

**Daily Report****Tuesday, 11 January 2022**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 11 January 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:37 P.M., 11 January 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Crown Prosecution Service: South East

**Bob Seely:** [\[98415\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the performance of the Crown Prosecution Service (a) on the Isle of Wight and (b) in the South East.

**Alex Chalk:**

Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPsi) published a report on CPS South East on 12 October 2021. The report found that the Area made strong charging decisions, and handled disclosure issues and victim and witness issues well. In addition, the report found that the quality of the Area's RASSO casework was particularly good. HMCPsi will conduct a follow-up inspection of CPS South East next year to assess whether improvements have been made.

HMCPsi are currently conducting an inspection of CPS Wessex, which includes the Isle of Wight, and will publish the report on the Area later this year. Recent CPS performance data shows that the Area's magistrates' court conviction rate and domestic abuse conviction rate are both above the national average.

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Aquind: Contracts

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[97046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what due diligence his Department has undertaken on the Aquind project company and its owners and directors.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 10 January 2022]:* The protection of infrastructure and critical services is a key priority for the Government, and new projects are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Foreign investment in critical national infrastructure undergoes the highest level of scrutiny.

#### ■ Aquind: Electricity Interconnectors

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[97045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has undertaken a national security assessment in relation to the proposed Aquind energy interconnector project.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 10 January 2022]:* The Government carries out rigorous checks and assessments to ensure the protection of infrastructure and critical services through a broad range of mitigations, including legislative and regulatory powers. Foreign involvement in critical national infrastructure undergoes the highest levels of scrutiny.

**Energy****Dan Carden:**[\[904935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to support the community energy sector as part of the Government's ambition to meet the net zero carbon emissions target by 2050.

**Greg Hands:**

Through the introduction of UK-wide growth funding schemes, such as the Community Renewal Fund and the Towns Fund, Government is enabling local areas to tackle net zero goals in ways that best suit their needs.

We encourage community energy groups to work closely with their local authority to support the development of community energy projects within these schemes.

For example, the Towns Fund has awarded over £23.6m to Glastonbury Town which includes the Glastonbury Clean Energy project that aims to generate renewable energy for use by other projects within the Plan, as well as local businesses and residents.

**Energy Supply: Billing****Jon Trickett:**[\[94293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to ensure consumers are protected from increases in consumer energy bills following supplier failures.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government and Ofgem ensure all consumers going through Supplier of Last Resort process will not go off supply and will have their credit balances protected.

Millions of domestic energy consumers on their supplier's standard variable and default tariffs are protected by the energy price cap. The price cap limits the rates a supplier can charge for these tariffs. The cap level is set by the energy regulator Ofgem and represents a fair price for energy based on the actual costs associated with supplying energy to consumers' homes.

**Energy Supply: Standards****Jon Trickett:**[\[94296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of OFGEM's final proposals for the Review of the Consolidated Segmental Statement.

**Greg Hands:**

As set out in their Statutory Consultation published in June 2021<sup>[1]</sup>, Ofgem's proposal for the Review of the Consolidated Segmental Statement (CSS) will ensure that the CSS better meets its aims, including providing transparency and market intelligence, ensuring consumers are treated fairly and supporting policy development. Further details can be found in the Final Impact Assessment published alongside the consultation.

[1] <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/final-proposals-and-statutory-consultation-reviewing-consolidated-segmental-statement>

**Energy: Prices****Andrew Gwynne:****[904939]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the price cap increase on the level of demand for support from household customers with dual fuel energy.

**Mary Kelly Foy:****[904942]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing additional financial support to households with dual fuel energy bills.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Our Energy Price Cap remains in place, protecting millions of households from sudden price spikes. We are also supporting the most vulnerable and low-income households with the cost of fuel bills through initiatives such as the Warm Home Discount, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments

**Firewood****Geraint Davies:****[98190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Digest of UK Energy Statistics for the UK in 2020, published in July 2021, for what reason the reduction in domestic wood consumption in 2018 was 67 per cent.

**Greg Hands:**

[Holding answer 10 January 2022]: Domestic wood consumption was revised in July 2021 to incorporate the results of research undertaken by the Department for the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (Defra): [link here](#).

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy published an article in March 2021 to quantify the likely impact for DUKES 2021:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-trends-march-2021-special-feature-article-domestic-wood-consumption-revised-baseline>.



## ■ Horizon Europe: Greater London and North East

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[94376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what percentage of the UK's successful Horizon bids are based in (a) Newcastle, (b) the North East and (c) Greater London.

**George Freeman:**

The UK stands ready to formalise our association to Horizon Europe at the earliest opportunity, but disappointingly there have been persistent delays from the EU.

UK participation in Horizon Europe benefits both the UK and the EU, bringing the expertise of UK researchers and innovators to vital collaborations, including those tackling global challenges such as climate change.

The regional distribution of funding under Horizon 2020 – the predecessor programme to Horizon Europe – can be seen in the table below, including for the North East and London. Horizon 2020 funding data is not available by individual cities (other than London). As Horizon Europe only recently started, data on successful bids will be reviewed as the programme progresses. UK entities are already eligible to apply ahead of formal association.

| <i><b>UK REGIONS</b></i> | <i><b>% OF UK RECEIPTS</b></i> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| London                   | 25.3%                          |
| North East               | 2.9%                           |

## ■ Housing: Energy

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[\[904941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help support energy efficiency measures in homes.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government has published the Heat and Buildings Strategy, setting out plans to decarbonise homes in the UK.

This includes £4 billion of new funding at the Spending review to start work.

## ■ Life Sciences: Clinical Trials

**Chris Green:**

[\[96913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of the UK's regulatory framework on the number of life sciences companies that deem it necessary to conduct clinical trials outside of the UK; and whether he has plans to make exceptions under the existing

framework to enable more UK-based life science companies to conduct trials within the UK.

**George Freeman:**

There has been no change to the number of applications to the MHRA for clinical trials over the past 5 years. We are committed to developing a world-leading regulatory system for clinical trials that allows us to collaborate effectively globally and maintains and enhances the attractiveness of the UK as a site for clinical trials. The MHRA are planning to launch a public consultation shortly on a set of proposals to improve and strengthen the UK clinical trials legislation (the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 as amended), to help us make the UK the best place to research and develop safe and innovative medicines. We have the opportunity to improve our regulation to support clinical trials in the best interests of patients, in line with the ambitions of the Life Sciences Vision to make the UK the leading global centre for innovative research design and delivery, across all types and phases of trials. Through the legislative proposals outlined in the consultation, we aim to streamline clinical trials approvals, enable innovation, enhance clinical trials transparency, enable greater risk proportionality, and promote patient and public involvement in clinical trials.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[98233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, dated 18 August 2021, transferred to his Department from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in a letter dated 10 September 2021, reference ZA57377.

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[98234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 20 October 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, formally transferred to his Department from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 3 November 2021, reference ZA58082.

**George Freeman:**

*[Holding answer 10 January 2022]:* I thank the Hon. Member for bringing this to my attention, a response has now been issued.

**Robert Largan:**

[\[98480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 13 October 2021, referenced RL27050.

**George Freeman:**

I thank the Hon Member for bringing this to my attention, a response has now been issued.

## ■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme

**Nick Smith:**

[\[904936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make a further assessment of the potential merits of the recommendations of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee's report on the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme, published on 27 April 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

In the Government response to the Select Committee inquiry into the Scheme we highlighted we continue to believe the arrangements agreed in 1994 with the Scheme Trustees still work well and are fair and beneficial to both Scheme members and taxpayers.

## ■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

**James Sunderland:**

[\[904945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help strengthen the automotive sector.

**Lee Rowley:**

This Government is supporting the automotive sector's transition to zero emission vehicles and has committed £2.5bn for vehicle grants and infrastructure. The Net Zero Strategy announced a further £350m for the Automotive Transformation Fund, on top of £500m previously committed. Recent investments by Nissan, Stellantis and Ford show strong business confidence.

## ■ Offshore Industry: Scotland

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[97138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent communications he has received from the Scottish Government on offshore oil and gas developments other than on the Cambo field.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 10 January 2022]:* My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has not received any direct communications from the Scottish Government on offshore oil and gas developments other than on the Cambo field recently.

## ■ Postal Services: Standards

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[904937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Royal Mail's current service standards for the delivery of letters.

**Paul Scully:**

Ofcom, the independent regulator, monitors Royal Mail's performance and has powers to investigate and take enforcement action if Royal Mail fails to achieve its service standards. Ofcom is consulting on the future regulatory framework for post and plans to issue a statement in Summer 2022.

■ **Science****Ben Everitt:**[\[904943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support the Government's ambition to become a global science superpower.

**George Freeman:**

We are funding the fastest increase in R&D spending ever to cement our position as a Global Science Superpower, driving economy-wide R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027 and priming the UK to take advantage of huge opportunities in emerging technologies like AI, Quantum computing and Fusion.

■ **UK Emissions Trading Scheme****Christian Wakeford:**[\[94579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the decision of 14 December 2021 by the UK ETS Authority not to intervene in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme after the cost containment mechanism was triggered, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of that decision with the Government's policy on support for industry in an energy transition to a low carbon economy; and what the criteria are for intervention by the UK ETS Authority to be approved.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK ETS Authority determined that a decision to not intervene on this occasion would uphold the objectives of the UK ETS as a market-based approach to reducing emissions and incentivising participants to find the most cost-effective solutions to decarbonise. The Government has set up multiple funding streams to support industry's transition to net zero, including the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund worth £315 million and £1 billion set aside for the Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage Fund.

Should the CCM be triggered again, the UK ETS Authority will consider up to date evidence from the market that enables a decision to be taken based on the most relevant factors affecting UK ETS allowance prices at that time.

■ **Utilities: Energy Supply****Jon Trickett:**[\[94295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take under the Energy Retail Market Strategy to (a) ensure that consumers can

always choose the lowest price and (b) escalate duties on energy companies to finance investment in low-carbon technologies.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is inviting views on how future policy can best achieve the vision set out earlier this year in the Energy Retail Market Strategy, and how the lessons from recent market developments should inform this to ensure the energy retail market is resilient, sustainable, and continues to protect consumers as we move to a net zero energy system. The Government aims to publish an updated Strategy as soon as possible, once the market has stabilised.

■ **Utilities: Insolvency**

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[94294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the number of customers whose energy supplier has closed since August 2021 in (a) each English region, and (b) Scotland, (c) Wales, (d) Northern Ireland.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government and Ofgem strive for orderly market exits and that customers are protected, with their supply uninterrupted. The available data the Government can share on the number of customers whose energy supplier has exited the market since the beginning of August 2021 is in the table below. Government does not hold regional customer data.

| COMPANY                | DATE         | CUSTOMERS TRANSFERRED                     |
|------------------------|--------------|---|
| Hub Energy             | 9 August     | c. 6,000 domestic, c.9,000 non-domestic   |
| MoneyPlus Energy       | 7 September  | c. 9,000 domestic                         |
| PFP Energy             | 7 September  | c. 82,000 domestic, c. 5,600 non-domestic |
| Utility Point          | 14 September | c. 220,000 domestic                       |
| People's Energy        | 14 September | c. 350,000 domestic, c.1,000 non-domestic |
| Green Supplier Limited | 22 September | c. 255,000 domestic, non-domestic         |
| Avro Energy            | 22 September | c. 580,000 domestic                       |
| Symbio Energy          | 29 September | c. 48,000 domestic, non-domestic          |
| Igloo Energy           | 29 September | c. 179,000 domestic                       |

| COMPANY                           | DATE         | CUSTOMERS TRANSFERRED                 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| ENSTROGA                          | 29 September | c. 6,000 domestic                     |
| Colorado Energy                   | 13 October   | c. 15,000 domestic                    |
| Pure Planet                       | 13 October   | c. 235,000 domestic                   |
| Daligas                           | 14 October   | c. 9,000 domestic & non-domestic      |
| GOTO Energy                       | 18 October   | c. 22,000 domestic                    |
| Bluegreen Energy Services Limited | 1 November   | c. 5,900 domestic, non-domestic       |
| Ampoweruk Ltd                     | 2 November   | c. 600 domestic, c.2,000 non-domestic |
| Zebra Power Limited               | 2 November   | c. 14,800 domestic                    |
| MA Energy Limited                 | 2 November   | c. 300 non-domestic                   |
| Omni Energy Limited               | 2 November   | c. 6,000 domestic                     |
| CNG Energy Limited                | 3 November   | c. 41,000 non-domestic                |
| Social Energy Supply Ltd          | 16 November  | c. 5,500 domestic                     |
| Neon Reef Limited                 | 16 November  | c. 30,000 domestic                    |
| Orbit Energy Limited              | 25 November  | c. 65,000 domestic                    |
| Entice Energy                     | 25 November  | c. 5,400 domestic                     |
| Zog Energy Limited                | 1 December   | c. 11,700 domestic                    |

## ■ Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre

**John Spellar:**

**[96761]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much has been spent to date on the Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre at Harwell as of 4 January 2022, what estimate his Department has made of the total cost of establishing that Centre; and when he expects that Centre to open.

**George Freeman:**

*[Holding answer 10 January 2022]:* The Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC) has been granted £206m of Government funding to date to support the delivery of the facility, including grants since the beginning of the COVID-19

pandemic to increase vaccine manufacturing capacity. As a private company, questions regarding VMIC's facility opening date should be directed towards VMIC.

■ **Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre: Sales**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[98275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department held discussions with scientific bodies prior to the decision to sell the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[98277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 5 January 2022 to Question 94362, how much has the Government invested in the Vaccine Manufacture and Innovation Centre since its inception (a) directly and (b) through its agencies; and what other forms of control does the Government exercise of that Centre.

**George Freeman:**

*[Holding answer 10 January 2022]:* The Vaccine Manufacturing Innovation Centre (VMIC) UK is a private company, limited by guarantee, and as such the UK Government does not exercise any ownership rights.

VMIC has been granted £206m of Government funding to date to support the delivery of the facility, including grants since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to increase vaccine manufacturing capacity. Reflecting the public funding VMIC has received, UK Research and Innovation (who have been managing the grant on behalf of the Vaccine Taskforce) will be required to 'consent' to any sale of the company or its assets and have confirmed that they will work closely with the Vaccine Taskforce in performing this function.

■ **Wind Power: North Sea**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[98224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of UK-built service operations vessels that are operating to offshore windfarm sites at Dogger Bank as of 4 January 2022.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 10 January 2022]:* The Government has not made an estimate of the number of UK-built service operations vessels that are operating to offshore windfarm sites at Dogger Bank.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **10 Downing Street: Alarms****Fleur Anderson:**[\[94552\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether an alarm was triggered at Number 10 offices on the evening of 18 December 2020.

**Michael Ellis:**

It is a long-standing practice that administrations do not comment on security arrangements on the Downing Street estate.

**COP26**■ **Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action****Patrick Grady:**[\[96943\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what discussions he has had with UNICEF on the UK becoming a signatory to the Intergovernmental Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate action.

**Alok Sharma:**

The UK Presidency team has regular meetings with UNICEF. We support many of the principles in the declaration on children, youth and climate action and are carefully considering how to engage with it.

The UK has been committed to amplifying the voices of young people from across the world through our COP26 presidency and domestic frameworks. COP26 agreed a new 10 year work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment which significantly increases youth engagement in climate processes.

In the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs 25 Year Environment Plan, the government sets out a plan for how the natural environment will be protected and enhanced for our, and future, generations. One of the actions it commits to is to help children and young people from all backgrounds engage with nature and improve the environment.

**DEFENCE**■ **Afghanistan: Refugees****John Healey:**[\[98886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of ARAP applications received by his Department in each month (a) have been processed with a final decision given and (b) await a decision on eligibility, before the new eligibility criteria were introduced on 14 December 2021.



**James Heappey:**

We owe a debt of gratitude to all Afghan nationals who risked their lives working alongside UK forces. As such, the ARAP Scheme has been one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world. It is not time-limited and will endure, facilitating the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families, from third countries if possible.

Due to constraints on accessible data, the information requested is only available from October onwards and can be found in the table below:

| MONTH    | APPLICATIONS RECEIVED | ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS MADE |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| October  | 5,998                 | 706                        |
| November | 4,636                 | 1,450                      |
| December | 2,631                 | 803                        |

**Dan Jarvis:**[\[98957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) applications, (b) requests, (c) referrals and (d) recommendations to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy are pending as of 6 January 2022.

**James Heappey:**

We owe a debt of gratitude to all Afghan nationals who risked their lives working alongside UK forces. As such, the ARAP Scheme has been one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world. It is not time-limited and will endure, facilitating the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families, from third countries if possible.

As of 5 January 2022, over 100,000 applications to the ARAP Scheme have been received. Of these, it is estimated that over 9,000 are currently pending a decision.

**Dan Jarvis:**[\[98958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time taken is to reach a decision on an application to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

**Dan Jarvis:**[\[98959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average processing time is of applications to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

**James Heappey:**

Since August 2021 the number of applications received for the ARAP scheme have increased exponentially to around 102,000 as at 10 January 2022. We do not record or hold the metrics for the processing times of applications, and any number of factors can affect how long it takes for an applicant to progress through each stage of the process. For example: their location, access to IT, employment history verification, security checks, or family circumstances. We continue to process

applications as swiftly as possible and the Ministry of Defence has devoted significant resource to the task.

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[98960]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2021 to Question 72439, on Afghanistan: Refugees, what constitutes fulfilment of the criteria terms of Category 4 applications (a) special cases, (b) extraordinary and unconventional contexts, (c) alongside the Government and (d) locally employed staff.

**James Heappey:**

We owe a debt of gratitude to all Afghan nationals who risked their lives working alongside UK forces. As such, the ARAP Scheme has been one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world. It is not time-limited and will endure, facilitating the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families, from third countries if possible.

It may be helpful if I explain that special cases, means that applications are considered on individual circumstances and eligibility is determined by those circumstances, and not solely as a result of membership of a particular group.

Extraordinary and unconventional contexts are subjective and therefore not subject to a comprehensive definition. All require assessment on a case-by-case basis and all Category 4 approvals are confirmed by Ministers.

Alongside the Government refers to those who have made a material contribution to the UK's defence and security and in the delivery of HMG's mission in Afghanistan, but who were not directly employed by HMG.

Locally employed staff refers to those who were directly employed by HMG, rather than via a contractor.

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[98961]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if the Shaheen Regiment of the National Directorate of Security were evacuated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy during Operation Pitting and relocated to the UK.

**James Heappey:**

We owe a debt of gratitude to all Afghan nationals who risked their lives working alongside UK forces. As such, the ARAP Scheme has been one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world. It is not time-limited and will endure, facilitating the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families, from third countries if possible.

The Ministry of Defence-administered Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme was established to support former Locally Employed Staff (LES) and their dependants who are assessed to be at serious risk of threat to life as a result of having been directly employed by the UK Government in Afghanistan. There is also some discretion within the rules to consider, on a case-by-case and exceptional basis, those who worked in meaningful and prominent enabling roles alongside HMG

and whose responsible HMG unit builds a credible case for consideration under the scheme. Approval in such cases is dependent upon the extent of the individual's relationship with HMG, the scale of their contribution to our mission, and an assessment of the risks they face, but could include members of National Directorate of Security units.

## ■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Procurement

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[96793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, who the System Design Authority is for the P-8A.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The System Design Authority (known as the Coordinating Design Organization) for the UK P-8A aircraft (Poseidon MRA1) is the United States Navy, which holds an Organizational Approval issued by the UK Military Aviation Authority.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[96794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which (a) nations and (b) companies can see the maintenance data for the UK's P-8A.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The maintenance policy and schedule for the UK's P-8A (Poseidon MRA1) aircraft belong to the US Government, which controls access to them. Therefore, maintenance data and the details of those in receipt of it can be shared only with the authority of the US Government. The UK operates in accordance with these parameters, which permit sharing this information with our primary support partners and other nations as covered by the necessary agreements.

## ■ Merlin Helicopters: Early Warning Systems

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[96785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the most recent forecast is of the whole life cost of the Crowsnest system; and what the original forecast whole life cost was.

**Jeremy Quin:**

As of 30 November 2021, the total forecast whole life cost for the CROWSNEST programme was £433.4 million. The original approved whole life budget for the programme was £459 million.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[96786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) CDEL and (b) RDEL cost is of the Crowsnest system to date.

**Jeremy Quin:**

As of the financial position dated 30 November 2021, the spend to date for the CROWSNEST programme was £45.7 million RDEL and £338.5 million CDEL, a total of £384.2 million.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[96789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Merlin airframes will be modified to accept the Crowsnest system.

**Jeremy Quin:**

It is intended that all thirty Merlin Mk2 airframes will be modified to accept the Crowsnest system.

#### ■ **Military Aircraft: Helicopters**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[96806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department has made of the CADMID costs for the UK's new medium utility helicopter.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Work on New Medium Helicopter is progressing and early market engagement has commenced. Initial provisioning and cost estimate work is part of this activity but will not be released prior to the expected competition and eventual contract award as this could undermine our commercial position.

#### ■ **Military Exercises: Ammunition**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[96796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many 40mm cased telescoped ammunition rounds have been fired on trials.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The table below summarises the quantities of 40mm ammunition consumed to 5 January 2022.

|  | TOTAL FIRED |
|--|-------------|
| 40mm Armour Piercing Fin Stabilised Discarding Sabot-Tracer (APFSDS-T) | 17,740      |
| 40mm Target Practice – Tracer (TP-T)                                   | 34,607      |
| 40mm General Purpose Round Point Detonation – Tracer (GPR PD-T)        | 2,641       |
| 40mm General Purpose Round Air Burst – Tracer (GPR AB-T)               | 690         |

## ■ Russia: Ukraine

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[904840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the build-up of Russian forces along the border of Ukraine.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

*[Holding answer 10 January 2022]:* The Integrated Review states that Russia remains the most acute threat to our security. The build-up of Russian forces along the border of Ukraine is unprovoked and unjustified. We remain clear Russia should take concrete steps to de-escalate. Together with our Allies and partners, the UK will continue to engage to reduce tensions and respond to Russia's actions.

## ■ Stonehouse Barracks

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[96784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to sell Stonehouse Barracks.

**Jeremy Quin:**

On current plans, Stonehouse Barracks is scheduled for disposal in 2027.

Work to determine the future location options for those units currently based at Stonehouse is subject to ongoing analysis. The outcome of this work will inform a decision on Commando Force future basing arrangements.

## ■ Warships: Iron and Steel

**John Healey:**

[\[96776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has targets for the proportion of UK steel used on the (a) Ajax, (b) Boxer, (c) Astute, (d) Dreadnought, (e) Type 26 Frigate and (f) Type 31 Frigate programmes.

**John Healey:**

[\[96777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to set targets for the use of UK steel in (a) Fleet Solid Support Ships, (b) Tempest, (c) Type 32 Frigates, (d) Type 83 Destroyers and (e) other contracts tendered by his Department.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Steel is procured in accordance with Cabinet Office guidelines. Many defence programmes require specialised steels that are not manufactured in the UK; nevertheless, we encourage the sourcing of UK steel wherever it is technically and commercially feasible.

Steel for our major defence programmes is generally sourced by our prime contractors from a range of UK and international suppliers. This Government is committed to creating the right conditions in the UK for a competitive and sustainable steel industry. It publishes its future pipeline for steel requirements, together with data

on how Departments are complying with steel procurement guidance. This enables UK steel manufacturers to better plan and bid for Government contracts.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Arts: Coronavirus

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[94529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the support required by the arts sector following the rise in the number of positive omicron covid-19 cases.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

DCMS is committed to supporting arts and culture across the country. This commitment is evident in the Government's recent Spending Round, where it was announced that Arts Council England will be receiving over £375 million of government funding in 2021/22.

In November 2021 we also announced that 925 arts, heritage and cultural organisations would benefit from the third round of the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF). In total, over £1.5 billion has now been allocated from the CRF which has helped to save around 5,000 individual organisations and sites, including funding allocated to the DCMS sponsored national cultural institutions. This constitutes the largest ever public investment in the arts in UK history.

The third round of CRF is still open for applications, providing vital ongoing support for the cultural, heritage and creative sectors. £30 million from the Culture Recovery Fund is being made newly available for organisations as part of the Chancellor's £1 billion support package, and this funding will be used to double the budget for the Emergency Resource Support strand of CRF which has been extended in order to meet the demand from across the cultural sector.

### ■ Coronavirus: Disinformation

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[98962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the cross-Whitehall unit to counter disinformation on covid-19 is operating as of 6 January 2022; how many staff working as part of that unit there are in the (a) Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, (b) Home Office (c) Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, (d) Cabinet Office and (e) Ministry of Defence; and whether the number of staff in each team has increased or decreased since that unit was established in March 2020.

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[98963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many pieces of content the specialist units established to tackle misinformation on covid-19 have directly rebutted on social media in each month since those units were established.

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[98964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many pieces of potentially harmful content that breaches a platform's terms and conditions have been flagged to (a) Twitter, (b) Facebook, (c) YouTube, (d) Google and (e) other platforms since the establishment of units to tackle disinformation on covid-19; and what data those units hold on the steps taken by platforms in response those units.

**Chris Philp:**

The Cross-Whitehall Counter Disinformation Unit (CDU) was established on 5 March 2020, bringing together cross-government monitoring and analysis capabilities. As of 7 January 2022 the CDU is still fully operational.

Addressing the challenges of disinformation and misinformation is a whole of the government effort. The CDU is resourced full time and works in close partnership with cross-government teams. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the size of the team in DCMS has increased. Requirements are continually reviewed to ensure appropriate levels of resourcing, including surge capacity as needed.

When false narratives are identified, the CDU coordinates departments across Whitehall to deploy the appropriate response. This can include a direct rebuttal on social media, flagging content to platforms and ensuring public health campaigns are promoted through reliable sources.

## ■ Crime Prevention: Young People

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[97155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will increase the number of support workers available to support young people engaged in or at risk of involvement in gangs and youth violence.

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[97156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will increase the number of youth clubs and sports clubs to support young people engaged in or at risk of involvement in gangs and youth violence.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

£130.5 million has been made available to tackle serious violence this year. This investment will support Violence Reduction Units to deliver a range of early intervention and prevention programmes for young people, including funding support workers, youth and sports clubs. It will also provide funding for early intervention programmes, including trauma-informed training for frontline professionals as well as therapy and specialist support for children and young people in crisis moments.

Universal youth services, including youth and sports clubs, help to reduce the risk factors associated with involvement in gangs and youth violence. Following the 2021 Spending Review, we are investing £560 million in youth services in England over the next 3 years, to support young people. This investment will provide up to 300 new or

refurbished youth facilities in deprived areas across the country and create hundreds of thousands of positive activities for young people.

In addition, we set out our commitment to grassroots sports, investing £205 million to build or transform up to 8,000 multi-use sports facilities; £21.9 million to refurbish park tennis courts; and up to £30 million per year to increase access to school facilities.

We are continuing to provide bursaries to help increase the number of qualified youth workers available to support young people. Over the past two years we have worked with the National Youth Agency to help more than 900 youth workers gain qualifications.

Furthermore, the government has made a £200 million investment over 10 years in the Youth Endowment Fund, to test what works in preventing young people from becoming involved in violence.

## ■ Cultural Heritage: Northern Ireland

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[98881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact on the export of illicit cultural property from Northern Ireland to the EU following the repeal of the EU Cultural Property Import Regulations in Great Britain and implementation in Northern Ireland through the Northern Ireland protocol.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The UK has sufficient legal powers to tackle the illicit trade in cultural goods and the import of cultural goods which have been unlawfully removed from another country. These powers are set out in existing domestic law, and in some cases also derive from our obligations in international law, notably UNESCO Conventions. The UK has a strong record of finding and returning unlawfully removed cultural goods, and remains determined to tackle the illicit trade in cultural objects.

The majority of the imports of cultural goods from Great Britain into Northern Ireland are carried out by museums rather than businesses or private owners. The revocation of EU Regulation 2019/880 on the introduction and the import of cultural goods in Great Britain will not significantly affect any potential export of illicit cultural property from Northern Ireland to the EU. Any changes to the pattern of imports will be identified and will lead to closer scrutiny. As much of the EU Regulation may not be implemented before 2025, precisely how it will need to be applied in Northern Ireland is still being evaluated.

## ■ Festival UK\* 2022: Finance

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[98966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's announcement of 16 November 2020 on 30 creative teams awarded up to



£100,000 each for Festival UK\* 2022 R&D project, which companies have received that funding; and how much each has received.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

30 creative teams were announced in November 2020 to take part in a £3m Research and Development (R&D) Project for what would become UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK. UNBOXED is a major creative programme that will reach millions of people, taking place at locations across the UK and online in 2022.

The 30 teams selected for the R&D Project were chosen following an open call. A rigorous selection process, undertaken at arm's length from the Government by Festival 2022 Ltd., considered 299 submissions involving almost 3,000 organisations, freelancers and others representing the five STEAM sectors (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths).

Each of the teams received up to £100,000 to enable them to develop ideas that could reach millions of people across the UK and online. The 30 teams presented their R&D proposals before a panel in February 2021, with 10 selected for the programme.

Details of the 30 teams who participated in the R&D Project between November 2020 and February 2021 can be found [here](#).

■ **Internet: Safety**

**Julie Elliott:**

**[96883]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to carry out a Child Impact Assessment for the provisions of the draft Online Safety Bill.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government published an [impact assessment](#) in May 2021 alongside the draft Online Safety Bill. The impact assessment considered the economic and social impacts of the draft Bill and included an assessment of impacts on freedom of expression, privacy and other wider societal impacts. The Government is currently working on a final stage impact assessment for the Online Safety Bill which will be published before the Bill is laid in Parliament.

The overall impact assessment includes considerations on the impact of harm on children where relevant and the strongest protections in the Bill will be for children. In-scope services which are likely to be accessed by children will need to conduct a child safety risk assessment and provide safety measures for child users. Services will need to keep risk assessments up-to-date and update them before making a significant change to the design or operation of their service. Ofcom will have a duty to issue guidance to assist providers in carrying out their risk assessments.

**■ Lord Brownlow of Shurlock Row****Lucy Powell:** [98965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will publish the (a) dates of and (b) subjects discussed at meetings held between (i) Ministers and/or officials in her Department and (ii) Lord Brownlow of Shurlock Row in the last 18 months.

**Julia Lopez:**

Ministers' official meetings with external organisations are published each quarter on gov.uk, these can be found [here](#).

**Angela Rayner:** [98971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the meeting between the Secretary of State, Lord Brownlow and Royal Festival Hall about the Great Exhibition 2.0 on 18 January 2021, if a minute was taken of the meeting and in what capacity Lord Brownlow attended that meeting.

**Julia Lopez:**

My department follows the Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers.

As laid out in his Lords register of interests, Lord Brownlow is a Trustee of the Royal Albert Hall Trust and an Ambassador of the Royal Albert Hall's 150th Anniversary.

**■ Mobile Phones: North West Norfolk****James Wild:** [97150]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which locations in North West Norfolk constituency will experience improved mobile coverage under the Shared Rural Network.

**Julia Lopez:**

At this stage, we are not able to confirm which specific locations will benefit from the Shared Rural Network (SRN) programme. In England, the majority of coverage improvements from the SRN will come from the industry funded and managed element of the programme, which will close the majority of partial not-spots - areas where there is currently coverage from at least one, but not all mobile network operators (MNOs).

The four MNOs have already commenced work on this element of the SRN, with more than 800 sites already announced, and work to improve coverage in other areas in progress. This aspect of the programme is on track to be delivered by June 2024.

In the East of England, 4G coverage from all four MNOs will rise to a minimum of 93% (up from 90% today) by the end of the programme.

The SRN is not the only focus for infrastructure investment in expanding mobile connectivity. MNOs independently invest around £2 billion annually in enhancing and improving their networks.

## ■ Musicians: EU Countries

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[97065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many European nations have signed agreements to allow British musicians to tour, work and operate visa free.

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[97066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on securing British musicians the right to work visa free in other European nations.

**Julia Lopez:**

This government is working hard to help touring musicians work in Europe. That is why we have spoken to every EU Member State about the importance of touring. From these discussions, 21 out of 27 Member States have now confirmed they offer visa and work permit free routes for musicians and creative professionals. This includes Spain, which introduced a new visa exemption after extensive lobbying from the sector and this government, which included engagement involving the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Department for International Trade (DIT), and the Cabinet Office.

The Government, led by DCMS and involving a number of departments, is working extremely hard with the remaining 6 EU Member States that have not confirmed that they allow any visa or permit free touring, to encourage them to make touring easier. We want all our European colleagues to be able to enjoy the economic and cultural benefits that UK touring artists bring, as we do from EU creative performers who can tour here easily.

## ■ Social Media: Hate Crime

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[98299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department plans to take to tackle hate speech on (a) Twitter and (b) other social media platforms to ensure that comments are removed in addition to users banned.

**Chris Philp:**

Under the draft Online Safety Bill, services in scope will need to minimise and remove illegal content, including illegal hate speech. Services in scope which are likely to be accessed by children will also need to protect them from harmful or inappropriate content.

Major platforms will also need to address legal but harmful content for adults. These services will have to set out clearly what legal content is acceptable on their platforms and enforce their terms and conditions consistently and transparently. This could include removal of prohibited content, banning repeat offenders and preventing them from creating new accounts. Priority categories of legal but harmful content for adults

will be set out in secondary legislation and these are likely to include some forms of abuse, including racist abuse.

If platforms fail in their duties under the Bill, they will face tough enforcement action including fines of up to 10% of global annual qualifying turnover.

The draft Bill has been subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee which reported its recommendations on 14 December. We are considering the Committee's report and will introduce the Bill as soon as possible.

## ■ Tourism: Coastal Areas

**Bob Seely:**

**[98413]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to further support the tourism industry (a) on the Isle of Wight and (b) in other coastal communities.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As set out in the government's Tourism Recovery Plan, we are committed to supporting the tourism industry's return to pre-pandemic levels across England including the Isle of Wight and other coastal communities.

So far, the government has provided over £35 billion in support to the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors over the course of the pandemic in the form of grants, loans and tax breaks.

The latest budget announcement also included a new temporary business rates relief for over 90% of eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England which will cut at least 50% off their business rates bills during the 2022-23 period which is worth almost £1.7 billion.

On 21 December 2021, HMT announced additional support for businesses who have been impacted by the Omicron variant across the UK, including one-off grants of up to £6,000 for hospitality and leisure premises, plus more than £100 million discretionary funding will be made available for local authorities to support other businesses.

VisitBritain (VB) promotes Isle of Wight and other coastal destinations on their websites, social media and through PR activity to ensure that when international travel resumes, visitors are inspired and informed on visiting our coastal towns and cities.

Coastal destinations were also supported via the Discover England Fund as part of the England's Coast project. This was up to 2021 however VisitBritain continues to support their initiatives, through marketing, PR and business support.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Adoption

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[98979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to make it mandatory for every adopted child to have a long-term, costed and deliverable support plan in place at adoption.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[98980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that every local authority has a published (a) strategy on how it identifies at the earliest stage children who are likely to wait longer for adoption and (b) process for seeking to match those children with a family in a timely manner.

**Will Quince:**

Our national adoption strategy 'Achieving Excellence Everywhere', published in July 2021, makes clear our ambition to support regional adoption agency leaders to ensure that support for adopted children and families is provided throughout childhood and in the transition into adulthood, whenever it is required. We recognise the importance of such support plans being in place even before the child moves into their adoptive family.

The adoption strategy focuses on the clear need to find families for children, not children for families, and for recruitment campaigns to focus particularly on seeking adopters for those children who often wait the longest. The strategy also sets out a range of ways to improve matching. As well as promoting existing methods and tools to secure matches for children without delay, we want to see new processes and procedures put in place to speed up the sharing of adopters across regions.

### ■ Adoption Support Fund

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[98981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy that families that are (a) receiving and (b) in the process of applying for therapeutic support via the Adoption Support Fund will be able to access that fund beyond March 2022; and if he will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

Our transitory funding arrangements for the adoption support fund (ASF) mean that applications for therapy starting between August and November 2021 may be funded for up to nine months, up to July 2022. We will be able to confirm more detailed plans, including for the ASF, in due course. In the meantime, we remain deeply committed to supporting families and adopted children.

## ■ Air Conditioning

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[94501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many air filtration units he has purchased for specialist settings and what brand were these.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department has committed to buying up to 1,000 air filtration devices for special educational needs and disabilities schools. The devices being provided to these providers are a mix of Camfil and Dyson products.

## ■ Apprentices: Degrees

**Matt Western:** [\[93873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made on the take-up of degree apprenticeships since their introduction.

**Alex Burghart:**

Apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7, including degree apprenticeships, are an important and growing part of our education and skills system and we are encouraged by the take-up so far. We have seen year on year growth since their inception, and in the last academic year there were 58,760 starts on apprenticeships at levels 6-7, 74.4% growth in 2020/21 compared to 2018/19.

There are now over 150 industry-designed apprenticeship standards available at levels 6 and 7, of which over 100 of these include a degree. As these are jobs with training, they directly address skills shortages for employers. They are available in a wide range of sectors such as Aerospace, Automotive, Digital, Engineering, Financial, Health, Leadership, Legal, Manufacturing, Nuclear and Protective Services.

Whilst we have seen positive growth of degree apprenticeships, we would like to see even more. Higher and degree apprenticeships support productivity, social mobility and widening participation in higher education and employment.

We continue to encourage more employers to consider using these apprenticeships to meet the skills needs of their industries. Education providers, including universities, have a vital role to play in working with employers to offer these apprenticeships wherever there is employer demand.

The attached file contains the number of apprenticeships starts at level 6 and 7, along with a further breakdown of those apprenticeships with a mandatory degree component since the first starts were recorded in the 2014/15 academic year.

### **Attachments:**

1. 93873\_table [93873\_table\_showing\_number of apprenticeships starts.xlsx]

## ■ Education: Expenditure

**Kim Leadbeater:**

**[93925]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what funding his Department has allocated to projects aimed at supporting the teaching of (a) English, (b) mathematics, (c) music, (d) languages, (e) science, (f) geography and (g) religious education in the last 5 years, excluding examination reform.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department has allocated central funding between financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21 on the curriculum projects and programmes in the attached table. In particular, the department provides funding for 4 curriculum hubs programmes in English, mathematics, music and languages as set out in the table.

The English hubs programme was launched in 2018 and aims to improve the teaching of reading in the primary phase, with a focus on supporting children making the slowest progress in reading, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The total departmental funding in the last 2 years is £22 million and the programme works across 34 hubs to provide appropriate and targeted support to several thousands of schools across England.

The maths hubs programme was launched in 2014 and aims to improve the teaching of mathematics from reception to A level. The total departmental funding in the last 5 years is £115 million and the programme works across 40 hubs and the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM), supporting over 11,000 primary and secondary schools.

Music education hubs were launched in 2012 and aim to create joined-up music education provision and provide specialist music education services across schools. The total departmental funding in the last five years is £381 million and the programme works across 119 hubs to provide support for around 90% of state-funded schools across England.

The modern foreign language hubs pilot was launched in 2018 and aims to support secondary phase teaching of French, German, and Spanish through the development of teaching resources, assessments, and continuing professional development (CPD). The total departmental funding in the last 3 years is £4.2 million. The programme has worked across 45 secondary schools between December 2018 and December 2021 and now offers free online CPD to over 1,350 teachers nationally in 2022.

Alongside the funding for the subject-specific curriculum programmes, the department also allocated funding over this period that supports teacher development, such as the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund and subject knowledge enhancement, which have benefitted teaching in a range of subjects, including geography and religious education. The department also provides scholarships and bursaries for initial teacher training in a wide range of subjects.



**Attachments:**

1. 93925\_table [93925\_table\_central\_funding.xls]

**Higher Education: Admissions****Matt Western:**[\[93870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for higher education providers to widen access programmes in the context of an increase in providers registered with the Office for Students.

**Michelle Donelan:**

All higher education providers wishing to charge tuition fees above the basic fee level (£6,000+), and to be eligible for funding from the Strategic Priorities Grant, must agree an access and participation plan with the Office for Students (OfS) in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. These plans need to set out their targets and planned expenditure to improve access and participation based on their priorities, and the gaps they need to address for their own institution.

To support students most at risk of dropping out, the government provides additional formula-based funding for providers through the student premium (part of the Strategic Priorities Grant). As of July 2021, the OfS has allocated student premium funding totalling £273m to providers for the 2021/22 academic year.

**Mental Health Services: Local Government****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[98329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if the Government will offer additional support and resources to local authorities' early intervention teams within their education departments.

**Will Quince:**

In the autumn Budget a package of £500 million for 'Early Help' was announced. This includes a £300 million package to transform 'Start for Life' services and create a network of family hubs in half of council areas in England and a £200 million uplift to the 'Supporting Families' programme.

The additional funding provided for 'Supporting Families' takes the total investment to £695 million over the next 3 years, around a 40% real-terms uplift in funding for the programme by financial year 2024-25.

The 'Supporting Families' key workers consider the whole family's needs and work through a multi-agency approach which includes schools and education specialists.

**Pupil Referral Units****Helen Hayes:**[\[98353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children and young people have been placed in pupil referral units in each year since 2016, by local education authority area and education Key Stage.



**Helen Hayes:**

**[98354]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children and young people placed in pupil referral units returned to mainstream education in each year since 2016, by local education authority area and education Key Stage.

**Helen Hayes:**

**[98355]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities who have been referred to pupil referral units in each year since 2016, by local authority area and education Key Stage.

**Will Quince:**

The table below is the high-level view of the total number of pupils within pupil referral units (PRUs) since 2016 with a Statement/Education Health Care (EHC) plan, as well as with and without Special Education Needs (SEN) support.

|                         | 2015/16       | 2016/17       | 2017/18       | 2018/19       | 2019/20       | 2020/21       |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>No SEN</b>           | 3,499         | 3,583         | 3,419         | 3,065         | 2,879         | 2,210         |
| <b>SEN</b>              | 10,015        | 10,453        | 11,447        | 10,908        | 9,997         | 7,511         |
| <b>Support</b>          |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| <b>Statement or EHC</b> | 1,501         | 1,633         | 1,866         | 2,161         | 2,520         | 3,064         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>15,015</b> | <b>15,669</b> | <b>16,732</b> | <b>16,134</b> | <b>15,396</b> | <b>12,785</b> |

The complete breakdown by the number of children and young people placed in state place-funded alternative provision (AP) schools (i.e. pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools whose main registration is in an AP setting) each year since 2016 is included in the attached spreadsheet. This includes detail of placement by local authority, year group, and identification of special educational need.

This table has been produced using the 'Special educational needs in England' data publication, which is based on data collected in the spring school census in January each year. This can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>.

The department does not currently collect data on pupil reintegration from AP to mainstream education.

**Attachments:**

1. 98353\_98354\_98355\_Table  
[98353\_54\_55\_breakdown\_children\_young\_people\_in\_AP.pdf]

**Schools: Bristol****Thangam Debbonaire:****[92978]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of schools in Bristol have received carbon dioxide monitors.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

During the Autumn term, the department provided CO<sub>2</sub> monitors to all state-funded education providers, including early years, schools and further education colleges, backed by £25 million in government funding.

We have now delivered on our public commitment with over 353,000 monitors delivered in the Autumn term. Feedback suggests that schools are finding the monitors helpful to manage ventilation and, in the majority of providers, existing ventilation measures are sufficient.

**Schools: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:****[93801]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support will he provide schools to ensure that they can safely open in January.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The government is clear on the critical importance of avoiding disruption to children and young people's education. Therefore, the priority is to keep all schools open. We have set out clear plans for schools opening in January.

The department has also reintroduced face coverings for all adults in schools and for pupils and students in year 7 and above in communal areas, and from 4 January, in classrooms. This is a temporary measure.

Schools must continue to comply with health and safety law and put in place proportionate control measures in line with our guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>. This includes ensuring good hygiene, cleaning, keeping occupied spaces well ventilated and following the latest public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

From Tuesday 14 December, young people and fully vaccinated adults who are identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 can take an NHS rapid lateral flow test every day for seven days and continue to attend their school or college as normal unless they have a positive test result.

Every child aged 12 and over is eligible to receive the vaccine. Healthy 12 to 15-year-olds can have a second dose 12 weeks after their first dose. My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced the acceleration of our COVID-19 booster programme to offer every adult in England a booster jab by the end of 2021 to protect people from the Omicron variant.

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within schools and colleges. All secondary schools have been asked to test their pupils once on-site, using lateral flow tests, on return in January. Tests, personal protective equipment, and funding to support the school workforce will be provided.

Secondary schools have had the option to stagger the return to school for the first week to accommodate on-site testing.

The department has also supported schools, colleges, and nurseries to improve ventilation. The department has also provided CO<sub>2</sub> monitors to state-funded schools, colleges and nurseries backed by £25 million in government funding. Over 99% of eligible maintained schools, further education colleges, and the majority of nurseries have now received a carbon dioxide monitor with over 300,000 now delivered. The government is also making available at least 7,000 funded air cleaning units for poorly ventilated teaching spaces where quick fixes to improve ventilation are not possible.

Additionally, the department has put in place support to help schools facing workforce shortages. This includes calling on former teachers with the time and skills to return to the classroom and re-introducing the COVID-19 workforce fund to provide financial support to eligible schools and colleges for absence costs incurred from 22 November until the spring half term.

Finally, to ease some of the burden there will also be a short temporary break from Ofsted inspections during the first week of term. Ofsted will also encourage providers that have been hit badly by COVID-19 related staff absence to ask for a deferral in planned inspections, and have confirmed that they will not ask school leaders to participate in the delivery of inspections for the spring term.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[93802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has held discussions on introducing mandatory covid-19 vaccinations for school (a) teachers and (b) workers.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Vaccinations are the best way we can protect ourselves and help keep children and young people in face-to-face education.

Since September, all eligible adults and young people aged 16 years and over who are at risk (including health and social care workers) have been offered two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. Eligible adults can receive a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccination if they had their second dose of the vaccine at least 3 months prior.

All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccination, including boosters where eligible.

## ■ Schools: Discipline

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[93878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have applied to be Behaviour Hubs in each month since that scheme's launch.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

When the behaviour hubs programme began in early 2021, 112 applications were received to be behaviour hub lead schools, of which 22 schools and 2 multi academy trusts were chosen. The department has recently invited applications for the second cohort of lead schools and received 130 applications, which we are currently assessing.

Since the beginning of the programme, a total of 195 schools and multi academy trusts have applied to be partner schools and receive support from the behaviour hubs lead schools. 34 schools and two multi academy trusts were selected for the first cohort and have been receiving support since April 2021. A second cohort of 41 partner schools and two multi academy trusts have since been recruited and their induction took place in September 2021.

**Schools: Inspections**

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[94468\]](#)

To the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has a timetable for the re-inspection by Ofsted of schools that were previously rated outstanding.

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[94469\]](#)

To the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools are exempt from Ofsted inspections as a result of having been rated outstanding.

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[94470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether Ofsted inspections for schools previously rated outstanding are taking priority over inspections on other schools.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

There are no longer any schools exempt from inspection as a result of having been rated Outstanding. The exemption from routine inspection, which applied to 3,446 outstanding schools at the time, was removed in November 2020. The removal took place at a time when Ofsted's routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

In September 2021, Ofsted resumed its programme of routine inspections and will aim to inspect every state funded school, including previously exempt outstanding schools, by the end of summer 2025. Ofsted will continue to prioritise schools most in need of inspection, particularly those with the lowest Ofsted grades and outstanding schools that have gone the longest without a visit.

**Schools: Ventilation**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[93806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of schools in York that have adequate ventilation to prevent the spread of covid-19.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[98983]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what criteria his Department is using to ensure that schools with poor air quality receive a Government-supplied air cleaning unit.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

During the autumn term, we provided over 353,000 carbon dioxide monitors to all state-funded education providers, including early years, schools and further education providers, backed by £25 million in government funding. Feedback suggests that schools are finding the monitors helpful to manage ventilation and, in the majority of schools, colleges and nurseries, existing ventilation measures are sufficient.

Maintaining adequate ventilation remains the responsibility of individual providers. Where an area of poor ventilation has been identified that cannot be resolved through simple measures such as opening doors and windows, schools are advised to explore what remedial works may be required to improve ventilation. Where it is not possible to maintain adequate ventilation, it may be appropriate to consider the use of an air cleaning unit while the underlying ventilation issue is addressed.

When used properly, air cleaning units can help reduce airborne contaminants in a poorly ventilated space, including viruses like COVID-19. Air cleaning units are not a substitute for ventilation and should never be used as a reason to reduce ventilation. They are not necessary in spaces that are adequately ventilated.

The department is also making up to 8,000 air cleaning units available for poorly ventilated teaching spaces in state-funded education providers, where quick fixes to improve ventilation are not possible.

State funded schools, further colleges and early years providers can apply for a funded air cleaning unit if they meet strict eligibility criteria. For further information on these criteria and application process is available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K9jZhgh1fjbBvYKq2b4sjIMiVWrQK1vH/view>. We will prioritise spaces with the poorest ventilation to receive units based on criteria such as carbon dioxide levels and occupation density.

Deliveries of air cleaning units will start from this week to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) providers. These were allocated in the first application round announced in November 2021. The second round of applications is open until 9am on 17 January 2022. All state funded schools, colleges and nurseries can apply. Special and AP providers that were not successful or did not apply in the first round are also eligible to apply in this round. Once applications have closed, all applications will be assessed against strict criteria and allocated to providers based on need. Providers with successful applications will be contacted individually to arrange delivery, with deliveries expected from February 2022.

For those providers that are not eligible for funded units, the online marketplace provides a route to purchasing air cleaning units directly from suppliers at a suitable

specification and competitive price. Further information is available here:

<https://s107t01-webapp-v2-01.azurewebsites.net/list/air-cleaning>.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we have emphasised the importance of ventilation and provided guidance to providers on ventilation requirements. In addition to our existing guidance on ventilation, we have given providers guidance on how to use the air cleaning units as well as how to order a unit via the marketplace. The application process has been communicated to providers via our daily bulletin, and we continue to support providers with their queries via the department's Coronavirus Helpline.

### ■ **Special Educational Needs: Codes of Practice**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[98330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will review the resources provided to local authorities in order to meet the service standards set out in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

**Will Quince:**

The department announced on 16 December that high needs funding for children and young people with complex needs is increasing in financial year 2022-23 by £1 billion to over £9.1 billion.

This unprecedented increase of 13% comes on top of the £1.5 billion increase over the last 2 years and will continue to support local authorities and schools with the increasing costs they are facing. Every local authority will attract an increase of at least 12% per head of the 2 to 18-year-old population in financial year 2022-23, with some local authorities seeing increases of up to 16% compared to the previous year.

As well as substantial increases in high needs funding for all local authorities, we are also targeting extra support for those authorities in the most financial difficulty and reviewing the overall system of support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The SEND Review is considering all elements of the SEND system, and the outcome of that review will be published in the first quarter of 2022 as a green paper for full public consultation.

### ■ **Teachers: Migrant Workers**

**Stephen Morgan:**

[93877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many teachers have been recruited from overseas in each of the last five years.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Department for Education does not hold information centrally on the nationality of teachers in the English school workforce. However, the department does hold information on the nationality of entrants to postgraduate teacher training since 2019/20.

In the 2021/22 training year, there were 30,323 postgraduate new entrants to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) whose nationality was known (97% of all postgraduate new entrants). Of these, 93% (28,296) were UK nationals, 4% (1,271) were European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, and the remaining 2% (756) were nationals of other countries. These proportions are broadly in line with data in the 2020/21 and 2019/20 training years, with a slight decrease in the proportion of EEA nationals, down from 5% in 2019/20 and 2020/21, to 4% in 2021/22. These statistics are available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census/2021-22>.

## ■ Turing Scheme

**Matt Western:** [94478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the value of the bid put in by Capita to obtain the contract to run the Turing Scheme was.

**Matt Western:** [94480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many bids were tabled for the contract to run the Turing Scheme; and what the monetary value of the lowest bid tabled was.

**Matt Western:** [94481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what mechanisms his Department has in place to ensure that Capita is held accountable in respect of its spending on the Turing scheme.

**Matt Western:** [94482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) number of students participating in Turing scheme and (b) subjects studied by those students; and what comparative assessment he has made of the number of students participating in the (i) Turing scheme at December 2021 and (ii) Erasmus scheme in the academic year 2015-16.

**Alex Burghart:**

The Turing Scheme has made funding available for more than 41,000 students from schools, colleges and universities to go on study and work placements in over 150 destinations across the world this academic year. The government has also confirmed funding for the continuation of the Turing Scheme for the next 3 years, including £110 million for the 2022/23 academic year.

A competitive procurement exercise was conducted to appoint a delivery partner for the Turing Scheme from 1 April 2022. Two compliant bids were received for the contract to run the Turing Scheme. Following a robust procurement process, Capita's bid was considered to be the highest in quality. The value of Capita's bid was £6,271,155, which was the lowest bid in monetary value in this procurement.

As with all contracts, we will actively manage it at an operational and strategic level and should concerns arise, our contracts contain provisions and remedies to deal with them swiftly and effectively.



UK education providers who have successfully applied for funding may use the Turing Scheme funding to support mobilities for any of their students, regardless of study subject.

Statistics on actual participation in the scheme will be available after the end of the first year of the programme. The COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant effect on mobilities with some institutions choosing to delay their students' placements.

Statistics on participation in ERASMUS+ are published by the European Union: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/statistics-and-factsheets>.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Animal Welfare: Charities

**Nick Smith:** [94312]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what impact the proposed Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill will have on the work of animal rescue charities.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Kept Animals Bill allows us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation. The Bill also brings in measures establish a licensing regime for the private keeping of primates in England and Wales, to ensure that in the future all primates are kept at high levels of welfare.

In August 2021, the Government launched an eight-week consultation on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets, including rescue pets, into Great Britain. This included proposals to ban the commercial and non-commercial movement into Great Britain of puppies under the age of six months, heavily pregnant dogs and dogs which have been subjected to low welfare practices such as ear cropping or tail docking. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary response in due course. This will allow us to take on board the views of the public and interested groups on puppy smuggling and low welfare imports in order to shape our future policy.

During the implementation phase following Royal Assent of the Bill, we will continue to work with the local authority, zoo, and rescue sectors to identify suitable rehoming facilities for primates, and to foster network-building amongst these groups. Our proposals put forward a transitional measure, by means of the Registration scheme, which would ensure rescue centres are not overwhelmed by a sudden surge in primates needing to be rescued.

**Nick Smith:** [94313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing exemptions for animal rescue



charities to the prohibitions listed in the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill on importations of animals which (a) are below a specified age, (b) have been mutilated and (c) are more than a specified number of days pregnant.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was introduced in Parliament on 8 June 2021 and completed committee on 18 November 2021. The Bill allows us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation.

In August 2021, the Government launched an eight-week consultation on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets, including rescue pets, into Great Britain. This included proposals to ban the commercial and non-commercial movement into Great Britain of puppies under the age of six months, heavily pregnant dogs and dogs which have been subjected to low welfare practices such as ear cropping or tail docking. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary response in due course. This will allow us to take on board the views of the public and interested groups on puppy smuggling and low welfare imports in order to shape our future policy.

■ **Avian Influenza: Disease Control**

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

**[93734]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the long-term efficacy of the current method of eradication of avian flu through culling.

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra's objective in tackling any outbreak of avian influenza is to eradicate the disease as quickly as possible and regain UK disease-free status.

Our approach is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#). Swift and humane culling of birds on infected premises coupled with good biosecurity is to prevent the amplification of avian influenza and subsequent environmental contamination and to reduce the risk of disease spread from infected premises.

Current policy is in line with international standards of best practice for disease control. It reflects our experience of responding to past outbreaks of exotic animal disease.

Defra's disease control measures seek to contain the number of animals that need to be culled, either for disease control purposes or to safeguard animal welfare. We aim to reduce adverse impacts on the rural and wider economy, the public, rural communities and the environment, whilst protecting public health and minimising the overall cost of any outbreak.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[94409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of labour supplies in the poultry sector on that sector's efforts to tackle the avian influenza outbreak.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We are in daily contact with poultry stakeholders as part of responding to the avian influenza outbreak and discussions include the labour supply.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) leads Government action on animal disease control and has outbreak response plans in place. These include measures to contract companies to support eradication and cover such matters as the deployment of non-Government vets and experts in culling and disposal of birds. APHA also works closely with other agencies from within the Defra group to provide additional capacity.

#### ■ Avian Influenza: Vaccination

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[93733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department plans to take to vaccinate domestic and captive bird populations against avian flu.

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra has no plans to vaccinate domestic or captive bird populations against avian influenza.

Our policy on vaccination is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#) and in [separate guidance on GOV.UK](#). Outside of zoos, the vaccination of birds as an immediate disease control response is not currently permitted. High standards of biosecurity, separation of poultry and other captive birds from wild birds, and careful surveillance for signs of disease remain the most effective means of controlling avian influenza.

While vaccination can help to reduce mortality, it is likely that some vaccinated birds would still be capable of transmitting avian influenza if they became infected. This would increase the time taken to detect and eradicate the virus.

#### ■ Birds: Gun Sports

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[93723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to ban woodcock shooting.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The reasons for the declines in woodcock populations are likely to include disturbance and habitat loss because of land drainage and changes in woodland management. The Government is not currently persuaded that hunting has a significant detrimental impact on the woodcock, and there are no current plans for a

ban. We continue to keep evidence regarding the impacts on species under review to inform policy decisions.

## ■ Food: Waste

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[97159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to enshrine in law sustainable development goal 12.3, on halving per capita food waste by 2030.

**Mary Kelly Foy:** [\[99069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to enshrine Sustainable Development Goals pertaining to food waste into law.

**Jo Churchill:**

The UK is committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 target, which seeks to halve global food waste at consumer and retail levels by 2030. There is a programme in place to achieve this domestically including support for the Courtauld Commitment 2030 voluntary agreement with industry and consumer campaigns. Robust estimates of national food waste volumes are made periodically and used to monitor and report progress against the SDG 12.3 target. The Government has no plans to make this target legally binding.

Since 2007, action to reduce food waste in the UK has contributed to a reduction in post-farm gate total food waste between 2007 and 2018 of around 15% (1.7Mt). Excluding inedible parts, the reduction was 21%.

## ■ Meat: Ritual Slaughter

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[93746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government is taking steps to protect the practice of shechita.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government is committed to supporting the rights of Jewish communities to eat meat slaughtered by the shechita method. This is secured in our legislation by the derogation from stunning that applies when animals are slaughtered in accordance with religious rites.

## ■ Pets: Imports

**Kate Osamor:** [\[93836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to to ban the import of pets other than those who have been rescued.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was introduced in Parliament on 8 June and completed committee on 18 November. The Bill allows us to protect the welfare of

pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation.

In August 2021, the Government launched an eight-week consultation on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets, including rescue pets, into Great Britain. This included proposals to ban the commercial and non-commercial movement into Great Britain of puppies under the age of six months, heavily pregnant dogs and dogs which have been subjected to low welfare practices such as ear cropping or tail docking. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary response in due course. This will allow us to take onboard the views of the public and interested groups on puppy smuggling and low welfare imports in order to shape our future policy.

### ■ **Pets: Sales**

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[93835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to ban the sale of animals online by unlicensed breeders and private individuals.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government considers that the best way of addressing the online sale of animals by unlicensed breeders and private individuals is to work closely with the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG). PAAG was created to combat growing concerns about the irresponsible advertising of pets for sale, rehoming and exchange, including through social media platforms. PAAG has developed a set of Minimum Standards which several of the UK's largest classified websites have agreed to meet.

In addition my Department maintains a national communications campaign (Petfished) to raise awareness of issues associated with low-welfare and illegal supply of pets. This includes providing clear signposting to where responsible breeders and rehoming centres can be found and encouraging prospective buyers to research the seller thoroughly before they visit and decide to purchase. The campaign provides a list of red flags for buyers to look out for when searching for a pet online.

### ■ **Pets: Sterilisation and Tagging**

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[93837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to introduce the mandatory neutering and microchipping of all pets.

**Jo Churchill:**

All dogs and all pet horses, ponies and other equines in England are already required to be microchipped. In December 2021 we announced that we will introduce compulsory microchipping of all owned cats in line with our manifesto commitment. We plan to introduce the necessary legislation in 2022. We have no plans to introduce compulsory microchipping of other pets.

The neutering of pets is a decision for owners and we have no plans to make this mandatory. We support animal welfare charities and rehoming establishments in their work to encourage people to neuter their cats and dogs when they are not intended for breeding purposes. Owners should consult their vets for advice about neutering and breeding control.

This is a devolved matter and this response relates to the situation applying in England.

## ■ Recreation Spaces: Urban Areas

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[98359]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to promote access to nature in cities.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan made major new commitments to connect people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing, including access to green spaces in urban areas.

Work undertaken includes the Green Recovery Challenge Fund which has invested £80 million to nature-based projects across England to support a green recovery from Covid-19. The fund has "connecting people with nature" as one of its three objectives, and many of these projects are working in urban areas. An example of one of the projects delivered is Green Space for Health, which aims to make NHS sites greener and provide outdoor wellbeing sessions for NHS staff.

We are leading a £5.77 million cross-Governmental project to test nature-based social prescribing in seven test and learn sites, run national research work to understand its scalability, and deliver a robust project evaluation. This will help improve mental health and wellbeing by connecting more people to nature. The project is working in both rural and urban locations and will help connect those living in cities with nature; for example, several of the test and learn sites are in and around cities such as Greater Manchester.

We are also investing £9 million through the Levelling Up Parks Fund to regenerate 100 green spaces across the UK as part of our Levelling Up agenda. Further details on the Fund will be announced shortly.

Natural England's England-wide map of green infrastructure launched in December 2021, as part of the emerging Green Infrastructure Framework, will help local areas identify priorities for creation and enhancement, including to address inequalities in access to greenspace. The full Framework to be launched later this year will include a green infrastructure design guide with advice on designing to promote access and to maximise the benefits that access provides. This will work alongside biodiversity net gain to encourage greater inclusion of nature into our cities and built environments.

The England Trees Action Plan committed to treble tree planting rates in England by the end of this Parliament, supported by the Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) which has more than £750 million by 2025 for work on peat restoration, woodland creation and management. Through the NCF the Government is also increasing tree planting in urban areas. Local authorities have access to several NCF grant schemes, including the £4.4 million Local Authorities Treescape Fund and the £6 million Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF). Over the next two years, the UTCF fund will provide up to £6 million for planting around 44,000 large trees in towns and cities. Meanwhile, the Local Authority Treescapes Fund will increase tree planting and natural regeneration in local communities, including urban areas and beside roads and footpaths.

### ■ Wood-burning Stoves

**Geraint Davies:**

[93687]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the new Ecodesign regulations on reducing emissions from wood burning appliances.

**Jo Churchill:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 15 December 2022 to PQ [93679](#).

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Bosnia and Herzegovina: Politics and Government

**Alicia Kearns:**

[R] [99080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the US Administration's decision to impose sanctions on Bosnian Serb leader, Milorad Dodik, for threatening the stability and integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Sanctions are an important part of the UK toolkit for the Western Balkans, for both corruption and destabilising activities. Experience has shown they work best when used in close coordination with our partners, and we are actively discussing with partners, including the US, how best to use these tools to target both the leaders of these moves, and those around them who help and facilitate. We keep all evidence and potential designations under close review. We will consider targets, guided by the objectives of the relevant sanctions regime and the evidence. It would not be appropriate to speculate about future sanctions targets as to do so could reduce their impact.

## ■ Cameroon: Schools

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[98240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking with international counterparts to help (a) prevent attacks on (i) schools, (ii) school staff and (iii) students attending schools in English-speaking regions of Cameroon and (b) promote engagement by the Government of Cameroon with peaceful campaigners for greater Anglophone autonomy.

**Vicky Ford:**

The Government is deeply concerned about the crisis in the North-West and South-West "Anglophone" regions of Cameroon. We have raised this with the Government of Cameroon and in multilateral fora, including in a joint statement with our US, Swiss and Canadian partners in November 2021. This condemned attacks on civilians and urged dialogue. The UK also has programmes in place which aim to prevent human rights violations.

Every child has the right to a safe education. We are appalled by the attacks on schools and have called for impartial investigations to determine the perpetrators of these attacks and to bring them to justice. We also urge all parties to remain engaged with the Swiss-led process to promote a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

## ■ Chad: Politics and Government

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[98245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support (a) the African Union and (b) civil society groups in Chad in (i) ensuring that civilian organisations are able to participate in the forthcoming National Dialogue process and (ii) ensuring that a timely timetable for free, fair, and inclusive elections is set as part of the National Dialogue process.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[98246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help support freedoms of (a) press, (b) expression and (c) association in Chad.

**Vicky Ford:**

The Government continues to follow the situation in Chad, including through our first resident Ambassador in N'Djamena, appointed in April 2021. The UK supports the African Union's conclusions on the transition back to civilian and constitutional rule in Chad, including the holding of democratic elections by October 2022. We have expressed this position to Chadian partners regularly through our diplomatic engagement, including in a visit from our Sahel Envoy in November 2021.

The UK supports freedom of expression and the rights of Chadians, like all peoples, to freedom of assembly and peaceful protest. Through the UN Development Programme, we are providing financial support for the inclusion of women and youth



in Chad's national dialogue on the transition, which is due to begin on 15 February 2022.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[99021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of requesting a meeting of the G20 to discuss a co-ordinated response to (a) the omicron variant of covid-19 and (b) any future covid-19 variants.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government is working closely with international partners, including through the G7, G20 and other fora, to respond to the spread of new variants. The Secretary of State for Health convened two urgent G7 Health Ministers meetings following the emergence of the Omicron variant under the UK's G7 presidency in 2021, and on 30 December the UK pledged up to £105 million to help vulnerable countries respond. We will continue to work through the G20 under the Indonesian presidency to deliver a robust response to COVID-19, deliver rapid, equitable and global distribution of vaccines, and strengthen global health and finance coordination for effective pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[94533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has plans to reduce the number of staff working in her Department.

**Amanda Milling:**

The department's focus on strategic workforce planning will ensure that we have the right capabilities to deliver on our international priorities as set out in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy and the forthcoming International Development Strategy. We want to ensure we invest in our people, take forward work to align terms and conditions and reward high performers. We will remain agile in the face of emerging opportunities and challenges.

Various workforce models were looked at prior to the current Foreign Secretary joining which we are not proceeding with. At this stage no decisions on changes to staff numbers have been made. But, as the Prime Minister and Minister Cleverly have said in the House on 15 and 16 December, there will not be an across the board 10 per cent reduction in FCDO staff. Indeed, with the addition of new responsibilities on the UK's relationship with the EU, we will need to further expand our capability in some areas to reflect new priorities.



## ■ Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

**Andrew Bowie:**

[\[94457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department are taking to ensure that UK humanitarian aid in Gaza is not diverted to the Hamas terror group.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and robust controls against the diversion of aid. We select our partners for the strong safeguards they have in place, which reduces risks and ensures the maximum impact of UK aid for Palestinians. In Gaza, we have strong controls in place to monitor spending, including enhanced due diligence assessments, annual audits, and field visits; all to ensure UK aid reaches its intended beneficiaries and achieves value for money for the UK taxpayer. The UK's funding agreements also commit partners to understand and comply with UK and international counter terrorism legislation.

## ■ Guinea: Elections

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[98242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help support (a) the Economic Community of West African States, (b) the African Union, and (c) civil society groups in Guinea in their efforts to secure a timetable for free and fair elections in Guinea.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK Government has joined the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and international partners to condemn the removal by force of the President of Guinea, Alpha Condé, in a coup that was led by Colonel Doumbouya on 5 September 2021.

We continue to call for all parties to engage in peaceful dialogue to ease tensions, prevent any further violence and uphold democratic principles, including the rule of law. The UK has expressed support for regional mediation efforts and remains aligned with ECOWAS efforts to restore stability in the region, including by calling for a peaceful democratic transition as soon as possible.

We continue to work with our international partners to address the implications of the coup and monitor the situation closely, including in my discussion with ECOWAS President Brou on 18 November 2021.

## ■ Iran: Nuclear Power

**Simon Fell:**

[\[93901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies on Iran's nuclear activity of the statement by the IAEA's Director General that all countries that have enriched uranium to 60 per-cent fissile purity have gone on to produce nuclear weapons.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments since 2019. This includes producing Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) at 60%, which is unprecedented for a state without a nuclear weapons programme. Iran's increasing 60% stockpile is bringing Iran significantly closer to having fissile material which could be used for nuclear weapons.

We call upon Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPOA without delay and take the opportunity in front of them in the JCPOA Vienna negotiations to restore the nuclear deal. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPOA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal. Iran's nuclear escalation means we have weeks, not months, to restore the deal before the JCPOA's core non-proliferation benefits are lost and the deal collapses. In the event of the JCPOA collapsing, we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**[\[93904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of reports that Iran has begun enriching uranium to 20 per cent fissile purity at its nuclear facility in Fordow in breach of the JCPOA nuclear deal.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments since 2019. This includes producing Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) at 60%, which is unprecedented for a state without a nuclear weapons programme. Iran's increasing 60% stockpile is bringing Iran significantly closer to having fissile material which could be used for nuclear weapons.

We call upon Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPOA without delay and take the opportunity in front of them in the JCPOA Vienna negotiations to restore the nuclear deal. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPOA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal. Iran's nuclear escalation means we have weeks, not months, to restore the deal before the JCPOA's core non-proliferation benefits are lost and the deal collapses. In the event of the JCPOA collapsing, we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies.

**Jacob Young:**[\[93916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the ability of the International Atomic Energy Agency to effectively monitor Iran's nuclear programme.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments since July 2019. Iran's nuclear programme is now more advanced than it has ever been before. Since February 2020, Iran has significantly

reduced IAEA access by withdrawing from JCPoA-agreed monitoring arrangements, and suspending its implementation of the Additional Protocol.

The UK has repeatedly made clear that Iran must fully co-operate with the IAEA, including on all issues related to the IAEA's separate safeguards investigation. Doing so is both a legally-binding obligation and essential to assuring the international community of the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

## ■ Iran: Nuclear Weapons

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

[\[93903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK Government is taking with its international partners to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

**James Cleverly:**

The Prime Minister, alongside his French, German and US counterparts, discussed Iran's nuclear programme on 30 October in Rome where they expressed their determination to ensure that Iran can never develop or acquire a nuclear weapon.

The UK is currently engaged, alongside the US and other Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) participants, in negotiations in Vienna aimed at restoring the nuclear deal. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPoA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal. In this scenario, we would carefully consider all the options in partnership with our allies.

**Holly Mumby-Croft:**

[\[94576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the IAEA Director General stating that the IAEA has an incomplete view of Iran's nuclear programme.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) commitments since 2019. This includes producing Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) at 60 per cent, which is unprecedented for a state without a nuclear weapons programme. Iran's increasing 60 per cent stockpile is bringing Iran significantly closer to having fissile material which could be used for nuclear weapons.

We call upon Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPoA without delay and take the opportunity in front of them in the JCPoA Vienna negotiations to restore the nuclear deal. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPoA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal. Iran's nuclear escalation means we have weeks, not months, to restore the deal before the JCPoA's core non-proliferation benefits are lost and the deal collapses. In the event of the JCPoA collapsing, we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies.

**Iran: Terrorism****Craig Tracey:** [\[93817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the level of Iran's support for (a) Hezbollah, (b) Hamas and (c) Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

**James Cleverly:**

The Government regularly assesses the impact of Iran's continued destabilising activity throughout the region, including its political, financial and military support to several militant and proscribed groups, including Hizballah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Such activity compromises the region's security, its ability to prosper and escalates already high tensions, with consequences for the international community. It is for this reason that we currently have over 200 EU sanctions listings in place against Iran, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety; have proscribed Hamas' military wing as a terrorist organisation; and support the enforcement of UN prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons to non-state actors in the region, including to Lebanese Hizballah (UNSCR 1701).

**Israel: Iran****Damien Moore:** [\[94517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the Tehran Times publishing a map of Israel with potential strike targets.

**James Cleverly:**

Our commitment to Israel's security is unwavering. Israel is an important strategic partner for the UK and we collaborate on issues of defence and security, which includes regular discussions with Israel on Iranian destabilising activity in the region.

**Jagtar Singh Johal****Catherine West:** [\[99026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with the Indian Government on the continued detention of Jagtar Singh Johal ahead of his scheduled court appearance in Delhi on 10 January 2022.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government takes all allegations of human rights violations very seriously, and we regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India at official and Ministerial level. The Foreign Secretary last raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 22 October 2021. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia, raised Mr Johal's case most recently by letter with the Indian Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, on 16 December and with the Indian High Commissioner on 17 December. The British High Commissioner to India also raised Mr Johal's scheduled court appearance with the Indian Home Secretary on 21 December. Consular staff have

attended a number of hearings in Mr Johal's case in an observer capacity, and did so on 10 January. This Government will continue to look to raise our concerns about Mr Johal's case at all appropriate opportunities.

■ **Jamaica: Coronavirus**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[94527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the covid-19 vaccination rate in Jamaica.

**Vicky Ford:**

As the Prime Minister has announced, vaccinations are a key part of ensuring we defeat this pandemic and return to normal. The UK has donated 300,000 AstraZeneca vaccines to Jamaica. All residents of Jamaica aged 12 and over can now get access to vaccines, but the take-up rate remains low. As of 2 January 2021, 1.21 million doses have been administered. The number of fully vaccinated persons is 567,000, and 24% of the island's population has received at least one dose. We continue to work closely with Jamaica and support their vaccination implementation plan.

■ **Kenya: Racial Discrimination**

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[98888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking assist the British Council with its inquiry into alleged racism in Kenya.

**Vicky Ford:**

The FCDO and the British Council take any allegations of racism extremely seriously. Issues regarding British Council staff are operational matters for the British Council. The British Council are conducting an investigation into the claims, which is expected to conclude in January.

■ **Lebanon: Palestinians**

**Craig Tracey:**

[\[94443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with the Lebanese Government on reports that labour restrictions on Palestinian refugees are to be eased in that country.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK welcomes the decision by the Lebanese Government to ease labour restrictions for Palestinian refugees. We acknowledge Lebanon's generosity in hosting refugees, which the UK will continue to support through our assistance for education and basic needs.

## ■ Madagascar: Famine

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[97013]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate she has made of the number people in southern Madagascar facing acute food insecurity and famine; and what support she is providing to people in that region.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK is deeply concerned by the humanitarian crisis in southern Madagascar. According to the latest official figures, around 1.64 million people (37%) in southern Madagascar were experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity between November and December 2021. The UK is working closely with the UN, the Government of Madagascar and other donors to ensure aid reaches those in need. In 2021, the UK allocated £5 million to UN humanitarian agencies to provide life-saving food assistance, nutrition and health interventions, access to safe water and to reinforce humanitarian system coordination in southern Madagascar. This UK funding will reach 250,000 people, including the provision of food assistance to 132,000 people. In addition, the UK is a core contributor to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund which allocated approximately £11.07 million (\$15m) to the international response last year.

## ■ Mali: Elections

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[98251]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support (a) the Economic Community of West African States and (b) civil society groups in Mali to secure an effective and timely timetable for free and fair elections in Mali.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK has consistently called for elections and a return to constitutional rule in line with the conditions set out by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). I made this clear in my statement on 29 September 2021, and the UK Government has again reiterated its position in the joint statement with international partners, on 23 December 2021, concerning the deployment of Wagner Group in Mali.

We have supported ECOWAS mediation efforts at the UN Security Council and in Ministerial and senior official meetings with the Malian transitional government. The UK's Minister for the Armed Forces and our Global Ambassador for Human Rights raised the need for elections during their visits to Mali in November 2021. Our Embassies across the West African region are in regular touch with their host governments and with the ECOWAS commission on political developments in Mali, and I had a call with ECOWAS President Jean-Claude Kassi Brou to discuss Mali in November 2021. Our Embassy in Bamako often speaks with civil society to seek their

views on a range of issues affecting the country, including the political uncertainty, insecurity, humanitarian crisis, human rights situation and women's rights.

## ■ **Nepal: Sanitation and Water**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[96853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the Department has allocated to water and sanitation projects in Nepal in each of the last five years.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK supports access to water and sanitation projects across Nepal, ensuring that communities living in remote, mountainous areas can reach clean water, toilets and good hygiene. FCDO-funded Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) projects are delivered in all seven provinces in Nepal, with activities targeted to reach the most vulnerable. Projects are implemented by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and through our Post-earthquake Reconstruction Programme. Over the last five years we have invested over £20 million in WASH projects. Since 2017/18, the yearly breakdown is as follows: £4.3 million, £4.5 million, £6.3 million and £4 million. This financial year we have so far allocated £1.09 million to WASH projects.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[96854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will provide details of the locations of water and sanitation projects in Nepal funded by his Department in each of the last five years.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK supports access to water and sanitation projects across Nepal, ensuring that communities living in remote, mountainous areas can reach clean water, toilets and good hygiene. FCDO-funded Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) projects are delivered in all seven provinces in Nepal, with activities targeted to reach the most vulnerable. Projects are implemented by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and through our Post-earthquake Reconstruction Programme. Over the last five years we have invested over £20 million in WASH projects. Since 2017/18, the yearly breakdown is as follows: £4.3 million, £4.5 million, £6.3 million and £4 million. This financial year we have so far allocated £1.09 million to WASH projects.

## ■ **Overseas Aid**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[96855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allocating funding to match charitable donations to projects that have environmental benefits for overseas countries.

**Amanda Milling:**

FCDO has been matching donations from the British public to UK charities' appeals under UK Aid Match. This allows the UK public to decide how a proportion of the UK aid budget is spent under specific projects, proposed by the charities, which work



towards sustained poverty reduction and the Global Goals across multiple sectors, including climate and environment. UK Aid Match is currently matching £23 million of public donations to 17 projects to deliver environmental benefits across 14 countries.

■ **Palestinians: British Council**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[93745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the UK Government provides to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza through the British Council.

**James Cleverly:**

The FCDO and British Council co-fund the 'Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning' programme which supports the UK's longstanding commitment to ensure quality education for children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The UK is also committed to protecting heritage at risk and generating sustainable socio-economic prosperity through the British Council Cultural Protection Fund in the OPTs and across the broader Middle East North Africa region.

■ **Republic of Congo: Freedom of Expression**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[98254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support the freedom of the press, of expression, and of association in the Republic of the Congo.

**Vicky Ford:**

In partnership with the international community, the UK Government engages with the Government of the Republic of the Congo on a range of issues, including human rights and media freedom. The UK does not have a resident Embassy in the Republic of the Congo but we monitor the political, economic, and social situation in that country through the British Embassy in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The UK is firmly committed to promoting and defending media freedom globally, including through the Global Media Defence Fund, managed by UNESCO, and the Media Freedom Coalition, both of which the UK helped establish.

■ **Somalia: Peacekeeping Operations**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[98898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 December 2021 to Question 91893 on Somalia:

Peacekeeping Operations, following the extension of African Union Mission in Somalia's mandate by the UN Security Council on 21 December 2021, what steps she will take to ensure progress is made on an effective future international security mission for Somalia prior to the new mandate's expiry on 31 March 2022.



**Vicky Ford:**

We support the temporary extension of the UN Security Council (UNSC) mandate for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) until 31 March. As 'pen-holder', the UK has urged all stakeholders to use this three month rollover period to engage transparently and in good faith to reach consensus on the way ahead. It is essential that the UN and the African Union (AU) produce their joint proposal on the strategic objectives, size and composition of a reconfigured AU-led mission rapidly, and within necessary timelines, to ensure that there can be a mutually agreeable UNSC mandate that supports security transition in Somalia. In the coming months, the UK will participate in a range of bilateral and international meetings with the AU, UN, Federal Government of Somalia, Troop Contributing Countries, EU and others to encourage progress towards these goals.

**■ Somaliland: Freedom of Expression****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[98241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to engage with authorities in Somaliland on (a) freedoms of the press and expression and (b) freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK engages with the Somaliland Government on an ongoing basis, including with regular meetings between the UK Ambassador to Somalia and President Muse Bihi Abdi (most recently on 18 December 2021). Our engagement covers a broad range of issues; discussion of our shared interests in upholding human rights in Somaliland - including freedom of expression and freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention - is an important element.

**■ Southern Africa: Coronavirus****Ruth Jones:**[\[98432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she has taken to help increase covid-19 vaccination rates in sub-Saharan Southern Africa.

**Vicky Ford:**

Africa's COVID-19 vaccination coverage is low, with less than 15% of its population receiving at least one dose of vaccine compared to over 59% of the population globally. The UK is committed to ensuring that people in the poorest countries receive vaccines. We have contributed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) Facility, which is ensuring equitable access for 92 low and middle-income countries, 46 of which are in Africa. As of 6 January 2022, COVAX delivered more than 335 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to 44 African COVAX AMC countries. In addition to our financial support to COVAX, the UK has donated 7.9 million surplus doses to 14 African countries.

We are also supporting vaccine rollout in countries. For example, we have provided £4 million to South Africa's Solidarity Fund, which includes support to logistics for vaccine delivery and public messaging on vaccines. In addition, the UK has provided £20 million in support of the Africa Union's COVID-19 response fund. We also support the development of business cases for vaccine manufacturing in Senegal, South Africa and Morocco that will help catalysing investment to produce COVID-19 vaccines in Africa.

## ■ Supply Chains

**Catherine West:**

[\[99027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with (a) Ministerial colleagues in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (b) industry representatives on ensuring that supply chains are not reliant on forced labour overseas.

**James Cleverly:**

The Government is committed to eradicating the use of all forms of forced labour from global supply chains. This was recently reaffirmed in the G7 Trade Ministers' statement on forced labour. The UK was the first country to require businesses to report on steps taken to tackle modern slavery and we have committed to strengthening our Modern Slavery Act. There are regular discussions with all relevant Government departments to inform this. To create parity between the public and private sector, the 2020 HMG Modern Slavery Statement committed all Government departments to publish such statements. The FCDO's first modern slavery statement was published on 25 November 2021.

The Government works closely with industry to encourage best practice, understand the challenges businesses face and learn from their experience. In June 2021, the Home Secretary and the Minister for Safeguarding met with the Business Against Slavery (BAS) Forum, a partnership between Government and multinational businesses. They discussed opportunities for working together to accelerate progress in the fight against modern slavery. Government continues to engage with the Forum and the wider business community, as part of the ongoing review of the government's modern slavery strategy due to be published in Spring 2022.

## ■ Sustainable Development: International Assistance

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[98248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of the World Bank's International Development Association funding mechanism on promoting sustainable development.

**Vicky Ford:**

The World Bank's International Development Association ('IDA') is an important partner for the UK and an important source of concessional finance to the world's poorest and least creditworthy countries.

In October 2021, at the World Bank's Annual Meetings in Washington DC, I discussed the UK's priorities for IDA, including the need for a greater focus on supporting women and girls, and pursuing a green recovery. In December 2021, the UK and other donors agreed a substantial IDA funding package of \$93 billion over three years from July 2022 to June 2025. This includes strong commitments on getting girls back into school, tackling climate change, financing Covid-19 vaccines, and building clean and green infrastructure.

## ■ **Turing Scheme**

**Matt Western:**

[\[94479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the financial impact on the British Council of losing the contract to run the Turing Scheme.

**James Cleverly:**

Decisions relating to the future operation of the Turing scheme were carefully considered by the Department for Education as part of the tendering process. The financial assessment alongside wider commercial activities are a matter for the British Council which were taken into account as part of their bid.

## ■ **United Arab Emirates: Prisoners**

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[98205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to my letter of 22 December 2021, what discussions her Department has had with its counterparts in the United Arab Emirates on the incarceration of Mr Saad Hasan Bashir at Al Sadr Prison.

**James Cleverly:**

Consular staff in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are aware of Mr Saad Hasan Bashir and continue to raise his case with the UAE Authorities. We are also in contact with Mr Saad Hasan Bashir's family. The Rt. Hon Gentleman will receive a reply to his letter shortly.

## ■ **Wagner Group: Sanctions**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[98244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to UK and international partners' condemnation of the Wagner Group's plan to deploy mercenaries in Mali, published on 23 December 2021, whether she plans to follow the EU in establishing UK sanctions against (a) the Wagner Group or (b) individuals and entities associated with the Wagner Group.

**Vicky Ford:**

In our joint statement with international partners on 23 December 2021, the UK condemned the deployment of Wagner Group mercenaries in Mali, noting the involvement of the Russian Federation Government. On 29 September 2021, I made

clear the destabilising impact of Wagner Group and the multiple human rights abuses they commit, as seen in other countries affected by conflict.

Yevgeniy Viktorovich Prigozhin, who has close links to the Wagner Group, is designated under the UK Libya sanctions regime for providing support for Wagner Group's activities in Libya which threaten the country's peace, stability and security. It would not be appropriate to speculate on potential measures, as doing so could reduce the impact of any options used in the future. We will continue to closely monitor the situation.

## ■ **Zimbabwe: Literacy**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[94526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the literacy rate in Zimbabwe.

**Vicky Ford:**

In 2014 the UN assessed Zimbabwe's literacy rate at 88.7%, demonstrating the strong delivery of education since the early 1980s and placing Zimbabwe in the top ten of African countries. However, since 2018 the education system in Zimbabwe has been under significant pressure due to under-investment, low wages and COVID-19. As a result we are seeing increasing rates of school dropouts and lower pass rates, particularly amongst girls due to rising rates of early marriage and pregnancy. We do not have an updated UN assessment, however.

The UK is committed to supporting young people's education in Zimbabwe. Since 2017, we have annually supported 1.4 million of the poorest and most marginalised girls and boys in over 4,500 rural, remote primary and secondary schools through the provision of grants to ensure schools are adequately equipped and functional. Through our Zimbabwe Girls Secondary Education (ZGSE) Programme, we have also supported 57,000 marginalised girls to complete their secondary education.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ **Ambulance Services: Finance**

**Catherine West:**

[\[98360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide additional support to NHS ambulance services in England during winter 2021-22.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are investing an extra £55 million to increase staff numbers in ambulance trusts in England, providing over 700 additional staff in control rooms and on the frontline. This includes £1.85 million to place hospital ambulance liaison officers at the most challenged hospitals and £4.4 million to provide an additional 154 ambulances during the winter.

## ■ Ambulance Services: Standards

**Damien Moore:**

[\[97055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve ambulance waiting times in the (a) North West and (b) UK.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement advises that the North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust has secured 55 new ambulances, alongside the temporary retention of a further 45 vehicles over winter. The Trust has also recruited additional paramedics and emergency medical technicians, alongside training ambulance care assistants to blue light driving standard. This has allowed 269 additional frontline staff to be deployed.

National Health Service ambulance trusts are being supported by NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve ambulance waiting times through an extra £55 million to increase staff numbers for winter, providing over 700 additional staff in control rooms and on the frontline. This includes £1.85 million to place more hospital ambulance liaison officers at the most challenged hospitals to help address ambulance queues and get crews quickly back out on the road.

Ambulance waiting times outside England is a devolved matter.

## ■ Care Homes

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[98940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish statistics on the number of residential care homes that cannot admit more residents on a temporary basis as of 5 January 2021.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department does not hold the information requested.

## ■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[98938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people need to test positive to define a covid-19 outbreak in a residential care setting.

**Maggie Throup:**

Current guidance defines an outbreak as two or more confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 confirmed by an appropriate test, or clinically suspected cases among people in the same specific setting with the onset of symptoms within 14 days. If there is a single test-confirmed case, this would initiate further investigation and risk assessment. An outbreak would be declared if the investigation ascertained a second COVID-19 case, either test-confirmed or clinically suspected.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Nadia Whittome:**

**[94578]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people who do not have access to technology needed to provide proof of a negative lateral flow test are not excluded from hospitality venues and other settings requiring an NHS covid pass.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 5 January 2022]:* Those who cannot access the digital NHS COVID Pass can display a text message or email, which can also be printed, to provide proof of COVID-19 status. Free rapid lateral flow tests are available through NHS.UK, 119 and at most pharmacies. The 119 service can also support those who require assistance with ordering, accessing and using test kits, registering their test result and for language support if English is not their first language. Once the result is registered, the person will receive a confirmation via email or by text. The confirmation will include:

- their name;
- their age or date of birth;
- the date the test sample was collected or received by the test provider;
- confirmation that the test was either a polymerase chain reaction test or a rapid lateral flow device test; and
- confirmation that the test result was negative.

This constitutes proof of COVID-19 status for accessing domestic venues and events where certification applies. It can be displayed either by showing the text or presenting a printed copy of the email. In addition, a non-digital NHS COVID Pass letter is also available demonstrating that an individual has completed a full primary course of an approved United Kingdom vaccine. However, the COVID Pass letter does not include test status.

## ■ Coronavirus: Intensive Care

**Dr Liam Fox:**

**[96756]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many admissions to ICU with covid-19 were (a) fully vaccinated, (b) partially vaccinated and (c) unvaccinated in each of the last 10 weeks in England.

**Maggie Throup:**

This information is not held in the format requested. However, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) publishes data on COVID-19 cases presenting to emergency care within 28 days of a positive specimen resulting in an overnight inpatient admission, by vaccination status. This data is published for the most recent four week period in the weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Surveillance report which is available at the following link:

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

The analysis is based on data from a sentinel network of acute National Health Service trusts contributing enhanced data cases data from the UKHSA, linked to vaccination status and presentation to emergency care and inpatient admissions from the NHS.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

**John Spellar:**

[96764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on 11 November 2020, Official Report, column 1022, regarding the production of PPE in the UK, what was the percentage of PPE produced in the UK in the most recent month for which figures are available.

**Edward Argar:**

This information is not available in the format requested. However, of 36.4 billion items ordered by 6 December 2021, 3.9 billion were ordered from United Kingdom manufacturers.

**Angela Rayner:**

[98970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 5 January 2021 to Question 81017 on Coronavirus: Protective Clothing, on what grounds this information has been deemed to be commercially sensitive.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is considered commercially sensitive as the Department is currently engaged in a mediation process with PPE Medpro concerning their products, which involves confidentiality undertakings.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[94461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing free covid-19 testing kits for businesses as more people are expected to take daily tests.

**Maggie Throup:**

Everyone can access free tests through Pharmacy Collect, online and via 119. We continue to distribute tests to workplaces in sectors where there is a particular need and to monitor issues in other sectors. Vulnerable settings continue to be offered regular asymptomatic testing for staff and for service users, particularly those who are at high risk of severe illness. This includes health and social care settings and prisons. Workplace testing has also continued for those who work in operational roles at the United Kingdom border and in education.



**Bill Esterson:**

[\[98917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which businesses are awaiting approval from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to (a) supply lateral flow tests to the NHS and (b) for the use of those tests in the UK.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) does not approve COVID-19 testing devices. Tests for professional use are subject to self-assessment by the manufacturer before they may be placed on the market. Self-test devices are required to be assessed for conformity to the regulations by an Approved or Notified Body. In addition, tests must also meet the COVID Testing Devices Authorisation requirements.

In exceptional circumstances, the MHRA can issue an Exceptional Use Authorisation (EUA). The MHRA publishes the names of tests and other medical devices which have been granted an EUA online. The MHRA does not currently have any outstanding decisions for EUAs.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**John Redwood:**

[\[96743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the difference in risk of serious illness from covid-19 is of having a booster vaccination for someone who has previously had two doses of the vaccine.

**Maggie Throup:**

Early data suggests that vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation and severe illness after two doses is 72%, compared to 88% following a booster dose. Analysis will continue as the booster programme progresses, including monitoring the duration of protection of booster doses against a range of disease outcomes.

**Sir Desmond Swayne:**

[\[98875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will take steps to ensure that the NHS Covid-19 app can accommodate the covid-19 vaccination records of people who have had one vaccination in England and another in Scotland without the need for them to travel to appointments designed for people who have been vaccinated overseas.

**Maggie Throup:**

NHS Digital has established bi-directional live data flows between England and Scotland which update the general practitioner (GP) record and NHS COVID Pass status. Individuals who have received one or both of their primary course vaccines in Scotland can access the NHS COVID Pass, provided they are registered with a GP in England or otherwise have an National Health Service number. Individuals do not need to attend an appointment to ensure their NHS COVID Pass status is updated, as this should happen automatically.



The NHS COVID-19 App is primarily a contact tracing app. Users are anonymous so it cannot be used as proof of vaccination status. The NHS App provides access to a range of services including the NHS COVID Pass.

## ■ Dental Services

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[85349]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of provision of NHS dental services in (a) Slough, (b) the South East, (c) England and (d) the UK.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No assessment has been made of the adequacy of provision of National Health Service dental services in Slough or the South East. The provision of dentistry outside of England is a devolved matter.

NHS dental services in England are currently focussing on urgent care and vulnerable groups, including children, followed by overdue appointments. We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement to increase activity levels based on evidence on the levels of care that can be provided safely whilst protecting staff and patients from the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

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

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[76024]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 65516, tabled by the hon. Member for St. Albans on 28 October 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Question [65516](#).

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[76026]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 69200, tabled by the hon. Member for St. Albans on 03 November 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Question [69200](#).

## ■ Doctors: Training

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[97014]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of changes to the status of educational achievement (EA) points in the UK Foundation Programme application scoring process on (a) international students, (b) graduate-entry medical students, (c) medical students undertaking intercalated degrees and (d) students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds.

**Edward Argar:**

The UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) is responsible for the application process for the UK Foundation Programme. On 20 November 2020, it confirmed that it would cease allocating points for additional educational achievements for those entering the Foundation Programme from August 2023. The UKFPO is aiming to support students who could not, for financial or other reasons, study for another qualification in addition to their degree. The UKFPO and Health Education England consulted bodies such as the Medical Schools Council and the British Medical Association on this change in early 2020. HEE also received feedback from a number of students who felt the current system was not fair.

The UKFPO considered this issue and determined that implementing this change in 2023 would strike a balance between supporting the interests of current students and making the system fairer for new applicants. Once this change has been introduced, we will work closely with the UKFPO to monitor the impact across all student groups.

**Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[98371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the NHS's performance in meeting the Access and Waiting Time Standard for Children and Young People with an Eating Disorder.

**Gillian Keegan:**

There has been a significant increase in demand and more children and young people with an eating disorder are accessing support during the pandemic. This has affected performance against the access and waiting times standard and the latest figures show that this is not currently being met.

We are working with the National Health Service to develop an understanding of the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's eating disorder services. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to work with leaders and regions to prioritise service delivery and investment to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.

**Health Services: Coronavirus****Mike Amesbury:**[\[97051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of allowing health care workers to be exempt from mandatory covid-19 vaccination on religious grounds.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government considered which exemptions from vaccine requirements should be permitted informed by responses to the open consultation held from 9 September to 22 October. The majority of respondents agreed exemptions should be made only on medical grounds. An exemption on religious grounds could reduce the impact of protecting patients and workers, be difficult to implement and evidence and may also

lead to tension in workplaces between religiously exempt workers and those to whom the requirements would still apply.

## ■ Health Visitors

**Tim Loughton:**

**[98880]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) full time equivalent and (b) actual health visitors have been employed in England in each of the last 10 years.

**Maggie Throup:**

The following table shows the number of full time equivalent (FTE) and actual headcount of health visitors employed by the National Health Service in England.

| DATE           | FTE    | HEADCOUNT |
|----------------|--------|-----------|
| September 2012 | 7,687  | 9,337     |
| September 2013 | 8,304  | 9,983     |
| September 2014 | 9,162  | 10,877    |
| September 2015 | 10,236 | 12,105    |
| September 2016 | 9,521  | 11,310    |
| September 2017 | 8,497  | 10,171    |
| September 2018 | 7,884  | 9,509     |
| September 2019 | 6,981  | 8,445     |
| September 2020 | 6,677  | 8,098     |
| September 2021 | 6,279  | 7,593     |

Source: NHS Digital <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics/september-2021>

Notes:

1. These figures do not include health visitors employed by independent healthcare providers.
2. Data on health visitors employed directly by local authorities is not collected or reported nationally

## ■ Hospital Beds

**John Redwood:**

**[96741]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to increase hospital bed capacity in winter 2021-22 for all health pressures on hospitals.

**Edward Argar:**

The National Health Service is working with local authorities and partners to release the maximum number of beds through ensuring that medically fit patients can be discharged home as soon as possible, seven days a week. The use of non-acute beds in the local health and care system is also being maximised, including in hospices, hotels, community beds and the independent sector. The NHS is also expanding the use of 'virtual wards' and 'hospital at home' models of care, allowing for patients to be safely cared for in their own homes and creating additional bed capacity in hospitals. NHS trusts are also reviewing plans to expand general and acute and critical care bed capacity in hospitals as needed, learning lessons from the pandemic to date.

**Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation****Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[96887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 December 2021 to Question 86579 on Chickenpox: Vaccination, what steps (a) he has taken and (b) plans to take to increase the routine immunisation modelling capacity of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation formulates advice and recommendations based on appraisal of the best scientific and other evidence available and has no specific allocated modelling resource. Modelling is commissioned from a range of resources as and when required.

There are no plans to increase capacity at present. Modellers in academic institutions, public bodies and the Government have been focused on supporting efforts against COVID-19 through the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies.

**Long Covid: Health Services****Mary Kelly Foy:**[\[99070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people who have reported a positive lateral flow test without taking a confirmatory PCR test, are still be able to access treatment for long covid.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Access to treatment for post-COVID-19 services is not dependent upon lateral flow device or polymerase chain reaction test results. NHS England and NHS Improvement's commissioning guidance asks integrated care systems to establish service plans from primary to specialist care for all of those experiencing on-going symptoms following confirmed or suspected infection, including those who were never tested.

## ■ **Malnutrition: Health Services**

**Alex Norris:**

**[92065]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of NHS statistics showing that the number of people treated for malnutrition increased from 4,657 in 2010-11 to 10,109 in 2020-21.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 16 December 2021]:* We have made no specific assessment.

## ■ **Maternity Services: York**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[98982]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of women living in York who have been transferred to hospitals outside the City of York local authority boundary to give birth in each month in 2021; and if he will provide the reasons for those transfers.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We are unable to provide monthly data on the number of women living in York who have been transferred to hospitals outside the City of York local authority boundary to give birth as the numbers are small and could lead to the identification of individuals. However, in 2021 of 1,334 deliveries in York, 34 were transferred to hospitals outside the area.

Information on the reasons for individual transfers is not routinely collected.

## ■ **Medical Equipment and Protective Clothing: Imports**

**John Spellar:**

**[96763]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to prevent imports of medical goods and personal protective equipment produced by forced labour.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department published its Modern Slavery statement in October 2021 which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care/about/modern-slavery-statement>

Contracts are normally placed in line with Departmental terms and conditions which include clauses requiring Good Industry Practice to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in supply chains. Suppliers appointed to NHS Supply Chain framework contracts, which provide the majority of medical goods and services to the National Health Service, must comply with the Labour Standards Assurance System or they can be removed from consideration for future procurement.

The Department was aware that the direct, urgent sourcing and purchasing of personal protective equipment in 2020 involved higher risks in ethical and business

practices and had a number of mitigations in place. The Department of Health and Social Care engaged with NHS Supply Chain, the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office regarding modern slavery concerns in awarding contracts. Additional training and guidance was distributed to strengthen buying professionals' knowledge of modern slavery risks specific to the pandemic.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Robert Largan:** [\[98469\]](#)

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

**Edward Argar:**

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

**Robert Largan:** [\[98472\]](#)

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 12 November 2021, referenced RL29609.

**Edward Argar:**

We replied to the hon. Member on 10 January 2022.

## ■ Midwives

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[97127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of a recent survey conducted by the Royal College for Midwives, what plans he has to tackle the reasons for a high proportion of newly qualified midwives leaving or never starting in the profession.

**Edward Argar:**

The Royal College of Midwives has identified concerns regarding key learning experiences missed during the pandemic, the need for better support for newly qualified midwives and staff shortages.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have provided funding to maternity services for the recruitment of maternity support workers (MSW) and offer enhanced education support to align them with the Health Education England MSW competency, education and career development framework. This will allow providers to achieve their recruitment and retention ambitions through a range of initiatives, such as supporting newly qualified midwives, additional pastoral care to aid retention and the recruitment of midwives from overseas. All staff have access to a comprehensive psychological and emotional support package.

The NHS People Recovery Task Force is developing a framework and interventions to ensure that National Health Service staff are safe and supported during the pandemic. The NHS Retention Programme is also seeking to understand why staff

leave, resulting in targeted interventions to support staff to stay whilst keeping them well.

## ■ **Midwives: Job Satisfaction**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[97126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to improve working conditions in midwifery to deter people from leaving the profession.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are designing and facilitating a community of practice for midwifery leaders to address the health and wellbeing needs of their teams and enhance morale. The 2020 NHS People Plan includes a programme for organisations to retain staff through prioritising staff health and wellbeing, building an inclusive and compassionate culture in the National Health Service and strengthening support for flexible working. The NHS Retention Programme seeks to understand why staff leave, resulting in targeted interventions to support staff to stay whilst keeping them well.

## ■ **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence**

**Chris Green:**

[\[96908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with NICE on their (a) current and (b) future capacity to deliver final draft guidance on medicines within three months of regulatory approval by the MHRA.

**Chris Green:**

[\[96909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the MHRA joining the Project Orbis scheme in January 2021 on the speed of patient access to new oncology medicines.

**Chris Green:**

[\[96910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of operational challenges faced by NICE on its ability to deliver timely patient access to new medicines.

**Edward Argar:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is committed to publishing draft recommendations on new medicines around the time of licensing, with final guidance within three months of licensing wherever possible. The Department holds regular accountability meetings with NICE on a range of topics, including capacity issues. NICE delivers timely guidance on new medicines in the vast majority of cases and expects to continue to do so.

Project Orbis has been established to allow participating partners, including the United Kingdom, to review and approve applications for promising cancer treatments efficiently. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, NICE and

NHS England and NHS Improvement are ensuring an integrated, timely approach to access new products, including those licensed through Project Orbis. NHS England and NHS Improvement and NICE have agreed principles to allow potential interim access ahead of NICE's guidance where timely guidance is not anticipated, which has supported early patient access for a number of medicines licensed through Project Orbis.

■ **NHS 111: Staff**

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[97128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many call handlers were employed by NHS 111 on the first day of each month in 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department does not hold the information requested.

■ **NHS and Social Services: Coronavirus**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[93789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to ensure that health and care staff who are unvaccinated are required to test daily for covid-19.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 5 January 2022]:* All health and social care staff, regardless of vaccination status, should test regularly as part of tailored asymptomatic testing regimes across health and social care which have been developed in line with clinical advice. Unvaccinated staff are not currently required to test daily but it is vital that all staff continue to adhere to the existing extensive testing. The Government will continue to keep all testing arrangements under review.

■ **NHS and Social Services: Training**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[98978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that all staff in the NHS and social care sector receive the Oliver McGowan mandatory training in autism and learning disability in 2022 and subsequent years to improve understanding of autism and learning disability and health outcomes.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on learning disability and autism for health and care staff was trialled in England in 2021. An evaluation is underway with a final report due in spring 2022. The outcomes of the evaluation will inform the next steps for the wider deployment to health and social care staff.



## ■ NHS: Coronavirus

**Florence Eshalomi:**

[\[99096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria will be applied to staff members who may have social contact with patients in relation to mandatory vaccines for NHS staff.

**Edward Argar:**

The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) (No.2) Regulations 2021 introduces a requirement for all providers of Care Quality Commission regulated services to deploy vaccinated workers to certain roles.

These requirements do not apply for workers where vaccination is not clinically advised due to a specific medical condition. Other workers exempt from these requirements are those aged under 18 years old; those who do not have face-to contact with patients or service users; those providing care as part of a 'shared lives' agreement; and those who have participated in a clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccination, either currently or previously.

**Florence Eshalomi:**

[\[99097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to extend the mandatory vaccination deadline for NHS staff who need to postpone a vaccination appointment after contracting covid-19.

**Edward Argar:**

The current clinical advice is that individuals who contract COVID-19 should not be vaccinated until at least four weeks after onset of symptoms, or first positive test for those who are asymptomatic. As such, individuals who contract COVID-19 and must postpone their vaccination would be temporarily exempt from vaccination. Workers would have a period of 42 days following a positive test to receive their vaccine.

## ■ NHS: Negligence

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[98284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 September 2021 to Question 43518 on NHS: Negligence, how much NHS Resolution spent on medication errors in (a) hospitals and (b) GP surgeries in the financial year 2020-21.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information is not held in the format requested as NHS Resolution indemnify their members under various schemes between primary and secondary care. However, the following table shows the total value of payments made by NHS Resolution for damages and legal costs for medication errors in secondary care and primary care in England in 2020/21.

| TYPE           | DAMAGES PAID | NATIONAL HEALTH     |                      | TOTAL COSTS |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|
|                |              | SERVICE LEGAL COSTS | CLAIMANT LEGAL COSTS |             |
| Secondary care | £5,773,001   | £839,761            | £10,155,919          | £16,768,681 |
| Primary care   | £38,140      | £13,792             | £63,541              | £115,474    |

## ■ NHS: Pensions

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[98258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent representations he has received from the Welsh Government on extending the temporary suspension under the Coronavirus Act 2020 of the regulations governing the administration of NHS pensions, including the 16 hour rule.

**Edward Argar:**

While we have not received any formal representations from the Welsh Government we continue to have a regular discussions on a range of matters relating to the NHS Pension Scheme.

The measures were designed to support the National Health Service in responding to the pandemic. Pension abatement in the NHS applies to nurses, midwives, physiotherapists and mental health officers with a retained legacy right to retire at 55 years old without a reduction in their pension. Between the ages of 55 and 60 years old, their pension plus earnings in NHS employment cannot exceed their NHS earnings before retirement. The abatement recognises that they have a significant benefit not available to other staff in the NHS including many nurses. Other staff are not subject to abatement after taking their pension.

This rule was suspended as part of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to enable this group of staff to increase their work for the NHS should they wish. It is due to expire on 25 March 2022 with the other provisions of the Act, including the 16 hour rule. These staff will still be able to continue working for the NHS, typically at least half time. The 16 hour rule limits the amount of NHS work that can be done in the first month after returning from retirement, with no restriction thereafter. However, the Department will keep this under review.

## ■ NHS: Software

**Justin Madders:**

[\[93776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of active users of the Test and Trace App as of 15 December 2021; and how that number compares with that for (a) October and (b) November 2021.

**Maggie Throup:**

The data is not held in the format requested as there is no single definition or measure for active users.

**Refugees: Afghanistan****Chi Onwurah:**[\[98279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether refugees under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will be provided with mental health support.

**Gillian Keegan:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked all local health commissioners to provide primary care services for arrivals in bridging accommodation. This includes facilitating general practice registration for all individuals and an enhanced health assessment to identify and manage families' immediate health and care requirements. This should assess trauma and safeguarding concerns, mental health needs, women's and children's health, long-term conditions, areas of public health concern, vaccinations and ensuring pathways to other priority services. Individuals requiring more specialist or extensive mental health support will be referred to the appropriate service.

**Social Services: Coronavirus****Alex Cunningham:**[\[98941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish the number of (a) social workers and (b) social care staff that were off work due to covid-19 in the week commencing 1 January 2021.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department does not hold data on the number of social workers absent from work due to COVID-19 in the week commencing 1 January 2021. The Department collects data on COVID-19 related absence among staff in care homes and domiciliary care. This data is currently being collated and validated for future publication.

**Surgery: East of England****James Wild:**[\[97147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group area have been waiting more than (a) 12 and (b) 24 months for elective care as of 4 January 2022.

**Edward Argar:**

Data for 4 January 2022 is not yet available. As of October 2021, the latest data available, there were 13,553 people waiting 12 months or more and 1,230 waiting 24 months or more for elective care in the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group area.

## ■ Travel: Coronavirus

**Justin Tomlinson:**

[\[90414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Competitions and Market Authority publication entitled Advice on PCR travel tests, published 10 September, what plans he has to implement the recommendations.

**Maggie Throup:**

We are considering and already implementing many of the Competitions and Market Authority's recommendations. We have established a test validation and the United Kingdom Accreditation Service accreditation process, which ensures that providers meet minimum standards before they are able to enter the market. We also continually monitor the pricing situation for travel testing, carrying out daily price checks on listings in addition to regular audits and reviews.

**Justin Madders:**

[\[93779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of taking steps to (a) reduce and (b) waive the costs of covid-19 tests for UK citizens returning to the UK.

**Maggie Throup:**

We have no plans to provide free tests for international travel. Free National Health Service tests cannot be used for travel in order to preserve domestic testing capacity.

We are committed to working with private testing providers to reduce the cost of testing. Since international travel testing requirements were introduced, the average cost of a day two polymerase chain reaction test has decreased to £45 and tests are regularly available from approximately £20. For United Kingdom residents or individuals with residency rights who would suffer severe financial hardship by paying the full cost of their testing fees before they travel, hardship arrangements may be available.

## ■ Xenotransplantation

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[98285\]](#)

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

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS Blood and Transplant has a statutory duty to match and allocate organs for transplant to hospitals within the United Kingdom. All organs supplied for transplant come from deceased or living human donors.

**HOME OFFICE****■ 10 Downing Street****Fleur Anderson:**[\[94554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with the Metropolitan Police Commissioner regarding (a) the Metropolitan Police presence at Number 10 on 18 December 2020 and (b) facilitating the Cabinet Secretary's investigation into allegations around social gatherings of staff on that date.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Secretary has regular meetings with the London Metropolitan Commissioner, Dame Cressida Dick to discuss matters of strategic interest.

The Metropolitan Police Service, in common with other police forces, is operationally independent of Government and free from political interference.

**■ Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre****Kate Osborne:**[\[98460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what arrangements, in terms of practice and contractual commitments, are in place at Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre to ensure adherence to rules 34, 35, 40, 42 and 45 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001.

**Kevin Foster:**

Following the formal opening of Derwentside immigration removal centre last year, the first women were detained at the centre on 28 December 2021. Of these women one has been subsequently released. As of 5 January, there were nine women detained at Derwentside.

The Home Office provides accommodation for those who are destitute and have outstanding asylum claims or to individuals who fall within the scope of protection provided to potential victims of modern slavery. Additionally, the Secretary of State may provide accommodation and support for a foreign national offender who is subject to a residency condition and are either considered to pose a high risk or harm to the public or be suffering from a serious physical or mental health problem.

As set out in published Detention Services Order (DSO) 07/2013 'welfare provisions in immigration removal centres' staff will provide support with planning travel to accommodation. Any individual released from detention is offered a travel warrant to reach the accommodation to which they are being released unless accommodation is being provided by the Home Office in which case transport is provided.

The published equality impact assessment and DSO 04/2020 'Mental vulnerability and immigration detention: non-clinical guidance', provides information on reasonable adjustments to accommodate incapacitated and mentally ill women at the IRC, including access to legal representation. The published contract and relevant Detention Services Orders set out the arrangements to ensure adherence to rules 34,

35, 40, 42 and 45 of the Detention Centre Rules. The contract is published here:  
[Hassockfield IRC \(STA\) - Contracts Finder](#)

## ■ Emergency Services: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:** [94435]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of requiring (a) police officers and (b) firefighters to have covid-19 vaccinations.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Secretary and Ministers have regular contact with both the Police and Fire and Rescue Services' Chiefs regarding a range of issues linked to the response to Covid-19 and their ability to continue to respond effectively and provide support where necessary. These meetings enable critical issues to be raised and ensure appropriate actions are taken to progress and resolve them.

From 15 December, access to vaccinations and boosters have been opened up across all ages above 18. Although taking up an offer of a Covid-19 vaccine is a personal decision for each police officer and firefighter to make, I would encourage them to take this option at the earliest opportunity to protect themselves, their colleagues and the wider public that they engage with on a regular basis.

## ■ Overseas Students

**Matt Western:** [94484]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the impact of the sixth-month limit on how long incoming exchange students can remain in the UK under the visitor immigration route.

**Matt Western:** [94486]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential economic and cultural benefits of extending the amount of time exchange students can remain in the UK under the visitor immigration route from six months to one year.

**Matt Western:** [94487]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to extend the time incoming exchange students can stay in the UK from 6 months to one academic year without having to apply for a Student Visa.

**Kevin Foster:**

Under the new simplified immigration rules which came into effect on 1 December 2020, study for up to six months at an accredited institution is permitted under the visitor route.

The visit route is for a person who wants to come to the UK for a temporary period, usually up to 6 months.

Visitors may also learn about and undertake research as part of a course they are studying overseas.

There are no plans to allow visitors to study for more than six months.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[96890]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with officials in the Department for Education on ensuring that refugees from Afghanistan with limited leave to remain can access schooling.

**Kevin Foster:**

All children and young people evacuated to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) with limited leave, will have access to education.

As of 6 January 2022, all school aged children and young people evacuated during Operation Pitting, are now enrolled into schools. Those children who have joined us since then are either in school, or being placed in schools, as quickly as possible.

We are also taking the availability of school places in each local authority into account, as new families arrive and are settled into the country.

**Tim Loughton:**

[98882]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will recognise at-risk cultural heritage workers from Afghanistan who have been threatened for their work with international bodies under her Department's refugee programme; and whether those individuals need to be outside of Afghanistan to be processed for re-settlement in the UK.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will provide up to 20,000 women, children and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK.

The scheme will prioritise those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for UK values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech and rule of law; and vulnerable people such as women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups (including ethnic / religious minorities and LGBT+).

Those we resettle will be prioritised according to risk and protection need. Further details on referral for resettlement can be found in the recent statement to Parliament on 6 January: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/oral-statement-on-the-afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

The capacity of the UK to resettle people is not unlimited, and therefore difficult decisions about who will be prioritised for resettlement will have to be made.

The UK is committed to working with our international partners to protect and promote the human rights of those in Afghanistan including cultural heritage workers, and encourage the international community to share our long-term interest in providing homes for those whose lives are at risk in Afghanistan.



## ■ Refugees: English Language

**Fabian Hamilton:** [\[98219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many digital devices have been provided to settled refugees on UK Resettlement Scheme to assist them with English for Speakers of Other Languages training and job applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

Local authorities receive a generous funding package for the support they provide for refugees resettled under the UK Resettlement Scheme.

The overall package also includes additional ESOL funding to improve the English language skills of adults and helping support better employability and integration outcomes. This package enables local authorities to support refugees as they rebuild their lives in safe and secure surroundings, among supportive communities in the UK.

The Home Office does not provide any digital devices, so any provision would be separate from Government, as such we do not hold this information.

**Fabian Hamilton:** [\[98220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme and (b) Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme participants have been enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages courses.

**Victoria Atkins:**

For both the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), beneficiaries over the age of 19 will have immediate access to funding through the Department for Education's Adult Education budget and be eligible for English For Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses.

The Home Office also provides a tariff per person to Local Authorities in return for providing a package of support to each arrival under the ACRS and ARAP, including an £850 payment for English Language training.

## ■ Sexual Assault Referral Centres

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[97048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what work her Department has undertaken with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure that women presenting with injuries from suspected sexual assault are referred to Sexual Assault Referral Centres rather than to alternative health services without specialist sexual assault support.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We ran a national Call for Evidence on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls which received an unprecedented 180,000 responses and highlighted numerous issues that the Government is determined to address. This evidence informed our Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, which we published in July 2021, and will later inform the forthcoming publication of a complementary Domestic

Abuse Strategy, in the coming months. We are committing to radically changing how we end violence against women and girls with a whole system approach focusing on: prioritising prevention, supporting survivors, pursuing perpetrators, underpinned by a stronger system.

Among the many commitments in that Strategy, NHS England and NHS Improvement committed to undertake a communications campaign to raise awareness of the support available to victims and survivors through Sexual Assault Referral Centres. Where appropriate, NHS 111 call handlers are trained to signpost people to their local Sexual Assault Referral Centre. NHS England has put in place training for NHS 111 call handlers to ensure they are equipped to support victims and survivors of sexual violence appropriately.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### ■ **Big Ben: Repairs and Maintenance**

**Alan Brown:**

[\[96953\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the latest estimate is of the cost of the Elizabeth Tower refurbishment.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

The budget for the refurbishment of Elizabeth Tower, most recently approved in early 2020, is £79.7 million.

Since then, further provision of up to £9 million has also been made to cover additional costs relating to the impact of COVID-19, which, as with almost all construction projects across the country, has affected the progress of work.

These costs arise from the four-month site closure in 2020, investment in COVID-secure measures and the necessity of reduced productivity on site until November 2020 – introduced to ensure the safety of the project's workforce.

This figure has been scrutinised by independent consultants, who are confident in the financial projections that have been developed by teams in the House Service, recognising the exceptionality of the project and its highly specific requirements.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ **Agriculture: Australia**

**David Duguid:**

[\[97015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what specific measures she has secured in the trade agreement with Australia to protect British agricultural interests from unfair trading practices.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) includes various instruments to protect British agricultural interests. Quotas on products such as beef set a maximum level for tariff-free imports for up to 10 years. Product specific safeguards for beef and lamb allow the UK to impose higher tariffs when imports exceed a certain threshold in years 10 to 15. On lamb, quota and safeguard volumes can be periodically reduced by 25% when fill rates are high. Additionally, a general bilateral safeguard mechanism allows for the temporary withdrawal of tariff preferences which will protect industry.

**David Duguid:**[\[97016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department plans to take to support the growth of British agriculture (a) at home and (b) in the Australian market.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Our support for exporters is underpinning jobs and economic growth in the agriculture sector at this critical time. In November we launched a refreshed Export Strategy. The strategy is focused on tackling trade barriers, opening new markets, providing the services exporters need to compete in global markets and helping businesses maximise the opportunities generated by new free trade agreements. We support businesses through all stages of their export journey to Australia and other markets, including through our GREAT.gov.uk platform, our Export Academy, our new Export Support Service. We have dedicated agriculture, food and drink trade advisers in the UK and overseas in markets such as Australia to support businesses in taking up these services.

**■ Arms Trade: Export Controls****Alyn Smith:**[\[93899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 8 December 2021, HCWS449, on Trade Policy Update, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of new arms licensing criteria in preventing (a) internal repression and (b) the commission of violations of international humanitarian law.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The revised Criteria announced in the Written Statement of 8 December 2021, HCWS449, reflect the UK's policy considerations and take into account a full range of factors including our international legal obligations including the Arms Trade Treaty.

HM Government is satisfied that the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria provides a thorough risk assessment framework for assessing all export licence applications. With regard to internal repression and the commission of violations of international humanitarian law, the key tests are Criterion 2a and Criterion 2c. These criteria have not substantially changed; indeed they have been made stronger by the addition of "facilitation" within their scope.

**Alyn Smith:**

[\[93900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 8 December, HCWS449 on Trade Policy Update, whether the Government held (a) formal and (b) informal consultations with representatives of the defence industry in advance of that announcement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

When preparing the written statement of 8 December, HCWS449 which introduced the current Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, there were no advance formal or informal consultations with industry or representatives of industry.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[94282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if her Department will agree to a temporary waiver of the TRIPS Agreement for the production of mRNA covid-19 vaccines; and if she will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

I refer the Hon. Member for Harrow West to the answer given by my Hon. Friend, the Minister for Exports, to the Hon. Member for Preston on 17 December, UIN: 90349.

The G7 Trade Ministers' communique of 22<sup>nd</sup> October notes our determination to achieve an impactful outcome on trade and health, including how the international IP framework can best support the WTO's pandemic response.

## ■ **Department for International Trade: Buildings**

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[\[98514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the total floor area of her departmental estate was in each year from 2010-11 to 2020-21.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Department for International Trade was established in July 2016. The total floor area for the Department's estate since inception was as follows:

| YEAR    | TOTAL FLOOR SPACE (M <sup>2</sup> , NET INTERNAL AREA) |
|---------|--|
| 2016/17 | 0  |
| 2017/18 | 898  |
| 2018/19 | 13993  |
| 2019/20 | 0  |
| 2020/21 | 0  |

During the first two financial years, our estate was partially owned by another Department while transfers were formalised.

The Department subsequently transferred ownership of its property assets to the Government Property Agency (GPA) from September 2019. The GPA will report the space separately for 2019/20 onwards in the Cabinet Office response.

## ■ Department for International Trade: India

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[94283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many Departmental staff were stationed in each of the 28 states of India in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) employees working overseas are often stationed at a central base, such as a High Commission, but operate across India. DIT has several overseas bases within India as part of the British overseas network, such as Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, New Delhi, Chandigarh and Kolkata. Total workforce numbers have been provided to protect anonymity of individuals working at some of these locations:

| DATE      | HEADCOUNT |
|-----------|-----------|
| 30-Nov-21 | 121       |
| 30-Nov-20 | 109       |
| 30-Nov-19 | 110       |
| 30-Nov-18 | 97        |
| 30-Nov-17 | 106       |

Please note: The headcount figures include overseas UK based staff, country-based staff and country-based staff interns (there are no country-based staff interns in India).

These figures do not include UKEF staff, those on loan from Other Government Departments who remain on their home departments payroll, contractors, military staff, people on secondment from other organisations, those who are on loan or secondment out of DIT, or on unpaid special leave or career break.

## ■ Iron and Steel: USA

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[96858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her timetable is for brokering a deal to allow UK steel exports to be transported to the US without incurring tariffs.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The removal of additional US tariffs on steel and aluminium is a key priority for the Government. The Secretary of State has been pushing for a speedy resolution to the Section 232 tariffs issue and during her December visit to the US she spoke to both the US Trade Representative Katherine Tai as well as the Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo about it. We are engaging with the US Administration regularly on this issue and continue to push for the start of negotiations and the removal of Section 232 tariffs as soon as possible.

**■ Overseas Trade: Israel****Stephen Crabb:**[\[94308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of the total value of bilateral trade with Israel in the last five years, and what steps she is taking to increase that value in the next five years.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Our bilateral trade relationship with Israel is already strong at almost £5 billion per year. Total trade between the UK and Israel has grown over the last five years from £3.5 billion in 2015 to £4.8 billion in 2020.

Officials and Ministers are in regular contact with their Israeli counterparts on our existing bilateral free trade agreement and ambitions for our future relationship. The Government will open a Call for Input on an enhanced bilateral free trade agreement with Israel early this year.

**■ Trade Agreements: Israel****Stephen Crabb:**[\[94307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with the government of Israel on a free trade agreement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Officials and Ministers are in regular contact with their Israeli counterparts on our existing bilateral free trade agreement and ambitions for our future relationship. On Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade met the Israeli Ambassador and discussed ways in which we can enhance our existing trade relationship over time.

The Government will open a Call for Input on an enhanced bilateral free trade agreement with Israel early this year.

## JUSTICE

■ **Courts: Repairs and Maintenance**

**Steve Reed:** [\[98968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of court sitting days lost as a result of broken heating systems, lifts and disrepair in courts in each of the last three years.

**James Cartlidge:**

HMCTS does not hold court sittings data that provides this level of detail.

Since 4 October 2021 HMCTS has been explicitly capturing the effect of planned and unplanned maintenance on our estate, and this has resulted in the lost availability of 754 courtroom days up to 1 January 2022. This represents less than 1% of sitting days during this period. Not all lost courtroom days result in a lost sitting day as these can be transferred to other rooms, if available.

The HMCTS estate is kept under regular review and priority is given to ensuring that buildings are safe, secure, meet statutory requirements and protect continuity of service.

■ **Family Courts: Barnet**

**Catherine West:** [\[93843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the level of the backlog of cases at Barnet Family Court as at 15 December 2021; and what steps he is taking to tackle that backlog.

**Catherine West:** [\[93844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on (a) children and (b) families of the delay in hearing cases at Barnet Family Court.

**James Cartlidge:**

The backlog in the family court at Barnet for private and public law case is as shown in the table below. Average timeliness in weeks has been provided also. Barnet is part of the West London Designated Family Court area. To give context the data for the whole area is also provided.

FINANCIAL YEAR TO SEPTEMBER

| 2021                                    | BARNET | WEST LONDON |
|---|--------|-------------|
| Number of outstanding private law cases | 925    | 2,596       |
| Number of outstanding public law cases  | 241    | 488         |



## FINANCIAL YEAR TO SEPTEMBER

| 2021  | BARNET | WEST LONDON |
|---|--------|-------------|
| Average timeliness in weeks for private law | 63.9   | 55.8        |
| Average timeliness in weeks for public law  | 51.9   | 47.1        |

The administration and senior judiciary are working closely together to increase the sitting capacity across the West London Cluster, which comprises of West London Family Court and Barnet County Court, and to re-balance the arrears of work across the region. Sitting days in the West London area have increased by 25%, comparing the financial year September 2021 to the same period in 2020.

In recognition of the pressures on family work across the West London estate, a Nightingale Court was created at Petty France with four additional courts. Additional courts are also being utilised in the Royal Courts of Justice.

The increased use of digital hearings in family have allowed the court to use more part-time judiciary and increase the number of hearings heard on a remote basis, and the introduction of a new pilot (known as Pilot Practice Direction 36Q\*) is enabling the court to progress private law cases through the system more quickly by introducing early triage and case management between issue and the first hearing.

\*PD36Q New **Pilot Practice Direction 36Q** came into force from 23 April 2020. Pilot PD36Q modifies PD12B (Child Arrangements Programme) to provide temporary local flexibility over procedures for progressing applications for Child Arrangements Orders.

## ■ Prisons: Drugs

**Steve Reed:**

[\[98967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 5 January 2021 to Question 94398 on Prisons: Drugs, whether he will publish data on the weights of drug finds by individual type of (a) Class A, (b) Class B and (c) Class C drug.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Data on the weights of drug finds by individual types of (a) Class A, (b) Class B and (c) Class C drugs is published [here](#) (Chart 9, 2\_b) from 2017 to 2021. It is not possible to split the total weight of drugs found in prisons by type or class of drug, so it is not possible to publish the data on drug weights by class of drug.

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES****■ Building Safety Fund**

**Gareth Thomas:** [94273]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether the Building Safety Fund will cover the cost of spandrel replacements; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:** [94274]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason the Building Safety Fund does not cover the cost of balcony deck remediation if that work is necessary to make a residential building safe from fire; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:** [94275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason the Building Safety Fund does not cover the cost of garage roof remediation if that work is necessary to make a residential building safe from fire; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Government funding covers all works directly related to the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding systems on residential buildings of 18 metres and above in height. Detailed information on works eligible for funding can be found in the Building Safety Fund prospectus, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#prospectus---outlining-eligibility-for-the-fund> . Eligible works can cover other structural and fire safety works but only where it integral to the remediation of the unsafe cladding system.

**■ Buildings: Fire Prevention**

**Gareth Thomas:** [94277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the competitiveness on price of companies seeking to secure contracts for mandatory building fire safety repairs; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Building Safety Fund will cover all reasonable costs for eligible works that are necessary to remediate unsafe non-ACM cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings. Reasonable costs must be informed by an industry standard approach to specification and procurement of works, having regard to cost benchmarks established from comparable projects. Higher than expected costs will be challenged and will be subject to further scrutiny, and the level of grant may be reduced.

## ■ Buildings: Safety

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[99093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with officials in his Department on the regulation of the managing agent sector prior to Building Safety Fund monies being dispersed to managing agents for building remediation.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Building Safety Fund will cover all reasonable costs for eligible works that are necessary to remediate unsafe non-ACM cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings, including a range of direct project costs such as professional team fees and managing agents' fees in respect of administering qualifying expenditure.

Reasonable costs must be informed by an industry standard approach to specification and procurement of works, having regard to cost benchmarks established from comparable projects. Higher than expected costs will be challenged and will be subject to further scrutiny, and the level of grant may be reduced. The Government is considering the recommendations in the report on the regulation of property agents from the working group chaired by Lord Best, and we will continue to work with the industry on improving best practice.

## ■ Council Tax

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[94562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of exempting or reducing council tax for people with (a) dementia or (b) another particular illness.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

A council tax exemption applies where a person has a severe mental impairment, as certified by a medical practitioner, and is entitled to one of a range of benefits set down in legislation. A reduced council tax bill is also available in certain circumstances where a disabled person requires a larger property than they would otherwise need.

## ■ Housing: Insulation

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[93928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Answer to the hon. Member for Putney on 29 November 2021, Official Report, column 658, what progress he has made in ensuring leaseholders are not responsible to pay for remediation works.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN 94569 on 5 January 2022.

**■ Local Government: Coronavirus****Mike Amesbury:**[\[93896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will take steps to ensure that councils are provided with additional resources to support their communities and prevent significant job losses in the context of the omicron variant.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Councils have been essential to the national response to COVID-19. Since the start of the pandemic, we have committed over £13 billion to local authorities to tackle the impact of COVID-19 on their services, over £6 billion of which is un-ringfenced in recognition that they are best placed to decide how to meet the major COVID-19 pressures in their local areas, as well as providing compensation for lost income.

**■ Property Development: Derelict Land****Bob Seely:**[\[98412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that brownfield development is prioritised ahead of greenfield developments.

**Christopher Pincher:**

This Government strongly encourages the re-use of suitable brownfield land – especially for development to meet housing need and regenerate our high streets and town centres. We have introduced a number of planning reforms to support our brownfield approach including uplifting local housing need by 35% in the top 20 most populated cities and urban centres, successfully requiring every local authority to publish a register of local brownfield land suitable for housing in their area, introducing “Permission in Principle” to speed housing-led development on land included in brownfield registers and revising Permitted Development and Use Class rules so yet more homes can be created. Brownfield sites vary greatly, and we recognise that local authorities are best placed to assess the suitability of each for redevelopment.

We are also providing significant financial support for the take-up and completion of brownfield redevelopment. This includes through the £4.3 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund; the £4.95 billion Home Building Fund; the £400 million Brownfield Housing Fund and the £75 million Brownfield Land Release Fund. The Chancellor announced at the Autumn Budget and Spending Review a further £300 million of locally-led grant funding that will be distributed to Mayoral Combined Authorities and local authorities to unlock smaller brownfield sites for housing and improve communities in line with their priorities.

**PRIME MINISTER**■ **Employment****Stephen Timms:**[\[98884\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to his oral contribution of 5 January 2022, Official Report, column 11, if he will set out the evidential basis for his statement that there are now record numbers of people in work, 420,000 more than there were before the pandemic began.

**Boris Johnson:**

Looking at the payroll employment measure of people in work, the most recent statistical release shows there were 29.4 million people in work in November 2021 – 424,000 more than in February 2020 and a new record high, compared with the previous high of 29.175 million in October 2021.

(Source: Office for National Statistics, *Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK: December 2021*, December 2021).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkhours/bulletins/earningsandemploymentfrompayasyouearnrealtimeinformationuk/latest>

**TRANSPORT**■ **A1: Freight****Alicia Kearns:**[\[99079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has estimates for the amount of freight transported across the A1 each week.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department for Transport does not hold data on the volume of freight that is carried on any specific route within the UK. The Department for Transport collects and publishes detailed information about domestic freight activity via the Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport. However, while this survey asks the origin and destination of freight journeys, in order to minimise the burden on hauliers, it does not ask drivers to specify the route they have taken.

■ **Highway Code****Dr Luke Evans:**[\[97142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the hierarchy of road users as outlined in the Highway Code is understood by road users.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The hierarchy of road users is one of a number of proposed changes to The Highway Code to improve road safety for cyclists, pedestrians and horse rider. The plan is to communicate the changes in two phases:

- A factual awareness raising campaign in early February, alerting road users to the changes as they come into effect.
- A broader behaviour change campaign later in the year, to align with seasonal increases in active travel, to help embed the changes and encourage understanding and uptake of the new guidance.

We are working with a broad range of stakeholders to ensure we develop communications that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of all road users.

## ■ Leamside Line

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[96862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to bring forward plans for a future city region settlement to include an assessment of the potential merits of re-opening the Leamside Line.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Integrated Rail Plan published in November 2021 confirmed that the potential re-opening of the Leamside line would be best considered as part of a future city region settlement.

The Government has committed to investing £5.7bn in the transport networks for eight city regions in England, including the North East, through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements programme. The first settlement period will begin in April this year and will last for five years. As set out at the Spending Review, the North East will be eligible to access this funding once appropriate governance is in place.

## ■ Private Roads: Accidents

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[98912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government holds statistics for accidents that have occurred on unadopted roads.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Statistics for accidents on unadopted roads are not held by the Department. The Department's published road accident statistics are based on the STATS19 system of accidents reported by police forces, which covers accidents occurring on the publicly maintained highway.

## ■ Private Roads: Lighting

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[98911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of unadopted roads on developments built in the last ten years do not have street lighting.

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[98913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government plans to review legislation on new housing developments and the adoption of new roads by local authorities.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department for Transport does not keep a list, nor is routinely informed, of how many roads are built on housing developments.

The legislation covering the process for local highway authority adoption of private roads into the public road network is set out in the Highways Act 1980. The Department has no plans to review this legislation since it continues to ensure that any new roads that are adopted and then maintained at public expense are built to the required standard.

The Department does provide advice to developers and highway authorities on the road adoption process. The 2017 Advice Note can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-of-roads-by-highway-authorities](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-of-roads-by-highway-authorities). An update of this advice note is planned to be published shortly.

## ■ Railways: Fares

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[98523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what environmental assessments and estimates were made on the effect of carbon emissions as part of the decision to allow rail fares to increase by 3.8 per cent. in March 2022.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Department considers many factors when assessing the impact of a fares change, notably the impacts on passengers and taxpayers. Whilst no specific assessment of environmental impacts was made, as the Department chose to hold fares to the Retail Prices Index (RPI) from last summer rather than follow the previous year's RPI + 1 per cent, it is likely that this decision would make rail travel more attractive than it would otherwise have been, which would have a positive effect on the environment by reducing carbon emissions from other transport modes.

**Louise Haigh:**

[99001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the cost to passengers of the 3.8 per cent increase in rail fares due in March 2022.

**Louise Haigh:**

[99002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of fare increases on passenger numbers; and if he will place a copy in the Library of that assessment.



**Louise Haigh:**[\[99004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the average passenger fare per journey following the 3.8 per cent increase in rail fares in March 2022.

**Wendy Morton:**

Rail fares increases will be capped and tied to the Retail Price Index (RPI) figure for July 2021 (3.8 per cent). The Government has deliberately continued to use the July figure as it was lower than the months since, as an August or September RPI figure would have led to a 4.8 per cent or 4.9 per cent change with October being even higher at 6 per cent. In addition, as with 2021, we have temporarily frozen fares for passengers to travel at the lower price for the entirety of January and February 2022, with fares changing on 1 March 2022.

The Department takes guidance from the Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook on the effects of changes to fares on rail demand. There are a number of factors which impact passenger demand, including most notably at the moment the pandemic's impact on passenger travel.

## ■ Railways: Fuels

**Louise Haigh:**[\[99005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the total cost of fuel to franchised train operators in each year from 2015 to date.

**Wendy Morton:**

The following table shows the total diesel fuel and traction electricity charges from 2015/16 to date.

| £M <sup>1</sup> | 2015/16    | 2016/17    | 2017/18    | 2018/19    | 2019/20    | 2020/21    | 2021/22 <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------|
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>558</b> | <b>506</b> | <b>522</b> | <b>593</b> | <b>611</b> | <b>539</b> | <b>297</b>           |

*Source: ORR data portal and train operating company management accounts*

<sup>1</sup> Figures are shown in £m for each financial year. For the period 2015/16 to 2020/21, figures are in 2020/21 prices. For 2021/22, figures are in 2021/22 prices.

<sup>2</sup> The figures for 2021/22 are taken from management accounts supplied to the Department by DfT-franchised train operating companies. The period covered is from 1 April to 11 December 2021. There may still be wash-up payments between the Department and DfT-franchised operators for 2021/22 to take place which are not reflected in the above figures.

## ■ Railways: Tickets

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[99003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on how many occasions the Book With Confidence scheme has been used by passengers since its introduction.

**Wendy Morton:**

While it is not possible to track the specific number of occasions where the Book with Confidence scheme has been used by passengers, rail industry survey data suggests that the scheme has contributed significantly to passenger willingness to travel by train during the pandemic. The Government has therefore extended the Book with Confidence scheme through to 31 March 2022, in recognition of the continuing uncertainty facing passengers due to COVID-19.

## ■ Roads: Construction

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[98910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many new roads have been built in each of the last ten years; and of those how many are unadopted by local authorities.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The number of road enhancement schemes funded by the Department and completed in each of the last ten years is as follows:

|         | LOCAL ROAD NETWORK | STRATEGIC ROAD NETWORK |
|---------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 2012/13 | 7                  | n/a                    |
| 2013/14 | 6                  | n/a                    |
| 2014/15 | 5                  | n/a                    |
| 2015/16 | 7                  | 5                      |
| 2016/17 | 7                  | 6                      |
| 2017/18 | 3                  | 10                     |
| 2018/19 | 3                  | 7                      |
| 2019/20 | 0                  | 7                      |
| 2020/21 | 4                  | 3                      |

This includes all road enhancement schemes funded by the Local Major Scheme Grant or those on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) from 2015/16. It includes capacity enhancement schemes as well as new roads.

In addition, the Department has funded a number of schemes over the past 10 years from targeted funding programmes. These programmes include the Local Pinch Point

Fund and National Productivity Investment Fund and these include new roads and road improvements.

The Department does not hold information on schemes that may have been funded from Local Authorities' own budgets (including those provided through formula funding allocations such as Integrated Transport Block funding). The Department does not hold information on new roads built by third party organisations, such as private developers.

All Department-funded road schemes will have been adopted by the relevant local highway authority.

### ■ Train Operating Companies: Codes of Practice

**Louise Haigh:** [\[99000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many items of guidance have been issued by his Department to Train Operating Companies in each of the last 36 months.

**Wendy Morton:**

Department for Transport officials communicate with Train Operating Companies on a daily basis, including providing guidance on a range of issues.

### ■ Transport for London: Finance

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[99022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a failure to secure a long-term funding deal for Transport for London beyond 4 February 2022 on (a) bus and (b) tube services.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We have repeatedly shown our commitment to supporting London's transport network through the pandemic, providing more than £4bn in emergency funding to Transport for London to keep essential services running, to enable businesses to continue to operate and key workers to continue their critical work in the capital. This is in addition to this year's Spending Review settlement for London, which provided over a billion pounds of capital investment per year, in line with previous funding.

The Government remains committed to providing further extraordinary funding to mitigate fare revenue loss as a result of the pandemic and ensuring all TfL services, including the bus and tube network, keep running in a way that is fair to the national tax payer. The current funding deal was only temporarily extended until February due to the Mayor being late in terms of providing future options.

**TREASURY****■ Biofuels: Excise Duties**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[94379\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential environmental implications of restricting the use of rebated Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil in certain diesel-powered vehicles, vessels and other appliances from 1 April 2022.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[94380\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of potential implications for respiratory health of restricting the use of rebated Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil for use in certain diesel-powered vehicles, vessels and other appliances from 1 April 2022.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[94381\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his policy of restricting the use of rebated Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil in certain diesel-powered vehicles from 1 April 2022, what steps he is taking to introduce a harmonisation period to avoid potential pressures on fuels supplies.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[94382\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his policy of restricting the use of rebated Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil in certain diesel-powered vehicles, whether he plans to provide support to businesses which are running down stocks of HVO, including costs of cleaning out storage tanks, in preparation for the introduction of the duty harmonisation of fuels ahead of 1 April 2022.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[94383\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will amend the Biofuels and other Fuel Substitutes Excise Notice 179e to include Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil from renewable feedstocks under paragraph 5.5; and if will he make a statement.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[94384\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will amend the Governments' definition of biodiesel to include the classification of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[94385\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will grant waivers to dye (mark) rebated fuels such as Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil to support (a) a transition to duty harmonisation on 1 April 2022 and (b) the use of low carbon fuels on major projects including (i) HS2 and (ii) the Thames Tideway Tunnel.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[94386\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to mitigate potential disruption to the fuel supply chain resulting from his Department's planned restriction regarding the future use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil from 1 April 2022.

**Helen Whately:**

At Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced that he will remove the entitlement to use rebated fuel from most sectors from April 2022. This will more fairly reflect the negative environmental impact of the emissions they produce and help to ensure that the tax system incentivises the development and adoption of greener alternative technologies.

During the consultation period, the Government engaged directly with a wide variety of organisations, including affected sectors and fuel suppliers, to discuss these tax changes. HMRC have published interim guidance on the implementation of the changes to the tax treatment of rebated fuel, which is available at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-rebated-fuels-entitlement-from-1-april-2022](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-rebated-fuels-entitlement-from-1-april-2022)

The Government has not announced any changes to the treatment of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) and so it will continue to be taxed at the same rate as diesel and required to be marked if supplied for rebated use. The rebated rate applies to qualifying uses, not to specific fuels, so sectors losing their entitlement will no longer benefit from the rebate regardless of what fuel they use.

As with all taxes, the Government will keep the tax treatment of HVO under review. However, there are no plans at present to change treatment as the Government uses the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) to incentivise the use of low carbon fuels and reduce emissions from fuel supplied for use in transport and non-road mobile machinery. HVO is eligible for Renewable Transport Fuel Certificates under the RTFO, and is eligible to receive twice the reward in certificates under this scheme where it is produced from waste.

**■ Business: Coronavirus**

**Rachael Maskell:** [93798]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional support to businesses effected by the new covid-19 restrictions.

**Rachael Maskell:** [94436]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to make additional support available to businesses in response to the omicron phase of covid-19.

**Rachael Maskell:** [94437]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on making additional funding available to support businesses through the omicron phase of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government has announced £1 billion of new grant support for the hospitality, leisure, and cultural sectors to protect jobs and businesses through this period of uncertainty. We are bolstering our package of existing support with:

- New one-off cash grants of up to £6,000 to support eligible businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors, totalling nearly £700 million.
- Over £100 million of new discretionary funding to local authorities to support other impacted businesses, particularly those in the supply chain. This is on top of around £250 million that Local Authorities already have available to distribute at their discretion.
- £30 million through the Culture Recovery Fund, to support theatres, museums, and other vital cultural institutions through the disruption this winter.
- The reintroduction of the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme to help small and medium-sized employers cover the cost of Covid-related sick absences, covering up to two weeks per employee.
- HMRC stands ready to support any business affected by the coronavirus pandemic through its Time to Pay arrangement. As part of this, businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors in particular will be offered the option of a short delay, and payment in instalments, on a case-by-case basis.

This additional funding is on top of the generous and wide-ranging support package already in place, which the Chancellor announced at the Spring and Autumn Budgets 2021. Small and medium-sized businesses can access Government-guaranteed finance through the extended Recovery Loans scheme until next June. Businesses will also be protected from eviction if they are behind on rent on their premises, thanks to the moratorium in place until March 2022.

In addition, business rates relief for eligible retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses in England is available until March 2022. Hospitality and tourism businesses will continue to benefit from a VAT reduction, paying only 12.5 per cent until March 2022.

The Government has also recently published guidance for the £1.5 billion COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund, allowing local authorities to provide financial support for businesses not impacted by existing reliefs, such as breweries and wholesalers.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we are closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. We will continue to respond appropriately and proportionately to the changing path of the virus.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[93800]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional support he will make available to businesses if further covid-19 lockdown restrictions are introduced.

**Helen Whately:**

In response to the Omicron variant, the government has recently announced £1 billion of new grant support for the hospitality, leisure and cultural sectors to protect jobs and businesses through this period of uncertainty.

This builds on the comprehensive economic response the government has provided over the course of the pandemic, providing around £400 billion of direct support for

the economy to date, which has helped to safeguard jobs, businesses and public services in every region and nation of the UK.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we are closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. We will continue to respond appropriately and proportionately to the changing path of the virus.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[94440]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of whether sectors that are financially affected by the most recent covid-19 outbreak require additional covid-19 grants and loans.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[94442]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide additional support to local authorities to support people and businesses to respond to the most recent covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

On 21<sup>st</sup> December, the government announced £1 billion of new grant support for the hospitality, leisure and cultural sectors in England to protect jobs and businesses from the adverse economic impacts of the Omicron variant. We are bolstering our package of existing support with additional funding for local authorities to support businesses via:

- New one-off cash grants of up to £6,000 to support eligible businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors, totalling nearly £700 million.
- Over £100 million of new discretionary funding to local authorities to support other impacted businesses, particularly those in the supply chain. This was on top of the £250 million of Additional Restrictions Grant funding held by local authorities in December which had yet to be disbursed to businesses.

This package of grant support also includes an additional £30 million through the Culture Recovery Fund, to support theatres, museums and other vital cultural institutions in England through the temporary disruption this winter.

The government has also announced that the devolved administrations will receive £860 million of up-front funding, to help them continue their response to Omicron. As the new cash grants are England-only, Barnett consequentials will lead to a total of around £150 million for the devolved administrations : £80 million for Scotland, £50 million for Wales, and £25 million for Northern Ireland.

In addition, we have announced:

- The reintroduction of the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme to help small and medium-sized employers cover the cost of Covid-related sick absences, covering up to two weeks per employee. This applies UK wide.
- The government is also waiving late filing and late payment penalties for Income Tax Self-Assessment (ITSA) taxpayers to support cashflow and ease administrative burdens. Taxpayers will not receive a late filing penalty if they file



online by 28 February, and will not receive a late payment penalty if they pay their tax in full or set up a payment plan by 1 April.

This additional support is on top of the generous and wide-ranging support package already in place, which the Chancellor announced at the Spring and Autumn Budgets last year. As part of this, small and medium-sized businesses can access government-guaranteed finance through the extended Recovery Loans scheme until June.

To support individuals, 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. This includes a £500 Test and Trace Self-Isolation payment available to people on low incomes who are required to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, cannot work from home, and in turn will lose income as a result of self-isolation. The scheme is in place until the end of March. The government continues to keep these support arrangements under review.

The government has also put in place a £500 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable households with costs for essentials such as food, clothing and utilities over the Winter. In England, this funding has been allocated to Local Authorities, who are best placed to direct help to those who need it most.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we are closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. We will continue to respond appropriately and proportionately to the changing path of the virus.

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[94550]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of state for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the introduction of additional measures to support (a) small- and medium-sized businesses and (b) the hospitality sector following the Government's updates on the spread of the omicron covid-19 variant on 15 December 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

On 21<sup>st</sup> December, the government announced £1 billion of new grant support for the hospitality, leisure and cultural sectors in England to protect jobs and businesses from the adverse impacts of the Omicron variant.

The package of support announced includes the reintroduction of the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme to help small and medium-sized employers cover the cost of Covid-related sick absences, covering up to two weeks per employee. This applies UK-wide.

The hospitality sector in England will benefit from:

- New one-off cash grants of up to £6,000 to support eligible businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors, totalling nearly £700 million.
- Over £100 million of new discretionary funding has been provided to local authorities to support businesses in other sectors, including in the supply chain for

the hospitality sector, that are not eligible for these new grants, supplementing around £250 million of unallocated discretionary grant funding already held by local authorities.

The government has also announced that the devolved administrations will receive £860 million of up-front funding, to help them continue their response to Omicron. As the new cash grants are England-only, Barnett consequential will lead to a total of around £150 million for the devolved administrations: £80 million for Scotland, £50 million for Wales, and £25 million for Northern Ireland.

HMRC also stand ready to support any business affected by the coronavirus pandemic through its Time to Pay arrangement. As part of this, businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors in particular will be offered the option of a short delay, and payment in instalments, on a case by case basis.

The government is also waiving late filing and late payment penalties for Income Tax Self-Assessment (ITSA) taxpayers, including those in the hospitality sector, to support cashflow and ease administrative burdens. Taxpayers will not receive a late filing penalty if they file online by 28 February, and will not receive a late payment penalty if they pay their tax in full or set up a payment plan by 1 April.

This additional support is on top of the generous and wide-ranging support package already in place, which the Chancellor announced at the Spring and Autumn Budgets last year. Small and medium-sized businesses can access Government-guaranteed finance through the extended Recovery Loans scheme until June.

Businesses in the hospitality, retail and leisure sectors continue to benefit from capped business rates relief at 66% until the next financial year, when a new capped relief of 50% takes effect. Hospitality and tourism businesses also benefit from reduced VAT at 12.5% until the end of March.

Businesses will also be protected from eviction if they are behind on rent on their premises, thanks to the moratorium in place until March.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we are closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. We will continue to respond appropriately and proportionately to the changing path of the virus.

## ■ Business: Taxation

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[94439]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing more flexibility to businesses in meeting their repayment requirements to HMRC.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC is working hard to help all taxpayers with temporary cash-flow issues, and to provide them with the support they need.

HMRC's longstanding Time to Pay policy allows taxpayers in temporary financial difficulty to schedule their tax debts into affordable and sustainable instalment

arrangements with no maximum repayment period. These arrangements are flexible and can be amended if circumstances change.

Any taxpayer concerned about their ability to pay should contact HMRC to discuss the support available.

## ■ Companies: VAT

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[94315\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs liquidation claims to recover VAT from company directors were recovered in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC is unable to advise what proportion of HMRC liquidation claims to recover VAT from company directors were recovered in each of the last five years. HMRC is not responsible for recovery of these amounts after the insolvency event. HMRC rely on the appointed Insolvency Practitioner to realise any and all available assets from the Insolvent party and are allocated their share per Insolvency legislation from funds obtained by the appointed Insolvency Practitioner. HMRC are provided with dividend payment from the liquidator as and when assets and funds are realised but are not advised of where the recoveries have come from. HMRC does not need to know whether recoveries have come from the directors, general company assets, or elsewhere.

## ■ Cooperatives and Mutual Societies

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[96754\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the oral contribution of the Economic Secretary to the Treasury of 14 December 2021, Official Report column 268WH, if he will publish the correspondence from Liverpool Victoria (LV=); and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

A Freedom of Information request for this correspondence was received and the letter has now been released.

## ■ Culture: Coronavirus

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[94549\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport regarding the introduction of additional measures to support the cultural and creatives industries since the Government's updates on the spread of the omicron covid-19 variant.

**Helen Whately:**

Treasury ministers regularly engage with ministers for the department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), including recently, to hear about the impact of

COVID-19 and how the Government can continue to support the cultural and creative industries particularly affected by the Omicron variant.

Following these discussions, a further £30 million from the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) has been made available for organisations as part of the Chancellor's £1 billion support package announced on 21 December 2021. DCMS have confirmed that this funding will be used to support organisations at risk across the arts, culture and heritage sectors.

Last year the Chancellor announced an unprecedented intervention in the culture sector, announcing nearly £2 billion for the CRF to help protect jobs and cultural organisations across the country. So far more than £1.5 billion has been allocated to around 5,000 individual organisations and sites.

The Government's £400 billion in COVID-19 support over the pandemic will continue to help businesses into spring of this year and we will continue to respond proportionately to the changing path of the virus, as we have done since the start of the pandemic.

#### ■ Fiscal Policy: Scotland

**Ian Murray:** [\[94329\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent progress his Department has made with the Scottish Government on the fiscal framework negotiations.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

In October 2021 we reached agreement with the Scottish Government to jointly commission an independent report that will cover the Block Grant Adjustment arrangements. This independent report will inform a broader review of the Scottish Government's Fiscal Framework later this year.

We are currently working with the Scottish Government to finalise the arrangements for commissioning the independent report.

#### ■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[94441\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide additional support to the hospitality sector during the most recent covid-19 outbreak.

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[94472\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if the Government will provide financial support to the (a) hospitality and (b) culture sectors as levels of covid-19 infection rise.

**Ruth Jones:** [\[94528\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the support required by the hospitality sector in response to the rise in the number of positive omicron covid-19 cases.

**Helen Whately:**

On 21<sup>st</sup> December, the government announced £1 billion of new grant support to protect jobs and businesses in England from the adverse economic impacts of the Omicron variant. This includes targeted support for the hospitality, leisure and cultural sectors in the form of:

- New one-off cash grants of up to £6,000 to support eligible businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors, totalling nearly £700 million.
- Over £100 million of new discretionary funding has been provided to local authorities to support businesses in other sectors, including in the supply chain for the hospitality sector, that are not eligible for these new grants, supplementing around £250 million of unallocated discretionary grant funding already held by local authorities.
- £30 million through the Culture Recovery Fund, to support theatres, museums and other vital cultural institutions through the temporary disruption this winter. This figure will build on nearly £240 million of Culture Recovery Fund grant support already allocated this financial year or currently available for organisations in England to bid for online until the end of January.

The government has also announced that the devolved administrations will receive £860 million of up-front funding, to help them continue their response to Omicron. As the new cash grants are England-only, Barnett consequential will lead to a total of around £150 million for the devolved administrations: £80 million for Scotland, £50 million for Wales, and £25 million for Northern Ireland.

The government also announced that it is reintroducing the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme to help small and medium-sized employers cover the cost of Covid-related sick absences, covering up to two weeks per employee. This applies UK-wide.

HMRC also stand ready to support any business affected by the coronavirus pandemic through its Time to Pay arrangement. As part of this, businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors in particular will be offered the option of a short delay, and payment in instalments, on a case by case basis.

The government is also waiving late filing and late payment penalties for Income Tax Self-Assessment taxpayers, including those in the hospitality and cultural sectors, to support cashflow and ease administrative burdens. Taxpayers will not receive a late filing penalty if they file online by 28 February, and will not receive a late payment penalty if they pay their tax in full or set up a payment plan by 1 April.

The additional funding announced in December is on top of the generous and wide-ranging support package already in place. Businesses in the hospitality, retail and leisure sectors continue to benefit from capped business rates relief at 66% until the next financial year, when a new capped relief of 50% takes effect. Hospitality and tourism businesses also benefit from reduced VAT at 12.5% until the end of March. Businesses in these sectors may also benefit from access to wider economic support,

including the Recovery Loans Scheme and protection from eviction if they are behind on rent on their premises.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we are closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. We will continue to respond appropriately and proportionately to the changing path of the virus.

## ■ Income Tax and Social Security Benefits: Wales

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[98908\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has received representations from the Welsh Government on the impact of receipt of the NHS and social care financial recognition scheme by primary care workers in Wales on income tax liabilities and/or benefit payments.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Frontline health and social care workers make a valuable contribution to our society and we are so grateful for their continued work.

Income Tax is a tax paid on income and is therefore applied to grants and support payments made because of Coronavirus, including the NHS and social care financial recognition scheme.

Receiving a bonus may reduce the amount of support a claimant receives through means-tested benefits such as Universal Credit. This is because if a claimants' earnings increase, they therefore have more money available to support themselves. It is a long-standing principle of means-tested benefits that as a person's earnings increase their Government support decreases.

HM Treasury officials regularly discuss these, and similar issues, with the Welsh Government and other devolved administrations.

## ■ Income Tax: Scotland

**Ian Murray:**

[\[94328\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 23 of Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts, published by the Scottish Fiscal Commission in December 2021, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the £355 million shortfall in income tax receipts to the Scottish Government in the financial year 2026-27.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The agreed Block Grant Adjustment arrangements provide substantial support to help the Scottish Government with its new tax and welfare powers, for example by shielding the Scottish Government from UK-wide impacts. However, there are residual risks as well as rewards in relation to these powers.

While the Scottish Government has tools to manage these risks, the fundamental challenge is to grow the economy in Scotland and therefore the income tax base. The UK Government is committed to building back better and levelling up all parts of the

UK, including in Scotland. We would encourage the Scottish Government to similarly use all its own economic levers – from tax to skills to planning to infrastructure – to help grow Scotland's economy and boost its own income tax receipts in the process.

**Ian Murray:**

**[94331]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential difference between projections and actual Scottish income tax receipts from the fiscal framework mechanisms.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The fiscal framework agreement explicitly included new tools to help the Scottish Government manage the additional volatility in its funding in relation to tax and welfare devolution, including from forecast error.

This includes the creation of the new £700 million Scotland Reserve, which the Scottish Government can use to save receipts that are higher than forecast and drawdown funding when receipts are lower than forecast. The framework also includes the ability, in normal times, to borrow up to £300 million per year in relation to tax and welfare forecast error. Under the terms of the fiscal framework, we have doubled this limit to £600 million per year in 2021-22 and the following two years.

## ■ Liverpool Victoria

**Gareth Thomas:**

**[93698]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will ask the Financial Conduct Authority to require Liverpool Victoria to publish how much they have spent on their efforts to demutualise and sell the business to Bain Capital.

**John Glen:**

The Financial Conduct Authority have advised that the costs associated with the attempted sale of LV= to Bain Capital will be disclosed as part of LV =’s 2021 Annual Report.

**Gareth Thomas:**

**[93699]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will discuss with the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority whether they will review whether the Chair and Chief Executive are still fit and proper persons to be Directors of Liverpool Victoria; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

Assessing the fitness and propriety of individuals in senior positions at financial services firms are a matter for the independent financial services regulators, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA).

The FCA and PRA consider their assessment on an ongoing basis and further information on the policy and its processes can be found here (

<https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/policy/guide-for-insurers.pdf> )



**■ National Science and Technology Council: Finance****Chi Onwurah:** [\[94378\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (a) how much funding the Government provides to the National Science and Technology Council and (b) which budget it comes from.

**Helen Whately:**

At this Spending Review, the government committed to increasing public R&D investment to £20 billion across the UK by 2024-25.

This will flow to individual departments as they set their R&D allocations in due course and will support priorities agreed by the Prime Minister's new National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), such as Quantum Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Bioinformatics and Space technologies.

**■ Red Diesel: Excise Duties****Alexander Stafford:** [\[94572\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of reforms to the tax treatment of red diesel on businesses.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[94573\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what measures he will take to protect critical businesses in the supply chain which are affected by the reforms to the tax treatment of red diesel.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[94574\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of delaying reforms to the tax treatment of red diesel until inflation abates and the effects of the covid-19 outbreak have passed.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[94575\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) a phased withdrawal of the red diesel subsidy over a longer time period and (b) Governmental financial support to facilitate the transition away from diesel for companies.

**Helen Whately:**

The Chancellor confirmed at Spring Budget 2021 that the Government will remove the entitlement to use red diesel from most sectors from April 2022. This will more fairly reflect the negative environmental impact of the emissions they produce, and help to ensure that the tax system incentivises the development and adoption of greener alternatives.

The Government recognised that this would be a significant change for some businesses, and ran a consultation to gather information from affected users on the expected impact of these tax changes and to make sure it had not overlooked any

exceptional reasons why affected sectors should be allowed to continue to use red diesel beyond April 2022.

The Government continues to take its world-leading environmental commitments seriously and remains dedicated to meeting its climate change and wider environmental targets, including improving the UK's air quality. This is why the Government decided that April 2022 is the right time to implement these reforms, as it also gave affected businesses a year to prepare for the changes since they were confirmed at Spring Budget 2021.

To support the development of alternatives that affected businesses can switch to, the Government is at least doubling the funding provided for energy innovation through the new £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio. From that portfolio, the Government announced the £40 million Red Diesel Replacement Competition, which will provide grant funding for projects that develop and demonstrate lower carbon, lower cost alternatives to red diesel for the construction, and mining and quarrying sectors.

As announced at Spring Budget 2021, from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2023, companies can also claim 130% first-year capital allowances on qualifying plant and machinery investments.

#### ■ **Self-employed: Coronavirus**

**Damien Moore:**

**[94512]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has plans to support people who are self-employed during the next stages of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We recognise the impact Omicron and Government guidance is having on businesses and individuals, including the self-employed, which is why on 21 December 2021 we announced £1 billion of new grant support for the hospitality, leisure, and cultural sectors, and reintroduced the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme. This is on top of the existing package of support, in place through to Spring 2022, which includes the Recovery Loan Scheme, business rates relief, VAT reduction, and the ongoing commercial rent moratorium.

The effectiveness of our £400 billion package of interventions since the start of the pandemic, and the strength of the recovery that we have seen from previous waves means the economy is in a different place now. Employee numbers are above February 2020 levels in every part of the country and grew consistently through last year. So, it is right that our economic response in the face of Omicron adapts too and that our support is better targeted at the businesses that need it the most, providing better value for taxpayers and helping the economy to bounce back more quickly.

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has a strong track record of responding quickly, flexibly, and comprehensively in supporting jobs, businesses, individuals, and families when needed. We will continue to respond proportionately to the changing path of the virus.

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[93833\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people subject to the Loan Charge have declared bankruptcy as of 15 December 2021.

**Lucy Frazer:**

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer that was given to PQ UIN 87576 and PQ UIN 87577 on 9 December 2021.

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[93834\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people seeking refunds as a result of the changes made in response to the Morse Review have been refunded by HMRC as of 15 December 2021.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Following Lord Morse's Independent Loan Charge Review, the Government introduced legislation requiring HMRC to establish a scheme to repay relevant Voluntary Restitution elements of disguised remuneration settlements.

These amounts were voluntary payments that taxpayers had agreed to make as part of settlements concluded before changes were made to the scope of the Loan Charge. Individuals and employers had until 30 September 2021 to apply to HMRC for a refund or waiver.

HMRC repays amounts that were paid in disguised remuneration scheme settlements, and/or waives amounts of instalments due that have not yet been paid if certain conditions are met.

As of 17 December 2021, HMRC had processed approximately 1330 applications, of which approximately 925 had received either a repayment, a waiver, or both.

Approximately 405 of the applications processed at that date were either invalid or ineligible.

## ■ Taxation: Carbon Emissions

**Stephen Farry:** [\[93923\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to develop an associated tax strategy as part of his Department's net zero review.

**Helen Whately:**

The Net Zero Review, which was published in October, explored the trade-offs and key issues, such as the likely fiscal implications of the transition, for the UK as it decarbonises. As per the Report's terms of reference, it did not contain policy detail on how sectors will decarbonise, but set out that the Government may need to consider changes to existing taxes to deliver net zero sustainably and consistently with the Government's fiscal strategy.

The UK Emissions Trading scheme and a wide range of taxes, including the Climate Change Levy, Vehicle Excise Duty, and Carbon Price Support rate, are already in

place to encourage businesses and consumers to make greener choices. The Government is committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 and keeps all taxes under review to ensure that they are helping us achieve this goal.

## ■ Taxation: Greater London and Yorkshire and the Humber

**Jon Trickett:**

[94286]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much tax revenue was raised from the (a) Yorkshire and (b) London from (i) income earnings tax, (ii) tax on dividends, (iii) corporation tax and (iv) capital gains tax in each year since 2010.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC publishes statistics on income and tax by region for tax years from the year 2010-2011 onwards here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-and-tax-by-county-and-region-2010-to-2011>

The Office for National Statistics publishes statistics on Corporation Tax by region for tax years from the year 2010 to 2011 onwards here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/articles/countryandregionalpublicsectorfinances/financialyearending2020>

HMRC publishes statistics on Capital Gains Tax by region for tax years from the year 2012- 2013 onwards in Table 5 here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/capital-gains-tax-statistics>

Previous years are in the National Archives.

## ■ Taxation: Voluntary Work

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[94298]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to increase the mileage allowance permitted for volunteer activities in future tax years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government set the Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs) rates to minimise administrative burdens.

Organisations are not required to use the AMAPs rates. Instead, they can agree to reimburse volunteers a different amount that better reflects their volunteers' circumstances. However, tax is charged on any payment received by volunteers which exceeds their out-of-pocket expenses.

This policy is kept under review by the Government.

**■ Treasury: USA**

**Rushanara Ali:** [94387]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who he met on his recent trip to California; and who accompanied him on that trip.

**Rushanara Ali:** [94388]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his recent visit to California was purely for the purposes of conducting official business.

**Rushanara Ali:** [94389]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his recent trip to California (a) began and (b) ended; and whether those dates are different to his original itinerary.

**Rushanara Ali:** [94390]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the dates of his recent (a) outbound and (b) return flights to California were.

**Rushanara Ali:** [94391]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the itemised costs of his recent trip to California.

**Rushanara Ali:** [94392]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, where he stayed on his recent trip to California.

**Helen Whately:**

The Chancellor was in the US on a long-planned business trip. He met with industry leaders from the tech and investment sectors to discuss the global economic recovery, investment in the UK, as well as the latest trends and innovations in the global tech sector.

The Chancellor travelled to San Francisco on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December and departed on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December. The Chancellor returned to the UK earlier than planned.

The remainder of the information will be published in the usual way in the quarterly transparency returns, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>. The next publication is due February 2022.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Coronavirus: Quarantine**

**Stephanie Peacock:** [94466]

To the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential effect of increasing statutory sick pay on compliance with self-isolation measures.

**Chloe Smith:**

The government has put in place support to help individuals to comply with public health advice on self-isolation.

This includes extending Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to those who are sick or self-isolating due to coronavirus. SSP is also now payable from the first day of absence, rather than the fourth, where an employee is sick or self-isolating due to coronavirus.

Alongside this, to ease financial barriers to self-isolating, we are providing the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment. This policy has been extended until the end of March 2022

SSP is just one part of our welfare safety net and our wider government offer to support people in times of need. Where an individual's income is reduced while off work sick and they require further financial support they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance, depending on their personal circumstances.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Compensation**

**Justin Madders:**[\[93777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many consolatory payments were made by her Department for poor service in each month from March 2020; and what the value of those payments was.

**Guy Opperman:**

DWP makes consolatory payments to acknowledge the non-financial impact of DWP maladministration. The information is recorded quarterly. The number of authorised payments and the total amount paid per quarter in 2020/21 is provided in the table. Equivalent data for 2021/22 will be finalised at the end of the financial year.

| DWP CONSOLATORY PAYMENTS 2020-21 |                            |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
|                                  | No. of authorised payments | Amount paid £  |
| Quarter 1                        | 598                        | 67,615         |
| Quarter 2                        | 778                        | 81,306         |
| Quarter 3                        | 1,216                      | 107,050        |
| Quarter 4                        | 1,244                      | 110,069        |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>3,836</b>               | <b>366,040</b> |

*The number and value of special payments authorised in quarter 1 and 2 are significantly lower than quarter 3 and 4. This is because, as part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department redeployed colleagues normally tasked with special payments to support processing regular claims and payments. As staff moved back into their normal duties, and changes were made to our DWP complaints*

*model to prioritise vulnerable claimants who may be at risk, we saw a temporary increase in special payment referrals from mid Q2, while claims in the system were processed.*

## ■ Employment Schemes

**Alison McGovern:**

**[98518]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many sector based work academies have taken place in each (a) country and (b) region of the UK since that programme began.

**Mims Davies:**

Sector-based work academies were first launched in August 2011 in England and January 2012 in Scotland. Regular statistical releases on sector-based work academies, covering participation by those on legacy unemployment benefits, began in 2011 and ended in 2017. These statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/employment-schemes-work-experience-sector-based-work-academy-and-skills-conditionality-starts-to-november-2017>

The scheme was relaunched as 'SWAP' in July 2020 as part of the government's Plan for Jobs. Data for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 shows that as of 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022, there was a total of 127,360 starts to a Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP). The breakdown of these starts by nation and region is displayed in the following tables:

Table 1: SWAP starts by nation

| NATION   | STARTS FY 2020/21 | STARTS FY 2021/22 | TOTAL STARTS |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| England  | 58,310            | 56,760            | 115,070      |
| Scotland | 6,120             | 5,750             | 11,880       |
| Unknown  | 60                | 350               | 410          |
| Total    | 64,500            | 62,860            | 127,360      |

Table 2: SWAP starts by region

| REGION                         | STARTS FY 2020/21 | STARTS FY 2021/22 | TOTAL STARTS |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| West Midlands                  | 5,000             | 4,960             | 9,960        |
| Central, East & North Scotland | 4,340             | 3,990             | 8,330        |
| South & West Scotland          | 1,780             | 1,770             | 3,550        |
| London & Essex                 | 12,950            | 15,380            | 28,340       |



| REGION                | STARTS FY 2020/21 | STARTS FY 2021/22 | TOTAL STARTS |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| North & East Midlands | 7,800             | 7,120             | 14,920       |
| North Central         | 6,960             | 7,060             | 14,020       |
| North East            | 5,550             | 4,570             | 10,110       |
| North West            | 5,340             | 4,550             | 9,890        |
| South East            | 8,200             | 8,190             | 16,390       |
| South West            | 6,510             | 4,940             | 11,450       |
| Unknown               | 60                | 350               | 410          |
| Total                 | 64,500            | 62,860            | 127,360      |

*Note on above: Figures are rounded to the nearest 10; components may not sum due to rounding. These figures reflect the number of starts by claimants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC), Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Income Support (IS).*

#### ■ Employment: Disability

**Ben Lake:**

[\[94493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to reform the Disability Confident Scheme to ensure that employers meet a minimum criteria and are independently assessed before becoming a member of that Scheme.

**Chloe Smith:**

As announced in the National Disability Strategy (NDS), DWP is undertaking a review of the Disability Confident scheme, involving the Business Leaders Group (BLG), Professional Advisers Group (PAG) and other key stakeholders, including representatives from the devolved governments. The review, which began in September 2021, seeks to review and strengthen the scheme overall and in particular levels 2 and 3. Our objective is ensuring it is clear, robust and sufficiently challenging in support of disability employment. The review is due to conclude at the end of the financial year. Following the conclusion of the review, all packs and guidance will be updated and made available via GOV.UK.

#### ■ Employment: Mothers and Pregnancy

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[94447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has plans to establish a specialist advice service run by the Health and Safety Executive for the purposes of delivering advice to (a) employers, (b) employees and (c) local authority officers on risk assessment and management for pregnant women and new mothers.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) already provides [guidance for employers of new or expectant mothers](#) on its web site. HSE's guidance includes recently updated advice and information, including on risk assessments, welfare rights and relevant workplace safety law. While the guidance is predominantly aimed at employers, it includes a section for new and expectant mothers and the content will be equally helpful to others with responsibilities for workplace health and safety.

Anyone who requires further advice on this topic can contact HSE through their [Concerns and Advice](#) service.

■ **Low Pay****Alison McGovern:**[\[96870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the Government plans to respond to the In-work Progression Commission's report entitled Supporting progression out of low pay: a call to action.

**Mims Davies:**

The Government is committed to ensuring everyone, no matter their background, has the opportunity to start, stay and progress in work. We will publish our response to the In-work Progression Commission's report shortly, setting out our approach to supporting people on low pay and helping them to progress in work.

■ **Members: Correspondence****Afzal Khan:**[\[99043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she will respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 11 November 2021 regarding Dr Peter Harrison.

**Afzal Khan:**[\[99044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she will respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 25 November 2021 regarding Chantelle Zerafa.

**Guy Opperman:**

The DWP National Complaints Team have progressed both cases and a full response will be issued week commencing 10 January 2022.

■ **Offshore Industry: Continental Shelf****Alex Cunningham:**[\[94354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2021 to Question 80980 on Offshore Industry: Continental Shelf, what steps she is taking to ensure that staffing levels are not reduced below that required to safely operate installations on the UKCS.

**Chloe Smith:**

The UKCS safety case regime requires all offshore duty holders to demonstrate to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) they can comply with safety legislation. Every UKCS offshore installation has an accepted safety case. HSE has a targeted intervention plan which involves testing the assertions made in safety cases. All duty holders must continue to demonstrate they are operating in compliance with their accepted safety case, and this includes the potential impact of reducing personnel numbers offshore for whatever reason. HSE's interventions have covered duty holders' continued ability to comply with legal requirements irrespective of whatever changes in offshore personnel levels they make.

**Alex Cunningham:**[\[98937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 5 January 2022 to Question 92626, how many planned maintenance shutdowns have been reported to the HSE by operators on the UKCS since 2015; and on what dates those shutdowns were reported.

**Chloe Smith:**

There is no legal requirement for operators on the UK Continental Shelf to report their planned maintenance shutdowns to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). HSE does not collect information on the numbers and timing of planned maintenance shutdowns on an annual basis.

As part of its ongoing interactions with operators on the UKCS, HSE does discuss with them any planned maintenance shutdowns they are considering so that HSE can determine what, if any, regulatory intervention might be required.

**■ Offshore Industry: Coronavirus****Alex Cunningham:**[\[94358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of managing the risk of covid-19 in the workplace on duty holders' safety cases in the offshore oil and gas industry.

**Chloe Smith:**

All installations currently operating on the UKCS have a safety case that has been accepted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Safety cases are required to demonstrate how a duty holder operating an installation complies with the relevant statutory provisions in relation to the hazards created by their work activities. HSE's ongoing offshore intervention plan tests the validity of demonstrations made in those offshore safety cases by identifying failures in compliance and requiring any non-compliance to be addressed. The planned interventions also check on how effectively duty holders are managing the potential safety impact of their responses to COVID19.

**■ Sick Leave**

**Alex Cunningham:** [98939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the 28 days self-certification for illness will be extended beyond 26 January 2022.

**Chloe Smith:**

There is no plan to extend the 28 days self-certification beyond 26 January 2022.

This is a temporary measure to quickly maximise GP capacity to support the coronavirus booster campaign.

**■ Sick Pay**

**Rachael Maskell:** [93799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of raising the level of statutory sick pay.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government previously consulted on Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) reform as part of Health is Everyone's Business. The Government's response to the consultation acknowledged that, while the consultation posed several important questions on the future of SSP which require further consideration, the pandemic was not the right time to introduce changes to the sick pay system.

**Stephanie Peacock:** [94467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the proportion of workers who are not eligible for statutory sick pay.

**Chloe Smith:**

There are around two million employees earning below the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) and who are therefore ineligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

**■ Social Security Benefits: Newport West**

**Ruth Jones:** [99055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the number of households in Newport West affected by the benefit cap.

**David Rutley:**

Statistics for the number of households receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, who were subject to the Benefit Cap, by Parliamentary Constituency (including Newport West), are published every three months and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Solihull

**Julian Knight:**

**[96917]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people were claiming benefits in Solihull constituency in (a) November 2020 and (b) November 2021.

**David Rutley:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The Department does publish Experimental Statistics on Benefit Combinations and the latest available statistics to May 2021, which can be broken down by parliamentary constituency, are available on the Department's Stat-Xplore website:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users of Stat-Xplore is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Statistics for a majority of the individual benefits administered by the Department are available at:

[Statistics at DWP - Department for Work and Pensions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/statistics-at-dwp)

Most of these statistics are available by parliamentary constituency on the [Stat-Xplore website](https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk) and in particular, the statistics for People on Universal Credit are available for both November 2020 and November 2021.

The Department also publishes annual benefit expenditure tables and the latest publication by parliamentary constituency covers 2010/11 to 2020/21 and is available at:

[Benefit expenditure and caseload tables 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/benefit-expenditure-caseload-tables-2021)

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: Newport West

**Ruth Jones:**

**[99057]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of her Department's progress on rectifying state pension underpayments to eligible married women in Newport West.

**Guy Opperman:**

The latest information published by DWP in October 2021 is available on gov.uk and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-pension-underpayments-progress-on-cases-reviewed-to-30-september-2021/state-pension-underpayments-progress-on-cases-reviewed-to-30-september-2021>)

The government does not collect geographical data in relation to State Pension underpayments.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[94284]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit claims were found to be inaccurate since April 2020; and in how many of those cases (a) recovery action has been initiated and (b) an overpayment has been identified.

**David Rutley:**

Our annual Monetary Value of Fraud and Error Estimates 2020/21 (table 5) published May 2021, provide information on the proportion of Universal Credit cases overpaid:

[Fraud and error in the benefit system: financial year 2020 to 2021 estimates - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

It should be noted that many will only have a very small overpayment, as the measurement doesn't distinguish between a very small overpayment and a whole award error, which is considerably rarer. The biggest area of loss from these overpayments is fraud, which includes cases where people exploited our suspension of face-to-face identification checks at the start of the pandemic.

Since April 2020, DWP has referred over one million Universal Credit overpayments for recovery, of which 694k have led to a recovery of money.

**Kate Osamor:**

[94449]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has plans to amend universal credit regulations so that maternity allowance is treated as earned income.

**David Rutley:**

We have no plans to change the way that Maternity Allowance is treated in Universal Credit.

**Royston Smith:**

[96982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many new universal credit claimants with limited capability for work and work-related activities were previously included in their parents' claim for child tax credit with disabled child element in 2021.

**David Rutley:**

The information requested is not available.

## ■ Universal Credit: Personal Income

**Kate Osamor:**

[96990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the results of any impact assessment her Department has conducted on the reintroduction of the universal credit minimum income floor.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department was always clear that the change to the Minimum Income Floor as a result of the coronavirus pandemic was temporary, and that it would be reinstated when appropriate. As the reintroduction of the Minimum Income Floor is a return to an existing policy, the Department does not intend to publish an impact assessment.

**■ Veterans: Employment****John Healey:**[\[96771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many armed forces champions are in post in each job centre district; and how many of those districts are without an armed forces champion.

**Mims Davies:**

DWP has 50 Armed Forces Champions, with at least one in each of our 37 Jobcentre Plus Districts. In addition, there are 11 Armed Forces Leads at group level.

**■ Winter Fuel Payments****Rachael Maskell:**[\[98990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on raising the level of the Winter Fuel Allowance in 2022.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Government is committed to the winter fuel payment and will continue to pay £200 to households with someone of State Pension Age and £300 to households with some aged 80 or over. We pay over 11m winter fuel payments each year at an annual cost of £2bn; this is a significant contribution to winter fuel bills. We keep all of our policies under review however, there are no plans at the current time to increase the level of the winter fuel payment.

Pension Credit also provides invaluable financial support for vulnerable pensioners. Around 1.4 million eligible pensioners across Great Britain receive some £5bn in Pension Credit, which tops up their retirement income and is a passport to other financial help such as support with housing costs, council tax, heating bills and a free TV licence for those over 75.

Local Authorities in England have discretion to design their own bespoke local schemes within the overall parameters of the Household Support Fund, with support primarily focused on food, energy & water bills and wider essentials. Up to 50% of the Fund is available for councils to spend on households without children, including those of State Pension age.

Cold Weather Payments are also available and help vulnerable people in receipt of certain income-related benefits to meet additional heating costs, during periods of unseasonably cold weather between 1 November and 31 March. This includes older people in receipt of Pension Credit.



The Warm Home Discount Scheme provides those in receipt of Pension Credit Guarantee Credit a discount of £140 on their energy bill providing their supplier is part of the scheme.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### EDUCATION

#### ■ School Improvement

**The Minister for School Standards (Mr Robin Walker):**

[\[HCWS527\]](#)

The Department for Education will today publish a Government response to the public consultation on reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded.

The Government response summarises responses and notes that Government will proceed to implementing the proposals consulted on. These are (i) that the local authority school improvement monitoring and brokering grant, forecast to be worth c.£42m in 2022-23 (based on October 2021 funding levels), will be reduced by 50%, (to c.£21m), for financial year 2022-23, prior to full removal in financial year 2023-24; and (ii) that provision will be included in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022 to instead allow local authorities to deduct funding for local authorities' core school improvement activities from maintained school budgets.

These changes should be viewed in the context of Government continuing to deliver year-on-year, real terms per pupil increases to school funding, as the recent spending review invests an additional £4.7bn in the core schools budget by 2024-25, including significant additional funding for high needs. Taking DSG allocations together with the £1.2 bn new Schools Supplementary Grant announced in December 2021, mainstream school budgets are due to see an average 5.8% year-on-year per pupil cash increase in 2022-23, with every local authority forecast to see at least a 4.7% increase per pupil.

I will place a copy of the Government response in the Libraries of both Houses.

### HOME OFFICE

#### ■ Government response to the Protect Duty consultation

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):**

[\[HCWS526\]](#)

Between 26 February and 2 July 2021, the Government consulted on proposals for the Protect Duty, whereby certain venues and organisations would be required to consider terrorist threats and reasonable mitigations to these. Yesterday, the Government published a document outlining the responses to the public consultation.

The consultation sought the views of those organisations and venues potentially within the scope of the Protect Duty, as to how we can work together to develop appropriate security measures to improve public security. It put forward criteria and thresholds for inclusion, and considered how responsible parties for public places could consider threats, and appropriate proportionate mitigating action. It also considered what support would be required to fulfil the requirements of the Duty, and what oversight and sanctions would be appropriate were there to be non-compliance.

There was an excellent response to the consultation with 2,755 responses being received via an online survey or e-mail. There were also over 80 virtual engagement events undertaken with representatives from a wide range of organisations responsible for public places.

There was broad support in the consultation responses that those responsible for public places should take appropriate and proportionate measures to protect the public from attacks, and to prepare their staff to respond appropriately. There were a wide range of views as to who a potential legislative requirement should apply to, and what they should be required to do.

The Government is carefully considering policy proposals in light of the views raised in the consultation, in particular, how a legislative requirement could further improve public security, whilst not placing an undue burden on organisations which are smaller in size or staffed by volunteers, such as places of worship. Legislative proposals will be taken forward when Parliamentary time allows.

A copy of the consultation response document will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.