



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 16 December 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:47 P.M., 16 December 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|--|----------|--|----|
| ANSWERS | 5 | ■ Navy: Shipping | 10 |
| ATTORNEY GENERAL | 5 | DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT | 11 |
| ■ 10 Downing Street | 5 | ■ Broadband: Prices | 11 |
| ■ Slavery: Prosecutions | 5 | ■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Official Hospitality | 11 |
| BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY | 6 | ■ Disinformation | 12 |
| ■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: BGI | 6 | ■ Football Index: Compensation | 12 |
| ■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Theft | 6 | ■ Vaccination: Disinformation | 13 |
| ■ Toys and Games | 6 | EDUCATION | 13 |
| ■ Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre | 7 | ■ Music: Education | 13 |
| DEFENCE | 8 | ■ National Tutoring Programme | 14 |
| ■ Afghanistan: Refugees | 8 | ■ Schools: Sports | 15 |
| ■ Air Force: Carbon Emissions | 8 | ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS | 16 |
| ■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement | 8 | ■ Floods | 16 |
| ■ Armed Forces: Conditions of Employment | 9 | ■ Floods: Housing | 16 |
| ■ Armed Forces: Immigration | 9 | ■ Land Drainage | 16 |
| ■ Merlin Helicopters: Expenditure | 9 | ■ River Tees: Dredging | 17 |
| ■ Ministry of Defence: Official Hospitality | 10 | ■ Sewage: Rivers | 17 |
| | | ■ Shellfish: Tees Valley | 18 |
| | | FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE | 19 |
| | | ■ Belarus: Poland | 19 |

| | | | |
|--|----|--|----|
| ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination | 19 | HOME OFFICE | 29 |
| ■ Developing Countries: Poliomyelitis | 20 | ■ Asylum: Local Government | 29 |
| ■ Ethiopia: Human Rights | 20 | ■ Biometric Residence Permits | 29 |
| ■ Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid | 21 | ■ Home Office: Official Hospitality | 30 |
| ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Official Hospitality | 21 | ■ Immigration | 30 |
| ■ Myanmar: Ukraine | 22 | ■ Immigration: Armed Forces | 31 |
| ■ Pakistan: Animal Welfare | 22 | ■ Members: Correspondence | 31 |
| ■ Somalia: Peacekeeping Operations | 23 | ■ Napier Barracks | 31 |
| ■ Tigray: Detainees | 23 | ■ Passports: Delivery Services | 31 |
| HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE | 24 | ■ Refugees: Afghanistan | 32 |
| ■ Ambulance Services: Shropshire | 24 | ■ Travel | 32 |
| ■ Blood Tests: Finance | 24 | ■ Visas: Migrant Workers | 33 |
| ■ Clinical Trials | 24 | JUSTICE | 33 |
| ■ Defibrillators | 25 | ■ Ministry of Justice: Official Hospitality | 33 |
| ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions | 25 | LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES | 33 |
| ■ Dietary Supplements | 25 | ■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Official Hospitality | 33 |
| ■ Health Services: Private Sector | 25 | SCOTLAND | 33 |
| ■ Hospitals: Discharges | 26 | ■ Seed Potatoes: Scotland | 33 |
| ■ Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis | 26 | TRANSPORT | 34 |
| ■ Medical Treatments: Public Consultation | 26 | ■ Abbey Line | 34 |
| ■ Members: Correspondence | 27 | ■ Ambulance Services: Carbon Emissions | 34 |
| ■ Primary Health Care: Allied Health Professions | 27 | ■ Blue Badge Scheme: Older People | 35 |
| ■ Prostate Cancer: Screening | 27 | ■ Bus Services: Rural Areas | 35 |
| ■ Strokes: Mechanical Thrombectomy | 28 | ■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Standards | 35 |
| ■ Surgery: Waiting Lists | 28 | ■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points | 36 |
| ■ Travel: Coronavirus | 29 | ■ Electric Vehicles: Safety | 36 |

| | | | |
|--|-----------|---|-----------|
| ■ Large Goods Vehicles: Concrete | 37 | ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Official Hospitality | 49 |
| ■ Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen | 38 | ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Theft | 49 |
| ■ Public Transport: Protective Clothing | 38 | ■ Industrial Health and Safety: Natural Gas | 50 |
| ■ Railway Stations: Parking | 39 | WRITTEN STATEMENTS | 51 |
| ■ Railways: Midlands | 39 | BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY | 51 |
| ■ Taxis: Carbon Emissions | 39 | ■ Enhancing the UK's Nuclear Third Party Liability Framework | 51 |
| TREASURY | 40 | CABINET OFFICE | 52 |
| ■ Business: Coronavirus | 40 | ■ Independent Review of Construction Frameworks | 52 |
| ■ Cheques | 40 | DEFENCE | 53 |
| ■ Children: Day Care | 41 | ■ Future Nuclear Deterrent Annual Update 2021 | 53 |
| ■ Citizens' Advice Bureaux: Oxfordshire | 42 | EDUCATION | 53 |
| ■ Coronavirus: Government Assistance | 43 | ■ School and Early Years Funding Update | 53 |
| ■ Corporation Tax: British Petroleum and Shell | 44 | HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE | 55 |
| ■ Culture Recovery Fund: Wales | 44 | ■ Adult Social Care Funding and Reform | 55 |
| ■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus | 44 | ■ David Fuller case: update on actions | 57 |
| ■ Goods Vehicle Movement Service | 45 | ■ Government Response to the Independent Inquiry Report into the Issues raised by Former Surgeon Ian Paterson | 58 |
| ■ National Insurance Contributions | 45 | ■ Medicines Update | 63 |
| ■ Small Businesses: Inflation | 45 | HOME OFFICE | 64 |
| ■ Tax Avoidance | 46 | ■ INTERPOL General Assembly | 64 |
| ■ Treasury: Theft | 46 | ■ Provisional Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2022/23 | 64 |
| ■ UK Trade with EU: Import Controls | 47 | ■ UK Anti-Corruption Strategy – Year 3 Update | 68 |
| WORK AND PENSIONS | 48 | | |
| ■ Child Maintenance Service: Standards | 48 | | |
| ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Carbon Emissions | 48 | | |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|---|----|
| ■ Work of the Home Office | 70 | WORK AND PENSIONS | 78 |
| LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES | 75 | ■ Disability Workforce Reporting Consultation | 78 |
| ■ Local Government Finance | 75 | | |

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ 10 Downing Street

Emily Thornberry: [90369]

To ask the Attorney General, whether she plans to oversee the Government Legal Department in their assistance of the inquiry into the events in Downing Street on 18 December 2020 announced on 8 December 2021.

Emily Thornberry: [90370]

To ask the Attorney General, whether she plans to ensure full operational independence of the Government Legal Department in their assistance of the inquiry into the events in Downing Street on 18 December 2020 announced on 8 December 2021.

Suella Braverman:

In my roles as chief legal adviser to the Government and sponsoring minister of the Government Legal Department (GLD), I oversee the provision of legal support by GLD to all of its client departments, including the Cabinet Office. When advising their clients, GLD lawyers provide advice in accordance with their professional duties and on behalf of the Treasury Solicitor, who is the head of the GLD. The [Ministerial Code](#) and [Cabinet Manual](#) set out the circumstances in which ministers and their policy officials consult the Law Officers on legal matters.

■ Slavery: Prosecutions

Dr Matthew Offord: [89565]

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of prosecutions of offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has had considerable success in increasing prosecutions of modern slavery cases involving the exploitation of vulnerable people. In addition to the number of offences charged by way of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, CPS records identify the number of defendants prosecuted for offences related to modern slavery, including conspiracy to commit Modern Slavery Act offences, which is charged under s1 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 . The number of defendants who have been prosecuted for modern slavery offences increased from 284 in 2017-18 to 322 in 2020-21, an increase of 13.4%. The increase has been achieved despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: BGI****Paul Holmes:**[\[89691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department or its Arm's Length Bodies has a working relationship, including on contractual or commercial terms, with BGI Group or any of its subsidiaries.

George Freeman:

BEIS does not have any contractual or commercial terms with BGI Group (BGI) or any of its subsidiaries.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Theft****Sarah Olney:**[\[89634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many of his Department's (a) laptops, (b) mobile phones, (c) memory sticks and (d) external hard drives have been lost or stolen in each of the last five years.

George Freeman:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has lost or had stolen the following numbers of laptops and mobile phones:

| <i>DATE</i> | <i>NUMBER OF LAPTOPS LOST</i> | <i>NUMBER OF LAPTOPS STOLEN</i> | <i>NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES LOST</i> | <i>NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES STOLEN</i> |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2017 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2018 | 6 | 6 | 27 | 5 |
| 2019 | 16 | 28 | 125 | 32 |
| 2020 | 10 | 18 | 63 | 12 |
| 2021 (to 09 Dec) | 6 | 14 | 74 | 11 |

Information about the loss or theft of memory sticks and external hard drives is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Toys and Games****Sarah Olney:**[\[90488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many meetings Ministers have held with representatives of the toys industry in the last year; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle the impact of (a) supply chain issues, (b) trade disruption and (c) labour shortages on the import and manufacture of toys.

Lee Rowley:

The Department publishes details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations on a quarterly basis, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

We recently established a Supply Chain Advisory Group and Industry Taskforce, which provides a link between business and the Government to identify causes of supply chain issues and what Government action may be proportionate.

■ Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre**Mary Glendon:****[90873]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason the Government is selling the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre.

George Freeman:

[Holding answer 15 December 2021]: VMIC was a project set up in the 2017 Life Sciences Sector Deal to support UK leadership in next generation vaccine manufacturing technology. The pandemic has dramatically accelerated both the demand and the technology of vaccine production since VMIC was established. The Government has invested over £380 million to secure and scale-up the UK's manufacturing capabilities to be able to respond to this pandemic, as well as any future pandemics, and in support of vaccine innovation at numerous facilities across the UK. Our positive engagement with industry and the UK's strong science base and international reputation has also seen a number of private investments across the whole of the UK announced over the past year. These include Serum Institute of India's £50m investment into Oxford Biomedica, Thermo Fisher Scientific's £70m expansion of its Swindon site and Fujifilm's £400m investment into its Billingham, Teesside facility.

One such facility that the Government provided support to is the Vaccine Manufacturing Innovation Centre (VMIC) which has the potential to be a significant part of the UK vaccine manufacturing ecosystem. VMIC is a private company, limited by guarantee, and as such the UK Government does not exercise any ownership rights.

Officials are working closely with VMIC and other third parties to ensure that the UK retains a strong domestic vaccine manufacturing capability to contribute to our response to COVID-19 and resilience to other future health emergencies. We will ensure that the UK's vaccine capabilities continue to benefit from the public investment. Discussions are commercially sensitive between VMIC and private potential acquirers.

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Refugees**

Dan Jarvis: [\[91966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan nationals deemed eligible for relocation to the UK were successfully evacuated before 28 August 2021; and what proportion (a) received letters of eligibility (b) received letters of eligibility and were called forward to Hamid Karzai International Airport.

James Heappey:

Approximately 7,000 Afghan Nationals were evacuated to the UK under the ARAP Scheme between 1 April and 28 August 2021. All necessary precaution was taken to ensure that established processes were abided by during OP PITTING. However, whilst the fast-moving situation developed, military and civilian personnel on the ground exercised an appropriate level of due diligence, balancing the urgent need to evacuate and the imminent threat to life. As a result the information requested is not held.

■ Air Force: Carbon Emissions

Patrick Grady: [\[90891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what dates meetings have taken place as part of the Global Air Chiefs Climate Change Initiative since its launch by the Chief of the Air Staff.

Jeremy Quin:

Since the launch of the Global Air Chiefs Climate Change Initiative in July 2021, the following meetings have taken place:

19 October 2021 - Deputy Chiefs' Meeting, led by the Royal Air Force;

30 November 2021 - Mission Planning and Execution working group meeting, led by the United States Air Force.

The 19 October meeting hosted by the RAF brought together participants from 41 different nations both in person and virtually.

A number of workstrands have been developed with further meetings planned in 2022.

■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[91858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many vehicle boxes have been delivered by GD from Spain to the factory in Wales.

Jeremy Quin:

296 Ajax Hulls have been delivered to the GD factory in Wales.

■ **Armed Forces: Conditions of Employment**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[91967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the length is of the defined return of service period by role in the (a) British Army, (b) Royal Air Force and (c) Royal Navy.

Leo Docherty:

The following information has been provided by the single Services.

British Army

Returns of service (RoS) are not directly linked to roles. However, recruits and soldiers wishing to enter certain trades and career paths may be required to complete specified training courses to do so and then become subject to a return of service.

Royal Air Force (RAF)

The Initial Training RoS required of Aviators (RAF Service personnel), following their initial Phase 2 professional training, is three years for most personnel and six years for Aircrew. The RoS are not focused on the role an individual is undertaking, but based on the training provided to an individual in order to seek a return on the investment made by the Ministry of Defence in the individual. In addition to an Initial Training RoS, personnel may attend additional training courses throughout their career, some of which also carry a Training RoS requirement.

Naval Service

Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel are required to complete a RoS if they have undertaken a course of funded training, taken up a secondment or placement within industry or been assigned into a designated command appointment. Training falls into two areas: initial training, undertaken by Officers, Ratings and Other Ranks prior to joining the trained strength; and further training, undertaken by those who have joined the trained strength.

■ **Armed Forces: Immigration**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[91968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Immigration Costs for Armed Forces Personnel Consultation, what evidence his Department used to decide the 12-year threshold for settlement fee waiver; and if he will make a statement.

Leo Docherty:

12 years reflects the full initial engagement period for all three Services.

■ **Merlin Helicopters: Expenditure**

John Healey:

[\[91833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2021 to Question 76577, on Merlin Helicopters: Expenditure, whether the incorrect recording of Merlin component lives leading to the fruitless payment of £20.995 million is related to the loss of Merlin Helicopter engineering record cards referred to in the fruitless payments

section on page 160 of the Ministry of Defence Annual Reports and Accounts 2011-12 resulting in a fruitless payment of £564,000.

Jeremy Quin:

The two fruitless payments covered in these Annual Report and Accounts (ARAc) entries relate to separate events. The fruitless payment of £20.995 million, referenced in the Department's ARAc financial year (FY) 2014-15, reflect additional costs incurred under the Integrated Merlin Operational Support contract including a period of reduced aircraft availability in delivery of the Merlin Capability Sustainment Programme. There were underlying issues with some aspects of data and asset management on this platform within the Department leading to additional costs under the support contract and as a result of limiting availability of aircraft for a capability sustainment programme.

The £0.564 million fruitless payment covered in the FY2011-12 ARAc relates to the same Operational Support Contract. The payment was for additional costs that were incurred by the supplier due to the loss within the Ministry of Defence of a number of Engineering Record Cards. Component lives and the consumption of these lives as well as records of modification, repair and overhaul, were recorded on the cards. Without this information, worst case assumptions (penalty lives) had to be made about the life of components in order to be assured that the aircraft remained safe, which increased the need for maintenance and replacement parts.

The Department has since reviewed and improved its procedures, including the use of new record-keeping software, to avoid further such costs arising.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Official Hospitality**

Sarah Owen:

[\[90954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any social events took place between three or more people within his Departmental buildings between (a) 5 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 and (b) 16 December 2020 and 22 February 2021.

Leo Docherty:

This information is not collected. At the time, staff were expected to work from home and undertake meetings remotely, wherever possible.

■ **Navy: Shipping**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[91847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in the context of his Department's decision to buy up to 61 new intercept vessels, which vessels they will be replacing; when the Department will tender for the design of those new vehicles; and what estimate his Department has made of the cost of the contract.

Jeremy Quin:

A tender was issued on 10 December 2021 for the procurement of up to 61 new intercept vessels. The deadline for tender response is 4 February 2022 after which responses will be assessed against the various assessment criteria. It is expected

that the Invitation to Negotiate will be issued in March 2022. The Intercept and Escort Craft project's aim is to replace the following craft variants:

- Avon Sea Rider
- Pacific 22 and 24
- Arctic 24
- Delta Dive Rigid Inflatable Boats

The project will reduce the number of variants currently operated while upgrading capability.

The estimated tender value has been advertised at between £16 million and £26 million.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Broadband: Prices**

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[92095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with OFCOM on the (a) affordability of current broadband contract prices and (b) the ease of switching between broadband providers.

Julia Lopez:

DCMS continues to work alongside Ofcom to encourage Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to go further to support low-income families.

Following our discussions with the telecoms sector, affordable social tariffs are now available from BT, Virgin Media, Hyperoptic, Community Fibre and KCOM for £15 per month to those on Universal Credit as well as other means-tested benefits. These ISPs operate in 99% of the UK. We continue to have on-going discussions with Ofcom who have a statutory duty to monitor affordability in the telecommunications sector. We also continue to encourage all operators to introduce affordable tariffs.

DCMS also continues to work with Ofcom on the issue of switching. Ofcom introduced new [rules](#) in September 2021 which are designed to make broadband switching easier. Under these rules, consumers only need to contact their new ISP, who will lead the switching process, regardless of the underlying network provider or connection type. These rules will go into effect in April 2023.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Official Hospitality**

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[90969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether any social events took place between three or more people within her Departmental buildings between (a) 5 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 and (b) 16 December 2020 and 22 February 2021.

Julia Lopez:

This information is not collected. At the time, staff were expected to work from home and undertake meetings remotely, wherever possible.

Disinformation**Wes Streeting:** [\[90923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date was the most recent meeting of the Government's counter disinformation forum.

Wes Streeting: [\[90924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date was the most recent meeting of the Government's counter disinformation forum in which anti-vaccine disinformation was discussed.

Chris Philp:

The Counter Disinformation Policy Forum was a six-month pilot programme that concluded on 10 June 2021. It brought together social media companies, academics, fact-checkers and researchers in response to concerns about the serious risk of harm posed by COVID-19 and anti-vaccination mis/disinformation.

Although the Policy Forum has concluded, DCMS regularly meets with major social media platforms bilaterally and at an Industry Group. This helps further our collective understanding of the issues and the steps being taken to address misinformation and disinformation in order to ensure this issue is tackled effectively. DCMS also continues to engage with relevant cross-sector expertise from across academia and civil society.

In addition the DCMS-led Counter Disinformation Unit monitors for false and misleading narratives shared on social media. Where dangerous and incorrect claims about the virus are identified these are flagged to the relevant platforms.

Football Index: Compensation**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[91902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to publish her Department's White Paper on the future of the Gambling Act; and whether that White Paper will include recommendations relating to the collapse of the Football Index.

Chris Philp:

The Government will publish a white paper setting out next steps regarding the Gambling Act Review in the coming months. We are considering all the evidence carefully, including the conclusions of the independent review of the regulation of BetIndex Ltd, the operator of Football Index, which we published in September.

■ Vaccination: Disinformation

Wes Streeting: [\[90926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many posts have been reported to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube for anti-vaccine disinformation by the Government's rapid response unit.

Chris Philp:

The Government takes the issue of disinformation very seriously. Since March 2020 the DCMS-led cross-Government Counter Disinformation Unit (CDU) has worked to provide a comprehensive picture of the extent, scope and the reach of disinformation and misinformation linked to COVID-19.

The Unit's primary function is to provide a comprehensive picture of the extent, scope and impact of disinformation and misinformation regarding Covid-19 and to work with partners to ensure appropriate action is taken. Where dangerous and incorrect claims about the virus are identified these are flagged to the relevant platforms, whose responsibility it is to take action in accordance with their terms and conditions. As an operational matter it is not appropriate for the government to give a running commentary on the amount of disinformation identified.

EDUCATION

■ Music: Education

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[91876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he will publish his National Plan for Music Education.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[91877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many times the expert advisory panel on music education has met since it was formed in August 2021.

Mr Robin Walker:

On 6 August, the government announced plans to work with a panel of experts from across the music education sector to develop a refreshed national plan for music education. This will shape the future of music education in this country, so that more children and young people have access to a good quality music education. The refreshed plan will be published early next year.

The announcement follows the publication of the non-statutory Model Music Curriculum in March, and the publication of the music education consultation report published in August, based on responses to the call for evidence to inform the refreshed plan and conducted between February and March 2020.

The advisory panel includes teachers and representatives from the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and UK Music, as well as Darren Henley, Chief Executive

of Arts Council England, whose independent Review of Music Education in England informed the original national plan. To date, the panel have met on three occasions.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Robert Halfon: [\[89551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Tuition Partners pillar of the National Tutoring Programme, what the regional breakdown is of the pupils enrolled as of 8 December 2021; and whether that breakdown fits with his Department's stated priorities.

Robert Halfon: [\[89552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Tuition Partners pillar of the National Tutoring Programme, what proportion of pupils enrolled on that programme receive the pupil premium.

Robert Halfon: [\[89553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the School-led tutoring grant scheme, how many pupils have (a) been enrolled for 2021-22 and (b) had at least one tutoring session as of 8 December 2021 under that scheme; how many schools have booked in tutoring under that scheme; and whether those figures are above, below or on target for this point in the 2021-22 academic year.

Robert Halfon: [\[89554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the School-led tutoring grant scheme, what proportion of enrolled pupils under that scheme receive the pupil premium.

Robert Halfon: [\[89555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the School-led tutoring grant scheme, what the regional breakdown is of the pupils enrolled under that scheme as of 8 December 2021; and whether that breakdown fits with his Department's stated priorities for that scheme.

Robert Halfon: [\[89556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils have been supported through the academic mentoring pillar of the National Tutoring Programme in 2021.

Robert Halfon: [\[89557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils supported in 2021 through academic mentoring receive the pupil premium.

Mr Robin Walker:

National Tutoring Programme (NTP) participation data has not yet been published.

The department continues to collect data from schools for all three strands of the programme (school-led tutoring, tuition partners and academic mentors) and will be publishing this shortly.

The NTP aims to engage up to 2 million pupils this year, and to deliver up to 90 million hours of tuition by the 2024/25 academic year.

Schools choose which pupils receive tutoring according to their individual needs. However, the £579 million for school-led tutoring has been allocated using the number of pupils in each school attracting the pupil premium. In addition, the department is working to ensure at least 65% of tuition partner tutoring goes to disadvantaged pupils.

An independent evaluation of the programme for the current academic year is being undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research.

■ Schools: Sports

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[89586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress his Department has made on discussions with the (a) Department of Health and Social Care, and (b) Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on confirming funding for the School Games Organiser network beyond March 2022.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[89587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the impact on schools of the (a) lack of confirmation of funding for the School Games Organiser network beyond March 2022 and (b) uncertainty around the future of the PE and Sport Premium beyond the 2021-22 academic year.

Will Quince:

The department is considering arrangements for the primary PE and sport premium for the 2022-23 academic year and beyond. We are aware of the importance of providing schools with sufficient notice of future funding and will confirm the position as early as possible in the new year.

Similarly, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) are considering arrangements for the School Games Organisers programme and will confirm the position on future funding as soon as possible.

The department is also working to deliver on the nearly £30 million announced in October towards improving and opening up school sport facilities in England, as well as to improve the teaching of PE at primary school. We will continue to work closely with DCMS and DHSC to deliver on the aims of the school sport and activity action plan which we will be updating next year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Floods**

Rachael Maskell: [\[89619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to rapidly protect communities that experience flooding in winter 2021-22.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) is prepared to take action this winter wherever it is needed. It has 6,000 trained staff, 40km of temporary barriers and over 250 mobile pumps that can be deployed anywhere in England within 48 hours. The EA will use its flood warning system to directly alert those at risk when flooding is expected.

If flood defences are damaged during the winter, the EA will take rapid action to carry out temporary repairs or put in place contingency measures to keep communities safe.

■ Floods: Housing

Rachael Maskell: [\[89618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions has he had with Flood Re on extending the scheme to homes built after 2009 that are not protected by resilience measures.

Rebecca Pow:

Engagement with Flood Re is frequent, however, there is no intention to extend the Scheme to include homes built after 2009. Changes to planning policy in 2006 set out that inappropriate development in floodplains should be avoided and local planning authorities must consider the strict tests in the National Planning Policy Framework that protect people and property from flooding. Where development is necessary in a flood risk area, it should be made safe for its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and be appropriately flood resistant and resilient. In July 2021 the Framework was strengthened further to ensure that *all* sources of flood risk are considered during plan making and providing a clear definition of what it means for a property to be resilient to flooding. This also includes clearly defining that properties should be built to be quickly recoverable in the event of flooding, without significant refurbishment.

■ Land Drainage

Rachael Maskell: [\[89614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of mandating the use of SuDs where recommended in planning.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is reviewing the case for implementing Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in England. Schedule 3 was designed to set ministerial standards for the construction of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) on new developments. This review will look at the benefits and impacts of implementation as well as alternative methods for ensuring that SuDS are incorporated in future developments and maintained after construction.

River Tees: Dredging**Mr Robert Goodwill:**[\[89525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will publish the risk assessments and relevant documents relating to the dredging on the River Tees in September and October 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

All applications, decisions and supporting documentation associated with licensed dredging activity are published on the [Marine Licensing public register](#). This includes the results of sampling and testing undertaken in accordance with international guidance developed to ensure this activity does not harm marine life.

Sewage: Rivers**Stephen Morgan:**[\[87818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of instructing the Environment Agency to require water providers to publish their mapped sewage pollution data for areas in which they have sewage outlets in rivers or watercourses.

Stephen Morgan:[\[87819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring water providers to produce live day-to-day reporting of sewage discharges into rivers and watercourses they are responsible for.

Stephen Morgan:[\[87822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of regulations on water providers on notifying customers of sewage discharges those companies are responsible for into rivers and watercourses.

Stephen Morgan:[\[87823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including a Budds Farm treatment centre within the storm overflow discharge reduction plan.

Rebecca Pow:

Working with water companies, the Environment Agency has concluded a programme to install Event Duration Monitors (EDM) on the vast majority of storm overflows, just over 80% of overflows in England, by the end of 2020. These monitors provide a robust and consistent way of monitoring how often and for how long storm overflows are used. By the end of 2023, the remaining number will be monitored.

Our landmark Environment Act places a direct duty on Water Companies and the Environment Agency to publish this sewage discharge data, building on the commitments to openness and transparency made through the Defra led Storm Overflows taskforce. This data was published for the first time in March 2021 for data in 2020.

The Environment Act also goes further, requiring water companies to monitor both the upstream and downstream impacts of their assets and to notify of spills in near real time (within 1 hour). The government will be bringing forward implementing legislation in respect of these duties in due course. The Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan, also legislated for in the Environment Act, is due to be published in September 2022.

It will be up to individual water companies to take account of the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan and other guidance when considering specific local projects to be included as part of their business plans.

■ Shellfish: Tees Valley**Mr Robert Goodwill:****[89526]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support his Department has given to fishermen and coastal communities affected by the mass deaths of crustacea on the Tees Valley coast.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra has regularly updated stakeholders and attended a public meeting on 14 December with the industry and its representatives. This gave an opportunity for industry to raise concerns and to hear actions taken to date as part of the multi-agency response to ascertain and address any potential cause for the mortality. Advice to fishermen and coastal communities has been provided in relation to food safety and hygiene practice, and we remain in close contact with fishermen and others to fully understand the impacts of the incident.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Belarus: Poland****Alex Norris:**[\[92066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure migrants on the Poland-Belarus border are able to access humanitarian assistance.

Wendy Morton:

As the Foreign Secretary wrote on 14 November [<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/we-must-stand-together-for-freedom-and-democracy>], the situation at the Polish border marks the latest step by the Lukashenko regime to undermine regional security. He is using desperate migrants as pawns in his bid to create instability and to cling on to power regardless of the human cost. We have made clear to the Belarusian authorities, including through their Ambassador to the UK, that this harmful, aggressive and exploitative behaviour must stop.

The UK is supporting its humanitarian partners to help alleviate the suffering of migrants at the border, including through our contributions to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund, organised by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and through our political advocacy. As President of the G7, the UK led on an 18 November Foreign Ministers statement, which called on the Belarusian regime to provide international organisations with immediate and unhindered access to deliver humanitarian assistance. We were also pleased to send a small team of personnel to Poland to provide engineering support to ease pressure at the border. The Foreign Secretary discussed the situation with her Polish counterpart on 16 November, reiterating the UK's support and solidarity with Poland.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[90380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to ensure that covid-19 vaccines donated by the UK which are then destroyed rather than being used are excluded from being counted as Official Development Assistance.

Wendy Morton:

There are ongoing discussions at the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) regarding how donations of vaccine doses should be reported in ODA in 2021. No decision has yet been made.

Avoiding vaccine expiry and wastage is a core UK objective, and determines when and where we share or deploy doses. Vaccines delivered by COVAX are delivered in consultation with recipient countries, and distributed in line with the World Health Organisation's 'equitable allocation framework.' For all bilateral donations, we have sought assurances from recipients that they have the capacity to roll out the quantity

of doses offered in line with National Deployment and Vaccination Plans ahead of their expiry dates.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[92042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government supports the OECD proposal to value donations of excess covid-19 vaccine doses in Official Development Assistance at 6.72 USD.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[92043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics of 8 December 2021, whether the Government supports the conclusion that the price of USD 6.72 per dose sets the right incentives to expand the roll out of vaccines to the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries, while also protecting the integrity of ODA and avoiding ODA inflation that might come at the expense of humanitarian and development programmes in developing countries.

Wendy Morton:

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has made a proposal on valuing donations of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021. Discussions are ongoing between DAC members, and within government. As yet, there is no consensus amongst DAC members. We are asking for certain clarifications on the proposal before making a final decision on whether or not to support this proposal.

■ **Developing Countries: Poliomyelitis**

Sarah Champion: [\[89585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the Government plans to allocate to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in (a) 2022 and (b) 2023.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is a strong supporter of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) having provided £1.37 billion in total since 1995. Commitments to GPEI in 2022 and 2023 will be determined as part of the Spending Review.

■ **Ethiopia: Human Rights**

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[91897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the United Nations Human Rights Council on 17 December 2021, if she will take steps to discuss at that meeting the potential merits of (a) introducing a robust independent mechanism to investigate human rights abuses during the current conflict in Ethiopia and (b) tackling the spread of misinformation.

Vicky Ford:

We have frequently and consistently raised the need for full humanitarian access in Ethiopia at the Human Rights Council and at the UN Security Council. The Foreign

Secretary, as Chair of the G7 Foreign and Development Minister's meeting, made a statement on 12 December also calling for unimpeded humanitarian access. The statement also called for an additional independent investigation on human rights violations as recommended by the Joint Investigation report from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. In my most recent discussion with Ethiopian Government Ministers - with Minister of State Redwan on 18 November and Justice Minister Gedion on 6 December - I raised our concerns about mass detentions, ethnic profiling, and hate speech. We will continue to take all opportunities to raise these important matters.

■ Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[91896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take steps to raise issues of humanitarian access to (a) Tigray and (b) other areas of Ethiopia at the special session of the United Nations Human Rights Council planned for 17 December 2021.

Vicky Ford:

We have frequently and consistently raised the need for full humanitarian access in Ethiopia at the Human Rights Council and at the UN Security Council. The Foreign Secretary, as Chair of the G7 Foreign and Development Minister's meeting, made a statement on 12 December also calling for unimpeded humanitarian access. The statement also called for an additional independent investigation on human rights violations as recommended by the Joint Investigation report from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. In my most recent discussion with Ethiopian Government Ministers - with Minister of State Redwan on 18 November and Justice Minister Gedion on 6 December - I raised our concerns about mass detentions, ethnic profiling, and hate speech. We will continue to take all opportunities to raise these important matters.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Official Hospitality

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[90966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any social events took place between three or more people within her Departmental buildings between (a) 5 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 and (b) 16 December 2020 and 22 February 2021.

Amanda Milling:

This information is not collected. At the time, staff were expected to work from home and undertake meetings remotely, wherever possible.

■ Myanmar: Ukraine**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[90390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she made representations on ending Ukrainian supply of arms to the Myanmar military in her meeting with her Ukrainian counterpart on 8 December 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is a longstanding supporter of an arms embargo on Myanmar. Since the coup, we have intensified efforts to stem the flow of weapons and dual-use goods reaching the military, through the G7, UN and with other close partners. We noted, with concern, the reports of arms sales from Ukraine to Myanmar but are pleased that Ukraine signed up to the UN General Assembly Resolution in July, which commits to preventing the flow of arms to Myanmar. The British Embassy in Kyiv has also engaged directly with the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the issue, and coordinated with partners on lobbying efforts. We continue to urge them to ensure they are delivering on their commitments. The UK is coordinating with partners to further investigate any allegations of arms sales, and engage and apply pressure on those countries who continue to enable the flow of weapons to Myanmar.

■ Pakistan: Animal Welfare**Jo Stevens:**[\[91989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress her Department has made in promoting animal welfare in Pakistan (a) in general and (b) in relation to the practice of keeping Himalayan brown bears in captivity for entertainment and dancing purposes.

James Cleverly:

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs published its Action Plan for Animal Welfare on 12 May 2021 setting out the Government's plans, aims and ambitions in this policy area. The Action Plan for Animal Welfare demonstrates this Government's commitment to a brighter future for animals both at home and abroad. Our exit from the EU affords us the opportunity to raise our already high domestic animal welfare standards, to act as a dynamic leader on the world stage, and to introduce measures and protections which are right in principle.

The UK Government is also at the forefront of international efforts to protect endangered animals from poaching and illegal trade. We are investing over £46m between 2014 and 2022 on work to directly counter the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) in animals and plants, including to reduce demand, strengthen enforcement, ensure effective legal frameworks and develop sustainable livelihoods. The IWT Challenge Fund has committed over £37m to 113 projects around the world since it was launched at the London IWT Conference in 2014. The UK is also contributing £250m to the Global Environment Facility between 2018-2022, which includes the world's biggest fund for tackling IWT, the Global Wildlife Programme (GWP), and supports IWT projects across 32 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

■ **Somalia: Peacekeeping Operations**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[91893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in (a) partner donor countries to the African Union Mission in Somalia, (b) the African Union, (c) the Federal Government of Somalia and other relevant stakeholders in Somalia on the future of that mission.

Vicky Ford:

The UK regularly engages international partners on the security situation in Somalia, including the threat from Al Shabaab, the role of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somalia's ongoing needs for international support as it transitions to take greater control of its own security. The UN Security Council (UNSC) mandate for AMISOM runs until 31 December 2021. A UNSC briefing on Somalia took place on 17 November, during which the UK - as 'pen-holder' - reiterated the need for progress on discussions on a successor mission to AMISOM to support the transition to Somali-led security in accordance with the Somalia Transition Plan. Senior officials, and ministers when required, liaise with their interlocutors as a matter of due course, including: the African Union, Troop Contributing Countries and the Federal Government of Somalia, to ensure that planning for a future mission can realistically meet objectives for transition while maintaining appropriate security levels; donor partners, to ensure appropriate funding mechanisms and levels of resources; and others in the UNSC who will be involved in formulating a future mandate. We continue to work with all relevant international partners on our collective interests in supporting long-term security and stability in Somalia and how a future mission can meet those shared objectives.

■ **Tigray: Detainees**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[91898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the special session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on 17 December 2021, if she will discuss with international partners the wellbeing of men and women considered to be of fighting age who have allegedly been subjected to systematic mass detention in western Tigray.

Vicky Ford:

We have frequently and consistently raised the need for full humanitarian access in Ethiopia at the Human Rights Council and at the UN Security Council. The Foreign Secretary, as Chair of the G7 Foreign and Development Minister's meeting, made a statement on 12 December also calling for unimpeded humanitarian access. The statement also called for an additional independent investigation on human rights violations as recommended by the Joint Investigation report from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. In my most recent discussion with Ethiopian Government Ministers - with Minister of State Redwan on 18 November and Justice Minister Gedion on 6 December - I raised

our concerns about mass detentions, ethnic profiling, and hate speech. We will continue to take all opportunities to raise these important matters.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Ambulance Services: Shropshire

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[86075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of (a) the average cost per emergency response and (b) the number of successful treatments of cardiac arrest resulting in return of spontaneous circulation in Shropshire in each year since the regionalisation of ambulance services; and what estimate he has made of the average ambulance response time for callers triaged as having (i) a stroke, (ii) a cardiac arrest and (iii) chest pain in Shropshire for the last 12 months.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 7 December 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that the cost of a West Midland Ambulance Service incident in 2021/22 is £225.36. No such estimate has been made of the number of successful treatments of cardiac arrest resulting in return of spontaneous circulation in Shropshire. The average ambulance response time for callers triaged as having a stroke, a cardiac arrest and chest pain in Shropshire for the last 12 months is not collected centrally.

■ Blood Tests: Finance

Janet Daby: [\[90944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support he will provide to NHS trusts on blood testing services.

Edward Argar:

To increase the volume of diagnostic activity, including blood tests, we have committed £2.3 billion in capital funding for diagnostics over the next three years. This will fund the launch of at least 100 community diagnostic centres by 2024/25, to tackle the backlog of patients waiting for clinical tests.

■ Clinical Trials

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[87579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many medicines failed human clinical trials that had previously passed an animal clinical trial in 2020 .

Edward Argar:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's Clinical Trials Unit does not hold data for United Kingdom trials where non-clinical or animal safety studies supported development of the medicine in human trials and where that development did not continue.

■ Defibrillators

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[91834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a national register of defibrillators.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and health services in the devolved administrations have been working with the British Heart Foundation, the Resuscitation Council UK and the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives to establish a database to register defibrillators across the United Kingdom called 'The Circuit'. The Circuit will provide a UK-wide network of defibrillators to every ambulance service in the country and the public.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Daisy Cooper: [\[76027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 57363, tabled by the hon. Member for St. Albans on 15 October 2021.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Question [57363](#).

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[87732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 70280 tabled by the hon. Member for Bristol West.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Question [70280](#).

■ Dietary Supplements

Alex Norris: [\[92064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what resources he has allocated to reviewing the responses to the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances consultation on standard adult ready-to-drink oral nutritional supplements.

Edward Argar:

The Committee's Secretariat function is provided by one member of staff. The Department has allocated the Secretariat and part of two staff members' time to review the responses to the consultation. The Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances is independent of the Department and will also review the responses.

■ Health Services: Private Sector

Stella Creasy: [\[84347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much was spent by (a) NHS providers and (b) NHS England Group on the purchase of healthcare from non-NHS bodies in financial year 2020-21.

Stella Creasy: [\[84348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) private organisations that have received funding from NHS bodies to provide healthcare services in the financial year 2020-21 and (b) value of those contracts.

Stella Creasy: [\[85244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much each NHS trust spent on the purchase of healthcare from non-NHS bodies in financial year 2020-21.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 6 December 2021]: We are unable to provide the information requested due to the National Audit Office's ongoing audit process.

Hospitals: Discharges**Rachael Maskell:** [\[92014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce delayed hospital discharges.

Edward Argar:

The Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, local government and social care providers to monitor and address the underlying causes of delayed discharges. A new national taskforce has been established to focus on the National Health Service and local authority actions required to reduce delayed hospital discharges. We are also making use of non-acute beds in local health and care systems, personal health budgets, hotel beds for stepdown care and bed capacity in hospices. Enhanced discharge funding has been provided until March 2022 to provide the resources needed to support patients to leave hospital as quickly and as safely as possible.

Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis**Jim Shannon:** [\[92937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis in the last 3 years.

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not available in the format requested.

Medical Treatments: Public Consultation**Dr Julian Lewis:** [\[83223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will establish permanent arrangements to gather testimony from members of the public with adverse experience of implanted materials, including (a) vaginal and (b) other mesh implants, and (c) silicone in (i) breast implants and (ii) contraceptive devices, in order that the long-term consequences of the use of such substances can be monitored continuously.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 2 December 2021]: We have no plans to do so. The report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review was published in July 2020 and investigated the impacts of three harmful medical interventions, including vaginal mesh implants. This independent report gathered testimonies from members of the public with adverse experience of mesh implants.

The Government's response set out the actions we are taking to implement the recommendations and improve patient safety. A patient reference group was established on a temporary basis to inform the development of the Government's full response to the Review

Anyone with safety concerns, including adverse incidents involving medical devices, can report these to a relevant medical professional and via the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's Yellow Card scheme.

Members: Correspondence

Robert Largan: [\[93085\]](#)

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 27 October 2021, reference RL29885.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 4 November 2021.

Primary Health Care: Allied Health Professions

Alex Norris: [\[92062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure Allied Health Professions workforce reconfiguration within primary care settings is sustainable.

Maria Caulfield:

Under the Primary Care Network Directed Enhanced Service, networks are able to recruit new roles to expand their care team with the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS). NHS England and NHS Improvement supply practices with the description of the ARRS roles to inform practices and ensure they make the best decision in recruiting for their practice, to utilise staff to their potential.

In order to ensure that recruitment of allied health professionals (AHPs) into primary care is sustainable, we are supporting training, supervision and general practitioner's understanding of these new roles. Health Education England also support AHPs to develop throughout their career, via advanced practice and new roles.

Prostate Cancer: Screening

Justin Madders: [\[87714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with relevant stakeholders on the (a) roll out of AI pathologist

technology by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to test men for prostate cancer and (b) potential merits of that testing technology for health outcomes.

Edward Argar:

The Department has not had specific discussions with stakeholders.

The new Artificial Intelligence (AI) Galen technology was developed by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to diagnose prostate cancer. The Galen application increases accuracy and speed of sample testing in suspected cancer cases and provides clinicians with a definitive diagnosis. It also reduces the need for duplicating biopsies and provides earlier diagnosis in positive cases, which improves patient health outcomes.

Imperial College Healthcare, University College London, University Hospital of Coventry and Warwickshire, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and University Hospitals Southampton will be trialling the Galen technology with the potential for adoption more widely across the health system. The trial is funded as part of the [£140 million AI in Health and Care Award Programme run by the NHS AI Lab and the Accelerated Access Collaborative.](#)

■ **Strokes: Mechanical Thrombectomy**

Alex Norris:

[\[85360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what percentage of stroke patients have been provided with mechanical thrombectomy services by region in England in the last year; and what steps his Department has taken to help ensure that mechanical thrombectomy services are provided to all patients who require them.

Maria Caulfield:

Information on the number and percentage of stroke patients provided with mechanical thrombectomy services is not held in the format requested

Thrombectomy is available in 24 centres in England. The National Health Service is committed to increasing the delivery of mechanical thrombectomy to 10% of patients. The latest data available shows that 2.3% of patients are receiving a thrombectomy following a stroke. In early 2022, NHS England will undertake a quality review with each region to understand and resolve the biggest local barriers to increasing the thrombectomy rate.

■ **Surgery: Waiting Lists**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[88670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what urgent steps his Department is taking to reschedule planned surgeries that were cancelled during October and November 2021 as a result of shortages of beds and staff.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 10 December 2021]: The National Health Service continues to prioritise those patients with the highest clinical need alongside those who have been waiting the longest. Where cancellations have been unavoidable, all efforts are being made to rebook patients who have been affected as soon as possible.

Travel: Coronavirus**Mr Steve Baker:****[R] [90409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will implement measures to ensure that convalescent covid-19 positive travellers are not disadvantaged by the Government's covid-19 travel testing requirements; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 15 December 2021]: While the United Kingdom does not recognise natural immunity for international travel at this time, it is being kept under review. The presence of antibodies does not guarantee that an individual is not capable of infection and transmitting the virus to others.

The strength of the protective immune response to COVID-19 varies greatly from person to person. Although it is likely that an individual will be protected from severe disease or death for a period post-recovery from first infection, the duration of this protection will vary and the ability for these individuals to still transmit the virus has not yet been quantified.

HOME OFFICE**Asylum: Local Government****Jacob Young:****[89693]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many local authorities have signed up to the voluntary dispersal scheme for asylum seekers as of July 2022.

Kevin Foster:

There are currently 168 Local Authorities in the UK with supported asylum seekers residing in dispersal accommodation provided by the Home Office.

A further 24 local authorities have no-one residing in dispersal properties but have supported asylum seekers residing in contingency accommodation

Biometric Residence Permits**Olivia Blake:****[92134]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of waiting times for Biometric Residence Permits.

Kevin Foster:

The waiting times for biometric residence permits (BRP) are dictated by the BRP production and delivery processes. We aim to deliver a BRP within 7 working days of the immigration decision.

BRPs are produced at the secure delivery facility (Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA)) within 48 hours of the decision being made and are collected by our secure delivery partner the same day. Our secure delivery partner (FedEx) aims to attempt to deliver the BRPs within 48 hours of receipt of the BRPs. This equates to a minimum of 5 working days from date of decision to delivery of the BRP. We have added an additional 2 working days to the timeline advised to applicants to allow us to resolve any production issues.

In November, DVLA produced all BRPs within 48 hours of the production request, of which 88.8% were produced within 24 hours. In November FedEx attempted to deliver 99.74% of BRPs within 48 hours.

■ Home Office: Official Hospitality**Florence Eshalomi:****[90968]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any social events took place between three or more people within her Departmental buildings between (a) 5 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 and (b) 16 December 2020 and 22 February 2021.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 15 December 2021]: This information is not collected. At the time, staff were expected to work from home and undertake meetings remotely, wherever possible.

■ Immigration**Dan Jarvis:****[91970]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the administrative cost is of each (a) Indefinite Leave to Remain and (b) naturalisation application in financial year 2021-22.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the estimated unit cost of all UK Visa, immigration and citizenship services, which can be accessed via the following link: [Visa fees transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/visa-fees-transparency-data).

The published data sets out our fees as at 11 October 2021. The associated published unit costs are based upon the expenditure incurred by the Home Office in the 2017/2018 financial year. The estimated unit costs are due to be updated following the audit of the 2021/2022 Home Office accounts.

■ Immigration: Armed Forces

Dan Jarvis: [\[91969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of waiving visa fees for non-UK (a) service personnel, (b) veterans and (c) their dependents who have served a minimum of five years in Her Majesty's armed forces.

Kevin Foster:

The Ministry of Defence together with the Home Office ran a public consultation this year. The consultation sought views on a policy proposal to waive settlement fees for non-UK Service Personnel. The results of the consultation have been analysed, and once collective agreement has been secured for a fully funded policy, the Government will publish its response, and make any associated changes to fees through Fees Regulations at the earliest opportunity.

■ Members: Correspondence

John Spellar: [\[87570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Warley dated 18 August 2021 regarding Mr Vieira.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 14 December 2021]: The Home Office responded on 7 December 2021.

■ Napier Barracks

Alison Thewliss: [\[91993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she (a) has received and (b) is taking steps in response to advice from Public Health England on the (i) ongoing use of Napier Barracks, (ii) covid-19 outbreak in Napier Barracks and (iii) cases of active TB in Napier Barracks as of 13 December 2021.

Kevin Foster:

We have not received any advice from UK Health Security Agency on the ongoing use of Napier, however we continue to engage with UK Health Security Agency to ensure COVID 19 is managed effectively on site.

There are no current confirmed cases of active tuberculosis at Napier. The one person identified by the NHS was, on the advice of UK Health Security Agency, moved to alternative accommodation on 14 December 21.

■ Passports: Delivery Services

Mr Toby Perkins: [\[90399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passports have been delivered since TNT became the delivery provider; and how many complaints have been received regarding their service.

Kevin Foster:

The volume deliveries by the secure delivery provider for Her Majesty's Passport Office in the UK includes both passports and supporting documents. The delivery of passports alone is not held in a reportable format.

From 1 March 2020 to 30 November 2021, 8,286,931 passports and supporting documents have been delivered under the current contract for UK secure delivery services. 1829 complaints, were received about these services within the same period, which represents 0.02% of the delivery volume.

Refugees: Afghanistan**Caroline Lucas:****[91911]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will extend the entry clearance period for family member visa applications for Afghan nationals to allow for the complexities of collecting documents from visa application centres in third part countries.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has recently taken steps to significantly extend the period during which a person is required to collect their documents from visa application centres, prior to entering the UK, from 30 days to 90 days.

If a person's vignette has expired, they can also apply for a replacement by completing the online form on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/transfer-visa>

Travel**Wes Streeting:****[87767]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many travellers are currently arriving in the UK each day on average.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on daily air passenger arrivals in the '[Immigration and border statistics relating to COVID-19](#)' publication.

The latest published information on daily air passenger arrivals to 31 October 2021, can be found in table Air_01, available at:

[Statistics relating to passenger arrivals since the COVID-19 outbreak, November 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Home Office also publishes quarterly data on admissions across all modes of transport in the '[Immigration Statistics quarterly release](#)' publication.

The latest published information on quarterly admissions to 30 September 2021, can be found in table Adm_01, available at:

[Immigration statistics data tables, year ending September 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

■ Visas: Migrant Workers**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[91865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the numbers of visas (a) applied for and (b) granted for (i) HGV and (ii) poultry workers given that the application windows for those worker visas closed on 2 December 2021 and 16 November 2021 respectively.

Kevin Foster:

I refer the Honourable Member to the response given in another place to Lord Berkeley on 30 November, UIN HL3979.

JUSTICE**■ Ministry of Justice: Official Hospitality****Geraint Davies:**[\[90821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether any social events took place between three or more people within his Departmental buildings between (a) 5 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 and (b) 16 December 2020 and 22 February 2021.

James Cartlidge:

This information is not collected. At the time, staff were expected to work from home and undertake meetings remotely, wherever possible.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Official Hospitality****Geraint Davies:**[\[90820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether any social events took place between three or more people within his Departmental buildings between (a) 5 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 and (b) 16 December 2020 and 22 February 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

This information is not collected. At the time, staff were expected to work from home and undertake meetings remotely, wherever possible.

SCOTLAND**■ Seed Potatoes: Scotland****Richard Thomson:**[\[92110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2021 to Question 73993 on Seed Potatoes: Scotland, what new markets his Department has identified for Scottish seed potato exports which were not previously available.

Mr Alister Jack:

My officials and I fully appreciate the importance of Scotland's seed potato industry, not only for ware production across the UK but also for export, and its deserved reputation for high quality.

Currently, the Scottish potato sector exports to over 40 countries worldwide, with recent data suggesting that the majority (around 80%) of Scottish seed potato exports already go to countries outside the EU, including Egypt, Morocco, Thailand and Turkey, demonstrating that Scottish seed potato exporters already take advantage of world markets.

TRANSPORT**■ Abbey Line****Daisy Cooper:**[\[92086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when a determination will be made on whether the application for funding for improvements to the Abbey Line to the Restoring Your Railway Fund will progress to the next stage.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In January 2020 the Government pledged £500 million for the Restoring Your Railway programme to deliver on our manifesto commitment to start reopening lines and stations. A Strategic Outline Business Case for the Abbey Line bid was submitted to the Department in March 2021. The Secretary of State for Transport and I will consider next steps for projects, including the Abbey Line, with a decision on the next tranche to progress anticipated in 2022.

■ Ambulance Services: Carbon Emissions**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[90340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on mitigating levels of carbon emission from ambulances.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government is employing a wide range of measures to accelerate the transition to zero emission vehicles, including specialist vehicles such as ambulances. Further, at COP26, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced that all four UK health services have made the landmark pledge to become net zero emission.

Reducing emissions from emergency service vehicles is an important part of the Office for Zero Emission Vehicle's (OZEV) research and development programme. For example, OZEV has provided £1.9 million of funding to support the development of a prototype for the London Ambulance Service. The electric-hydrogen ambulance is the first in the world capable of travelling 300 miles before needing to be charged.

OZEV has also supported the Yorkshire Ambulance Service to trial hydrogen vehicles as part of its £2 million Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Fleet Support Scheme.

■ **Blue Badge Scheme: Older People**

Damien Moore: [\[89661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the time within which a photo for a blue badge qualifies as recent to over one month, particularly for those aged 75 and over.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has no plans to change current legislation relating to the specifications of photographs for use as identification on the UK Blue Badge.

■ **Bus Services: Rural Areas**

Sir Geoffrey Cox: [\[90362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has been made of the adequacy of bus services in (a) rural and (b) coastal communities; what assessment he has made of the role bus services have in enabling access to (i) NHS appointments, (ii) social care provision and (iii) dental services; and what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the National Bus Strategy will support rural communities with a limited access to the rail network.

Trudy Harrison:

Local authorities have recently published Bus Service Improvement Plans, which provide an assessment of existing services in their area, including detail of current provision for rural and coastal communities. Government supports local authorities working with partner agencies to improve bus access to amenities and services – including health and social care needs.

The Strategy encourages consideration of Demand Responsive Transport for large workplaces with anti-social hours, such as hospitals and in areas where demand is more dispersed, and the distances involved make it more challenging to maintain or provide services which meet residents' diverse needs.

We have already established a Rural Mobility Fund (RMF) worth £20 million to trial more demand responsive services and have awarded funding to 17 pilot projects. The first pilots have recently launched. The RMF provides us and local authorities with an opportunity to better understand the challenges associated with introducing bookable bus services in rural and suburban settings.

■ **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Standards**

Neil Parish: [\[91952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to improve the efficiency of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

Trudy Harrison:

The quickest and easiest way to make an application to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is to use its extensive suite of online services. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their documents within a few days.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application and the DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail every day. To help reduce waiting times for paper applications, the DVLA has introduced additional online services, recruited more staff, increased overtime working and has secured extra office space in Swansea and Birmingham. The DVLA has reconfigured its accommodation to safely maximise the number of staff on site and is working hard to process paper applications as quickly as possible.

Together with the ending of industrial action, these measures are having a positive impact. The queues are reducing, and customers will continue to see an improving picture in terms of turnaround times.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Theresa Villiers:**[\[91866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 21 November 2021 that all new homes must include electric charging points, whether the costs of installing those charging points are to be met by housebuilders.

Trudy Harrison:

The Prime Minister recently announced that new buildings with associated parking such as homes, supermarkets and workplaces, as well as those undergoing major renovation, will be required to install electric vehicle charge points from next year under new legislation to help ensure a smooth transition to electric vehicles.

We expect that the cost of installing a chargepoint in the first instance will fall on the property owner or developer. In order to ensure developers do not incur excessive costs for installing chargepoints, we have introduced an exemption for new residential properties where the installation of a chargepoint would increase grid connection costs by more than £3,600 (although cable routes will still be required). We expect developers will be able to benefit from economies of scale by purchasing charging infrastructure in bulk. This policy will reduce the overall costs of installing chargepoints in homes and avoiding potentially costly retrofitting in the future for consumers and developers.

■ Electric Vehicles: Safety**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[91919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the safety of (a) electric vehicles and (b) electric vehicle charging infrastructure for people with heart pacemakers.

Jonathan Edwards:[\[91920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the car industry on the safety of (a) electric vehicles and (b) electric vehicle charging infrastructure for people with heart pacemakers.

Trudy Harrison:

I have regular meetings with both representatives of the car industry and Ministerial colleagues about a wide range of issues pertinent to our support for the transition to zero emission driving.

The Government regards public safety to be of paramount importance and we require that all electric vehicle technology supported by public funding must clearly demonstrate how it is safe before it is awarded funding.

Electric vehicle chargepoints must meet the relevant legislation for electro-magnetic radiation as defined in the Electromagnetic Compatibility Regulations 2016 and the Electrical Equipment Safety Regulations 2016 which covers requirements for compatibility with pacemakers. All electric vehicles eligible for the Government's Plug-in Grant schemes are required to provide evidence that they are compliant with current electrical safety regulations.

Large Goods Vehicles: Concrete**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[92056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer on 28 October 2021 to Question 62817 on Large Goods Vehicles: Concrete, whether he plans to publish the impact assessment.

Trudy Harrison:

The impact assessment done at the time of the Goods Vehicles (Plating and Testing) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2017 is published online alongside the regulations and is available to view via legislation.gov.uk.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[92057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer on 28 October 2021 to Question 62817 on Large Goods Vehicles: Concrete, for what reason no additional environmental impact assessments have been made to estimate the effect of the additional lorry journeys needed by replacing 38.4 tonne VCMs with 32 tonne VCMs.

Trudy Harrison:

No additional environmental impact assessment has been undertaken because the standard weight limit applicable to 4-axle rigid HGVs is 32 tonnes. The Government amended regulations connected with annual testing and operator licensing but not permitted maximum weights. Only a limited and specific number of volumetric concrete mixers (VCMs) are permitted to temporarily operate at 38.4 tonnes using Vehicle Special Orders. This is to allow the industry time to adjust to the standard legal weight limits.

■ Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen

Alan Brown:

[\[92011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2021 to Question 88776 on Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen, what grants are available for the purchase of hydrogen powered cars as of 13 December 2021; and what the time period for those grants being available is.

Trudy Harrison:

Government's approach to delivering our long-term ambitions for greener transport is technology neutral and we are supporting hydrogen where the market favours its use.

The plug-in car grant has been in place for over a decade to help reduce the up-front purchase price of zero and ultra low emission vehicles for private motorists and businesses. Funding is currently available until financial year 2022/23. Hydrogen fuel cell cars have benefited from the grant up until March 2020, when a price cap was introduced to focus the grant on more affordable vehicles, where taxpayer funding would have greatest impact. Hydrogen fuel cell cars still benefit from discounted road tax, as well as beneficial company car tax rates which can save drivers up to £2,000 per annum.

Alongside this, the Government's £23 million Hydrogen for Transport Programme is increasing the uptake of fuel cell electric vehicles and growing the number of publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations across the UK. The programme is delivering new refuelling stations, upgrading some existing stations as well as deploying hundreds of new hydrogen vehicles. -

■ Public Transport: Protective Clothing

Caroline Lucas:

[\[89540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to (a) inform people about and (b) encourage people to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering when travelling inside a public transport vehicle and when in indoor transport hubs in England, unless they are exempt or have a reasonable excuse; and if he will make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

Following the Prime Minister's announcement, which set out the requirement to wear face coverings on public transport, unless exempt, the Government has published updated safer travel guidance, issued communications and worked closely with transport operators to disseminate this information to the public.

We trust that the public will comply with this requirement and continue to play their part in supporting the country through the pandemic.

■ **Railway Stations: Parking**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[91868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will ensure that no additional funding provided to Transport for London is used to fund projects to build over station car parks.

Trudy Harrison:

Transport in London is devolved and the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). It remains the responsibility of the Mayor to make planning decisions, including on station car parks, as part of his wider transport strategy.

■ **Railways: Midlands**

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[91909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the economic benefits for the Midlands from the roll-out of smart ticketing as outlined in the Integrated Rail Plan.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

This year's spending review set aside £360 million investment to modernise industry ticketing and retailing systems. This includes an expansion of

pay-as-you-go travel on rail to more than 700 stations in urban areas across the country.

This investment will deliver significant benefits to passengers in the Midlands and other areas by making the process of paying for travel convenient and simple, removing the uncertainty from having to select a ticket in advance. It also frees up staff to support passengers, unlocking economic benefits as people have more flexibility in how they travel. Our assessment will be developed and refined as the project progresses to ensure that the full economic potential to the Midlands is realised.

■ **Taxis: Carbon Emissions**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[90339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps is he taking together with local authorities to help ensure that carbon emissions from taxis are reduced substantially by 2030.

Trudy Harrison:

Government is directly supporting the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) sector to transition to zero emission vehicles through the Plug in Taxi Grant (PiTG) and the Plug in Car Grant, which offset the higher upfront cost of electric vehicles. The PiTG has supported the purchase of over 5,500 vehicles across the UK.

Support has also been provided to increase the availability of charging infrastructure to meet driver needs. Government has awarded over £20 million to 27 local

authorities to deploy almost 800 rapid and fast chargepoints dedicated to electric taxis and PHVs.

TREASURY

■ Business: Coronavirus

Jane Stevenson:

[\[92073\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to provide financial support for businesses affected by covid-19 restrictions announced by Government on 8 December 2021.

Helen Whately:

Plan B has been designed to help control the virus's spread while avoiding unduly damaging economic and social restrictions. Throughout the pandemic, the Government has demonstrated that it can respond proportionately to the changing path of the virus, and will continue to do so. The Government has a strong track record of responding quickly, flexibly and comprehensively in supporting jobs, businesses, individuals and families if needed.

As part of our £400bn package of support, businesses will continue to receive considerable support into the spring of next year. Small and medium-sized businesses can access Government-guaranteed finance through the extended Recovery Loans scheme until next June. Businesses will be protected from eviction if they are behind on rent on their premises, thanks to the moratorium in place until March 2022. Where applicable, businesses can also continue to apply for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme through their local authority, which is open until March 2022.

For the sectors who were hardest hit by previous restrictions and may need additional support, there is further support in place. Business rates relief for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England is available until March 2022, and hospitality and tourism businesses will continue to benefit from a VAT reduction – paying only 12.5% until March 2022. The arts and culture sector can still access support from the £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund and Sports Recovery Package, and the Film and TV Production Restart Scheme, which is in place until 30 April 2022. While the £800m Live Events Reinsurance Scheme is giving events across the country the confidence needed for organisers to plan for the future.

■ Cheques

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[91845\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with UK Finance on the future of the cheque; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

Cheques remain an important part of the UK's payments landscape and, whilst there has been a decline in cheque volumes, they continue to be used by many individuals, businesses, and charities. In order to secure the future of cheque usage in the UK, HM Treasury introduced legislative measures in 2015 to allow UK banks and building societies to introduce 'cheque imaging'. Cheque image clearing allows a digital image of a cheque to be sent for clearing, rather than the paper cheque itself.

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel

■ **Children: Day Care**

Stella Creasy:**[91955]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of eligible families with children under five (a) have an open Tax Free Childcare account and (b) used their Tax Free Childcare account in 2020-21.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The total eligible population is 1.3m families. This estimate is not broken down by family characteristics. The total number of eligible children in those families is 1.7m for 2020-21. The table below shows the total number of children with open and used Tax-Free Childcare accounts for 0-4 year olds in 2020-21:

| MONTH/YEAR | TOTAL OPEN ACCOUNTS (0-4 YEAR OLDS) | TOTAL USED ACCOUNTS (0-4 YEAR OLDS) |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Apr-20 | 447,725 | 87,055 |
| May-20 | 442,905 | 62,575 |
| Jun-20 | 446,180 | 117,490 |
| Jul-20 | 460,955 | 157,200 |
| Aug-20 | 470,145 | 159,840 |
| Sep-20 | 465,120 | 225,020 |
| Oct-20 | 464,860 | 232,435 |
| Nov-20 | 474,150 | 240,935 |
| Dec-20 | 477,185 | 245,065 |

| MONTH/YEAR | TOTAL OPEN ACCOUNTS (0-4 YEAR OLDS) | TOTAL USED ACCOUNTS (0-4 YEAR OLDS) |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jan-21 | 490,315 | 230,370 |
| Feb-21 | 503,135 | 230,450 |
| Mar-21 | 525,770 | 283,095 |

■ Citizens' Advice Bureaux: Oxfordshire

Layla Moran:

[92068]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the funding available to Citizens Advice Bureaux in Oxfordshire in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of funding available to Citizens Advice Bureau to provide debt advice from April 2022.

John Glen:

Citizens Advice are funded by various Government departments, public bodies, private companies, local authorities as well as charitable trusts. Details regarding their sources of funding can be found on their website:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/our-work/annual-reports/

The Government is strongly committed to supporting the financial wellbeing of the most vulnerable in society, and to tackling problem debt; and works closely with the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) and the wider debt advice sector, including Citizens Advice. This is why the Government agreed to maintain record levels of funding for free-to-consumer debt advice in England in 2021-22, bringing this year's debt advice budget for MaPS to £94.6 million. This is a more than 70% increase since 2019-20 to help more people who are struggling with their finances during the pandemic.

The Government cannot comment on the funding sources outside of its remit. Regarding the debt advice funding administered by MaPS for future provision of debt advice services in England, MaPS is currently undertaking a commissioning exercise. This exercise is ongoing and commercially sensitive.

This MaPS-led recommissioning exercise is expected to materially increase the amount of debt advice available to people in England and ensure services – including face-to-face provision – are built around customers' needs. It is also informed by MaPS statutory duty to consider the needs of the most vulnerable. MaPS are in the process of concluding the evaluation of all bids they have received and will provide an update on the outcome as soon as possible.

■ Coronavirus: Government Assistance

Rachael Maskell:

[\[90904\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide additional financial support to local authorities to assist (a) people who have to isolate and (b) business during the new covid-19 restrictions.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Plan B has been designed to help control the virus's spread while avoiding unduly damaging economic and social restrictions. Throughout the pandemic, the government has demonstrated that it can respond proportionately to the changing path of the virus, and will continue to do so. The Government has a strong track record of responding quickly, flexibly and comprehensively in supporting jobs, businesses, individuals and families if needed.

The Government continues to provide funding to enable local authorities to offer practical and financial support to those who are eligible and require assistance to self-isolate. Since the start of the pandemic the government has provided £2.1 billion of funding to local authorities in England as part of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). The COMF has supported local authorities to work with local communities to ensure effective testing, contact tracing in providing these vital services.

In addition, the Government continues to fund a £500 payment available to people on low incomes who are required to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, cannot work from home and will lose income as a result of self-isolation. In March 2021, the Government increased funding to local authorities for the discretionary scheme to £20 million a month to enable local authorities to widen eligibility criteria and support more people to isolate. The scheme is in place until March 2022.

As part of our £400 billion package of support, businesses will continue to receive considerable support into the spring of next year. Small and medium-sized businesses can access Government-guaranteed finance through the extended Recovery Loans scheme until next June. Businesses will be protected from eviction if they are behind on rent on their premises, thanks to the moratorium in place until March 2022. Where applicable, businesses can also continue to apply for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme through their local authority, which is open until March 2022.

For the sectors who were hardest hit by previous restrictions and may need additional support, there is further support in place. Business rates relief for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England is available until March 2022, and hospitality and tourism businesses will continue to benefit from a VAT reduction, paying only 12.5% until March 2022. The arts and culture sector can still access support from the £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund and Sports Recovery Package, the Film and TV Production Restart Scheme, which is in place until 30 April 2022. In addition, the £800 million Live Events Reinsurance Scheme is giving events across the country the confidence needed for organisers to plan for the future.

■ Corporation Tax: British Petroleum and Shell**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[91849\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of Government fiscal policy in the context of the level of corporation tax paid by (a) Shell and (b) BP in the last three years.

Lucy Frazer:

It would not be appropriate for the Government to comment on the affairs of individual taxpayers.

■ Culture Recovery Fund: Wales**Ben Lake:** [\[92052\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much and what proportion of the consequential funding for Wales resulting from the £300 million uplift to the Culture Recovery Fund the Welsh Government has received as of 13 December 2021.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Barnett formula applies to changes in departmental DEL budgets, not when departments make spending or policy announcements.

The UK government has provided the Welsh Government with an additional £3.8 billion of Barnett-based funding this year. It is for the Welsh Government to decide how to allocate this funding across its devolved responsibilities, including how to provide support to the culture sector.

If the Treasury provides additional funding to departments in areas that are devolved in Wales, then the Welsh Government will receive additional funding through the Barnett formula.

■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus**John Redwood:** [\[91823\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish forecasts of the economic impact of the covid-19 restrictions announced on 8 December 2021.

John Glen:

On 8 December, the government implemented its Plan B response to managing Covid-19. This was in response to the risks posed by the Omicron variant. The government set out the economic impacts of Plan B in its Autumn and Winter Plan, published in September 2021. Plan B has been designed to help control the spread of the virus while avoiding unduly damaging economic and social restrictions. A full assessment of the measures can be found in the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-autumn-and-winter-plan-2021>

HM Treasury does not prepare formal economic forecasts for the UK economy, which are the responsibility of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). HM

Treasury will continue to conduct macroeconomic analysis to monitor the impacts on the economy from the implementation of Plan B measures.

■ **Goods Vehicle Movement Service**

Sarah Olney: [\[90486\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many registrations to the goods vehicle movement service for imports have taken place as of 9 December 2021.

Lucy Frazer:

The Goods Vehicle Movement Service (GVMS) is a UK Government IT platform for moving goods into and out of Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. There were 9,458 registrations to the GVMS as of 12 December 2021.

■ **National Insurance Contributions**

Ben Lake: [\[89646\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the (a) Welsh Government, (b) Scottish Government and (c) Northern Ireland Executive on HMRC's request that employers use, and software developers facilitate, the payslip messaging functionality in 2022-23 explaining the National Insurance Contributions increase.

Lucy Frazer:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer that was given on 29 November 2021 to PQ UIN 78496.

The engagement with the devolved administrations mentioned includes the Northern Ireland Executive.

■ **Small Businesses: Inflation**

Seema Malhotra: [\[91975\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of rising levels of inflation on small businesses.

John Glen:

Inflation has recently increased in many global economies, including the UK, pushed up by higher energy prices and global supply and demand imbalances.

We continue to monitor businesses' ability to absorb rising costs and raise prices, which is easier at times of high demand (as is the case now).

Where cost pressures become more difficult to absorb for small businesses, there continues to be Covid-related business support available, such as guaranteed lending, tax reductions and grants.

■ Tax Avoidance

Sarah Olney:

[90490]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what comparative assessment he has made of trends in the levels of tax avoidance and the increase of people employed by umbrella companies following the IR35 reforms.

Lucy Frazer:

On 30 November 2021, HMRC published its latest report on the use of marketed tax avoidance schemes in the UK. The report included estimates of the number of individuals and employers using avoidance schemes in each tax year between 2013-14 and 2019-20, as recorded in its avoidance database. The report is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-marketed-tax-avoidance-schemes-in-the-uk/use-of-marketed-tax-avoidance-schemes-in-the-uk-2019-to-2020): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-marketed-tax-avoidance-schemes-in-the-uk/use-of-marketed-tax-avoidance-schemes-in-the-uk-2019-to-2020>

Estimates for later tax years are due to be published in future reports.

The Government also published a Call for Evidence on 30 November 2021 on the umbrella company market, inviting views on the role that they play in the labour market and the ways in which they interact with the tax and employment rights systems.

The Call for Evidence sets out the external analysis and is available here: <http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/call-for-evidence-umbrella-company-market>

The HMRC data suggests that the overall umbrella company market has grown substantially since it first became popular 20 years ago. *Many umbrella companies are compliant with the tax rules and HMRC will continue to take action against those that are not.*

HMRC analysis suggests that at least 500,000 individuals were employed by an umbrella company in the 2020-21 tax year and early HMRC data suggests that usage of umbrella companies continued to increase after April 2021.

■ Treasury: Theft

Sarah Olney:

[89639]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many of his Department's (a) laptops, (b) mobile phones, (c) memory sticks and (d) external hard drives have been lost or stolen in each of the last five years.

Helen Whately:

The numbers of (a) laptops, (b) mobile phones, (c) memory sticks and (d) external hard drives that have been lost or stolen in each of the last five years are provided in the table below

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Laptops Lost | 6 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 3 |
| Laptops Stolen | 1 | 12 | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| Mobile Phones Lost | 24 | 23 | 28 | 12 | 5 |
| Mobile Phones Stolen | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Memory Sticks Lost | 3 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Memory Sticks Stolen | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| External hard drives Lost | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| External hard drives Stolen | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

■ UK Trade with EU: Import Controls

Sarah Olney:

[\[90487\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate the Government has made of the time it will take the typical import consignment or other relevant unit to clear the UK border from 1 January 2022.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government's priority is to keep goods moving and avoid delays at the border. HMRC use a risk based and intelligence-led response to compliance issues working alongside Border Force.

There are a number of different customs checks which could take place, and the time required for a check will vary significantly based on:

- The type of check required;
- The nature of the import and the associated risk;
- The type and quantity of goods examined;
- The amount of time a trader or their agent takes to provide information at points in the process.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Child Maintenance Service: Standards

Olivia Blake: [\[92133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the ability of the Child Maintenance Service to respond effectively to atypical cases and resolve errors.

Guy Opperman:

There have been no recent assessments made on atypical Child Maintenance cases.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Carbon Emissions

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[91940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Guy Opperman:

Our plan for Net Zero will generate thousands of well-paid jobs here in the UK, help us develop thriving, world-leading green industries, strengthen our energy security, and improve our health and well-being. Acting now will put us at the forefront of large, expanding global markets and allow us to capitalise on export opportunities so that the UK becomes an importer rather than a customer of the technology of the future. This is why the government's approach will be tech-led using the best of British technology and innovation – just as we did in the last industrial revolution – to help make homes and buildings warmer, the air cleaner and our journeys greener, all while creating thousands of jobs in new future-proof industries.

Our Net Zero Strategy sets out a plan to:

- Level up our country supporting up to 190,000 green jobs in 2025 and up to 440,000 jobs across net zero sectors in 2030.
- Build a secure, home-grown energy sector which ends our dependency on volatile foreign gas prices, which will help protect consumers and businesses.
- Leverage new private investments of up to £90 billion by 2030 levelling-up our former industrial heartlands.
- The policies and spending brought forward in the Net Zero Strategy mean that since the Ten Point Plan, we have mobilised £26 billion of government capital investment for the green industrial revolution. More than £5.8 billion of foreign investment in green projects has also been secured since the launch of the Ten Point Plan, along with at least 56,000 jobs in the UK's clean industries.
- Take a credible and conservative approach to cutting our climate emissions, putting us on track to meet our carbon reduction targets, including our Nationally Determined Contribution (68% reduction by 2030) and Carbon Budget 6 (78% 2035) - building on our successes since 2010.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Official Hospitality

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[90965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether any social events took place between three or more people within her Departmental buildings between (a) 5 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 and (b) 16 December 2020 and 22 February 2021.

Guy Opperman:

This information is not collected. At the time, staff were expected to work from home and undertake meetings remotely, wherever possible.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Theft

Sarah Olney:

[\[89644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many of her Department's (a) laptops, (b) mobile phones, (c) memory sticks and (d) external hard drives have been lost or stolen in each of the last five years.

Guy Opperman:

| LOST AND STOLEN | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 21/22 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Computers (laptops and Surface Pros) | 0.66% | 0.17% | 0.17% | 0.17% | 0.06% | 0.07% |
| Mobile Phones | 0.37% | 0.30% | 0.56% | 0.57% | 0.17% | 0.22% |

The information for memory sticks and external hard drives is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

All DWP mobile phones and laptops are password protected and encrypted in accordance with Data Protection guidelines.

The figures provided combine lost and stolen items and do not include cases where items have been recovered. The majority of these losses/thefts occurred in home/office break-ins and whilst travelling. To put this in context, DWP is the largest government department employing over 82,000 staff and is a geographically dispersed organisation.

■ Industrial Health and Safety: Natural Gas**Alan Brown:****[88775]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to bring forward amendments to the gas management safety regulations to facilitate blending of hydrogen in the gas network by up to 20 per cent.

Chloe Smith:

The Government is committed to reaching Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 and decarbonising our energy system. Hydrogen blending is a potential mechanism in the pathway towards achieving these ambitions.

The economic assessment and safety evidence for hydrogen blending is not yet complete. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is working with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Ofgem and the industry to ensure that the necessary economic analysis and safety evidence to support any change to the current permitted hydrogen content is obtained. HSE will shortly be consulting on proposals to amend the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations (GSMR), however as the demonstration of hydrogen blending is ongoing, blending will not form part of this suite of proposals.

Exemptions to the permitted hydrogen limit in GSMR can be sought until legislation is changed and HSE has already issued exemptions to enable hydrogen blending demonstrations up to 20 per cent to take place at Keele University and Winlaton in England.

Subject to both the economic and safety case for blending being demonstrated, the Government is aiming to make a final decision on blending by the end of 2023.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Enhancing the UK's Nuclear Third Party Liability Framework**

Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Greg Hands): [\[HCWS504\]](#)

Today I am notifying Parliament of the ratification of the 2004 Protocols to amend the Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy (the "Paris Convention") and the Convention Supplementary to the Paris Convention (the "Brussels Convention") (together the "2004 Protocols") that will come into force on 01 January 2022. The 2004 Protocols were laid before Parliament in September 2015 under cover of Miscellaneous Series 6 (2015), Command Paper 9135 and Miscellaneous Series 7 (2015), Command Paper 9136 respectively.

The Paris and Brussels Conventions are implemented domestically through the Nuclear Installations Act 1965. This has been amended prospectively by the Nuclear Installations (Liability for Damage) Order 2016 to implement the 2004 Protocols. Ratification of the 2004 Protocols will trigger the remainder of the 2016 Order coming into force in the UK on 1 January 2022.

Nuclear has a key role to play in our transition to net zero by 2050. Nuclear safety and regulation are of paramount importance and the risk of any accidents in the UK remain very low. Nevertheless, ratification of the 2004 Protocols mean that in the highly unlikely event of an incident, an increased level of compensation would be available to victims and the period during which claims can be brought would be extended. The 2004 Protocols, once in force, increase operator liability in the event of a nuclear incident from the current €140m to a maximum of €1.2bn over a period of 5 years and extends the period for which claims can be made from 10 to 30 years.

The Government recognises that in the short term, there is a gap in the insurance market. Therefore, the government has agreed initially to provide an indemnity, for a charge, to cover increased personal injury liabilities for the 10 to 30 year period. For each individual site, the maximum HMG liability is between €70m and €160m depending on the site's classification, operator's uptake of the indemnity, and whether transit of nuclear material takes place. The indemnity will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains the best value for money option. In relation to this, I have today laid before Parliament a Departmental Minute giving notice of the Department incurring this contingent liability.

Additionally, the Government is also providing an indemnity to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). The NDA are a non-departmental public body who are responsible for the decommissioning of several civil nuclear facilities, and who will be required to have appropriate cover in place. This creates a maximum contingent liability of €700m in the first year, rising to €1.2bn for the government per site over a five year period.

We also intend to build on our well established nuclear third-party liability regime by seeking accession to the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (the “CSC”), by working with the International Atomic Energy Agency (“IAEA”) as depository for the CSC, and legislating when parliamentary time allows. Accession to the CSC would expand the number of countries to which the principles of channelling liability to the operator, and capping that liability, apply. This further improves the investment climate for new nuclear in the UK, without placing any additional burden of liability for developers or operators. In the event of a nuclear incident in a country that is party to the CSC, the UK would contribute an amount to the shared international fund, based on its installed capacity and UN contributions at the time. Similarly, in the events of an incident in the UK, we would be able to draw on these pooled CSC funds.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Independent Review of Construction Frameworks

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Steve Barclay): [\[HCWS502\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Minister of State for Efficiency and Transformation (Lord Agnew Kt), has today made the following written statement:

The Government has today published the Independent Review of Construction Frameworks Report. The Review is a key part of implementing the Construction Playbook which was published in December 2020 to deliver the Government’s ambition of transforming how we assess, procure and deliver public works projects and programmes. This work has been led by Professor David Mosey of King’s College London and supported by the invaluable input of over 120 participants from across the construction industry and public sector. The recommendations in the review will help to ensure the principles of the Construction Playbook apply to the many projects that utilise commercial frameworks and not only those that run standalone procurement exercises. This will help change the face of the construction industry and enable better, faster and greener project outcomes.

The review reflects the Government’s focus on delivering for the taxpayer by getting projects right from the start, driving better outcomes and achieving a more productive and sustainable construction sector. It sets out the components of a Gold Standard Framework that will help Government to make informed procurement and contracting decisions. The report makes specific recommendations and highlights examples of good practice that provide value for money through reducing waste and supporting innovation.

Applying the Gold Standard will enable us to easily identify those frameworks which embody the policies and principles of best practice whilst providing a number of options to ensure competition and flexibility. This will be achieved through:

- An outcome-based strategic approach that drives economic, social and environmental value;

- Collaborative, multi-party relationships that align objectives, success measures, targets and incentives with commitments to jointly work on improving value and reducing risk;
- Improved framework call-off systems, cost models and incentives that provide a fair return for suppliers and that drive value rather than a race to the bottom.

Construction is a key UK industry and we are committed to underpinning the economy through investing in infrastructure. By improving our approach to construction frameworks, we will progress towards a sustainable and more productive construction sector which benefits all of our citizens. A full list of the recommendations is available as part of the report published today on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

A copy of the Independent Review of Construction Frameworks Report has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

DEFENCE

■ Future Nuclear Deterrent Annual Update 2021

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS506\]](#)

On 18 May 2011, the then Secretary of State for Defence, the Right Hon. Member for North Somerset (Dr. Liam Fox) made an oral statement to the House (Official Report column 351) announcing the approval of the Initial Gate investment stage for the procurement of the successor to the VANGUARD Class ballistic missile submarines. He also placed in the Library of the House a report "The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: The Submarine Initial Gate Parliamentary Report".

As confirmed in the 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, this Government has committed to publishing an annual report on the programme. I am today publishing the ninth report, "The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: 2021 Update to Parliament".

A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Attachments:

1. UK's Future Nuclear Deterrent 2021 [2021 Nuclear Deterrent Update to Parliament - v3.pdf]

EDUCATION

■ School and Early Years Funding Update

The Minister of State for School Standards (Mr Robin Walker):

[\[HCWS508\]](#)

Today I am confirming schools, high needs and early years revenue funding allocations for 2022-23. This announcement covers the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the pupil premium, and supplementary funding to allocate an additional £1.6 billion announced at the spending review.

Overall, taking the DSG allocations and the supplementary funding together, core schools funding is increasing by £4 billion in 2022-23 – a 5% increase in real terms per pupil from 2021-22. This includes an increase in mainstream school funding, for the 5-16 age group, of £2.5 billion. This is equivalent to a 5.8%, or £300, cash increase in funding per pupil on average. Every local authority area is forecast to see an above-inflation increase in mainstream school funding, with each local authority seeing at least a 4.7% increase per pupil.

Nationally, high needs funding, including the supplementary funding, is increasing by over £1 billion (13%).

In July 2021, the then Minister of State for Schools informed Parliament of the publication of primary and secondary units of funding for the schools block of the DSG, and the provisional allocations for the high needs block and central school services block. These have now been updated with the latest pupil numbers to show how much each local authority will receive in 2022-23.

For Early Years, we are announcing initial allocations for local authorities of £3.6 billion for 2022-23 based on the Early Years hourly funding rates that were published on 25 November 2021. These initial allocations will be updated later using census data from January 2022 and January 2023.

The DSG also includes funding for the department's safety valve intervention programme, which targets the local authorities with the highest DSG deficits, accumulated where LAs have struggled to manage their high needs systems within their allocated funding. With £150m of additional funding secured through the Spending Review, we are expanding this programme in 2022-23 to target more local authorities with the highest deficits, to rapidly secure the sustainable management of their high needs systems and reduce their deficits. This expansion will sit as part of a new, wider programme of intervention and support for local authorities, including the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme which will provide some support with attached funding to help more local authorities with less substantial deficits to establish sustainable and effective practice in managing their high needs systems. I will announce further detail about the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme in due course.

In addition to the DSG, mainstream schools will receive a supplementary grant in 2022-23 worth £1.2 billion. For early years and post-16 provision, the grant is being provided in respect of the Health and Social Care Levy. For primary and secondary provision, the grant is being provided in respect of both the Health and Social Care Levy and other cost pressures, giving schools the resources they need to raise attainment, increase teacher pay and continue to rise to the challenges of Covid response and recovery.

Today I am announcing how that supplementary grant will be allocated. Mainstream schools will get:

- o A lump sum of £3,680 for schools that have primary and/ or secondary provision. (Schools with only early years or post-16 provision will not receive this lump sum.)
- o £24 per pupil for their early years provision

- o £35 per pupil for their post-16 provision
- o £97 per pupil in primary
- o £137 per pupil in key stage 3
- o £155 per pupil in key stage 4
- o Additional funding of £85 per primary pupil and £124 per secondary pupil who are recorded as having been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years (FSM6).

The grant rates will be uplifted with area cost adjustments for schools in areas with higher wage costs.

Special schools and other providers funded from the high needs block of the DSG will benefit from an additional £325 million in 2022-23, through a top up to the DSG allocations referred to above. This is an increase of 4% to the allocations announced in July 2021.

This core schools funding comes alongside the Government's investment totalling nearly £5 billion, up to 2024-25, to help children and young people recover from the impact of the pandemic, which includes spending £1.5 billion on a national tutoring revolution in schools and colleges.

Funding for disadvantaged pupils: the Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium provides additional funding to schools to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Today, I am announcing that Pupil Premium rates in 2022-23 will increase by 2.7%, in line with forecast inflation as published by the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) at the 2021 Spending Review. This will ensure that this targeted investment continues to support the most disadvantaged children in our schools.

With the increased funding rates, total Pupil Premium funding is forecast to be its highest ever, in cash terms, in 2022-23. Total Pupil Premium funding is forecast to increase to over £2.6 billion in 2022-23 (up from £2.5 billion in 2021-22, and from £600 million when the Pupil Premium was introduced in 2011-12). Funding rates in 2022-23 will be the highest ever in cash terms, with primary pupils who have been eligible for FSM at a point over the past 6 six years attracting £1385, and secondary "FSM6" pupils attracting £985. This means that, compared to when the Pupil Premium was introduced in 2011, funding rates are now almost £900 higher in cash terms for primary FSM6 pupils, and almost £500 higher for secondary pupils. The Department for Education continues to ensure that all schools must have regard to high-quality evidence-based interventions when deciding how best to support eligible pupils.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Adult Social Care Funding and Reform

Minister of State (Minister for Care and Mental Health) (Gillian Keegan):

[[HCWS509](#)]

As set out in our Adult Social Care Reform White Paper, *People at the Heart of Care*, on 1 December 2021, the government is committed to a wide-ranging and ambitious reform of the adult social care system.

To make social care fairer, we are protecting people from unpredictable care costs; are supporting local authorities to move towards paying a fair cost of care to providers and ensuring that more self-funders will be able to ask their local authority to arrange their care for them to give them a choice of better-value care.

To move us towards the 10-year vision for reform set out in *People at the Heart of Care*, the government is today publishing the Fair Cost of Care and Market Sustainability Fund: Purpose and Conditions for 2022-23. This sets out how Government will provide £1.4 billion over the next three years to support local authorities to prepare markets for reform and move towards paying providers a fair cost of care. This breaks down into £162 million in 2022-23 and £600 million in both 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Some local authorities are promoting efficient and effective operation of care markets, with sustainable rates of care. However, a significant number of local authorities are paying residential and home care providers less than it costs to deliver the care received. In many areas, this has resulted in higher self-funder fees which we are addressing by further bringing into effect section 18(3) of the Care Act 2014. The market effect of this change will be that some providers will over time need to reduce reliance on subsidising state funded care from self-funders. This £1.4billion will enable local authorities to ensure local care markets can respond to the changes reform will bring and will also help to address under-investment and poor workforce practices.

It is important this additional funding reaches the places and parts of the social care system that need it most. The government proposes to distribute 2022-23 funding on the basis of the Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formula, as is used for the Social Care Grant. Local authority level allocations for 2022-23 have been published alongside the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

Today my Department are publishing a policy statement which sets out:

- Funding conditions for 2022-23. As a condition of receiving further grant funding in the two following years, we will expect local authorities to conduct cost of care exercises, set out their plans for driving market sustainability, including progress towards a fair cost of care, and to report to DHSC on how funding is being used. The Department will use this information to monitor progress and provide public assurance that local markets are being managed successfully.
- Practical guidance and support tools. From January 2022, we will work closely with the sector to develop a practical support offer for those local authorities who may require it to meet the funding conditions. This includes guidance and templates on cost of care exercises; workshops, webinars and market shaping tools.

The funding and conditions set out in this statement today are part of the new Health and Care Levy announced in September this year, of which £5.4 billion is being invested into adult social care over the next three years.

We will work closely with local government to determine appropriate grant conditions, national guidance and distribution mechanisms for funding allocations in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Beyond this additional £1.4 billion, we are proposing today in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement to make available over £1 billion of additional funding for social care in 2022-23.

Councils are not expected to rely solely on this earmarked funding to meet the inflationary and demographic pressures facing these services; they also have access to funding from unringfenced grant, including the 2022-23 Services Grant, and from council tax. The funding available to councils means overall local government core spending power will increase by over 4 per cent in real terms in 2022-23, including the investment in Adult Social Care reform.

Today's publication is a further milestone on the government's journey to reform adult social care, creating a system that is fit for the future and of which we can all be proud.

■ **David Fuller case: update on actions**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care) (Maria Caulfield): [\[HCWS505\]](#)

Yesterday, David Fuller was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court for the murders of Wendy Knell and Caroline Pierce, as well as over 100 sexual offences in a mortuary, and several other sexual offences.

This is a profoundly distressing case and I would like to reiterate my apologies to the friends and families of all of David Fuller's victims. While nothing can undo the damage that has been done, he has been brought to justice for his crimes.

I would like to provide an update on the steps we are taking to ensure something like this never happens again.

Firstly, all NHS Trusts have undertaken risk assessments on their mortuary and body store facilities and assured their practices against existing Human Tissue Authority guidance. NHS England and Improvement is working with all trusts to ensure that the additional steps already requested are in place early in the New Year, if they have not already been delivered.

Secondly, we have made good progress in establishing the independent inquiry chaired by Sir Jonathan Michael to look into the circumstances surrounding the offences committed at the hospital. It will help us understand how these offences took place without detection, identify any areas where swift action is necessary and consider wider national issues, including for the NHS. Sir Jonathan has developed draft terms of reference and will seek views on these from families who have been affected in the new year before they are published.

Next, Ministers have received initial advice from the Human Tissue Authority and they will be reviewing this carefully.

Finally, families have quite understandably approached the Trust seeking compensation. I have asked NHS Resolution to work with the Trust and engage on plans for providing settlements. More details will be set out on this soon.

■ **Government Response to the Independent Inquiry Report into the Issues raised by Former Surgeon Ian Paterson**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care) (Maria Caulfield): [\[HCWS499\]](#)

On 4th February 2020, the Independent Inquiry into the issues raised by the disgraced surgeon Ian Paterson published its report, which was welcomed by the government. On 28th April 2020, we reluctantly announced a delay in the government response due to the unprecedented pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic. On 23rd March 2021, we provided an update on the progress made and committed to publishing a full response during 2021. Today, the government has published that response.

We want to thank the Right Reverend Bishop Graham James and the inquiry team for their thorough report which provides a detailed analysis of the issues which allowed this malpractice to take place and recommends steps to better protect patients moving forward.

Our thanks also go to the patients who shared their experiences with the Inquiry and to their representatives who subsequently continued to engage with the government through the process of preparing this response. Patient voices have rightly been central to this entire process.

The government's response

The Inquiry's findings point to several important themes where action is needed to improve protections for patients being given hospital-based care – whether in the NHS or independent sector. These actions must improve the way our health system works for patients at every stage of their treatment journey.

The health system has to provide patient-centred information to enable patients, their families and carers to make informed decisions about their treatment and care. Medical practitioners should face regular challenge to improve the standard of care they provide as part of their overall learning and development, with concerns about their practice from any source heard and acted upon. There must be accountability across the healthcare system, ensuring quality of service from the frontline to the boardroom. Finally, when things do go wrong, patients must have the confidence that the entire system will work to put things right – meeting the needs of the patient and learning the lessons to prevent the same mistakes being repeated.

Working with patients and stakeholders, we have carefully considered all 15 recommendations the Inquiry made for improving the health system. We are accepting 12 of these recommendations either in full or in principle with a further 1 recommendation

still pending. There is 1 recommendation we are not accepting but keeping under review and 1 recommendation that we do not accept. Whether we are accepting the recommendation or not, we are taking action to improve healthcare against every recommendation.

The response outlines actions which have been taken since Ian Paterson's malpractice came to light, in addition to detailing 40 actions for our further implementation plan. The government will review the progress made in this implementation in a further publication after 12 months to ensure adequate action has been taken and update where additional action is planned.

Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1 calls for a single repository of the whole practice of consultants in England containing critical consultant performance data. This would be made accessible for use by both managers and healthcare professionals, and by members of the public. We accept this recommendation in principle. A significant amount of progress has been made on the collection of consultant performance data in both the NHS and independent sector. We commit to making more progress on the collection of data, use of the information it allows us to develop, and the publication of useful metrics. In 2018, the Acute Data Alignment Programme was launched to move towards a common set of standards for data collection and reporting across the NHS and independent sector. This brings together data collection through NHS Digital, with the use and processing of this data in parallel in the NHS and independent sector through the National Consultant Information Programme (NCIP) and the Private Healthcare Information Network (PHIN). This is currently in pilot, with the potential to be fully implemented, dependent on the results of that pilot, in 2022-23. This data will be made available for managers and healthcare professionals across the system to support learning and identify outliers. PHIN is already mandated to publish information on consultant practice in the independent sector and will be continuing to roll-out the publication of further metrics in the coming years. Over the next 12 months, we commit to reaching a decision with key stakeholders on what further information should be made publicly available and whether further government action will be needed to achieve this.

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2 asks that it become standard practice for consultants to write directly to patients about their treatment and care in language they can understand. We are pleased to accept this recommendation. Guidance across the system makes clear that this is best practice and a range of key stakeholders have agreed to write to their members to encourage the uptake of this advice. We will continue to explore with providers how their systems can change to embed this process and to monitor that best practice is being followed.

Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3 requires the publication of information explaining the differences in how care is organised in the NHS and the independent sector, so that patients can make informed decisions. We have accepted this recommendation. We will be commissioning

the production of this independent information, to be created in partnership with patients, families and carers. This will be published in 2022 and made widely accessible.

Recommendation 4

Recommendation 4 calls for the introduction of a short waiting period in the decision-making process for surgical procedures, to enable reflection on the diagnosis and treatment options. We are accepting this recommendation in principle. Whilst a specific period for general surgery is not being introduced, as the time required will depend on the patient and the procedure in question, the General Medical Council has updated its guidance to confirm that patients should be given sufficient time to consider their options before making decisions about treatments. During appraisals, doctors must demonstrate they are meeting the principles set out in GMC's 'Good Medical Practice', and CQC takes all GMC guidance into account during its assessments across the NHS and independent sector.

Recommendation 5

Recommendation 5 relates to multi-disciplinary teams, asking CQC to assure that all hospital providers are complying effectively with national MDT guidance. We have accepted this recommendation. CQC has added more detailed prompts to its inspection framework on multi-disciplinary team working. When assessing providers across the NHS and independent sector, CQC will continue to seek assurance that patients are not at risk of harm due to non-compliance in this area.

Recommendation 6

We have considered recommendation 6, which relates to complaints processes, in two parts. The first part calls for more effective communication to patients of the means to escalate a complaint to an independent body. We have accepted this part of the recommendation. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is piloting the NHS Complaints Standards which set out in one place the ways in which the NHS should handle complaints. This includes the need for organisations to ensure people know how to escalate a complaint to the ombudsman. These have been developed with the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service, ISCAS, who have included it in their code of practice.

The second part of recommendation 6 proposes that all private patients are given the right to mandatory independent resolution of their complaints. We have accepted this part in principle. CQC will strengthen its guidance to make clearer that it expects to see arrangements in place for patients to access independent complaints resolution. We will review the impact of this guidance in the coming year and will explore whether legislative action is needed, if insufficient action is taken.

Recommendations 7 and 8

Recommendations 7 and 8 both relate to the recall of patients of Ian Paterson by providers – University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and Spire Healthcare. These recommendations have already been accepted in full. UHB has contacted all known living patients of Ian Paterson and ensured that all cases had been

reviewed by June 2021. Spire had proactively contacted all known living patients by December 2020 and have now reviewed the care of over two-thirds of the patients concerned. We have asked Spire to provide an update on progress in 12 months on reviewing the remaining patients.

Recommendation 9

Recommendation 9 calls for a national framework to be developed for the recall of patients. We have accepted this recommendation. This framework has been developed and outlines actions to be taken by organisations in the NHS and independent sector in the event that a patient recall is necessary. This framework will be published in 2022 and will be owned by the National Quality Board, who will ensure it is periodically updated.

Recommendation 10

Recommendation 10 relates to indemnity products for healthcare professionals and asks for the shortcomings in clinical negligence cover identified by the inquiry to be resolved. The outcome of this recommendation is pending. We recognise that a system needs to be in place to ensure that patients have confidence that they can access compensation if harmed while receiving care, and we will bring forward proposals in 2022. These proposals will build on the consultation at the end of 2018 on 'Appropriate clinical negligence cover' for regulated healthcare professionals. The summary of responses to this consultation will be published in early 2022. We have put forward an extended programme of actions in our response to work towards change in this area, and we will ensure any reforms are robust, meeting the needs of both patients and professionals, before implementing them.

Recommendation 11

Recommendation 11 calls for the government to ensure that the system of regulation in healthcare serves patient safety, that regulators collaborate effectively and that weaknesses identified by the inquiry are resolved. We are accepting this recommendation. The healthcare regulators referenced in the Paterson Inquiry (the GMC, Nursing and Midwifery Council, and CQC) exist to protect patient safety and this is reflected in their new corporate strategies. They have also taken a number of actions to encourage collaboration and information sharing between organisations. The government's consultation on 'Regulating Healthcare Professionals, Protecting the Public' sets out proposals which address issues raised by the inquiry, including a proposed duty to cooperate for all regulators. We plan to bring forward legislation in relation to the GMC in 2022.

Recommendation 12

We have considered recommendation 12 in two parts. The first part required that any investigation of a healthcare professional's behaviour should result in a suspension, if there is any perceived risk to patient safety. We have not accepted this recommendation. Exclusion and restriction of practice can be a necessary and appropriate response during an investigation in some instances. However, we do not believe it would be fair or appropriate to impose this step as a blanket rule in all cases. It is vital that investigations

are robust and conducted in a timely manner. Guidance has been implemented in recent years to ensure concerns are taken seriously and appropriate action taken, including clear advice on when exclusion is the right step to take.

The second part of recommendation 12 proposes that any concerns about a healthcare professional at one provider should be shared with other providers they work with. We accept this recommendation in principle. Where patient safety is at risk, information should be shared. Providers must use their judgement, though, as they are taking on responsibility to ensure the information is appropriate and accurate when shared. Regulators have taken key steps to make it easier for people and organisations to share information regarding patient safety risks.

Recommendation 13

Recommendation 13 identifies a specific issue relating to the engagement of consultants through practising privileges in the independent sector. This is where the consultant is self-employed and allowed to work in the hospital's facilities, rather than employed by the hospital. In the case of Ian Paterson, this led to a gap in responsibility and liability for the consultant's actions. The Inquiry reported the impression that private providers were just renting consultants a room, and claims for compensation took significant time and effort from patients to resolve. We accept this recommendation in principle. Independent sector providers must take responsibility for the quality of care provided in their facilities, regardless of how the consultants are engaged. The Independent Healthcare Provider Network published the Medical Practitioners Assurance Framework in 2019 to improve consistency around effective clinical governance in the independent sector. We encourage all private providers to take up this framework, and CQC will continue to assess the strength of clinical governance in all providers as part of its inspection activity. We will be using the response to recommendation 10 on indemnity products and the programme of action laid out there as the initial response to the challenges faced by patients of Ian Paterson in accessing compensation. We will additionally keep the potential liability held by providers in the independent sector under review.

Recommendation 14

Recommendation 14 says that apologies should be given at the earliest stage of investigation when something goes wrong, and that potential liability should not hold anyone back from apologising. We accept this recommendation. Healthcare organisations have a statutory duty of candour – which sets out specific requirements providers must follow when things go wrong with care and treatment, including providing truthful information and an apology. This duty is regulated by CQC. NHS Resolution consistently advises members to apologise when things go wrong and that this has no impact on potential legal liability. We continue to ensure this guidance is promoted.

Recommendation 15

Finally, recommendation 15 says that private providers should not be eligible for NHS contracted work unless they have implemented all the other accepted recommendations from this response across the entirety of their workload. We are not accepting this recommendation, but will keep it under review. Across all the issues raised in this inquiry

report, independent sector providers are fully committed to implementing changes alongside NHS providers. These providers must meet the same regulatory standards as NHS providers, as required by CQC. Independent providers must meet the conditions of the NHS Provider License and the NHS Standard Contract to be able to deliver NHS-funded treatment. Accepting this recommendation would create a duty on the NHS which would need to be carefully implemented to ensure it could be monitored effectively and would not reduce the capacity available to the NHS for providing care – particularly given the numbers of patients waiting for treatment as a result of the pandemic. We do, however, recognise the importance of ensuring change takes place. We will continue to work with the independent sector to implement the changes related to the Inquiry's recommendations and will review progress in 12-months' time. We commit to taking robust action should progress not meet our expectations.

This response forms part of the government's broader commitment to patient safety, including our response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review as previously published and the measures included in the Health and Care Bill.

Copies of the government's full response will be laid before the House and will be available from the Vote Office and at: <https://www.gov.uk>

■ Medicines Update

Minister of State for Health (Edward Argar):

[HCWS507]

Under the Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP), medicines moving from GB to NI are required to comply with the EU Pharmaceutical Acquis. This creates a number of additional and duplicative regulatory barriers which risk the continuity of supply for medicines moving into NI.

Negotiations are underway to seek a bilateral agreement with the EU to tackle these problems. In order to support this, it is essential that we do everything we can to ensure that our regulations are fit for purpose, regardless of the outcome of these negotiations, and that the supply of medicines to patients in Northern Ireland is not put at risk.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), and officials from my own Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), have been working closely with officials from the Northern Ireland Department of Health (DHNI) in recent months to design a robust contingency measure which can be operational, if necessary, to support the flow of medicines into Northern Ireland from 1 January 2022.

Today the UK Government will be introducing a statutory instrument titled the Human Medicines (Amendment) (Supply to Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021 to establish the Northern Ireland MHRA Authorised Route (NIMAR).

NIMAR provides a route for the lawful supply of prescription only medicines that are unlicensed in NI, where no licensed alternative is available. This route will be tightly governed, with all medicines supplied via NIMAR already complying with the strong regulatory safeguards required for a product to enter the GB market. All medicines supplied this way into Northern Ireland will meet the MHRA's robust standards that are in place for the rest of the UK.

Supply using the NIMAR route will be closely monitored by DHSC, in partnership with officials at DHNI. It will only be used where clinical need cannot be met by a licensed alternative, in the interests of public health.

It will allow citizens in NI to continue to access the prescription only medications that they require for their individual treatment.

The required statutory instrument will be laid before the house today, along with the accompanying explanatory memorandum, and I invite members to refer to this for more detail on the functionality and detail of NIMAR.

HOME OFFICE

■ INTERPOL General Assembly

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse): [\[HCWS501\]](#)

INTERPOL's 89th General Assembly took place in Istanbul, Turkey between 23-25 November, during which elections took place for the role of INTERPOL President and membership of the Executive Committee.

The General Assembly voted to elect the UAE candidate, Major General Al-Raisi, as Interpol President for a period of four years, on a majority of 104 to 47. Voting was conducted in secret.

The UK candidate for election to the Executive Committee, Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr of Police Scotland, was also elected, and will take a seat alongside Turkey and Spain to represent the European region in INTERPOL for a period of 3 years. In addition, a UK lawyer, Ms Susie Alegre, was elected to the Requests Chamber of the Commission for the Control of Files (CCF).

INTERPOL remains a vital tool for UK law enforcement in tackling international crime worldwide and we will work with the newly elected Executive Committee to ensure that it continues to operate in accordance with its Constitution and with full respect for human rights obligations.

■ Provisional Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2022/23

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse): [\[HCWS503\]](#)

My rt hon. Friend the Home Secretary has today published the provisional Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2022/23. The Report sets out the Home Secretary's determination for 2022/23 of the aggregate amount of grants that she proposes to pay under section 46(2) of the Police Act 1996. A copy of the Report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Today the Government is setting out the provisional police funding settlement in Parliament for the 2022/23 financial year. Overall funding for policing will rise by up to £1.1 billion compared to the 2021/22 funding settlement, bringing the total up to £16.9 billion. Within this, funding to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will increase by up to an additional £796 million, assuming full take-up of precept flexibility. This would

represent an increase to PCC funding in cash terms of 5.8% on top of the 2021/22 police funding settlement.[1]

This Government is absolutely committed to keeping the public safe; the police have a critical role to play in this, and in reducing crime. We are determined to strengthen our police service and, by providing a three-year Spending Review settlement, we are giving the police the financial certainty and stability needed for longer-term, strategic reforms. We have confirmed total grant funding for police forces for the next three years, with increases of £550 million in 2022/23, at least £650 million in 2023/24 and no less than £800 million in 2024/25. In addition, PCCs will have up to £10 of precept flexibility in each of the next three years to use according to their local needs.

With this substantial investment, this settlement supports the police to:

1. Successfully complete the 20,000 officer Police Uplift Programme by March 2023, building on the outstanding progress to date.
2. Accelerate progress on the Government's key policing priorities: reducing crime, ensuring the Criminal Justice System works for all, driving forward improvements in the service the public receive, and transforming critical capabilities and infrastructure.
3. Ensure an increase in productivity using enhanced technology and investigative tools. In return for this significant investment, we expect police leaders to become more efficient and effective with officers' time, and in the fight against national threats.

Recruitment

This Government is delivering on its commitment to recruit 20,000 additional police officers, and the three-year Spending Review settlement gives the police the investment and financial certainty they need for this. We have already invested significantly in increasing the number of police officers, providing £700 million in 2020/21 and a further £425 million in 2021/22. Forces have leaned in to this commitment, and as at the end of September, over 11,000 officers have been recruited, 55% of our 20,000 target. As a result of this policing is more diverse than ever. Since April 2020, more than four in ten new recruits were female and 11.4% identified as belonging to a Black, Asian, Mixed or other minority ethnic groups. Good progress is also being made on deployments into Regional Organised Crime Units. Forces are recruiting officers to support deployments across the policing system, and we expect this growth to be seen over the Spending Review period. Forces must not be complacent in their efforts to ensure policing is open to all in modern Britain and to bring in the best talent from across their local communities.

For 2022/23, PCCs will receive an additional £550 million of government grants which include funding for the recruitment of the final 8,000 additional officers, and continued growth in police staff to support officers, by the end of March 2023. To ensure recruitment is maintained, £135 million of the grant increase will be ringfenced and allocated in line with funding formula shares. As in previous years, PCCs will be able to access this as they progress towards their recruitment target.

Building on the commitments in the Beating Crime Plan, we are continuing to strengthen capability to confront serious and organised crime, therefore, 425 officers will be deployed into Regional Organised Crime Units and equivalent capability in London. Recruitment allocations for year three of the programme are set out in the tables attached to this statement.

Precept

Spending Review 2021 confirmed that PCCs will be empowered to raise additional funding through precept flexibility. We propose to enable PCCs to increase their Band D precept by up to £10 in each of the next three years without the need to call for a local referendum, the equivalent of less than £1 per month. If all PCCs decide to maximise their flexibility, this would result in up to £246 million additional funding for local policing next year. It is for locally accountable PCCs to take decisions on local precept.

Counter-terrorism policing

The Government will continue to provide vital support for counter-terrorism (CT) policing, ensuring they have the resources they need to meet and deal with the threats we face. For the first time, CT police funding will total over £1 billion in 2022/23. This significant investment will aid in supporting the ongoing CT policing investigations to keep the country safe, and includes continued funding for both armed policing and the CT Operations Centre. The funding includes the transfer of £44 million for Special Branch from core PCC budgets to the CT policing grant, protecting local CT assets while providing forces with greater access to specialist expertise and resources to keep our citizens safe from harm.

PCCs will be notified separately of force-level funding allocations for CT policing, which will not be made public for security reasons.

National priorities

This Government will continue to support PCCs and forces through increased investment in national policing priorities. This settlement provides £1.4 billion for the following national priorities in 2022/23 (as set out at tables 1 and 5):

1. Maintaining our focus on cutting crime to make communities safer, we are continuing to invest in critical priority areas. This includes drugs and county lines activity, violent crime reduction, child sexual abuse and exploitation, fraud, and modern slavery. Next year we will see: Further investment in law enforcement intelligence and investigation capacity, taking these capabilities one step closer to intercepting the rise of economic crime. Regional Organised Crime Units equipped with the capabilities they need to tackle serious and organised crime and protect the most vulnerable citizens from abuse, building on the provision of more officers through the Uplift Programme. A National Crime Laboratory to drive the use of innovative data science techniques to prevent and reduce crime.
1. This Government recognises that transparency, governance and accountability have a key role to play in building public confidence in the criminal justice system. This settlement will enable us to: Fulfil key commitments from the Rape Review,

including the expansion of Operation Soteria to additional pilot areas to test innovative ways for the police and CPS to investigate rape cases. Deliver on our commitment to ensure that no victim of rape and serious sexual assault is left without a mobile phone for more than 24 hours and explore how we can further exploit technological advancements and new ways of working to improve investigation outcomes. Drive improvements in local police performance, including measuring responsiveness to 101 and 999 calls and providing a peer support function through the College of Policing for poor performing forces.

1. We must ensure that there is no place left for criminals to hide that carry out serious and organised crime and rely on sophisticated digital communications to evade detection. That is why this Government will be: Investing in a set of critical investigative tools to help deliver the Drugs Supply Attack Plan and support a range of other national priority threats. These tools will provide better-quality intelligence, expand law enforcement's ability to tackle international crime networks, homicide and neighbourhood crime, and boost prosecution rates against high-harm offenders. Providing greater investment in tackling fraud and improving the way in which intelligence on firearms is collected and managed.
2. This settlement also includes continued investment in Major Law Enforcement Programmes, and other critical national police and law enforcement IT capabilities. This Government will invest in: Strengthening the ability to share, analyse and act on all available intelligence data to counter drugs, county lines and other high harm offences. Collaborating with industry to leverage technology in support of safeguarding the vulnerable. Simplifying the technological capabilities that are delivered so that they can be easily adopted and exploited by operational users.

The Government expects PCCs to continue to take responsibility for crime outcomes both locally and nationally, and we will support PCCs and forces to deliver well-evidenced crime interventions as part of their core business. The Spending Review has provided £150m of Government funding for crime reduction in each of the next three years, which will allow the continuation of existing programmes as well as some new investments to prevent crime and keep our communities safe.

We will confirm funding arrangements for specific crime reduction programmes in due course. These will follow a match-funding principle where funding for local intervention is supported via funding allocated to or raised by local leaders. This approach will maximise PCC investment in crime reduction and increase the total funding spent on crime priorities, making our communities safer.

Outcomes and efficiency

While we continue to invest in policing, it is only right that the Government holds the policing sector, as with other public services, to account on delivering for the public. The police must demonstrate to taxpayers that they are using this funding effectively, meeting the needs of their community and ensuring the public receive the highest possible quality of service.

As part of the Spending Review settlement, the Government will expect to see over £100 million of cashable efficiency savings delivered from force budgets by 2024/25. For 2022/23, we expect to see £80 million of efficiency savings - which have been reflected in the funding set out as part of the settlement.

Ensuring the value of the Government's investment in policing goes beyond efficiencies. Following greater investment in modern technology infrastructure and interoperable systems, we expect to see an increase in productivity. This will enable more efficient data sharing and analysis, reduce the risk of service disruptions, and provide a foundation for future enhancements and innovations. We will continue to work with and support the policing sector through the Efficiency in Policing Board with a renewed focus on improving the measurement and delivery of productivity gains.

This Government has once again set out its commitment to giving the police the resources they need to cut crime and keep the public safe – setting out today how up to an additional £1.1 billion will be invested in the policing system in 2022/23. We will continue to work with policing to achieve the outcomes set out here. I would like to pay tribute and express my sincere gratitude to our police officers and police staff for the extraordinary bravery and dedication they display each day, to keep us all safe from harm.

I have set out in a separate document, attached, the tables illustrating how we propose to allocate the police funding settlement between the different funding streams and between Police and Crime Commissioners for 2022/23. These documents are intended to be read together.

[1] Funding for Special Branch has been transferred from existing PCC baselines and now will go to PCCs through the CT policing grant.

Attachments:

1. TABLES [Provisional Police Grant Report 22-23 TABLES.pdf]

■ UK Anti-Corruption Strategy – Year 3 Update

The Minister of State for Security and Borders (Damian Hinds): [\[HCWS500\]](#)

Today I am pleased to be publishing the third annual Update to the UK Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017-2022 which covers the year 2020. As part of the Strategy, the Government is committed to providing an annual written update to parliament on progress.

It is particularly pertinent that we are publishing this Update as countries are gathering to assess progress with implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption. This serves as a reminder to us all of the need for domestic and international action to address the evolving threat from corruption. This month we also saw the UK join our US partners in their Summit for Democracy, which similarly focuses on actively tackling the corruption challenges at home and abroad.

This Update highlights the progress made against the anti-corruption commitments in 2020 and focuses on a number of key areas:

- securing the public commitment with all Crown Dependencies and inhabited Overseas Territories to implement publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership information. This will help strengthen the international effort to counter illicit finance;
- extending the remit of the National Fraud Initiative and helping local authorities to undertake bank account and active company checks;
- reforming the police complaints and disciplinary systems to make them more transparent, independent and proportionate;
- securing endorsement from G20 Ministers of a G20 Call to Action for countries to combat corruption in the COVID-19 response and recovery;
- publishing a review of procurement risks in local government that improves understanding and strengthens our response; and
- publishing the Green Paper on procurement reform with specific proposals to further strengthen transparency and integrity across government.

This Update covers activity made against the Government's commitments in the Strategy during 2020. Activity in 2021 will be reported on in the Year 4 Update due to be presented next year.

The year 2020 has been dominated in so many ways by the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenging global environment has required the whole of government to respond to the pandemic focused on public health. Whilst recognising 2020 was a challenging year, this Update provides more details and highlights achievements which have gone beyond the original Strategy commitments as well as an explanation for those off-track commitments.

The Government will continue to implement its Strategy commitments to combat corruption and to promote integrity and transparency at home and overseas. There is still much work to do and it is important to recognise that a number of broader issues are considered as we look ahead. The Government will update parliament on progress made in 2021 in the fourth annual update due next year and I am pleased also to announce that Government has started to develop the successor to the Strategy which expires at the end of 2022. In addition, a policy statement in response to the *Upholding Standards in Public Life Report* from the Committee on Standards in Public Life and the review into the development and use of Supply Chain Finance in government by Nigel Boardman will be published in due course, in the New Year. Alongside this the Government will be providing an update to its work to reform the Business Appointment Rules.

I have written to the Devolved Administrations as the Update is of direct interest to them.

Finally, I would also like to thank the ongoing work of the Prime Minister's Anti-Corruption Champion (the Hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare) throughout this period.

A copy of the Update will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and also published on GOV.UK.

■ Work of the Home Office

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS511\]](#)

Today I am updating Parliament on Home Office delivery over the last twelve months.

Dealing with the effects of Covid-19 has been a challenge for the entire country, but it has also brought out the best of us as communities stepped up to deal with those challenges. Few have played a more important role than our emergency service workers and I put on record my particular thanks to the police officers and firefighters who have continued selflessly to serve the public in sometimes trying circumstances, as well as all Home Office staff and Border Force officers who have played their part in the fight against Covid-19.

Despite Covid-19, the Home Office has continued to deliver on the people's priorities and as we recover from the pandemic, we will continue to build back safer in 2022.

Cutting crime and law enforcement

We are delivering our manifesto commitment for new police officer recruitment, having recruited more than 11,000 of the 20,000 new police officers we have pledged for England and Wales to help cut crime and protect our communities. Every region in the country has more police officers keeping our streets and communities safer day and night – both beating crime and preventing crime.

The College of Policing has continued to connect all those working in the police and law enforcement, with the chair of its board, Lord Herbert of South Downs, launching a fundamental review of the College's work. This is important if we are to ensure that it continues to meet its potential and that its work and role within policing is valued across the service.

We have published several landmark strategies on the safety and security of our nation.

Our Beating Crime Plan establishes how the Government will ensure the public is better protected across all parts of the country, with each neighbourhood having contactable, named police officers who know their area and are best placed to ensure that persistent crime and anti-social behaviour is tackled.

Our Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy set out plans to increase support for victims and survivors, increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice and reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls in the long term. The need for the strategy became all the more stark following the tragic murder of Sarah Everard and immediate measures taken included the creation of the new online tool 'StreetSafe'. This provides women and girls with a way to anonymously and quickly pinpoint areas where they have felt unsafe and say why – an innovative crime prevention tool. The appointment in September of Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth as the National Police Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls means that police action in this vital area is now being coordinated across England and Wales.

In June we published the end-to-end rape review report on findings and actions, in which we committed to deliver lasting improvements to the way we investigate and prosecute rape so that victims are properly

supported and they - and the public - can have confidence that perpetrators of this sickening crime will feel the full force of the law.

The Domestic Abuse Act, which gained Royal Assent this year, provides for the first time in history a wide-ranging legal definition of domestic abuse and delivers important new protections and support for victims, such as ensuring that abusers can no longer directly cross-examine their victims in the family and civil courts. It also gives police new powers, including Domestic Abuse Protection Notices which provide victims with immediate protection from abusers.

We also published our Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy - a first-of-its-kind national strategy to protect children from all forms of child sexual abuse in which we set out how the government will use new legislation and enhanced technology to stop offenders in their tracks and bring the perpetrators of these heinous crimes to justice.

We have also enhanced our work tackling the scourge of drugs with a new cross-government 10-year strategy which includes pursuing and closing down the ruthless gangs who exploit and threaten the most vulnerable in society for financial gain through the illegal drugs trade. We have already closed down 1,500 county lines and this new crackdown aims to dismantle a further 2,000, as we seek to continue driving down crime and delivering safer streets for all.

During the course of this year, we have also expanded Project ADDER, the programme which seeks to ensure that more drug users get effective treatment, with enhanced treatment and recovery provision. Its overarching aim is to reduce drug-related deaths, reduce drug-related offending and reduce the prevalence of drug use while disrupting high-harm criminals and networks involved in the supply and importation of drugs. Having launched the programme in January 2021 in Blackpool, Hastings, Middlesbrough, Norwich and Swansea Bay, in July 2021 it expanded to take in Bristol, Newcastle, Wakefield, the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney, and three local authorities in Liverpool City Region.

Meanwhile, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill – legislation to restore confidence in the criminal justice system – is approaching its concluding stages in the House of Lords. Once enacted, this will give our police officers more of the powers and tools they need to keep themselves and all of us safe, while introducing tougher sentencing for the worst offenders and ending automatic halfway release from prison for serious crimes. Following recent antisocial protests which have caused misery and disruption for countless road users and citizens going about their lawful business, the legislation will give the police the power to stop and search people in order to seize items such as glue and chains intended to cause serious disruption by ‘locking-on’. It will also introduce mandatory life sentences for those who kill an emergency worker in the course of their duty.

Following the mass shooting in Plymouth in August, a review of police firearms licensing procedures was completed, including a review of licences which had been surrendered, seized, revoked or refused, only then to be returned following further checks or appeals. Following this review, eight of these returned licences were either re-surrendered or revoked, providing further reassurance to the public that their safety remains our priority.

We have also continued to establish what needs to be done to protect people from being exposed to harmful content online, whether that be publishing incitement to terrorism or images of the sexual abuse of children. I will continue to hold technology companies to account for the harmful content they host on their platforms and if they neglect public safety when designing products; and in due course our Online Safety Bill will place on those technology companies a binding duty of care to their users – and end-to-end encryption will not release them from that duty. This is fundamental to ensuring public safety and keeping people safe from evil.

Figures published last month show a 14% decrease in total crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse) across England and Wales for the year ending June 2021, compared with the year ending June 2019. This includes an 11% decrease in the number of homicides, a 6% decrease in the number of police recorded offences involving firearms and an 8% decrease in offences involving knives or sharp instruments.

Controlling our borders

Following the UK's exit from the European Union we have been able to take back control of our borders by ending free movement and introducing our new Points-Based Immigration System, which has now been in operation for over a year. We have also created new routes to attract the most talented and highly-skilled workers and global leaders in their fields to the UK.

These include the Graduate route, which will allow talented international graduates who have been awarded their degree from a UK university to stay in the UK and work, or look for work, at any skill level for at least two years, and the new fast-track International Sportsperson route, which will make it easier for professional athletes across sports to work in the country.

Additionally, we have improved the employer sponsorship system to enable UK businesses and educational institutions to become sponsors and attract global talent faster, while adding more illustrious prizes to the Global Talent Visa, making it simpler for more of the world's most gifted minds to come to the country.

We have also created an immigration route for British Nationals Overseas status holders in Hong Kong, reflecting our historic and moral commitment to the people of Hong Kong who have had their rights and freedoms restricted. As of 30 September, since the route launched on 31 January 2021 there had been 67,300 applications with 57,300 successful grants.

Recognising the considerable public concerns about illegal migration, the Nationality and Borders Bill is a critical piece of legislation whose aim is to deter illegal entry into the UK

and reduce the pull factors. It was given its Third Reading in the House of Commons by a majority of 67 earlier this month.

This legislation will deliver long-overdue reform to our broken asylum and immigration system and will be critical in making unviable the business model of the people smugglers who threaten the lives of every person from whom they take money to then place in unseaworthy vessels to cross the English Channel.

Once enacted, this legislation will: make the system fairer and more effective so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum; deter illegal entry into the UK and save lives by breaking the business model of those criminal trafficking networks; and remove from the UK those with no right to be here.

We have also continued to work closely with our international partners on tackling this shared problem emanating from the global migration crisis and specifically signed a new agreement with the French government to strengthen UK-France cooperation on tackling illegal immigration across the Channel.

The tireless work of the National Crime Agency tackling organised immigration crime has also played an important role in helping bring to justice people smugglers, having been involved in more than 140 arrests in the first eleven months of this year and with around 50 ongoing investigations linked to organised immigration crime. (The NCA has also played a critical role in other areas, such as keeping children safe online throughout the pandemic and disrupting high risk offenders.)

We have also signed a new agreement with the Albanian government to remove Albanian nationals who have no right to be in the UK, and established a new Migration and Mobility Partnership with the Indian government, supporting people coming to the UK through legal routes, while stopping the abuse of the system and speeding up the removal of those who have no right to be in the UK.

Protecting the homeland

Most of the work of our counter-terrorism police and security agencies is done out of public sight for good reasons, but they play an essential role in keeping the public safe.

They constantly review where threats exist and take the necessary action to clamp down on those with malign intent. To that end, this year Parliament has proscribed the entirety of Hamas, the militant Islamist terrorist movement, as a terrorist organisation, as well as Atomwaffen Division and The Base, predominantly US-based white supremacist groups.

During the year, the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Act received Royal Assent, further protecting the public by completely ending the prospect of early release for anyone convicted of a serious terror offence and forcing them to spend their whole term in jail. It also enhances the tools available to counter-terrorism police and the security services to manage the risk posed by terrorist offenders and individuals of concern outside of custody.

The Covert Human Intelligence Sources Act was also given Royal Assent, providing a clear and consistent statutory basis so that our intelligence and enforcement agencies and public bodies have the right tools to keep us safe. This longstanding critical capability

supports the work of undercover agents in preventing and safeguarding victims from serious crimes, including terrorism, by ensuring they can gain the trust of those under investigation.

This year also saw the unveiling of the first elements of the new Counter Terrorism Operations Centre in London, including a cutting-edge counter terrorism operations suite which is now fully operational and helping to keep the public safe.

During the summer, the Home Office stepped up to help in the evacuation of people from Kabul airport – the largest evacuation mission undertaken since the Second World War, which involved getting more than 16,000 people out of the Afghan capital. The Home Office's dual priorities during this evacuation were to save as many lives as possible while keeping the British public safe and I'm very proud of all who worked on that immense response.

Likewise, I was proud of all the Home Office teams, police and our partner agencies who were involved in safely delivering the COP26 conference in Glasgow in November – the largest international event the UK has hosted since the 2012 Olympics – as well as the G7 summit earlier this year. UKVI staff and Border Force officers efficiently processed and welcomed tens of thousands of visiting delegates from around the world; meanwhile, police officers from across the UK and our security agencies kept attendees and the public safe throughout – as they do without fanfare across the UK every day of the year. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

International engagement

In September I chaired the G7 interior ministers in London, showing how the UK is taking a lead on the international stage in the spheres of Counter Terrorism and illegal migration, as well as tackling Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation online. We agreed to work together to take action to prevent and combat violent extremism and terrorism; to protect people against harms enabled or exacerbated by the internet; to ensure security is not undermined by the threat of serious and organised crime; to support global action to confront emerging issues for national and border security; and to strengthen international action against corruption and kleptocracies.

Throughout the year I and ministerial colleagues have engaged with numerous counterparts from around the world. In November I visited Washington, where I met with senior members of the US administration, and it was agreed that the UK and US security services will undertake joint work to further strengthen the vital counter terrorism relationship between our two nations.

EU Settlement Scheme

Following the UK's departure from the European Union, a considerable number of our EU friends and neighbours decided to make the UK their home and secure the status to which they are entitled through the hugely successful EU Settlement Scheme. By the end of November 2021, more than 6.3 million applications had been received, with over 5.9 million (94%) applications concluded. We have continued to work as quickly as possible

to conclude applications, as well as supporting people with late applications, and the scheme remains open indefinitely for late applications.

Windrush

Finally, this year, we have continued to put right the wrongs suffered by the Windrush generation under successive governments. Following the overhaul of the Compensation Scheme I announced in December 2020, it is now easier for people to get higher payments more quickly, and as a result of my changes, more than £38 million has been paid or offered in compensation.

We simplified the application process, including changes to the primary claim form, designed in consultation with stakeholders, to make it easier to complete and easier for caseworkers to process; and for those who need support, we have funded an organisation to provide free, independent claimant assistance to individuals for the duration of the Scheme.

We have also worked at pace to implement the recommendations of the Windrush Lessons Learned review, with Wendy Williams having recently returned to the Home Office to undertake a progress review on delivery of her recommendations.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Local Government Finance

Secretary of State for Levelling UP, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove): [\[HCWS510\]](#)

Introduction

Today, I have set out the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23. This is a Settlement that, at a national level, makes available an additional £3.5 billion to councils, an increase in local authority funding for 2022/23 of over 4% in real terms. This will ensure councils across the country have the resources they need to deliver key services.

The proposals I am announcing today focus on providing stability by:

- Making available up to £3.5 billion more funding for councils across England compared to 2021/22. Overall, this means up to £53.9 billion of funding available for core services.
- Providing a new, one-off 2022/23 Services Grant worth £822 million.
- Striking a balance on Council Tax that helps councils invest in the services they provide to residents while protecting hard-working taxpayers from unfair hikes in rates, with a 2% core referendum threshold and 1% of additional flexibility for councils with adult social care responsibilities.
- Making available over £1 billion of additional funding for social care.

Alongside this Settlement, the Government will be providing further support to local communities through: £2.6 billion of UK Shared Prosperity funding, which helps people access opportunities in places in need; a £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund, which seeks to level up the country by investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK; and a further £2 billion of investment across the next three years to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

2022/23 Services Grant

Local government delivers a range of services that are at the core of every community.

I therefore propose to create a one-off 2022/23 Services Grant worth £822 million that will be distributed through our existing Settlement Funding Assessment. We will then take the time to fully consider its future distribution in consultation with councils.

This funding would be excluded from any proposed baseline for transitional support as a result of any proposed system changes.

Adults and Children's Social Care

The Government is committed to ensuring local government has the resources it needs to support the most vulnerable through adult and children's social care.

I propose, therefore, allocating £700 million of new grant funding going to social care. This means:

- £636 million more into the Social Care Grant, including funding for equalisation against the 1% Adult Social Care precept.
- providing an inflationary uplift to support integrated working with the NHS.

Local authorities can make use of over £1 billion of additional resource specifically for social care in 2022/23. This includes the increase in Social Care Grant and the improved Better Care Fund, a 1% Adult Social Care precept and deferred flexibilities from last year's settlement.

For many councils, adults and children's social care are key priorities and the largest areas of spending. Councils are not expected to rely solely on this earmarked funding to meet the inflationary and demographic pressures facing these services; they also have access to funding from unringfenced grant, including the 2022/23 Services Grant, and from council tax.

On top of this funding to address core pressures, £162 million in Adult Social Care reform funding will be allocated in 2022/23 to support local authorities as they prepare their markets for adult social care reform and to help move towards paying a fair cost of care. The funding made available to councils means overall local government core spending power can increase by over 4% in real terms in 2022/23, including the investment in Adult Social Care reform.

Council Tax

This government recognises the importance of high-quality local services and believes in empowering local decision makers to shape thriving communities. This includes ensuring

they have the flexibility to generate their own income through council tax, while protecting residents from excessive increases.

I have proposed the following package of referendum principles for 2022/23:

- A core council tax referendum principle of up to 2% for shire counties, unitary authorities, London boroughs, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and fire and rescue authorities.
- A principle of up to 2% or £5, whichever is higher, for shire district councils
- An Adult Social Care (ASC) precept of 1% for all authorities responsible for ASC.
- The ability to add up to an additional 3% of unused ASC Precept from 2021/22.
- A £5 referendum principle for the 8 lowest-charging fire and rescue authorities.
- A referendum principle of £10 for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), including the GLA charge for the Metropolitan Police and the PCC component of the Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Mayoral precepts.
- No other council tax referendum principles for Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and no council tax referendum principles for town and parish councils.

The Government's manifesto commits to continuing to protect local taxpayers from excessive council tax increases, and it is for the House of Commons to set an annual threshold at which a council tax referendum is triggered. This is an additional local democratic check and balance to avoid the repeat seen under the last Labour Government when council tax more than doubled.

This package of referendum principles strikes a fair balance. The council tax referendum provisions are not a cap, nor do they force councils to set taxes at the threshold level. Councillors, mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners and local councils will rightly want to consider the financial needs of local residents at this challenging point in time, alongside the public's support for action on keeping our streets safe and providing key services.

Stability of Funding

Through this package we are providing local authorities with a firm foundation for funding throughout 2022/23. This means we are proposing to roll over much of the 2021/22 Local Government Finance Settlement, including:

- Rolling over the current approach to the New Homes Bonus worth £554 million.
- Keeping the Rural Services Delivery Grant at £85 million.
- Maintaining the Lower Tier Services Grant at £111 million with an updated cash terms funding floor.
- Increasing the Revenue Support Grant in line with inflation; an increase of £70 million.
- Continuing with the 100% retention authorities in the five Devolution Deal areas and 67% for Greater London overall.

Updating the System

Government is committed to ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources. The data used to assess this has not been updated in a number of years, dating from 2013-14 to a large degree, and even as far back as 2000. Over the coming months, we will work closely with the sector and other stakeholders to update this and to look at the challenges and opportunities facing the sector before consulting on any potential changes.

As part of this we will look at options to support local authorities through transitional protection. Councils should note the one-off 2022/23 Services Grant provided in the Local Government Finance Settlement in 2022/23 will be excluded from potential transitional protections.

Conclusion

In outlining these proposals, my priority is to provide stability in the immediate term so I can work closely with local government and other partners on options to update our assessment of local authority needs and resources. I welcome representations from all interested parties on the 4-week consultation we have launched today.

Please see a link to the consultation [here](#).

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Disability Workforce Reporting Consultation

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Chloe Smith):
[\[HCWS498\]](#)

Today the Government is publishing its consultation on disability workforce reporting, as announced in the National Disability Strategy.

Our strategy, published in July 2021, set out over 100 wide-ranging practical actions to improve the everyday lives of disabled people. The strategy focuses on the issues that disabled people have told us matter most to them.

Supportive workplaces, where disabled people feel valued and able to be open about any additional needs, are vital to driving progress. It is also important that employers have the information required to create inclusive workplaces.

Through this consultation we will build an evidence base to better understand:

- current reporting practices, and what works well
- the case for and against implementing a mandatory approach to reporting
- how a mandated approach to reporting, if adopted, might be implemented in practice
- if there are alternative approaches that could also be taken to enhance transparency and increase inclusive practices.

I would encourage Members to make constituents and networks aware of the consultation, and to respond before the closing date on 25 March 2022.

I will deposit a copy of the consultation in the Libraries of both Houses and publishing it online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/disability-workforce-reporting>