



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 21 January 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:28 P.M., 21 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Space Technology

Owen Thompson: [\[106786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which aspects of the National Space Strategy his department is responsible for.

George Freeman:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is the Department responsible for co-ordinating civil space policy and strategy across government and co-authored the National Space Strategy with the Ministry of Defence. It is also the sponsoring department of the UK Space Agency and UK Research and Innovation, which are key agencies for the delivery of the National Space Strategy.

BEIS jointly co-chairs the newly established Director-level National Space Board with the Ministry of Defence to oversee and drive delivery of the National Space Strategy's ambitions and commitments across government. The strategy will be delivered jointly by several government departments and with the support of our thriving space sector: businesses, innovators, entrepreneurs, and space scientists.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Working Hours

Chris Stephens: [\[106761\]](#)

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

George Freeman:

Staff at BEIS work a standard 36/37 hour full-time week. Pay and Time Off In Lieu for overtime, and flexitime, are available where agreed and recorded locally. Managers are responsible for monitoring the hours worked by their team members and for addressing any excess hours that are worked on a regular basis.

■ Drax Power Station

Sir Peter Bottomley: [\[103511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make a statement on the decision of S&P Global Dow Jones to remove Drax from its Global Clean Energy Index.

Greg Hands:

The decision of S&P Global Dow Jones to remove Drax from its Global Clean Energy Index is a commercial decision for S&P Global Dow Jones.

The Government only supports biomass usage that complies with strict sustainability criteria.

■ Drax Power Station: Subsidies

Kim Johnson:

[\[103693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what renewable subsidies for burning wood pellets were paid to Drax in each of the last 10 years under the (a) Renewables Obligation and (b) Contracts for Difference scheme.

Greg Hands:

Information is not available on the support given specifically for the generation of electricity from the burning of wood pellets.

The figures in the table below give the value of the support under the Renewables Obligation for generation from all the types of biomass used by Drax.

YEAR	NOTIONAL VALUE OF SUPPORT UNDER THE RENEWABLES OBLIGATION [1]
2011/12	£50.5m
2012/13	£21.3m
2013/14	£181.3m
2014/15	£399.1m
2015/16	£548.1m
2016/17	£547.9m
2017/18	£399.2m
2018/19	£513.3m
2019/20	£508.9m
2020/21	£508.5m[2]

Drax has received support under the Contracts for Difference scheme since 21 December 2016. Payments to individual projects are published by the Low Carbon Contracts Company on their Data Portal ^[3].

[1] Support under the Renewables Obligation is through tradeable certificates. The figures give the notional value of the support, based on Ofgem's certificate report as at 14 January 2022 from their Renewables and CHP Register at:

<https://www.renewablesandchp.ofgem.gov.uk/Public/ReportViewer.aspx?ReportPath=/DatawarehouseReports/CertificatesExternalPublicDataWarehouse&ReportVisibility=1&ReportCategory=2>

[2] Provisional figure as all the certificates for 2020/21 may not have been issued yet.

[3] The Low Carbon Contracts Company's Data Portal is at:

<https://www.lowcarboncontracts.uk/dashboards/cfd/actuals-dashboards/historical-dashboard>

■ Drax Power Station: Timber

Sir Peter Bottomley: [\[103510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the wood burnt in the Drax power station is sourced from the (a) UK and (b) rest of the world.

Greg Hands:

This information is reported by suppliers to OFGEM. The latest dataset can be accessed here: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/biomass-sustainability-dataset-2019-20>.

■ Electricity

Stephen Kinnock: [\[103563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many private wire networks supplying power there are in England as of 13 January 2022.

Greg Hands:

Private wires typically connect electricity generators directly with industrial & commercial demand customers, or act as networks at sites such as ports, airports or business parks.

They are not required to apply or register with the Government or its energy regulator.

■ Energy: Conservation

Rachael Maskell: [\[103600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to ensure that people on low incomes are prioritised for energy efficiency retrofits to help reduce energy costs.

Greg Hands:

The Government created the Energy Company Obligation scheme for larger energy suppliers to install energy-efficiency and heating measures to the homes of people on low incomes. It has delivered over 3 million measures in approximately 2.3 million homes up to October 2021.

■ Energy: Housing**Rachael Maskell:** [\[103591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding he has allocated to domestic energy transition (a) in each of the last five years and (b) for each of the next five years.

Greg Hands:

Government spending is set out in the Budget and the BEIS Annual Report and Accounts.

■ Energy: Meters**Helen Morgan:** [\[103713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure homes in areas with poor mobile signal can access energy smart meters.

Greg Hands:

Second generation smart meters use a dedicated national smart metering communications network, which deploys a variety of technologies to deliver connectivity to premises. These include cellular mobile technology, wireless mesh radio, and long-range radio.

■ Energy: Prices**Rachael Maskell:** [\[103598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that people who pay for energy using a prepayment meter are not paying more for energy than people with other payment arrangements.

Greg Hands:

Supplier licence conditions, enforced by independent regulator Ofgem, state that the differences in price between payment methods for energy, including by prepayment meter, must reflect the cost to the supplier of that payment method. The energy price cap protects prepayment meter customers and ensures they pay a fair price for their energy.

■ Fuel Poverty**Rachael Maskell:** [\[103595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will undertake a review of the impact of fuel poverty.

Greg Hands:

Over the past 10 years fuel poverty rates have gradually declined from 22% in 2010. The number of households estimated as in fuel poverty fell by 1.6 million (34%) between 2010 and 2019.

In February 2021, the Government published the fuel poverty strategy 'Sustainable Warmth' which outlines its strategic approach. It provides an overview of the support available to low income and vulnerable households through energy efficiency schemes, such as the Local Authority Delivery scheme and the Energy Company Obligation, and energy bill support, including the Warm Home Discount.

Fuel poverty statistics, including fuel poverty estimates for 2021 and 2022, will be published in due course.

■ Help to Grow Scheme

Seema Malhotra: [\[105538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses have participated in the Help to Grow: Management and the Help to Grow: Digital schemes.

Paul Scully:

Since courses began in July 2021, 1,270 business leaders have been onboarded and 402 have completed the Help to Grow: Management programme.

The programme is a 12-week course designed to equip businesses with the knowledge and skills they need to boost performance and reach their full growth potential.

Help to Grow: Digital launched on 20 January 2022 and aims to support up to 100,000 small businesses with online advice and a discount for software costs.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Rachael Maskell: [\[103599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with energy companies on the potential merits of decarbonising the homes of people on low incomes.

Greg Hands:

The Energy Company Obligation scheme is an obligation that the Government has placed on larger energy suppliers to install energy efficiency and heating measures to low income and vulnerable households in England, Scotland and Wales. The Government is consulting on extending the Energy Company Obligation scheme from 2022-2026 and expanding it to £1 billion per year. Energy companies were consulted during this process and the Government will issue a full response in due course.

■ Night-time Economy

Colleen Fletcher: [\[106721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support businesses in the night-time economy in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

Paul Scully:

The Government's response to the Omicron variant of COVID-19 enabled businesses across the night-time economy, including nightclubs, to remain open over the holiday period as Plan B measures were introduced in England.

Recognising the impact of Omicron, the Chancellor announced a further £1 billion of support including one-off grants for hospitality, accommodation and leisure businesses and over £100 million discretionary funding for Local Authorities to support other businesses. Eligible businesses can also access an additional £30 million available through the Culture Recovery Fund. Over the course of the pandemic, the Government has provided £400 billion of businesses support.

The success of our vaccine and booster programme is now allowing us to revert to Plan A. As a result, the Government is no longer asking people to work from home and, as of 27 January, nightclubs and events venues are no longer required by law to check visitors' NHS COVID Pass. They can still choose to use the NHS COVID Pass on a voluntary basis.

■ Post Offices: ICT**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[106642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the £58 million paid in damages to those effected by the Post Office Horizon scandal, will be paid for by (a) Fujitsu or (b) the public purse.

Paul Scully:

The £57.75m 2019 Group Litigation Order settlement was paid entirely from Post Office Ltd resources.

■ Retail Trade: Job Security**Navendu Mishra:**[\[106907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support retail jobs in the context of the increasing automation of services by retailers.

Paul Scully:

Our Plan for Growth acknowledges skills as a pillar for growth. This department is working in partnership with the Department for Education (DfE) to ensure we deliver against the skills pillar of the Plan for Growth through successful implementation on key policies from within the Skills for Jobs white paper, including promoting the adult skills offer to help upskill and reskill the existing workforce. This White Paper is focused on giving people the skills they need, in a way that suits them, so they can get great jobs in sectors the economy needs and boost this country's productivity.

The retail sector has been undergoing a period of transition for some time, including many retailers investing in technology and innovation and adapting their business models to meet different consumer demands. We recognise the challenges this brings and are working with the sector, including through the industry-led Retail

Sector Council, to address these challenges. The Council has identified skills and employment as two of their priority areas of work as part of this and government continues to work closely with the Council to consider the future needs of the sector.

Additionally, the government's new 'Help to Grow: Digital' scheme will help up to 100,000 UK SMEs over three years to adopt digital technologies that are proven to increase firm-level productivity by learning new skills, reaching new customers and boosting profits.

■ **Timber: Power Stations**

Kim Johnson:

[\[103692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of (a) the number of trees felled in the US in 2021 to provide fuel for UK power stations and (b) the number of trees which were replanted in the same forests.

Greg Hands:

The Government does not hold this information. In accordance with the government's strict sustainability criteria, where biomass is sourced from forests, it needs to be sourced from areas managed in a way that is consistent with sustainable forest management practices, irrespective of the sourcing location.

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Cabinet Office: Diaries**

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[106876\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish in full his predecessor's Ministerial diary for 20 May 2020.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[106892\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish in full the Prime Minister's diary for 20 May 2020.

Michael Ellis:

Ministers regularly meet departmental officials and external stakeholders. Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published quarterly and can be found on GOV.UK.

■ **Cabinet Office: Written Questions**

Angela Rayner:

[\[106716\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to answer Question 90429, on 10 Downing Street, tabled by the hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne on 9 December 2021.

Michael Ellis:

I responded to the Rt. Hon Member's Parliamentary Question, 90429, on 20 January.

DEFENCE

■ **Afghanistan: Intelligence Services**

Dan Jarvis: [\[106706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which private providers were involved in the delivery of training for the National Directorate of Security.

James Heappey:

UK Armed Forces supported NATO's Resolute Support Mission that provided training, advice and assistance to the Afghan security forces and institutions. I am not aware of any private providers that delivered training to the National Directorate of Security on the Ministry of Defence's behalf.

Dan Jarvis: [\[106707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department (a) paid and (b) supplemented the National Directorate of Security in Afghanistan over the last 10 years.

James Heappey:

UK Armed Forces supported NATO's Resolute Support Mission that provided training, advice and assistance to the Afghan security forces and institutions.

■ **Army: Stonewall**

Tim Loughton: [\[106613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2022 to Question 103509 on Ministry of Defence: Stonewall, if he will publish a detailed breakdown of the £17,181 that the British Army spent on Stonewall in the 2017-18 financial year.

Tim Loughton: [\[106614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2022 to Question 103509 on Ministry of Defence: Stonewall, if he will publish a detailed breakdown of the £11,226 that the Ministry of Defence Centre D&I spent on Stonewall in the 2018-19 financial year.

Leo Docherty:

The requested information is set out below:

British Army :

Prior to July 2019, records on expenditure on Stonewall were not centrally held. It has not, therefore, been possible to provide a detailed breakdown of the money spent.

Financial Year 2017-18 :

COSTS (£)	PURPOSE
2,500.00	Organisation Membership

COSTS (£)	PURPOSE
14,681.00	Information not held

MOD Centre Diversity and Inclusion Directorate :

Financial Year 2018-19:

Stonewall Membership: £3,000.00

Stonewall speaker fee: £240.00

Stonewall Allies Training programme: £6,300.00

Stonewall Workplace Conference: £1,686.00

■ **C17 Aircraft: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[106656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the TDEL costs of the UK's lease agreement with Boeing for four C-17 Globemasters.

Jeremy Quin:

The RAF leased four C-17 from 2001 to 2007. The MOD bought out the lease in 2008 to bring those four aircraft into the Departmental fleet. The lease was announced in 2000. Forecast costs were also published through Major Projects Reports during that period which forecast the cost of the initial lease at £769 million against an approved cost at Main Gate of £785 million.

However, the lease deal pre-dates the creation of DE&S and the full introduction of Resource Based Accounting, therefore the actual cost data and TDel is no longer held centrally.

■ **Military Aid: Ambulance Services**

Stephen Kinnock: [\[105569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which ambulance services are receiving military support; and how many military personnel are deployed in each region and nation of the UK to support ambulance services.

James Heappey:

As at 17 January 2022, Defence is providing the following support to ambulance services through the Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) system:

- England:
- North West - 170 Service personnel.
- South Central - 32 Service personnel.
- East Midlands - 134 Service personnel.
- Yorkshire - 112 Service personnel.

- Scotland - 96 Service personnel.
- Wales - 313 Service personnel.

■ **Military Aid: Grampian NHS Board**

David Duguid: [\[105689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of deploying armed forces personnel to support NHS Grampian in January 2022.

James Heappey:

For January 2022, the charge for Defence support to NHS Grampian is estimated to be approximately £180,000. Defence personnel are currently deployed to NHS Grampian where they are providing acute medical support.

■ **Military Aid: York**

Rachael Maskell: [\[105625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether armed forces personnel will be embedded in public health services in York other than ambulance and vaccine delivery services.

James Heappey:

The Armed Forces are currently providing Service personnel to support the Yorkshire Ambulance Service and vaccinator support to the York area. Requests for further support in other roles will be considered through the Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) process in the normal way.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Space Technology**

Owen Thompson: [\[106791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which aspects of the National Space Strategy his Department is responsible for.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is the Department responsible for co-ordinating civil space policy and strategy across Government and co-authored the National Space Strategy with the Ministry of Defence. It is also the sponsoring department of the UK Space Agency and UK Research and Innovation, which are key agencies for the delivery of the National Space Strategy.

BEIS jointly co-chairs the newly established Director-level National Space Board with the Ministry of Defence to oversee and drive delivery of the National Space Strategy's ambitions and commitments across Government. The strategy will be delivered jointly by several Government Departments and with the support of our thriving space sector: businesses, innovators, entrepreneurs, and space scientists.

■ Ministry of Defence: Written Questions

Tim Loughton: [\[106612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answers of 18 January 2022 and 1 November 2021 to Questions 103509 and 61052 on Ministry of Defence: Stonewall, what steps he is taking to help ensure that figures provided in response to Parliamentary questions are (a) up to date and (b) accurate.

Tim Loughton: [\[106615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2022 to Question 103509 on Ministry of Defence: Stonewall, and with reference to his Department's responses to Freedom of Information requests reference FOI2021/02580 and FOI2021/02402 in April 2021, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure (a) accuracy of and (b) consistency between (i) answers to Parliamentary questions and (ii) responses to Freedom of Information requests.

Leo Docherty:

Ministry of Defence (MOD) staff do the best they can within the given time available to supply necessary information for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Parliamentary Questions (PQs). Staff strive to ensure the information supplied is as accurate as possible and, where inaccuracies or inconsistencies are later found, the Department will set the record straight at the earliest opportunity. It must be recognised that requests for large data sets, over many years, present a significant challenge to locate, retrieve, and extract information, especially where such data is not collated or held centrally and is dispersed among different branches of Defence. In cases where FOI/PQs are made for historic information before the advent of widespread electronic filing, this task is made yet harder where paper records need to be manually interrogated. This can be further complicated by the time constraints imposed by the nature of such requests. Where time is limited, in the case of Named Day PQs staff typically have around one working day or less, it is not always possible for staff to ensure all records are thoroughly reviewed and the total accuracy of the data supplied. In such cases, estimates may be given. In the case of Question 61052, a Named Day Question, MOD staff produced the best estimate possible within the time constraint the question imposed. Having had the time to conduct a more thorough search and analysis in the time since, MOD staff were able to supply revised and more detailed information in response to Question 103509.

■ York: Army

Rachael Maskell: [\[106771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to help ensure the presence of the Army in York after 2028.

Rachael Maskell: [\[106772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what opportunities there will be to relocate parts of the armed forces to York after 2028.

James Heappey:

As part of delivering future Army capability and optimising the Defence Estate, the hon. Member will be aware that Regular Army units, including Headquarters 1 (UK) Division, will relocate to Catterick Garrison by 2029.

The Department remains committed to keeping an Army Reserve presence in the city.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **Broadband: Optical Fibres**

Chi Onwurah: [\[106696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the (a) cost, (b) environmental and (c) coverage implications of the duplication of fibre networks on new build development sites.

Chi Onwurah: [\[106697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what analysis her Department has undertaken on the (a) level of carbon emissions and (b) cost to consumers that result from the duplication of fibre networks on new build development sites.

Julia Lopez:

It is a government priority to ensure that new build homes have access to gigabit-capable connections. We have a [technical consultation](#) underway on proposed new legal requirements for developers along with associated draft statutory guidance; this closes on 28 February.

As a result of the government's approach to encourage competition in the broadband market, over 65% of premises can today access gigabit-capable networks - up from just one in ten in November 2019. The sector has also benefited from record levels of investment.

Infrastructure sharing can reduce the cost and environmental burden of overbuild. We have taken a number of steps to encourage the sharing of passive infrastructure in the UK. This includes launching a [Review of the Access to Infrastructure Regulations](#). The Government also welcomes [Ofcom's Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review](#), which encourages competitive build in the majority of the UK.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Working Hours**

Chris Stephens: [\[106757\]](#)

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

Julia Lopez:

Staff at DCMS work a standard 36 or 37 hour week and paid overtime is allowed on an exceptional basis in priority areas. No members of staff have opted off of the Working Time Directive, and we do not have any workers in the categories set out in Regulation 9 of the Working Time Regulations 1998 at this time.

Staff are encouraged to discuss their working hours with their Line Manager and, where they may be working beyond their standard hours, to record their hours of work with managers keeping oversight. A flexi time sheet template is available for individuals to use to record their hours; records are not held centrally and staff are free to retain them for as long as useful.

■ Horse Racing**Allan Dorans:**[\[104404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will undertake an impact assessment of implications for the British horse racing industry of measures proposed in the forthcoming White Paper on gambling.

Chris Philp:

The Gambling Act Review is wide-ranging and aims to ensure that the regulation of gambling is fit for the digital age. We will publish a white paper setting out our conclusions and next steps in the coming months, with appropriate consideration of impacts being made at all stages.

■ Social Media: Safety**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[106725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure social media platforms take a proactive approach to tackling online harm.

Chris Philp:

The Online Safety Bill will usher in a new age of accountability for tech companies and for the first time they will be accountable to an independent regulator to keep their users, particularly children, safe from online harms.

The new regulatory regime will give them clear legal responsibilities to understand the risk of harm to users and put in place proactive systems and processes to improve user safety. In scope companies must take action to prevent the proliferation of illegal content and activity online and ensure that children who use their services are not exposed to harmful or inappropriate content. The biggest tech companies must also take action on legal content that may harm adults. We expect companies to take steps now to improve safety, and not wait for the legislation.

We are also taking action to protect users now. For example, DCMS has published safety by design guidance and a 'one-stop shop' for companies on protecting children online.

EDUCATION**■ Adoption**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[103626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how the £7 million made available in the 2021 Spending Review to improve adoption support will be spent; and what proportion will be allocated to improving the letterbox contact system.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[103627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to involve people with lived experience in the Adoption Strategy review of contact arrangements between adopted children and birth parents.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[103628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the support available to adoptive families and birth parents engaging in letterbox contact.

Will Quince:

Local authorities have a legal duty to provide a comprehensive adoption service.

This specifically includes assistance, including mediation services, in relation to arrangements for contact between an adoptive child and a natural parent, natural sibling, former guardian or a related person of the adoptive child.

As set out in our recently published 'Adoption Strategy: achieving excellence everywhere' we will be working with local authorities and regional adoption agencies to improve support around contact with birth relatives, including letterbox contact.

This will include working closely with birth parents and those with lived experiences.

More details on how funding from the Spending Review will be used will be confirmed in due course.

■ Department for Education: Working Hours

Chris Stephens: [\[106758\]](#)

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

Michelle Donelan:

The department does not centrally monitor working hours for any employee but requires all employees, regardless of work location, to keep an accurate record of the hours they work. This must be retained by the employee for 3 years and will be reviewed by their line manager on a regular basis.

■ Disability: Children**Alexander Stafford:**[\[104413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his polices of the backlog in Education, Health and Care Plan assessments for disabled children.

Will Quince:

The department does not collect data on the backlog of educational, health and care plan (EHCP) assessments. However, the department uses data to monitor and assess implications of departmental policy through local authority performance and has been supporting local authorities to meet their statutory duties for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including by providing challenge and support to those local authorities where there are long-standing delays.

Due to circumstances relating to the COVID-19 outbreak, the department is carrying out monthly surveys of local authority performance. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) continue with their full inspection programme and our team of SEND advisers and colleagues in NHS England are continuing to provide support and challenge to help improve performance.

Depending on the underlying issues that each authority faces, such as those relating to EHCP assessments, we commission specialist and regional support from our delivery partners or facilitate peer to peer support. The department has commissioned the CQC and Ofsted, with the support of the Department of Health and Social Care, to develop a new area SEND inspection framework. We will ensure the new framework aligns with any recommendations from the SEND Review, proposals from which will be published in a green paper for public consultation in the first 3 months of this year. It remains our priority that local areas provide the right services at the right time for children and young people with SEND.

Alexander Stafford:[\[104414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on supporting disabled children and families to recover from the covid-19 outbreak.

Will Quince:

The department continues to work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on supporting disabled children and their families. Since June 2020, we have announced £4.9 billion to support education recovery. This includes support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our recovery programmes have the flexibility to support those pupils most in need, including children with SEND. We have also provided additional funding for those interventions that the evidence tells us will have a significant impact on high quality tutoring and great teaching.

We have consistently prioritised children who attend specialist settings by providing additional uplifts both in the 2020 Catch-up Premium and in the 2021 Recovery

Premium, and providing the flexibility to deliver provision based on pupils' needs. Specialist settings also received an uplift to deliver the summer schools programme.

We have ensured that settings have the flexibility to target this to meet the needs of their pupils and students. In addition, the department continues to work hard to ensure children and young people are given access to therapies and equipment so that the right support is in place for all children and families, including addressing the backlog in assessments.

We are providing over £42 million in financial year 2021-22 to continue funding projects to support children with SEND. This investment will ensure that specialist organisations around the country can continue to help strengthen local area performance, support families, and provide practical support to schools and colleges. This includes £27.3 million to the Family Fund in financial year 2021-22 to support over 60,000 families on low incomes raising children and young people with disabilities or serious illnesses.

■ Higher Education: Coronavirus

Matt Western:

[\[104391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans are in place to charge Higher Education providers for access to the reserved stream of covid-19 testing kits intended for education providers.

Michelle Donelan:

There are no plans to charge higher education providers to access government supplied LFD test kits. These LFD test kits continue to be provided free of charge via the government's higher education asymptomatic testing programme, and providers should continue to order tests for their staff and students via their usual route, in line with public health advice.

■ Initial Teacher Training Market Review

Stephen Morgan:

[\[103668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many providers his Department plans to accredit as part of the proposed changes to the delivery of Initial Teacher Training in the Market Review.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department invited new and existing providers to apply for accreditation under the process announced in the government's response to the initial teacher training (ITT) review and there has been a considerable level of interest shown.

We anticipate receiving a diverse range of applications, reflecting the different types of ITT provision that exist currently. Each application will be assessed on its individual merits and so there is no set number of providers that the department aims to award accreditation. Our overall priority is to ensure that there are sufficient high-quality ITT providers and places to meet demand across the country.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[106691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) primary and (b) secondary pupils are receiving tutoring or academic mentoring from National Tutoring Programme tuition partners.

Mr Robin Walker:

The national tutoring programme aims to deliver up to 2 million tuition courses this year, and up to 90 million tuition hours by the 2024/25 academic year across the programme's 3 pillars.

The programme is currently on course to deliver its objectives. Schools know their pupils best and have the freedom to enrol those who will benefit most. So far, an estimated 230,000 courses have been started by pupils through the school-led tutoring pillar, an estimated 20,000 with academic mentors and an estimated 52,000 with tuition partners. As a course consists of 15 tuition hours, this means pupils who need it most will be receiving millions of hours of high quality support.

We do not currently publish statistics by school phase but will consider doing so going forward.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Damien Moore:

[\[103677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional plans are in place to support schools that have been impacted by teacher absences as a result of the Omicron variant of covid-19.

Mr Robin Walker:

Our priority is to maintain high quality face-to-face education for all children and young people.

There are measures in place to help break the chains of COVID-19 transmission, minimise disruption to education and limit absences. These include regular testing, improving ventilation in classrooms and continuing the booster rollout for adults and vaccinations for secondary age pupils.

The department has reintroduced the COVID-19 workforce fund to provide financial support to eligible schools and colleges for additional staff absence costs incurred from 22 November until the February spring half term in 2022. The fund is available to support schools and colleges facing the greatest staffing and funding pressures to continue to deliver high quality face-to-face education to all pupils.

The department has also called for ex-teachers to return to the classroom and, on 12 January, it published initial data from a sample of supply agencies gathered between 20 December 2021 and 7 January 2022. This showed that 485 former teachers have signed up with supply agencies, and over 100 Teach First alumni have also expressed interest in returning to the classroom.

Given the size of the sample, the true number of sign-ups since the call was launched will be larger. Full details of the data release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/number-of-ex-teachers-joining-the-school-workforce-2021-to-2022>.

We have also published sector-led case studies that illustrate practical ways in which schools can work to remain open in the face of staff shortage. Our priority is that all schools offer in-person learning for all pupils. This might involve hybrid lessons, remote teaching, streaming teaching to more than one class at a time, combining face-to-face classes, timetable solutions and using recorded teaching.

■ Skills Bootcamps

Mr Toby Perkins:

[106680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what destination data his Department collates on employment outcomes for people who are (a) recently unemployed and (b) long-term unemployed who undertake training at a Skills Bootcamp in each subject; and if he will publish that data.

Mr Toby Perkins:

[106681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the long-term outcomes for those who are (a) in employment or (b) unemployed and who undertake training at a Skills Bootcamp in each subject.

Alex Burghart:

Skills Bootcamps are open to adults aged 19 and over who are either in work, self-employed, recently unemployed or returning to work after a break. This training is not aimed at adults who are long-term unemployed.

We have now published the outcome data from wave 1 of Skills Bootcamps, delivered between September 2020 and 31 March 2021. This outcome data shows that Skills Bootcamps are supporting individuals to access new opportunities and are helping them progress in their careers. The outcome data is available here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/skills-bootcamps-outcomes#releaseHeadlines-summary>.

Between September 2020 and March 2021, over 2,000 participants completed a Skills Bootcamp, of which at least 54% of individuals achieved a positive outcome as a result. A positive outcome is defined as a new full or part time job or apprenticeship, a new role, or increased responsibilities with their current employer or, for the self-employed, access to new opportunities.

The department has commissioned process and impact evaluation for wave 2 of Skills Bootcamps, which is currently being delivered in financial year 2021-22. Data on wave 2 and future wave 3 course completions will provide further evidence and learning to inform future delivery. This data will provide the same breakdown of outcomes as the data that we already published from wave 1. We are working with

providers in wave 2 of the programme to ensure they provide consistent and accurate data.

■ **Social Services: Children**

Alexander Stafford: [\[104412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help support local authorities to address backlogs in disabled children's services.

Alexander Stafford: [\[104415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure every parent carer can get the respite care and short breaks they need.

Alexander Stafford: [\[104416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the backlog in disabled children's social care services.

Alexander Stafford: [\[104417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has of the potential merits of increasing funding for disabled children's early intervention services.

Will Quince:

I refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Rother Valley, to the answer I gave on 3 December 2021 to Question [82126](#).

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[106872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the findings of the Disabled Children's Partnership polling released in January 2022, what recent progress he has made on tackling unmet need in disabled children's social care.

Will Quince:

Social care services, including those for disabled children and their families, are provided on the basis of an individual assessment of each child and family's needs.

The department has not conducted an assessment of children's social care services in light of the Disabled Children's Partnership polling released in January 2022. The government believes it is right for local authorities, who know their areas' needs best, to determine what services are required locally, including disabled children's social care services.

This year councils have access to £51.3 billion to deliver their core services, including a £1.7 billion grant for social care. The government has also given over £6 billion in unringfenced funding directly to councils to support them with the immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 spending pressures, including children's services.

The department will continue to work with other government departments, including the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to ensure the needs of children's services are reflected.

In addition to statutory services, the department is providing £27.3 million to the Family Fund in the 2021-22 financial year to support over 60,000 families on low incomes raising children and young people with disabilities or serious illnesses. Grants can be used for a range of purposes, including family breaks.

■ Special Educational Needs: Standards

Charlotte Nichols:

[103690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of SEND children who are not in schools that adequately meet their needs; and what steps his Department is taking to improve educational provision for SEND children.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not held. However, the department publishes data on the number of children with special education needs and education, health and care (EHC) plans awaiting provision once a year. The department's last published figure in May 2021 for the number of children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) who have an EHC plan who are not in schools and are awaiting provision was 1,460. Further information is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>.

The department has recently announced an additional £2.6 billion over the next 3 years for school places for children and young people with SEND. This is more than tripling current capital funding levels to over £900 million by the 2024-25 financial year.

The department is conducting a review of the SEND system and will publish proposals for public consultation as a green paper in the first 3 months of this year.

■ Students: Loans

Matt Western:

[104384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2022 to Question 93857 on Students: Loans, what the financial value is of the 136 cases of full or partial loss to fraud relating to Student Finance England loans.

Matt Western:

[104385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2022 to Question 93857 on Students: Loans, what percentage of the 136 loans given out fraudulently are of the total number of loans provided by Student Finance England in the 2020-21 financial year.

Michelle Donelan:

The financial value of the 136 cases of full or partial loss to fraud relating to Student Finance England loans in the 2020-21 financial year is £963,806. The percentage of the 136 loans given out fraudulently out of the total number of loans provided by Student Finance England in the 2020-21 financial year is around 0.01%.

■ Teachers: Voluntary Work

Stephen Morgan: [\[103667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of teaching volunteers that are required to cover staff absences.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department is extremely grateful to all the teachers who are responding to our call to return temporarily to the classroom. Every single teacher that responds can make a vital difference to children and young people by keeping them in face-to-face education.

The campaign aims to further bolster the many supply staff that are already working in our schools and who have been supporting schools throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

On 12 January, the department published initial data from a sample of supply agencies gathered between 20 December 2021 and 7 January 2022. This showed that 485 former teachers have signed up with supply agencies, and over 100 Teach First alumni have also expressed interest in returning to the classroom.

Given the size of the sample, the true number of sign-ups since the call was launched will be larger. Full details of the data release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/number-of-ex-teachers-joining-the-school-workforce-2021-to-2022>.

This call for ex-teachers is just one of many measures we have in place to support our school workforce mitigate the challenges of COVID-19, including the reintroduction of the COVID-19 workforce fund, which we extended to the February half-term.

■ Turing Scheme: Finance

Matt Western: [\[104386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the financial value of the two bids submitted to his Department for the Turing Scheme.

Michelle Donelan:

On 11 January 2022, in response to PQ [94480](#), the department confirmed that the value of the successful bid was £6,271,155. The value of the unsuccessful bid will not be published as this information is commercially sensitive.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Cats: Tagging

Daniel Zeichner: [\[106734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when legislation requiring the compulsory microchipping of cats is planned to come into effect.

Jo Churchill:

We plan to lay a new set of regulations in autumn 2022 which will update the current dog microchipping requirements and introduce compulsory cat microchipping. These may be made soon afterwards and then come into effect after any transition period has ended.

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

Coastal Erosion**Sir Greg Knight:**[\[106649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what further steps he proposes to take to (a) mitigate the effect of coastal erosion and (b) assist those communities affected.

Rebecca Pow:

Between 2021 and 2027, we have doubled our overall investment in flooding and coastal erosion to £5.2 billion. This will ensure a further 336,000 properties are better protected from flooding and coastal erosion.

An additional £200 million will be invested in the Innovative Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme. This is already helping 25 local areas over six years to take forward wider innovative actions that improve their resilience to flooding and coastal erosion.

Local authorities are best placed to understand their coastline and to develop the most appropriate approaches to manage risk through Shoreline Management Plans and their local planning policies. These plans provide a high level, long term policy framework to manage local risks from coastal change over a 100-year timeline.

The Environment Agency is working with coastal authorities on a £1 million refresh of Shoreline Management Plans to ensure that they are up to date, using the best evidence in their recommendations and focus attention on priority areas for investment and adaptation.

As set out in our Flood and Coastal Erosion Policy Statement we will be reviewing the current mechanisms, including legal powers, which coastal erosion risk management authorities can use to manage the coast. We will also be exploring the availability and role of financial products or services that can help people or businesses to achieve a managed transition of property and infrastructure away from areas at very high risk of coastal erosion.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Working Hours**Chris Stephens:**[\[106759\]](#)

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

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Easington on 17 January 2022, PQ UIN [102586](#).

■ **Fisheries****Paul Girvan:**[\[101812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) allocating a share of publicly-owned fishery to recreational sea anglers and (b) setting aside an area within 0 to 3 miles from commercial exploitation for those anglers.

Victoria Prentis:

Regarding (a) in England, recreational sea angling is unlicensed and therefore anglers are not subject to quota allocations.

The value of recreational sea angling is recognised in England via the inclusion of 'recreational sea fishing' in the Fisheries Act 2020. The Act contains a requirement to develop fisheries management plans, ensuring the integration of recreational sea angling into wider fisheries management.

Regarding (b) there is no proposal to set aside specific areas for recreational sea angling. However, consultation on a number of potential Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) in English waters is planned for this spring. As part of this work, we will continue to work with recreational fishers to explore opportunities for recreational or low impact zones around HPMAs.

■ **Horticulture: Environment Protection****Peter Dowd:**[\[106741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the ornamental horticulture and landscaping industry's potential to support the UK's environmental targets.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra regularly meets with the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group, who recently published their 'Unlocking green growth: A plan from the ornamental horticulture & landscaping industry'. This ambitious report sets out the industry's potential contributions to delivering the 25 Year Environment Plan, and how it can help to underwrite the environmental challenges facing the UK.

In the past year £1 million has been made available through the Tree Production Innovation Fund to encourage adoption of new technologies and ways of working, and a further £2.6 million has been made available in capital grants to support climate and disease resilience and expand nursery capacity. We are also exploring new data sharing practices to help better plan for supply and demand in the sector. This will support nurseries and seed suppliers to produce the right stock at the right time.

We will be publishing a public consultation on proposed long-term targets to be set under the Environment Act 2021. During the consultation we will be interested in hearing the views of all interested sectors, and the delivery of targets will require actions across the economy.

■ Meat: Imports

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[96852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of the amount of (a) pork, (b) beef, (c) chicken and (d) lamb consumed in the UK is imported.

Victoria Prentis:

In tonnage terms, imported pigmeat accounted for 53% of UK supply in 2020. For beef and veal the equivalent figure was 29%, for poultrymeat 24% and for mutton and lamb 28%. Imports of meat in composite products such as ready meals are not accounted for. UK supply excludes home production that is exported.

■ Skips

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[103517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department takes to help ensure that skips are emptied at official recycling and landfill sites.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[103518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department takes to monitor (a) the number of skips in operation and (b) where the contents of those skips are disposed.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[103519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how the use and disposal of skips is regulated by his Department.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[103520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans to review and update regulations on the use of skips by organisations and individuals.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[103521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many incidents of illegal dumping of waste from skips were recorded in 2020-21.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[103522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to help reduce illegal waste disposal by (a) organisations and (b) people who hire skips.

Jo Churchill:

Waste site operators and anyone who transports waste must hold an appropriate environmental permit or registration, which can impose conditions on operators about how waste is handled. Today we are launching a consultation on the reform and strengthening of the waste carrier, broker, and dealer regime, and on introducing mandatory digital waste tracking. Taken together, these two reforms will significantly strengthen the powers available to tackle rogue waste operations.

A detailed breakdown of the flytipping incidents reported by local authorities available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-in-england>. While illegal dumping specifically from skips is not separately recorded flytipping incidents can be filtered by size.

More widely we have given the Environment Agency £60 million extra to tackle waste crime since 2014 on top of the wider funding it receives from Defra. We have also set up the Joint Unit for Waste Crime to disrupt serious and organised waste crime and reduce its impact on the economy, the environment and local communities.

■ Tree Planting**Peter Dowd:****[106742]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to expand its existing tree nursery production scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

In the England Trees Action Plan the Government committed to provide funding to support UK public and private sector nurseries and seed suppliers to enhance the quantity, quality, diversity and biosecurity of domestic tree production. Our interventions will help the sector to modernise existing facilities and explore innovative technologies and practices. This is necessary to create a resilient, healthy, and genetically diverse planting stock.

In the past year £1 million has been made available through the Tree Production Innovation Fund to encourage adoption of new technologies and ways of working, and a further £2.6 million has been made available in capital grants to support climate and disease resilience and expand nursery capacity. We are also exploring new data sharing practices to help better plan for supply and demand in the sector. This will support nurseries and seed suppliers to produce the right stock at the right time.

We continue to work to monitor our interventions and see how the nursery sector can best be supported.

Peter Dowd:**[106743]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to consult on the introduction of a statutory tree planting target.

Rebecca Pow:

As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, we will explore a long-term statutory tree target in England as part of the suite of targets to be introduced using powers in the Environment Act.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE■ **Abu Dhabi: Terrorism****Mr David Jones:**[\[106671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the large number of British citizens resident in the United Arab Emirates, what support the Government is offering to that country following the drone attack on Abu Dhabi airport on 17 January 2022.

James Cleverly:

As set out by the Foreign Secretary and I on 17 January, the UK condemns in the strongest terms the attacks on Abu Dhabi. We are in close contact with our Emirati partners via Ministerial and official channels and continue to offer our support. We are closely monitoring the situation and keeping our Travel Advice under constant review. British Nationals in the UAE should sign up for alerts and follow our travel advice for the latest information.

■ **Crimes Against Humanity****Owen Thompson:**[\[106785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take steps to empower Counter Terrorism Command SO15 to investigate suspects of crimes against humanity under the International Criminal Court Act 2001 who are neither British residents nor nationals.

Vicky Ford:

The United Kingdom is committed to upholding international law and holding those who commit the most serious crimes accountable for their actions. Under the International Criminal Court Act, crimes against humanity are an offence against the law of England and Wales if committed in England or Wales or outside the United Kingdom by a United Kingdom national or resident or a person subject to UK service jurisdiction. The jurisdiction of the courts in the UK to try crimes is premised on a presumption of territoriality, unless there is express statutory provision to the contrary. It is UK Government policy that the United Kingdom should not provide a safe haven for war criminals or those who commit other serious violations of international law. The UK is committed to helping other countries to prosecute offences that take place within their territory or within their jurisdiction.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[106747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help enable low-income countries to meet the Independent Allocation of Vaccines Group recommendation, published on 21 December 2021, on vaccinating 70 percent of all countries populations against covid-19 by mid-2022.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is committed to ending the acute phase of the pandemic as soon as possible, and strongly supports the COVAX Facility as a key mechanism to deliver this. COVAX has now delivered over one billion vaccine doses to 144 countries and territories. The UK is among the largest donors to COVAX's Advance Market Commitment, committing £548 million to supply vaccines in up to 92 low and middle income countries. The UK has also donated more than 30 million doses, with millions more to be sent globally in 2022.

Many factors contribute to vaccination coverage levels, including supply, health system capacity and demand. The UK worked closely with the Independent Allocation of Vaccines Group established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to develop WHO's global vaccination strategy and endorsed it at the G20 Leaders' Summit in October 2021. The UK recognises its recommendation for 70% vaccination coverage as well as its advice that countries need to set their own national targets based on local context and demographics.

■ Development Aid: Research

Chi Onwurah:

[\[103548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of research funded by Overseas Development Assistance is carried out (a) in the UK and (b) overseas.

Vicky Ford:

Effective Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) research projects are undertaken in partnerships of two or more organisations. UK-overseas partnerships are common. Information on specific FCDO programmes is provided on the UK's Development Tracker: <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/>, with some additional information on funding of organisations available through the d-portal of the International Aid Transparency Initiative: <https://d-portal.org/ctrack.html#view=search>. However, in light of the way in which individual project budgets are presented it is not practical to aggregate the data to provide the requested breakdown.

UK institutions have strong capability in development research, in which the UK is a global leader. Researchers in these institutions are relatively successful in open competitions for FCDO ODA research funding. Therefore, a substantial proportion of FCDO ODA-funded research is undertaken within the UK.

■ Diplomatic Service: Languages**Damien Moore:** [\[103682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to increase the proportion of diplomats who speak foreign languages in Embassies and High Commissions.

Vicky Ford:

Language skills are critical to the FCDO's operations and impact. Full-time language training is offered for some overseas roles (known as 'speaker slots'), and its successful outcome is measured by examination. In 2018, the proportion of FCDO officers in speaker slots with a valid exam pass at their target level was 55%. Following considerable efforts to improve teaching quality, employee performance and results monitoring, that figure now stands at 70%. The FCDO is committed to further improving target level attainment and expanding the language skills of our staff.

■ Faizullah Jalal**Patrick Grady:** [\[103571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish a response to EDM 836 on Detention of Professor Faizulla Jalal.

James Cleverly:

We welcome the release of Professor Faizullah Jalal. Following his arrest, we joined international partners in raising our concern over his detention. FCDO officials continue to regularly raise human rights with the Taliban, including the importance of freedom of expression. We will continue to work closely with others to call for freedom of the media to be respected in Afghanistan, to respond to human rights violations and abuses and to push for those responsible to be held to account.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Heathrow Airport**Emily Thornberry:** [\[100467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish the (a) dates and (b) outbound destinations for each occasion on which (i) she and (ii) her predecessor made use of the VIP suites at Heathrow Airport in (A) 2019, (B) 2020 and (C) 2021.

Vicky Ford:

We cannot provide specific detail on VIP use of Heathrow Suite - or any other airport, as this could potentially compromise said VIPs security.

■ HSBC: Xinjiang Tianye**Sir Iain Duncan Smith:** [\[105332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she has taken in response to reports that HSBC has invested in Xinjiang Tianye

Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, which was sanctioned by the US for slave labour and genocide.

Amanda Milling:

The Government has taken a number of measures to help ensure that no British organisations are profiting from or contributing to human rights violations against the Uyghurs or other minorities. We have introduced new guidance for UK businesses on the risks of doing business in Xinjiang - supported by a programme of Ministerial engagement - and announced enhanced export controls, as well as a commitment to introduce financial penalties for non-compliance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act. Our overseas business risk guidance makes clear to UK companies the risks of operating in Xinjiang, and urges them to conduct appropriate due diligence and consider their corporate responsibilities when making investment decisions.

■ **Nigeria: Orphans**

Ruth Jones:

[\[103683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made assessment of the (a) treatment of Mercy, Destiny, Emmanuel, Martha and Esther Tarfa who were transferred to an orphanage in Gaya in Kano State, Nigeria and (b) implications for her policies of that matter.

Ruth Jones:

[\[103684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the situation of the children from the Du Merci orphanages in the context of the acquittal of Professor Tarfa, the founder of the Du Merci orphanages in Nigeria's Kano and Kaduna states, following charges of abducting and confining children in unregistered and illegal orphanages.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government has emphasised to the Nigerian authorities the importance of a fair and transparent legal process for Professor Tarfa, in accordance with Nigerian law and international human rights standards. We understand that Professor Tarfa is still facing an additional charge and we will continue to monitor the case closely.

The welfare of the children relocated from the Du Merci orphanage remains paramount. The UK Government will continue to engage with the Nigerian authorities to reiterate the need to ensure the children's safety and wellbeing, in the most appropriate care setting for their needs.

■ **Palestinian Authority**

Steve McCabe:

[\[106624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to support the efforts of the Israeli government in respect of building confidence in the Palestinian Authority.

James Cleverly:

The UK welcomes continued engagement between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), including direct meetings between Israeli Defence Minister Gantz and President Abbas, as well as discussions between the Ministries of Finance aimed at improving economic cooperation. I attended the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) in October 2021 where I held meetings with Prime Minister Shtayyeh, Israeli Regional Minister Frej and the wider international community to urge the parties to accelerate efforts to improve the financial situation of the PA and the economic conditions in the OPTs.

■ Republic of Ireland: Foreign Relations**Ruth Jones:**[\[103685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 97062 on Republic of Ireland: Foreign Relations, where that dinner took place; and how much it cost.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As part of the United Kingdom's diplomatic engagement with foreign countries and foreign dignitaries, Ministers and senior civil servants will from time to time provide diplomatic hospitality at home and abroad for business purposes. Foreign governments may also provide reciprocal hospitality at home and abroad.

As highlighted in the answer of UIN 66182, we do not routinely provide details of such hospitality, as this could in itself undermine the national interest. It may compromise the goal of such international engagement by providing a running commentary of which foreign representatives were met and which were not met; how much was spent on one country, as opposed to the other; and diminish the ability to engage in secure and confidential channels of communication by revealing the locations that discrete meetings may take place.

Having carefully considered the public interest in this matter, it is in the national interest not to disclose this information. There is a public interest in respecting international confidences to ensure that foreign states and international organisations are not deterred from engaging with the UK Government. This broader approach is also reflected in the Section 27 exemption of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 passed by Parliament, and in the approach taken under successive Administrations.

■ Summit for Democracy**Alex Norris:**[\[105706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the outcome of the 2021 Summit for Democracy which he addressed online on 9 December 2021; and if she will make statement.

Vicky Ford:

The PM welcomes this US initiative and was pleased to be able to deliver the UK statement. The UK was also able to field Ministers across a range of summit events,

including on Democracy-Affirming Technology and Disability-Inclusive Democracy. We will continue to partner with the US, and others, to make the "Year of Action" on democracy a success, building momentum for the planned in-person second Summit. This is an opportunity to advance the Network of Liberty through collaborating on technology, trade, investment and infrastructure so that together, democracies can advance the cause of freedom from a position of strength. We look forward to continued engagement with the US and our allies on this vital agenda.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion

Bob Blackman:

[\[103537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department takes to ensure that the upper gestational limits on abortion are guided by the latest science on foetal viability; and whether his Department has made an assessment of the implications for its policies of the findings on foetal viability from 22 weeks gestation in (a) Riley K., et al., Survival and neurodevelopmental morbidity at 1 year of age following extremely preterm delivery over a 20-year period: a single centre cohort study, published in *Acta Paediatrica* in 2008, (b) MBRRACE-UK Supplementary report on survival up to one year of age for babies born before 27 weeks gestational age — For Births in Great Britain from January to December 2016, Maternal, Newborn and Infant Clinical Outcome Review Programme published in 2019 and (c) Håkansson S. et al., Proactive Management Promotes Outcome in Extremely Preterm Infants: A Population-Based Comparison of Two Perinatal Management Strategies, published in *Pediatrics* in 2004.

Bob Blackman:

[\[103538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to review the current upper gestational limit on abortion of 24 weeks in response to the latest advancements in perinatal medicine showing fetal viability from 22 weeks, and given that the median time limit in other European countries is 12 weeks gestation.

Maggie Throup:

It would be a matter for Parliament to determine whether changes to the law on abortion should be made. As with other matters of conscience, abortion is an issue on which the Government adopts a neutral stance and allows hon. Members to vote according to their moral, ethical or religious beliefs.

■ Clandeboye Agencies: Protective Clothing

Angela Rayner:

[\[106717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2021 to Question 103562, on Clandeboye Agencies, whether the 22 million gowns held in storage (a) meet NHS standards and (b) are allocated for use by the NHS.

Edward Argar:

The gowns meet National Health Service standards and are available for use.

■ Contain Outbreak Management Fund**Rachael Maskell:**[\[106764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans for the continuation of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund beyond March 2022; and what his timetable is for making a decision on the future of that fund.

Maggie Throup:

No decision has yet been made and we continue to have discussions across the Government regarding COVID-19 funding for local authorities.

From 2020 to 2022, over £2.1 billion has been provided to local authorities to support public health efforts through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), with £400 million allocated in 2021/22. In December 2021 we confirmed that unspent monies from the COMF can be carried forward into 2022/23. We continue to work with local authorities to ensure that the COMF delivers the objectives of Local Outbreak Management Plans.

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**Angela Rayner:**[\[106718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2022 to Question 103559 on Protective Clothing: Coronavirus, how many other suppliers awarded contracts for personal protective equipment through the high-priority lane are in mediation with his Department as of 18 January 2022.

Edward Argar:

The Department is currently engaged in a mediation process with one other supplier.

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Wes Streeting:**[\[88810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the average length of time required to upgrade covid-19 testing labs which do not have S gene target failure capabilities.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 December 2021]: No specific estimate has been made. Five of the 10 Lighthouse Laboratories are able to report SGTF from their primary polymerase chain reaction assay as an indicator for the Omicron variant. This represents approximately 57% of the current network capacity. It is not practical to convert the remaining laboratories to these primary assays. However, an alternative rapid method for detection of the Omicron variant, a genotyping assay, has been implemented in all 10 laboratories.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Stephen Hammond: [\[105442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is Government policy to the vaccine strategy before the summer parliamentary recess period.

Stephen Hammond: [\[105443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the forthcoming vaccines strategy will set targets for all adult vaccines.

Stephen Hammond: [\[105444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the forthcoming All Vaccines Strategy will set a target of 75% for adult pneumococcal vaccination coverage in line with coverage targets set for influenza vaccination.

Stephen Hammond: [\[105445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the forthcoming vaccines strategy will commit to supporting the expansion and evolution of the JCVI to ensure that it is adequately resourced and equipped.

Maria Caulfield:

The vaccine strategy has been delayed due to the Department's ongoing response to the pandemic. The strategy is being kept under review given the continuously evolving understanding of COVID-19, its vaccines and vaccination programmes and the impact of these developments.

Munira Wilson: [\[73978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department is taking to ensure that (a) people with poorly controlled asthma are invited to receive their covid-19 booster jabs on time and (b) the evidence for changes to the vaccine prioritisation list are clearly communicated to asthma sufferers.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 17 November 2021]: Every eligible adult in England has now been offered a COVID-19 booster vaccination, including those with poorly controlled asthma.

On 16 September 2021, the UK Health Security Agency's Green Book definition of asthma was updated to state that with 'poorly controlled asthma' would be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose. This definition includes individuals who have had two or more courses of oral corticosteroids in the preceding 24 months; or are on maintenance oral corticosteroids; or have had one or more hospital admission(s) for asthma in the preceding 24 months. This followed a systematic review of the evidence on asthma severity, control and COVID-19 hospitalisations by the British Thoracic Society. The British Thoracic Society's guidance for those with poorly controlled asthma is available at the following link:

<https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/covid-19/covid-19-information-for-the-respiratory-community/>

On 29 November 2021, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advised that all those aged 18 years old and over, including those with poorly controlled asthma, and those individuals with severe immunosuppression who have had three primary doses are eligible for a booster vaccination from a minimum of three months after completion of their primary course.

Justin Madders: [83407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average time is between referrals to the NHS vaccination data resolution service and successful contact with the patient.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 2 December 2021]: The information requested is not held centrally. Vaccine data inaccuracy issues are handled by teams at regional and local level. However, the Vaccine Data Resolution Service aims to respond to initial contacts from patients within 21 days.

Mr Clive Betts: [84302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the NHS has to introduce prescribers of third doses for the immunocompromised at all mass vaccination sites; and which sites already have an on-site prescriber.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 7 December 2021]: There are no current plans to do so. No mass vaccination sites have an on-site prescriber for third primary doses, as these are handled at a local level by general practitioner practices.

Rachael Maskell: [92024]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to ensure that covid-19 vaccinators are fully trained during the booster campaign.

Maggie Throup:

NHS England and NHS Improvement, the UK Health Security Agency and relevant professional groups have developed a training package for COVID-19 vaccinators. All vaccinators are required to undergo both a training programme and competency assessment to ensure they can safely administer vaccines under the clinical supervision of an experienced health care professional.

■ Disability: Health Services and Social Services

Mary Kelly Foy: [106873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2021 to Question 43668 on Disability: Finance, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Education to improve the provision of disabled children's health and care services.

Gillian Keegan:

We are working with the Department for Education on health and care's role in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system through the SEND Review. This includes how we can improve the provision of health and care services to disabled children.

Fertility: Health Services**Olivia Blake:**[\[106910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timetable is for publishing the review into the variation in provision of NHS fertility services; and following that review, whether he plans to take steps to ensure that Clinical Commissioning Groups are prevented from setting additional non-clinical criteria for fertility services, including having children from previous relationships.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department undertook a review on the variation in access to National Health Service fertility services, which was completed in 2021. The results of this internal review will inform future policy. We will set out our initial aims in the Women's Health Strategy, due to be published in the spring.

We expect local NHS commissioning bodies to commission fertility services in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidelines, to ensure equitable access in England. We are aware that some commissioners set additional non-clinical criteria, which can include having children from previous relationships. This is outside the best clinical practice within NICE's fertility guidelines.

Genetics: Screening**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[41880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of variability in success-rate of testing across England's seven Genomic Laboratory Hubs.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 8 September 2021]: The performance of the Genomic Laboratory Hubs is monitored quarterly through an assurance framework, which ensures all Hubs are operating to national quality standards. This identifies and minimises any potential variability in the success rate of testing.

Health: Equality**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[106723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle health inequalities in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

Maria Caulfield:

We have established the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to tackle disparities working with the National Health Service, integrated care systems, wider health and care services and national and local government.

Through its regional team in the West Midlands, the OHID is providing support to programmes in Coventry aimed at reducing health inequalities. This includes providing evidence, intelligence and sharing best practice for initiatives to tackle infant mortality, homelessness, migrant health issues and access to housing, improved access to services for vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups.

Hospitals: Discharges**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[106724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to speed up the delivery of care packages for people waiting to be discharged from hospital in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

Gillian Keegan:

We have provided £3.3 billion to the National Health Service to facilitate timely hospital discharges, including £478 million this winter. We have established a national discharge taskforce, with local and national government and the NHS. The taskforce works with NHS England's regional teams to support hospital discharge in local areas, including in Coventry, the West Midlands and England.

We have provided an additional £462.5 million for the recruitment and retention of social care workers to support the hospital discharge process, expanded the Health and Care Visa to include care workers and launched the Made with Care national recruitment campaign running until March 2022.

Hospitals: Visits**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[106722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure patients in hospitals in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England are allowed safe and regular visits from family members.

Edward Argar:

National guidance on how National Health Service hospitals may facilitate visits was in place during the pandemic. However, visiting policies have now returned to the discretion of local NHS trusts and other NHS bodies in England, based on national principles, to make an assessment of the appropriate visiting arrangements given local prevalence of COVID-19 and the design of facilities.

■ Immunosuppression: Coronavirus

Ian Byrne:

[\[86644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what specific support his Department is taking to help protect people who are immunocompromised and have at least one child attending school settings from covid-19 infection; and whether his Department is taking additional steps to protect those people from infection with the omicron variant of covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 8 December 2021]: On 29 November 2021, the Government accepted advice from the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) in response to the Omicron variant. This stated that that severely immunosuppressed individuals who have completed the course of three primary doses should be offered a booster vaccination, with a minimum of three months between the third primary and booster dose. Those who have not yet received their third dose may receive this immediately with a booster dose given in three months.

On 22 December 2021, the JCVI further advised that those aged 16 to 17 years old, those aged 12 to 15 years old who are a household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed and 12 to 15 year olds in a clinical risk group, should be offered a booster dose no sooner than three months after completion of their primary course. It also advised that children aged five to 11 years old who are a household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed and those in a clinical risk group should be offered two doses of the vaccine.

Immunocompromised individuals are also a priority cohort for research into therapeutic and prophylaxis treatments such as monoclonal antibody therapies, novel antivirals and repurposed compounds. The highest risk cohort of non-hospitalised patients, including those who are immunocompromised, can access treatments from COVID Medicines Delivery Units, if clinically eligible. These treatments include molnupiravir, an antiviral drug, and sotrovimab, a monoclonal antibody infusion. Another monoclonal antibody treatment, ronapreve, is available to treat the most vulnerable hospitalised patients in the United Kingdom where genotyping shows they are not infected with the Omicron variant. Vulnerable patients with hospital-onset infection with the Omicron variant may be eligible to receive sotrovimab.

■ NHS: Coronavirus

Gareth Thomas:

[\[103516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that NHS staff have access to covid-19 lateral flow tests; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

National Health Service staff who are asymptomatic should continue to test themselves twice a week, or in line with the Government's guidance as required. The

UK Health Security Agency has provided NHS regions and local authorities with a contingency supply of lateral flow device tests from its prioritised stock for the NHS and social care. Health and social care staff should therefore be able to access testing through their employer. In addition, we are making 400 million tests available via GOV.UK in January which can be delivered directly to staff at home.

■ Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016

Lee Anderson:

[103688]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, at what stage in the process is the post-implementation review of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016; and when that review will be published.

Maggie Throup:

The Department will publish its response to the post implementation review of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016, as well as the Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products 2015, early this year. The review reports are currently with the Regulatory Policy Committee and we await the conclusion of their process. Following these reviews, the Department will consider the need for any regulatory changes.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Hilary Benn:

[87590]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance he is making available to travellers wishing to come to the UK who have recently recovered from covid-19 and are deemed no longer to be contagious about the need to take a test given that it may show a positive result.

Maggie Throup:

Proof of natural immunity is not accepted as an alternative to proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test. Those who have recently recovered from infection should take a pre-departure lateral flow device test, as it is less likely to return a positive result from historic infection. Those who are fully vaccinated are not required to take pre-departure tests.

Guidance for travellers on testing for travel to England is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-people-travelling-to-england#positive-test-results>

Wes Streeting:

[88806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the current average time is for registering the results of day 2 covid-19 PCR tests.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 December 2021]: For travel testing requirements in England, the median average number of days between arrival and specimen date for day two polymerase chain reaction test is two days.

Wes Streeting:[\[88807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of day two covid-19 PCR tests do not have results registered by the end of (a) day three and (b) day four in the latest period for which that data is available.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 December 2021]: Data based on private provider polymerase chain reaction tests for arrivals between 24 October 2021 and 12 January 2022 show that 5% of tests are not registered by the end of day three and 3% by the end of day four.

HOME OFFICE**■ Ansar Allah: Proscribed Organisations****Mr David Jones:**[\[106673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the context of the drone attack on Abu Dhabi airport, if she will proscribe Ansar Allah, the Houthi Movement, as a terrorist organisation under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Damian Hinds:

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters, including whether an organisation is or is not under consideration for proscription. The Government keeps the list of proscribed organisations under review.

■ British Nationality**Naz Shah:**[\[106745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish data on the number of people deprived of citizenship status under section 40(2) of the British Nationality Act 1981 in 2019 and 2020.

Damian Hinds:

Data concerning the number of people deprived of their British citizenship is published by the Government in its Transparency Report on Disruptive Powers.

The Government is committed to publishing the annual Transparency Report on Disruptive Powers. The 2020 report will be published in due course.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

John McNally:

[\[103570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to add further exemptions to her Department's absence policy to include absence related to reactions and side effects caused by covid-19 booster vaccination.

Rachel Maclean:

There is an existing exemption in our attendance management policy covering the acute phase of Covid infection.

For absences relating to reactions to, or side effects from, Covid vaccination (which are likely to be of short duration), managers are encouraged to take a sympathetic approach under the normal provisions of our attendance management policy. We have no plans to introduce an exemption covering reactions to Covid vaccinations.

■ Roads Policing Review

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[106688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to implement the recommendations of HMICFRS's July 2020 report, Roads Policing: Not optional - An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales.

Kit Malthouse:

Two of the recommendations of the HMICFRS Roads Policing Report were addressed directly to the Home Office.

The Home Office considers that using the powers under section 7(4) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to require locally elected PCCs to include specific policing issues in their Police and Crime plans needs to be balanced with a proper regard for local autonomy and the will of local voters. PCC's are directly elected and must consult their communities in developing a Police and Crime Plan that reflects local circumstances.

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) will set clear direction to policing on the contribution they need to make to respond to priority national threats including terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse. Following the SPR review that we concluded last year, we are considering the national threats and policing capabilities, such as roads policing, that are included in the SPR. The revised SPR will be published in due course.

The remainder of the recommendations were addressed to the Department for Transport, Chief Constables and the College of Policing. The Home Office is committed to working closely with these bodies to consider what further improvements can be made to the effectiveness of roads enforcement in England and Wales and reduce road traffic casualties.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership****Gareth Thomas:** [\[102541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many meetings have there been of the CPTPP UK Accession Working Group; how many of those meetings Ministers have (a) been invited to and (b) attended; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The first CPTPP UK Accession Working Group meeting which the UK attended took place on 28th September 2021. This was a senior official level meeting attended by Chief Negotiators, without ministerial invitation. There have been no further CPTPP UK Accession Working Group meetings to date but further technical written and oral discussions are continuing in a range of areas to ensure accession takes place smoothly.

■ Trade Agreements: Canada**Dr Kieran Mullan:** [\[102803\]](#)

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

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the Hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich to the answer given by my Hon. Friend, the Minister for International Trade, on 25 November, UIN: 79336.

Work continues on developing the British negotiating mandate, and we look forward to formally commencing talks this year. On 13 December 2021 HM Government of Canada notified its Parliament of intentions to begin negotiations with the UK, triggering a 90-day notification period which, we are advised, must be completed before negotiations can commence for Canada.

■ Trade Agreements: USA**Ruth Jones:** [\[102769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent progress her Department has made on securing a free trade agreement with the United States.

Penny Mordaunt:

We have had five productive rounds of negotiations to date and agreed a significant proportion of legal text across multiple chapters.

In September 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the President of the United State agreed to continue working towards a future Free Trade Agreement.

In December 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade travelled to the US to bolster UK-US trade ties, support increased transatlantic trade and investment, and build on our shared interests and priorities with the US.

During my visit in December, I held productive meetings with Governors, Mayors, Commissioners, and business leaders. These stakeholders had great interest in doing more trade with the UK, including Memoranda of Understanding agreement, which we are following up.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[105370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department have taken to secure a free trade agreement with the United States.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 20 January 2022]: We have had five productive rounds of negotiations to date and agreed a significant proportion of legal text across multiple chapters.

In September 2021, my Rt.Hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the President of the United States agreed to continue working towards a future Free Trade Agreement.

In December 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade travelled to the US to bolster UK-US trade ties, support increased transatlantic trade and investment, and build on our shared interests and priorities with the US.

During my visit in December, I held productive meetings with Governors, Mayors, Commissioners, and business leaders. These stakeholders had great interest in doing more trade with the UK, including Memoranda of Understanding agreement, which we are following up.

■ Trade: Business

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[105369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the potential effect of her Department's trade policies on growth for British businesses.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[Holding answer 20 January 2022]: We recently set out the potential benefits of a Free Trade Agreement with India in our published 'Scoping Assessment', which shows that the British economy could grow by between around £3,300 million and £6,200 million in the long run as a result of an agreement.

An 'Impact Assessment' has been published on the recently signed agreement with Australia too, which shows that the British economy could increase by around £2,300 million in the long run, compared to without the deal.

■ Trade: Mercosur

Chris Grayling:

[\[101652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she (a) has had and (b) plans to have with relevant stakeholders on strengthening trade ties with the Mercosur countries.

Penny Mordaunt:

Ministers and officials engage regularly with stakeholders to understand the opportunities and challenges to increasing trade and investment with the region, including at a Mercosur-focused roundtable discussion with businesses chaired by my Hon. Friend the Minister for International Trade last July, and on a visit to Uruguay in September. In November, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade discussed collaboration on trade and health with Argentina's Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero. On Tuesday, the Secretary of State spoke with her Brazilian counterpart Roberto Fendt to discuss opportunities to improve our trade. The Secretary of State and I look forward to further engagement around the next UK-Brazil JETCO later this year.

JUSTICE**■ Courts**

Damien Moore: [\[103680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the average length of time between a person being charged with a crime and a verdict in court.

James Cartlidge:

The Government is committed to improving timeliness in the Criminal Justice System. In December, the first Criminal Justice Scorecards were published, bringing together performance data across the system from the stage a crime is recorded to completion of a case in court.

Improving timeliness is one of the priority areas within the Scorecards and demonstrates the Government's commitment to driving forward improvements in the time taken from charge to verdict in court.

We will be closely monitoring changes in performance in relation to improving timeliness as we continue to publish the scorecards on a quarterly basis.

■ Fraud: Telephones

Emily Thornberry: [\[105787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) reported instances, (b) prosecutions and (c) convictions for fraud conducted through phone calls in the years (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020 and (iv) 2021.

Emily Thornberry: [\[105788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) reported instances, (b) prosecutions and (c) convictions for fraud conducted by text message in (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020 and (iv) 2021.

Emily Thornberry:

[105793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) reported instances (b) prosecutions and (c) convictions for fraud conducted online in (i) 2018, (ii) 2019 (iii) 2020 and (iv) 2021.

James Cartlidge:

The number of prosecutions and convictions for fraud offences that were conducted through phone calls is not centrally held in the court proceedings database, as the specific use of phone calls is not separately identified from wider fraud offences in legislation. Equally, offences conducted by text message and online are not separately identified in legislation. Identifying these offences separately would require a manual search of court records, which would be at disproportionate costs.

Published figures provide the number of prosecutions and convictions for the following offences that may include offences of fraud which occurred online, through phone calls or by text:

Computer Misuse Act 1990

- Unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate commission of further offences (Computer Misuse Act 1990)
- Unauthorised acts with intent to impair, or with recklessness as to impairing, operation of computer, etc (Computer Misuse Act 1990)
- Unauthorised access to computer material
- Making, supplying or obtaining articles for use in offence under SS.1 or 3 (Computer Misuse Act 1990, S.3A)

Fraud Act 2006

- Dishonestly making a false representation to make a gain for oneself or another or to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk
- Dishonestly failing to disclose information to make a gain for oneself or another or to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk
- By any dishonest act obtaining services for which payment is required, with intent to avoid payment including attaching a decoder to a television to enable viewing access to cable or satellite television channels for which there is no intention of paying

The number of prosecutions and convictions can be found by searching for the above offences in the 'Detailed offence' filter in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code' data tool available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987731/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2020.xlsx

Information on the number of recorded fraud offences, which may help to answer part (a) of the questions, is held by the Home Office

■ Judges: Retirement

Steve Reed:

[\[105554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many judges in England and Wales have retired in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

The number of salaried judges in the courts and tribunals who retired in each of the last five financial years is as follows:

- 2016-2017: 123 courts judges, 23 tribunals judges
- 2017-2018: 86 courts judges, 23 tribunals judges
- 2018-2019: 80 courts judges, 34 tribunals judges
- 2019-2020: 80 courts judges, 32 tribunals judges
- 2020-2021: 44 courts judges, 9 tribunals judges*

Data for salaried judges for the years 2016 to 2020 is from the MOJ's 2020/21 evidence to the Senior Salaries Review Body, for the annual review of judicial pay.

*The 2020/21 retirement data is not yet available, so the numbers reported above are the leavers data included in the Diversity of the Judiciary 2021 Statistics.

Data on fee-paid judges is recorded differently and does not make a distinction between those retiring from office and those leaving office for other reasons. The number of fee-paid judges who left office since 2018 is reported in the Diversity of the Judiciary annual statistics.

- 2018-2019: 68 courts judges, 71 tribunals judges
- 2019-2020: 98 courts judges, 74 tribunals judges
- 2020-2021: 98 courts judges, 108 tribunals judges

Data for 2016 to 2018 is not available.

■ Legal Aid Scheme

Damien Moore:

[\[103681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the proportion of the population eligible for the legal aid scheme in 2020-21 compared with 2010-11.

James Cartlidge:

We do not have comparative assessments of the proportion of the population eligible for legal aid in 2010-11 or 2020-21.

In 2019, we announced a comprehensive review of the legal aid means test. The review is assessing the effectiveness with which the means test protects access to justice, and we hope to publish the review alongside a public consultation shortly. Alongside our policy proposals, this will include estimates of legal aid eligibility.

■ Prison Officers: Incentives**Ellie Reeves:** [\[103644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish information on bonuses received by prison officer staff in the (a) private and (b) public sector in (i) 2020 and (ii) 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

(a) All staffing matters in privately managed prisons, including bonuses, are the responsibility of individual contractors. The Ministry of Justice does not hold this information

(b) Information relating to non-consolidated performance bonuses received by public sector staff working within HMPPS during 2020 and 2021 will be released in due course.

■ Prisons: Chess**Ellie Reeves:** [\[103650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of promoting and supporting chess clubs throughout the prison estate.

Victoria Atkins:

We are supportive of all programmes that could potentially improve outcomes for offenders, including chess. Our association with the English Chess Federation (ECF) and other chess charities, has successfully promoted the game of chess in prisons, provided books and equipment for prisoners to use as well as establishing chess clubs in prisons to help prisoners participate in chess at all levels. In October 2021, a team from HMP Wandsworth and HMP Hollesley Bay, trained by the charity "Chess in Schools and Communities" participated in the Intercontinental Online Championship for Prisoners - that featured teams from 31 countries – HMP Wandsworth reached the final stages of the competition.

In terms of further expansion, prison governors remain best placed to make decisions on the right mix of sport and recreational activities that are offered in their establishments to meet the needs of their population.

■ Prisons: Profits**Ellie Reeves:** [\[103648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will publish information on the profits made by private prisons for the years 2010 - 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

The Ministry of Justice does not hold any data on contractor profit within the privately managed prison estate. Contractors for the privately managed prisons are paid a unitary rate per prisoner place per day which is set out for the full contract term and is commercially confidential.

■ Prisons: Safety

Ellie Reeves:

[\[103649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what safety metrics are used in (a) private and (b) public prison key performance indicators; and what definition of serious assault is used for key performance indicators in (i) private and (ii) public prisons.

Victoria Atkins:

The Department publishes statistics on deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales in the quarterly Safety in Custody statistics at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics>.

Overall rates of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff have also featured in recent years as metrics in the prison performance framework, alongside scores from HMIP Healthy Prison Tests, Measuring the Quality of Prisoner Life (MQPL) surveys and HMPPS risk management audits in relation to safety. These metrics apply to both public sector and contracted establishments.

The prison performance framework provides a balanced suite of metrics covering all areas of prison operations. The framework is reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet HMPPS priorities. It is used as part of the formal performance assessment to derive overall prison performance ratings that are published annually. Because of COVID-19, the ratings were last published in July 2020 covering the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-performance-ratings-2019-to-2020>.

HMPPS statistics cover both public sector and contracted establishments and the same definitions apply to all. An assault is defined as serious if:

- it is a sexual assault;
- it results in detention in outside hospital as an in-patient;
- it requires medical treatment for concussion or internal injuries; and/or
- the victim incurs any of the following injuries: a fracture, scald or burn; stabbing; crushing; extensive or multiple bruising; black eye; broken nose; lost or broken tooth; cuts requiring suturing; bites; and temporary or permanent blindness.

When an assault results in one of these types of injury, it is classified as serious even if the actual harm was superficial.

■ Prisons: Staff

Ellie Reeves:

[\[103643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether private sector prison staff will receive bonuses equivalent to the bonuses public sector prison staff have received throughout the covid-19 outbreak.

Ellie Reeves: [\[103646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether there are guidelines on minimum staffing levels for private prisons.

Victoria Atkins:

All staffing matters in privately managed prisons, including bonuses, are the responsibility of individual contractors. There is no requirement in the contracts to agree such matters with the Ministry of Justice.

Private providers play an important role in the prison estate and we continue to monitor them to ensure they maintain safe, decent and secure prisons.

Ellie Reeves: [\[103645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether contingency plans for staffing in private prisons includes moving staff across different prisons to fill any gaps; and if he will publish his Department's contingency plans for staffing in private prisons.

Ellie Reeves: [\[103647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offender courses are taking place in private prisons; and what proportion of prisoners are enrolled on those courses, in the latest period for which data is available.

Victoria Atkins:

Staffing is the responsibility of private prison operators as they are responsible for the daily operational running of individual prison establishments. They have their own contingencies that allows movement across the different prisons that they operate and from their wider business. In addition, we have contingences and contractual mechanisms that allow operators to request support from HM Prison Service, if any prison is not able to operate safely. These arrangements have been reviewed and updated to reflect Covid-19 challenges that have affected all prisons. We do not publish our contingency plans with privately managed prisons as these form part of the commercial contracts that we have with them.

The Ministry of Justice does not hold information centrally on the number of courses presently taking place, or the proportion enrolled at privately managed prisons. Data is, however, held about the overall course completion at each site.

■ Victims: Public Consultation

Anna McMorrin: [\[106838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 5 January 2022 to Question 94498 on the Victim's Bill Consultation, if he will publish a list of all the organisations he has had engagement sessions with up to 18 January 2022; and how many organisations have been consulted to date.

Tom Pursglove:

We recognise the importance of engaging and hearing from victims, frontline staff, and experts on this important topic and this consultation is the result of engagement

the department has undertaken over the past six months. This includes fortnightly calls with the sector, which involve at least twenty-seven organisations involved in supporting victims.

As part of the consultation, we are working with partners in the victim sector to deliver a series of engagement events to hear directly from victims on the issues which are most important to them. As of 18th January, the first of these events has been delivered, with a further thirteen events confirmed to take place before 3rd February and plans for six further events being finalised. These events are being delivered in partnership with specialist organisations to ensure a diverse range of voices are heard, including those who work with victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse, victims who are women and girls, victims with disabilities, ethnic minority victims and victims who are children and young people.

We are also hosting a series of roundtables with staff of the frontline services which support victims. As of 18th January, we have ten events planned to be delivered before 3rd February, involving four inspectorates, sixteen policing related groups, three court-based organisations, thirty-five commissioning organisations, eighteen advocate organisations and ten community-based services.

These events will provide further opportunities to canvass views, and to speak to groups directly affected by the consultation. We will publish a full list of organisations we have engaged with as part of the consultation response.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Building Safety Fund

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[103660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many applications for the Building Safety Fund are outstanding in (a) Slough, (b) the South East and (c) England.

Christopher Pincher:

As of 31 December 2021, out of a total of 2825 registrations, there are 5 outstanding applications in Slough, 49 in the South East of England, and 717 across England. Outstanding applications are defined as registrations where eligibility is under review or where further information is required to determine eligibility.

The Department is awaiting further information for 515 registrations across England. Applicants should provide any information requested by the Department promptly to make sure that their registration is processed without delay.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[105669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to speed up the processing of Building Safety Fund applications in response to reports that some housing associations have been waiting more than six months for the outcome of their Building Safety Fund application.

Christopher Pincher:

Government is continuing to deliver the Building Safety Fund. £976 million has already been allocated from the non-ACM Building Safety Fund so far, with 108 social sector registrations to the Fund (covering an estimated 119 buildings) proceeding with a full application. It remains the responsibility of applicants to submit information and plan their projects promptly so the Department can process their application as quickly as possible.

■ Building Safety Fund: Ealing Central and Acton**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[105671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the number of applications to the Building Safety Fund that remain outstanding in Ealing Central and Acton constituency (a) six months and (b) more than six months since they were submitted.

Christopher Pincher:

As of 31 December 2021, there are 13 outstanding applications in Ealing Central and Acton. Outstanding applications are defined as registrations where eligibility is yet to be determined. Applicants should provide any information requested by the Department promptly to make sure that their registration is processed without delay.

■ Council Housing: Standards**Rachael Maskell:**[\[103601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure council-owned homes meet an appropriate housing standard.

Christopher Pincher:

All social rented homes are required to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The Standard requires that homes are free of serious hazards, are in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services such as kitchens and bathrooms, and have efficient heating and effective insulation.

We are delivering on our Social Housing White Paper commitments by reviewing the Decent Homes Standard as part of our transformation of the social housing regulatory system. The review will consider whether the Standard needs to be updated to make sure it is delivering what is needed for safety and decency today.

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Working Hours**Chris Stephens:**[\[106760\]](#)

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

Eddie Hughes:

The Department's policies and processes are supported by payroll and other records that are retained for at least two years.

■ Flats: Coronavirus

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[106821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether there are regulations in place to regulate the implementation of ventilation and other covid-19 safety measures in communal areas of residential blocks of flats which include a mix of permanent tenants and holiday lets.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[106822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies on future building standards for communal areas in blocks of flats of the need to protect occupants from infection with covid-19, in particular where some of the flats are used as holiday lets.

Christopher Pincher:

COVID-19 has shown the importance of ventilation in reducing the spread of infection. In England, it is through Part F of the Building Regulations that we set minimum ventilation standards for new buildings, or when work is done to an existing building. We have recently published our response to the Future Buildings Standard Consultation which sets out new guidance on Part F, to come into force in June 2022. The new guidance includes measures to mitigate the risks of airborne infection in new buildings, including CO₂ monitoring and updated specifications for systems that recirculate air between rooms.

Buildings should be provided with an adequate means of ventilation as a requirement of the Building Regulations. The updated guidance for shared communal rooms (such as laundry rooms or communal gyms) in flats is provided in Approved Document F2. This states that rooms in new buildings where aerobic exercise is likely to take place, such as communal gyms, should have CO₂ monitors installed, which allow air quality to be monitored.

Building regulations apply when a new building is erected, or when building work is done to an existing building. They apply equally to buildings irrespective of tenure, including those that are let for short periods of time, such as holiday lets.

■ Holiday Accommodation

Rachael Maskell: [\[106766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department provides powers for local authorities to prevent new properties from being used for the sole purpose of (a) airbnb and (b) other short-term holiday lets.

Christopher Pincher:

This Government recognises that holiday homes can bring benefits to local economies, including the tourism sector, and we do not wish to restrict people's freedom to live and holiday where they choose. We also recognise, however, that large numbers of holiday homes and lets concentrated in a single area can have a negative effect on local communities.

The planning system has tools to manage the number of new holiday homes in local areas by restricting the sale of new homes to principal residences. This can be done both via a local authority's local planning policies and through neighbourhood planning. Policies that restrict or prohibit the sale of a new home as holiday home must be supported by appropriate local evidence.

Housing First: Finance**Dan Carden:****[R]** [\[106840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to allocate funding announced in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 to tackle homelessness to Housing First schemes.

Eddie Hughes:

The Spending Review commits to over £2 billion of funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years. The detail of how this funding will be allocated will be determined in due course.

Housing: Construction**Harriett Baldwin:**[\[103540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to take steps to revise down future housing projections in local plans in the context of the latest population predictions from the Office for National Statistics.

Christopher Pincher:

The standard method for assessing local housing need is only the starting point in the process of planning for new homes. It comprises a baseline of 2014-based household projections, informed by population projections, which are then adjusted to take account of affordability and capped to make the increase realistic for areas. In December 2020 following a review, a 35% uplift for the 20 most populated urban areas was added to ensure that the standard method was consistent with the aim to deliver 300,000 homes a year. After uncertainty due to COVID-19 it was particularly important to provide stability and certainty for plan-making and decision-making, so that local areas could get on and plan based on a method and level of ambition that they are familiar with.

Household projections are not a measure of how many homes are needed to meet demand, they simply show what would happen if past trends continue. The Office for National Statistics has been clear that lower household projections do not mean fewer homes need to be built.

As with all policies we will monitor the impact of the updated standard method, particularly as the impact of changes to the way we live and work and levelling up become clear.

Helen Morgan:

[\[103714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy is on expanding planning consent beyond the area allocated for housing in the Local Plan.

Christopher Pincher:

My policy is to support a plan-led system which engages communities and gives a clear indication of what will happen where. There will be some circumstances where development is appropriate on other sites – for example where plans are out of date or new regeneration opportunities arise – which is why plans need to be reviewed regularly. I am considering how further reform of planning could support the preparation of timely, accessible and effective plans.

Helen Morgan:

[\[103715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy is on the provision of additional local services after significant development takes place in a community.

Christopher Pincher:

I recognise the importance of ensuring new housing development is supported by the provision of infrastructure and appropriate services. Local authorities have responsibilities for planning for local development and the infrastructure to support it. The resources available include grant funding, loan finance, developer contributions and council tax.

At the 2021 Spending Review, the Government announced a £1.8 billion package of investment to regenerate communities and level up the country, unlocking up to 160,000 new homes in total. This includes £1.5 billion to regenerate underused land and deliver transport links and community facilities.

Contributions from developers also play an important role in delivering the infrastructure to support communities and local economies. The Government is exploring the creation of a new 'Infrastructure Levy' to replace the existing system of developer contributions. This would deliver more of the infrastructure these communities require by capturing a greater share of the uplift in land value that comes with development.

New development will increase the council tax base for local authorities, supporting the delivery of services. Other Government Departments may also provide funding, to support the expansion and ongoing delivery of services, in line with their wider approach to capital and resource spending.

The provisional Local Government Settlement for 2022-23 makes available an additional £3.5 billion to councils. This is an increase in local authority funding for

2022-23 of over 4% in real terms, which will ensure councils across the country have the resources they need to deliver key services.

■ Housing: Standards

Jim Shannon: [\[103556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the findings of the Building Research Establishment that 2.6 million homes contain at least one category one hazard, what steps the Government is taking to tackle those hazards and improve housing standards in England.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to ensuring that everyone has a safe home. Since 2009, the total number of households with Category 1 Hazards has reduced from 21% to 10% as of 2019. As part of its ongoing work to improve the quality of housing, the Government is reviewing the Decent Homes Standard and Housing Health and Safety Rating System, to make standards easier to understand and act on.

The Government is also providing £3.9 billion of funding over the next three years which will improve the energy efficiency of many homes, increasing their thermal comfort, and reducing hazards associated with the cold.

■ Planning

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[101617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to publish its response to the Planning for the Future consultation.

Christopher Pincher:

We will bring forward a response shortly.

■ Private Rented Housing: Databases

Dan Carden: [R] [\[106844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure the accuracy of data on (a) the size and (b) other aspects of the private rented sector.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department uses a range of data from a variety of sources to inform our understanding of the private rented sector (PRS). The English Housing Survey (EHS) is our main source of information on the size and household/ dwelling characteristics of the PRS.

The EHS is badged as a National Statistic, which means it's been deemed of the highest quality by the UK Office for Statistics Regulation, and we retained our badging in a recent audit of our methodologies. National Statistics must follow the principles and detailed practices outlined in the Code of Practice for Statistics (<https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/the-code>).

Alongside the main EHS data release, we also publish an annual Technical Report which details the steps that the EHS goes through to meet the high standards of trustworthiness, quality and value required of it. The most recently published report is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-technical-report>.

■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions

Lilian Greenwood: **[106690]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of reinstating measures previously introduced during the covid-19 outbreak to (a) have court eviction proceedings stayed and (b) extend the minimum notice period for section 21 evictions from two to four months during the period in which tenants and advice services are affected by the spread of the omicron variant.

Eddie Hughes:

The action we took at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic helped keep renters in their homes- through banning bailiff evictions, extending notice periods and unprecedented financial support

These measures worked - fewer households have been assessed as homeless, there are fewer rough sleepers and fewer possession claims are now being made to court. There was a reduction of 34% of those at risk of homelessness due to service of a Section 21 notice between April and June 2021 compared to the same quarter in 2019. Most measures that were put in place to support renters during the pandemic have now lifted. We continue to monitor the situation using the public health data, homelessness data, English Housing Resilience Survey data and repossession statistics. There are no current plans to reintroduce the emergency measures to delay evictions given the wider lifting of national restrictions, the success of the vaccination roll-out and the impact that these measures have on landlords. . Bailiffs must, however, provide at least 14 days' notice of an eviction and will not carry out an eviction if they are made aware that anyone living in the property has COVID-19 symptoms or is self-isolating. We have also retained the power to reintroduce longer notice periods until 25 March 2022 if needed and significant support is available to renters through the welfare system.

■ Private Rented Housing: Licensing

Dan Carden: **[R] [106843]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to simplify the process through which local authorities are granted selective licensing powers.

Eddie Hughes:

We are committed to reducing the time taken between applications being submitted to the department and decisions on selective licensing applications being

communicated, that have recently been longer due to covid pressures. We are reviewing our processes and updating relevant guidance to ensure councils have the information they need.

■ **Public Bodies: Sanctions**

Andy McDonald: [\[106714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when the Government plans to bring forward a Bill on boycotts, divestment and sanctions.

Kemi Badenoch:

We are committed to our manifesto pledge to ban public institutions from imposing their own divisive boycotts, divestment and sanctions measures directly or indirectly against foreign countries. We will legislate as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

■ **Right to Buy Scheme**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[103662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether progress has been made on the national rollout of the Voluntary Right to Buy Scheme following the independent evaluation of the Midlands Voluntary Right to Buy pilot.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[103663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to extend the Voluntary Right to Buy Scheme to housing association tenants following the Midlands Voluntary Right to Buy pilot.

Christopher Pincher:

This Government remains committed to the Right to Buy and to spreading the dream of home ownership to even more people. The Midlands pilot of the Voluntary Right to Buy scheme completed in 2021 and an independent evaluation of the pilot was published in February 2021. The Government is looking at the evaluation's findings, which will be used to inform future policy, and we will announce further details on the Voluntary Right to Buy in due course.

■ **Tree Preservation Orders**

Munira Wilson: [\[106898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the answer of 5 January 2022 to Question 98458 on Trees: Biodiversity and Climate Change, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of giving greater weight to (a) climate change and (b) biodiversity for those seeking to grant Tree Preservation Orders.

Christopher Pincher:

Trees are at the forefront of the Government's plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and to help to bend the curve of biodiversity loss. We are committed to

increasing tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament.

As stated in the answer to Question 98458, our guidance sets out that local authorities may wish to take nature conservation importance or climate change response factors into account when assessing the amenity of a tree or woodland, but that these factors alone would not warrant making an Order. The guidance also sets out that Orders should be used where the removal of the tree or trees would have a significant negative impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public.

■ Welcome Back Fund

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[106709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much and what proportion of the Welcome Back Fund has been distributed to local authorities.

Neil O'Brien:

Our £106 million Welcome Back Fund (WBF) is playing a vital role in supporting local authorities and their communities to bounce back from the Covid-19 pandemic.

This funding, which is available until 31 March 2022, has been allocated to 314 local authorities in England on a per capita basis. Councils can incur expenditure on eligible activities and claim up to the full amount of their allocation from Government in quarterly arrears. It is up to places to decide what to spend this funding on, having regard to the Fund's eligibility criteria. More information, including a list of all local authority funding allocations, can be found in the WBF Guidance and FAQs on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-back-fund>.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Carbon Emissions

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[105676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the level of carbon emissions produced by the UK's aviation industry; and what steps he is taking with that industry to reduce carbon emissions from air travel in the UK.

Robert Courts:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes UK greenhouse gas emissions figures annually, including domestic and international aviation emissions. The final UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics from 1990 to 2019 were published in February 2021 and are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/final-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-1990-to-2019>. It showed that in 2019, carbon dioxide emissions from UK domestic aviation were 1.4 Mt CO₂e and carbon dioxide emissions from international aviation were 36.7 Mt CO₂e.

The 2020 greenhouse gas emissions figures are due to be published on 1 February 2022.

In July 2021, the Department for Transport published the Jet Zero Consultation which sets out our vision for the aviation sector to reach net zero by 2050. We engaged with stakeholders extensively during the development of the consultation and are carefully considering consultation responses in the development of our final Jet Zero Strategy which we aim to publish later this year.

We are working closely with industry to reduce aviation emissions. We have established the Jet Zero Council, bringing together government, industry and academia to drive the delivery of new technologies and innovative ways to cut aviation emissions. We have been supporting the industry through £1.95bn of funding into aerospace R&D through the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) programme and recently confirmed the continuation of funding for the ATI programme to 2031. We have also recently announced £180 million of new funding to support the development of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) plants in the UK, building on the progress made through the previous Green Fuels Green Skies competition, and a £400 million partnership with Breakthrough Energy, through which SAF projects can bid for additional capital.

■ **Blue Badge Scheme: Applications**

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[106806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Part One of the National Disability Strategy published 28 July 2021, what progress his Department has made towards improving the online Blue Badge application process.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[106807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Part One of the National Disability Strategy published 28 July 2021, what recent work his Department has carried out with Blue Badge users and local authorities in England to ensure its suitability for all users.

Wendy Morton:

The Department conducts an ongoing programme to identify ways to improve the Blue Badge scheme application process for all users, including acting on feedback from local authority administrators and citizen users of the scheme. A project to test the application of advanced technological developments to the online application process is expected to report in Spring 2022.

■ **Bus Services: Concessions**

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[106643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of bringing England in line with the rest of the United Kingdom by introducing free off-peak bus travel for over-60s.

Trudy Harrison:

Concessionary travel is a devolved policy area and the administrative arrangements for the schemes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are entirely separate.

Funding the concessionary bus pass costs around £1 billion annually, so any changes, such as extending free bus travel to those who are not yet eligible would have an impact on the scheme's financial sustainability. In England, the age of eligibility for the concessionary bus pass is linked to the state pension age. This addresses the anomalous position of non-disabled, working age citizens receiving free bus passes, which in turn supports the financial sustainability of the scheme. There are no current plans to change the concessionary bus travel age of eligibility in England. However, concessionary travel legislation gives local authorities the flexibility to offer local travel concessions, such as free or discounted travel to those who are not yet eligible for the bus pass, if they choose to do so.

■ Department for Transport: Space Technology**Owen Thompson:**[\[106790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which aspects of the National Space Strategy his Department is responsible for.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department for Transport is responsible for ensuring the Space Industry Act and Space Industry Regulations continue to provide a modern legal framework that is internationally competitive and will support innovation and growth in the UK space sector. It will ensure that new spaceflight activities regulated under these provisions by the Civil Aviation Authority are safe and provide the right opportunities for industry. In addition, the Department for Transport is responsible for co-ordinating work to use space technology to modernise and transform the UK's transport system under the Strategy's Ten Point Plan.

■ High Speed 2 Line: Railway Stations**Louise Haigh:**[\[106784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether any bids were received from UK-based manufacturers for the HS2 station lift and escalator work to be carried out at (a) Birmingham Curzon Street, (b) Interchange, (c) Old Oak Common and (d) Euston.

Andrew Stephenson:

The contracts awarded are a framework arrangement for the supply of lifts and escalators at all four Phase One HS2 stations. All of the tenderers for the lifts and escalators framework have a UK base and are UK registered companies.

No UK-based lift or escalator suppliers responded to the Prior Indicative Notice to demonstrate that they had the required capacity to deliver this contract, and this is why the shortlist was comprised of companies which manufacture lifts and escalators outside the UK. The market was made aware of the upcoming contract in March 2019

with engagement through the Lifts and Escalators Industry Association (which consists of 140 UK and worldwide suppliers). This was followed up in April 2020 by the launch of the procurement process via the Publication of Prior Indicative Notice on the Official Journal of the European Union.

In terms of the wider project, an estimated 98% of HS2 contracts have gone to UK based companies.

■ **Railway Stations: Disability**

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[105660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Part One of the National Disability Strategy published on 28 July 2021, whether his Department consulted on an update to the Design Standards for Accessible Stations in 2021 as planned.

Wendy Morton:

We are in the process of finalising a public consultation to revise the Design Standards for Accessible Stations: A Code of Practice. We will make a further announcement shortly.

■ **Railway Stations: Visual Impairment**

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[105661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Part One of the National Disability Strategy published on 28 July 2021, what work his Department has carried out to date with Network Rail to develop proposals for the accelerated upgrade of rail station platforms with tactile paving.

Wendy Morton:

Network Rail estimate that around 60 percent of British mainline station platforms are fitted with tactile surfaces. We are committed to making this 100 percent and Network Rail has received an initial £10 million to install tactile paving at priority stations not already funded. Tactiles have since been installed at a number of stations including Chiswick, Cosham and Whitchurch with more to come. I will make further announcements on future rounds of funding in due course.

■ **Railways: Disability**

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[105658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Part One of the National Disability Strategy published on 28 July 2021 and his Department's invitation to submit innovative project ideas to improve communication for disabled passengers and others with reduced mobility on rail services across Great Britain, (a) whether the contracts were awarded as planned by July 2021, (b) how many contracts were awarded and (c) to whom they were awarded.

Wendy Morton:

Four projects aimed at making the railway easier to use for people with disabilities were awarded funding through the First of a Kind 2021 rail innovation competition. The contracts were awarded to Mission Room Ltd, GoMedia Services Ltd (two projects) and Transreport Ltd, working in partnership with other bodies. Each project commenced as scheduled on 1 July 2021, though contracts for the two projects led by GoMedia were finalised in August and October due to delays in completing pre-contract checks. The projects are all still in progress and are scheduled to complete by the end of March 2022.

Railways: Fares

Sarah Olney: [\[105684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has conducted an assessment of the potential impact of a rise in rail fares on the railway industry.

Sarah Olney: [\[105685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential impact of a rise in rail fares on the environment.

Sarah Olney: [\[105688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential impact of a rise in rail fares on passenger numbers.

Wendy Morton:

Rail fares increases will be capped and tied to the Retail Price Index (RPI) figure for July 2021 (3.8%). 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% or 4.9% change with October being even higher at 6%.

No specific assessment has been made on environmental impacts or on those on the rail industry in general. On passenger numbers, the Department takes guidance from the Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook on the effect of changes to fares on rail demand and revenues.

Sarah Olney: [\[105686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has consulted commuter groups on the anticipated rise in the cost of rail fares.

Wendy Morton:

Since announcing the rise on 17 December, the Department has consulted a number of key stakeholders, including those that represent passengers.

Railways: Season Tickets

Louise Haigh: [\[105638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many flexi season tickets have been sold since the sale began on 21 July 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

Over 100,000 new flexible season tickets have been sold since their launch on 21 June 2021, offering commuters travelling two to three days a week significant savings as they return to the railway.

Regional Airports: Income**Paul Girvan:**[\[105698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to support regional airports that have lost a significant amount of income due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Robert Courts:

This government has renewed the Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme (AGOSS) for a third time to support airports and ground handlers suffering losses as a result of COVID-19. The latest renewal of the scheme, which is open to eligible regional airports in England, will provide up to £4m of support towards permitted fixed costs, and represents a crucial funding and liquidity bridge through the typically challenging winter months for the sector, toward the increased stability that the summer season offers.

By the end of this financial year, this government will have in total provided up to £175m through the AGOSS scheme. This forms part of the around £8 billion of government support that the air transport sector has benefitted from since the start of the pandemic, demonstrating our commitment to safeguarding the sector.

Support for airports outside of England remains a devolved matter, with the support offered through AGOSS consistent with measures in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and new AGOSS funding attracting Barnett consequential for the devolved administrations in the usual manner.

Road Traffic Control: Police**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[106687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to implement the recommendations of HMICFRS's July 2020 report, Roads Policing: Not optional - An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales.

Trudy Harrison:

The HMICFRS report Roads Policing: Not Optional was commissioned by the Roads Policing Review Governance Board which is jointly chaired by officials from the Department for Transport and the Home Office. Recommendations 1 to 3 and 7 were addressed to the Government. The remainder of the thirteen recommendations were for Chief Constables and the College of Policing.

In respect of Recommendation 1 that Department for Transport and Home Office produce a joint road safety strategy, the Government is going further. We will instead establish a cross Government Road Safety Strategic Board to engage all Departments in a strategic framework to reduce road casualties.

The use of statutory powers to require locally elected PCCs to include specific policing issues in their Police and Crime plans needs to be balanced with a proper regard for local autonomy and the will of local voters. PCCs are directly elected and must consult their communities in developing a Police and Crime Plan that reflects local circumstances. The Home Office is committed to working closely with the police and PCCs to consider what further improvements can be made to the effectiveness of roads enforcement in England and Wales and reduce road traffic casualties.

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) will set clear direction to policing on the contribution they need to make to respond to national threats including terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse. It will highlight where police forces need to work together, using local and/or regional capabilities, to protect the public. Following the SPR review that we concluded last year, we are considering the national threats and policing capabilities, such as roads policing, that are included in the SPR. The revised SPR will be published in due course.

Recommendation 7 was that the Government should refresh Department for Transport Circular 1/2007. The Department for Transport is currently redrafting and updating the guidance in consultation with stakeholders and it is anticipated new guidance will be published in the summer.

The Home Office and Department for Transport will continue to work with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing to monitor the progress made in respect of the recommendations relevant to them. This will be done in a manner that respects the operational independence of Chief Officers and the College of Policing.

■ **Rolling Stock: Yorkshire and the Humber**

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[106648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of trains operating across all routes in Yorkshire each month are (a) fully electric, (b) hybrid and (c) diesel.

Wendy Morton:

We do not hold information regarding fleet deployment at a county level. The Integrated Rail Plan will see electrification on the Transpennine Main Line between Manchester, Leeds and York, and the Midland Mainline between Sheffield, the East Midlands, and London St Pancras.

■ **Transport: Public Lavatories**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[105654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Part One of the National Disability Strategy published on 28 July 2021, how many additional Changing Places toilets have been made available since August 2021.

Wendy Morton:

In October 2020, the government announced that it would provide £2.2 million of funding to 59 motorway service areas to support the installation of more Changing Places toilets on the motorway network in England.

Most of these will be installed through 2022, with all due to be in place by April 2023.

This will see us achieve the ambition set out in the 2018 Inclusive Transport Strategy to have Changing Places toilets at the majority of motorway service areas in England.

TREASURY■ **Beer: Coronavirus****Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[106644\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support his Department is making available for brewery taprooms affected by reduced footfall caused by the spread of the omicron variant over the festive period.

Helen Whately:

The Government is committed to supporting hospitality venues throughout this challenging period.

The COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) is designed to provide support to businesses affected by COVID-19 that have not been covered by existing support linked to business rates. This relief will be awarded through funding for Local Authorities (LAs), taking into account the economic impact COVID-19 has had on specific sectors. It is for LAs to award relief based on their local schemes and applications received, while having regard to the guidance.

The Government is also providing an Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG) worth up to £6,000 to eligible businesses. If a hospitality venue generates more than 50% of its income from providing in-person food and drink services, then they will be eligible to receive this. Hospitality venues not eligible for the OHLG may be able to apply for support from the Additional Restrictions Grant, which was increased by over £100 million in response to the Omicron variant.

Furthermore, as announced at Autumn Budget 2021, the duty rates on alcohol, including beer, will be frozen for another year. This is expected to save consumers £3 billion over the coming years and will save beer drinkers £900 million. Beer duty rates are now at their lowest level in real terms since the 1990s.

■ **Debts: Advisory Services****Chi Onwurah:**[\[106695\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with the Money and Pensions Service over the decision on recommissioning of new contracts for local debt advice services in (a) the North East, (b) North West and (c) Midlands; what his timeframe is for agreeing new contracts for those debt advice services; and what

assessment he has made of the impact on local communities of the non availability of those services.

John Glen:

The Government and the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) are committed to creating a more resilient debt advice sector, which will drive better quality of advice and customer outcomes over the longer term.

As per their update of 17 December 2021, MaPS have evaluated the bids for the regional lot and concluded that the services being offered through submissions would not represent value for money or adequately meet the need of people in vulnerable circumstances. Over the coming months, MaPS intends to work closely with stakeholders to identify the best ways to deliver locally based debt advice provision in England and how best to procure these services on a longer-term basis. MaPS will provide more details on how they intend to carry out this engagement in the coming months.

■ **Defibrillators: VAT**

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[106641\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 January 2018 to Question 123106 and the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 60363, if he will provide further detail on what VAT relief the Government maintains for community defibrillators and associated equipment such as batteries and casing.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government maintains VAT reliefs to aid the purchase of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), including VAT relief on purchases made by local authorities and those made through voluntary contributions, where the AED is donated to eligible charities or the NHS. Otherwise, they attract the standard rate of VAT.

Defibrillator batteries and pads attract the standard rate of 20 per cent, which may be recoverable if purchased by a business, subject to the normal rules on VAT recovery.

Any new VAT relief would come at a cost to the exchequer and the Government has received over £50 billion worth of requests for relief from VAT since the EU referendum.

The Government however keeps all taxes under constant review.

■ **Health and Social Care Levy: Scotland and Wales**

Ben Lake:

[\[103651\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 29 November 2021 to Question 78496, whether his Department's engagement with the devolved Administrations included how the new Health and Social Care levy should be described by payroll messaging facilities in those nations.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government's ongoing engagement with the Devolved Administrations includes raising awareness of HMRC non-statutory guidance to employers, for example, being explicit on payslips that the increase in National Insurance liabilities pays for additional health and social care funding. This engagement will continue until, and beyond, the introduction of the Health and Social Care levy in April 2022.

■ Taxation: Fraud**Cat Smith:****[103572]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the loss to the Exchequer of tax revenue through tax scams.

Lucy Frazer:

The information requested is not available as HMRC does not make an estimate of the amount of revenue lost through tax scams.

HMRC estimates the tax gap which is the difference between the amount of tax that should, in theory, be paid to HMRC, and what is actually paid. For the tax year 2019-20, the tax gap arising from criminal attacks on the tax system was £5.2 billion.

Tax gap statistics are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/measuring-tax-gaps>

Cat Smith:**[103573]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many cases have there been identified by the HMRC team looking into cases of false self-assessment filing to date.

Cat Smith:**[103574]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to fraudsters who have been identified by HMRC, did those persons fraudulently register as authorised tax agents or advisers.

Cat Smith:**[103575]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, where fraudsters have been identified by HMRC, if they have been issued an agent code.

Cat Smith:**[104353]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the number of court cases relating to persons filing fraudulent self-assessment tax claims without the claimant's knowledge.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC has a duty to protect the tax system from potential fraudulent repayment claims being made which undermine both public confidence in the system and reduces the amount of money available to fund our vital public services.

Over 90 per cent of HMRC's Income Tax Self-Assessment repayment requests come from a genuine person and are paid without suspension or intervention. However, their systems are continually under attack from fraudsters.

Over the last 8 years, HMRC have successfully countered fraudulent repayments through rigorous risk assessment and other upstream initiatives. However, the volume of attempts to defraud them has also increased and they must continually adapt their response.

A release of the information requested in these questions, including the numbers of cases worked and the outcome of those cases, could undermine the compliance activity which HMRC are undertaking. This could in turn prejudice any investigations into suspected repayment fraud.

Where a fraudster has been identified, HMRC will not give them agent codes and will suspend any codes that may already be active in order to maintain the integrity of the tax system, safeguard customer data, and protect revenues.

■ **Taxation: Self-assessment**

Cat Smith: [\[103576\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether SA1 registration forms for Self-Assessment are retained by HMRC after processing.

Lucy Frazer:

Paper SA1 Registrations forms are retained for three years after processing. In cases where the SA1 cannot be processed because there is insufficient information, a letter is sent to the customer requesting that information and the SA1 is deleted. The letter tells the customer to complete a new registration form.

SA1 forms submitted online are not retained.

■ **Treasury: Diaries**

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[106879\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish in full his Ministerial diary for 20 May 2020.

Helen Whately:

Ministers regularly meet with departmental officials and external stakeholders. Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published quarterly and can be found here: [HMT ministers' meetings, hospitality, gifts and overseas travel - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel)

■ **Treasury: Heathrow Airport**

Emily Thornberry: [\[106674\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the (a) dates and (b) outbound destinations for each occasion (i) he and (ii) his predecessors made use of the VIP suites at Heathrow Airport in (A) 2019, (B) 2020 and (C) 2021.

Helen Whately:

There has not been an occasion in which any Chancellor between 2019 – 2021 has made use of any VIP suites at Heathrow Airport while on official business.

■ **Wines: Excise Duties****Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[100618\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of the review of excise duties on wine and subsequent price impacts on small businesses and independent wine sellers of higher strength and higher value wines.

Helen Whately:

The Government believes the reforms announced at the Budget will produce an alcohol duty system that is overall simpler, fairer and healthier.

The reforms announced at Autumn Budget 2021 mean higher strength still wines will pay more duty, while lighter wines (below 11.5% alcohol by volume – ABV) will become cheaper.

The Government also announced that the 28% higher duty rate on sparkling wine will be abolished, so that sparkling wines will pay considerably less duty in future. From 2023 sparkling and still wines of the same strength will pay the same duty.

The Government is continuing to engage with industry – including small businesses – for further information about the effect of the changes on them. Industry members are encouraged to respond to the alcohol review consultation before the deadline of 30 January 2022.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES■ **Equality Act 2010****Dan Carden:**[\[105710\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether he plans to review the Equality Act 2010.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Equality Act 2010 is continually kept under review to ensure that it operates as intended. A formal post-legislative scrutiny of the Act took place in 2015 and there are no current plans for a further such exercise.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme

Damien Moore:

[\[103678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has plans to reduce the required application frequency by disabled people for support through the Access To Work scheme, where their needs have not changed.

Chloe Smith:

Access to Work is committed to improving customer experience and transforming the service disabled people receive. This will introduce a new digital customer journey and explores how we can streamline the current processes, including reviewing the frequency of applications.

In addition, we are developing the Adjustments Passport which aims to reduce the need for holistic assessments where the customer's needs remain the same. The Adjustments Passport is currently being piloted with freelancers, contractors and universities. In 2022, it will include the Armed Forces service leavers and various Department for Education programmes supporting young disabled people.

■ Cold Weather Payments

Rachael Maskell:

[\[103592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing the rate of cold weather payments.

Guy Opperman:

There are currently no plans to change the Cold Weather Payment scheme.

The Cold Weather Payment scheme helps vulnerable people in receipt of certain income-related benefits to meet the additional costs of heating for every week of severe cold weather, between 1 November and 31 March each year. A payment of £25 is made when the average temperature has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0 degrees C or below over seven consecutive days at the weather station linked to an eligible person's postcode. It is paid automatically within 14 working days of a trigger to ensure claimants receive payments at the time of need. Between 1 November 2020 and 31 March 2021, the Government made £98.8 million in payments to those in need.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: City of Westminster and Kensington

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[106623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in (a) Westminster North, (b) Cities of London and Westminster South and (c) Kensington constituency.

Jeff Smith: [\[106756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people in Manchester Withington constituency who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits following the transition from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19th January to question number [104377](#).

■ **Employment and Support Allowance: Devon**

Luke Pollard: [\[107721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in (a) Plymouth Sutton and Devonport, (b) Plymouth Moor View and (c) South West Devon constituency.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave on 19th January to question number [104377](#).

■ **Employment and Support Allowance: Greater London**

Clive Efford: [\[105341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment support allowance in (a) Eltham, (b) Bromley and Chislehurst, (c) Beckenham, (d) Orpington, (e) Old Bexley and Sidcup and (f) Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[105407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Bristol East constituency.

Debbie Abrahams: [\[105525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Oldham East and Saddleworth constituency.

Debbie Abrahams: [\[105526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after

transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Heywood and Middleton constituency.

Gerald Jones: [\[105667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the under payment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney constituency.

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[105670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Ealing Central and Acton constituency.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[106689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits following their transition from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in (a) Broxtowe, (b) Gedling and (c) Rushcliffe constituencies.

Jess Phillips: [\[106719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment support allowance in Birmingham Yardley constituency.

Jess Phillips: [\[106720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people in Birmingham Erdington constituency who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment support allowance.

Helen Hayes: [\[106812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19th January to question number [104377](#).

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Harrow West**Gareth Thomas:** [\[105342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Harrow West constituency; and if she will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[105343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency; and if she will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[105344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Harrow East constituency; and if she will make a statement.

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[105372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Wallasey constituency.

Alison McGovern: [\[105501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment support allowance, by parliamentary constituency.

Alison McGovern: [\[105502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment support allowance in Wirral South constituency.

Mary Glendon: [\[105520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to unemployment and support allowance in North Tyneside constituency.

Andy McDonald: [\[105555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after

transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Middlesbrough constituency.

Andy McDonald: [\[105556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency.

Andy McDonald: [\[105557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Redcar constituency.

Kate Hollern: [\[105573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Blackburn.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[105577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in the Brentford and Isleworth constituency.

Cat Smith: [\[105601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency.

Chris Elmore: [\[105681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Ogmore constituency.

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[105691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Gower constituency.

Emma Hardy: [\[105708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Hull West and Hessle constituency.

Mike Amesbury: [\[105715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Weaver Vale constituency.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[105723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of social security after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Battersea constituency.

Ruth Jones: [\[105725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Newport West constituency.

Kate Osborne: [\[105747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Jarrow constituency.

Zarah Sultana: [\[105748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of social security payments after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Coventry South constituency.

Fleur Anderson: [\[105749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Putney constituency.

Apsana Begum: [\[105750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after

transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Poplar and Limehouse constituency.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[105755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employment and support allowance claimants her Department has determined were underpaid their benefits following their 2011 reassessment in Warrington North constituency; and what the total cash amount is that they were underpaid.

Paula Barker: [\[105759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Liverpool Wavertree constituency.

Alex Davies-Jones: [\[105770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Pontypridd constituency.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[105783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from incapacity benefit to employment and support allowance in Luton South constituency.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19th January to question number [104377](#).

■ **Employment and Support Allowance: Wolverhampton**

Valerie Vaz: [\[106692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from Incapacity Benefit to Employment Support Allowance in (a) Wolverhampton South West and (b) Wolverhampton North East to date.

Valerie Vaz: [\[106693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits after transitioning from Incapacity Benefit to Employment Support Allowance in (a) Walsall South constituency, (b) Walsall North constituency and (iii) Aldridge Brownhills constituency.

Valerie Vaz: [\[106694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have been affected by the underpayment of benefits following their transition from incapacity benefit to employment support allowance in (a) West Bromwich East, (b) West Bromwich West and (iii) Halesowen and Rowley Regis.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19th January to question number [104377](#).

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[103606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November 2021 to Question 65471 on the Health Transformation Programme, how many assessors are on secondment to her Department from Advanced Personnel Management Group (UK) Ltd; and how many (a) work capability assessments and (b) personal independence payment assessments they have undertaken since May 2021.

Chloe Smith:

There are currently 28 Healthcare Professionals employed by Advanced Personnel Management Group (UK) Ltd working in the Health Transformation Area (HTA).

There were 13 Healthcare Professionals in the HTA when it first began operating.

In the HTA, we have completed just over 500 PIP and close to 1500 WCA assessments.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[103607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November 2021 to Question 65471 on the Health Transformation Programme, when she plans to begin recruitment of the new in-house assessors for work capability assessments and personal independence payment assessments who will be directly employed by her Department.

Chloe Smith:

We have launched our first recruitment advert for Healthcare Professionals (closing date 03 February) for 10 roles in our existing Health Transformation Area sites in London and Birmingham.

Individuals appointed from this advert will work alongside existing Healthcare Professionals provided by Advanced Personnel Management Group (UK) Ltd.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[103608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress she has made on the tendering process for health and disability assessments from 2023.

Chloe Smith:

The tender for Functional Assessment Service contracts to deliver health and disability assessments from 2023 was successfully launched by the DWP on 12 November 2021.

The details can be found on [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Vicky Foxcroft:**[103609]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will place in the Library details of the procurement process that resulted in Advanced Personnel Management Group (UK) Ltd being contracted to undertake disability benefit assessments and other work under the Health Transformation Programme.

Chloe Smith:

DWP undertook an EU open procurement exercise for the provision of Additional Healthcare Capacity services in 2018. Upon conclusion of the exercise APM (UK) Ltd were awarded the contract to provide these services.

The details of the procurement process are publicly available and can be found on www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk.

Vicky Foxcroft:**[103610]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the evidence pack published alongside the Health and Disability Green Paper in July 2021, if she will place in the Library the survey questionnaires sent to claimants by Atos, Capita and Maximus following one of their assessments for employment support allowance, universal credit limited capability for work or work related activity and personal independence payment which result in 97 per cent and 94 per cent satisfaction respectively.

Chloe Smith:

Yes, DWP will place in the library a copy of the questionnaires..

However, it should be noted that the survey questionnaires for each provider have since been updated to incorporate remote assessment channels (telephone and video) introduced as part of the Covid-19 response.