly from suppliers at a suitable specification and competitive price.

Maintaining adequate ventilation remains the responsibility of individual nurseries, schools and colleges. The department is providing additional, exceptional funding for air cleaning units in SEND and AP settings as a way to mitigate the transmission risk amongst the most vulnerable cohorts.

Further advice for schools on balancing the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature is available in the Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the COVID-19 outbreak (which can be found here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm> ) and the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers' COVID-19 advice (which can be found here: <https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19> ).

## ■ STEM Subjects: Females

**Justin Tomlinson:**

**[83357]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress the Government is making on encouraging more girls into STEM careers.

**Alex Burghart:**

The department recognises the demand for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills is growing, which is why ensuring that anyone, regardless of their background, can pursue a career in a STEM occupation is a key priority for this government.

We are pleased to see that since 2010, there has been a 26% proportional increase in the number of STEM A level entries from girls in England. In 2020, girls made up just over half of science A level entries (in biology, chemistry and physics), and there was an increase in the number of female students taking both mathematics and further mathematics, by 4.2% and 4.8% respectively. We recognise, however, that there is still some way to go to address the gender gap in physics and the mathematical subjects.

In order to address this, and encourage more young people into STEM subjects and careers, the government is funding informal learning programmes to inspire young

people in schools. For example, the STEM Ambassadors scheme is a nationwide network of over 37,000 volunteers representing over 7,000 employers, who provide engaging extracurricular activities for young people to increase their interest in STEM subjects and to raise awareness of the range of careers that STEM qualifications offer. STEM Ambassadors are relatable role models - 57% are under 35, 45% are female and 15% are from UK minority ethnic backgrounds.

Secondary schools are expected to provide pupils with at least one meaningful interaction with employers per pupil per year, with a particular focus on STEM employers. These interactions open young people's eyes to a range of different career possibilities and challenge stereotypes, as well as helping to prepare them for the workplace. Furthermore, the Careers and Enterprise Company, working with STEM Learning, have launched a series of STEM toolkits to support teachers to link careers to the STEM curriculum.

In September 2020, we began the phased rollout of T Levels - new technical courses for 16-19 year olds which are equivalent to three A levels. A number of T Level subjects now being taught are related to STEM, such as Construction, Digital, Healthcare and Science. T Levels in Engineering and Manufacturing will be taught from September 2022. The content of these courses is designed by relevant employers and other industry experts, ensuring that students leave their course with the skills most needed by STEM employers. We want as many students as possible to be able to take advantage of T Levels – and to challenge any stereotypes which may hold young people back from applying. Our T Level ambassadors showcase a wide range of voices.

Apprenticeships are a great way for young people to receive high quality training and begin a successful career in STEM. There are over 340 employer-designed apprenticeship standards in STEM, including Cyber Security Technician at level 3 and Civil Engineer (degree) at level 6. In the 2020/21 academic year 24% of all apprenticeship starts were in STEM and it is encouraging to see that female representation in STEM apprenticeships is increasing. We are continuing to promote apprenticeships in schools through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge programme and working with our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network of influential employers to promote best practices in encouraging and retaining more women in STEM apprenticeships.

## ■ **Training: Energy Intensive Industries**

**Jack Lopresti:**

[\[84335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has plans to allocate further funding to training and retraining programmes in high carbon sectors.

**Alex Burghart:**

The government is very aware of the challenges we face in our aim for net zero and is committed to supporting green skills across the country.

The department aims to reform the skills system so that training providers, employers and learners are incentivised and equipped to play their part in delivering the transition to net zero. This is demonstrated in our recent publication of the Net Zero Strategy, published in October 2021.

Building on the Skills for Jobs White Paper, the Net Zero Strategy sets out how our skills reforms will strengthen links between employers and providers, support workers in high carbon sectors with the transition, and help to build a pipeline of future talent.

At the recent Spending Review, we set out investment of £3.8 billion more in further education and skills over the course of the parliament as a whole, to ensure people can access high-quality training and education that leads to good jobs, addresses skills gaps, boosts productivity and supports levelling up. This will support the sector to reform and deliver the technical and skilled education our economy needs. This includes funding for programmes in green sectors crucial to the net zero transition.

Through the National Skills Fund investment, we are delivering skills bootcamps, which are short, flexible courses covering digital, technical, and green skills. Green skills bootcamps are available in areas such as housing retrofit, solar, nuclear energy and vehicle electrification. Several fully funded level 3 qualifications included in the free courses for jobs offer can support learners into green jobs. For example, we have included technical qualifications in engineering and construction.

We have also increased future funding for apprenticeships, where there are a growing number of standards supporting green and low carbon sectors such as the energy supply industry, agriculture and recycling. The department will continue to ensure that the existing skills programmes can be directed to support the net zero agenda and help to identify where the evidence tells us we might need to go further or faster.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Agriculture: Water

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

**[85183]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will carry out further consultations with farmers and the NFU, as well as the waste industry, before introducing Rule 1 of the Farming Rules for Water; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Farming Rules for Water, introduced in 2018, aim to underpin the standards of a world leading farming sector whilst protecting our water environment from diffuse agricultural pollution to deliver the government's ambitious environmental commitments. As part of this, Rule 1 was also introduced in 2018.

We have already been in discussions with farming stakeholders, the NFU and water companies regarding providing further clarification on how the Farming Rules for Water apply to them. We will have further such conversations.

## ■ Animal Products: Imports

**Mrs Pauline Latham:**

**[84338]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to ban trophy hunting imports.

**Rebecca Pow:**

This year we have already introduced our Animal Sentience and Kept Animals Bills to Parliament and we intend to legislate further to protect animals abroad as soon as parliamentary time allows. We will be setting out our detailed plans for action soon, including by publishing the Government's response to the consultation on trophy hunting imports.

## ■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Vaccination

**Sir Geoffrey Cox:**

**[83273]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of widespread vaccination of the UK's badger population for the purpose of reducing the spread of bovine tuberculosis; what evidence his Department has that vaccination will be effective in protecting livestock on farms in England; and whether his Department will make provisions to retain culling in areas where vaccination does not prove effective.

**Jo Churchill:**

Evidence indicates that vaccination reduces disease burden in the badger population, with field trials showing that vaccinated badgers were at least 54% (and up to 76%) less likely to test positive for TB. The same field trial found that when more than a third of the social group was vaccinated, infection risk to unvaccinated cubs reduced by 79% (Carter et al 2012 [1]).

Both modelling in a post-cull environment in England (Smith GC & Budgey R, 2021 [2]), and evidence from Ireland (Martin SW, et al. 2020 [3]), suggests that vaccination following culling should help maintain reductions in cattle TB incidence. In a trial of badger vaccination in Ireland, vaccination was found to be as effective as long-term continuous culling in lowering cattle TB incidence in four of the seven counties studied, which led to a policy change to gradually replace culling with vaccination.

Logically, as badgers cause a proportion of cattle breakdowns and badger vaccination has been proven to reduce the disease burden in badgers, vaccination is expected to result in a reduction in cattle TB incidence where badgers are infecting cattle. However, there has been no trial in England to assess the magnitude or timing of these effects. Accordingly, we are developing a surveillance and monitoring system that will allow us to monitor levels of disease in wildlife and cattle. This will enable government and industry to be more agile in tackling the disease.

Badger culling would remain an option where epidemiological assessment indicates that it is needed.

[1] <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0049833>

[2] <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0248426>.

[3] <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.prevetmed.2020.105004>.

## ■ Nature Conservation

**Daisy Cooper:**

[83494]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the Joint Nature Conservation Committee has changed the eligibility criteria for legal protections afforded by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, in its 7th Quinquennial Review; and whether his Department had agreed to those changes.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Quinquennial Review of Schedules 5 and 8 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) is an independent process, required by the act, undertaken by the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and NatureScot), working jointly through the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

The JNCC reports on Quinquennial Review (QQR) 6 in 2014 recommended that criteria for consideration of species be refined ahead of QQR7 to address concerns that they were no longer fit for purpose and lacked clarity. A review was completed in 2018 by the JNCC and SNCBs, which proposed a revised approach, including providing clarity on definitions of 'place of shelter' and 'endangered'.

The JNCC will make final recommendations early next year to Defra. Changes to species protection have not yet been recommended to the Government, nor have any decisions been made.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[83495]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will publish its green paper on species protections before making decisions on the recommendations from the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee's 7th Quinquennial Review.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Yes, Defra will publish a Green Paper, which will look at how the regulatory framework can help drive the delivery of our new target to halt the decline of species abundance by 2030, before making decisions on the recommendations from the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee's 7th Quinquennial Review.

## ■ Polar Bears

**Luke Pollard:**

[76823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 2 July 2021 to Question 22019 on Animal Products: Imports and 17 November 2021 to Question 68441 on Polar Bears, in what capacity the four polar bear trophies were imported in 2019 and 2020 if they were not issued with a licence.

**Rebecca Pow:**

No polar bear hunting trophies were imported under CITES in 2019 or 2020. The reply I gave to the hon. Member on 2 July 2021, PQ 22019, was based on inaccurately reported data which conflated information on commercial and hunting trophy trade in polar bear parts. We will publish a correction to PQ 22019.

CITES permits can be issued for a range of purposes, for example commercial, scientific or personal use. Four polar bear items were imported for commercial purposes, with permits, in 2019 and 2020.

**School Milk****Christian Wakeford:**[\[83527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has plans to introduce a domestic replacement for the EU School Subsidy Scheme for England; and if he will consult stakeholders on the details of any such scheme.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government wants children to be healthy and well-nourished and is doing a great deal nationally to promote children's dairy consumption. The School Milk Subsidy Scheme sits alongside the requirement for schools to make milk available for all children under the Department for Education's School Food Standards, and provision of free milk for disadvantaged pupils. The School Milk Scheme will continue to run in England through the coming 2022-23 school year. Any future changes in this area will be subject to wide consultation.

**Seas and Oceans: Pollution****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[83283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to reduce UK coastal sea pollution.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The UK Government is committed to leading efforts to protect the marine environment, including from pollution.

The UK Marine Strategy Part 3, published in December 2015, sets out a comprehensive list of actions the UK Government is taking to reduce contaminant concentrations in the marine environment. We are currently updating the document and aim to publish an updated UK Marine Strategy Part 3 in 2022, outlining the programmes of measures that will continue to move us towards Good Environmental Status in our seas. Existing measures include various pollution reduction requirements for emissions and discharges from industry, and measures for coastal waters that are set out in the River Basin Management Plans.

The Government has made tackling harm from storm overflows a priority and we are the first Government to take concerted action to tackle this historic infrastructure issue. Earlier this year the Government published a new draft set of strategic

priorities for the water industry's financial regulator, Ofwat. In this publication, the Government set out its expectation that water companies take steps to "significantly reduce the frequency and volume of sewage discharges from storm overflows." The Environment Act then placed this direction on a statutory footing, setting a duty for water companies to achieve a progressive reduction in the adverse impacts of discharges from Storm Overflows. Defra intends to set out the level of ambition expected by this in due course.

The UK Government is also tackling pollution from waste at its source. The Resources and Waste Strategy for England, published in December 2018, sets out our plans to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste, working towards our 25 Year Environment Plan target to significantly reduce, and where possible to prevent, all kinds of marine plastic pollution.

Given the trans-boundary nature of the marine environment, we work closely with other countries to tackle pollution, such as with those who share our seas through the OSPAR Convention. The UK also contributes to and implements the obligations of several global initiatives, including the London Protocol and the London Convention, to protect the marine environment from mercury, persistent organic pollutants, hazardous wastes, hazardous chemicals, pesticides and marine litter and their impact on our precious marine spaces.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Afghanistan: Armed Forces

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[86105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to take steps in response to the Hong Kong Watch report's finding that more than 100 former members of the Afghan security forces have been summarily executed or disappeared by the Taliban since it took power in Kabul in August 2021.

**James Cleverly:**

We are aware of the reports by Human Rights Watch and others of targeted killings of former Afghan Security forces (ANDSF) and continue to track it closely. On 5 December the UK, along with the EU and 20 states, joined a US statement condemning the reports of summary killings and enforced disappearances of former members of the ANDSF and calling on the Taliban to effectively enforce the amnesty for former security forces and government officials.

### ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[86154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her international counterparts on the settlement of refugee children from Afghanistan with no familial links to other countries.

**James Cleverly:**

The Government has committed to welcome up to 20,000 people through the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (ACRS) over the coming years. The ACRS will provide those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety.

Unaccompanied children may be offered resettlement where they have been identified as eligible for the ACRS and it is determined that resettlement to the UK is in their best interests. This assessment will be made with expert partners. Where a child is unaccompanied, it may be in their best interest to remain in the region, where they are more likely to be reunited with family.

**■ Balkans: Arms Trade****Catherine West:**[\[86146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of Russian arms sales to (a) Republika Srpska and (b) Serbia on peace and stability in that region.

**Wendy Morton:**

We reject recent attempts by Russia to undermine the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and to close his Office prematurely. These efforts undermine regional security. We will continue to provide effective support to BiH in implementing domestic reforms, and tackling challenges to peace and stability. The UK's approach to Russia more widely is clearly set out in the Integrated Review.

**■ Bangladesh: Hinduism****Daisy Cooper:**[\[83499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made representations to the Bangladeshi government on bringing the perpetrators of violence against Bangladeshi Hindus to justice.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government is concerned about the recent violence at Hindu Durga Puja celebrations across various districts in Bangladesh. Lord Ahmad, the Minister for South Asia, tweeted his concern on 21 October.

During his visit to Bangladesh in November 2021, Lord Ahmad stressed the importance of freedom of religion or belief in his meeting with Foreign Minister Momen. He also met with faith leaders to discuss the current situation for religious minorities in the country, and to encourage further focus on inter-faith dialogue.

Bangladesh remains a human rights priority country for the FCDO. We will continue to regularly engage with the Government of Bangladesh on our human rights concerns, including the right to freedom of religion or belief for all.

**■ Bosnia and Herzegovina: Peace Negotiations**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[86174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions has he had with his counterpart in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding upholding the Dayton Agreement and ensuring peace in that country.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is closely following the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). As a signatory of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), which ended the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in the 1990s, and a member of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), the UK is fully committed to upholding the GFAP and the international architecture it created. This includes the Office of the High Representative (OHR), and the EU's stabilisation force (EUFOR), which have helped maintain peace and stability in BiH for the last 26 years. The Foreign Secretary met BiH Foreign Minister Turkovic at the OSCE Ministerial meeting on 2 December, as well as the High Representative Christian Schmidt.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[86175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the EU and (b) his European counterparts on ensuring peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK works closely with NATO Allies and EU Member States to support the integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as a single, sovereign state, comprising two entities. We also support the NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo, including through the secondment of UK staff officers, who are building the capacity of the BiH Armed Forces. The UK rejects efforts to undermine BiH's stability, and will continue to support BiH in implementing domestic reforms and tackling challenges to peace and security. Discussions of how to support stability in BiH took place at the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Riga, which the Foreign Secretary attended.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[86176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of imposing sanctions on countries whose activities undermine the Dayton Agreement and peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Wendy Morton:**

A specific legal regime allows the UK to impose sanctions on individuals to counter anti-Dayton activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Experience has shown that sanctions are most effective when used in conjunction with other partners, and we are in close touch with our allies. We keep all evidence and potential sanctions designations under close review, and it would not be appropriate to speculate about future sanctions targets as to do so could reduce their impact.

We will also continue to use the wider range of tools available, including support for the High Representative and his executive powers, our programming work to strengthen the rule of law, media environment, civil society and the democratic process, and our public and private diplomatic engagement. We take a comprehensive approach in BiH, aiming to tackle corruption and state capture as well as targeting those who undermine the integrity of the state.

## ■ **Bosnia and Herzegovina: Peacekeeping Operations**

**Catherine West:**

[\[86148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Defence and (b) NATO partners on contingency plans to support EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Wendy Morton:**

In November 2021, the United Nations Security Council authorised the EU stabilisation force's (EUFOR) mandate for a further 12 months. Although the UK no longer participates in EUFOR following our withdrawal from the European Union, we liaise closely with Commander EUFOR and his team. We also support the NATO headquarters in Sarajevo including through the secondment of UK staff officers, who are playing an important role in building the capacity of the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Armed Forces. Further discussions of how to support stability in BiH took place at the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Riga, which the Foreign Secretary attended.

## ■ **Bosnia and Herzegovina: Russia**

**Catherine West:**

[\[84432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the role of Russia in respect of the tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Wendy Morton:**

We reject recent attempts by Russia to undermine the High Representative in BiH and to close his Office prematurely. These efforts undermine regional security. We will continue to ensure that we provide effective support to BiH in implementing domestic reforms and tackling challenges to peace and stability. The Foreign Secretary met BiH Foreign Minister Turkovic at the OSCE Ministerial meeting on 2 December, and High Representative Schmidt in London also on 2 December to underline this support. I [Minister Morton] also met with High Representative Schmidt and raised this issue in a Backbench Business Committee debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina on 2 December. The UK's approach to Russia more widely is clearly set out in the Integrated Review: the UK takes the threat from the Russian State extremely seriously and we will continue to call out Russian aggression.

**■ China: Detainees****Andrew Rosindell:****[83267]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the number of people who hold British passports that are being detained in China under the National Security Law.

**Amanda Milling:**

Consular Transparency Data for 2020 can be found on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-commonwealth-development-office-consular-data-2021>). This includes the number of new arrest or detention cases that have been opened by consular staff relating to British nationals in China.

**■ China: Olympic Games****Andrew Rosindell:****[83265]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games.

**Amanda Milling:**

No decisions have yet been made about Government attendance at the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics in 2022.

**Andrew Rosindell:****[83266]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to ensure the safety of UK athletes travelling to China for the 2022 winter Olympics.

**Amanda Milling:**

We expect China to respect and uphold rights and freedoms as guaranteed under international law, including for all athletes participating in the Winter Olympics and Paralympics.

British Embassy Beijing are in regular contact with the British Olympic Association and British Paralympic Association. As with all Olympics and Paralympics, we will provide advice and support in line with our travel advice.

**■ China: Religious Freedom****Feryal Clark:****[84505]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations she has made to her counterpart in the Chinese government on protecting the religious freedoms and freedom of belief of (a) the Falun Gong people, (b) Muslims, (c) Christians and (d) all minority religious groups in China; and if she will make a statement.

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[84506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has met representatives of the Falun Dafa Association UK to discuss the illegal practice of organ harvesting and persecution by the Chinese Government of the Falun Gong people in that country.

**Amanda Milling:**

We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on freedom of religion or belief in China, including the persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others on the grounds of their religion or belief. The freedom to practise, change or share ones faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a human right that all people should enjoy.

We continue to monitor and review evidence relating to reports of forced organ harvesting in China and maintain a dialogue with leading NGOs and international partners on the issue.

We regularly raise our concerns about human rights with the Chinese authorities. The Foreign Secretary did so most recently in a telephone call with her Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on 22 October.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[86163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many covid-19 vaccine doses have been donated overseas since 1 November 2021.

**Wendy Morton:**

COVAX accepted 10 million doses from the UK on the 12 November, in addition to the 10 million doses accepted on 26 October. Of these, 5.2 million have since been delivered to recipients, a further 7.8 million are with COVAX for allocation and distribution, and 7 million will be delivered to COVAX directly from Astra Zeneca in the coming weeks. In addition, 235,000 doses have been delivered to recipients bilaterally since 1 November.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[86164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many covid-19 vaccine doses were donated to other countries between the 1 September and 1 November 2021.

**Wendy Morton:**

COVAX accepted 10 million doses from the UK on 26 October. 3.5 million of these doses were delivered before 1 November for allocation and distribution. Prior to 1 September, COVAX had accepted and distributed most of the 6.2 million doses donated by the UK. The final 969,600 were delivered between 1 September and 1 November. The UK also delivered 245,000 doses bilaterally in this timeframe.

**■ Eritrea: Sanctions****Tim Farron:** [\[81913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that Eritrean individuals and organisations who have had sanctions recently imposed on them by the US Treasury do not relocate to the UK.

**Tim Farron:** [\[81914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that Eritrean (a) individuals and (b) organisations who have had sanctions recently imposed on them by the US Treasury do not relocate to the UK.

**Vicky Ford:**

We note the statement on 12 November by the US Treasury that they have sanctioned four entities and two individuals.

Individuals designated under either autonomous UK or UN sanctions for the purposes of a travel ban may not freely travel to the UK. Where Border Force are aware of individuals that pose a threat to the UK, they can and do refuse entry and (where legislation applies) refuse Authority to Carry prior to departure.

**■ Iran: Nuclear Power****Jack Lopresti:** [\[83315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department plans to take in response to Iran's non-compliance with the 2015 Joint Combined Plan of Action nuclear agreement.

**James Cleverly:**

We are currently engaged in negotiations in Vienna aimed at restoring the JCPoA. There is a fair and comprehensive offer on the table and Iran should seize the opportunity to conclude a deal now.

If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, we will have to change our approach. Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPoA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal.

**■ Jordan: Press Freedom****Margaret Ferrier:** [\[83397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of media freedom in Jordan; and whether her Department has allocated specific funding for the promotion and protection of media freedom in that country.

**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[83398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) she and (b) officials in her Department have raised concerns with their Jordanian counterparts on reported violations of media freedom (a) in that country generally and (b) in connection with the intimidation and detention of Syrian journalists in exile there, such as Syrian freelance journalist Ibrahim Awwad.

**James Cleverly:**

Jordan is a valued partner of the UK and we maintain a close dialogue with the Government of Jordan and Jordanian civil society. This includes discussion of human rights issues and media freedom. We are aware of the reported arrest of Ibrahim Awwad. The UK continues to encourage compliance with Jordan's international human rights obligations and supports efforts being made by the Jordanian Government and civil society to that end.

The FCDO remains committed to the Global Media Freedom campaign launched in 2018. Through the UK's co-chairing of the Media Freedom Coalition we are working to improve media freedom internationally. The Coalition is taking action to defend media freedom including through statements on the deteriorating situation for media across the globe. We do not currently fund projects in Jordan focused specifically on media freedom.

**■ Morocco: Detainees****Mark Tami:**[\[83249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she (a) has made and (b) plans to make representations to her Moroccan counterpart on the case of a constituent of the hon Member for Alyn and Deeside, Abdul Kolim, imprisoned in Morocco.

**James Cleverly:**

We are in regular contact with Mr Kolim and the Moroccan authorities, and continue to provide consular support to Mr Kolim.

**■ Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Aid****Jim Shannon:**[\[85259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps her Department has taken to help ensure access of humanitarian aid to the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

**Wendy Morton:**

In September, I [Minister Morton] announced that the UK had contributed £500,000 to a United Nations Development Programme initiative to take action on mines left in the region as a legacy of the conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. The region is one of the most heavily contaminated with land mines in the world and the money the UK has given will eventually allow people to live safely and without fear of harm from unexploded ordnance. This funding complements the £1 million the UK gave last year

to the ICRC in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. The UK Government continues to consider what further support we might provide to the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan in the coming months as they recover from the conflict and we continue to call for international humanitarian agencies to have unrestricted access to the whole region.

### ■ **Palestinians: Health Services**

**Dr Philippa Whitford:**

[\[85290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 75008 on Occupied Territories: Health Services, what steps the Government has taken since January 2021 to help ensure access to essential healthcare services for Palestinians.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is a longstanding supporter to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Our annual contribution to UNRWA's core programme budget helps UNRWA provide basic education to more than 533,000 children a year (half of which are girls), access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees and social safety net assistance for around 255,000 of the most vulnerable across the region. The UK Embassy in Tel Aviv also regularly raises the importance of access to essential services with the Israeli authorities.

### ■ **Southern Africa: Travel Restrictions**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[83474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she had discussions with her counterparts in Southern Africa before the recent restrictions on travel were introduced.

**Vicky Ford:**

The Government acted quickly to impose travel restrictions when the Omicron variant first appeared, where possible the government engaged with countries prior to the announcement. Since the decision to impose travel restrictions the Prime Minister has spoken to South African President Ramaphosa and the Minister for Africa has spoken to counterparts in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Zambia. UK scientists are working closely with colleagues around the world to tackle COVID-19. In the case of the Omicron variant, we are particularly grateful to South Africa for early sharing of information to support global health security, which has enabled the world to act quickly.

### ■ **West Bank: Water**

**Mr Clive Betts:**

[\[84299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she will take to help ensure that the Government of Israel ceases its destruction of

(a) the main water pipeline serving multiple communities in Massafer Yatta and (b) other water infrastructure in the West Bank.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK has raised the issue of access to water in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Israeli authorities, including stressing the urgent need for Israel to take immediate and practical measures to improve the current situation and ensure fair distribution of water in the West Bank. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The UK regularly raises the issue of demolitions, confiscations and forced evictions of Palestinians from their homes with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defence on 19 October.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Jim Shannon:**

[84361]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the long-term role of single-use technology as a means to (a) increase infection prevention and control measures, and (b) reduce the risk of hospital acquired infections; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have published guidance on infection prevention and control, including advice on the sterilisation and decontamination of reusable medical equipment and the use of single-use equipment, which can help reduce the risk of hospital acquired infections. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/infection-control>

The purchase and use of single-use equipment is determined at individual National Health Service local level to allow trusts to take into account their own facilities, workforce, finances and patient population.

### ■ Agency Nurses: Per Capita Costs

**Derek Twigg:**

[80210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average daily cost was of employing an agency nurse in NHS hospital trusts compared to the cost of a directly employed NHS nurse as at the 31 October 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2021]:* The information is not held in the format requested. However, the average daily cost of an agency nurse calculated in October 2021/22 was £194.28 and £204.69 in October 2020/21. A comparative average cost of substantive staff is not available as the cost of agency staff includes all training,

development and other costs, whereas average salary information for substantive National Health Service staff will not incorporate this.

## ■ Cardiovascular Diseases

**Chris Green:** [\[83400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recommendations of Association of British HealthTech Industries' Cardiovascular Health Check Report, published November 2021, what plans he has (a) to appoint a national cardiovascular disease director and (b) create a national cardiovascular disease strategy to help reduce the number of deaths from the disease each year.

**Chris Green:** [\[83402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of the Association of British HealthTech Industries' Cardiovascular Health Check report, published November 2021, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the number of deaths from cardiovascular disease in the UK each year.

**Maria Caulfield:**

To deliver the priorities in the NHS Long Term Plan, a cardiovascular programme has been established led by national clinical directors and national specialty advisors. The programme is supported by senior clinicians from cardiac and stroke specialties and primary care.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with regional and local teams to develop cardiac networks and integrated stroke delivery networks in England. These networks take an evidenced-based approach to improvement from prevention, diagnosis, treatment and through to end of life care. The networks' priorities include opportunistic case finding and the improved management of risk factors such as hypertension, atrial fibrillation and familial hypercholesterolemia.

To increase the volume of diagnostic activity and reduce patient waiting times, the National Health Service opening 44 community diagnostic centres which could deliver over one million additional scans and tests across computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, X-ray, ultrasound and echocardiograms by the end of March 2022.

## ■ Carers: Unpaid Work

**Feryal Clark:** [\[81149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to help improve access to support for unpaid carers in (a) Enfield North, (b) Greater London, and (c) England.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are committed to support carers to provide care as they would wish and in a way that supports their health and wellbeing, access to education, employment and life choices.

The Department has not made a formal assessment on steps taken to help improve access to support for unpaid carers at a local level. All local authorities have a duty under the Care Act 2014 to provide carers an assessment of and support for, their needs where eligible.

The white paper 'People at the Heart of Care', published on 1 December, sets out a new strategic approach to supporting carers. We will be investing up to £25 million to work with the sector to change the services provided to support unpaid carers.

## ■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Reorganisation

**John Redwood:**

[56366]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the cost of the reorganisation of clinical commissioning groups.

**Edward Argar:**

There has been no specific assessment. NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing guidance and support during the abolition of clinical commissioning groups and the establishment of integrated care boards. NHS England and NHS Improvement are managing changes required to adapt software and processes managed by third-party suppliers and we expect these costs to be absorbed within NHS England's budgets.

## ■ Coronavirus

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[86047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the 5.7 million people who tested as covid-19 positive in the UK in the last six months his Department has estimated were unvaccinated.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has not made a specific assessment. However, the UKHSA monitors weekly COVID-19 cases by vaccination status, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccine-weekly-surveillance-reports>

## ■ Coronavirus and Influenza: Research

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[86033]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were invited to register for the REACT study into the spread of covid-19 and flu; and how many and what proportion of those people registered before the closing date.

**Maggie Throup:**

The REal-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT) Study, commissioned by the National Institute for Health Research, is looking at the prevalence of COVID-19 in the community. Tests are offered to randomly selected

individuals who have been invited to register on the trial. In rounds one to 15, conducted between May 2020 and October 2021, the researchers looked at COVID-19 infection in participants. In these rounds, 11,059,669 people were invited to participate and of those 2,844,378 or 19.1% registered with the trial.

Round 16, which is currently underway is measuring the prevalence of influenza A and B in participants. This round closed to registration on 5 December 2021 with 130,599 people or 16% registered from 803,860 people invited to participate.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[83432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase funding for local covid-19 contact tracing.

**Maggie Throup:**

Since 2020, over £2.1 billion has been provided to local authorities to support public health measures such as contact tracing through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), with £400 million allocated in 2021/22.

We are currently assessing the future use of the COMF. We continue to work with local authorities to ensure that the funding provided in 2021/22 delivers the objectives of Local Outbreak Management Plans. The specific public health activities funded from the COMF are determined by local authorities with Directors of Public Health.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[86036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Government first became aware of the causal link between the Oxford/AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine and thrombosis with thrombocytopenic syndrome; what steps his Department took as a result of that awareness; and if he will make a statement.

**Maggie Throup:**

After a review of cases reporting blood clots in individuals who had received the AstraZeneca vaccine to 31 March 2021, the Medical and Healthcare products Agency (MHRA) issued its first statement on thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) on 7 April 2021. Over 20 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine had been administered in the United Kingdom and 79 cases of suspected TTS had been received. This indicated an extremely rare event that may affect approximately four people per one million who received the vaccine. The review concluded that there was a possible link between the AstraZeneca vaccine and TTS, but more work was needed to further establish a causal association. Information for healthcare professionals and vaccine recipients was updated.

All reports of suspected TTS and other thromboembolic events are monitored by the MHRA and further information has been published in its weekly summary of COVID-19 vaccine Yellow Card reports.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Louise Haigh:** [\[86137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any (a) business on and (b) associated people of the providers listed on the gov.uk coronavirus travel test provider list have been subject to previous enforcement action.

**Maggie Throup:**

In some instances where a business has demonstrated that they have rectified the issues that caused their removal from the list and no further concerns, investigations or issues have come to light, they have been returned to the list.

**Louise Haigh:** [\[86138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has taken steps in response to the recommendation by the CMA in their report, PCR Travel Tests: Advice to the Secretary of State, published in September 2021, to tackle bait pricing.

**Maggie Throup:**

Providers found to be engaging in 'bait pricing' can be removed from the list and subject to other sanctions as appropriate.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[86173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of covid-19 testing labs that have the technology and capacity to identify the (a) delta variant and (b) omicron variant from PCR swabs.

**Maggie Throup:**

A combination of current single gene target failure (SGTF) capability and the current genotyping assay coverage, there are rapid 'proxy' ways to detect the Omicron variant in 75-80% of all samples processed by lighthouse laboratories. At present, all samples of interest are being directed to laboratories which can report SGTF and are being prioritised for sequencing.

A genotyping assay capable of detecting Delta variant with more than 90% accuracy and Omicron with 88% accuracy is already in place in eight lighthouse laboratories providing approximately 15%, or 30,000 samples per day, coverage of positive viable samples. All pillar 1 positive samples are tested via the current genotyping assay and capable of detecting Delta variant with more than 90% accuracy and Omicron with 88% accuracy. Most pillar 1 labs are not able to detect SGTF. There are plans to implement the assays in the final two lighthouse laboratories in the coming weeks.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Mr Clive Betts:** [\[84303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of immunocompromised people have received a third covid-19 vaccine dose; and how that proportion varies by the condition causing compromised immunities.

**Maggie Throup:**

Provisional weekly vaccine uptake data in people identified as immunosuppressed in England is published in the UKHealth Security Agency's weekly COVID-19 vaccine surveillance report, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccine-weekly-surveillance-reports>

As of 21 November 2021, vaccine uptake among those identified as immunosuppressed with at least three doses in England was 69.7%. Further information on third doses by conditions causing immunosuppression is not available.

**■ Dementia: Research**

**Sarah Olney:** [\[84441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase funding for research into dementia.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We have committed £375 million for research into neurodegenerative disease over the next five years on projects into a range of diseases, including dementia. We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for future years in 2022. This will include our ambitions for dementia research.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Departmental Records**

**Owen Thompson:** [\[86139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there is a body within his Department responsible for providing guidance and training to staff on how to manage their information and records equivalent to the Knowledge and Information Management team at the Department for Transport.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department's Information Risk Management and Assurance Directorate sets policy for information and records management, including the provision of advice and guidance.

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

**Stella Creasy:** [\[60402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 44335 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, tabled by the hon. Member for Walthamstow on 7 September 2021.

**Stella Creasy:** [\[81950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Question 44335, tabled on 7 September 2021, and Question 60402, tabled on 21 October 2021, on Coronavirus: Vaccination, by the hon. Member for Walthamstow, for what reason his Department has not been able to provide a substantive response to those Questions

within the required timeframes; and when he plans to provide a substantive response to those Questions.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2021]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Question 44335.

## ■ Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[83504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase (a) knowledge of and (b) training on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders for NHS health professionals.

**Edward Argar:**

We have commissioned the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to produce a quality standard on the education and awareness of foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) as well as improved data collection and prevention.

Each medical school in the England sets its own undergraduate curriculum which must meet the standards set by the General Medical Council (GMC) in its Outcomes for Graduates. The GMC would expect that, in fulfilling these standards, newly qualified doctors are able to identify, treat and manage any care needs, including FASD. The training curricula for postgraduate trainee doctors is set by the relevant Royal College and must meet the standards set by the GMC.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Royal College of General Practitioners curricula contain sections on foetal alcohol spectrum disorders alongside e-learning training modules. The curriculum for non-medical healthcare professionals is set by the higher education institutes to meet the standards of healthcare regulators. All curricula emphasise the skills and approaches a health care practitioner must develop to ensure accurate and timely diagnoses and treatment plans for their patients, including those with FASD.

## ■ General Practitioners

**Adam Holloway:**

[\[41751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there is a target for the proportion of GP patient appointments which are delivered face to face.

**Adam Holloway:**

[\[41752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are required to monitor the number and proportion of GP appointments in their commissioning area which are being delivered face to face.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There is currently no target for the proportion of appointments in general practice which must be delivered face to face. However, practices should respect preferences for in person appointments unless there are good clinical reasons.

Commissioners use information collected locally alongside data gathered from other sources, such as the Quality and Outcomes Framework, to plan and improve general practitioner (GP) services. NHS Digital publishes GP appointment data, from planned activity recorded in GP appointment book systems, which includes face to face appointments at clinical commissioning group level. As set out in 'Our plan for improving access for patients and supporting general practice', NHS Digital is working to publish activity and waiting time data at individual practice level as soon as possible. This will include the proportions of appointment by different professions and by different appointment modality.

## ■ Health Services: Children

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[83421]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing local clinical and social services leads to embed co-ordinated pathways for families who have children with specific diagnoses relating to (a) neurodiversity conditions and (b) mental and physical health and learning disability challenges.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Children and Families Act 2014, commissioners are responsible for ensuring the provision of services based on the local needs of their population. Local commissioners should have due regard to the relevant National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines, when commissioning these services. In 2021/22, we have provided £1.25 million to recruit local autism and learning disability champions to embed high quality and accessible autism and learning disability services in integrated care systems. We have also invested £7 million through the COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan and NHS Long Term Plan to help regions test and improve diagnostic and post-diagnostic pathways for autism in 2021/22.

## ■ Health Services: Private Sector

**Derek Twigg:**

**[80206]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of private health sector capacity being used as at 1 November 2021 to help reduce NHS waiting lists.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2021]:* No specific estimate has been made as we do not have an estimate of the total capacity of the private health sector. The latest data from September shows that over 196,000 treatments and diagnostic tests were provided by independent providers for National Health Service funded patients.

## ■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[83427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 November 2021 to Question 71376 on Hospitals: Coronavirus, how much his Department has spent on private hospital facilities and clinics for additional care capacity during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

Spending on purchasing hospital capacity and health services from private sector providers from March 2020 to March 2021 under the national contracts with independent providers is not currently available as these contracts are being reconciled. It is expected that this will be completed by the end of 2021/22. From 1 April 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement returned to local commissioning arrangements therefore the information requested after this date is not held centrally.

## ■ Hospitals: Private Sector

**Derek Twigg:**

[\[80207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) diagnostic and (b) surgical procedures were carried out on NHS patients in private sector hospitals which had been referred by the NHS in each month since March 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2021]:* The following table shows the total number of diagnostic tests provided by the independent sector for National Health Service patients in each month since March 2021. The data requested on surgical procedures is not held centrally.

MONTH	TOTAL DIAGNOSTIC TESTS
March 2021	101,544
April 2021	92,000
May 2021	87,628
June 2021	92,636
July 2021	78,333
August 2021	76,835
September 2021	83,842

## ■ **Immunosuppression: Coronavirus**

**Mr Clive Betts:**

**[84301]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people who have no immune response to the covid-19 vaccine will be given priority access to monoclonal antibody or antiviral treatments.

**Maggie Throup:**

Immunocompromised individuals are a priority cohort for research into therapeutic and prophylaxis treatments, such as monoclonal antibody therapies and repurposed compounds.

Ronapreve is the first neutralising monoclonal antibody to receive marketing authorisation from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to treat and prevent COVID-19. The interim clinical policy was updated on 4 November to expand treatment

to a wider group of hospitalised patients, which may include immunocompromised patients.

Xevudy (sotrovimab) has been approved by the MHRA as effective at reducing the risk of hospitalisation and death in people with mild to moderate COVID-19 infection who are at an increased risk of developing severe disease. We will confirm how this treatment will be deployed to patients in due course. On 20 October, we announced two oral antiviral treatments for United Kingdom patients. Molnupiravir (Lagevrio) has now received MHRA authorisation, while PF-07321332 (Paxlovid) is pending approval from the MHRA.

Antivirals will be deployed initially through a national study prioritising those most at risk from COVID-19, including those who are immunocompromised and will identify those who will benefit most from treatment. The Department will provide more information on the national study, including eligibility, in due course.

## ■ **Incontinence: Health Services**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[85264]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how his Department plans to use the National Bladder and Bowel Health Project and the 2018 Excellence in Continence Care guidance to inform the development of clinical standards and pathways.

**Edward Argar:**

The National Bladder and Bowel Health Project was paused at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has now recommenced and is in the process of developing pathways in bladder and bowel care.

## ■ Long Covid: Clinics

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[75098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of staffing levels at long covid clinics.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No formal assessment has been made.

NHS England and NHS Improvement operate 90 post-COVID-19 assessment services across England. Integrated care systems have developed service expansion plans, including increasing workforce capacity. Services are currently recruiting a expert clinical teams, including psychologists, physiotherapists, nurses and occupational therapists. This includes the creation of a care coordination role to support integrated care across the local post-COVID-19 pathway. In July 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement announced an additional investment of £100 million bringing total National Health Service funding in England to £134 million.

## ■ Medical Technologies Directorate

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[76634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a list of (a) members, (b) roles and (c) other responsibilities of the Medical Technologies Directorate.

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[76635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) operational and (b) total cost is of the Medical Technologies Directorate.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 22 November 2021]:* The Medical Technologies Directorate was announced in May 2021. Staff are being recruited to the Directorate and will work in the following areas: supply resilience and engagement; strategy; policy and regulation; operations; and data and analysis. Information on the senior team will be made available once permanent staff have been recruited. The Directorate is currently led by Chris Stirling as Interim Director.

The primary costs of the Directorate will be approximately £1.8 million per annum for its staff.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Robert Largan:** [\[84526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 23 July 2021, reference RL21530.

**Edward Argar:**

We replied to the hon. Member on 3 December 2021.

**Sir Mike Penning:**[\[85215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to correspondence from the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead of 12 August 2021, case no. MP70336, departmental reference PO-1342263, on covid-19 vaccinations for immunocompromised patients.

**Edward Argar:**

We replied to the Rt hon. Member on 3 December 2021.

**Robert Largan:**[\[85404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 13 October 2021, reference RL27492.

**Edward Argar:**

We replied to the hon. Member on 8 November 2021.

**■ Mental Health Services: Children****Rachael Maskell:**[\[83422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he is having with mental health professionals to ensure that workforce planning with CAMHS is taking place to ensure that timely and appropriate support is provided for school-aged children with levels of anxiety, depression or other mental health conditions by people with suitable competencies to provide that support.

**Gillian Keegan:**

In July 2021 the Department commissioned Health Education England to work with partners, including mental health professionals, to review workforce trends and renew the long term strategic framework to ensure we have the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours to deliver high standards of care, including to school-aged children.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to the expansion of the National Health Service workforce, with the aim of achieving an additional 27,000 mental health professionals by 2023/24. There are now more than 180 mental health support teams in approximately 3,000 schools and colleges, supporting 15% of pupils in England, with a further 100 teams in development. These teams, staffed by educational mental health practitioners, are supporting children and young people, including those with levels of anxiety, depression or other mental health conditions. The total number of mental health support teams is planned to increase to approximately 400 by 2022/23, supporting nearly three million children.

**■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Health Services****Cat Smith:**[\[83411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Prime Minister's response to the hon. Member for Rhondda on 24 November 2021, Official Report, Col 341, on the development of a cross-governmental strategy on acquired brain injury and

other neurological conditions, what (a) other neurological conditions and (b) other Departments will be included in the scope of that strategy.

**Gillian Keegan:**

To inform the content of the strategy, the Department will publish a call for evidence, to seek the views of stakeholders including healthcare staff, people living with an acquired brain injury and their families and carers on what should be prioritised within the strategy and whether there are other similar or related neurological conditions which should be considered for inclusion.

The Department for Health and Social Care is working with other Government departments including the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for Education and the Ministry of Justice to explore ways to strengthen the support provided to those with an acquired brain injury.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[83466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure equitable treatment, care and support for people with neurological conditions.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The majority of services for those with neurological conditions are commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups, with NHS England commissioning specialised care through the 25 specialised neurological treatment centres in England. NHS England's service specification sets out what providers must have in place to deliver specialised neurological care to support equity of access to high quality services for patients.

The National Neurosciences Advisory Group are currently developing optimum clinical pathways for people with neurological conditions. The aim of these pathways is to support the improvement of services, set out aspirations for good care and enable good commissioning of neurological services locally and nationally. In addition, the Department has announced the development of a cross-Government strategy on acquired brain injury and potentially other neurological conditions.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[83467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure Integrated Care Systems have sufficient knowledge of neurology services before responsibility for certain specialised commissioned services is delegated to them by April 2023.

**Edward Argar:**

The Health and Care Bill proposes that certain specialised services may be subject to joint commissioning arrangements between NHS England and integrated care boards during 2022/23. The services which would benefit from a more integrated commissioning approach remain under consideration and further details will be set out before April 2022.

For all specialised services, including those that are joint commissioned or delegated, NHS England will remain accountable for their commissioning and retain responsibility for setting national standards and clinical policies determining access to both new and existing treatments. For services that are delegated, NHS England will provide support, tools and guidance to integrated care systems to enable them to commission effectively.

## ■ **NHS England: Reorganisation**

**John Redwood:** [\[58706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the reorganisation costs for NHS England resulting from the establishment of new management and commissioning bodies.

**Edward Argar:**

There has been no specific assessment. NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing guidance and support during the abolition of clinical commissioning groups and the establishment of integrated care boards. NHS England and NHS Improvement are managing changes required to adapt software and processes managed by third-party suppliers and we expect these costs to be absorbed within NHS England's budgets.

## ■ **Ophthalmic Services**

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[79383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve uptake of routine eye care check-ups via community optometry.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2021]:* Free National Health Service sight tests are available for eligible groups, including children, people aged 60 years old and over, people on low incomes and those at risk of eye disease. NHS.UK sets out the importance of regular sight tests and provides information about entitlement to free tests. The Department also used social media to promote the importance of sight tests during National Eye Health week in 2021.

## ■ **Orthopaedics: Private Sector**

**Derek Twigg:** [\[80208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average payment made to private sector hospitals was for orthopaedic procedures as at 31 October 2021 or from when the latest figures are available; and what the average cost of that procedure was at NHS trust hospitals.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2021]:* Information on contracts held between National Health Service commissioners and the independent sector, including the payments made for specific procedures, are not held centrally.

The latest data available for costs for NHS treatments is from 2019/20. The median cost of all orthopaedic procedures was £3,647. However, this figure accounts for 391 different treatment types of both a varied set of medical procedures and a wide range in cost.

## ■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[83509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of adding Parkinson's and other degenerative conditions to the list of medical exemptions from prescription charges.

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[83510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason Parkinson's disease and other degenerative conditions are not included on the NHS medical exemption list in respect of prescription charges.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department has no plans to extend the list. Our policy on entitlement to help with prescription charges in England is based on the principle that those who can afford to contribute should do so, while those who are likely to have difficulty in paying should be protected.

Extensive arrangements are already in place to help people afford National Health Service prescriptions, including a broad range of exemptions relating to age, income and medical conditions, for which someone with Parkinson's disease or other degenerative condition may qualify. Approximately 89% of NHS prescription items are dispensed in the community free of charge. To support those who do not qualify for an exemption, the cost of prescriptions can be capped by purchasing a prescription pre-payment certificate, which can be paid for in instalments. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

## ■ Social Services: Fees and Charges

**Chris Loder:** [\[83483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are in receipt of state support for their social care costs in (a) Dorset and (b) West Dorset.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Data on the number of people receiving state support for their social care costs are collected at a local authority level by NHS Digital. At the end of 2020/21, there were 3,900 people in receipt of local authority supported long-term care in Dorset. Though an end of year figure for short-term care is not available, there were 1,855 people in receipt of local authority supported short-term care in Dorset during 2020/21.

The information requested is not available for West Dorset, as data is collected at local authority level.

**Daisy Cooper:**[\[83493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November to Question 69198, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to update the Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014 to include universal credit regulations to ensure consistency across local authorities in calculating Minimum Income Guarantee entitlements.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Government believes regulations and guidance already make clear how the Minimum Income Guarantee should be applied for people in a range of circumstances, including those receiving Universal Credit.

■ **Social Services: Newcastle upon Tyne****Chi Onwurah:**[\[76687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the average (a) cost of care paid by working-age disabled people and (b) number of hours of care per person available to working-age disabled adults in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central and (b) Newcastle City Council in each of the last five years.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The average weekly rate paid towards care by working-age disabled adults in Newcastle City Council in each of the last five years is shown in the following table.

YEAR	NURSING CARE	RESIDENTIAL CARE	RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING CARE
2020-21	£926	£1,401	£1,256
2019-20	£925	£1,079	£1,030
2018-19	£782	£1,000	£926
2017-18	£910	£1,228	£1,113
2016-17	£814	£1,030	£957

This information is not held at constituency level. Data on average cost of care for working age adults only in domiciliary care is not held centrally and data on the number of hours of care per person available to working-age disabled adults is not collected centrally.

■ **Social Services: Reform****Andrew Lewer:**[\[83457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's Build Back Better policy paper, published in September 2021, whether he

plans to include working age adult social care, including mental health social care, in the forthcoming white paper on wider system reform and funding.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The white paper sets out our reforms for adult social care and outlines priorities for investment. This includes an investment of at least £500 million in the workforce to support the delivery of person-centred social care and £300 million in housing to allow more people to live in a place that supports them to live independently. These reforms apply equally to those of working age as to those aged over 65 years old.

The white paper does not present reforms based on specific reasons for care. However, it includes case studies that explore how reforms will benefit different groups, including those of working age and with mental health needs.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[73796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on (a) tourism, (b) businesses and (c) family lives of the restrictions on travel to third countries for those who cannot demonstrate they have had a third booster vaccination if evidence of such vaccinations cannot be provided within the NHS Covid Pass.

**Maggie Throup:**

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

■ **Xenotransplantation**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[80997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether operations have taken place in the UK using animal organs for transplants.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS Blood and Transplant is not aware of any animal organ being transplanted into a human within the United Kingdom.

## HOME OFFICE

■ **Animal Experiments**

**Martyn Day:**

[\[82364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 November 2021 to Question 76763 on Animal Experiments, if she will make an assessment of the effectiveness of establishing a Ministerial position dedicated to accelerating the replacement of animal research with human relevant techniques.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Home Office has no plans to make such an assessment.

**Patrick Grady:**[\[85311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a response to Early Day Motion 674 on Animals in Scientific Research and transition to new approach methodologies.

**Damian Hinds:**

This Government is committed to the development of non-animal technologies. Such technologies have the potential to reduce the reliance on the use of animals, improve the efficiency of drug research and development and to deliver safer, cheaper, and more effective medicines to patients. We continue to actively support and fund the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs).

At this current point in time, the availability of non-animal technologies does not allow us to transition away from the use of animals in science and testing. The use of animals in science supports the development of new medicines, safety testing and cutting-edge medical technologies, for humans and animals, as well as the safety and sustainability of our environment.

Where animals have to be used they are protected under law. No animal testing may be conducted if there is a non-animal alternative available, where only the minimum numbers are used to achieve the likely expected benefit and only the minimum suffering caused.

**■ Animal Experiments: Cosmetics****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[76580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to (a) maintain and (b) enforce the ban on animal testing of cosmetics.

**Damian Hinds:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2021]:* The Government can confirm that the 'testing' and 'manufacturing' bans of animal testing of cosmetics are maintained and enforced.

Animal testing of cosmetics to permit their marketing for consumer use has been banned in the UK since 1998 and it is illegal to test cosmetic products, or their ingredients, on animals if that testing is to meet the requirements of the Cosmetics Regulations 2009.

Chemicals legislation to protect human health and the environment may require animal testing as a last resort where there are no alternatives under the UK REACH Regulations. However, this does not include finished cosmetic products.

## ■ Au Pairs: Brexit

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[86140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the British Au Pair Agencies Association regarding the impact of Brexit on the au pairing sector.

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[86141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of establishing a dedicated immigration route for au pairs from the EU.

**Kevin Foster:**

Home Office officials have been in correspondence with the British Au Pair Agencies Association on numerous occasions regarding the au pair sector.

Since 2008 successive governments have decided the UK's immigration system will not offer a dedicated visa route for au pairs. With the ending of free movement, this position now applies to EEA nationals.

Immigration routes which allow general work rights in the UK can be used by those who may wish to take up au pair roles, such as those who arrive under our Youth Mobility Schemes (YMS). We remain open to negotiating YMS arrangements with other countries and territories, including the EU or nations within it. However, as each YMS is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement which also provides benefit to UK Nationals, we will therefore not add nations to the YMS route unilaterally as it is not simply a one-way route for recruiting cheaper labour overseas.

## ■ British Nationality

**Naz Shah:** [\[84380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have had their British citizenship revoked in each year since 2002.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 3 December 2021]:* The Home Office publishes data relating to those deprived of British Citizenship. Statistics are available from May 2010.

Figures for conducive deprivation orders, which are made under Section 40(2) of the 1981 British Nationality Act, have been published as part of the HM Government Transparency Report: Disruptive and Investigatory Powers. Four reports have been published to date in 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-government-transparency-report-on-the-use-of-disruptive-and-investigatory-powers>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disruptive-and-investigatory-powers-hm-government-transparency-report>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disruptive-and-investigatory-powers-transparency-report-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transparency-report-disruptive-powers-2018-to-2019>

Section 40(3) of the 1981 British Nationality Act, allows for deprivation of citizenship where fraud, false representation or concealment of material facts have been used to obtain British citizenship. Since February 2020 these figures have been published via the Transparency report on asylum data, which can be found using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-february-2020>

**Naz Shah:** **[84381]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many have people born in the UK have had their British citizenship removed in each year since 2002.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 3 December 2021]:* We do not anticipate that the amendment laid by the Government to the Nationality and Borders Bill in respect of assisting unlawful immigration or an asylum seeker (clause 40) will have any financial impact on the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Government Amendment 63 has been made to allow RNLI to continue as now and it doesn't require any changes of practice from them.

Home Office officials have discussed clause 40, Government Amendment 63 and the duty to rescue persons in distress at sea with the RNLI.

**Naz Shah:** **[84382]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people born in the UK who had their British citizenship removed in each year since 2002 (a) had dual nationality and (b) belonged to an ethnic minority.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 3 December 2021]:* We do not anticipate that the amendment laid by the Government to the Nationality and Borders Bill in respect of assisting unlawful immigration or an asylum seeker (clause 40) will have any financial impact on the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Government Amendment 63 has been made to allow RNLI to continue as now and it doesn't require any changes of practice from them.

Home Office officials have discussed clause 40, Government Amendment 63 and the duty to rescue persons in distress at sea with the RNLI.

## ■ Cryptocurrencies: Fraud

**Justin Tomlinson:** **[83359]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government is developing plans to protect investors from potential crypto currency scams.

**Justin Tomlinson:** [83360]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to protect older and more vulnerable people from online scams.

**Justin Tomlinson:** [83361]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to protect older and more vulnerable people from rogue traders.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Government recognises the serious risks presented by scams and fraud and the huge financial and emotional impact they can have on victims. This is why the Home Office is working with other departments, law enforcement and the private sector to better protect the public and businesses from fraud, reduce the impact on victims, and ensure fraudsters have no space to operate.

This includes the development of a new Fraud Action Plan, the relaunch of the Joint Fraud Taskforce and publication of charters with the retail banking, telecommunications and accountancy sectors. As part of the Police Uplift Programme to recruit an additional 20,000 officers by 2023, we have prioritised more investigators in the City of London Police to fulfil their role as a world class fraud specialist force.

We have also channelled additional resource into the Regional Organised Crime Unit network to work on a host of serious and organised crime threats including fraud. The Government is also reviewing asset recovery powers to ensure the architects of such scams cannot profit from their crimes and intends to bring forward legislation on crypto assets when parliamentary time allows.

We continue to encourage the public to report fraud to Action Fraud and to forward any suspicious emails to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk) and suspicious texts to 7726, free of charge.

This information is being used by the City of London Police alongside crime reports to identify, disrupt and stop fraudsters. Any contact with rogue traders should also be reported to Trading Standards at

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards/>.

## ■ Domestic Abuse

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [83284]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Building a robust response to perpetrators: recommendations for the new Domestic Abuse Strategy, published by the Drive Partnership on 9 September 2021, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the recommendations in that report.

**Rachel Maclean:**

In the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Government have committed to publish a comprehensive perpetrator strategy that aims to bring more perpetrators to justice and reduce reoffending.

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 to prevent offending, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the systems in place needed to deliver these goals.

We are extremely grateful for the input, advice, and expertise we have received so far from the domestic abuse sector, including the report on Building a robust response to Perpetrators, which we have considered when developing the strategy.

**Human Trafficking: Social Media****Theresa Villiers:**[\[85204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that social media companies do not allow people traffickers to use their platforms to advertise criminal activities such as sale of stolen passports.

**Damian Hinds:**

We have identified social media as a key enabler for Organised Immigration Crime (OIC) and we know that social media platforms are used to advertise people smuggling services and facilitate communication throughout a migrant's journey. It is used to publicise people smuggling services and facilitate encrypted communication throughout a migrant's journey. Advertisements on platforms target vulnerable migrants at or near point of origin selling false or stolen documents, and facilitation packages to enter the UK, including across the Channel.

The Home Office and NCA are working with social media companies to remove OIC related content from their platforms. Many of the major social media companies (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Tik Tok) have taken welcome action to identify and remove illegal online content. However, there is clearly more that can be done. That is why the UK Government supports the work that NCA is doing with social media companies to ensure their policies are consistently enforced, and to establish a good shared understanding of how the problem is being addressed.

**Immigration: Costs****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[84306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to minimise the financial challenges facing people who awaiting the results of an Indefinite Leave to Remain application.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office's service standard for the processing of ILR applications is six months. Where there is a specific reason cases cannot be decided within the service standard, we will contact the individual concerned.

Performance against service standards for ILR applications are included in the Migration Transparency data which is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data#uk-visas-and-immigration>

Where an applicant is in the UK and, at the time of making an application, has leave to enter or remain; section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971 extends the conditions of their visa, including their right to work if they have it, until the application is decided (or withdrawn).

The Home Office also allows for individuals with leave under particular provisions to submit a "change of conditions" application, if the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition has been applied to their leave, and there is a subsequent change in their financial circumstances.

When an individual makes an application following the expiry of their leave to enter or remain they would not benefit from the provisions in Section 3C, this is in keeping with ensuring individuals do not overstay their visa.

**■ Immigration: Disadvantaged****Mr Barry Sheerman:****[84307]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussion she has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on mitigating financial hardship for people in the immigration and asylum application process.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:****[84308]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that people prevented from taking up employment as a result of awaiting a ruling on an immigration or asylum application are not pushed into poverty.

**Kevin Foster:**

Asylum seekers and others who do not have leave to remain in the UK on a condition that gives them access to public funds are not eligible to benefits provided by the Department of Work and Pensions.

If an asylum seeker would otherwise be destitute the Home Office provides support under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, pending consideration of their asylum claim and any appeal. This support usually consists of free accommodation and a weekly financial allowance to cover other essential living needs.

Section 95 of support is not available to other groups of people applying for leave to remain in the UK.

Our policy allows asylum seekers to work if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL), which is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

#### ■ **Interpol: Public Appointments**

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** **[84488]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department can formally appeal the Interpol presidency of Emirati Major General Ahmed Nasser al-Raisi, in the context of the UAE's human rights record.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Rules of Procedure for the Interpol General Assembly set out the process and associated oversight for electing members of the INTERPOL Executive Committee, including the INTERPOL President.

That document is published on the Interpol website: [Legal documents \(interpol.int\)](https://www.interpol.int/legal).

#### ■ **National Refugee Integration Forum**

**Daisy Cooper:** **[83496]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of re-establishing the National Refugee Integration Forum for coordinating support for refugees at the national, regional and local level.

**Kevin Foster:**

The National Refugee Integration Forum was wound up in October 2006, as it formed part of a wider programme of changes to stakeholder engagement at that time.

However, as part of our commitment under the New Plan for Immigration, we are committed to offering an enhanced integration package for refugees. This will be for those arriving through safe and legal routes to help them integrate into UK society and become self-sufficient more quickly.

We have been in consultation with key stakeholders to design this package. It will build on previous Government schemes and evidence of good practice from the UK and abroad. We will provide a package of tailored support to help refugees rebuild their lives in the UK more quickly. This will include working with local authorities and charities to help refugees into work, and to learn English.

Collaboration with civil society, businesses and local authorities will continue to be key to achieving our goals on refugee integration, and we will ensure our approach is informed by the experiences of refugees.

## ■ Nationality and Borders Bill

**Neil Coyle:** [85286]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what consultation her Department has undertaken with the RNLI on the Nationality and Borders Bill and the duty to rescue persons in distress at sea.

**Neil Coyle:** [85287]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has consulted the RNLI on (a) Clause 40 of the Nationality and Borders Bill and (b) Government amendment 63 regarding exemption from potential prosecutions.

**Neil Coyle:** [85288]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the financial impact on the RNLI of proposed Government amendments to the Nationality and Borders Bill.

**Tom Purslove:**

We do not anticipate that the amendment laid by the Government to the Nationality and Borders Bill in respect of assisting unlawful immigration or an asylum seeker (clause 40) will have any financial impact on the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Government Amendment 63 has been made to allow RNLI to continue as now and it doesn't require any changes of practice from them.

Home Office officials have discussed clause 40, Government Amendment 63 and the duty to rescue persons in distress at sea with the RNLI.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Caroline Lucas:** [71309]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the resettlement status of Afghan people who have been housed by local authorities will be communicated to local authorities for the purpose of allowing local authorities to receive the funding the Government has committed but not yet paid for people resettled via the (a) Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and (b) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy; and if she will make a statement.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Home Office is contacting those here in the UK in order to assist them to obtain Indefinite Leave to Remain status.

A funding instruction for local authorities in the support of the United Kingdom's Afghan Locally Engaged Staff Ex Gratia & ARAP Schemes was published on 24 July 2021. This is for those Afghan nationals who arrived in the UK under those schemes between 22 June 2021 and 31 August 2021. This instruction is available on gov.uk at the following link: [Afghan relocation and assistance: funding instruction - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97442/afghan-relocation-and-assistance-funding-instruction-2021.pdf)

Funding instructions for local authorities providing hotel wraparound support were circulated to the relevant authorities on 12 November 2021; while the ACRS and ARAP funding instruction for all those resettled with local authorities from 1 September 2021 were shared with local authorities on 22 November.

Work is underway to revise and re-issue a combined funding instruction for the ACRS and ARAP schemes for all those resettled with local authorities.

**Sarah Olney:**

**[84433]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when Afghan refugee arrivals will be assigned to councils for permanent settlement.

**Victoria Atkins:**

*[Holding answer 3 December 2021]:* The success in evacuating 15,000 people under Op Pitting means that we are facing an unprecedented housing challenge. We are working closely with local authorities to bring forward enough offers of housing to provide every family with a home as soon as possible.

We are also looking at ways to make more suitable homes available in the private rented sector, and to provide alternatives to hotels for those families who may have to remain in bridging accommodation for long periods: for example, by making available a number of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) units on the MoD estate.

We continue to work with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible for Afghan families who were evacuated to the UK. So far, over 300 local authorities across the UK have offered to house Afghan families.

Over 4,000 individuals have either moved into a settled home, or are being matched .

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/research-data-and-statistics/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets).

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

**[85340]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Afghans who arrived under Operation Pitting and given six months Leave To Remain will have their status converted to Indefinite Leave to Remain in an appropriate immigration category by the end of their six month period.

**Kevin Foster:**

Following the policy statement, the Government published on 13 September, we will be working through the cases of those who have recently arrived from Afghanistan and will be processing them in line with the published policy.

The Home Office is contacting those here in the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy and those moving onto the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, in order to assist them to obtain Indefinite Leave to Remain status.

No one will be required to leave the United Kingdom, or be disadvantaged in any way, while we work through their cases.

More information can be found in the Afghanistan Resettlement and Immigration Policy Statement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement-accessible-version#afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy>

**Ian Byrne:**

**[86206]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme will open by the end of 2021.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme remains under development. Officials are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme. 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.

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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement).

## ■ Refugees: Housing

**Philip Davies:**

**[86074]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2021 to Question 83279 on Refugees: Housing, what consultation her Department carried out with each local authority prior to taking the decision to place asylum seekers in each local authority area.

**Kevin Foster:**

Where we procure properties for asylum seekers, there is an engagement and consultation process to follow with stakeholders dependant on whether this is initial or dispersal accommodation.

For initial accommodation, including contingency initial accommodation, the Home Office will write to the Local Authority and the MP for the area to inform them of plans to use a site and arrange a meeting to discuss further. This is normally done in advance of a property being used, but where an urgent need for accommodation occurs, this may take place retrospectively.

For dispersal accommodation, which will be sourced in areas which have previously agreed to be part of this scheme, the Home Office's providers will normally notify the Local Authority and begin a consultation process around the proposed use of a site. However please note, providers are not contractually bound to do this.

## ■ Refugees: Social Security Benefits

**Feryal Clark:** [\[84498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to support welfare provision for refugees who have arrived in the UK via channel crossings on small boats.

**Kevin Foster:**

If the individuals claim asylum and would otherwise be destitute they can apply to the Home Office for accommodation and other support to meet their essential living needs, pending consideration of their immigration status, in particular whether their asylum claim falls to be treated as inadmissible.

## ■ TNT Post: Passports

**Hilary Benn:** [\[85188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the average length of time in days it takes for passports sent by the Passport Agency via TNT to be received by the applicant.

**Kevin Foster:**

The average length of time taken for the delivery of printed passports is not held in a reportable format.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[85189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what performance assessment measures she uses to assess the timeliness of TNT in delivering documents from her Department to members of the public.

**Kevin Foster:**

Her Majesty's Passport Office assesses the performance of the UK Secure Delivery supplier, FedEx (parent company of TNT), using the following Key Performance Indicators/Service Level Agreements:

- The percentage of urgent deliveries achieved in 24 hours of collection from the print supplier. The target is 99.75%
- The percentage of standard deliveries achieved in 48 hours of collection from the print supplier. The target is 99.75%

## ■ Visas: Fees and Charges

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[85341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much revenue her Department received from visa fees in the 12 months to October 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office records and publishes data on a financial year basis. Please refer to page 161 of the Home Office 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts, which

contains data from April 2020 to and including March 2021, for the most recent disclosure of visa and immigration income.

[HO annual report and accounts 2020-21 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Data relating to the current financial year has yet to be published but will be made available in the 2021-22 Home Office Annual Report and Accounts.

## ■ Youth Mobility Scheme: EU Countries

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[86142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of including the EU within the Youth Mobility Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

We remain open to negotiating Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) arrangements with other countries and territories including the EU or nations within it. However, each YMS is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement which also provides benefit to UK nationals with the detail negotiated and agreed between the relevant parties. We will not add nations unilaterally to the scheme.

We are unable to disclose the status of negotiations on YMS arrangements as they occur.

Further details of additional YMS agreements will be announced once they are concluded.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Overseas Trade: Women's Rights

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[84322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure the UK Government's trade policy is aligned to its international commitments on women's rights.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government is committed to equality of opportunity for men and women, including through our trade policy. We want the World Trade Organisation's work to take this issue into account routinely, building on progress already made in implementing the Buenos Aires Declaration. Further, we have sought commitments in our bilateral free trade agreements to date, securing stand-alone chapters on this with Australia and New Zealand.

**JUSTICE****■ Administration of Justice: Reform****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[83288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the press release of 20 July 2021, Lord Chancellor sets out reform vision for justice, what steps he has taken to consult criminal justice sector organisations in relation to a forthcoming prisons white paper; and what further consultation he plans to undertake (a) in advance of and (b) following the publication of that white paper.

**Victoria Atkins:**

In July 2021 we announced our intention to publish a Prisons White Paper before the end of the year. Officials in MoJ and HMPPS led roundtables in July with criminal justice sector organisations to seek views on future reforms to the prison system, and stakeholders were invited to provide written feedback following the roundtables. A Ministerial roundtable chaired by the Minister for Prisons was held in November on potential policy proposals for the White Paper.

We are committed to continued stakeholder engagement. The White Paper includes consultation questions inviting views from stakeholders to which we will issue a response. We will also hold additional engagement with criminal justice sector organisations following publication.

**■ Bedford Prison: Young Offenders****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[83285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Bedford, published on 26 November 2021, whether it remains his policy to open a specific wing for young prisoners at HMP/YOI Bedford; and what his planned timescale is for that project.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMP Bedford intends to introduce a residential unit to support young adults aged 18-21 who exhibit complex needs. We are keeping the timescale under review and will provide an update in due course.

**■ Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients: Coronavirus****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[83289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 26 November 2021 to Question 77407 on Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients: Coronavirus, what his timetable is for the work underway to explore (a) the use of prison as a place of safety, (b) whether it is used solely in respect of concerns over mental health, or in conjunction with other factors such as the offending history of the individual, (c) how that information is recorded and (d) the extent to which that information can be quantified.

**Victoria Atkins:**

My department are working with officials in the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England and Improvement to improve our understanding of, and develop solutions to these operational challenges. In January 2022, we will be publishing an action plan in response to the recommendations in the Joint Thematic Inspection of the Criminal Justice Journey of Individuals with Mental Health Needs and Disorders. This includes a recommendation to end the use of prison as a place of safety and ensure that alternatives to prison are available for sentencers in line with the Mental Health Act White Paper.

**■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service****Alex Cunningham:**[\[86096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what data the HM Courts and Tribunals Service holds on (a) which court buildings have the highest number of urgent repairs outstanding, (b) what those repairs are and (c) how long the work on those repairs will take to complete.

**James Cartlidge:**

The HMCTS estate consists of more than 350 buildings, many of which are large and historic. It is not unusual for an estate of this size and nature to require regular repair and maintenance. Repair requests are logged with our Facilities Management provider – Equans, and typically more than 2,000 urgent repairs are being completed across the estate each month with an average completion time of 7 days.

Last year this Government provided £105m in additional capital funding for building improvements, taking total capital spend on the court estate to over £150m. This year HMCTS are budgeting to spend £105m on capital maintenance and estate projects, to enhance the resilience of our estate and maintain capacity to help our courts recover.

Below is a list of court buildings that currently have the highest number of urgent repair requests to be completed, although this can change regularly.

1. Southwark Crown Court
2. Snaresbrook Crown Court
3. Inner London Crown Court
4. Croydon Magistrates' Court
5. Royal Courts of Justice – Main Building
6. Isleworth Crown Court
7. Nottingham Magistrates' Court
8. Manchester Crown Court (Crown Square)
9. Manchester Civil Justice Centre
10. Liverpool QE2 Crown Court

The three most common type of repair works across our estate are lighting faults, cooling and heating.

The average completion time for urgent repair works is one week.

The HMCTS estate is kept under regular review; spending is prioritised to ensure that buildings are safe, secure, meet statutory requirements and protect continuity of service.

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[86097]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the HM Courts and Tribunals Service's response to the consultation paper entitled Fit for the future: transforming the Court and Tribunal Estate, what effect the implementation of building champions has had on reducing the time taken to complete small repair works; and if the HM Courts and Tribunals Service will publish monthly or quarterly reports on repairs undertaken.

**James Cartlidge:**

Building Champions play an important role in how our court and tribunal buildings are maintained. Acting as a central contact for staff and the judiciary at every HMCTS site, they monitor the condition of their building, and initiate repair works with our Facilities Management provider, alongside their day to day roles.

Working with staff and judiciary they ensure potential impacts on court users are minimised. They also ensure that maintenance tasks are given an appropriate level of priority. Since building champions have been established, they have significantly improved the way that repair works are identified, prioritised and delivered.

Repair requests are logged with our Facilities Management provider – Equans, and typically more than 2,000 urgent repairs are being completed across the estate each month with an average completion time of 7 days. There are no plans to publish this information regularly.

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[86098]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether any courts or tribunals buildings have had to close to undertake repairs or maintenance work in each of the last five years.

**James Cartlidge:**

In some instances, the failure of a key system such as heating or cooling has made it necessary to close a court or tribunal building to conduct critical maintenance or repair works.

When planning all necessary repair and maintenance works, minimising impacts on court users is paramount. The scheduling of repair and maintenance works is developed in consultation with local judiciary and court & tribunal staff to remove or minimise impacts to the operational business. This can be achieved by conducting works outside of business hours or staging works across different areas of a building to avoid a complete closure.

The HMCTS estate is kept under regular review; spending is prioritised to ensure that buildings are safe, secure, meet statutory requirements and protect continuity of service.

## ■ Internet: Sexual Harassment

**Chris Elmore:** [\[85335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to introduce a new offence of cyberflashing in England and Wales.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Government remains firmly committed to the protection of people from abuse and harm online.

This disturbing behaviour may already be captured by existing offences.

However, we are keenly aware of concerns that have been expressed over the changes in technology, including the misuse of, communications, social media, imagery, and the opportunities to abuse and upset others that such developments can bring.

That is why we asked Law Commission to review the law on Harmful Online Communications to ensure that the law is up to date and fully equipped to protect victims.

The Law Commission has completed that review and made a number of recommendations, including the creation of a new criminal offence to capture specifically the practice known as cyberflashing.

I can assure you that the Government is now actively and carefully considering that recommendation.

It is important that any changes to the criminal law are thoroughly assessed and fully evidenced.

## ■ Prison Accommodation

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[83423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reason prisons are limiting inmates to leaving their cells for one hour per day.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Our ongoing strategy for managing Covid-19 in prisons continues to be guided by our [National Framework](#) which sets out restrictions to the prison regime that are necessary to maintain Covid-safe measures. Whilst time out of cell has at times been reduced due to these restrictions, prisons are not limiting prisoners to leaving their cells for one hour per day.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[83424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reason two prisoners are occupying cells designed for one person in the prison estate.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Prison cell occupancy is certified by the Prison Group Director (PGD) in accordance with Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 17/2012, which provides guidelines for determining cell capacities. Cells are only shared where a PGD has assessed them to be of an adequate size and condition.

This is a longstanding issue that will not be easily addressed. We are investing £3.8 billion over the next three years to deliver 20,000 additional, modern prison places including 2,000 temporary prison places across England and Wales by the mid-2020s. This includes creating four new prisons over the next six years and expanding another four prisons over the next three years. Additional prison places will have a positive impact on lowering the proportion of crowding within the prison estate by providing accommodation that is safe, decent and uncrowded. However, the extent to which the proportion of prisoners held in crowded accommodation will ultimately reduce will always be dependent on levels of demand in the system.

**Prisons: Protective Clothing****Rachael Maskell:**[\[83425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether covid-19 guidelines in prisons permit people who are medically exempt from wearing facemasks to enter prisons where facemasks are otherwise required.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Prison COVID-19 guidelines specify the GOV.UK criteria for persons exempt from wearing face coverings. Visitors to Prisons who are exempt from wearing a covering are permitted to visit and are not required to wear a covering during the visit. Where staff are exempt from wearing a mask an individual risk assessment is undertaken and any necessary adjustments are made, for example these staff may be deployed to work in areas of the prison where face masks are not required.

**Probation: Standards****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[83286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of (a) finance, benefits and debt and (b) dependency and recovery support provided since 26 June 2021; and what steps he is taking to monitor (i) commissioning (A) timescales, (B) values and (C) outcomes and (ii) the level of (1) voluntary sector and (2) small local organisation participation for those service categories, across probation regions.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[83287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information his Department will publish on (a) finance, benefits and debt and (b) dependency and recovery service commissioning across probation regions for (i) 2021/2 and (ii) future years.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We assessed the regional needs and existing provision in the areas of accommodation; education, training and employment (ETE); finance benefit and debt

(FBD); dependency and recovery (D&R); personal wellbeing; and holistic women's services to identify the minimum viable services required for 26 June 2021, to support the unified Probation Service. FBD and D&R could be better met than other services through a combination of access to universal services, probation officer support and individual support through the personal wellbeing service so these were not included within the initial commissioning for June 2021.

All Probation regions are looking to commission services related to finance, benefits and debt and we expect these services to be in place by July 2022. All regions are also looking to commission services for dependency and recovery. Some of these will be co-commissioned with local partners so there will be a range of start dates, but the majority are also expected by July 2022.

We continue to monitor the timescales and plans to commission and mobilise specialist FBD and D&R services. Budgets have been allocated for these services and contract values will be monitored once the contracts have been procured. The level of voluntary sector and small local organisation participation and the outcomes related to FBD or D&R will be monitored once the procurement has taken place.

In the meantime, we continue to engage with charities and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to encourage them to apply to the Dynamic Framework and to prepare for these and other competitions. Around two-thirds of the £195 million funding already awarded, for the 110 contracts for accommodation, ETE, personal wellbeing and women's services that began providing services on 26 June 2021, is to registered charities or VCSEs.

We plan to have commissioned finance, benefits and debt and dependency and recovery services by summer 2022. We will then publish the contract award details including values for future years.

## ■ Remand in Custody

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[83384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to provide alternative accommodation for people placed in prison for their own protection under the Bail Act 1976.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Community accommodation is already available for defendants who may otherwise be remanded into custody. Approved Premises and the Bail Accommodation Support Services both provide a community-based alternative to custody for specific cohorts of individuals who are unconvicted or unsentenced. For high risk bailees, Approved Premises provide temporary accommodation with enhanced supervision and rehabilitative support.

The court's decision to remand an individual in custody for their own protection is used as a last resort and out of concern for the defendant, where circumstances are such that a defendant would come to harm if released into the community and there is no other suitable option available to the courts.

Following a commitment from the Government earlier this year, MoJ is reviewing the use of the power to remand for own protection. This work is ongoing.

### ■ **Wealstun Prison: Smuggling**

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[83282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2021 to Question 58346 on Wealstun Prison: Smuggling, and with reference to the Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Hull by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, published on 2 November 2021, page 12, whether all prisoners arriving at HMP Hull are checked with the X-ray body scanner; whether checking all prisoners with that scanner is compatible with the Use of X-ray body scanners (adult male prisons) Policy Framework, published on 19 May 2020; and whether he plans to amend that Policy Framework (a) to enable routine use of X-ray body scanners, (b) to enable random use of X-ray body scanners or (c) otherwise.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The use of X-ray technology must be approved in line with the [Justification of Practices Involving Ionising Radiation Regulations 2004](#) (as amended). For HMPPS, the Justifying Authority is the Secretary of State for the Home Office. Approval from the Justifying Authority has been issued on the condition that a set of Requirements for Practice for Prisons are complied with and they state that each scan must only be conducted where there is intelligence or reasonable grounds to suspect that an item is being concealed by a person internally. The intelligence can be HMPPS owned intelligence and/or intelligence received from external agencies, either linked to specific prisoners or cohorts. A person must not be scanned routinely or on a random basis and at present there are no current plans to extend this criteria although we continually assess the best ways to reduce the conveyance of illicit items into prisons.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ **Building Safety Fund**

**Royston Smith:** [\[78448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the service standard timeframe is for the Building Safety Fund application review process in order to reach a final decision.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer my Hon Friend to my answer to Question UIN [78447](#) on 29 November 2021.

### ■ **Homelessness**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[83303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will issue guidance to local authorities to accommodate all homeless people this winter due to the

continued risks from covid-19, including those not owed a homelessness duty, and match this with necessary resources; and if he will make a statement.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government is clear that no one should be without a roof over their head. We have made considerable progress in the last few years to reduce rough sleeping. Much of this work provided the capacity to deliver the pandemic response both locally and nationally.

We are supporting local authorities under the greatest pressure from rough sleepers under the £10 million Winter Pressures Fund which will bring rough sleepers across the country into safe and supported accommodation across winter. Brighton and Hove are eligible for this fund. We have made a further £3.8 million available to voluntary and community organisations to provide COVID-19 secure accommodation for those sleeping rough. This work bolsters our year-round investment through the £203 million Rough Sleeping Initiative. We continue to support local authorities to exhaust all options for rough sleepers, including those who are non-UK nationals.

■ **Islam: Religious Hatred**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[83477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he last discussed tackling Islamophobia with the leaders of the devolved Administrations.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government remains committed to tackling Islamophobia and recognises the discrimination and intolerance faced by Muslim communities. Criminal Justice is a fully devolved issue in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In Wales, we maintain a dialogue and the Welsh Government has been consulted on our forthcoming Hate Crime Strategy.

■ **Leasehold: Service Charges**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[83492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of redress available to leaseholders who wish to challenge a service charge increase at a First-tier Property Tribunal, where the freeholder is in administration and the administrator either (a) refuses permission or (b) does not respond to a request to permit a hearing.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government believes very strongly that service charges should be transparent and communicated effectively. The law is clear that service charges and any increase in costs must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, the work or services must be of a reasonable standard.

The Government believes that there should be a clear route to challenge or redress if things go wrong. Leaseholders may make an application to the First-tier Tribunal for it

to make a determination on the reasonableness of their service charges, and may continue to do so even if the freeholder is in administration.

Where a freeholder is in Administration, an agent or administrator acting on its behalf is required to take on the responsibilities of the freeholder. This includes managing the building, arranging works and collecting service charges. This means that leaseholders still have the right to challenge the reasonableness of any charges.

It will be for the First-tier Tribunal to determine whether the case can continue to be heard. If the administrator does not engage in the proceedings, they risk the Tribunal finding that the leaseholder is not liable to pay the service charge in whole or in part, thereby potentially increasing the indebtedness of the landlord.

Section 24 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 gives the First-tier Tribunal the power to appoint a manager to take over the landlord's right to manage the building under specific circumstances. As part of the process leaseholders are expected to nominate a suggested manager (which may include a managing agent), and the First-tier Tribunal will seek assurances that the nominated person is capable of performing the role before issuing an Order.

## ■ Local Government: Accountancy

**Anthony Browne:**

[\[83503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to South Cambridgeshire District Council not signing off its 2018-19 accounts and not publishing audited accounts for 2019-20 and 2020-21, what steps he is taking to help ensure that local councils are required to resource and prioritise the production of annual accounts within statutory deadlines.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

It is vital that local authorities continue to fulfil their responsibilities in the timely completion of audits to maintain transparency and assurance of local authority accounts.

It is for local authorities to do all they can to clear the backlog of delayed audits. In the meantime, the Department continues to prioritise measures to improve timeliness of completed audits, and have taken several steps to improve the situation, including extending the publication deadline for 2019/20 accounts from July to November to ease pressures on councils and audit firms as a result of COVID19. We are also making available an additional £15 million in 2021/22 to help affected bodies meet the growing cost pressures in the audit market and will consider in due course funding arrangements for future years. In October 2021, we laid regulations to allow for greater flexibility around fee-setting and fee variations.

In its capacity as interim system leader for local audit, the Department recently wrote to s151 officers of local authorities to stress the need for local authorities to prioritise clearing outstanding audits and the timely completion of draft accounts going forward in preparation for external audit.

## ■ Park Homes: Fees and Charges

**James Wild:**

[\[83502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to change the pitch fee review inflationary index from the RPI to the CPI.

**Eddie Hughes:**

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

## ■ Property Development: York

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[86120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what procurement process is being used to select a developer for the York Central development site; when that procurement process is planned to be launched; and when he expects a developer to be in place.

**Christopher Pincher:**

York Central is being brought forward by Homes England and Network Rail as the major landowners, building on their Strategic Partnership with the City of York Council and the National Railway Museum.

The Partnership has developed a strong vision and masterplan for the project, and has jointly secured outline planning permission.

The landowners now aim to deliver the first phase of substantial infrastructure works, including a new roads, pedestrian links, bridge and new public park. Homes England and Network Rail are jointly examining the next steps required to deliver the vision for this scheme, in particular the right development skills and most sensible phasing to commence the development building on the strong interest in the site, and further information will be shared with stakeholders by Spring 2022.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[83301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the role of building more zero carbon social houses in levelling up the country.

**Eddie Hughes:**

From 2025, the Future Homes Standard will ensure that new homes produce at least 75% fewer CO2 emissions than those built to current standards. This represents a considerable improvement in energy efficiency standards for new homes. These homes will be future-proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy

efficiency. No further energy efficiency retrofit work will be necessary to enable them to become zero-carbon over time as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing for a variety of tenures so that we can support a range of people in different circumstances and stages in their lives. We are investing over £12 billion in affordable housing, the largest investment in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme (AHP), which will provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow.

## ■ Religious Hatred: Islam

**Afzal Khan:** [\[83460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group has taken to tackle Islamophobia.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Anti-Muslim Hatred has played an important role as the Government's forum for discussing issues of concern around Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred. The group has been instrumental in a number of achievements; regional workshops to empower communities and educate them in how to respond to hate crime, conducting research into the drivers of Islamophobia and running educational events such as those during the pandemic focusing on how Islamophobia spreads on social media.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[83461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when officials in his Department last met with the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Officials have been in regular contact with the chair of the working group throughout the pandemic.

## ■ Waking Watch Relief Fund

**Royston Smith:** [\[78444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many (a) administrative officers and administrative assistants (AO and AA), (b) executive officers (EO), (c) senior executive officers and higher executive officers (SEO and HEO), (d) grades six and seven and (e) senior civil service (SCS) officials are responsible for processing applications to the Building Safety Fund.

**Royston Smith:** [\[78445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many FTE officials in his Department are responsible for processing applications to the Waking Watch Relief Fund.

**Royston Smith:**[\[78446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many (a) administrative officers and administrative assistants (AO and AA), (b) executive officers (EO), (c) senior executive officers and higher executive officers (SEO and HEO), (d) grades six and seven and (e) senior civil service (SCS) officials are responsible for processing applications to the Waking Watch Relief Fund.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer my Hon Friend to my answer to Question UIN [78443](#) on 29 November 2021.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Airfield Advisory Team****Sarah Olney:**[\[84443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what is the (a) remit and (b) annual budget of the Civil Aviation Authority's Airfield Advisory Team.

**Robert Courts:**

The Civil Aviation Authority's Airfield Advisory Team (AAT) were set up to provide independent non-regulatory advice and support to General Aviation airfields on a range of matters affecting their operations.

The annual budget for the AAT in FY21/22 is £375,000.

■ **Aviation: Carbon Emissions****Justin Madders:**[\[85303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to make the final announcement on the Green Fuels, Green Skies Competition following the shortlisting announcement on 23 July 2021.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We will announce the final funding grants awarded to winners of the Green Fuels Green Skies competition shortly.

■ **Bus Services: Finance****Gill Furniss:**[\[86153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the £226.5 million Bus Recovery Fund has been allocated to (a) South Yorkshire, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber, and (c) all other regions.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Bus Recovery Grant is providing support to the bus sector following the lifting of restrictions in the summer. Most of the £226.5 million funding available has been allocated to commercial bus operators to support the recovery of bus services.

However, £18.3 million of funding has been allocated to Local Transport Authorities to support tendered services. This funding has been calculated based on claims made by Local Transport Authorities under the previous emergency support scheme. The Department does not distinguish between the areas outlined, however the allocations for each Local Transport Authority are below.

LOCAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (LTA)	TOTAL LTA BUS RECOVERY GRANT ALLOCATION
Bedford Borough Council	£75,840
Blackpool Council	£73,460
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£42,203
Bracknell Forest Council	£72,923
Brighton and Hove City Council	£42,394
Buckinghamshire Council	£120,974
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	£121,838
Central Bedfordshire Council	£75,018
Cheshire East Council	£202,287
Cheshire West and Chester Council	£216,929
City of Stoke-on-Trent Council	£56,602
City of York Council	£61,461
Cornwall Council (including Isles of Scilly)	£855,741
Derby City Council	£12,946
Derbyshire County Council	£430,469
Devon County Council	£432,491
Dorset Council	£102,034
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	£79,303
East Sussex County Council	£116,176
Essex County Council	£521,958
Gloucestershire County Council	£163,578
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	£922,770

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LOCAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (LTA)	TOTAL LTA BUS RECOVERY GRANT ALLOCATION
Hampshire County Council	£418,145
Herefordshire Council	£62,511
Hertfordshire County Council	£91,881
Hull City Council	£136,392
Kent County Council	£960,333
Lancashire County Council	£268,474
Leicester City Council	£261,130
Leicestershire County Council	£220,626
Lincolnshire County Council	£95,537
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	£718,721
Medway Council	£82,842
Milton Keynes Council	£240,036
Norfolk County Council	£790,615
North East Joint Transport Committee	£1,276,314
North East Lincolnshire Council	£9,097
North Lincolnshire Council	£35,022
North Northamptonshire Council	£4,696
North Somerset Council	£36,816
North Yorkshire County Council	£298,519
Nottingham City Council	£167,059
Nottinghamshire County Council	£200,360
Oxfordshire County Council	£60,294
Plymouth City Council	£52,453
Portsmouth City Council	£38,965
Reading Borough Council	£12,263
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	£31,640

LOCAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (LTA)	TOTAL LTA BUS RECOVERY GRANT ALLOCATION
Rutland County Council	£63,898
South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive	£1,008,883
Shropshire Council	£295,615
Slough Borough Council	£128,919
Somerset County Council	£158,039
Southampton City Council	£163,578
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	£27,203
Staffordshire County Council	£62,189
Suffolk County Council	£577,446
Surrey County Council	£672,362
Swindon Borough Council	£13,508
Tees Valley Combined Authority	£41,202
Telford and Wrekin Council	£46,876
Thurrock Council	£15,261
Torbay Council	£17,186
Warrington Borough Council	£48,219
Warwickshire County Council	£202,942
West Berkshire Council	£32,156
West Midlands Combined Authority	£841,567
West Northamptonshire Council	£18,801
West of England Combined Authority	£1,057,145
West Sussex County Council	£174,223
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	£825,071
Wiltshire Council	£297,667
Wokingham Borough Council	£137,555
Total	£18,297,645

**Sam Tarry:** [\[86201\]](#)

To the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 4.65 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, what the £3 billion of bus investment across the Parliament will be allocated to.

**Sam Tarry:** [\[86202\]](#)

To the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 4.65 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, how much and what proportion of the £3 billion for bus investment comprises new funding.

**Sam Tarry:** [\[86204\]](#)

To the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 4.65 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, excluding the £1.2 billion of new funding for bus transformation deals and funding for zero-emission buses announced in March 2021, what the remaining investment will be allocated to.

**Trudy Harrison:**

At the Budget we announced more than £3 billion of spend on buses over this Parliament which includes £1.2 billion funding for bus transformation deals; £525m to deliver zero emission buses (of which £355m is new funding announced at the Budget); £1.5 billion Covid support to maintain service levels until next April; and, over £500m from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements that will directly fund bus infrastructure.

**Sam Tarry:** [\[86203\]](#)

To the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 4.65 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, how much and what proportion of the £3 billion for bus investment comprises bus recovery funding.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) is a £226.5 million funding scheme for the bus sector, which will support the recovery of the sector following the lifting of restrictions. The Spending Review confirmed that recovery funding will be included within the £3 billion sector funding pledge.

## ■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions

**Ian Paisley:** [\[83374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the zero-emission buses purchased using the £355 million allocated in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 will be made in the UK.

**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. UK bus manufacturers are well placed to benefit from this funding for zero emission buses.

**Ian Paisley:** [\[83375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he will announce the successful applicants to the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) slow-track process.

**Trudy Harrison:**

17 local transport authorities are working to produce business cases under the standard process of the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme. The Department will award funding to successful business cases under the standard process in Spring 2022.

**John McNally:** [\[83408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support local councils to buy zero emissions buses produced in the UK.

**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. Local transport authorities have been able to apply for funding for zero emission buses under all these schemes.

Under the ZEBRA scheme, £70.8 million has been awarded so far to five local transport authorities: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, Leicester City Council, Kent County Council, Milton Keynes Council and Warrington Borough Council. The Department is in the process of formally awarding funding to these areas. A further 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 under the standard process in Spring 2022.

UK bus manufacturers are well placed to benefit from this funding for zero emission buses.

## ■ **Driving: Safety**

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[84373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) equity and (b) effect on driver safety of drivers being fined for sleeping in car parks at motorway services.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department has made no recent assessment of this specific practice. The primary function of motorway services areas (MSAs) is to provide drivers with a safe area to take a short break from driving. In England, MSAs are operated by private companies who work within the requirements of Government policy as set out in

Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 02/2013 "*The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development*". This requires MSA operators to provide 24/7 free short-term parking for up to two hours for all types of vehicle allowing people to take a break, use the facilities and/or eat a meal as required. After this period, operators are permitted to charge for parking as this helps to ensure a turnover of spaces.

## ■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

**Martin Vickers:**

[\[84332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Policy Exchange report entitled Charging up, published on 2 February 2021, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the number of electric vehicle charging points needed to meet demand across the UK are installed by 2030.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The UK has been a global front-runner in supporting provision of charging infrastructure along with private sector investment. Our vision is to have one of the best infrastructure networks in the world for electric vehicles (EVs), and we want chargepoints to be accessible, affordable and secure. The number of public chargepoints available has increased by 33% in the past 12 months from October 2020 to October 2021.

We will invest over £1.3 billion in accelerating the roll out of charging infrastructure over the next four years, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major roads, and installing more on-street chargepoints near homes and workplaces to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car. Our grant schemes and the £400m Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund will see thousands more electric vehicle charge-points installed across the UK.

Government's forthcoming 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. The strategy will clearly establish Government's expectations for the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the planning and deployment of charging infrastructure.

Alongside the Strategy, to increase confidence in the charging network and reduce range anxiety the Government is working with industry to simplify payment, ensure reliability and make chargepoint data freely available, helping drivers easily locate and access available chargepoints. In Spring 2021 we consulted on measures to improve the consumer experience of public charging and we will publish our response this winter and are seeking to lay legislation in the new year.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[86123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress he has made on rolling out electric vehicle charging points (a) nationally and (b) in York.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Data on public electric vehicle charging devices and private, grant-funded charging devices for the United Kingdom and York are presented in the table. Figures are up to 1 October 2021.

	TOTAL NUMBER OF CHARGING DEVICES IN THE UK, YEAR ENDING:			TOTAL NUMBER OF CHARGING DEVICES IN YORK, YEAR ENDING:		
	October 2021	October 2020	% change	October 2021	October 2020	% change
Total Public Devices	25,927	19,487	33	86	73	18
Rapid Devices <sup>1</sup>	4,923	3,530	39	13	13	0
Private Domestic Charging Devices <sup>2</sup>	230,148	168,809	36	651	453	44
Workplace Charging Device Sockets <sup>2</sup>	19,054	11,224	70	62	41	51

1. Rapid charging devices are those whose fastest connector is rated 25kW and above.
1. Data on both private charging domestic and workplace devices comes from three Office for Zero Emission Vehicle (OZEV) grant schemes: the Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) for businesses; the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme (EVHS) and its predecessor, the Domestic Recharge Scheme (DRS) for private domestic charging devices. The workplace chargepoints listed are exclusively for staff or fleet use. There will be a significant number of private domestic or workplace charging devices that have been installed without funding from OZEV. These are not captured in this data.

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line: Iron and Steel**

**Mick Whitley:**[\[R\] \[84484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of steel used in the construction of HS2 was produced in the UK as of 30 November 2021.

**Mick Whitley:**

[R] [\[84485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of steel that has been ordered to be used in the construction of HS2 as of 30 November 2021 will be produced in the UK.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport are committed to working with the UK steel industry to ensure it is engaged, informed and prepared to seize the contract opportunities that will be generated by HS2. HS2 Ltd's contractors are committed to signalling demand pipelines and tendering all steel opportunities in open and transparent competition. Social and environmental benefits and the impacts of proposals will be evaluated as part of a Balanced Scorecard approach to procurement, in alignment with the Procurement Policy Note 11/16: Procuring Steel in Major Projects. HS2 Ltd is currently providing its latest steel procurement data to the Department for Transport. This will in turn be provided to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and published as a single industry steel pipeline around Spring 2022.

**Mick Whitley:**

[R] [\[84487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that UK produced steel is increasingly used in the building of HS2.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd does not currently have any plans to buy steel directly. However, HS2 Ltd continues to uphold the principles of the Crown Commercial Service's Procurement Policy Note (11/16): Procuring Steel in Major Projects; which aims to reduce the barriers faced by UK steel producers when conducting procurement activity. For instance, the company's contractors are required to tender all steel requirements in open and transparent competition, applying a series of evaluation factors that take into account relevant social and environmental benefits.

HS2 Ltd has met with the UK Steel Board and pledged to work with UK Steel members and has also met with British Constructional Steel Association (fabricators) Confederation of British Metalforming, UK Steel Long Product Groups and the Galvanisers Association. HS2 Ltd has engaged extensively with the British steel industry over the last five years to ensure that it is in the best position possible to compete for contracts to build Britain's new high-speed rail network. The success of this engagement is underlined by the fact that, at tier 3, 28 of the 29 reinforcement fabrication contracts supplying the HS2 piling category today have been awarded to a total of 9 UK-based companies, as an example. HS2 Ltd also publishes a dedicated 'Steel Pipeline' to UK Steel and the BCSA on a quarterly basis (the last one being September 2021), which sets out upcoming steel-related contract opportunities.

## ■ **Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions**

**Martin Vickers:**

[\[84331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to page 24 of the Net Zero Strategy, what his Department's implementation timeline is for the zero emissions vehicle mandate; and what the next steps his Department plans to take are in respect of the zero emissions vehicle mandate.

**Trudy Harrison:**

As referenced in the Net Zero Strategy, the Government has committed to introducing a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Mandate, setting targets for a percentage of manufacturers' new car and van sales to be zero emission each year, from 2024.

The Government is currently analysing responses to the consultation, and will publish a full Government response in due course.

Following publication of the Government's response to the consultation, we will work to bring forward specific proposals. The first of these will most likely be in Spring 2022, with regulatory proposals for cars and vans.

## ■ **Motorways**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[84436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many of those appointed to oversee the Highways England smart motorway project hold either a (a) CEng or (b) IEng qualification.

**Trudy Harrison:**

National Highways does not routinely record the qualifications of employees and if any qualifications are required for specific roles, these are requested as part of selection and recruitment processes, to ensure that employees are suitably qualified for those posts.

## ■ **Transport: Schools**

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[83521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the home-to-school services exemption to the Public Services Vehicle Accessibility Regulations beyond 31 March 2022.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Bus and coach operators have already had many years to comply with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000, and I am disappointed that some operators in the rail replacement and home-to-school sectors are still unable to provide relevant services using compliant vehicles.

When writing to the industry in July to offer further temporary exemptions to 31 March 2022 to enable essential services to operate, the buses Minister Baroness Vere was clear that to be eligible for future (qualified) exemptions beyond 31 March 2022,

operators would need to demonstrate steps they have taken to comply with the Regulations.

We are finalising the scope and eligibility criteria for such exemptions and will provide further information in due course.

## TREASURY

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[904610\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the merits of supporting the River Severn Partnership to help provide (a) flood defence and (b) economic growth in the Shropshire region.

**Helen Whately:**

Reducing the likelihood and impact of flooding remains a priority for the Government and we recognise the important work of the River Severn Partnership. In the English Severn and Wye region £170 million will be invested in flood and coastal erosion risk management from 2021-2027.

The government wants every region to thrive. This is why the Government has invested £1.05bn over five years to the West Midlands to transform local transport networks, and there were 11 successful bids in the West Midlands for the £1.7bn first round of the £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund. Further, Shropshire and other places across the West Midlands will benefit from the Government's £5bn national programme, Project Gigabit, to support rollout of gigabit capable broadband.

**Elliot Colburn:**

[\[904611\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to help the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors recover from the covid-19 pandemic.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government has announced a new relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth almost £1.7 billion, to help support high streets.

This is part of a wider package announced at the conclusion of the Government's review of business rates, which is worth £7 billion over the next five years, including a freeze in the multiplier for 2022-23.

This follows unprecedented business rates support worth £16 billion for high streets throughout the pandemic.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[904613\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure value for money in public spending.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Spending Review 2021 has placed a renewed emphasis on ensuring that every pound of taxpayers' money is spent well and focused on the areas that make the most difference to people's daily lives.

As Chief Secretary, I work closely with the Director General for Public Spending to hold Departments to account on delivering Value for Money.

**Stephen Morgan:**[\[904619\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to tackle (a) tax avoidance, (b) money laundering and (c) other financial crimes following the publication of the Pandora Papers.

**John Glen:**

This government is committed to making the UK a hostile place for illicit finance and economic crime. We are determined to crack down on dirty money and financial exploitation, to protect our security and prosperity. We have taken action through our 'No Safe Havens' strategy to ensure the correct UK tax is paid; and our landmark 2019 Economic Crime Plan outlines a comprehensive response to ensure the UK cannot be abused for economic crime.

**■ Aviation: Fuels and Tickets****Sarah Olney:**[\[86160\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the annual revenue to the Exchequer that would have arisen in 2019-20 from extending (a) the present road fuel duty applicable to petrol to aviation fuel and (b) standard rate value added tax to airline passenger ticket sales.

**Sarah Olney:**[\[86161\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of how much the £3.6 billion of Air Passenger Duty levied in 2019-20 would have increased by in the event that the exemption on Air Passenger Duty for international-to-international transit passengers at UK airports had been removed.

**Helen Whately:**

Air Passenger Duty (APD) is the Government's principal tax on the aviation sector, since tickets are VAT free and aviation fuel incurs no duty. Members of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), including the United Kingdom, are prevented from taxing international aviation fuel, or any proxies for fuel, under the Chicago Convention.

APD raised £3.6 billion in 2019-20 and its primary objective is to ensure that airlines make a fair contribution to the public finances. APD is paid by airlines and is levied on a per-passenger basis on all flights departing UK airports.

## ■ Bank Cards: Coronavirus

**Mohammad Yasin:**

[\[86162\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the size of the increase in the level of card only transactions during the covid-19 outbreak; and what assessment he has made of the impact of that increase on vulnerable groups of people.

**John Glen:**

All businesses and individuals are encouraged to follow the latest Government advice to help control the virus. In order to work safely, retailers have been recommended to minimise contact around transactions, for example, by considering offering contactless payments where possible. Ultimately, it remains the individual retailer's choice whether to accept or decline any form of payment, including cash or card.

In recent years, the ongoing trend in UK payments has been away from cash and towards card payments and other digital payment methods. This transition brings opportunities, including the potential for faster and safer payments. Nonetheless, the Government recognises that access to cash remains important to millions of people across the UK, particularly some vulnerable groups. As such, the Government has committed to legislating to protect access to cash, and to ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable in the longer term.

## ■ Carbon Emissions: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[83416\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward an urgent climate mitigation budget in response to COP26 to ensure there is sufficient funding targeted at reducing the UK's carbon emissions in line with the Committee on Climate Change Carbon Budget recommendations.

**Helen Whately:**

The Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 confirmed that since March 2021, the government will have committed a total of £30bn of domestic investment for the Green Industrial Revolution (includes capital and resource expenditure, excludes admin). As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, this spending package, along with action on regulation and green finance, will keep the UK on track for its carbon budgets and 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution, and establishes the longer-term pathway towards net zero by 2050.

## ■ Child Benefit: Fraud

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[83528\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what procedure is in place for investigating alleged child benefit fraud where the victim is a Child Maintenance Service paying third party.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC is committed to preventing fraud in all forms to ensure that Child Benefit payments are protected only for those who are entitled to receive them. All allegations of fraud, irrespective of the source or alleged victim, are investigated thoroughly, legally, and robustly. It would put the effectiveness of these approaches, and therefore the public finances, at risk if HMRC were to publicly share details of its fraud investigation measures.

**Energy: Conservation****Ben Lake:**[\[83452\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2021 to Question 78497 on Energy: Conservation, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the 5 percent reduced rate to the supply of certain energy-saving materials.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government maintains a reduced rate of VAT of 5 per cent on the installation of many energy saving materials, subject to certain conditions.

Going further would impose additional pressure on the public finances, to which VAT makes a significant contribution. VAT raised around £130 billion in the year 2019-20, and helps to fund key spending priorities, including on health, education, and defence.

The Government keeps all taxes under review.

**Low Incomes****Stephen Metcalfe:**[\[904614\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to increase wages and support the lowest-income households.

**John Glen:**

The government is increasing the National Living Wage to £9.50 an hour from April 2022, which keeps us on track to meet our target to end low pay by 2024-25.

We have taken decisive action to make work pay by cutting the Universal Credit taper rate from 63p to 55p and increasing Universal Credit work allowances by £500 p.a.

These measures will help us to build a high skilled, high productivity, high wage economy.

**Mortgages: Tax Allowances****Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[83434\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his Answer of 2 November 2021 to Question 64692, on Mortgages: Tax Allowances, on what basis his Department has concluded that one in 10 landlords are affected by the decision to restrict tax relief on mortgage interest to the basic rate of income tax.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[83435\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his Answer of 2 November 2021 to Question 64692, on Mortgages: Tax Allowances, for what reason his Department's estimate of the number of landlords affected by the decision to restrict tax relief on mortgage interest to the basic rate of income tax has changed from one in five to one in 10.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The original estimate that 1 in 5 landlords would be affected by the decision to restrict finance cost relief to the basic rate of tax was a forecast based on limited information. The latest estimate of 1 in 10 is based upon received self-assessment tax returns for the tax year 2017-18, the first year after the restriction was brought into force. The statistic refers to individual UK landlords of residential property who completed the main self-assessment property return. It does not include corporate landlords, members of partnerships with property income, landlords of property abroad, landlords who completed the SA200 short self-assessment return, or owners of Furnished Holiday Lettings.

For tax year 2017-18, of all individuals that had declared property income via their self-assessment tax return, around 11 per cent, or approximately 1 in 10, paid more income tax as a result of the decision to restrict tax relief on mortgage interest to the basic rate of income tax.

**■ Private Rented Housing: Taxation****Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[83436\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Treasury has made of the potential impact of taxation on the supply of homes for private rent.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government believes good quality private rental accommodation is important and is committed to reforming the Private Rented Sector. The Government plans to publish a White Paper in 2022 which will set out a balanced package of reforms that works for both tenants and landlords.

In April 2016, the Government introduced higher rates of Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) for those purchasing additional properties as a second home or as a buy to let property. The higher rates are three percentage points above the standard SDLT rates and are part of the Government's commitment to support first time buyers and ensure an efficient use of housing.

**■ Public Sector: Heating****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[83349\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the overall direct cost to the public purse of heating costs for buildings used as workplaces by public sector workers, not including the homes of staff working from home, in winter 2021-22 compared to winter 2020-21.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

HM Treasury has not calculated the overall direct cost of heating for buildings used by public sector workers in winter 2021-22 compared to winter 2020-21.

**■ Revenue and Customs: Correspondence****Bridget Phillipson:****[83346]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HMRC monthly performance report: September 2021, what proportion of the 51.7 per cent of iForms and letters sent to HMRC in September 2021 which were not answered within 15 days were answered within one calendar month.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Information on HMRC performance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-quarterly-performance-updates>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-monthly-performance-reports>

**Bridget Phillipson:****[83347]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what targets he has set for improving the proportion of written correspondence sent to HM Revenue and Customs which is answered within (a) 15 days and (b) one calendar month.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Due to the impact of COVID-19, HMRC's role responding to COVID-19, and the wider economic uncertainty, HMRC agreed with Ministers that it would set rolling quarterly performance expectations rather than full year external targets for the year 2021-22. HMRC is publishing these expectations from the Quarter 2 expectation onwards within its quarterly performance publications:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-quarterly-performance-updates>

HMRC's Quarter 3 expectation, October – December 2021, for the percentage of correspondence cleared in 15 days is 55 per cent. This includes both post and online forms. There is no calendar month expectation.

**■ Revenue and Customs: Paper****Bridget Phillipson:****[83337]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of the paper purchased each year by HM Revenue and Customs for the purpose of printing and sending letters to people and businesses is partially or fully recycled paper.

**Lucy Frazer:**

As an ecologically conscious consumer, HMRC has ensured that all paper purchased by our supplier was from mills that are accredited by either the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification or the Forest Stewardship Council.

HMRC's Customer Communications supplier ensures that the paper meets ISO 14001, which is the international standard for environmental management, within their own supply chain.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[83338\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much paper is purchased each year by HM Revenue and Customs for the purpose of printing and sending letters to people and businesses in terms of (a) reams and (b) tonnes.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Records of paper purchased directly by HMRC are not held in such a way as to disaggregate the tonnage and reams of paper purchased solely for the process of printing and sending letters to people and businesses.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[83339\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much paper is recycled each year on average by HM Revenue and Customs.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC does not hold the data as requested.

In 2020-21, 76 per cent of HMRC's total waste was recycled, including paper. Top line figures are available on page 85 of HMRC's Annual Report and Accounts:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1035552/HMRC Annual Report and Accounts 2020 to 2021 Web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1035552/HMRC_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2020_to_2021_Web.pdf)

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Telephone Services

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[83345\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HMRC monthly performance report: September 2021, what steps were taken to contact, on the number from which they rang, the 20.8 per cent of callers to HMRC who wished to speak to an adviser in September 2021 but were unable to get through.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC do not attempt to contact customers whose telephone calls to them have not been answered. Customers can recontact HMRC if they still have concerns.

HMRC is working hard to improve performance and return it to pre-pandemic levels.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[83348\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what targets he has set for improving the overall proportion of telephone calls received by HM Revenue and Customs which are answered within (a) five minutes, (b) 10 minutes and (c) at all.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC no longer has a target for the time taken to answer telephone calls. Instead, HMRC now measures the percentage of customers who want to talk to an advisor

who are able to do so. This is called Advisor Attempts Handled. Further information on HMRC performance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-quarterly-performance-updates>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-monthly-performance-reports>

**Rachael Maskell:** [86118]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many calls to the telephone lines operated for taxation advice by HMRC were cut-off by the HMRC telephony system in January 2021 (a) due to the calls exceeding the telephone system queuing time limits and (b) for other reasons.

**Rachael Maskell:** [86119]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in January 2021 how many calls to HMRC's telephone advice lines for people completing a self assessment form were not answered by an HMRC call agent within (a) 20 minutes, (b) 15 minutes, (c) 10 minutes, (d) 5 minutes.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Information on HMRC performance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-quarterly-performance-updates>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-monthly-performance-reports>

## ■ Spirits: Finance

**Christine Jardine:** [904616]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to support domestic spirits producers.

**Helen Whately:**

At the Budget, the Government froze spirits duty for the fifth consecutive budget, saving consumers 52p off a bottle of Scotch. This is the eighth cut or freeze since 2014. It means spirits duty is at its lowest level in real-terms since 1918. Through our alcohol duty review, we are also equalising the duty rate on domestically produced liqueurs and other spirits-based drinks with imported wines.

## ■ Stamp Duty Land Tax: Second Homes

**Simon Jupp:** [83525]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue has been raised from the 3 per cent stamp duty surcharge placed on second homes from 2016 onwards as of 29 November 2021.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The values have been published in the quarterly Stamp Duty Land Tax publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-stamp-duty-land-tax-sdlit-statistics>

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[83372\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will commission a further independent review of the Loan Charge.

**Lucy Frazer:**

An independent review of the Loan Charge has already taken place. The 2019 Review, conducted by Lord Morse, concluded that it was right for the Loan Charge to remain in force and for the Government to collect the tax due.

The Government accepted all but one of the 20 recommendations in the review, which is estimated to benefit over 30,000 individuals, removing 11,000 from the Loan Charge entirely.

The charge on disguised remuneration loans is targeted at contrived tax avoidance schemes which seek to avoid income tax and National Insurance contributions by paying users their income in the form of loans, usually via an offshore trust. This kind of tax avoidance deprives the Exchequer of funds to deliver vital public services.

## ■ Taxation: Self-assessment

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[83342\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department has spent on advertising campaigns carried out by or on behalf of HM Revenue and Customs to encourage timely submission of self assessment forms by people in each of the last 10 years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The amount HMRC spent on Self-Assessment advertising in the years 2014-21 is shown in the table below. HMRC does not hold records of spend before the 2014 -15 financial year.

2014 - 15	£1,916,306
2015 – 16	£1,369,871
2016 – 17	£1,194,347
2017 – 18	£1,147,806
2018 – 19	£1,171,735
2019 – 20	£724,395
2020 – 21	£954,057

**Bridget Phillipson:****[83343]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which types of media and platforms, advertising campaigns carried out by or on behalf of HM Revenue and Customs encouraging timely submission of self assessment forms by people have been placed in each of the last five years; and how much has been spent on (a) the placement of those campaigns, by each medium or platform used and (b) all other associated costs.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC spent the following on Self-Assessment advertising by channel over the past five years. This is the most detailed channel breakdown available.

2016 – 17

Radio – £389,959

Out of Home (outdoor posters) – £409,505

Digital display - £58,055

Search engine advertising - £96,000

Social media - £20,000

Research - £139,000

Production - £81,828

Total - £1,194,347

2017 – 18

Radio - £234,931

Out of home - £289,794

Digital display - £149,661

Search engine advertising - £149,505

Research - £97,335

Production - £226,580

Total - £1,147,806

2018 – 19

Radio - £254,624

Out of home - £287,841

Digital display - £182,976

Search engine advertising - £99,909

Social media - £49,943

Research - £131,425

Production - £165,017

Total - £1,171,735  
2019 – 20  
Radio - £185,072  
Digital display - £188,363  
Search engine advertising - £89,152  
Social media - £72,930  
Research - £133,294  
Production - £55,584  
Total - £724,395  
2020 – 21  
Radio - £290,829  
Digital display - £281,545  
Search engine advertising - £90,661  
Social media - £144,851  
Research - £55,272  
Production - £90,899  
Total - £954,057

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[83344\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the value for money achieved from advertising spend on HM Revenue and Customs' campaigns to ensure timely submission of self assessment forms from individual taxpayers.

**Lucy Frazer:**

All Government campaigns are subject to rigorous planning and approvals processes, including peer review through the Government Communications Service. Advertising forms only a part of any campaign. They are bolstered with no and low-cost activity wherever possible.

HMRC fully evaluates its advertising campaigns to establish value for money for the UK taxpayer; this includes identifying the effectiveness of each channel as well as assessing the quality of the media bought. It also identifies learnings from each campaign that can be applied to future activity.

In the last three years, HMRC has done additional research into its major campaigns to identify a return on marketing investment. The figures for the Self-Assessment advertising campaign are below:

2020 – 21	14.1: 1 *
2019 – 20	16.8: 1
2018 – 19	9.91:1

\*for every £1 spent on advertising, HMRC saves £14.10 in administration costs

#### ■ Treasury: Internet and Social Media

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[83350\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether there are any formal or informal written internal guidelines or design principles on the production of his Department's graphics for web and social media use.

**Helen Whately:**

There is an internal written document setting out design guidelines for HM Treasury graphic design content.

#### ■ Treasury: Paper

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[83340\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much office printing paper is purchased each year on average by his Department in terms of (a) reams and (b) tonnes.

**Helen Whately:**

7,664 reams of paper on average were purchased by the department over the last three years. We do not have information relating to the printing paper purchased in tonnes.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[83341\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of the office printing paper purchased by his Department is partially or fully recycled.

**Helen Whately:**

All of the printing paper purchased by the department is fully recycled.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

#### ■ Children: Maintenance

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[83507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in her Department were employed in child maintenance in (a) 2011, (b) 2016 and (c) 2021.

**Guy Opperman:**

Due to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policies, we do not have the staffing numbers for 2011 so we have attached the earliest figures we have. The numbers are shown as Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and Headcount (HC).

There are some caveats around these numbers as in 2016 and earlier there were corporate functions (such as HR and finance) included within Child Maintenance Group and these were later subsumed within DWP and there were also some changes to the HR system and how staffing levels were calculated.

It is worth noting that the 2021 staffing figures also reflects that we had in the interim closed down our two older schemes (CSCS and CSA) therefore significantly reducing our caseload.

Child Maintenance Group

Aug-12 Mar-13 Mar-16 Mar-21 Oct-21

FTE 7618.83 7400.65 7433.29 3971.66 3626.66

HC 8708 8503 8738 4791 4368

**■ Social Security Benefits: Disability****Ruth Jones:**[\[81127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Welsh Government on the adequacy of legacy benefits for people with severe disabilities in Newport West constituency.

**Chloe Smith:**

There is a well-established working relationship between the Department for Work and Pensions and the Welsh Government, ensuring that we work together on devolved and reserved areas effectively.

There are a number of legacy benefits but people with severe disabilities in Wales are most likely to be in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). ESA caseload data for Wales, at both local authority and constituency level can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dwp-benefit-statistics-dissemination-tools#stat-xplore>.

ESA is paid at different rates depending on an individual's circumstances. In income-related ESA, claimants with severe disabilities may also be eligible for additional amounts, such as the Enhanced Disability Premium and or the Severe Disability Premium. To reflect the functional impacts of their health condition or disability on their capability to work, claimants found to have limited capability for work and work related activity receive an additional support group component.

Claimants may also be eligible for Personal Independence Payment to help meet the extra costs of living faced by disabled people.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

**Kate Osamor:** [\[84422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2021 to Question 78474 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, how many and what proportion of cases reviewed under the Risk Review Process have been closed as of 30 November 2021.

**Kate Osamor:** [\[84423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many cases that have been reviewed under her Department's Risk Review Process remain suspended as of 30 November 2021.

**Kate Osamor:** [\[84424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2021 to Question 78474 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, what proportion of claims reviewed by the Risk Review Team have been closed as a result of fraud as of 30 November 2021.

**David Rutley:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud

**Kate Osamor:** [\[84421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the policy that her Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service use to identify which benefit claims present a high fraud risk.

**Kate Osamor:** [\[84425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the policy that is followed by the Risk Review Team when investigating a claim they have suspended.

**David Rutley:**

The methods used to identify cases reviewed by the Risk Review Team are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified.

By putting such methods or the guidance in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: Liverpool West Derby

**Ian Byrne:** [\[86205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what impact assessment her Department has conducted on removing the pensions triple lock; and what estimate her Department has made of how many more pensioners in the Liverpool, West Derby

constituency will (a) be living in poverty and (b) unable to afford food, fuel and essentials as a result.

**Guy Opperman:**

We are not ending the Triple Lock for State Pensions up-rating. A full impact assessment is available in the House Library ([Deposited paper DEP2021-0855 - Deposited papers - UK Parliament](#)).

■ **Universal Credit (Exceptions to the Requirement not to be receiving Education) (Amendment) Regulations**

**Shabana Mahmood:** **[86553]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason an impact assessment was not completed for the Universal Credit (Exceptions to the Requirement not to be receiving Education) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 which came into force on 15 December 2021.

**David Rutley:**

An Impact Assessment had not been prepared for the Universal Credit (Exceptions to the Requirement not to be receiving Education) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 because they restore the original policy intent of Universal Credit.

■ **Universal Credit: Reviews**

**Feryal Clark:** **[83516]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will set out the processes and procedures of the Universal Credit Risk Review Department.

**David Rutley:**

The methods used to identify cases reviewed by the Risk Review Team are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified.

By putting such methods or the guidance in the public domain we would undermine the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

**Feryal Clark:** **[83517]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the risk of poverty among universal credit claimants whose payments are suspended whilst their case is with the Universal Credit Risk Review Department.

**David Rutley:**

Any decision by the Risk Review Team to suspend a claim to benefit is not made lightly. Suspending a claim would be a last resort, based on the risk that a person may not be entitled to receive a benefit payment.

Should a claim be suspended, once the Risk Review Team is in possession of all material requested and a decision is made that a person is entitled to benefit, then any suspension can be lifted immediately.

**Feryal Clark:**

**[83518]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure cases with the Universal Credit Risk Review Department are dealt with in a timely manner.

**David Rutley:**

The Risk Review Team (RRT) completes their reviews as quickly as possible. This is partly dependant on the co-operation of the claimant to provide any information requested to support the review.

We closely monitor the volumes of cases to ensure we have the correct resources on the team to take the necessary action on cases in a timely manner.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Commencement of the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018

**Minister of State (Minister for Care and Mental Health) (Gillian Keegan):**

[\[HCWS446\]](#)

Today, I am delighted to announce the commencement of the majority of the provisions of the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018, and alongside this, the publication of:

- i. the government's response to a public consultation on the draft statutory guidance; and
- ii. the revised statutory guidance, which has been reviewed considering the public consultation held earlier this year.

The provisions specified within the commencement regulations will be brought into force on 31 March 2022. This will allow reasonable time for mental health units to prepare for the new requirements the Act will place on them, and enable them to take account of the statutory guidance which is being published in advance of commencement, alongside the response to the recent public consultation on the statutory guidance.

The Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 was introduced in the House of Commons by the Honourable Member for Croydon North in July 2017 and received Royal Assent in November 2018. The Act, also known as Seni's Law, is named after Olaseni Lewis, who died as a result of being forcibly restrained by up to 11 police officers whilst he was a voluntary patient in a mental health unit. Seni was 23 at the time of his death, doing a post-graduate Masters in IT and business management at Kingston University and should have had his whole life ahead of him. Following their son's death, Aji, Conrad and the Lewis family campaigned and fought for justice for their son, and the answers to what happened to him on that day. It took seven years before there was an inquest, which ruled: "The excessive force, pain compliance techniques and multiple mechanical restraints were disproportionate and unreasonable"

The Act aims to clearly set out the measures which are needed to both prevent the inappropriate use of force and ensure accountability and transparency about the use of force in mental health units, encouraging a human-rights, trauma-informed and person-centred approach to patient care. The statutory guidance sets out how we expect mental health units to meet the requirements of the Act. The requirements of the Act and the statutory guidance provide a much-needed opportunity to embed a consistent approach across services nationally.

I believe every individual has the right to be treated with dignity, in a caring therapeutic environment which is free from abuse. The use of force can sometimes be necessary to secure the safety of patients and staff. However, it is always accompanied by risk and can often be a traumatic experience for patients when they are most vulnerable and in need of compassionate care. For too long mental health services have relied on the use of force, with data showing the use of force is at an all-time high.

This Act represents a vital step in efforts to reduce the use of force in mental health units, which affected over 13,000 individuals in 2020/21 and disproportionately those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

I am encouraged that this landmark piece of legislation enjoys the support of patients, people with lived experience, voluntary and charitable sector organisations and the NHS. Today's commencement of the majority of the Act represents a significant step forward in our efforts to prevent the use of inappropriate force in mental health units, which would not have been possible without the tireless campaigning of the Honourable Member for Croydon North, Aji and Conrad Lewis and their daughters Kemi and Lara. Aji Lewis, with the support of her family, continues to campaign to reduce the use of force and improve mental health services for all patients. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to meet with Aji and hear her family's and Seni's story directly from her.

This is part of the Government's wider reform agenda to improve support for individuals with severe mental illnesses. The Government published its Mental Health Act White Paper on 13 January 2021 which sets out proposals for once in a generation reforms to the Mental Health Act, responding to and building on the Independent Review of the Act, led by Professor Sir Simon Wessely's. As part of this, NHS England and NHS Improvement has developed the Patient and Carers Race Equality Framework to support mental health services to improve the experience of care for people from ethnic minority backgrounds by increasing staff understanding of their racial and cultural differences.

We are also working hard to achieve our NHS Long Term plan commitment to give 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illnesses greater choice and control over their care and support them to live well in their communities by 2023/24. Through this plan, we are also expanding services for people experiencing a mental health crisis including working towards 24/7 crisis resolution and home treatment services and investing in a range of local complementary and alternative crisis services. In addition, all NHS mental health providers have now established 24/7 all-age urgent mental health helplines for those experiencing a mental health crisis or those supporting them.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Prisons update

**Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Dominic Raab):** [\[HCWS447\]](#)

Today the government has published our Prisons Strategy White Paper which sets out our plans to build the prison places the country needs, transform the prison regime to protect the public, and to drive down re-offending and cut crime. The White Paper sets out our plans to deliver on this:

The White Paper sets out our ambitious plans to:

- Deliver the biggest prison building programme in more than 100 years, with almost £4 billion to create up to 20,000 additional prison places to help us to meet demand as tougher sentencing rules come in and the courts clear backlogs.

- Support a zero tolerance approach to weapons, drugs and contraband in prisons, disrupting criminal activity from within the prison walls and, crucially, ensuring good order and discipline in our estate so that staff and prisoners are safe and can focus on the purposeful activity which reduces reoffending.
- Use the prison system to get more prisoners off drugs, by improving drug testing and delivering access to a full range of drug and mental health treatment, including abstinence-based drug treatment options, with stronger continuity of drug treatment on release.
- Introduce an improved Prisoner Education Service, which ensures prisoners have access to a range of services to improve skills, such as literacy and numeracy, acquire qualifications, and is focused on opening up employment opportunities for prisoners on release.
- Transform the opportunities for work in prisons and on Release on Temporary License (ROTL) to increase job prospects for prison leavers, by holding Governors to account for the job opportunities and outcomes they achieve for prisoners.
- Provide the basics that offenders need to live crime-free lives (such as a CV, setting out the qualifications, skills and work experience gained in custody, ID and conditions of release) through a system of 'passports' to better aid resettlement and investing £200 million a year by 2024-25 to transform our approach to rehabilitation.
- Empower Governors to innovate locally, whilst still operating with and being assessed against clear outcome measures that align with the Government's priorities.
- Use clear, public and transparent prison performance statistics with published Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for prisons and league tables to compare performance and spread best practice, ensuring success is measured against our priorities: security and stability; substance misuse and mental health; and resettlement and family ties.
- Recruit an extra 5,000 prison officers and upskilling our existing staff by enhancing training, supervision, and qualifications; as well as making sure we hire the next generation of governors through an HMPPS fast-track scheme.
- Modernise our prisons with digital infrastructure so that prisoners have autonomy over their in-prison affairs, and staff have a reduced bureaucratic burden, enabling them to work more efficiently.

The full package of proposals will help us bring down rates of reoffending, which cost our economy over £18 billion per year, beat crime and build back better – to make our communities safer, and level up opportunities across the country. This White Paper sets out what we will deliver over the next two years as well as our longer-term ten-year vision. The White Paper can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prisons-strategy-white-paper>.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Fourth Substantive Report of the Independent Reporting Commission****Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis):****[\[HCWS448\]](#)**

I have received the fourth substantive report from the Independent Reporting Commission (IRC).

The IRC emanated from the Fresh Start Agreement of November 2015. That Agreement set out the Northern Ireland Executive's commitments around tackling paramilitary activity and associated criminality, and led to a programme of work to deliver a Northern Ireland Executive Action Plan containing 43 recommendations.

The New Decade New Approach Agreement, in January 2020, included a commitment to ongoing work to tackle paramilitarism and, earlier this year, it was agreed that a second phase of the programme of work to tackle paramilitary activity would run until March 2024.

This fourth substantive report builds on the work already undertaken by the Commissioners and highlights the ongoing challenge of paramilitarism, and reminds us of the important work still to be done.

I would like to thank the Commissioners for their work, particularly in delivering this year's report in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.