

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 27 January 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:33 P.M., 27 January 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Staff

Emily Thornberry:

[110297]

To ask the Attorney General, how many staff the CPS employed (a) overall and (b) in the International Justice and Organised Crime Division, (c) in the Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division and (d) in the Specialist Fraud Division as of (i) 24 January 2022, (ii) 1 January 2022, (iii) 1 January 2021, (iv) 1 January 2020, (v) 1 January 2019, (vi) 1 January 2018, (vii) 1 January 2017, and (viii) 1 January 2016.

Alex Chalk:

The Data set out in the table below shows CPS headcount (a) overall, (b) in the International Justice and Organised Crime Division, (c) in the Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division and (d) in the Specialist Fraud Division as close to those dates specified.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/110297>

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Carbon Dioxide: Shortages

Bill Esterson:

[110340]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to prepare contingency measures to prioritise users of CO2 in the event that there are supply shortages as a result of the closure of CF Fertilisers' plant at Billingham.

Lee Rowley:

It is for the CO2 industry to ensure supplies to their customers across the UK, as demand requires and based on market conditions. We are confident that industry is working extensively to ensure that essential CO2 is supplied into the UK market where it is required.

■ Competition Law: Reviews

John Penrose:

[\[107533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Government will publish its official response to the Penrose Review that it commissioned into the UK's competition and consumer regime, published in February 2021.

Paul Scully:

I would like to thank the Hon. Member for conducting his review and continued advocacy for reforming our competition and consumer policy. The Government consulted from July to October 2021 on a wide range of reforms to competition and consumer policy, and the consultations respond to proposals made by the Hon. Member in his report. The Government is now analysing the feedback received and will respond to the consultations in due course. We do not intend to issue a formal response to the Penrose review beyond our plans for response to consultation.

■ Competition: Digital Technology

Damian Collins:

[\[108515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the Government's response to the consultation on a new pro-competition regime for digital markets.

Paul Scully:

The consultation closed in October. We are carefully considering the responses we received and will publish our response in due course.

■ Coronavirus: Uganda

Caroline Lucas:

[\[107538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the expiry date was for the shipment of 299,520 doses of Astra Zeneca vaccine donated by the UK to Covax scheduled to touch down in Uganda on 18-19 August 2021.

George Freeman:

These doses were delivered to COVAX with approximately two months' shelf life, with an expiry of the end of September.

The UK, COVAX and AZ are working closely together and with international partners such as UNICEF to allocate vaccines according to need, facilitate the rapid delivery of doses and maximise the shelf life available to recipients. This includes the provision of regular forecasts to COVAX to assist planning. Doses are sent directly by AZ to UNICEF, rather than having to be processed by the UK Government.

Vaccines delivered by COVAX are distributed in line with the World Health Organisation's 'equitable allocation framework', which helps ensure COVAX doses reach those countries most in need. Recipient countries are informed of vaccine expiry dates, and doses are delivered in consultation with countries via COVAX to ensure they are ready and able to begin immediate roll out.

■ Defence: Space Technology

Carol Monaghan:

[\[109267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the National Space Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on how the defence space portfolio can enable wider space sector growth aspirations.

George Freeman:

In September 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Secretary of State for Defence published the UK's first joint civil and military National Space Strategy. A core part of that strategy is delivering the defence space portfolio, which will support our goals in space including both protecting and defending the UK and supporting economic growth.

The Ministry of Defence is investing an extra £1.4bn in Defence space technologies over the next 10 years. This is in addition to the £5bn investment in Skynet satellite communications over a similar timeframe. This represents a significant increase in Government funding for the UK space sector and will play a part in stimulating innovation, commercialisation, and growth across the wider sector. Defence will utilise elements of the Defence Space Portfolio funding to further support Space Science & Technology (which includes Research & Development), alongside existing funding.

Ministers and officials engage regularly with the Ministry of Defence to understand the opportunities and challenges to enable the UK's space sector to grow and flourish, and I look forward to continuing to engage in that process as we implement the National Space Strategy.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Incentives

Bill Esterson:

[\[110342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2022 to Question 104330 on Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Expenditure, how many individuals were awarded non-cash award vouchers supplied by Park Retail Ltd during July and September 2021.

George Freeman:

The table below shows the number of individuals that were awarded non-cash award vouchers during July and September 2021.

NUMBER AWARDED

Jul-21	482
Aug-21	240
Sep-21	182

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Legislation**

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[109237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many pieces of (a) primary and (b) secondary legislation their Department has sponsored in each of the last 10 years.

George Freeman:

The information on primary legislation is only held for internal administrative reasons and may not be exhaustive, for example, due to machinery of government changes to departmental structure in the past decade.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) was founded in 2016, through a merger between the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). The information for primary legislation therefore includes predecessor departments. Due to the nature of primary legislation spanning calendar years, information has been provided per Parliamentary Session.

PARLIAMENTARY SESSION	DEPARTMENTAL SPONSORED GOVERNMENT BILLS
2021 - 2022 Session	6
2019 - 2021 Session	4
2017 - 2019 Session	4
2016 - 2017 Session	1
2015 - 2016 Session	3
2014 - 2015 Session	2
2013 - 2014 Session	2
2012 - 2013 Session	2
2010 - 2012 Session	2

The number of pieces of secondary legislation sponsored by Government departments could be calculated utilising publicly available information. This information is not held within the Department.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Park Retail**

Bill Esterson:

[\[110341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2022 to Question 104330 on Department for Business, Energy

and Industrial Strategy: Expenditure, how much his Department has paid to Park Retail Ltd since they were first accredited as a supplier.

George Freeman:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy was formed in July 2016.

The total paid via electronic purchasing card solution (ePCS) since July 2016 to September 2021 is £997,000.

■ **Drax Power Station**

Allan Dorans:

[\[108623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of (a) the number of megawatt-hours of power produced by Drax power station from burning wood pellets in the last year and (b) tonnes of CO₂ created by that supply chain; and whether he has made an estimate of the equivalent supply chain carbon cost in the event that that power station was still burning coal.

Greg Hands:

Data regarding the electricity generation in megawatt-hours derived from burning wood pellets at the Drax power station is not available due to commercial confidentiality.

The supply chain target for biomass supported under the Renewable Obligation and Contracts for Difference scheme is 240 kgCO_{2eq} per MWh (from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2020), and 200 kgCO_{2eq} per MWh (from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025), though generators may perform lower than that.

The Department does not hold supply chain emissions data for coal.

■ **Drax Power Station: Timber**

Allan Dorans:

[\[108622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in the context of wood pellets being sourced from Estonia and burnt at the Drax power station, what his policy is on the minimum number of trees per hectare that need to be replanted for a forest to count as sustainably managed.

Greg Hands:

In accordance with the Government's strict sustainability criteria, biomass needs to be sourced from areas managed in a way that is consistent with sustainable forest management practices, irrespective of the sourcing location. Further information on sustainable forest management that informs the UK's sustainability criteria can be found at:

<https://foresteurope.org/workstreams/sustainable-forest-management/#>.

■ Fireworks

Sir Alan Campbell:

[\[108467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to review legislation in place on fireworks.

Paul Scully:

There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks. The Government's aim is to strike the right balance for people to enjoy fireworks, whilst aiming to reduce risks and disturbances to people, animals, and property.

The Government has no current plans to place further restrictions on the sale of fireworks to the public.

■ Life Sciences: Task Forces

Chi Onwurah:

[\[110353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to page 34 of the Life Sciences Vision published on 6 July 2021, (a) what recent progress he has made on establishing the Life Science Scale Up Taskforce; how that Taskforce is funded; from which budget that Taskforce receives its funding; what criteria his Department will use to award funding to life sciences start ups; and whether he has made an assessment of that Taskforce's contribution to levelling up.

George Freeman:

In September 2021, the Government convened a Life Sciences Scale-up Taskforce (the Taskforce), who were asked to consider how we can drive progress on the ease with which Life Science companies across the UK can start, grow, and scale up. This Taskforce was industry-led and not funded by Government.

In December 2021, the Taskforce provided its response to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. This included recommendations on issues that inhibit scale-up and growth, identified throughout the Life Sciences Vision (the Vision). These recommendations will now be considered by the Government as it takes forward implementation of the Vision.

■ Natural Gas: Storage

John Redwood:

[\[105319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to expand UK gas storage capacity.

Greg Hands:

The Department is continuing to explore the future of the gas storage landscape, including in relation to hydrogen. The diversity of Great Britain's sources of gas supply obviates reliance on natural gas storage, distinguishing Great Britain from some European countries.

The Government recognises that the gas sector underpins the nation's security of supply, whilst the renewables sector and low carbon infrastructure continues to grow and develop.

The North Sea Transition Deal will support workers, businesses and the supply chain through the energy transition by harnessing the industry's existing capabilities, infrastructure, and private investment potential to exploit new and emerging technologies such as hydrogen production, Carbon Capture Usage and Storage, offshore wind and decommissioning, with a focus on people and skills so that no-one is left behind.

■ **Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant**

Kim Leadbeater:

[110644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason (a) travel agencies (b) hairdressers and personal care providers and (c) gyms are not included in the list of eligible businesses set out in Annex A of the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant Guidance document issued on 21 January 2022.

Paul Scully:

The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG) scheme supports businesses that offer in-person services, where the main service and activity takes place in a fixed rate-paying premises, in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors. The funding supports sectors where social mixing is a primary motivation for consumers.

An indicative list of the types of businesses that can be supported under this scheme can be found at annex A of the scheme guidance. It is for Local Authorities to determine those cases where eligibility is unclear.

Local Authorities are encouraged to focus Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) support on businesses who have been severely impacted by reduced business activity due to the spread of the Omicron variant. The guidance does not mandate specific evidence to determine if a business has been severely impacted by Omicron. It is for Local Authorities to issue grants at their discretion, based on local decision making.

The guidance for both OHLG and ARG schemes can be found [here](#).

■ **Re-employment**

Justin Madders:

[108543]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to reform the law on fire and rehire practices.

Paul Scully:

This Government has been clear that we expect employers to treat their employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership. Using threats about firing and rehiring as a negotiation tactic is unacceptable. We expect employers and employees to negotiate

new terms and conditions and there are laws around how this must be done, and legal protections in place when firms are considering redundancies.

We asked Acas to produce new and updated guidance which was published on 11 November, and sets out the employer's responsibilities when considering changes to employment contracts. In their guidance, Acas state that an employer should only consider dismissing and offering to rehire someone on new terms ('dismissal and re-engagement') as a last resort. The guidance is available from:

<http://www.acas.org.uk/changecontract>.

■ Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme

Drew Hendry:

[108553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the renewable heat incentive (RHI) scheme application closure deadline beyond 31 March 2022 for the purposes of allowing applications from people who have already ordered potentially RHI eligible systems that may not be installed by 31 March 2022 as a result of shipping delays.

Greg Hands:

The Government intends to close the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive to new applications on 31 March 2022. In England and Wales, this will be followed by the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, which is scheduled to launch in April 2022. The Boiler Upgrade Scheme will provide a more targeted, accessible, and simpler offer, by providing upfront capital grants to support the installation of low carbon heat technologies. Some installations which are unable to apply in time for the Renewable Heat Incentive may be eligible for support in the Boiler Upgrade Scheme instead. The Scottish Government has made the decision to opt out of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme in favour of using their budget to enhance their existing schemes such as Warmer Homes Scotland and Home Energy Scotland Loans and Cashback.

■ Research: Private Sector

Chi Onwurah:

[110349]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help encourage more private, self-funded research and development.

George Freeman:

We are implementing the Innovation Strategy, which sets out the Government's vision to make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035. It aims to boost private sector investment across the whole of the UK, which is critical to achieve our target of 2.4% of GDP being invested in R&D by 2027.

Through the Strategy, we have committed to take action in areas such as regulation and public procurement, creating the conditions for all businesses to innovate. However, this is just the starting point, and over the coming months and years

we will continue to build an enabling environment for private sector investment in R&D.

Following the Spending Review, we are also ensuring that government funding attracts private – including from overseas – investment. For example, we have increased funding for core Innovate UK programmes, reaching c.£1bn per year by 2024/25, which are highly successful in securing private sector leverage.

■ Space Technology

Carol Monaghan: [\[109268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has for a joint, multi-year national space portfolio between his Department and the Ministry of Defence to support the implementation of the National Space Strategy.

George Freeman:

In September 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Secretary of State for Defence published the UK's first joint civil and military National Space Strategy. A core part of that strategy is delivering the defence space portfolio, which will support our goals in space, including both protecting and defending the UK and supporting economic growth.

The Ministry of Defence is investing an extra £1.4bn in Defence space technologies over the next 10 years. This is in addition to the £5bn investment in Skynet satellite communications over a similar timeframe. This represents a significant increase in Government funding for the UK space sector and will play a part in stimulating innovation, commercialisation, and growth across the wider sector. Defence will utilise elements of the Defence Space Portfolio funding to further support Space Science & Technology (which includes Research & Development), alongside existing funding.

Ministers and officials engage regularly with the Ministry of Defence to understand the opportunities and challenges to enable the UK's space sector to grow and flourish, and I look forward to continuing to engage in that process as we implement the National Space Strategy.

Carol Monaghan: [\[109269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to publish a detailed implementation plan for the National Space Strategy.

George Freeman:

The National Space Strategy, published in September 2021, sets out the Government's plans to build one of the most innovative and attractive space economies in the world. Government is already pivoting to build on the success of the strategy's publication to drive forward its delivery and prioritise commercial and investment enabling activities.

The BEIS Space Directorate is working closely with the Ministry of Defence to develop an implementation plan and we will engage with industry, academia, and the sector in due course.

BEIS jointly co-chairs the newly established 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.

Monitoring and evaluating the impact of initiatives against key success factors will be an integral part of delivering the strategy's vision. The Government will work with the space sector on finding the right set of metrics to raise ambition, drive progress and monitor delivery.

■ **Termination of Employment: Commuters**

Charlotte Nichols:

[107733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether her Department holds data on the number of commuters whose employment was terminated as a result of those people being unable to attend work as a result of disruption caused by protests in 2021.

Paul Scully:

The Department does not collect this information. However, we expect employers and employees to behave reasonably in relation to travel disruption and discuss whether it is possible to work from home, take leave or make the time up later if they cannot get to work because of travel disruption. More guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/travel-disruption-your-rights-at-work>.

■ **Urban Areas: Retail Trade**

Stuart Anderson:

[108624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support the growth and sustainability of independent shops, cafes, and restaurants on high streets.

Paul Scully:

In July 2021, the Department launched the first-ever hospitality strategy to support the reopening, recovery and resilience of England's pubs, restaurants, cafes and nightclubs. We have also launched the Hospitality Sector Council to oversee the delivery of the strategy, including working with the sector to make hospitality a career option of choice and looking at the labour and skills shortages.

In order to help address the immediate challenges of labour shortages in the hospitality sector, the Department for Work and Pensions is working hard to fill ongoing vacancies by using work coaches to help find local talent, and Plans for Jobs programmes, such as Kickstart and Sector-based Work Academy Programmes.

The Department for Education has also added hospitality and catering qualifications to the Free Courses for Jobs, as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

Additionally, we are increasing employer-led apprenticeship funding to £2.7 billion by 2024-25, extending the £3,000 incentive payment for every apprentice a business hires up until 31 January 2022, and improving the apprenticeship system for employers.

On 15 July, we published the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy, where we committed to continue working with the retail sector, and the Retail Sector Council in particular, on its long-term strategic needs to ensure that businesses are profitable, resilient, innovative and support local economies in socially and environmentally responsible ways.

On 20 January, BEIS and HMT jointly launched Help to Grow Digital, a UK wide Government scheme offering eligible small and medium sized businesses access to digital technology to supercharge their business growth and help drive our recovery from coronavirus.

On 18 August, the Retail Sector Council launched a national online initiative to help small independent retailers (SMEs) cut their carbon footprint and become more environmentally friendly . [Green Street](#) is an informative and accessible Hub, built by retailers for retailers to encourage planet friendly shopping.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Business Interests

Angela Rayner:

[\[110379\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the letter of 24 January 2022 from Lord Pickles on behalf of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, what steps he plans to take to enforce effectively the Business Appointment Rules.

Michael Ellis:

The Cabinet Office is leading the programme of work to improve the Business Appointment Rules in collaboration with the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. The Cabinet Office aims to improve: the scope and clarity of the Rules, the consistency and proportionality of their implementation across government, and enforcement of the Rules.

The Government is currently reviewing Lord Pickles' letter of 24 January, including its points on the need for differentiation between the Business Appointment Rules and rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists or the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

I note that in his correspondence, Lord Pickles advises: "The Committee's advice letters will now make explicit reference to a former minister's responsibility to

understand any other rules and regulations they are subject to in parallel with the Committee's advice."

■ **Cabinet Office: Government Procurement Card**

Emily Thornberry: [\[110292\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a Government procurement card was used by staff of his Office to order deliveries of pizza with a value lower than £500 on the night of 16 April 2021.

Michael Ellis:

No.

■ **Cabinet Office: Taxis**

Emily Thornberry: [\[110293\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether any vehicles were ordered on his Office's mini-cab account to take Downing Street staff to their homes or other locations between 8pm and 4am on the night of 16 April 2021.

Michael Ellis:

No.

■ **Civil Servants: Recruitment**

Catherine West: [\[110490\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to promote diversity in the Civil Service Fast Stream.

Michael Ellis:

The proportion of ethnic minority groups overall being appointed to the Civil Service Fast Stream in 2021 was 23.3%, this aligns with the 2019/20 Higher Education Statistics Agency graduate population level of 23.7% for ethnicity.

Steps to ensure that students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are successful in their application to the Civil Service Fast Stream start with outreach, attraction and marketing activity, which is designed to encourage applications from individuals from all backgrounds and locations. This is undertaken via early stage schools, college and apprenticeship engagement, along with industrial and internship placements. We have developed an inclusive website, social media strategy, and refreshed the target university list for outreach.

Further to this, the Cabinet Office is:

- expanding the range of internships we offer,
- undertaking cultural bias reviews of our selection processes,
- increasing assessor diversity, and

- improving our fair and inclusive selection processes by incorporating more regional/virtual assessment.

Catherine West:

[\[110491\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to increase the proportion of black applicants in the Civil Service Fast Stream.

Catherine West:

[\[110492\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to increase the proportion of applications to the Civil Service Fast Stream from poorer and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Michael Ellis:

The proportion of ethnic minority groups overall being appointed to the Civil Service Fast Stream in 2021 was 23.3%, this aligns with the 2019/20 Higher Education Statistics Agency graduate population level of 23.7% for ethnicity.

Steps to ensure that students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are successful in their application to the Civil Service Fast Stream start with outreach, attraction and marketing activity, which is designed to encourage applications from individuals from all backgrounds and locations. This is undertaken via early stage schools, college and apprenticeship engagement, along with industrial and internship placements. We have developed an inclusive website, social media strategy, and refreshed the target university list for outreach.

Further to this, the Cabinet Office is:

- expanding the range of internships we offer,
- undertaking cultural bias reviews of our selection processes,
- increasing assessor diversity, and
- improving our fair and inclusive selection processes by incorporating more regional/virtual assessment.

■ Dover Port: Customs

Sarah Olney:

[\[110504\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he will take with his counterparts in the EU to resolve the backlog of road freight at Dover.

Michael Ellis:

Traffic flows and any congestion build up at the Short Straits are monitored 24/7 by officials on both sides of the English Channel, and the appropriate escalation routes are already in place, and well tested to mitigate the risk of delays at the border. The reasons why the Dover Traffic Assessment Project (TAP) has been activated recently

are understood, and we are confident that new customs processes introduced from 1 January were not the cause of queues.

Officials continue to monitor the situation closely and are engaging with industry groups, Port of Dover and local stakeholders in Kent.

■ **Dyson: Public Bodies**

Catherine West: [\[110648\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what products Dyson supplies to the UK public sector; and which Departments and services that includes.

Michael Ellis:

This information is not held centrally.

Details of Government contracts above £10,000 and £25,000 in the wider public sector are published on Contracts Finder:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>.

■ **Electronics Watch: Government Departments**

Catherine West: [\[110488\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether any Departments are affiliated to the labour rights monitoring organisation Electronics Watch.

Michael Ellis:

This information is not held centrally.

The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) has previously held a contract with Electronics Watch, which expired in June 2021. CCS are currently reviewing the service to assess whether it is the best source of data for labour rights monitoring and how this data can be shared more widely.

DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces: Mefloquine**

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[110226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department continues to apply the criteria introduced following the 2016 publication of the Defence Committee report (HC567) calling for restrictions on the prescribing of the antimalarial drug Lariam (Mefloquine) to Service personnel; if he will arrange for a consolidated table to be published of the twice-yearly data, subsequently compiled, showing the (a) number of individuals prescribed Lariam in each six-month period since such data began to be released, (b) percentages of those individuals prescribed Lariam who (i) did and (ii) did not receive face-to-face assessments, prior to the issuing of the prescriptions during each six-month period, and (c) totals of other antimalarials prescribed to Service personnel

during each six-month period; whether it is his policy that the use of Lariam on a scale greater than that since 2016 should be permitted in future; and whether he accepts the original recommendation by the Defence Committee that Lariam should be designated as a drug of last resort, to be prescribed to Service personnel only (A) if an individual is unable to tolerate any of the available alternatives; (B) after a face-to-face individual risk assessment; and (C) after he or she has been made aware of the available alternatives and given the choice between such alternatives and Lariam; and whether his Department has an evidential basis for challenging evidence of serious side effects previously caused to some Service personnel when Lariam was widely dispensed within the Armed Forces.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) revised its malaria prevention policy in response to the Defence Select Committee Inquiry. As a result, it remains the policy that mefloquine only be prescribed to Service personnel by a doctor, after a face-to-face malaria health risk assessment and alternatives to mefloquine have been identified as unsuitable. There are no plans for this policy to change in the future.

The Government publishes official statistics every six months on Mefloquine Prescribing in UK Armed Forces. All future official statistics will include the supplementary table requested.

It is admitted, on the balance of probabilities, that as a prophylactic mefloquine can cause a range of minor to moderate psychiatric symptoms in certain individuals for a limited period of time. The causal relation between mefloquine and severe or long-term symptoms has not been shown. Whether it has caused any symptoms in individual cases will be a matter for expert evidence.

The issue of longer-term sequelae is currently being litigated and the MOD has the support of eminent experts in the fields of psychiatry, neuro-psychiatry, epidemiology, neurotoxicology and psychopharmacology whose evidence is privileged and will be disclosed in due course within the litigation. Their evidence is consistent in its conclusion that there is insufficient evidence to establish a link between taking mefloquine and long-term psychiatric illness or neurological damage.

■ **Armed Forces: Sports Competitors**

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[110415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has (a) undertaken a risk assessment on behalf of those members of the Services travelling to Beijing as part of Team GB and (b) issued personal security advice and information to those serving personnel who are expected to travel.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence is proud of all Defence personnel involved with Team GB, and takes their security very seriously. Risk assessments regarding the 2022 Winter Olympics have been conducted by the Department in collaboration with Government partners. Tailored security threat awareness briefings have been, and will continue to

be, delivered by security teams to Defence personnel travelling to Beijing to participate in the Games.

■ **Chinook Helicopters: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[110263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2021 to Question 10187, on Chinook Helicopters: Procurement, how many jobs are expected to be supported in the wider UK supply chain for manufacture and long-term support.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[110264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of UK jobs created by the £64 million contract awarded to BDUK to improve the defence systems of the UK's Chinook fleet.

Jeremy Quin:

The current number of UK industry jobs supporting the Chinook helicopter fleet is estimated to exceed 450 across the UK defence supply chain. This includes around 100 jobs under the contract with BDUK to install state-of-the-art Infra-Red Suppression Systems across some of the Chinook fleet.

The UK and US Governments reached agreement in March 2021 to procure a future Chinook Capability as part of the Chinook Capability Sustainment Programme. This long-term investment is highly likely to provide sustainment of UK supply chain jobs and opportunities in the support of the Chinook Platform.

■ **Defence: Space Technology**

Carol Monaghan: [\[109270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department plans to publish the Defence Space Strategy.

Jeremy Quin:

We are planning for the publication of the Defence Space Strategy to happen soon.

■ **HMS Spey and HMS Tamar**

Luke Pollard: [\[107715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason the basing arrangements for HMS Spey and HMS Tamar in the Far East has changed from a base in Singapore to a service contract with BAE Systems not in Singapore.

James Heapey:

The Batch 2 OPVs are highly versatile platforms with the advantage of being suitable for maintenance in a large number of ship yards around the world. Thus, whilst BAE Systems continue to have the contract for maintenance of these ships, they do not need to be tied to maintenance in a single home base. This maximises range and utility.

■ Ministry of Defence: Public Appointments

Kevin Brennan:

[\[110257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department seeks references for candidates appointed to public positions which fall under the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Leo Docherty:

The Department has a robust recruitment process in place for appointments that are regulated by the Commissioner which is in line with the process and principles set out in the 2016 Governance Code on Public Appointments. It is Departmental policy to take up references for candidates shortlisted for interview and this is set out clearly in the candidate information pack for each recruitment campaign.

■ Ministry of Defence: Stonewall

Tim Loughton:

[\[110227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2022 to Question 106614 on Ministry of Defence: Stonewall, for what reason his Department did not maintain financial records of the £14,681 the Army spent on Stonewall in the 2017-18 financial year; and what his Department's requirements are for recording and retention of financial expenditure.

Leo Docherty:

In my response to Question 103509 on 18 January and to Question 106613 on 21 January, the Army spent £17,181 in FY2017-18. £2,500 of this was for Stonewall Membership. The remaining £14,681 was spent on Stonewall Conferences as well Stonewall training courses which are purchased on an ad-hoc basis by the Army LGBT+ network. As the full breakdown and specifics are held on archived IT systems it would take time to retrieve and collate the information in a more granular format.

FY2017-18	COST
Training	£13,641
Conference Fees	£1,040

Government policy is that financial records should be kept for up to seven years. Government departments and agencies' accounts have to be laid before Parliament and are therefore preserved as published Parliamentary papers. Therefore, supporting documentation may be destroyed after any limitation periods have expired.

■ **Satellite Communications: Procurement**

Carol Monaghan: [\[109271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's plans are for the Skynet 6 Enduring Capability programme; and when his Department plans to publish a timeline for that programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The Enduring Capability requirement consists of two elements: the satellites and the ground-based infrastructure. Both are important investments within the Defence Space Strategy, giving opportunity to lever the best of UK space research and development. This will deliver long term innovative solutions for the which can overcome the increasingly hostile threats that we face in space.

We continue to refine the Enduring Capability satellite requirement and procurement approach. As part of this refinement, we will be undertaking further industry engagement which will inform the satellite programme timeline.

The exact timings for the ground-based elements are dependent on the final agreements reached on the preceding programme of ground and flight control provision (the Service Delivery Wrap, which is currently being competed).

■ **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

John Healey: [\[107455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what military accommodation has been (a) assessed and (b) chosen to house migrants who arrive in the UK following illegal Channel crossings.

James Heappey:

Defence has previously provided Napier Barracks in Kent and Penally Camp in Pembrokeshire to the Home Office to provide additional capacity to house cross-channel migrants. Penally Camp was handed back to Defence in March 2021 however Napier Barracks is still in use by the Home Office. In addition, in December 2021 Defence made the former Defence Fire Training and Development Centre in Manston available to the Home Office to provide additional processing capacity in the South East of England. As part of reviewing the operational plans for the Channel, Defence is working closely with the Home Office to review the effectiveness of current arrangements, including processing and initial accommodation capacity. As part of this work, there may be a requirement for the use of additional military accommodation although no final decision has been taken.

■ **Veterans: Identity Cards**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[110265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many veteran ID cards have been issued by his Department as of 24 January 2022.

Mr Kevan Jones: [110266]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate has he made of the number of veterans eligible for a Veterans ID card who have yet to receive their Veterans ID card.

Leo Docherty:

Since December 2018, there have been 43,913 HM Armed Forces Veterans' Recognition Cards issued to service leavers as part of phase one. Phase two will see the Cards made available to existing veterans. A forecast of the size of the veteran population is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/769727/20190107_Background_Quality_Report_-_Population_Projections_-_UK_Armed_Forces_Veterans_residing_in_Great_Britain_-_2016_to_2028.pdf

No estimate has been made as to how many of those are likely to apply for a Card.

■ York: Military Bases

Rachael Maskell: [110455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what value for money assessments he has conducted on the closure of his Department's barracks and facilities in York.

Rachael Maskell: [110456]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Joint Service Publication 507: Investment Appraisal and Evaluation, what steps he has taken to meet the requirements of that document while preparing to close (a) Queen Elizabeth Barracks and (b) Imphal Barracks.

Rachael Maskell: [110457]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to Joint Service Publication 507, what investment appraisal he has carried out on the proposed closure of (a) Imphal Barracks, (b) Queen Elizabeth Barracks and (c) other military facilities in York.

Jeremy Quin:

The investment, and value for money, in providing modern and sustainable facilities for Armed Forces personnel moving from York has been and continues to be, evaluated at each stage of the project since it was announced in 2016. Further work is ongoing to assess requirements to effectively deliver Future Soldier. This work is being done in-line with Treasury and Department policy and guidance, to provide the facilities needed for a more agile Army.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ BBC Monitoring and BBC World Service: Finance****Dr Julian Lewis:**[\[110225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what safeguards are in place to protect the budgets of BBC (a) World and (b) Monitoring Services in light of the (i) freezing of the Licence Fee and (ii) intensifying military confrontation between Russia and Ukraine; and if she will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

The BBC will continue to receive billions in public funding every year.

The Government recognises the vital role that the BBC World Service plays across the globe.

The Secretary of State has made it clear to the BBC that it should continue to make a substantive investment from the licence fee into the World Service to ensure that it continues to effectively reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world - in English and through its language services.

■ Broadband: Poverty**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[108630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact of the communications sectors' work with low-income families in (a) the UK and (b) Leicestershire to ensure the affordability of broadband for low-income families.

Julia Lopez:

The Department continues to work alongside Ofcom to monitor the affordability of telecoms services.

Fixed-broadband social tariff products are currently available to over 5 million low-income households in receipt of Universal Credit support and other means-tested benefits, such as Pension Credit, Income Support and Job-Seekers Allowance.

These tariffs are available in 99% of the UK. We encourage anyone with financial concerns to speak with their provider about the support that may be available to them.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Legislation**Kirsty Blackman:**[\[109239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many pieces of (a) primary and (b) secondary legislation their Department has sponsored in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

Below are the estimated numbers for the pieces of primary and secondary legislation sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport over the last 10

years. It is important to note that this information is only held for internal administrative reasons and may not be exhaustive - for example, due to machinery of government changes to departmental structure in the past decade.

YEAR	PIECES OF PRIMARY LEGISLATION	PIECES OF SECONDARY LEGISLATION
2012	0	24
2013	2	13
2014	0	28
2015	0	10
2016	3	18
2017	4	28
2018	1	32
2019	1	19
2020	3	23
2021	6	19

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[110382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many post legislative reviews (a) their Department or (b) their predecessor Department has undertaken on (i) primary and (ii) secondary legislation in each of the last five years.

Chris Philp:

The number of post legislative reviews the Department has undertaken on primary and secondary legislation in each of the last five years is not held within the Department.

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[110399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many and what proportion of the (a) primary and (b) secondary legislation sponsored by (i) their Department or (ii) their predecessor Department has undergone a post legislative review in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

The number of post legislative reviews the Department has undertaken on primary and secondary legislation in each of the last ten years is not held within the Department.

■ **Gambling: Suicide**

Carolyn Harris:

[\[108578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2021 to Question 88799, what assessment she has made of the reasons for the Gambling Commission investigating a total of eight deaths by suicide where gambling may have been a factor since the start of 2018, in the context of Public Health England's September 2021 estimate that there are 409 gambling-related suicides a year; and in relation to those eight investigations, how many times the Commission reported the findings of its investigation to the coroner conducting the inquest into each death.

Chris Philp:

The Government does not collect statistics on suicides where gambling may have been a factor, although Public Health England's evidence review estimated on the basis of two overseas studies that there may be 409 such deaths each year. The Department of Health and Social Care is working to improve data collection and address other evidence gaps identified in the report.

Operators who are aware of a death by suicide which may be linked to their gambling facilities are expected to notify the Gambling Commission so that it can investigate whether there has been a breach of social responsibility codes and take action where appropriate. Coroners' jurisdiction does not extend to determining the underlying reasons for a person's death, and the Commission does not routinely notify them of its findings. However, it has assisted a coroner in making their overall findings on the circumstances of an individual's death in two cases since the beginning of 2018. The Commission co-operates with coroner inquiries whenever they are made, usually by providing information about the regulation of the gambling industry.

■ **Government Departments: Flags**

Stephen Farry:

[\[111750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to review the list of dates in its Union Flag flying guidance for UK government buildings.

Chris Philp:

DCMS is responsible for informing UK Government Departments of the designated days for the flying of the Union Flag throughout the year. The designated days list is reviewed on an annual basis by the department in conjunction with the Royal Household before it is published on GOV.UK.

Individuals, local authorities and other organisations may fly flags whenever they wish, subject to compliance with any local planning requirement. UK government buildings are encouraged to fly the Union Flag all year round.

DCMS will publish any updates to the designated days list for Union flag flying in February 2022.

■ Radio Wales and S4C: Finance

Beth Winter: [\[108632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what role the Welsh Government will have in the determination of future funding arrangements of S4C and BBC Radio Cymru, in the context of her statement of 16 January 2022 that the most recent licence fee announcement will be the last.

Julia Lopez:

The Government has committed to maintain the current licence fee funding model for the duration of this eleven year Charter period, until 2027.

We will be reviewing the licence fee funding model well in advance of the next Charter period.

The UK Government has a strong record of demonstrating its commitment to minority language broadcasting to ensure that our broadcasting sector services all audiences of the UK nations and regions.

■ Youth Investment Fund

Lucy Powell: [\[110370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether any ministers, special advisors or other political appointments were involved in setting criteria for areas eligible for funding from the Youth Investment Fund.

Nigel Huddleston:

Ministers are advised by civil servants and special advisors before making decisions on how public money is spent.

In the case of the Youth Investment Fund, ministerial decisions regarding which areas would be eligible to apply were taken on the basis of high quality, robust and publicly available data. The methodology used has been published on GOV.UK.

EDUCATION

■ Africa: Overseas Students

Chi Onwurah: [\[107571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students from Africa are studying in British universities in the 2021-22 academic year.

Michelle Donelan:

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes data on students enrolled in higher education.

Counts of student enrolments at UK Higher Education Providers (HEPs) are available by level of study and region of domicile for the academic years 2014/15 to 2019/20 in Table 28 of HESA's Higher Education Student Open Data pages:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-28>.

In academic year 2019/20, there were 33,290 undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled at UK HEPs who were domiciled in Africa prior to study.

HESA will update their open data to the academic year 2020/21 on 10 February 2022. Statistics relating to the academic year 2021/22 are expected to be available in February 2023.

■ Apprentices: York

Rachael Maskell: **[110462]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprenticeships are currently being undertaken in (a) York and (b) York Central constituency, by level of apprenticeship.

Alex Burghart:

Apprenticeship participation, by apprenticeship level, for York Local Authority District and York Central Parliamentary Constituency in the academic year 2020/21 are shown in the table below:

	Apprenticeship Participation	
	York LAD	York Central PCON
Intermediate	560	320
Advanced	1,020	500
Higher	700	360
Total	2,270	1,170

Note:

1. Volumes are rounded to the nearest 10
2. Source: Individualised Learner Record

Further information on apprenticeship participation can be found in the apprenticeships and traineeships statistics publication: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/99259960-1fe7-4dd6-b81b-95881f664a94>.

Rachael Maskell: **[110463]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprenticeship placements are currently available in (a) York and (b) York Central constituency.

Alex Burghart:

Apprenticeships provide people with the opportunity to earn and learn the skills needed to start an exciting career in a wide range of industries with over 640 high-quality standards to choose from in roles such as Baker, Veterinary Nurse and Nuclear Desk Engineer.

As apprenticeships are jobs, employers choose which apprenticeships they offer and where and when they offer them.

The Find an Apprenticeship (FAA) service on: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship> allows individuals to register for apprenticeship vacancy alerts, search and apply for vacancies, and receive feedback from employers. Around 2.8 million people have registered to use this service, and we are working with employers so they advertise more apprenticeships in this way.

The department publishes data on apprenticeship adverts and vacancies on the FAA service details of which can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2020-21>. In November 2021, there were over 19,500 apprenticeship vacancies advertised across England on FAA. There are currently 149 apprenticeship vacancies being advertised through FAA in York, and 30 in the York Central constituency.

Employers may choose to advertise through their own recruitment platforms or other job sites, therefore, the number of vacancies available on FAA does not provide a true measure of the available apprenticeship vacancies.

■ Communist Party of China: Universities

Andrew Rosindell:

[106664]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to protect universities from influence through donations from people connected to the Communist Party of China.

Michelle Donelan:

The security guidelines commissioned at my request and published by Universities UK in October 2020, 'Managing risks in internationalisation: security-related issues', advise universities on engaging in secure international collaborations: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/managing-risks-in-internationalisation.pdf>. This includes a recommendation that due diligence should be conducted on all international partnerships, including donations. Universities due diligence processes should consider reputational, ethical and security risks. As autonomous institutions, universities will have their own fundraising and gift acceptance policies in place.

■ Conversion Therapy: Children

Dan Carden:

[110566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will include safeguarding children from sexual orientation and gender identity conversion therapy in the proposed Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

Will Quince:

Our statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping children safe in education (KSCIE) is already very clear that all school staff should be aware of indicators of any form of abuse and or neglect, and what they should do if they have any concerns about a

child being abused. Child abuse under the name of so-called conversion therapy is no different.

KCSIE is under constant review and maintained to make sure it is reflective of abuse, harm, the law and government policy. We will consider updating KCSIE in line with any legislative changes following the Government Equalities Office consultation "to help the development of legislation for banning conversion therapy". The consultation closes on 4 February.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Skills Bootcamps

Seema Malhotra: [\[107587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applications the Government has received for the HGV Skills Bootcamp.

Alex Burghart:

We are investing up to £34 million in Skills Bootcamps in heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driving, to create up to 11,000 HGV driver training places for people that are new, returning to, or looking to upskill as an HGV driver.

Following the launch in December of Skills Bootcamps in HGV driving, the suppliers contracted to deliver training have seen high demand for places. We understand that training providers overall have seen at least twice as many people expressing an interest in completing a Skills Bootcamp in HGV as the number of training places they have been contracted to deliver.

■ Out-of-school Education: Codes of Practice

Stephen Morgan: [\[106854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department will take to measure the effectiveness of its voluntary code of practice on out-of-school settings.

Mr Robin Walker:

The voluntary code of practice, which was published in October 2020, is intended to be a supportive resource for out of school setting providers that sets out good safeguarding practice and outlines which areas should be considered when operating out of school settings for children and young people, including health and safety, fire safety, and developing child protection policies and procedures:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice>.

To help raise awareness and encourage take-up of the code of practice after publication, we provided £60,000 of funding to be shared across 6 local authorities to test targeted communications approaches with out of school settings providers.

The code is also part of a larger package of work the department is undertaking to improve the safeguarding of children in out of school settings. This includes over £3 million of targeted funding for selected areas to demonstrate how safeguarding in out

of school settings can be enhanced through multi-agency working and engaging providers with supportive resources such as the code of practice.

The targeted communications and multi-agency working pilots concluded in December 2021. We are currently evaluating these, and the insights gained will be used to inform next steps, such as how best to measure effectiveness of the code of practice.

■ **Russell Scott Primary School: Repairs and Maintenance**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[110287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress his Department has made on urgent improvements to Russell Scott Primary School in Denton and Reddish constituency; and whether officials from his Department have met with officers from Tameside Council.

Mr Robin Walker:

We are aware of the condition issues at Russell Scott Primary School and officials within the department have been engaging with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council to understand and advise on these issues. The department has committed to review and discuss evidence from any further investigative work or surveys undertaken.

The department provides local authorities with an annual School Condition Allocation (SCA) to invest in improving the condition of their maintained schools. We expect local authorities to effectively prioritise this funding on what they identify to be the most urgent priorities across the school estate, ensuring schools are kept safe and operational.

For the financial year 2021-22, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council has been allocated £1,328,013 in SCA funding. Allocations for the financial year 2022-23 will be published in due course.

In addition to annual condition funding, the department has launched a ten-year School Rebuilding Programme. We have announced the first 100 schools that will benefit from the programme as part of a commitment to 500 projects over the next decade.

We recently consulted on how to prioritise future places on the programme. We plan to set out our response to the consultation and details of further rounds of the programme early this year.

■ **School Leaving: Apprentices**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[110464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of school leavers take up an apprenticeship (a) nationally, (b) in Yorkshire, (c) in York and (d) in York Central constituency.

Alex Burghart:

The table below shows the number and proportion of pupils who left key stage 4 from state-funded mainstream schools in 2018/19 and went on to sustain an apprenticeship destination in 2019/20. The table shows these figures nationally, in Yorkshire, in York and in the York Central constituency. A pupil must have 6 months of consecutive activity in an apprenticeship at any point within the destination year to be categorised as having a sustained apprenticeship destination. There may be pupils who started an apprenticeship who did not sustain their destination for 6 months. These pupils are not included in the figures below.

	NUMBER OF KEY STAGE 4 PUPILS IN THE COHORT	SUSTAINED APPRENTICESHIPS (%)
England ¹	531,917	3.7
Yorkshire and the Humber ^{1 2}	53,539	5.0
York ^{1 2}	1,683	3.4
York Central ^{1 3}	735	2.7

Footnotes

(1) State-funded mainstream schools include community schools, voluntary aided schools, voluntary controlled schools, foundation schools, academies, free schools, city technology colleges and further education colleges with provision for 14- to 16-year-olds.

(2) The data are based on local education authority area. Local education authority area uses the provider's administrative local authority.

(3) The data are based on the provider's location.

The data which have been used to create the table can be found in the following links:

England: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/ea915f4a-f3ab-44c7-9dc6-d53da1589337>.

Yorkshire and the Humber and York local authority: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/a8dafbce-bcb6-4278-94ba-578e9f770a13>.

York Central: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/27db1050-831e-4eb6-87c8-6f40b7bbcfa8>.

■ Schools: Air Conditioning

Chi Onwurah:**[107576]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that an adequate number of HEPA filters are available in schools in Newcastle.

Mr Robin Walker:

Air cleaning units were allocated to providers based on need, using the eligibility criteria we have set out in our guidance, which is available here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12cU_I5q0v1_my97yPMpb87RsSL5d5lpi.

As of 24 January, 1,265 providers that applied for department-funded air cleaning units were eligible for air cleaning units, including 8 providers in Newcastle. We are currently finalising the total number of units allocated to providers, this will depend on the needs identified by eligible providers, including the number of people using the room(s).

The total number of eligible providers mirrors published summary findings from the department's survey of the use of CO2 monitors, which show that only 3% of providers using carbon dioxide monitors reported sustained high carbon dioxide readings that couldn't otherwise be addressed. This is available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/co2-monitor-survey-and-applications-for-air-cleaning-units>.

The total number of air cleaning units that providers have applied for was just over 8,000. Up to an additional 1,000 units have now been ordered, bringing the total number of units available up to 9,000, allowing all eligible applications to be fulfilled.

■ Schools: Closures**Alex Norris:****[108607]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to close full-time unregistered schools; and if he will give Ofsted greater powers to seize evidence, search premises, and close illegal operations in relation to unregistered schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

It is a criminal offence under Section 96 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to conduct an unregistered independent school. The department and Ofsted will investigate any institution where intelligence or evidence suggest that this offence is being committed. Section 97 of the act permits no-notice inspections of education providers believed to be operating as an unregistered independent school.

Between 1 January 2016 and 31 August 2021, Ofsted have investigated 850 education providers. These investigations have led to 412 inspections which have resulted in the identification of 114 unregistered schools. Joint work between the department and Ofsted has led to 101 of these providers changing their provision to cease operating unlawfully. In addition, since 2016, 6 successful prosecutions have been brought against groups responsible for operating illegal education providers. The department has made public commitments to take forward measures to make it easier for Ofsted to investigate and gather evidence of breaches of section 96 of the Act and prosecute those responsible for running unregistered schools. These changes are intended to lead to the identification of greater numbers of unregistered schools. Such measures will be taken forward when a suitable legislative opportunity arises.

■ Skilled Workers

Seema Malhotra:

[107586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November 2021 to Question 76723 on Skilled Workers, how many of the 36 Skills Advisory Panels have been set up.

Alex Burghart:

All of the 36 Skills Advisory Panels across England were established in 2019 as part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships. A list of the Skills Advisory Panels and their Local Skills Reports is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-advisory-panels/skills-advisory-panels-list>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Richard Graham:

[905302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support new woodlands and community green spaces.

Rebecca Pow:

Our England Trees Action Plan sets out how we will deliver our ambitious commitments to treble tree-planting rates across the country and bring trees and woodlands closer to people, backed by the £750 million Nature for Climate Fund. We are funding three new Community Forests in Cumbria, Devon and the North East, have established the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, and have created opportunities for large-scale tree planting through the Landscape Recovery Scheme with details soon to be launched. On 24 January I had the pleasure of visiting Blenheim estate, a 104-hectare woodland created under the England Woodland Creation Offer. Landowners, land managers and public bodies can apply to the England Woodland Creation Offer, which provides both greater financial incentives to plant and maintain trees and offers greater recognition of the benefits provided by woodland to people and nature.

■ Agriculture: Soil

Derek Thomas:

[107661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to take steps in response to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's recommendation that the agricultural sector switch to EN 17033 biodegradable thin mulch films to reduce plastic contamination in soil.

Jo Churchill:

In April 2021 we published our response to the call for evidence on the need for standards for bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics. Concerns were

raised regarding the extent to which plastics marketed as biodegradable actually biodegrade, as such our focus is on increasing reuse and recycling of plastics.

Defra has commissioned an external expert organisation to look into plastic within digestate and compost. This short project, ending early this year, includes searching existing literature on the potential risks of compostable and non-compostable plastic fragments added to agricultural soil from digestate or compost, and will highlight further evidence gaps. We will carefully consider the findings of this project, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations recommendations in considering next steps and any potential actions in this area.

■ Cats: Imports

Theresa Villiers:

[\[110281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of Cats Protection's Cats and Their Stats report finding, that around 70,000 cats were imported into the UK between March 2020 and March 2021.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[110282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the difference between official figures which report around 30,000 cats entering the UK legally commercially and non-commercially between March 2020 and March 2021 and the findings of Cats Protection's Cats and Their Stats report that 70,000 cats entered the UK in the same period.

Jo Churchill:

The estimate of 70,000 cats detailed in the Cats Protection's 'Cats and Their Stats' report appears to be based on an estimate of the number of cats obtained between March 2020 and March 2021 and the proportion of individuals that reported in a survey that they had sourced a pet from abroad during the same period. The official Government statistics show that between March 2020 and March 2021 27,601 cats entered the UK under the non-commercial rules and 8,511 cats entered under the commercial rules.

The official statistics are based on data submitted by pet checkers and carriers for non-commercial movements. Data for commercial movements in 2020 is taken from the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), and data for commercial movements in 2021 is taken from the Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS). We are working with the Cats Protection to understand the difference between the reported figures.

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

restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation.

In August 2021, the Government launched an 8-week consultation on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary in due course. This will allow us to take onboard the views of the public and interested groups in order to shape our future policy.

We will continue to work closely with stakeholders, including the Cats Protection, prior to the introduction of the legislation to ensure that our final measures are well considered and led by the latest evidence.

■ **Chemicals: Regulation**

Caroline Lucas: [\[110318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will conduct a public consultation ahead of publishing the Government's UK Chemicals Strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan commits to a new strategy to tackle chemicals of national concern. The Government is developing a Chemicals Strategy which will set out our immediate priorities, alongside any actions we will need to take to achieve safer and more environmentally sustainable management of chemicals for present and future generations. We recognise this is an area of interest to many, and we will consult with a wide range of stakeholders as an important part of its development.

■ **Clean Air Zones: Greater Manchester**

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[110314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what additional support the Government will provide to Greater Manchester Combined Authority to implement the clean air zone required by central government.

Jo Churchill:

We have provided a substantial £132 million from the Clean Air Fund to Greater Manchester authorities to help businesses and individuals upgrade to compliant vehicles. This is on top of providing £36 million to enable the implementation of the Clean Air Zone.

This funding has not yet been spent as the HGV support scheme has only recently opened for applications, and schemes for other vehicle types affected are due to launch later in the year.

We have also agreed with Greater Manchester authorities that we will keep the position of further funding under review, subject to clear evidence of need and have agreed a process for doing so.

We are aware that Greater Manchester has proposed a review of funds and we continue to engage with them on the evidence.

■ Coastal Areas: Swimming

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[107564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that every bathing water location on the coast achieves excellent status.

Rebecca Pow:

Substantial improvements have been made to bathing water quality: in the early 1990s, just 28% of bathing waters met the highest 'excellent' standards in force at that time. In 2021, using a stricter 'excellent' standard introduced in 2015, 70.7% of bathing waters were classified as 'excellent' and another 24% as 'good'.

Improving water quality is a Government priority, and we know there is more to be done. The Environment Agency is working with partners including local authorities, water companies, farmers and businesses to both improve bathing water quality and prevent deterioration. The landmark Environment Act 2021 sets a duty on water companies to achieve a progressive reduction in the adverse impacts of discharges from Storm Overflows, which will further support this work.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Public Appointments

Kevin Brennan:

[\[109191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department seeks references for candidates appointed to public positions which fall under the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra always takes appropriate steps to ensure the suitability of candidates for regulated public appointments in line with the Governance Code. Candidate references are sought on a case-by-case basis as one of a range of assessments.

■ Deposit Return Schemes

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[107558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Deposit Return Scheme will be introduced in England.

Jo Churchill:

Last year's consultation asked for views on the proposed DRS implementation timetable. We are currently analysing responses to the consultation with a response due to be published early this year.

■ Floods: Insurance

Drew Hendry:

[\[108554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government response to the independent review of flood insurance in Doncaster, what assessment his Department has made alongside the Association of British Insurers of the scale of flooding exclusions; and what discussions officials in his Department have had with the Financial Conduct Authority on the regulatory framework for flood exclusions.

Rebecca Pow:

Following the independent review of flood insurance in Doncaster, Defra commissioned industry to gather data from insurers on the number of policies sold with flood exclusions. The data samples from the Association of British Insurers and British Insurance Broker's Association currently suggests less than 0.5% of policies sold have flood exclusions.

Defra are also conducting further research into the affordability and availability of flood insurance which will also seek to understand the scale of flood exclusions. The study will conclude in summer 2022. Defra officials have met the Financial Conduct Authority to discuss flood exclusions. However, the evidence base for supporting the need for a regulatory change is inconclusive at this stage.

We continue to work closely with the British Insurance Brokers' Association, the Association of British Insurers and Flood Re to agree a new signposting service and Code of Practice. The Code of Practice will set out the role of insurers and brokers to ensure customers are appropriately informed of their available options, including eligibility for the Flood Re scheme. When launched, participating insurers and brokers will be asked to signpost customers to the new specialist directory of providers if they are unable to provide flood insurance cover. The interventions will be embedded throughout industry by summer 2022.

■ Forests: High Speed 2 Line

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[107560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions (a) he and (b) his Department has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on protecting ancient woodland along the route of HS2.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises that ancient woodlands are an irreplaceable habitat that should be protected. In designing the railway, HS2 Ltd has sought to carefully avoid impacts on ancient woodlands wherever possible. Where effects on ancient woodland cannot be reasonably avoided then HS2 Ltd has committed to provide a range of compensation measures in response to these losses. As part of the compensation strategy, Government and HS2 Ltd. are planting more than 7 million new trees and shrubs, including over 40 native species, as part of Phase One of the HS2 programme.

On top of this, the Government has committed £7 million in establishing the HS2 Woodland Fund, helping landowners within 25 miles of the railway to create and restore woodland. The first £2 million of this fund has already been committed, which we expect will create around 198 hectares of new native woodland and help restore around 144 hectares of ancient woodland sites.

Additionally, the Forestry Commission (FC) has a service level agreement with HS2 under which FC provides expert and technical advice on the scheme's impact on woodlands, including ancient woodlands. This includes contributing to scheme-wide documents such as HS2's Environmental Statements (via both informal and formal consultation), technical specifications and site-specific documents such as on a selection of Ecology Site Management Plans (ESMPs) where ancient woodlands are affected.

Natural England (NE) also has a service level agreement with HS2, via which it provides technical advice on ecological and landscape impacts including ancient woodland. NE are consulted on the HS2 Environmental Statements and technical standards and on a selection of ESMPs for ancient woodland sites.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[107561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the loss of ancient woodland along the route of HS2.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises that ancient woodlands are an irreplaceable habitat that should be protected. Defra has worked with the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd to ensure that route design and delivery plans minimise any loss of trees as far as possible, and in particular minimise any loss of ancient woodlands and veteran trees.

Ancient Woodland Strategies have been prepared for Phase One and Phase 2a which provide a detailed breakdown of the bespoke compensatory measures being put in place for each woodland affected. A further strategy setting out the impacts on ancient woodland for Phase 2b (Crewe to Manchester) is also being developed.

Measures to compensate for ancient woodland affected by HS2 include: creating new woodland; sensitively moving, or translocating, ancient woodland soils to new sites; and enhancing adjacent parts of ancient woodlands that are not affected by construction. The Government has also committed £7 million to establish the HS2 Woodland Fund, helping landowners within 25 miles of the railway to plant new native woodlands and restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites.

HS2 Ltd have recently published an environmental sustainability progress report, which provides an up-to-date assessment of the impacts of HS2 on ancient woodland. This forecasts that 23.7ha of ancient woodland will be lost during construction of Phase One of HS2. This is a reduction of 5.7ha on what was expected in the Phase One Environmental Statement and includes seven woodland sites where there will now be no impacts at all.

The full report can be found here:

[25091_HS2_EnvironmentalSustainabilityProgressReport20-21_CS1547_Final_InteractiveWeb.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

■ Livestock: Animal Welfare

Daisy Cooper:

[\[107724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2021 to Question 73933 on Livestock: Animal Welfare, what progress his Department has made on delivering the reforms outlined in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare relating to (a) the use of cages for laying hens and (b) farrowing crates for pigs.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Edmonton, Kate Osamor, on 12 November 2021, PQ UIN 73933.

■ Nature Conservation

Emma Hardy:

[\[107690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to establish the geographical boundaries for the delivery of local nature recovery plans.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government anticipates that there will be roughly fifty Local Nature Recovery Strategies which together will cover the whole of England with no gaps and no overlaps. Precise boundaries will be established by the Defra Secretary of State on a case-by-case basis so that every Local Nature Recovery Strategy covers an area that is both large enough to plan for nature recovery across landscapes and meaningful to local people.

It is anticipated that in many cases there will be one Local Nature Recovery Strategy per county (or equivalent), but individual geographies will be set according to an assessment of local circumstances. We will shortly be confirming which designated authorities will lead on the drafting of the strategies, and their relevant boundary.

■ Nature Conservation: Finance

Emma Hardy:

[\[107691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what budget has been allocated for the delivery of local nature recovery plans; which agency will have responsibility for allocating that budget; and which agency or agencies will be responsible for delivering the plans at the local level.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has committed to funding all new burdens on Local Authorities arising from the Environment Act. This includes those relating to the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Defra is currently working through spending plans for the next three years. Further announcements concerning specific funding arrangements for Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be made in due course.

As set out in our consultation, [Local Nature Recovery Strategies: how to prepare and what to include](#), which is now closed, Local Nature Recovery Strategies are intended to inform a number of policy areas and will therefore be delivered through a variety of mechanisms operating in a complementary way. These could include mandatory biodiversity net gain, environmental land management schemes, the strengthened NERC duty on public bodies; and use by local planning authorities, for example in informing the preparation of local plans.

■ Pets: Theft**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[107559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on reducing pet theft.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's Pet Theft Taskforce was set up by Defra, Ministry of Justice and Home Office Ministers to gather evidence around the concerns about a perceived increase in pet theft during lockdown and to recommend measures to tackle the problem. The Pet Theft Taskforce published its report on 03 September 2021 and made a number of recommendations including the introduction of a new pet abduction offence, which has been added to the Kept Animals Bill. The full report is available at [Pet theft taskforce report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The three departments are continuing to work together to implement the recommendations from the report and to tackle the issue of pet theft from all angles.

■ Water: Standards**Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[105778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve water quality.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[107555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve river water quality.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[107556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve coastal water quality.

Rebecca Pow:

Restoring water quality is a Government priority. We will shortly be setting new legally binding targets for water under the Environment Act to provide a strong mechanism for driving long-term environmental improvements.

This Government is the first to take action to tackle the historic infrastructure issue of sewage overflows, with new duties through the Environment Act on the water industry to reduce the harm they cause. Water company investment in environmental improvements has been scaled up to £7.1 billion over the period 2020-25. Through the next Price Review (PR24) we are using the strategic policy statement to Ofwat, the economic regulator, to make the environment a top priority.

We have doubled investment in the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme creating a new annual budget of £30 million, which means that 100% of England's farmers will be able to access advice. The new Environmental Land Management schemes will also play a major role in rewarding farmers for actions that improve water quality. Funding will also be made available for farmers to improve their slurry infrastructure from autumn 2022. We have also made extra budget available to the EA for 50 extra inspectors to be recruited in this financial year to visit farms posing a risk of water pollution.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Advertising: Fraud****Emily Thornberry:**[\[107514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many reports the National Cyber Security Centre received regarding scam adverts in each of the last five years.

James Cleverly:

The National Cyber Security Centre does not operate a service for the public to report scam adverts. The Advertising Standards Authority provides a reporting tool "ASA's Scam Ad Alert System", launched in June 2020, for the public to report paid-for scam adverts online.

■ Afghanistan: Emigration**Rachael Maskell:**[\[107622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the viability of safe routes out of Afghanistan for people fleeing that country.

James Cleverly:

We continue to work to ensure those still in Afghanistan are able to depart the country safely. This is challenging work and we are working with a range of partners

to minimise the risks as far as we can - including by publishing comprehensive and up to date Travel Advice.

■ **Afghanistan: LGBT People**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[107621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the risks faced by LGBT+ people in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

LGBT+ people have long faced discrimination and violence in Afghanistan, and are unable to live openly. The UK Government worked closely with Rainbow Railroad, Stonewall and MicroRainbow to evacuate 42 at-risk LGBT+ people and eligible dependents to the UK in October and December 2021. We continue to work with humanitarian partners to ensure our programmes are inclusive and aid reaches those in need, including LGBT+ Afghans.

■ **Afghanistan: Religious Freedom**

Jim Shannon:

[\[108523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking in response to the risks to religious minorities in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

The Government is committed to protecting the rights of minority faith communities in Afghanistan. FCDO officials regularly raise human rights, including rights of members of minority groups, in discussions with the Taliban. On 15 December 2021, the Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, the Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Lord Herbert of South Downs held a roundtable with NGOs to discuss the ongoing challenges faced by vulnerable groups, including religious minorities.

■ **Armenia: Azerbaijan**

Bob Blackman:

[\[108517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of responsibility for the massacre perpetrated against civilians in the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly on 26 February 1992; and if she will send her condolences to the people of Azerbaijan on the anniversary of that event.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The events of February 1992 were a tragic episode in Azerbaijan's history, and were strongly condemned by the UK Government at the time. Such hostilities should never take place again. The UK Government has not yet made plans to mark this anniversary of the date.

■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia**Claire Hanna:**[\[110627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether arms sales granted an export licence by the Government have been used by Saudi Arabia and their coalition partners in recent bombings which have resulted in civilian casualties in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

We are looking into recent reports of the impact of airstrikes on civilians in Yemen. We urge all parties to the Yemen conflict to exercise restraint and avoid further civilian impact and suffering. The Government takes its strategic export control responsibilities very seriously. The Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, including respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. All licences are kept under careful and continual review as standard.

■ British Council**Navendu Mishra:**[\[110615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2021 to Question 92117 on the British Council, what discussions her Department has held with the British Council on the decision to outsource the delivery of the Turing Scheme; what assessment her Department made of the potential merits of the retention of skills and experience of staff at the British Council when tendering the Turing Scheme contract; and what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the decision to outsource the Turing Scheme on British Council's future revenues and capacity.

James Cleverly:

FCDO officials meet regularly with British Council counterparts on a range of issues. Decisions relating to the future operation of the Turing scheme were carefully considered by the Department for Education as part of the tendering process and we do not expect the decision to have a major impact on the British Council's overall financial position. The retention of skills and experience of staff alongside wider commercial activities are a matter for the British Council.

■ Burkina Faso: Security**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[110302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the (a) security of the Government of Burkina Faso and (b) impact of recent mutinies on the security situation for Burkinabe civilians and UK nationals in that country; and what steps she is taking to support (i) ECOWAS and (ii) the elected Government of Burkina Faso in preventing coup attempts.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is deeply concerned about the deteriorating security and political situation in Burkina Faso. As I set out in my statement on 25 January 2022, the UK condemns the coup d'etat by military forces in Burkina Faso, and calls for the immediate, safe and unconditional release of all members of the civilian government who have been detained, including the President of Burkina Faso, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré. It is vital that all parties remain calm and respect human rights, and for Burkina Faso to return to democratic civilian and constitutional rule without delay.

The UK stands with our partners on these developments, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the G5 Sahel. We continue to update British Nationals through our travel advice. Through our deployment to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA), our deployment of Chinook helicopters to the French counter-terrorism mission Barkhane, and our programmatic support for stabilisation and conflict resolution, the UK is working to build long-term peace and stability in the Sahel. We also provide humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable in the region, including in Burkina Faso.

■ Confucius Institutes**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[106663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential role of Confucius Institutes in projecting China Communist Party influence in the UK and abroad.

Amanda Milling:

It is crucial that any international partnerships entered into by UK universities, including with Confucius Institutes, are managed appropriately with the right due diligence in place. This government takes seriously any concerns regarding the operation of international organisations at UK education providers. If any institution feels it is coming under pressure to compromise its core values, we encourage them to inform government.

■ Development Aid: Food**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[107688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential impact on international food insecurity of the cuts to the Government's aid budget.

Vicky Ford:

Conflict, climate change and now Covid-19 have caused food insecurity and acute hunger to reach record levels and has worst affected the poorest and most vulnerable. As well as providing humanitarian aid we are investing in building resilience to future crises and supporting sustainable recovery across Africa and Asia.

We have strengthened our food security and agriculture development programmes and investments. We are also working with international partners to strengthen global food security monitoring and analysis to better understand the challenge and further enhance the impact of our work. For example, through our Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) programme and the UK co-chaired multilateral Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP). We are also ensuring better coherence between life-saving humanitarian response and livelihoods-saving early action and a greener recovery, through the G7, our bilateral partners, with UN agencies and development banks.

UK initiatives and announcements at COP26 were supportive of sustainable agriculture, food systems, land governance and natural resource use. For example, a new UK-led multi-stakeholder commitment to support secure land tenure and forestry rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) with a related financial pledge of \$1.7billion, including the UK's new £105million Land Facility Programme. Commitments were also made for agricultural research and to support greener policy reforms in agriculture.

■ **Development Aid: Tuberculosis**

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[110312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the impact of the recent reductions in Official Development Assistance on diagnostics, treatments and services for TB.

Amanda Milling:

The World Health Organisation's 2021 Global Tuberculosis Report provided an assessment of progress on TB in 2020. The report notes an 18% decline since 2019 in the reported number of people newly diagnosed with TB and a decline in TB treatment coverage from 72% in 2019 to 59% in 2020. The report attributes this to disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and a fall in global spending on TB diagnostic, treatment and prevention services from \$5.8 billion to \$5.3 billion.

The majority of FCDO's funding to diagnostics, treatments and services for TB is through our investment in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The UK remains the second largest donor to the sixth replenishment (2020-2022) with a pledge of up to £1.4 billion. We also invest in TB research and innovation, to help people access new TB treatments and diagnostics, and to provide evidence on best practices to tackle the disease.

■ **Email: Fraud**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[107512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many reports the National Cyber Security Centre received regarding email scams via report@phishing.gov.uk in each of the last five years.

James Cleverly:

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) acts to remove malicious scams from the internet as part of its Active Cyber Defence programme. In addition to proactive identification and removal of malicious websites, the NCSC also acts upon reports from the public.

As the NCSC set out in its 2021 Annual Review, at the time of the report's publication, the Suspicious Email Reporting Service, report@phishing.gov.uk, had received more than 7.25 million reports from the public, with almost 60,000 scams taken down as a result and 112,000 malicious URLs.

The NCSC's pioneering Active Cyber Defence programme has also taken down 2.3 million cyber-enabled commodity campaigns - including 442 phishing campaigns.

Ethiopia: Human Rights**Owen Thompson:**[\[107635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support the UN Human Rights Council inquiry into atrocities in Ethiopia.

Vicky Ford:

We are extremely concerned by reports of widespread human rights violations and abuses in Ethiopia committed by all sides to the conflict. All those responsible for human rights violations and abuses should be held to account.

The Foreign Secretary, as Chair of the G7 Foreign and Development Minister's meeting, made a statement on 12 December 2021 that called for an additional independent investigation on human rights violations as recommended by the Joint Investigation report from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. The UK supported the Human Rights Council resolution of 17 December 2021 that mandates an independent and transparent mechanism for investigation and redress of human rights violations. The UK will continue to support the UN in the need for independent, transparent and impartial investigations and will work to ensure that those responsible for these atrocities are held to account.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Public Appointments**Kevin Brennan:**[\[110261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department seeks references for candidates appointed to public positions which fall under the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Vicky Ford:

The Governance Code on Public Appointments sets out that the Advisory Assessment Panel must satisfy itself that all candidates for appointment can meet the Seven Principles of Public Life and adhere to the Code of Conduct for board members of public bodies.

The Governance Code requires that candidates are asked to declare relevant interests and these are discussed at interview. The FCDO may also provide the panel with other information, for example, open source material that they may wish to consider in reaching a judgement in a fair and open way.

Whilst the FCDO will usually seek references for candidates appointed to public positions which fall under the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, it is noted that references may not always be an appropriate, fair or open way of reaching such an assessment due to the limitations on what might be provided and the lack of transparency as to their contents.

■ **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[110509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) impact and (b) value for money of the Government's investments into the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Amanda Milling:

The impact and value for money of the Government's investments in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria are assessed annually. More information of the UK's investment in the Global Fund can be accessed on the government Development Tracker. In 2021 the Global Fund scored 'A' met expectations.

■ **Internet: Fraud**

Emily Thornberry: [\[107513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many reports the National Cyber Security Centre received regarding scam websites in each of the last five years.

James Cleverly:

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) acts to remove malicious scams from the internet as part of its Active Cyber Defence programme. In addition to proactive identification and removal of malicious websites, the NCSC also acts upon reports from the public.

The National Cyber Security Centre's online form for reporting scams and suspicious websites, www.ncsc.gov.uk/scams, was launched in August 2021.

The NCSC's pioneering Active Cyber Defence programme has also taken down 2.3 million cyber-enabled commodity campaigns - including 442 phishing campaigns.

■ **Iraq: Israel**

Andrew Gwynne: [\[110283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2021 to Question 60364 on Iraq: Israel, whether

the UK has encouraged the Iraqi Government to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel in bilateral meetings.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[110284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 71288, whether the Government has encouraged the Omani Government to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel in bilateral meetings.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[110285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November 2021 to Question 71291, whether the Government has encouraged the Mauritanian Government to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel in bilateral meetings.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[110286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to encourage Saudi Arabia to normalise relations with Israel.

James Cleverly:

The United Kingdom warmly welcomed the normalisation agreements between Israel and Arab partners Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan. The Foreign Secretary made clear her commitment to the Abraham Accords at both the recent UK-Israel Strategic Dialogue on 29 November, and subsequently at the Gulf Cooperation Council-United Kingdom Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 20 December. The UK is working with regional partners to ensure the Abraham Accords are an enduring success, and continue to encourage other countries who have not yet normalised to do so.

■ Jerusalem: Palestinians

Caroline Lucas: [\[107537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Israeli counterpart on the eviction and demolition of the home of the Salhiye family in Sheikh Jarrah, in Occupied East Jerusalem; and if she will make it her policy to refer the Israeli Government to the International Criminal Court for war crimes of forcible transfer of protected persons and wanton destruction of seized property; and if she will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. On 19 January, I urged the Government of Israel to stop these practices.

■ **Mobile Phones: Fraud**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[107511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many reports the National Cyber Security Centre received regarding SMS scams via the 7726 number in each of the last five years.

James Cleverly:

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) acts to remove malicious scams from the internet as part of its Active Cyber Defence programme. In addition to proactive identification and removal of malicious websites, the NCSC also acts upon reports from the public. '7726' is a number all mobile customers using UK networks can text to report unwanted SMS messages or phone calls on a mobile. The number '7726' was chosen because it spells 'SPAM' on an alphanumeric phone keypad. This service is operated by phone providers.

The NCSC's pioneering Active Cyber Defence programme has taken down 2.3 million cyber-enabled commodity campaigns - including 442 phishing campaigns.

■ **Nepal: Religious Freedom**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[107687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterpart in Nepal on protecting freedom of religion in that country.

Amanda Milling:

We lobby the Government of Nepal on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) at the highest level. The Minister of State for South Asia met with Nepali Prime Minister Deuba at COP on 1 November, where he raised the importance the UK attaches to human rights and FoRB. The Embassy also regularly engages civil society to discuss policy priorities, including human rights and FoRB. Finally, the Embassy is also the Chair of the Human Rights Core Group, a network of like-minded diplomatic missions, which discusses concerns related to freedom of religion or belief to drive collective action.

The UK's assessment of the trends on religious and belief tolerance is that there have not been significant recent shifts in intra-community persecution or closure of civil society space. This is due to Nepal's Constitution and legal framework forming part of the peace settlement to bring marginalised communities into Nepal's institutions, related laws being largely upheld by the courts and relevant human rights commissions, and COVID-19 related lockdowns not discriminating between different faiths or beliefs.

■ **Summit for Democracy**

Alex Norris:

[\[110560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Ministers participated in the Summit for Democracy 2021 and what contribution did they make.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government welcomes the US-led Summit for Democracy and the "Year of Action" that follows. The UK's engagement included the Prime Minister setting out the key themes of the UK offer in a pre-recorded message aired at the Summit. The Foreign Secretary also joined the opening session for President Biden's remarks on 9 December, while Minister of State for South and Central Asia, UN and the Commonwealth Lord Ahmad attended a side event on disability-inclusive democracy in the run-up to the Summit. Other UK ministerial engagement included Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries joining a side event on tech and democracy, as well DCMS Minister Chris Philp speaking at a session on defending democracies against disinformation.

■ **Tigray: Armed Conflict**

Owen Thompson:

[\[107637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions the Government has had with the (a) African Union peace envoy and (b) US peace envoy on the conflict between the Ethiopian Government and Tigray.

Vicky Ford:

We are extremely concerned by the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia and the implications it has for the country as a whole. The UK is working to bring an end to the violence. I discussed Ethiopia on my visit to Kenya 17 to 18 January and met Prime Minister Abiy in Addis Ababa on 20 January when we discussed the conflict. Whilst in Addis, I also met new US envoy Satterfield. I have called on all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire and allow humanitarian aid through. I have continued to emphasise the need for a ceasefire through calls with my African counterparts, including from Kenya and the African Union (AU). We have spoken with a variety of international partners about the situation in Ethiopia, and have urged them to support a ceasefire and support the efforts of AU High Representative Obasanjo to bring an end to the violence. I have also spoken to HR Obasanjo. The British Ambassador in Addis Ababa remains in touch with HR Obasanjo.

Dan Carden:

[\[110565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the use of air strikes in in Tigray.

Vicky Ford:

We are deeply concerned by recent airstrikes in northern Ethiopia. I raised my concerns with Minister Redwan in Addis Ababa 20 January. I also met Prime Minister Abiy in Addis Ababa on 20 January when we discussed the conflict.

As we pursue an end to the violence the protection of civilians is of the utmost importance to our work. We repeat our call for a ceasefire and we request all parties to end hostilities including airstrikes.

■ Tigray: Humanitarian Aid**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[110303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to monitor the (a) number of flights undertaken by the Ethiopian Government to deliver humanitarian supplies to the Tigray region and (b) efficacy of such flights in enabling distribution of humanitarian supplies to the areas in greatest need.

Vicky Ford:

On my visit to Addis Ababa on 20 January 2022 I discussed the clear need for an urgent improvement in humanitarian access with the Government of Ethiopia, including in my meeting with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

A single humanitarian passenger flight to Mekelle from Addis Ababa each day is no substitute for the level of aid that is urgently required in the region. According to the UN, the relief effort in Tigray requires 100 trucks worth of life-saving supplies to be delivered each day. The humanitarian response in Tigray is now at standstill owing to the de facto blockade of the region imposed by the Government of Ethiopia since July 2021 and recent violence along the Tigray-Afar border. The blockade has caused major disruption to the provision of essential services. UK funded partners report that single-use items including medical gloves and surgical materials such as chest drains are being washed and reused significantly increasing the risk of infections for patients. The UK is appalled at reports that civilians are dying due to the unavailability of insulin and other generic medicines.

According to the latest available information from the UN, no humanitarian aid trucks entered Tigray during the period 14 December 2021 - 20 January 2022 with only 12% of required aid permitted to enter Tigray since July 2021. Fuel trucks have not been allowed entry to Tigray for over five months - since 2 August 2021.

■ Tigray: Politics and Government**Owen Thompson:**[\[107634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking towards the normalisation of relations between the Ethiopian Government and Tigray.

Vicky Ford:

We are extremely concerned by the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia and the implications it has for the country as a whole. On my recent visit to Ethiopia, I met Prime Minister

Abiy on 20 January and discussed the UK's concern over conflict in the north but hope for lasting peace in Ethiopia. I also met Ethiopian State Minister Redwan and reiterated my message for peace.

The UK is working to bring an end to the violence. I have called on all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire and allow humanitarian aid through. I have continued to emphasise the need for a ceasefire through calls with my African counterparts, including from Kenya and the African Union (AU). We have spoken with a variety of international partners about the situation in Ethiopia, and have urged them to support a ceasefire and support the efforts of AU High Representative Obasanjo to bring an end to the violence.

■ UK Relations with EU

Rachael Maskell: [\[108567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to improve the (a) UK's relationship with the EU and (b) UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Rachael Maskell: [\[108568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement has been implemented.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The UK wants a positive relationship with the EU, underpinned by trade and our shared belief in freedom and democracy. We are already working together extremely closely on a number of issues, for example cross-border operational cooperation of law enforcement and criminal justice, counter terrorism and data - helping to keep our citizens safe and bringing criminals to justice.

Turning to trade, the UK has, or is on track to, deliver the vast majority of its Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) commitments on time. The Government is also working hard to ensure the EU and Member States implement their commitments equally as effectively, including through the formal TCA committees.

■ Ukraine: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

John Healey: [\[105356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much annual funding does the Government provide to the OSCE's special monitoring mission in Ukraine.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Information on the UK's financial contribution to OSCE Field Missions can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conflict-stability-and-security-fund-annual-report-2020-to-2021/conflict-stability-and-security-fund-annual-report-2020-to-2021#annex-b-cssf-non-discretionary-spend-breakdown>

Information on the budget of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission can be found here: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/0/484139.pdf>

John Healey: [\[105357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many British employees are funded by the UK's funding to the OSCE's special monitoring mission in Ukraine.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The UK provides the third largest number of secondees to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. The specific figure, which currently stands at around 50, changes regularly subject to Mission needs and the availability of UK candidates.

■ **Unmanned Air Vehicles: Tigray**

Owen Thompson: [\[107636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if her Department will investigate the potential use of British components in the construction of drones used in aerial attacks on civilians in Tigray.

Vicky Ford:

There are no extant Standard Individual or Open Individual Export Licences for controlled items for unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) components for Ethiopia directly or indirectly. The Government takes its strategic export control responsibilities very seriously. We examine every application on a case-by-case basis against strict criteria. Risks around human rights violations are a key part of our assessment. The Government will not grant a licence for items where we determine there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate internal repression, or where we determine there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law. We can and do respond quickly and flexibly to changing or fluid international situations. All licences are kept under careful and continual review as standard.

■ **Yemen: Aviation**

Alison Thewliss: [\[108547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an estimate of the number of seriously ill people who are unable to leave Yemen for treatment by air from Sana'a International Airport since the war in Yemen began and Saudi Arabia closed the airspace.

James Cleverly:

We are aware that information about individuals wishing to leave Yemen via Sana'a International Airport has in the past been shared by the Houthis with the UN. However, due to restrictions in place, it is not possible to verify the accuracy of the information. The UK continues to lobby the parties to end restrictions on humanitarian access across Yemen.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention

Claire Hanna: [\[110630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions her Department has had with its Saudi counterparts on the recent airstrikes in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The UK raises regularly the importance of protecting civilians and complying with International Humanitarian Law with members of the Saudi-led Coalition. Most recently, I discussed the escalating violence in Yemen and its impact on civilians with the Saudi Ambassador to Yemen on 26 January. We urge all parties to exercise restraint and avoid further civilian casualties and suffering.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion: Telemedicine

Caroline Lucas: [\[106677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the ability of NHS Trusts to continue providing Early Medical Abortion care if the permission allowing telemedical care is removed; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas: [\[106678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to make the permission allowing telemedical abortion services permanent; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

We are considering all evidence submitted to the Government's public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion. We will publish our response as soon as possible.

The Department is also continuing to work closely with organisations such as the Care Quality Commission, statutory bodies, NHS England and independent providers to monitor system capacity in relation to the temporary approval of home use for both early medical abortion pills up to 10 weeks gestation.

■ Autism and Learning Disability: Coronavirus

Barbara Keeley: [\[107534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the covid-19 booster vaccine rollout among people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

Maggie Throup:

The most recent data shows that in England as of 31 December 2021, over 88% of those on the Learning Disability Register had received their first COVID-19 vaccine,

over 84% had received their second dose and over 37% had received their third or booster dose.

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Learning Disability and Autism Programme has been working with regional teams to provide additional support and advice to increase uptake. We have produced a range of resources in a variety of formats to provide reliable information about the vaccine. This includes easy read and accessible versions of booking letters, question and answers, films and information leaflets. We have also created training for vaccinators, volunteers and voluntary sector partners with a particular focus on adapting communication and making reasonable adjustments for people with a learning disability or autism. Best practice guidance and examples of innovation have also been shared with regional teams and local systems.

■ **Breast Cancer: Screening**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[106728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the take-up rate for breast cancer screening was in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in each of the last three years.

Maria Caulfield:

Data on uptake in the NHS Breast Screening service is collected annually by NHS Digital nationally, by region and local authority. Data is currently not collected at constituency level.

The following table shows the percentage uptake in the NHS Breast Screening Programme in England, West Midlands, and Coventry as at 31 March in each of the last three years for which data is available.

AREA	31 MARCH 2020	31 MARCH 2019	31 MARCH 2018
England	74.2%	74.6%	74.9%
West Midlands	73.5%	74.2%	74.3%
Coventry	65.7%	69.9%	70.1%

■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[76611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to support care homes that risk losing staff due to the proposed mandatory covid-19 vaccination guidelines.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 22 November 2021]: We have ensured social care workers are prioritised for COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. In addition to repeat care home visits

by vaccination teams, we have introduced priority access at vaccination centres for social care workers and unpaid carers which is available now at walk-in sites. The regulations on vaccination requirements in care homes included a 16-week grace period to provide time for staff to be vaccinated and also for care homes to manage staff transition, if necessary. We also made guidance available through partners to support local authorities with capacity and workforce planning.

We have put in place a range of measures to support local authorities and care providers address workforce capacity pressures. On 10 December 2021 we announced £300 million to support local authorities and care providers to recruit and retain staff through winter. This is in addition to the existing £162.5 million Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund. We have also launched a new phase of our national recruitment campaign which will run until March 2022.

■ Care Homes: Visits

Caroline Lucas:

[\[108514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which (a) charities and (b) other organisations were consulted as part of (i) the redrafting of the care home visitor guidance released on 10 December 2021 and (ii) the upcoming changes to care home visitor guidance announced in his press conference on 19 January 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

We are in regular contact with stakeholders on the development and implementation of guidance. Due to the emergence of Omicron variant and the evolving situation, weekly meetings were held to inform stakeholders. This is in addition to ad-hoc meetings with smaller groups and individual stakeholders.

Membership of these weekly meetings were as follows:

- The Department of Health and Social Care;
- The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
- The Care Quality Commission;
- The UK Health Security Agency,
- NHS England and NHS Improvement;
- The Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies' Social Care Working Group;
- The Local Government Association;
- UNISON;
- Skills for Care;
- The Association of Directors of Public Health;
- The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services;
- The Homecare Association;

- The National Care Association;
- Care England;
- The National Care Forum;
- Age UK;
- The Voluntary Organisations Disability Group;
- HC-One;
- The Relatives and Residents Association;
- The Care Workers Charity;
- Gloucestershire Care Providers Association;
- Barchester Healthcare;
- ARC UK;
- The Registered Nursing Home Association;
- The Alzheimers Society;
- Devon County Council;
- Shared Lives Plus; and
- The Care Association Alliance.

We expect to make further announcements on next steps for visiting guidance in care homes shortly.

■ **Cataracts: Health Services**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[107712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of the October 2021 survey by the Private Healthcare Information Network of a 30 per cent increase in the number of patients self-funding cataract surgery, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients can access eyecare services through the NHS in a timely manner.

Edward Argar:

Surgical hubs are being used to deliver high volume low complexity operations, which is increasing the number of cataract operations being performed. National Health Service trusts are also increasing the use of technology to improve ophthalmic diagnostics, including virtual eye hubs where technicians administer tests and consultants can review results via cloud software. In some cases, these hubs have halved patient journey times and reduced costs and unnecessary referrals.

Clinicians from the Getting It Right First Time programme and the Royal College of Ophthalmologists are producing a best practice guide to support providers to increase capacity as well as the quality of services. This guidance will be circulated to providers shortly.

We have made £2 billion available through the Elective Recovery Fund in 2021/22 and a further £8 billion from April 2022 to March 2025 to increase activity and tackle the backlogs in elective care services. This is expected to deliver the equivalent of approximately nine million more checks, scans and procedures across elective services. The NHS in England can aim to deliver approximately 30% more elective activity by 2024/25 than pre-pandemic levels. A further £5.9 billion capital funding was announced in the October 2021 to support elective recovery, diagnostics and technology from 2022 to 2025.

■ **Clandeboye Agencies: Protective Clothing**

Angela Rayner: [\[109236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2022 to Question 106717 on Clandeboye Agencies: Protective Clothing, what steps he has taken to investigate reports of the resale of gowns purchased from Clandeboye Agencies on the open market at lower than purchase cost.

Edward Argar:

We are not investigating claims of personal protective equipment (PPE) being resold. We are providing free PPE to health and care settings and expect recipients to use the items for their intended use.

■ **Coronavirus: Barnsley**

Dan Jarvis: [\[101731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help increase the availability of Lateral Flow Tests in Barnsley Central constituency.

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[101843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of lateral flow tests in County Durham.

Ian Byrne: [\[101852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available for people to access lateral flow tests when (a) they have tried to access lateral flow tests at their local pharmacies but they are out of stock and (b) they do not have the means to access the Government website to order tests online.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 14 January 2022]: In December 2021, 280 million lateral flow tests were delivered and we have since procured new stock and increased delivery capacity. We expect to deliver 90 million tests a week across the United Kingdom, including seven million a day through GOV.UK. Those who are unable to order tests through GOV.UK should contact 119 or visit their local pharmacy. We are distributing 12 million tests a week through pharmacies in England. We expect that everyone, including those in Barnsley and County Durham, will be able to receive the tests they need.

■ Coronavirus: Children

Wes Streeting:

[\[107646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish data on (a) the causes of increasing rates of hospitalisations among children with covid-19 and (b) the number of cases for which covid-19 was the primary cause of hospitalisation for children admitted to hospital.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) does not collect data on the causes of increasing hospitalisation rates among children with COVID-19, therefore there are no plans for the publication of this data.

The UKHSA collects data on the number of cases for which COVID-19 was the reason for hospitalisation in all age groups, including children, through the Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) Watch surveillance system. This data is not currently validated, however the UKHSA is considering including this data in future published reports as percentage figures.

■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Rachael Maskell:

[\[106765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that local authorities that identify contact tracing as the optimum way to manage covid-19 beyond March 2022 are supported with the continuation of running contact tracing.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 January 2022]: We have continued to provide funding to local authorities to tackle COVID-19 in their local communities through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). The specific public health activities undertaken which are funded by the COMF are determined by local authorities in conjunction with Directors of Public Health and local tracing teams. No decision has yet been made on the continuation of the COMF. However, in December 2021, we confirmed that unspent funds from the COMF can be carried forward to 2022/23.

■ Coronavirus: Databases

Sarah Olney:

[\[108587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timeline is for re-infections being added to the covid-19 dashboard.

Maggie Throup:

Daily COVID-19 dashboard figures for the United Kingdom will include re-infections for England, Northern Ireland and Wales from 31 January 2022. Re-infections for Scotland will be included when available.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell: [\[104372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that his response to the covid-19 outbreak takes account of regional variations of infection rates and levels of hospital admissions in different parts of the country.

Maggie Throup:

Regional variations are monitored via the weekly National Flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports. This information is used to help inform the response at local and regional level, such as the National Health Service and local Directors of Public Health, Local Resilience Forums and regional partnerships.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[107487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the level of threat from the Omicron variant of covid-19 for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable; and what plans his Department has to issue updated guidance specifically for that group following that assessment.

Maggie Throup:

The shielding programme ended on 15 September 2021. People previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to follow general guidance, while considering extra precautions to reduce their chance of infection. Updated public health advice was issued on 24 December 2021 for people previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable, which is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

Guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19 is also available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk

NHS England and NHS Improvement have written to general practices and hospital trusts in England to raise awareness of this new guidance. We will continue to assess the situation and the risks posed by COVID-19.

Rachael Maskell: [\[107626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to protect vulnerable people, who are not confident in coming out of their homes, once covid-19 public health restrictions lifted.

Maggie Throup:

The shielding programme ended on 15 September 2021. People previously considered as clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to follow general guidance, while considering extra precautions to reduce their risk of infection.

Updated public health advice was issued on 24 December 2021 for people who were previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable, which is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

Guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19 is also available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk

The NHS Volunteer Responders programme is available to offer short-term help by providing telephone support, help with collecting shopping, medication or other essential supplies.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Ian Byrne: [\[100729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2021 to Question 92129, on Coronavirus: Screening, and in the context of that Answer which states that there is no shortage of covid-19 lateral flow test kits, for what reason people have reported that those kits have been out of stock (a) on the gov.uk website and (b) upon collection at pharmacies following the issue of a collection code from that website.

Ian Byrne: [\[100730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2021 to Question 92129, on Coronavirus: Screening, what additional support the Government is providing to pharmacies in (a) England and (b) Liverpool West Derby constituency to meet increased demand for covid-19 lateral flow test kits.

Ian Byrne: [\[100731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2021 to Question 92129, on Coronavirus: Screening, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that people who are unable to visit a pharmacy may have covid-19 lateral flow test kits delivered to their home in the context of the gov.uk website indicating that those kits are out of stock for home delivery.

Ian Byrne: [\[100733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2021 to Question 92129, on Coronavirus: Screening, how people can receive covid-19 lateral flow test kits in the event that those kits are unavailable (a) on the gov.uk website for home delivery and (b) collection at their local pharmacy.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 January 2022]:

We delivered approximately 280 million lateral flow device tests in December 2021 and we have procured additional stock and increased delivery capacity. We expect to deliver 90 million tests a week across the United Kingdom. In England, this includes approximately 12 million tests a week through pharmacies and seven million tests a day through GOV.UK so we do not expect that deliveries, including those to Liverpool West Derby, will be limited.

Mike Kane:

[\[107596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which of the recommendations made by the Competition and Markets Authority to improve the PCR testing market for consumers have been implemented.

Maggie Throup:

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

Rachael Maskell:

[\[107617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to maintain the covid-19 testing regime in place on 19 January 2022 until infection rates are significantly reduced.

Maggie Throup:

We will continue to provide free lateral flow device tests for asymptomatic use and polymerase chain reaction test for symptomatic use. We will continue to review the provision of testing in line with the latest public health advice.

Alex Sobel:

[\[107706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2022 to Question 100678 on Coronavirus: Screening, how many lateral flow test results have been reported through the usual channels since 11 January 2022.

Maggie Throup:

Between 11 January to 19 January 2022, 9,091,308 lateral flow device test results have been reported.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[107577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making covid-19 vaccinations available to primary school children.

Maggie Throup:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) concluded that those aged five to 11 years old who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed should be offered a primary course of COVID-19 vaccination. The Government accepted this advice on 22 December 2021. The JCVI will provide further advice for all remaining primary school children following consideration of additional and emerging data.

Chi Onwurah:[\[107578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure covid-19 vaccines are available for children, whose parents make a request for such vaccinations.

Maggie Throup:

On 22 December 2021, the Government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) that children aged five to 11 years old who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed should be offered a primary course of COVID-19 vaccination. The National Health Service is preparing to deploy these vaccinations by the end of January 2022. Children and their parents or guardians will be contacted to arrange an appointment by the local NHS.

All 12 to 17 year olds are eligible for two doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Parents or guardians can book an appointment through the NHS Booking Service or via walk-in centres across the country. This is in addition to the ongoing school-based offer for 12 to 15 year olds. Since 10 January 2022, children aged 12 to 15 years old are also being offered a second vaccine dose in their schools.

From 17 January 2022, the NHS has offered booster doses to eligible children and young people aged 12 to 17 years old. Primary care teams are inviting eligible 12 to 15 year olds who are clinically at-risk and those who are household contacts of someone who is immunosuppressed. Appointments are available via local booking systems, hospital hubs, general practitioners or primary care networks or through a home visit if the patient is housebound. All 16 to 17 year olds can book their booster vaccine through the National Booking Service. The JCVI keeps the emerging data on COVID-19 vaccination of children and young people under regular review.

Charlotte Nichols:[\[107734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many appointments have been arranged to date for people who have received covid-19 vaccines abroad to register their inoculations; how many people are still awaiting an appointment; and what steps he is taking to increase the number of those appointments.

Maggie Throup:

Approximately 9,000 appointments have been arranged for people to register their overseas vaccination into the National Immunisation Management System. This has resulted in 11,500 vaccination records being created. Information on the number of

people awaiting an appointment is not held centrally. A further 13 new sites have been identified by regional teams to offer this service. This will double the current capacity by the end of March 2022.

Emma Hardy:

[109326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to include vaccination status among the daily covid-19 statistics available on the gov.uk website for hospital admissions.

Maggie Throup:

There are no plans to include vaccination status among the daily COVID-19 statistics available on the gov.uk website for hospital admissions. These figures require complex linkage of different data sets, as well as careful interpretation.

The UK Health Security Agency publish weekly COVID-19 vaccine surveillance reports which are available at the following link:

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

As well as reporting vaccination status in cases, deaths and hospitalisations, these reports also describe the complex issues to consider when interpreting the data.

Bridget Phillipson:

[110338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, by what date he estimates all eligible (a) 12 to 15 year olds and (b) 16 to 17 year olds will have received at least one dose of a covid-19 vaccine; whether he has set any targets for particular percentages of each of those age groups to have received at least one dose; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

The Government met its target of offering a first dose of the Pfizer vaccine to all 16 and 17-year-olds in England on 23 August 2021.

NHS England and NHS Improvement do not have estimated timescales or associated targets for ensuring individuals will have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, including for (a) 12 to 15-year-olds and (b) 16 to 17-year-olds.

Clive Lewis:

[110475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to extend the policy of mandatory covid-19 vaccination to healthcare workers in private hospitals.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leeds North East (Fabian Hamilton MP) on 12 January 2022 to Question [74895](#).

Alex Norris:

[110562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of offering antibody tests to people who are immunocompromised and suppressed, who are unsure whether or not they have

generated an immune response to the covid-19 vaccines, or whether they remain immunologically vulnerable and need to shield.

Maggie Throup:

There are no imminent plans to implement targeted antibody testing for immunocompromised patients. National Health Service clinicians can arrange antibody testing for patients based on their assessment of clinical need. Those with a cancer diagnosis may also be able to access free antibody tests through the National Cancer COVID Survey, which aims to assess levels of protection conferred by antibodies following vaccination or infection in cancer patients.

Damien Moore:

[\[72591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the level of uptake of the covid-19 booster vaccination in (a) Southport and (b) North West England.

Maggie Throup:

As of 16 January 2022, 67.2% of adults aged 18 years old and over and 62.7% of those aged 12 years old and over in Southport had received a booster or third dose. As of 22 January 2022, 60.5% of adults aged 18 years old and over and 55.8% of people aged 12 years old and over in the North West had received a booster or third dose.

■ **Coronavirus: Vitamin D**

Alex Sobel:

[\[109333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the potential merits of the use of Vitamin D as a protection against covid-19 and (b) the steps that can be taken to increase the public promotion of Vitamin D's merits for maintaining the immune system.

Maggie Throup:

Public Health England, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published a rapid guideline on vitamin D and COVID-19 in December 2020.

The guideline concluded that there was not enough evidence to support taking vitamin D solely to prevent or treat COVID-19 and reiterated existing Government advice for everyone to take a daily 10 microgram supplement of vitamin D throughout Autumn and Winter for bone and muscle health.

The Government continues to actively promote these recommendations through a range of platforms, including the NHS.UK website, social media and campaigns such as Better Health.

NICE and SACN continue to monitor evidence in this area.

■ Dental Services: Coronavirus**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[110507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the mandatory covid-19 vaccination programme on staffing levels in the dental industry.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for York Central (Rachael Maskell MP) on 18 January 2022 to Question [100611](#).

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Legislation**Kirsty Blackman:** [\[109244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many pieces of (a) primary and (b) secondary legislation their Department has sponsored in each of the last 10 years.

Edward Argar:

Between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2021, the Department's Secretary of State and Lords Minister have sponsored 9 Government bills which became Acts of Government. In the same period the Department made 692 statutory instruments.

This information is only held for internal administrative reasons by the Department and may not be exhaustive.

Kirsty Blackman: [\[110386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many post legislative reviews (a) their Department or (b) their predecessor Department has undertaken on (i) primary and (ii) secondary legislation in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

The number of post legislative reviews the Department has undertaken on primary and secondary legislation in each of the last five years is not held centrally within the Department.

Attachments:

1. RR Guidance [2022.01.25 - Round Robin Guidance - Post Legislative Reviews in the Last 5 Years (1).docx]

Kirsty Blackman: [\[110404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of the (a) primary and (b) secondary legislation sponsored by (i) their Department or (ii) their predecessor Department has undergone a post legislative review in each of the last 10 years.

Edward Argar:

The number of post legislative reviews the Department has undertaken on primary and secondary legislation in each of the last ten years is not held centrally.

Attachments:

1. RR Guidance [2022.01.25 - Round Robin Guidance - Post Legislative Reviews in the Last 10 Years (002).pdf]

■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Standards**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[110594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he estimates sexual health services will return to pre-pandemic levels of service.

Maria Caulfield:

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services have remained open during the pandemic, though some services had to temporarily reduce their face-to-face appointments due to health and safety measures.

No national assessment has been made of the level of unmet need across all SRH services in England during the pandemic. The Department's plans to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes across the population over the next five years will be set out in our forthcoming sexual and reproductive health strategy.

■ Home Care Services**Steve McCabe:**[\[108455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to provide further support for (a) domiciliary care providers and (b) domiciliary care staff.

Gillian Keegan:

To provide further support for domiciliary providers, we have extended the Infection Control and Testing Fund by a further £388.3 million until 31 March 2022. Domiciliary care providers are able to access this funding to put in place effective infection prevention and control measures, including supporting testing and increasing vaccine uptake.

We have made available two rounds of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention fund, totalling £462.5 million to support local authorities and care providers recruit and retain care staff. Home care workers will be eligible for the Health and Care Worker visa for a 12-month period and added to the shortage occupation list, making it quicker, cheaper and easier to recruit eligible workers from overseas to fill vital gaps.

The Government has committed to providing free Personal Protective Equipment for their COVID-19 needs until the end of March 2023. To support staff, a bespoke testing supply channel has been set up to enable asymptomatic home carers to access weekly polymerase chain reaction tests to administer at home. Domiciliary care workers have been prioritised for the COVID-19 vaccine and we have made free flu vaccines available to eligible staff.

We are continuously reviewing our guidance to ensure that staff working in domiciliary care are receiving up to date advice to keep them as safe as possible during this time.

■ Home Care Services: Finance

Steve McCabe: [\[108454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the £1.4 billion fund to help local authorities offer a fairer cost of care to providers will go to those providing domiciliary care.

Gillian Keegan:

As a condition of receiving funding, we will expect local authorities to conduct cost of care exercises, including for domiciliary care, to set out their plans for driving market sustainability. This will include progress towards a fair cost of care and to report on how funding is being used. How far local authorities will move towards paying a fair cost of care, and the amount of funding that goes towards domiciliary fee rates, will vary according to their starting point, local market circumstances and local pressures.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largan: [\[110636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for High Peak dated 26 August 2021, reference RL25229.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 26 January 2022.

John Penrose: [\[89530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letters dated 4 October 2021 and 3 November 2021 from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare in relation to my constituent, Caroline Lenihan.

Edward Argar:

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

Feryal Clark: [\[89692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Enfield North of 31 August 2021 on supply of breathing equipment in the UK, reference FC10392.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 5 January 2022.

Sir Mike Penning: [\[90363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to correspondence from the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead dated 12 August 2021, case number MP 71131 on NHS Staffing Levels.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 14 December 2021]: We replied to the Rt Hon. Member on 5 January 2022.

Mr John Baron:[\[93715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to correspondence from the hon. member for Basildon and Billericay dated (a) 10 September, (b) 11 October and (c) 26 November 2021 on a constituency matter with reference JB34115.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 5 January 2022]: We replied to the hon. Member on 6 January 2022.

■ Mental Health Services: Standards**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[110558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to reduce the amount of time that individuals wait for mental health support.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have consulted on the potential to introduce five new waiting time standards, in addition to the three waiting time standards that already exist, as part of its Clinically-led Review of NHS Access Standards. The consultation closed on 1 September 2021 and NHS England and NHS Improvement expects to publish the response to the consultation on the proposals for new waiting time standards in due course.

We are also providing an additional £500 million in 2021/22 to help address waiting times for mental health services and give more people the mental health support they need. This is on top of the additional investment in mental health services through the NHS Long Term Plan, which will enable an extra two million people in England to access NHS-funded mental health support by 2023/24.

■ NHS Test and Trace: Telephone Services**Daisy Cooper:**[\[99071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) average call duration, (b) average waiting time and (c) total number of calls were to the NHS covid-19 testing help number 119 where the caller ended the call before it was answered in (i) 2020 and (ii) 2021.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 11 January 2022]: While an informal estimate has been made, the data requested has not been centrally verified.

■ NHS: Re-employment

Rachael Maskell: [\[108564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) encourage and (b) make it simpler for people to return to practice in the NHS.

Edward Argar:

Health Education England leads a national programme to encourage and support people who wish to return to practice in the National Health Service. This includes sign-posting readmission requirements, available return to practice courses, regulatory requirements and employer reimbursement of associated costs.

■ Nurses

Dawn Butler: [\[110280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of nurses in NHS hospitals in England are registered nurses.

Edward Argar:

To work as a nurse in a National Health Service hospital in England, professionals must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

■ Ophthalmic Services

Marsha De Cordova: [\[107711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish an update on progress made in implementing the National Outpatient Transformation Programme, with specific reference to ophthalmology services.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement launched the National Outpatient Transformation Programme in April 2020 to modernise outpatient services and reduce face to face appointments by a third. As of October 2021, it had facilitated over 34.4 million remote consultations, supporting general practitioners to treat more patients without onward referrals and enabling patients to book follow up appointments when needed. This has increased capacity for those needing face to face consultations.

In November 2021, 1,327 or 0.21% of ophthalmology outpatients booked follow up appointments. There were 11,574 specialist advice requests for ophthalmology which reduced onward referrals by 15.5%.

■ Respiratory System: Diseases

Feryal Clark: [\[110625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to improve diagnosis rates for patients with respiratory illnesses other than covid-19.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service will build on the existing RightCare programme to reduce variation in the quality of spirometry testing. The Accelerated Access Collaborative is launching fractional exhaled nitric oxide testing to improve diagnosis of asthma.

Targeted lung health checks are available to diagnose cancer and identify respiratory conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. We have also announced £2.3 billion to increase the number of community diagnostic centres to provide access to physiological and imaging tests for the diagnosis of respiratory illnesses.

Self-harm: Children in Care

Sarah Champion: [\[109230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many looked after children were admitted to accident and emergency for self-harming in each year from 2018 to 2021.

Sarah Champion: [\[109231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what percentage of children admitted to accident and emergency for self-harming in each year from 2018 to 2021 were looked after children.

Sarah Champion: [\[109232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of children admitted to accident and emergency for attempting suicide were looked after children, in each year from 2018 to 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

The data requested is not available. Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), which records attendances in accident and emergency departments, does not record whether a person is a looked after child. In addition, HES data provides a count of attendances and not a count of individual people.

Social Services: Staff

Jon Trickett: [\[107466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact to date of covid-19 vaccination as a condition of employment within the social care sector.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government's impact assessment for vaccination as a condition of deployment in care homes estimated that around 37,000 additional staff might leave the care home workforce. Between 20 July and 29 December 2021, the care home workforce decreased by 19,300, although this will also include the effect of new staff joining the sector over the same time period and staff leaving for other reasons.

The extension of vaccination as a condition of deployment to wider social care will apply from April 2022. The impact assessment extending the policy across health and

social care estimates that 35,000 staff in domiciliary care and other care services may not have met vaccination requirements by the end of grace period on 31 March 2022. We will continue to monitor the impact of the policy in the lead up to the regulations coming into force.

■ Tuberculosis

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[110308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the increase in domestic cases of TB.

Maggie Throup:

National statistics do not show evidence of an overall increase in domestic cases of tuberculosis (TB). In England, the number and rate of TB notifications has declined by approximately 43% since 2011. From 15.6 per 100,000 (8,280 cases) in 2011 to 7.3 per 100,000 (4,125 cases) in 2020.

In July 2021, the UK Health Security Agency in collaboration with NHS England and NHS Improvement published the 'TB Action Plan for England 2021 to 2026'. The plan supports the United Kingdom to meet its commitment to the World Health Organisation elimination targets by supporting a year-on-year reduction in TB incidence. The TB Action Plan outlines five main priority areas and steps to reduce domestic cases of TB, including: recovery from COVID-19 through understanding and reporting the impact and learning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, TB prevention, TB detection, TB disease control, and workforce.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[110309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of TB between 2019 and 2021.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency has undertaken an analyses of tuberculosis (TB) trends in 2019 and 2020. This showed that the number of cases reported in England declined from 4,725 in 2019 to 4,125 in 2020. This represents an overall decline in the rates of TB to 8.4 per 100,100 in 2019 to 7.3 per 100,000 in 2020. An analysis for 2021 is still underway and will be published in October 2022.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[110310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the reasons why people who were not born in the UK face a higher risk of contracting TB in the UK compared to people who were born in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency undertakes analysis of tuberculosis (TB) trends in non-United Kingdom born individuals compared to UK-born individuals. Data to the end of 2020 shows that the rate of TB in non-UK born individuals is over 15 times greater than the rate in the UK-born population.

There is a higher risk of disease in individuals who are born in high prevalence areas and this elevated risk continues within settled migrant populations in England. This is a complex issue and the continued higher risk is in part explained by reactivation of latent or dormant disease and the higher rates of contact with the populations and countries with a high prevalence of disease. Effective targeted prevention programmes have been commissioned to address this risk, which includes new entrant and pre-entry screening of individuals from high prevalence countries.

■ Tuberculosis: Health Services

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[110311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce delays in treatment for people diagnosed with TB.

Gillian Keegan:

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant pressures on National Health Service's, including the detection, control, and prevention of infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis (TB). The TB Action Plan 2021-2026 for England aims to drive forward improvements by first prioritising the recovery of services, and then the prevention, detection and control of TB and developing the healthcare workforce. It includes a list of actions, such as strengthening treatment of active and/or latent TB in higher risk groups.

The Government has made £2 billion available via the Elective Recovery Fund and £8 billion across the following three years to transform elective services, increase capacity and reduce waiting times. The funding aims to deliver the equivalent of nine million more checks, scans, and procedures and 30% more elective activity by 2024-2025 than pre-pandemic.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Afghanistan

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[99373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to use its log of individuals at risk in Afghanistan referred to it by hon. Members; and whether that log will be part of the referral process for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 12 January 2022]: The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will prioritise those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for UK values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech and rule of law; and vulnerable people such as women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups (including ethnic / religious minorities and LGBT+).

Those eligible for the scheme include individuals evacuated during Operation Pitting. Due to the success of the evacuation in unprecedented circumstances, there are around 6,500 people in the UK who have been brought to safety during and after the evacuation who are eligible for the ACRS. We're considering how we use MPs correspondence to inform the referral process, as set out in the Oral statement.

There will not be an application process for the ACRS. Instead, eligible people will be prioritised and referred for resettlement through one of three ways, more detail can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>.

■ Asylum: Napier Barracks

Alison Thewliss:

[106752]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many responses to the public consultation on extending the use of Napier Barracks as asylum accommodation for a further further years will be taken into account, given that the extension on its use came into force on 21 September 2021.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 21 January 2022]: Given the increasing pressure on the asylum accommodation system, the Home Office took the decision that retaining the use of Napier beyond 21 September 2021 was necessary to ensure sufficient accommodation was available to uphold our statutory requirement.

The Home Office engaged with statutory partners, members of parliament and local government before the SDO was laid before Parliament. The timing of this decision and the circumstances in which it was made (i.e. the quickly growing need to secure accommodation) dictated only a limited level of engagement could be undertaken.

The Home Office is currently consulting on the continued use of Napier Barracks as accommodation for eligible asylum seekers whilst their claims for asylum are being considered. The consultation description is available at: [Napier barracks planning application](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/napier-barracks-planning-application)(www.gov.uk)

All representations made in relation to the Planning Application will be considered to inform the planning process and any representation will be contained within a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) report. This report will be hosted on the Gov.UK website and those who made representations will be notified to advise them the SCI is now in the public domain.

Alison Thewliss:

[106753]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason a public consultation on extending the use of Napier Barracks as asylum accommodation for a further five years was not held prior to the decision to proceed with the extension of its use.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 21 January 2022]: Given the increasing pressure on the asylum accommodation system, the Home Office took the decision that retaining the use of

Napier beyond 21 September 2021 was necessary to ensure sufficient accommodation was available to uphold our statutory requirement.

The Home Office engaged with statutory partners, members of parliament and local government before the SDO was laid before Parliament. The timing of this decision and the circumstances in which it was made (i.e. the quickly growing need to secure accommodation) dictated only a limited level of engagement could be undertaken.

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All representations made in relation to the Planning Application will be considered to inform the planning process and any representation will be contained within a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) report. This report will be hosted on the Gov.UK website and those who made representations will be notified to advise them the SCI is now in the public domain.

■ Crime: Computers

Emily Thornberry: [\[110295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many offences were recorded under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 as (a) unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate commission of further offences, (b) unauthorised acts with intent to impair, or with recklessness as to impairing, operation of computer, etc., (c) unauthorised access to computer material and (d) making, supplying or obtaining articles for use in offence under sections 1 or 3, as set out in section 3A of that Act, in each of the last five years.

Emily Thornberry: [\[110296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many offences were recorded under the Fraud Act 2006 as (a) 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 and (b) 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, in each of the last five years.

Damian Hinds:

The Home Office collects data on the number of reports of fraud and Computer Misuse Act (CMA) offences made to Action Fraud that have been recorded as criminal offences by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB).

This data is published as official statistics by the Office for National Statistics on a quarterly basis. A breakdown of fraud and CMA offences is available from June 2015 to June 2021 in table A5 below:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/criminenglandandwalesappendixtables>.

■ Domestic Abuse: Mental Health Services

Mike Amesbury:

[\[107708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on providing domestic abuse survivors with mental health and support services.

Mike Amesbury:

[\[107709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of providing mental health and support services for people involved in domestic abuse.

Rachel Maclean:

This Government is committed to supporting all victims of domestic abuse. We passed the landmark Domestic Abuse Act last April, which will strengthen our protection to victims and ensure perpetrators feel the full force of the law. We will also be publishing a Domestic Abuse Strategy in the coming months, which will help drive a step-change in the response to these crimes and build on the Domestic Abuse Act, seeking to transform the whole of society's response to domestic abuse.

We recognise that domestic abuse can have a lasting and severe impact to the mental health of victims and their families. Forthcoming statutory guidance on Domestic Abuse will ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood, including the long and short term physical and mental health impacts of domestic abuse.

In 2021-22, Government is providing just under £151m for victim and witness support services, including funding for a number of domestic abuse specialist services providing counselling and one-to-one support to victims of domestic abuse and 'by and for' services for Black, Asian and minority ethnic, LGBTQ+ or disabled victims.

In addition, the Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) fund is delivering a wide range of interventions which are designed and carefully chosen to support children affected by domestic abuse and improve their long-term outcomes, including therapeutic support and counselling.

In respect of the health and social care system, through the Health and Care Bill we will create 42 Integrated Care Systems (ICS) across England - these will allocate resources, coordinate services and plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups.

We will continue to work across Government to ensure that those involved in domestic abuse receive the support that they need.

■ Drugs: Misuse

Anne McLaughlin:

[\[110440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has any plans to devolve powers on drug policy to the Scottish Parliament.

Anne McLaughlin:

[\[110441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of fully devolving drug policy to the Scottish Government.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has no plans to devolve powers on drug policy, such as the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, to the Scottish Government and has made no assessment of the merits or demerits of doing so. While the legal framework on the misuse of drugs is reserved to the UK, the Scottish Government has its own approach to tackling drug misuse in areas where responsibility is devolved, including healthcare, criminal justice, housing and education.

Tackling drug misuse is a priority for this government and it is clear that action is needed across the country to reduce the harms caused. We are committed to working closely with the Scottish Government on this issue to improve the particular challenges of drug abuse in Scotland.

■ Fire and Rescue Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[107624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that all fire fighters are equipped with the latest breathing apparatus and location devices.

Kevin Foster:

Fire and rescue authorities, as employers, are responsible for ensuring that their operational personnel are sufficiently trained and equipped to carry out their roles and responsibilities to meet local risk.

■ Fraud

Emily Thornberry:

[\[107515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many reports of (a) SMS scams, (b) email scams, (c) scam websites, and (d) scam adverts Action Fraud has received in each of the last five years.

Damian Hinds:

The Office for National Statistics publish official statistics on the number of frauds reported to Action Fraud on a quarterly basis and the latest statistics can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingjune2021>

However, the detailed information requested about how the fraud was committed is not held centrally.

Fraudsters are sophisticated and will exploit any vulnerabilities they can, especially as more of us find ourselves at home and online. As Government, we are working with the private sector, especially technology and communications companies to better tackle and identify the sources of these threats. We will continue to work with online platforms to identify what more can be done.

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

■ HSBC: Xinjiang

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:

[110229]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2022 to Question 105332 on HSBC: Xinjiang Tianye, what plans she has to investigate the veracity of HSBC's Modern Slavery Statement in response to reports that the company holds shares in Xinjiang-based companies alleged to have perpetrated mass atrocity crimes against the Uyghurs and others; and if she will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has serious concerns about the gross human rights violations being perpetrated against Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang. The Government's 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.

With regard to transparency reporting on modern slavery, the UK was the first country in the world to require businesses to report on the steps they have taken to tackle modern slavery. The landmark provision in section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires organisations, including financial institutions, with a turnover of £36m or more, to report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

The prevalence of modern slavery and complexity of global supply chains means that it is highly unlikely that any sector or company is immune from the risks of modern slavery. Section 54 therefore does not require organisations to certify that their supply chains are 'slavery free' or require the Government to verify the content of modern slavery statements. The Government expects companies to report transparently about how they are mitigating modern slavery risks and to use their modern slavery statements to demonstrate year on year progress. This enables consumers, shareholders and civil society to scrutinise the efforts being made.

Anyone with concerns about an organisation's modern slavery statement should write to the Board of Directors (or equivalent) as the Act requires a modern slavery statement to be approved by the Board and signed by a Director (or equivalent) to ensure senior level accountability for modern slavery. Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that their statements reflect the circumstances and action their organisation is taking.

Under the current provisions of section 54, if an organisation does not comply with their legal requirements in relation to producing a modern slavery statement, the Home Secretary can apply for an injunction to enforce compliance. To enhance the impact of transparency and accelerate action to prevent modern slavery, the Government committed to strengthening the reporting requirements contained in section 54 and to introduce financial penalties for organisations that fail to meet their statutory obligation to publish modern slavery statements. These measures require primary legislation and will be introduced when parliamentary time allows.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Spellar: [\[107443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he plans to reply to the enquiry from the hon. Member for Warley of 6 October 2021 regarding Todd Tagarira.

John Spellar: [\[107444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he will respond to the letter from the hon. Member from Warley of 13 October on Baljit Kaur.

John Spellar: [\[107445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he will respond to the letter from the hon. Member from Warley of 13 October on Anania Getachew.

John Spellar: [\[107447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he will respond to the letter from the hon. Member from Warley of 2 September on Amit Chhura.

Tom Pursglove:

I apologise for the delay. UK Visas and Immigration, MP Account Management team responded as detailed below:

PQ 107443 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0169429/21 – The Home Office responded on 20 January 2022.

PQ 10744 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0193802/21 – The Home Office responded on 20 January 2022.

PQ 107445 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0193784 – The Home Office responded on 20 January 2022.

PQ 107447 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0179656/21 – The Home Office responded on 20 January 2022.

John Spellar: [\[107446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he will respond to the letter from the hon. Member from Warley of 22 October on Pishtivan Ahmed.

Tom Pursglove:

I apologise for the delay. The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 14 January 2022.

Robert Largan:[\[107746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for High Peak of 26 November 2021, reference RL29216.

Tom Pursglove:

A response was sent to the hon. Member via email on 6 December 2021. The Home Office has resent its response on 20 January 2022.

Anneliese Dodds:[\[99372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to reply to representations made by hon. Members on behalf of constituents stuck in Afghanistan wanting to come to the UK who have pre-existing valid leave in the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

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

Those eligible for the scheme include individuals evacuated during Operation Pitting. Due to the success of the evacuation in unprecedented circumstances, there are around 6,500 people in the UK who have been brought to safety during and after the evacuation who are eligible for the ACRS. We're considering how we use MPs correspondence to inform the referral process, as set out in the Oral statement.

There will not be an application process for the ACRS. Instead, eligible people will be prioritised and referred for resettlement through one of three ways, more detail can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>.

Metropolitan Police: Recruitment**Sarah Olney:**[\[108591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of the new recruits for the Metropolitan Police (a) have been and (b) will be allocated to South West London.

Kit Malthouse:

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

Due to their hard work and commitment, police forces in England and Wales have already recruited over 11,000 additional officers, 55% of the 20,000-officer target. This is on top of recruitment of new officers to backfill leavers.

As at 30 September 2021, the Metropolitan Police Service had recruited 2,070 additional officers against a combined allocation of 2,713 additional officers for years one and two of the uplift programme. The force has been allocated a further 1,825

additional officers to be recruited by March 2023. The deployment of officers is a decision for operationally independent Chief Constables.

■ North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Rachael Maskell: **[107627]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the safe and well programme ran by the North Yorkshire Fire Service.

Kit Malthouse:

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) assesses the impact of prevention activities delivered by local fire and rescue services, including safe and well checks.

Details of their last report can be found here: [Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19: An inspection of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/effectiveness-efficiency-and-people-2018-19-an-inspection-of-north-yorkshire-fire-and-rescue-service/).

■ Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Unit: Police

Holly Lynch: **[110467]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers are currently serving in the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Unit.

Damian Hinds:

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the size of the police workforce in England and Wales on a biannual basis in the '[Police workforce, England and Wales](#)' statistical bulletin

Information on the number of police officers, police staff and Police Community Support Officers by function is published annually in tables F1, F2 and F3 accompanying the police workforce statistics as at 31 March. The latest data, covering the situation as at 31 March 2021 are available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005990/police-workforce-mar21-tables.ods

The data in these tables include the number of police officers and staff working under function 9 – National Policing.

Function 9 - "National Policing" - includes officers, staff, and PCSOs working primarily in the following subfunctions:

- Counter Terrorism/Special Branch
- NPCC Projects / Initiatives
- Hosting National Services
- Other National Policing Requirements

Table F4 provides further details on the types of roles covered by these functions. For reasons of national security, we do not separately publish the number of officers in each of these roles.

■ Police: Public Inquiries

Daisy Cooper: [\[107725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will define and publish the criteria that will inform her decision on whether to convert the Angiolini Inquiry into a full statutory inquiry.

Daisy Cooper: [\[107726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will convert the Angiolini Inquiry into a full statutory inquiry in the event of such a recommendation from the independent chair.

Daisy Cooper: [\[107727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to update the House of any request by the Chair of the Angiolini Inquiry to convert that inquiry into a full statutory inquiry within five days of receiving that request.

Kit Malthouse:

As the Home Secretary said in her statement to the House on 22 November 2021 when announcing the appointment of Rt Hon Dame Elish Angiolini QC as Chair of the inquiry, she will not rule out converting it to a statutory footing should Dame Elish feel that she is unable to fulfil the terms of reference on a non-statutory basis.

Any such decision would only be taken after discussion with Dame Elish, taking into account official advice, and the House would be informed accordingly.

■ Rape: Victims

Steve Reed: [\[110371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of victims of rape who withdrew their complaint after reporting it to the police in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

Rape and sexual violence are devastating crimes that can have a long-lasting impact on victims. We have taken a hard and honest look at how the criminal justice system deals with rape; in too many instances it is simply not good enough. We apologised at the time for this and will not rest until we have delivered real improvements – transforming support for victims, ensuring cases are investigated fully and pursued rigorously through the courts.

We know that rape and sexual offences are still all too often hidden crimes, and we want to see more victims having the confidence to come forward to report them to the police. The large increase in the latest figures is likely to reflect both more victims

coming forward to report sexual offences in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 and more latterly the re-opening of the night-time economy following COVID restrictions easing.

It is key that we must ensure that victims receive their rights under the Victims' Code, which, together with improving the provision of support services, will mean more victims should have the confidence and support they need to stay engaged in the justice process. Our plans for the Victims' Bill to improve accountability and ensure victims feel supported are critical to improve victim engagement.

The Home Office does not hold information on the precise number of rape offences recorded by the police where the victim withdrew their complaint after reporting it. The Home Office publishes statistics on the number of rape offences recorded by the police in England and Wales and the number of these offences where the investigation was closed as the victim did not support any further action. This also includes cases which were reported by a third party where the victim did not wish to report an offence, and those where the victim is unable to support further investigation for another reason. The latest statistics can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

■ Refugees

Anne McLaughlin:

[103577]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the safe and legal routes to the UK which are available to (a) refugees and (b) asylum seekers as of 13 January 2022.

Kevin Foster:

The UK has a long history of supporting refugees in need of protection. Our resettlement schemes have provided safe and legal routes for tens of thousands of people to start new lives in the UK. Since 2015 we have resettled over 26,000 refugees through our safe and legal routes directly from regions of conflict and instability.

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) commenced on 6th January and will provide up to 20,000 women, children and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK.

In addition to our resettlement schemes, we also operate the following safe and legal routes:

- Refugee family reunion, which enables the spouse or partner and children of a refugee sponsor who are under 18 years of age to join their family member in the UK. More than 39,500 family reunion visas have been granted since 2015
- Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), for current or former locally employed Afghan staff working for or alongside the UK Government. We have relocated over 8,000 people under ARAP so far, with more continuing to arrive.

- A bespoke immigration route for British National (Overseas) status holders and their family members, which reflects the UK's historic and moral commitment to people affected by the restrictions on their rights and freedoms in Hong Kong. As of 30 September 2021, there have been approximately 88,800 applications, with 76,176 successful grants since the route launched on 31 January.

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Our New Plan for Immigration demonstrates a strengthening of Government-backed safe and legal routes to the UK, so those in need of protection don't have to put their lives in the hands of people smugglers.

You can find more information on our safe and legal routes at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-and-borders-bill-safe-and-legal-routes-factsheet/nationality-and-borders-bill-factsheet-safe-and-legal-routes>

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Dan Jarvis:

[102637]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether (a) consular services, (b) Visa Application Centres and (c) biometric submission capabilities are present (i) in-country (ii) regionally to process Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications.

Victoria Atkins:

There are no facilities in country in Afghanistan currently therefore individuals would need to travel to nearby countries, such as Pakistan or India, to apply.

The UK is working with international partners, including non-governmental organisations and other countries to secure safe routes out of Afghanistan as soon as they become available, starting with those in most need.

The Government is committed to doing all it can to support those most in need and those at risk who have had to flee Afghanistan.

Dan Jarvis:

[105528]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals relocated to the UK via (a) Operation Pitting and (b) the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy are waiting for Indefinite Leave to Remain to be granted.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 20 January 2022]: Between 15 and 29 August, the Department evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan.

The Home Office is supporting those currently in the UK with 6 months leave to apply for and be granted ILR. Our aim is to conclude this process before individuals' leave to remain expires.

The data on those who are waiting for their ILR to be granted is not currently available but once published we will direct to the publication.

Dan Jarvis: [\[105529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals relocated to the UK via (a) Operation Pitting and (b) the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy have their Biometric Residency Permits.

Victoria Atkins:

Between 15 and 29 August, the Department evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan.

The Home Office is supporting those currently in the UK with 6 months leave to apply for and be granted ILR. Our aim is to conclude this process before individuals' leave to remain expires.

The data on those who have received their Biometrics Residency Permits is not currently available but once published we will direct to the publication.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[110596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish her Department's policy and guidance on matching and allocating people to local authority properties under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan citizens resettlement schemes.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[110598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish targets and timescales for the placement of families in to available properties under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan citizens resettlement schemes.

Victoria Atkins:

Operation Warm Welcome is a significant cross-government effort, working with local authorities, NGOs, housing organisations and the commercial sector to explore all options available to meet the need for housing. We are working closely with Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities and other stakeholders to identify a range of alternative accommodation options to minimise hotel use and to enable people to get into accommodation as quickly as possible in order for them to begin their new lives here in the UK.

We do not want to keep people in temporary accommodation for any longer than is absolutely necessary and more than 4,000 Afghans who arrived in the UK before, during, and after Operation Pitting have either been matched or are in the process of being matched into properties.

We currently have Home Office Liaison Officers (HOLO's) who's role is to provide support to those in bridging hotel accommodation. The role of the HOLO is to provide both face to face support and remote support when not physically present. They are reactive to the needs of those accommodated in hotels and can provide signposting to other government departments and Local Authorities and ensure safeguarding concerns are appropriately acted upon.

There is a huge effort underway to get families into permanent homes as soon as we can so they can settle and rebuild their lives, and to ensure those still temporarily accommodated in hotels have access to healthcare, education, any essential items they need as well as employment opportunities or Universal Credit.

We have a range of criteria which is taken into consideration when allocating families into permanent accommodation to allow for the best possible matches, this includes family size, vulnerabilities and availability of housing.

We strive to allocate the right families into the right accommodation to ensure they have a smooth integration into their new communities within the UK.

DLUHC have created a new Housing Portal to make it easier for councils to assess the suitability of properties prior to contacting landlords. Offers of property are triaged by DLUHC and sent directly to councils. We are also looking at ways to make more suitable homes available in the private rental sector by engaging with landlords, letting agencies and industry bodies to promote the housing portal and encourage participation in the resettlement programme. We are also working with the Estate Agent Rightmove to identify potential properties available in the private rental sector.

Local Authorities continue to assist with helping families to integrate into communities upon their arrival to their permanent accommodation. We would also ask that Local Authorities who are not already part of the scheme to consider assisting in our efforts to resettle the Afghan people into permanent accommodation in the UK.

There are no plans to publish targets for placing Afghans in permanent accommodation.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[110599]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle delays in matching families to local authority properties under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan citizens resettlement schemes.

Victoria Atkins:

Operation Warm Welcome is a significant cross-government effort, working with local authorities, NGOs, housing organisations and the commercial sector to explore all options available to meet the need for housing. We are working closely with Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities and other stakeholders to identify a range of alternative accommodation options to minimise hotel use and to enable people to get into accommodation as quickly as possible in order for them to begin their new lives here in the UK.

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Local Authorities continue to assist with helping families to integrate into communities upon their arrival to their permanent accommodation. We would also ask that Local Authorities who are not already part of the scheme to consider assisting in our efforts to resettle the Afghan people into permanent accommodation in the UK.

There are no plans to publish targets for placing Afghans in permanent accommodation.

Sarah Champion:

[\[98314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average attendance rate is in Government-funded ESOL courses for Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy participants is.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 14 January 2022]: This information is not held centrally by the Home Office.

■ Senior Civil Servants: Ethnic Groups

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[103705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is on track to meet its Inclusive by Instinct Strategy's target of increasing the representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees at senior civil service level to 12 per cent by 2025.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 January 2022]: The Department has made progress in increasing its representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the SCS, with representation increasing from 6% in 2018 to 7% in 2020.

As part of our response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, the Home Office has published Race commitments online, which include both measures and actions to strengthen our talent pipeline and support our progress towards our target. These include Independent Panel Members from diverse backgrounds on our SCS selection panels, an internal enhanced talent development offer for talented Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in the feeder grades to the SCS, a Sponsorship Programme between our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues and our EXCO members and increasing the funding and number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues on central Civil Service talent programmes, such as the Future Leaders Scheme.

The Department will publish updated statistics in Q2 of 2022.

[Actions to increase Black, Asian and minority staff at senior levels within the Home Office \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Home Office workforce diversity statistics 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

■ Skilled Workers: Shipping**Karl Turner:****[110334]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 5 January 2022 to Question 93748 on Immigration Controls: Shipping, what the status is of deckhands in the (a) fishing and (b) merchant navy with respect to the Shortage Occupation List.

Kevin Foster:

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), recommended that this occupation, and others, be added to the list of eligible occupations for Skilled Worker visas and to the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) following their review in 2020. However, the Government was of the view that wide scale changes to the SOL relating to medium skilled occupations - which only recently became eligible for Skilled Worker visas at that time – should not be made until the Government could assess how the UK labour market developed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Government therefore accepted only the first part of the MAC's recommendation - to recognise deckhands on large (9m+) fishing vessels as meeting the skills threshold for the Skilled Worker route, where they have 3 years' relevant experience. Although this job was not included on the SOL, it become eligible for Skilled Worker visas where a sponsoring employer is offering a salary of at least £25,600, in line with other non-shortage occupations.

The Government continues to monitor how the UK labour market is developing and also agreed to the MAC's recommendation for a more regular pattern of reviews for the SOL, with one expected to take place later this year.

■ **Speed Limits: Cameras**

Feryal Clark: [\[108636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the average cost per single speed camera of (a) installation, (b) maintenance each year and (c) revenue each year.

Kit Malthouse:

The information requested is not held centrally.

The deployment and maintenance of speed cameras is an operational matter for local chief officers of Police in conjunction with local authorities.

■ **Spiking**

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[110487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people who have been spiked through the use of injection needles in (a) Wales, (b) England, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland in each month since January 2021.

Rachel Maclean:

The Home Office does not collect figures for the number of people who have been spiked through the use of injection needles.

However, following the concerns raised about this new phenomenon last year, the Home Secretary has been receiving regular reports from the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). The NPCC has established a reporting mechanism to enable forces to report any reported incidences of needle-spiking to help us to gain a better understanding of the scale and nature of the problem.

■ **Tools: Theft**

Sarah Olney: [\[108592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle tool theft and the handling of stolen tools.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is tackling acquisitive crime as a priority and is committed to reducing the ability for criminals to profit. We understand the negative impact theft has on victims who rely on the tools of their trade to earn a living. We have established an expert Stolen Goods Working Group with the police and academia to tackle the markets for stolen goods. The group is examining ways to make property more identifiable and traceable, and are working with partners to increase enforcement.

To ensure the police have the resources they need to tackle crime, the Government is recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers by March 2023. The police have now recruited an additional 11,053 officers towards the target.

■ **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

Luke Pollard: [\[107720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what responsibilities Ministers in her Department hold in respect of the operational control of the Royal Navy's cross channel migration operation.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government is determined to prevent further loss of life in the Channel and break the business model of dangerous criminal people smugglers.

The UK armed forces already work closely with Border Force in these operations, given their expertise and experience in maritime operations.

This is a complex global issue requiring a response across the whole of government, and it is right that we pursue all options to prevent illegal crossings and protect life at sea.

The Government's New Plan for Immigration will help deter illegal migration and break the business model of the criminal gangs.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Liquefied Natural Gas: Mozambique**

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[110508\]](#)

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

Mike Freer:

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

■ **World Expo: Dubai**

Karl Turner: [\[110331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment he has made of whether the cost of the UK's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 will remain within its allocated budget.

Mike Freer:

Costs are routinely assessed each month as part of the department's financial governance process and are expected to remain affordable within DITs 2021-22 control totals.

Karl Turner:[\[110332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many businesses operating in the UK (a) shipping and (b) ports industry have exhibited in the UK's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai from 1 October 2021 to date.

Mike Freer:

The activity at the UK Pavilion is arranged by the UK Government via the Department for International Trade (DIT) and also by sponsors and UK companies/organisations using the space to deliver their own events and messages. The number of UK companies from the Travel and Transport Industries that have taken part in the DIT programme as speakers, panellists and providers of podcasts online and physically to date is 20. The number of companies (UK and Overseas) who participated as audience was in excess of 300 and continues to be counted as our on-demand content is accessible until the end of Expo 2020 Dubai, on 31st March 2022.

The UK Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai is the centre point of a business culture education and tourism programme that promotes the UK and UK companies in a number of different ways. UK expertise and excellence is promoted through the retail of food and drink, physical showcasing, thought leadership sessions, business and networking events and through online podcasts, virtual events and media/communications.

JUSTICE**■ Children: Protection****Dan Jarvis:**[\[110367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's Press Release of 9 November 2020 entitled Child protection at the heart of courts review, when he plans to publish that review.

Dan Jarvis:[\[110368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the time taken to publish the Child protection at heart of courts review on children living with a parent who is a known perpetrator of domestic abuse.

Tom Pursglove:

Work is underway on the review into the presumption of parental involvement in private law proceedings. The review is focused on the application of the presumption, and the statutory exception, in cases where there is evidence to suggest that parental involvement will put the child at risk of harm. Covid-19 has led to delays in the commissioning and delivery of the literature review, qualitative research project, and

judgment analysis. All three strands are now on track to complete by the end of the year.

■ **Courts: Greater London**

Anna McMorrin: [\[110547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which nightingale courts in London will receive funding for operation past March 2022; and how long that funding is allocated for.

James Cartlidge:

Our decisive action in the courts has kept justice moving during the pandemic.

Funding has been allocated to support additional court rooms in London to aid recovery from the pandemic. Plans for specific venues are being actioned and these will include both extensions of existing venues and new venues.

Anna McMorrin: [\[110548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funds are allocated by his Department to the nightingale courts at Monument and Aldersgate past March 2022 for the purposes of supporting their continued work to help tackle the court backlog.

James Cartlidge:

We are assessing the need for the continued use of the Nightingale courts including at Monument and Aldersgate past March 2022. The decisions regarding Nightingale courts at Monument and Aldersgate will be made in due course. HMCTS will be provided with the funding needed to operate the Nightingale courts required to support recovery from the pandemic during 2022-23.

As part of the Spending Review we announced that we will be investing £477 million in the Criminal Justice System over the next three years. This will help to reduce the backlog and deliver the swift access to justice that victims deserve.

Anna McMorrin: [\[110549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of scale of backlog in London courts; and whether he has plans to further increase courtroom use and Judicial capacity.

James Cartlidge:

The department regularly publishes data on outstanding caseloads, which can be found here for the criminal courts ([Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly: July to September 2021](#)) and here for Civil and Family courts (Family Court Statistics Quarterly: July to September 2021 and [Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly: July to September 2021](#)).

We have allocated over a quarter of a billion pounds on recovery in the last financial year (20/21), making court buildings safe, rolling out new technology for remote hearings, recruiting additional staff and opening Nightingale courtrooms, including London's fifth Nightingale courtroom at Monument in September. 32 Crown Court Nightingales have been extended to the end of March 2022.

We have undertaken one of our most ambitious programmes of judicial recruitment ever, so that we can hear as many cases as possible. We have also made greater use of part-time judges by lifting the number of days fee-paid judges can sit from 30 days to 80 for the second year in a row. The Spending Review will provide additional funding to recover performance following the pandemic.

We are now focused both on increasing capacity of the criminal courts and using the capacity we have in high-demand areas to its maximum. The Department continues to work with the judiciary to enable movement of additional judicial capacity into the London Crown Courts from other Regions, and where appropriate and agreed by all parties to move some Crown Court cases out of London into the South East and South West Crown Courts.

■ Crime: Victims

Ellie Reeves:

[\[107670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of safe spaces at courts for victims of crime to be with their advisor, legal team and family.

Tom Pursglove:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) reviews its facilities to make sure it fulfils its commitment to provide victims attending court with a different entrance to the defendant and a separate waiting area before and after a case is heard where possible, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales and the Witness Charter. If a victim has any concerns about attending court, or about the facilities at the court, then they can discuss these with the witness care officer ahead of the trial. Advice, pre-trial support and information is also available for victims and witnesses from Victim Support and the Citizens Advice Witness Service.

■ Criminal Proceedings

Emily Thornberry:

[\[107508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many outstanding Crown Court criminal cases had been incomplete for more than a year as of 1 January in of each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

The table below shows the latest published data on the number of outstanding cases in the Crown Courts in England and Wales. This data can be found on the [criminal court statistics information page](#).

The age of an outstanding case is calculated from the point of receipt into the Crown Court and the end of the reporting period.

NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING CASES IN THE CROWN COURT LONGER THAN A YEAR

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (up to September)
4,644	3,600	2,775	2,393	10,456	13,202

For further data on disposals including by each Crown Court and by region in the Magistrates' court please see the Crown Court cases received, disposed and outstanding tool and the Magistrates' courts cases received, disposed and outstanding tool available at [Criminal court statistics quarterly: July to September 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2021).

■ Criminal Proceedings: Females

Charlotte Nichols:

[107736]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will set a target and milestones for reducing the number of women entering the criminal justice system; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government remains fully committed to delivering the Female Offender Strategy and its three overarching priorities of i) fewer women coming into the criminal justice system; ii) fewer women in custody (especially on short-term sentences) and a greater proportion of women managed in the community successfully; and iii) better conditions for those in custody.

The Government will be considering the recommendations in the report "Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system" published earlier this month by the National Audit Office, one of which is to "set out a list of the work it is doing to implement the strategy's aims, with milestones". While the Government has not previously set targets or milestones for delivering the Strategy, it will be considering whether this would be practical and beneficial as part of its response to the report.

We launched the Female Offender Strategy in 2018 with the aim of steering women away from crime and since then, the number of women entering the criminal justice system has fallen by 30%. We are investing millions of pounds over the next 3 years into community services like women centres, drug rehabilitation and accommodation support so fewer women end up in prison.

■ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences: Criminal Proceedings

Emily Thornberry:

[107509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many outstanding (a) rape, (b) sexual abuse, excluding rape and (c) domestic abuse cases had been incomplete for more than a year as of 1 January of each of the last five years.

Emily Thornberry:[\[107510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) mean and (b) median time was from offence to completion for cases of (i) rape, (ii) sexual abuse, excluding rape and (iii) domestic abuse in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

Below we have provided data on outstanding rape cases and sexual assault cases (excluding rape) over one year old, along with the median and mean duration (in days) of those cases from offence to completion. The data for each calendar year includes the figures as of 31st December of that year. For 2021, we can only provide that data up to the 30th September which is the latest published data available.

It is not possible to separately identify domestic abuse cases in the data we collate because domestic abuse cases are recorded as “assault” offences, and so we are not able to distinguish an assault case which includes domestic abuse.

The table below shows that the volume of cases over one year old was greatly impacted by the pandemic with a 540% increase between 2019 and 2020.

VOLUME OF OUTSTANDING CASES WHICH HAVE BEEN OUTSTANDING FOR A YEAR OR MORE AT THE CROWN COURT

	Rape	Sexual assault - excluding rape
2016	287	371
2017	248	295
2018	156	196
2019	84	121
2020	489	775
2021 (to September)	576	947

The table below shows timeliness across both areas. The impact of the pandemic has resulted in the median days from offence to completion increasing, and is at its highest level over the five-year period since 2016.

OFFENCE TO COMPLETION IN DAYS

	Rape		Sexual assault - excluding rape	
	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2016	676	2,393	547	2,356
2017	670	2,423	510	2,323

OFFENCE TO COMPLETION IN DAYS

2018	727	2,664	488	2,299
2019	808	2,910	491	2,154
2020	796	2,359	546	1,791
2021 (to September)	1,020	2,767	695	2,115

■ Domestic Abuse: Courts

Ellie Reeves: [\[107666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made on the current availability of specialist domestic violence courts.

Ellie Reeves: [\[107667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many days specialist domestic violence courts sat in each year from 2015 to 2021.

Ellie Reeves: [\[107669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funding was made available for specialist domestic violence courts in each year from 2015 to 2021.

Tom Pursglove:

Since January 2019 all magistrates' courts across England and Wales have been required to use the Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework. This introduced an expectation that cross-agency specialists should work together to enhance the service and support provided to, and experience of, those involved in domestic abuse cases. The framework was developed by identifying common components from high performing courts and aims to improve the capacity and capability of the criminal justice system to respond effectively to reports of domestic abuse offending. The framework includes:

- A clear multiagency/community approach which addresses risk management and safeguarding procedures;
- Independent Domestic Violence Advocate support;
- Trained and consistently deployed staff across all agencies; and
- In court services including proactive witness services, pre-trial familiarisation visits, and use of special measures. In some areas they have considered fast tracking or expedited trial systems.

Since 2019 all magistrates' courts are expected to operate in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework. Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals

Service (HMCTS) does not hold data on how many Specialist Domestic Violence Courts sat between 2015 to 2021.

HMCTS does not provide dedicated funding for Specialist Domestic Violence Courts.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[107668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure the availability of specialist domestic violence courts as part of tackling the backlog of cases in courts.

James Cartlidge:

Since January 2019, all magistrates' courts across England and Wales are required to follow a Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework which introduced consistent expectations on all cross-agency specialists and a requirement that they work together to enhance the service, support and experience of those involved in domestic abuse cases.

Our action to reduce the backlog across magistrates more broadly will ensure that domestic violence cases will continue to be heard in a consistent and supported way. As part of the Spending Review, we announced that we will be investing £477 million in the Criminal Justice System over the next three years to help reduce the backlog and deliver the swift access to justice that victims deserve.

We invested a quarter of a billion pounds to support court recovery across all jurisdictions in the last financial year (20/21), opening Nightingale Courts, lifting restrictions on sitting days and increasing the roll-out of remote hearings where suitable. This investment will benefit users throughout the court system.

This year (21/22) we have provided over £150 million for support services for victims and witnesses, rising to over £185 million by 2024/25. This will fund more than 1,000 Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors and 24/7 crisis helplines and is an 85% increase on funding in 2019/20.

We are seeing the positive impact of this investment in reducing the court backlog; the caseload in the Crown Court has reduced from around 61,000 cases in June 2021 to around 58,700 cases at the end of November 2021.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[107671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the sufficiency of specialist staff and judges who can deal with domestic violence cases in courts.

Tom Pursglove:

The majority of domestic abuse offences conclude in the magistrates' courts. Since January 2019, all magistrates' courts across England and Wales are required to follow a Domestic Abuse Best Practice Framework which introduced consistent expectations upon those working on domestic abuse across different agencies and an expectation that they work together to enhance the service, support and experience of those involved in domestic abuse cases. One of the main planks of the

Best Practice Framework ensures staff are trained and consistently deployed across all agencies.

Across all court jurisdictions, staff are trained to provide practical protections, for example, protective screens, video links, and access to separate waiting rooms and separate entrances where appropriate.

We are also continuing work to deliver our commitments made in response to the Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts report, including working with colleagues across the family justice system to improve training on domestic abuse, to address gaps where appropriate, and to provide professionals with the tools to effectively support vulnerable parties.

MoJ makes no assessment of the sufficiency of specialist judges as responsibility for the judiciary sits with the Lord Chief Justice, the Senior President of the Tribunals, and the Chief Coroner.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[107672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the ability of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and other specialist staff to be with victims in court during periods of the covid-19 outbreak when restrictions were in place.

Tom Pursglove:

Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and other specialist support staff play a crucial role in supporting victims of domestic abuse to rebuild, recover and engage with the criminal justice system. We are currently consulting on a Victims' Bill, which includes reviewing what more can be done to strengthen victim advocate roles such as IDVAs, including how they engage with criminal justice agencies.

We have allowed court supporters, including IDVAs, access to court and tribunal buildings throughout the pandemic, and have conducted regular local risk assessments and put mitigations in place to keep people safe.

Since the start of the pandemic we have also stayed engaged with stakeholders and frontline practitioners, including through the Ministry of Justice led Silver Command Forum which was created to help them overcome challenges and additional pressures created by Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions.

■ Judges: Training

Dan Jarvis:

[\[110369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the Magistrates Association and Family Division of the High Court on the potential merits of providing training to judges on implementing (a) a ban on cross examination of domestic abuse survivors in court and (b) special measures for victims of abuse as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

To preserve the independence of the judiciary, the Lord Chief Justice (LCJ), the Senior President of the Tribunals, and the Chief Coroner have statutory responsibility

for judicial training, under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, and Coroners and Justice Act 2009 respectively. These responsibilities are exercised through the Judicial College. The judiciary with support of the professional staff, in the Judicial College are responsible for the design, content, and delivery of judicial training.

I understand that, since April 2021, the Chair of the Judicial College, in consultation with the President of the Family Division, has led work to review judicial training on domestic abuse. Refreshed and updated specialist digital training on domestic abuse was launched in October 2021 for all family judges, including Recorders and Deputy District Judges. New digital domestic abuse training to meet the needs of magistrates and legal advisers was also launched in October.

New training that addresses the Domestic Abuse Act will be rolled out from April 2022 and will form a substantial part of compulsory family and civil continuation training seminars for the 2022/23 training year.

■ **Prisoners: Self-harm**

Charlotte Nichols:

[107735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the rate of self-harm was among prisoners in (a) women's prisons and (b) men's prisons in each of the last three years.

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. A spreadsheet containing statistics on all instances of self-harm broken down by category is available, in addition to quarterly bulletins outlining trends at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics>.

Last year, we implemented a revised version of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) multi-disciplinary case management approach to support prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm. We continue to make the Samaritans phone service available and are working with the Samaritans to ensure that the Listener peer support scheme continues to function effectively.

We are also implementing a new safety training package for staff, which addresses related issues, including suicide and self-harm prevention, understanding risks, triggers and protective factors, and communication skills.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Public Appointments**

Kevin Brennan:

[110258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department seeks references for candidates appointed to public positions which fall under the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities does not routinely seek references for Public Appointments.

The Governance Code on Public Appointments sets out that the Advisory Assessment Panel must satisfy itself that all candidates for appointment can meet the Seven Principles of Public Life and adhere to the Code of Conduct for board members of public bodies.

The Governance Code requires that candidates are asked to declare relevant interests and these are discussed at interview. The department may also provide the panel with other information, for example, open source material that they may wish to consider in reaching a judgement in a fair and open way.

References may not always be an appropriate, fair or open way of reaching such an assessment due to the limitations on what might be provided and the lack of transparency as to their contents.

■ Levelling Up Fund: Shropshire

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans his Department has to provide levelling up funds in the form of revenue to counties such as Shropshire.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to ensure the effectiveness of Shropshire's access to future rounds of levelling up funding.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government is committed to levelling up all areas of the UK. Telford in Shropshire is one of 101 towns with which we have agreed a Town Deal - worth £22.3 million, which included revenue funding for project development and delivery. We expect to launch the next round of the Levelling Up Fund this Spring and further details of that, and the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund, will be announced soon. The Marches received £14 million in funding through the Getting Building Fund, this included £5 million to remodel Pride Hill shopping centre in Shrewsbury. We expect to launch the next round of the Levelling Up Fund this Spring and further details of that, and the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund, will be announced soon.

■ Local Government Finance

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to announce a three year funding settlement to support the effectiveness of local authorities' ability to plan.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises how important multi-year certainty is to local authorities, and we aim to provide that whenever possible. The settlement for 2022-23 provides the resources and stability councils need, following the impact of pandemic.

The Government is committed to ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources. Over the coming months, we will therefore work closely with the sector and other stakeholders and look at the challenges and opportunities facing the sector before consulting on any potential changes.

Local Government Finance: Shropshire

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the publication of the provisional settlement in December 2021, if he will take steps to ensure that Shropshire Council receives fair and reasonable funding in the Final Local Government Settlement.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy that the final local government finance settlement will provide increased funding for Shropshire Council for 2022-23.

Kemi Badenoch:

The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement makes available an additional £3.5 billion to councils, including funding for adult social care reform. 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.

For Shropshire Council, these proposals mean a proposed percentage increase to Core Spending Power of up to 7% from £264.5 million in 2021/22 to up to £283 million in 2022/23.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to amend the current funding mechanism for the local government settlement to ensure that urban areas such as Telford and Wrekin are not favoured over more rural areas in Shropshire.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to amend the indices used to determine the allocations of funding in the levelling up agenda to ensure that they (a) take into account rural deprivation and (b) result in fair funding for Shropshire and other rural areas.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to address delays in the Fair Funding Review and the implementation of that review.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when the Fair Funding Review will recommence.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking through the Fair Funding Review to address structural deficits in Shropshire Council's funding for services.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is committed to ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources, including Shropshire Council.

We understand councils want clarity on local government funding reform. For this reason, we committed at the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December to work closely with our stakeholders over the coming months to look at the challenges and opportunities facing the sector, before consulting on any potential changes.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[107519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to support Shropshire Council in meeting immediate pressures as a result of increased demands on social care services and changes in its demographic make-up by resolving the £50m structural deficit within its operating budget.

Kemi Badenoch:

The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement makes available an additional £3.5 billion to councils, including funding for adult social care reform. 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.

Local authorities can also make use of over £1 billion of additional resource specifically for social care in 2022/23 through this proposed Settlement. This includes the increase in Social Care Grant and the improved Better Care Fund alongside the additional 1% ASC precept and deferred flexibilities from last year's Settlement.

Further to this, the Government is committed to reforming health and social care, we have announced an additional £5.4 billion investment over three years to begin a comprehensive programme of reform for adult social care. In the provisional Settlement, we set out that £162 million of this funding will be allocated in 2022/23 to support local authorities as they prepare their markets for reform and to help move

towards paying a fair cost of care. A further £600 million will be made available in both 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025.

For Shropshire Council, these proposals mean a proposed percentage increase to Core Spending Power of up to 7% from £264.5 million in 2021/22 to up to £283 million in 2022/23.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Dan Jarvis: [R] [\[110366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Barnsley Central of 2 December 2021 on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Neil O'Brien:

A response to the Hon Member's letter was issued on 27 January 2022.

■ **Parking**

Grahame Morris: [\[110320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the Parking code enforcement framework, private parking charges and an appeals charter, following the further technical consultation which closed on 27 August 2021.

Neil O'Brien:

The 'Private parking charges, discount rates, debt collection fees and appeals charter: further technical consultation' contained proposals to bring private parking charges into closer alignment with Local Authority Penalty Charge Notices, along with a number of other measures to improve the private parking sector. The Government is currently finalising its response. Our intention is to publish the consultation response together with the new Code of Practice as soon as possible so that motorists can benefit and industry has time to adapt itself to the new requirements.

■ **Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019**

Mr Steve Baker: [\[107565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to publish the Government's response to the technical consultation for the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019 alongside the new Code of Practice; and when he plans to publish that document.

Neil O'Brien:

The 'Private parking charges, discount rates, debt collection fees and appeals charter: further technical consultation' contained proposals to bring private parking charges into closer alignment with Local Authority Penalty Charge Notices, along with a number of other measures to improve the private parking sector. The Government is currently finalising its response. Our intention is to publish the consultation

response together with the new Code of Practice as soon as possible so that motorists can benefit and industry has time to adapt itself to the new requirements.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Council Tax**

Holly Lynch: [\[110465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that tenants with a periodic tenancy who give notice to leave their rental property, but vacate the property before the date on which the tenancy ends, are held liable for council tax owed up to the end of the tenancy rather than the landlord.

Eddie Hughes:

The collection of council tax is a matter for councils. They will decide who is liable for council tax by reference to the hierarchy of liability set out in the [Local Government Finance Act 1992](#). If individuals are concerned about the calculation of their council tax liability, they should contact their council. There is also a right of appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Evictions**

Tim Farron: [\[107536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ban Section 21 no-fault evictions.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to bringing in a Better Deal for Renters to deliver a fairer and more effective rental market that works for both tenants and landlords. The Government's consultation, 'A New Deal for Renting: Resetting the balance of rights and responsibilities between landlords and tenants' sought views on how the new system should operate. This received almost 20,000 responses, which we are carefully considering as we develop our response. We will publish a response to the consultation as well as a White Paper detailing our plans for reform of the private rented sector later this year. The White Paper will provide further detail on repealing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988.

■ **Regional Planning and Development**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[107563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether the Government's upcoming Levelling Up White Paper will include an assessment of the (a) role of and (b) support required by local authorities to deliver on its objectives.

Kemi Badenoch:

Core Spending Power for local government is expected to rise from £50.4 billion in 2021-22 to up to £53.9 billion in 2022-23. The forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper will set out our plans for strengthening accountable local leadership. This is alongside recent investments including the Levelling Up Fund, UK Community Renewal Fund

and Towns Fund where Government is working closely with councils right across the United Kingdom.

Alexander Stafford: [\[107755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to hold a consultation on the forthcoming (a) White Paper and (b) draft Bill on Levelling-Up.

Neil O'Brien:

The UK Government will continue to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and partners on the levelling up agenda after the White Paper has been published. Further details on any potential legislation will be provided in due course.

Justin Madders: [\[108544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2021 to Question 72642 on Regional Planning and Development, what information he holds on whether any other person made such oral or written requests of hon. Members.

Neil O'Brien:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question 72642 on 16 November 2021.

■ Sleeping Rough

Dan Carden: [\[R\] \[107692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to page 9 of the Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on protecting the homeless and the private rented sector, published on 24 May 2021, CP 439, and the planned independent review referred to in the Government's response to recommendation four in that document, when his Department will review the manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament.

Eddie Hughes:

We have made excellent progress on our manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping this Parliament. The annual rough sleeping snapshot in 2020 saw a 37% reduction from the year before, and rough sleeping levels have fallen 43% since 2017.

To build on this progress, the Government will be spending over £2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years, with multi-year funding enabling local partners to better plan services.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Dan Jarvis: [\[R\] \[110365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to section 3.31 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, what recent

assessment he has made of the feasibility of extending the commitment on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for Cornwall to all regions of the UK.

Neil O'Brien:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will focus on restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging across the country. The UKSPF will act as a primary lever in levelling up people and places in all parts of the UK to empower places to identify, and build on, their own strengths and needs at a local level.

UK-wide funding for the UKSPF will ramp up to at least match receipts from EU structural funds, which on average reached around £1.5 billion per year. Spending Review 2021 fulfils this commitment, with the announcement of over £2.6 billion for the UKSPF over the next three years, with funding reaching £1.5 billion in 2024-25.

The Government will publish further details on the fund in due course.

■ **Vagrancy Act 1824**

Catherine West:

[\[107660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will review the Vagrancy Act 1824.

Eddie Hughes:

This Government believes that no-one should be criminalised simply for sleeping rough.

Following the review undertaken as part of the 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Government has confirmed that it will seek to repeal the outdated Vagrancy Act and replace it with more modern, fit for purpose legislation when parliamentary time allows.

PRIME MINISTER

■ **Independent Adviser On Ministers' Interests**

Angela Rayner:

[\[110377\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to his Answer of 24 January 2021 to Question 107600 on Independent Adviser On Ministers' Interests, whether his plans to change the powers of the Independent Adviser will require legislation.

Boris Johnson:

I would again refer the Rt. Hon Member to my published exchange of letters with the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests, published on GOV.UK and available in the Library of the House.

■ Prime Minister: Written Questions

Stephen Timms:

[\[110232\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he plans to respond to Question 83228, tabled on 29 November 2021 by the right Hon. Member for East Ham, regarding Inequalities in Health Alliance: Correspondence.

Boris Johnson:

I answered the Hon. Member's question on 2 December. My office has since been informed that a system error with Parliamentary systems meant that it was not published in the Official Record. My reply was as follows: 'My Office has no record of receiving this letter.' I have asked my Office to contact the organisation to see if they can re-send the correspondence, and ensure they have the correct address for any future correspondence.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Legislation

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[109250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many pieces of (a) primary and (b) secondary legislation their Department has sponsored in each of the last 10 years.

Mr Alister Jack:

This information is only held for internal administrative reasons and may not be exhaustive, for example, due to machinery of government changes to departmental structure in the past decade.

In the last 10 years, the Scotland Office has sponsored two pieces of primary legislation. These were the Scotland Acts of 2012 and 2016.

The Scotland Office has also sponsored 91 pieces of secondary legislation in this period. This figure includes Scotland Act Orders, which the department outlines in our annual reports. Scotland Act Orders implement, update or adjust Scotland's devolution settlement. The Scotland Office have recently sponsored Scotland Act Orders relating to Civil Partnerships, Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment.

The breakdown of the secondary legislation we have sponsored is outlined below:

YEAR	NUMBER OF PIECES OF SECONDARY LEGISLATION SPONSORED BY THE SCOTLAND OFFICE
2012	6
2013	8
2014	10

YEAR	NUMBER OF PIECES OF SECONDARY LEGISLATION SPONSORED BY THE SCOTLAND OFFICE
2015	15
2016	8
2017	7
2018	11
2019	7
2020	6
2021	10
2022	3 pieces so far this year.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation

Sarah Olney:

[\[110499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many flights with no or very few passengers have operated in the UK to ensure that landing slots are retained by airlines in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022 to date.

Robert Courts:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on air passenger demand and this has inevitably led to flights with fewer passengers. We do not hold reliable data on the number of flights with no or very few passengers flown in order to retain slots.

Since the start of the pandemic the Government has implemented alleviation from the usual slot usage requirements – these were originally intended to protect airlines' finances while minimising the risk of airlines operating environmentally damaging ghost flights solely to retain slots. The rules requiring airlines to use slots in order to retain them were fully suspended for the Summer 2020, Winter 2020/21 and Summer 2021 seasons. The UK's exit from the EU means that it has been able to take a more tailored approach that reflects the UK's specific circumstances.

As the pandemic has gone on, the Government is now also keen to encourage recovery. In the Winter 2021/22 Season which will last until 27 March 2022 we have set the usage requirement for slots at 50%. We also gave airlines the option of handing back slot series that they were not intending to use before the season started to allow other airlines to use them.

A draft Statutory Instrument setting out arrangements for Summer 2022 was published on 24 January 2022.

■ Blue Badge Scheme

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[110595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason applicants with a PIP score of 10 out of 12 for planning and following a journey are automatically eligible for a Blue Badge while those applicants with a score of 12 out of 12 are required to provide additional evidence of eligibility.

Wendy Morton:

The Department for Transport is responsible for the legislative and policy framework of the Blue Badge Scheme in England only, where applicants with scores other than 10 under PIP descriptor 'e' would only be eligible for a badge following further assessment.

The rules relating to Blue Badges in England, Scotland and Wales differ as each country runs its own Blue Badge scheme and is responsible for determining the eligibility criteria that will apply. Questions about how the scheme operates outside England should be addressed to the Government of the relevant nation.

■ Bus Services

Mike Amesbury: [\[108612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of municipal ownership of buses to improve bus service provision especially for night time and off-peak services.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government has committed to issuing a Call for Evidence on whether there is a need to reverse the current prohibition on the establishment of new municipally-owned bus operators. It will be published in due course.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

Ian Lavery: [\[107580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what equality impact assessment his Department has made of the end of emergency covid-19 funding in March 2022 on bus service users.

Trudy Harrison:

We are working with the sector and HMT on next steps and will fulfil our legal duties on equalities as part of this process, which we take seriously.

The DfT considers the distributional impacts of bus funding very carefully, and there is clear evidence that people on lower incomes are more likely to use the bus.

However, as Plan B restrictions and working from home guidance are lifted, we would

anticipate there will be a change to some of the financial sustainability considerations for operators and bus services.

■ **Bus Services: Travel Information**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[110357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what comparative assessment he has made of the adequacy of (a) access to and (b) use of open data for real time bus times in (i) London and (ii) the North East; what steps he is taking to incentivise third party developers to produce aggregated real time transport apps for Newcastle and the North East; and whether he has had discussions with representatives of the Open Data Institute on the steps that would contribute best to promoting third party developers.

Trudy Harrison:

Since 2007, TfL has made data freely available to enable app developers to create journey planning solutions for passengers, so that bus time arrival information is readily available. Since the launch of the London Datastore, there are now over 600 apps powered by this data and almost half of all national bus journeys completed in London.

Inspired by the success in London, the Bus Open Data Service (BODS) was launched in 2020 to make bus live location data available to application developers for local bus services across England. The National Bus Strategy includes a commitment to provide funding for predictions information which will inform the passenger how many minutes away their bus is from the bus stop and on average how long the journey will take.

In the North East, application developers such as Bus Times and Citymapper have been able to launch their journey planning products which include bus time arrivals utilising data from the Bus Open Data Service and integrate it into multimodal journey plans to enable passengers to plan their journeys on public transport.

The Open Data Institute have shaped the programme since its early inception back in 2017, for example delivering the Discovery research project. We will continue to build upon this success of the early programme, steered by our programme board which the Open Data Institute does participate in.

■ **Community Transport: Recruitment**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[107640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Part One of the National Disability Strategy published 28 July 2021, what steps his Department has taken towards working with the Community Transport Association and other stakeholders to understand the difficulties associated with recruiting community transport drivers.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government understands that community transport services are essential for many people's independence, yet some organisations struggle to recruit drivers qualified to drive their vehicles.

My officials are engaging with stakeholders to better understand these challenges. £200,000 is paid annually by the Department to the Community Transport Association (CTA), supporting them to continue championing inclusive and accessible community transport across the country.

■ Diesel Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Grahame Morris: [\[109215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government provides guidance for staff on the risks of exposure to diesel engine exhaust emissions to Highways England.

Grahame Morris: [\[109216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) preventative and (b) control measures he has put in place to help tackle the exposure of Highways England staff to diesel engine exhaust emissions.

Grahame Morris: [\[109217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Highways England regularly monitors data on emissions from diesel engine exhausts.

Trudy Harrison:

National Highways (formerly Highways England) do not specifically monitor emissions from diesel engine exhausts. However, National Highways has approximately 60 automatic air quality monitoring stations located alongside the Strategic Road Network (SRN) measuring nitrogen dioxide. Of these, 6 also measure particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter are pollutants produced by all petrol and diesel vehicles.

Pursuant to the answer to Question 109214, National Highways own and maintain a standard within their Health Safety and Wellbeing management system, for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH). Guidance and Procedures are also provided for Traffic Officers working in road tunnels, which are equipped with ventilation to mitigate risk associated with air quality and harmful fumes.

Pursuant to the answer to Question 109214, National Highways' staff are assessed for operational health hazards, and safety critical medicals included as part of general health assessments every other year. An occupational hygiene assessment is due to be undertaken for National Highways Traffic Officers and Highways Inspectors over the next four months, which will assess their current, and any new, occupational health risks.

■ Driving Tests: Waiting Lists

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[108479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the waiting time for learner motorists wishing to take their tests.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) recognises the high demand for learners wanting to take their practical driving test following the suspension of routine driver training and testing during the pandemic.

The DVSA is working hard to provide as many practical driving test appointments as possible and has a number of measures in place to do this. These include offering a national recovery allowance and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays and weekends).

The DVSA is also continuing with its campaign to recruit more driving examiners across Great Britain and further increase availability of driving test appointments.

Kirsten Oswald:[\[110427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of size of the backlog by test class of (a) theory and (b) practical driving tests in (i) Scotland and (ii) Great Britain; and what estimate he has made of how long it will take to clear each backlog.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) offers a six month window for people to book theory tests, therefore appointments are booked at the times people choose. There is not a backlog of theory tests as there is capacity available for more people to book.

The DVSA recognises the high demand for learners wanting to take their practical driving test following the suspension of routine driver training and testing during the pandemic.

As of 24 January 2022, the number of candidates with a test booked were:

	CAR	BIKE – MODULE 1 (OFF ROAD)	BIKE – MODULE 2 (ON ROAD)	VOCATIONAL	DRIVER CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE
Scotland	35272	929	838	1372	36
Great Britain	519197	12865	12161	23608	977

The DVSA is committed to the safe recovery of all its services as quickly as possible and has a number of measures in place to do this. These include offering a national recovery allowance and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to

return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays and weekends).

The DVSA is also continuing with its campaign to recruit more driving examiners across Great Britain and further increase availability of driving test appointments.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[110485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the development of electric vehicle smart charging regulations.

Trudy Harrison:

Officials from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) have worked closely with counterparts in Welsh Government throughout the development of The Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021. I wrote to all Devolved Administrations, including the Welsh Government ahead of announcing our commitment to legislate. We will continue to work with the Welsh Government as we develop further smart charging policy in the future.

■ **Great British Railways: Procurement**

Rachael Maskell: [\[109280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to launch the competition for Great British Railways; and what the scope is of the consultation.

Wendy Morton:

The Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT) is in the process of designing the selection process for the new headquarters. Details, including the scope, will be announced in the coming weeks with the aim of announcing the successful bid later this year.

■ **M69: Repairs and Maintenance**

Sir Greg Knight: [\[110256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the northern bound carriageway of the M69 motorway (a) was last inspected for imperfections and (b) is next scheduled for repair and resurfacing.

Trudy Harrison:

National Highways' inspectors carry out weekly safety inspections of the M69 and the last inspection was carried out on 25/01/2022.

Where safety critical defects, including potholes, are identified, they are made safe within 24 hours. Permanent repairs are carried out according to the severity of the defect, often within 28 days.

Repairs to the northbound carriageway were last carried out on 18/01/2022, and there are some further patching works currently planned to begin later this month with additional proactive patching due in March 2022.

National Highways will continue to review the condition of the M69 along with other routes on the strategic road network to ensure that future works are prioritised according to need.

■ Network Rail: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[110449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment has he made of the opportunities to develop Network Rail engineering support services and related expertise in York.

Wendy Morton:

Network Rail carefully assesses its facilities to ensure they best deliver for passengers and freight users and has continued to invest significantly in the Holgate Engineering Works in York in recent years. The site has been enhanced to enable Network Rail to better maintain its fleet safely and efficiently at a central location. Investment in the depot has created new job opportunities and Network Rail is committed to York as one of the long-term bases for its engineering fleet.

■ Railways: Fares

Mike Amesbury: [\[110581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the cost of rail tickets relative to average incomes in each region of the UK; and what steps he is taking to reduce the cost of rail travel.

Wendy Morton:

Rail fare increases are calculated with reference to inflation rather than average income. This year rail fares increases will be capped and tied to the Retail Price Index (RPI) figure for July 2021 (3.8 per cent). The Government has deliberately continued to use the July figure as it was lower than the months since, as an August or September RPI figure would have led to a 4.8 per cent or 4.9 per cent, change with October being even higher at 6 per cent.

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, published May 2021, contains a number of passenger-focused reforms that will bring in improved services and encourage the use of rail. The Spending Review 2021 confirmed £5.7 billion of funding over three years to support essential rail services, and will see the Government investing £360 million in modernising ticketing and retailing systems, delivering a major overhaul to the way in which rail travel is bought and paid for.

We have recently introduced flexible season tickets on rail, which provide better value to most part-time commuters than buying daily tickets or traditional seasons. We have also saved a generation of passengers a third off their rail fares, including the 16-17 Saver and 26-30 Railcards and, most recently, the Veterans Railcard.

■ Railways: Merseyside

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[107686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January to Question 102756 on Railways: Merseyside, if he will publish a list of the benefits referenced in his answer.

Andrew Stephenson:

Merseyside is set to benefit from the Integrated Rail Plan in terms of both Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and HS2. Compared to today, capacity between Manchester and Liverpool will more than triple, with journey times to Manchester Piccadilly station cut from 50 to 35 minutes. HS2 services from London to Liverpool will benefit from a segregated route through Warrington, and capacity on the existing route into Liverpool could potentially benefit freight services. Connectivity to Manchester Airport will be transformed, with journey times falling from 71 to 26 minutes and the number of services increased from 1 to 4 trains per hour. Journey times from Warrington to Liverpool will be cut by more than 10 minutes compared to the current fastest service with frequency increasing from a typical 3 trains per hour at present to up to 11.

■ Railways: Repairs and Maintenance

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[107495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has taken steps to ensure that environmental impact assessments are conducted and published on works programmes to existing railways.

Wendy Morton:

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations refer to two schedules that can require Environmental Impact Assessments to be carried out by Network Rail in relation to works programmes. Network Rail works with legal advisors to advise on its schemes which includes compliance to legislation such as the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations. An Environmental Impact Assessment must accompany any application for planning permission or a Transport and Works Act Order where one is required by legislation.

Applications for Transport and Works Act Order, including any associated Environmental Impact Assessments, are made publicly available on the GOV.UK website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/twa-inspector-reports-and-decision-letters#2021-twa-decisions-and-applications>, as well as being available during formal consultations. Environmental Statements for schemes applying for planning permission from a local authority will be made available on the respective Local Planning Authority webpage, usually via the planning portal.

■ Railways: Travel Information

Holly Lynch:

[\[110466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his press release of 21 January 2022 on reducing train announcements, whether British Transport Police

announcements with counter-terror information, and details of how to report concerns via the See it. Say it. Sorted campaign, will be decreased or removed from train announcements.

Wendy Morton:

Train operating companies are required to make security announcements at a set frequency to encourage the public to be vigilant for all types of crime and to report this to either Rail Staff or the British Transport Police. This requirement has not changed, but we will be ensuring that rail operators do not make more announcements than they are required to do and to avoid unnecessary repetitions of the message.

Louise Haigh: [\[110468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department spent on the promotional film and other promotional activities regarding his announcement on 21 January 2022 on abolishing some tannoy announcements on trains.

Wendy Morton:

The promotional film was produced in-house.

■ **Taxis: Disability**

Anthony Browne: [\[109349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress his Department has made on mandating disability awareness training for all private hire vehicle drivers.

Trudy Harrison:

Effective disability awareness training can help ensure that taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide passengers with appropriate assistance, so that they can travel independently and with confidence.

The Department wants every local licensing authority to require taxi and PHV drivers to complete this training and will make this clear in updated best practice guidance, due to be published for consultation later in the year.

The Government also remains committed to introducing mandatory disability awareness training for taxi and PHV drivers through new National Minimum Standards for licensing authorities when Parliamentary time allows.

■ **Taxis: Guide Dogs**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[108584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that guide dog owners are not illegally turned away by taxis.

Trudy Harrison:

Assistance dogs play a vital role in the lives of their owners, enabling them to live independently, confidently and safely. It is unacceptable that some taxi and PHV drivers continue to refuse them carriage.

Effective training is important for helping drivers to assist disabled passengers appropriately, and in December 2020, we launched the REAL training package of disability equality training to improve the transport sector's confidence and skills in delivering inclusive journeys for disabled passengers.

The Government also remains committed to introducing mandatory disability awareness training for taxi and PHV drivers through new National Minimum Standards for licensing authorities when Parliamentary time allows.

In the meantime, we will shortly publish for consultation updated best practice guidance for local licensing authorities, including a strong recommendation that taxi and PHV drivers are required to complete disability awareness training.

■ Taxis: Visual Impairment**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[107562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that partially-sighted and blind people are not discriminated against when trying to access private hire vehicles.

Trudy Harrison:

Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) are vital modes for disabled passengers, including many who are visually impaired, helping them to make independent door-to-door journeys.

The law already protects assistance dog owners when using taxis and PHVs, but every disabled passenger should be able to travel, confident that they will receive the support they need.

The Government is supporting the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Bill proposed by my Rt Hon Friend Jeremy Wright QC MP, which aims to strengthen existing provisions protecting the interests of disabled people travelling by taxi and PHV.

Effective training is also important for helping drivers to assist disabled passengers appropriately, and in December 2020, we launched the REAL training package of disability equality training to improve the transport sector's confidence and skills in delivering inclusive journeys for disabled passengers.

Ultimately, local licensing authorities are responsible for ensuring drivers understand and fulfil their duties to disabled passengers. We will shortly publish for consultation updated best practice guidance for such authorities, including recommendations that all drivers should complete disability awareness training, and that robust action should be taken against those who discriminate illegally against disabled passengers.

■ Trailers: Driving Licences

Tim Loughton:

[\[110228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department made of the potential risk to road safety prior to the decision in September 2021 to cease the requirement to take the B+E test to tow a trailer or caravan with a car.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) takes its commitment to road safety extremely seriously and continues to work with the industry and stakeholders to drive forward the importance of safe driving and safe towing.

The Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) driver shortage has been well documented and is an issue that is affecting people and businesses throughout the world. The Government has acted decisively to help address the HGV driver shortage and announced a range of measures to help the industry recover from the pandemic. A public consultation exercise was launched to seek views on changes to the HGV driving test. The proposal to remove the requirement for car drivers to take a B+E test if they want to tow a trailer was subject to that public consultation. The consultation received over 9,500 responses and most respondents supported the proposals. The DVSA has analysed the responses and published a summary of the public feedback on these proposals on GOV.UK

The car and trailer licence changes announced on 10 September 2021 have now been approved by Parliament and came into force on 16 December 2021.

All car drivers wishing to tow a trailer or caravan for leisure or business are still encouraged to undertake voluntary training through an accreditation scheme, which is being developed with the trailer industry and training providers.

■ World Expo: Dubai

Karl Turner:

[\[110333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has allocated (a) funding and (b) staff to the Government's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for Transport (DfT) has provided £3m funding towards the costs of the Government's pavilion at ExPo 2020 Dubai.

Staffing of the Government's pavilion is the responsibility of the Department for International Trade, therefore no DfT staff have been assigned to work at the pavilion.

TREASURY**■ Cost of Living: Disability****Mr Ben Bradshaw:****[108453]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional steps he is taking to ensure disabled people are financially supported as energy prices and other costs of living rise.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government is forecast to spend over £58 billion in 21/22 on benefits to support disabled people in Great Britain. Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is the government's primary means of supporting working age adults with the extra costs arising from having a disability and is paid regardless of income and irrespective of whether someone is in work. The government will spend over £12.2 billion to support 2.1 million people on PIP in 21/22. Those who have a disability or health condition which limits their ability to work can get additional support through Universal Credit (UC) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). For those with limited capability for work or work-related activity, this includes an additional component in UC, worth £79.30 per week.

We recognise the recent increase in wholesale global gas prices will be a cause of concern, particularly for those who are vulnerable or have a disability. That is why we continue to protect households through the energy price cap, which has saved the 15 million customers on default tariffs up to £100 a year on their bills since it was introduced in 2019. This is on top of wider support that the government is providing this winter through the £140 Warm Home Discount, up to £300 Winter Fuel Payment and £25 per week Cold Weather Payment, all of which help to ensure those most vulnerable are better able to heat their homes over the winter.

The government is providing support worth around £12 billion this financial year and next to help with the cost of living. This includes the £500 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable households with costs for essentials such as energy bills, food, clothing, and utilities over the winter. The Household Support Fund adds to the support already in place to help those on low incomes with the cost of living, including:

- £140 million in 2021-22 for Discretionary Housing Payments;
- £670 million in 2021-22 for local authorities to support households struggling with their council tax bills;
- £200m each year of the Spending Review to continue the Holiday Activities and Food programme; and
- increasing the value of Healthy Start vouchers.

■ Customs: Dover Port

Jon Trickett: [\[110248\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the average length of time it takes for lorries to pass through customs at the Port of Dover.

Lucy Frazer:

Recent estimates of the average length of time it takes for lorries to pass through customs at Dover have not been made. Short delays to freight movements have not been caused by new customs processes. The main causes were ship-fitting, which reduces capacity across the short straits, and higher than expected freight volumes. The Goods Vehicle Movement System and other customs systems are online and working as planned.

The Borders are flowing, we are continuing to monitor the situation closely, and are engaging with industry groups and local stakeholders in Kent.

We always act to preserve the flow, but we will not compromise on the security of the UK at the border. This includes fiscal security. HMRC continues to use a risk based, intelligence-led response to compliance issues working alongside Border Force.

■ Diesel Fuel and Petrol: VAT

Alison Thewliss: [\[110435\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much was raised in VAT on (a) petrol and (b) diesel in each of the past of ten years.

Alison Thewliss: [\[110436\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much was raised in VAT on (a) gas, (b) electricity and (c) heating oil in each of the past of ten years.

Lucy Frazer:

The information requested is not available. HMRC does not hold information on VAT revenue from specific products or services because businesses are not required to provide figures at a product level on their VAT returns, as this would impose an excessive administrative burden.

■ Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[110510\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussion officials in his Department have had with their counterparts in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on (a) the work of the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and (b) preparations for the Government to continue its position as a significant donor at the Fund's seventh replenishment conference this year.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The events of the past few years have demonstrated the importance of long term investment in global health

Officials across government departments regularly discuss global health development policy, including the Global Fund

FCDO is looking forward to reviewing the Global Fund's investment case once it is published. This investment case will underpin the funding for the seventh replenishment and will be considered as part of internal business planning within the SR21 settlement.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Robert Largan: [\[107751\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 17 November 2021 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL30688.

Helen Whately:

A response was sent to the Member on 16 December 2021 and a further copy has been sent by email.

Robert Largan: [\[107753\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 1 December 2021 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL30875.

Helen Whately:

A response was sent to the Member on 12 January 2022 and a further copy has been sent by email.

■ **Patents: Corporation Tax**

Chi Onwurah: [\[110350\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department made of the potential merits of the Patent Box; and what metrics were used when making that assessment.

Chi Onwurah: [\[110356\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 34 of the Centre for Business Research's May 2021 Report on R&D tax credits, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of that report's estimate that abolishing Patent Box would save £1.1 billion a year.

Helen Whately:

The Patent Box's objective is to encourage companies to commercialise intellectual property in the UK. In November 2020 the Government published an evaluation of the Patent Box which considered its impact on investment, as one metric of measuring commercialisation. The evaluation is available online: www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-patent-box.

The Government keeps all tax reliefs under review.

■ Personal Care Services: Coronavirus

Alex Cunningham:

[\[110348\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to provide grant support to people working in the hair and beauty industry.

Helen Whately:

In December we announced a generous £1bn package of support for business and their employees to help them manage the effects of the rapid surge of Omicron. This includes a £102m top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), a discretionary fund delivered by local authorities in England. This is in addition to the £250m of ARG which local authorities report is left over from previous allocations. This scheme is open until 31 March 2022 and I encourage people and businesses impacted by the Omicron variant to contact their local authority.

The Government also continues to support small businesses through the VAT threshold, currently higher than any EU member state.

For those on low income whose earnings continue to be affected by Covid-19 restrictions, work coaches will continue to be able to suspend the Universal Credit Minimum Income Floor on an individual basis for up to six months.

Thanks to our decisive action to implement balanced and proportionate measures in response to the Omicron variant, Cabinet has decided to return to Plan A in England.

■ Red Diesel

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[110319\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposals to restrict the use of red diesel from April 2022 on the construction industry.

Helen Whately:

At Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced that the Government will remove the entitlement to use red diesel from most sectors from April 2022. This will more fairly reflect the negative environmental impact of the emissions they produce and help to ensure that the tax system incentivises the development and adoption of greener alternative technologies.

The Government recognised that this would be a significant change for some businesses and ran a consultation to gather information from affected users on the expected impact of these tax changes and make sure it had not overlooked any exceptional reasons why affected sectors should be allowed to continue to use red diesel beyond April 2022. During the consultation period, the Government engaged directly with a wide variety of organisations, including representatives of the construction sector.

However, the Government did not believe that the case made by sectors that will not retain their red diesel entitlement, including the construction sector, outweighed the

need to ensure fairness between the different users of diesel fuels and the Government's environmental objectives.

To support the development of alternatives that affected businesses can switch to, the Government is at least doubling the funding provided for energy innovation through the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio. From that portfolio, the Government announced the £40 million Red Diesel Replacement Competition, which will provide grant funding for projects that develop and demonstrate lower carbon, lower cost alternatives to red diesel for the construction, and mining and quarrying sectors.

As announced at Spring Budget 2021, from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2023, companies can also claim 130% first-year capital allowances on qualifying plant and machinery investments.

■ **Second Homes: Council Tax**

Tim Farron:

[\[107535\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward proposals to increase council tax by up to 100 per cent on second homes.

Lucy Frazer:

It would not be appropriate to comment on the likelihood of future tax changes outside of fiscal events. However, the Government keeps all tax policy under review.

It is worth noting that purchases of second homes in England and Northern Ireland will be liable to pay the Higher Rates for Additional Dwellings Stamp Duty Land Tax surcharge. This was introduced in 2016 as part of the Government's commitment to support first time buyers.

■ **Treasury: Public Appointments**

Kevin Brennan:

[\[110259\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department seeks references for candidates appointed to public positions which fall under the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Helen Whately:

All regulated public appointments are made in line with the process and principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments and regulated by an independent Commissioner.

Due diligence inquiries are carried out, and references requested where appropriate during the recruitment process. Some of Treasury's Public appointment roles are also subject to scrutiny by the Treasury Committee.

WALES**■ Wales Office: Legislation**

Kirsty Blackman: [\[109253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many pieces of (a) primary and (b) secondary legislation their Department has sponsored in each of the last 10 years.

Simon Hart:

This information is only held for internal administrative reasons and may not be exhaustive, for example, due to machinery of government changes to departmental structure in the last decade. The numbers for my department are as follows:

(a) 2

(b) 17

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Access to Work Programme**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[110330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 December 2021 to Question 91950, on Access to Work Programme, what interim steps her Department is taking to tackle the delays to Access to Work applications until additional staff are able to help respond to the increased demand.

Chloe Smith:

Access to Work (AtW) are currently receiving an increased level of applications for support and are working through all applications to ensure that they are progressed as soon as possible.

For applications where a customer is due to begin a job in the next 4 weeks, their case will be prioritised and contact made as soon as possible.

All other Case Managers are deployed to work on the oldest outstanding cases and overtime working for AtW staff is also being used.

Business processes have been reviewed, including the Renewals process, resulting in improved clearance times.

■ Child Maintenance Service: Finance

Olivia Blake: [\[110638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of Child Maintenance Service funding is allocated to the Financial Investigation Unit.

Guy Opperman:

The Financial Investigation Unit is allocated 2% of Child Maintenance Service funding.

■ Child Maintenance Service: Staff

Olivia Blake: [\[110639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the staffing levels were in (a) the Child Maintenance Service and (b) Financial Investigation Unit in each year since 2015.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance Group (CMG) was made up of The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) and the Child Support Agency (CSA) up until the CSA closed in 2019, therefore the staffing levels used are from 2019 to show CMS only.

YEAR	CHILD MAINTENANCE SERVICE	FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION UNIT
December-2019	6536	85
December-2020	5643	87
December-2021	5325	67

■ Children: Maintenance

Olivia Blake: [\[110640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to tackle the increase in levels of unpaid child maintenance.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) take rigorous action to collect unpaid maintenance, combining robust negotiation activity with the highly effective use of its extensive range of enforcement powers. This approach is driven by the Payment Compliance Strategy increasing CMG compliance influencing activities with paying parents to tackle non-paying cases and challenge non-compliant behaviours.

CMS have worked in partnership with Courts and Enforcement Agents following the restrictions on enforcement activity during the initial phase of the pandemic in 2020 to quickly return to normal operating practice.

There has been a consistent downward trend in the proportion of unpaid maintenance as a proportion of maintenance arranged since 2017, falling from 12.5% in 2017 to 8.5% in September 2021 (Source – National Tables - table six ‘ how much maintenance CMS has arranged March 2015 to September 2021).

Olivia Blake: [\[110641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure the Child Maintenance Service follows Government guidance on the referral of a case to the Financial Investigation Unit.

Guy Opperman:

The Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) are a component part of the Child Maintenance Service (CMS). The CMS has clear guidance around the criteria for raising FIU referrals which forms part of caseworker training and instructions.

In addition, the department undertakes regular upskilling and awareness sessions to ensure that all caseworkers are aware of how to spot potential fraud and when to make referrals to FIU.

Olivia Blake: [\[110642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the ability of the Child Maintenance Service to safeguard applicants who are survivors of domestic abuse.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) has robust procedures in place to support parents who have experienced domestic abuse.

The £20 application fee is waived for survivors of abuse and a programme of domestic abuse training is delivered to all CMS caseworkers.

Safeguards are built into the system such as non-traceable payment methods to keep parents' locations hidden and the CMS ensures there is no unwanted contact between parents. The Service can also signpost customers to external organisations such as charities and support groups.

Disability**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[107641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Part One of the National Disability Strategy published on 28 July 2021, when the Disability Unit plans to launch its next disability survey.

Chloe Smith:

Part 1 of the National Disability Strategy makes reference to the UK Disability Survey. This was a discrete exercise. In Part 2 of the National Disability Strategy, the Disability Unit committed to beginning regular disability surveys through the Office for National Statistics by January 2022. This work has been commissioned.

Employment and Support Allowance: South West**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[108483\]](#)

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) Filton and Bradley Stoke, (b) Kingswood, (c) North East Somerset, (d) North Somerset, (e) Thornbury and Yate, (f) Wells and (g) Weston-super-Mare constituency.

Chloe Smith:

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

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Appeals**

Kate Osamor:[\[106820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2021 to Question 63817 on Personal Independence Payment: Appeals, how many appeals against personal independence payment decisions were lapsed by her Department prior to the hearing at the First Tier Tribunal in Quarter 2 of 2020.

Chloe Smith:

The information on number of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) appeals lapsed during Quarter 2 of 2020 is given below:

PERIOD	NUMBER OF PIP APPEALS LAPSED
April – June 2020	5,960

Data has been rounded to the nearest 10. Totals are for Great Britain.

PIP appeals data taken from the DWP PIP computer system's management information. Therefore, this data may differ from that held by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service for various reasons such as delays in data recording and other methodological differences in collating and preparing statistics.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Appeals**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:[\[108449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the impact on the finances of personal independence payment and employment support allowance claimants who are required to wait for a tribunal in order to receive their correct benefits award.

Chloe Smith:

The Department understands the potential effect of waiting for a tribunal hearing which is why our aim is to make the right decision as early as possible in the claim journey. Recent improvements to our decision-making processes mean that Decision Makers can better gather relevant additional evidence. This helps to ensure that people get the support they are entitled to as quickly as possible, without the need for a tribunal appeal.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:[\[108450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps are taken to ensure that claimants receive the correct benefit award after their assessment, rather than requiring a mandatory reconsideration or tribunal.

Chloe Smith:

The Department's aim is to make the right decision as early as possible in the claim journey. We have made improvements to our decision making processes to ensure that people get the support they are entitled to as quickly as possible, because decision makers can better gather relevant additional evidence earlier in the process.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:[\[108451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department has considered the potential merits of (a) introducing a right to request an assessor with appropriate knowledge of a claimant's condition, and (b) the potential impact such an assessor would have on the number of claimants requiring mandatory reconsideration and tribunal.

Chloe Smith:

The Health and Disability Green Paper published last year explores how the benefits system can better meet the needs of disabled people and people with health conditions, including how we could improve assessments to better understand the impact of a person's condition on their ability to work or live independently. We will follow up on the responses to the Green Paper through a White Paper that we will publish later this year.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[\[108452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made for the implications of her policies of the level of confidence disabled people have in the equity of the disability benefits assessment process.

Chloe Smith:

The Department operates a robust quality assurance and independent audit process to ensure assessment decisions are consistent. We recognise that improvements could be made to the assessment process and we plan to publish a Health and Disability White Paper later this year following the views shared in response to the Green Paper published last year.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**Kate Osamor:**[\[110480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 96989, on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, whether the Risk Review Team has undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment; and if she will publish the outcome of that assessment.

David Rutley:

No demographic data has been used to determine if a case is referred to the Risk Review Team, therefore no Equality Assessment was required.

■ Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals

Kate Osamor: [\[110483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has shared data provided by people who applied for pre-settled status with the Risk Review Team.

David Rutley:

The Department has not used any demographic data to influence or determine what cases are referred to the Risk Review Team.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Colleen Fletcher: [\[106729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on how many occasions people have been declared fit for work and have then been successful in an appeal of that decision against her Department in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in each of the last three years.

Chloe Smith:

National Statistics for Employment Support Allowance Work Capability Assessments (WCA) are published every three months here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employment-and-support-allowance-outcomes-of-work-capability-assessment>

Detailed monthly statistics showing the outcomes of completed initial and repeat WCAs and the outcomes of Mandatory Reconsiderations and Appeals, by various geographical areas, are available on Stat-Xplore at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The information requested for Universal Credit WCAs is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Universal Credit: Appeals

Kate Osamor: [\[106819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 23 October 2017 to Question 107685 on Social Security Benefits: Appeals, when her Department stopped collecting data on the number of appeals to the First-Tier Tribunal against its decisions on universal credit that were lapsed or conceded by its decision-makers each year; and for what reason that data collection stopped.

Chloe Smith:

The Department has not stopped collecting data on Universal Credit lapsed appeals. The information provided in the answer to Question 107685 in October 2017 was internal management information.

That information is still available today but to assess the completeness of its recording and quality assure the data, would incur disproportionate costs. This is necessary because this type of information does not form part of the official statistics outputs that are released by the Department in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Update on negotiations with EDF related to the Sizewell C Project

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng):

[\[HCWS562\]](#)

The UK was the first major economy to legislate for a target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. As set out in the Net Zero Strategy and the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, nuclear will continue to be an important and reliable source of clean electricity as we strive to decarbonise the UK economy. By 2050, we expect that the electricity system will be built on a foundation of renewables such as wind and solar, but these will need to be bolstered by reliable low-carbon power. The UK Government recognises that large-scale nuclear is the only proven technology available to provide continuous, low carbon electricity at scale. Ministers are therefore firmly committed to deploying new nuclear in order to strengthen Britain's energy security and reduce our exposure to volatile global gas prices, provided there is clear value for money for consumers and taxpayers

In 2016 we took the decision to enter into a Contract for Difference over Hinkley Point C in Somerset, which is currently under construction and expected to begin generating power by 2026, when it will start providing 3.2GW of electricity. However, with 5 of the UK's 6 nuclear stations scheduled to close by 2028, the Government has made a commitment to bring a further large-scale nuclear project to a Final Investment Decision during this Parliament, subject to value for money and all relevant approvals. To facilitate this, we have introduced legislation for a new financing mechanism, the Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model, through the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill. It is estimated that RAB could lower the cost of each new large-scale nuclear power projects by more than £30bn, compared to the existing Contracts for Difference model. The RAB model is also expected to reduce Britain's reliance on overseas developers for finance by substantially widening the pool of private investors to include British pension funds, insurers and other institutional investors from like-minded countries.

After Hinkley Point C, the Sizewell C Project in Suffolk is the most advanced nuclear project in the UK. As a replica of Hinkley Point, Sizewell offers a high level of design maturity and an identified supply chain. The company developing the project has applied for both a Development Consent Order and Nuclear Site Licence and believes it can begin construction during this Parliament. If built, the new plant could deliver around 7 percent of the UK's current electricity needs (enough to power the equivalent of around 6 million homes) and create tens of thousands of jobs across the country. New nuclear is not only at the heart of our plans to ensure greater energy independence, but to drive economic growth

The Government entered into Sizewell C project discussions in January 2021. Following significant investment from EDF, the project requires additional financial support to further

mature it to a point where other private investors (and, subject to value for money considerations and relevant approvals, the Government) could consider a direct investment in the project development company. Sufficient early development funding prior to the construction of major projects is a key determinant of subsequent project performance, and to this end the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan committed in 2020 to provide nuclear development funding for this purpose

I am pleased to announce that I will today enter into an option agreement with EDF Energy Holdings Ltd, which provides Government with an option over the land at Sizewell C and conditionally over the shares in the development company in exchange for an option fee of £100m. EDF Energy Holdings Ltd will invest that £100m in further developing the Sizewell C electricity infrastructure project. Should the project reach a successful Final Investment Decision, subject to value for money and all relevant approvals, the Government would recover this funding together with a financing return, either through an equity stake in the project, or in cash

This agreement represents an important milestone for both the Government's nuclear strategy and the project, which has the potential to significantly contribute to the UK's decarbonisation and security of supply objectives. However, I am clear that this agreement does not represent a Government decision that the Sizewell C project will progress. Neither is it an indication that similar commercial arrangements would necessarily be desirable for other prospective nuclear projects. Decisions on the Sizewell C Project will be dependent on decisions in respect of planning and designation under the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill if passed into law. Noting that the future of the Sizewell C Project is not confirmed, the agreement the Government has reached with EDF provides the taxpayer with downside protection should the project not proceed. In return for the £100m, the Government will be granted an option on the Sizewell site and conditionally over the shares in certain circumstances of the development company. In the event the negotiations with EDF do not successfully result in a positive investment decision satisfactory to all parties, then subject to certain conditions, taxpayers would be entitled to seek acquisition of either EDF's shares in the Sizewell C development company or the site itself or if neither can be delivered by EDF, the taxpayer would be entitled to a reimbursement of the £100m with a financing return. This in turn would provide Government with the possibility of proceeding with alternative nuclear or low-carbon infrastructure, and therefore support the realisation of our net zero objectives.

Today's announcement further demonstrates our commitment to energy security, investing in our thriving nuclear sector and creating thousands of jobs.

DEFENCE

■ Defence Estate Update

Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin):

[\[HCWS563\]](#)

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) continues to review its estate to ensure value for money.

In 1996, the Ministry of Defence, in what was effectively a sale and leaseback agreement, granted a 999-year lease of over 55,000 Service Family Accommodation homes to Annington Property Ltd and immediately leased the homes back on 200-year underleases. In 2018, the National Audit Office concluded in its review of the arrangements that taxpayers are between £2.2 billion and £4.2 billion worse off as a result of the sale and leaseback arrangements.

Given our obligations to secure value for money, we have reviewed MOD's current arrangements with Annington and now set out the steps that MOD is taking to deliver greater value for money for the taxpayer in relation to Service Family Accommodation.

First, MOD engaged highly experienced advisers and counsel to deliver a settlement with Annington in the site rent review process. This settlement achieves value for money, and removes ongoing uncertainty for the Department; we believe it to be a good outcome and a fair settlement. The settlement resulted in a change in the overall adjustment to open market rents from 58% to 49.6%.

Secondly, MOD continues to reduce the number of untenanted properties which it holds since these otherwise represent a liability for the taxpayer, by returning these to Annington under the terms of the lease.

Thirdly, MOD can confirm that the Department will explore the exercise of its statutory leasehold enfranchisement rights to buy out Annington's interest in the homes and gain full ownership rights. Initially, the MOD has made a single claim for one house, with the intention to submit a further claim in respect of another house in the near future. It is hoped that this test case will establish certain key principles. The cost of enfranchising these houses will be in accordance with the statutory enfranchisement formula, fixed at the date of the notice of claim, and the price will be agreed between the parties or determined by an independent Tribunal. If the cost of recovering full ownership of the units from Annington is less than the present value of MOD's ongoing liabilities, such a transaction is likely to represent good value for money. The MOD would then benefit from any future appreciation in value of the units. Accordingly, the MOD has served notice on Annington under Section 5 of the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 of its desire to enfranchise a house currently leased from Annington. Annington, through its lawyers, has notified the MOD that it is considering the impact of the claim and has put the MOD on notice of a potential dispute.

A successful enfranchisement programme would also provide the MOD with more flexibility in the management of its estate to the benefit of Defence, tenants, and potentially wider Government objectives.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ OSCE: Ministerial Council and Priorities for 2022****Minister for Europe (Chris Heaton-Harris):**[\[HCWS565\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Minister for South and Central Asia, United Nations and the Commonwealth (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) faced a challenging year in 2021, with geopolitical tensions leading to a failure to reach consensus on a range of important issues. Sweden, as 2021 Chair-in-Office, steered the organisation through this period with a focus on addressing protracted conflicts, strengthening democracy and enhancing gender equality. The UK worked closely with Sweden, including as chair of the OSCE's Security Committee, which we have now concluded after two successful years.

On 2 and 3 December, Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde hosted the 28th Ministerial Council meeting of the OSCE in Stockholm. The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, represented the United Kingdom. The Ministerial Council is the key decision-making body of the OSCE and was attended by Ministers and senior officials from across its 57 participating States, including US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

The Council agreed a decision on increasing cooperation to address the challenges of climate change. Due to the positions of certain participating States, there was difficulty in reaching agreement on a number of other valuable decisions, reflecting wider difficulties in reaching consensus. In 2021, the OSCE's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Europe's largest annual human rights and democracy conference, did not take place because we were unable to reach agreement on the agenda.

The Foreign Secretary's intervention at the Ministerial Council underlined the need for all participating States to respect OSCE commitments. The Foreign Secretary raised concern over the impact of ongoing conflicts on regional stability and the threats facing freedom and democracy across the region, placing a particular emphasis on the importance of the OSCE's work in election observation.

The Foreign Secretary's statement also emphasised our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling on Russia to use OSCE tools to build trust and live up to their commitments on military transparency. The UK and allies made clear to Russia that its military build-up on the border of Ukraine and in illegally annexed Crimea is unacceptable. We reiterated these points in our closing statement and also regretted Russia's decision not to renew the mandate of the Border Observation Mission along the Ukraine-Russia state border.

During the ministerial working dinner, the Foreign Secretary led a discussion on conflict resolution focusing on the importance of finding the political will to implement existing tools. She also co-hosted a side event on the human rights situation in Belarus, alongside Denmark and Germany, with 36 co-sponsors. Her Majesty's Ambassador to the OSCE,

Neil Bush, represented the UK in a discussion focused on the potential OSCE role in Afghanistan particularly in supporting regional stability.

Poland have taken on the OSCE Chair for 2022 and will face another challenging year, at a particularly tense moment for the region. They plan to prioritise conflict prevention and resolution, with a focus on protection of civilians, and will champion building back better through effective multilateralism.

At the first OSCE Permanent Council in 2022, the UK offered Polish Foreign Minister Rau our full support. Our statement underlined our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russia's aggressive acts and urged participating States to robustly defend the principles and commitments we signed up to. We also emphasised the importance of the cross-dimensional approach to security, which includes support for democracy and human rights, and called for adequate financing of the OSCE's autonomous institutions and field missions in the Unified Budget. As a consensus-based organisation, where all countries in the Euro-Atlantic Area are represented and have an equal voice, the OSCE has a unique and valuable role in resolving tensions and avoiding escalation.

In 2022, the UK remains committed to supporting the work of the OSCE. We will focus on conflict prevention and resolution, ensuring in particular that we use the OSCE platform to hold Russia to account for its ongoing aggression in Ukraine. We will continue to work closely with the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Secretary General Helga Schmid, and other participating States to build an effective organisation which maintains comprehensive security in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Covid-19 Update

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid): [\[HCWS566\]](#)

Thanks to the success of the vaccination booster roll out, and the reducing level of both infection and hospitalisations across the country, the government has been able to announce the end of Plan B. This means we are now able to take steps towards getting care homes back to normal, easing some of the difficult restrictions which both staff and residents have had in place which I know have been incredibly challenging for all, whilst still protecting residents from the continued risk of COVID-19.

From Monday 31st January, there will no longer be nationally-set direct restrictions on visiting in care homes and there will be no limit on the number of visitors a resident can receive. Residents should be supported to undertake visits out of the care home without the need to isolate on their return, but should continue to take reasonable precautions and undertake testing arrangements for high-risk visits.

As well as removing those additional precautions we put in place in response to the Omicron variant, we are now able to reduce isolation periods for residents in care homes so that they are the same as for the general public in most cases.

Residents who need to isolate will now only need to do so for a maximum of 10 days. The 10-day maximum period will apply to those residents who test positive, are identified as a close contact or have had an unplanned stay in hospital. For some residents, the isolation period could be as short as five days subject to the testing regime that will be outlined in guidance.

Today I am also announcing changes to regular testing for staff. For all adult social care staff, we are moving to lateral flow testing every day before work and removing weekly PCR testing. Recent clinical advice is that following the pre-shift testing regime provides better protection than the current regular testing regime of weekly PCR with three lateral flow tests a week in high-risk settings.

As restrictions are relaxed for care home residents and for the general population, testing continues to be essential for providing the protections needed to support this relaxation of restrictions. The introduction of pre-shift rapid lateral flow tests should help identify and isolate positive cases quicker rather than waiting for PCR results to return from the lab.

This change applies only to regular asymptomatic testing for staff meaning PCR tests will remain available for symptomatic staff and residents. Outbreak testing and monthly resident testing will also remain unchanged.

By maintaining a robust regime of testing in adult social care, continuing to press ahead with our vaccination programme and maintaining high standards of infection prevention and control, we are able to support residents of care homes and recipients of care to gradually return to enjoying life as it was before the pandemic.

■ The NHS Constitution and Handbook

Minister of State (Minister for Health) (Edward Argar):

[\[HCWS564\]](#)

Statutory report on the effect of the NHS Constitution and updates to the Constitution Handbook

In accordance with the Health Act 2009, I have laid before Parliament a report on the effect of the NHS Constitution. The report has also been published on the Gov.uk website, alongside an updated version of the Handbook to the NHS Constitution.

The NHS Constitution, like the NHS, belongs to us all. It empowers patients, public and staff by bringing together in one document the founding principles and values of our NHS. It sets out the legal rights to which patients, the public and staff are entitled and the pledges that the NHS has additionally made towards them. Just as importantly, it makes clear the responsibilities which we all have for supporting the NHS to operate fairly and effectively.

Throughout this extraordinary time where we have seen the huge impact of the pandemic on staff, patients and society as a whole, our NHS workforce have strived tirelessly to protect the people we love. It is therefore more important than ever that patients, public and staff know their rights, responsibilities and what they can expect from their NHS.

The report is based on an independent survey of staff, patients and the public. It describes how they view the impact of the NHS Constitution, and its value in promoting and raising standards of care.

While the report shows that public awareness of the Constitution is still low, we are pleased to see it has increased since the 2018 report, and staff awareness remains significantly higher than public awareness. We know that those informed about the NHS Constitution are more likely to use it and so there is further work to do in improving awareness to ensure we all get the most out of our interactions with the NHS.

Looking forward, a full review of the NHS Constitution itself is due in January 2025. The scoping for this review, including a statutory consultation with patients, carers and staff will begin this year. We will use the findings from today's report to shape the consultation and explore how to increase awareness and use of the NHS Constitution across all public and staff groups.

Alongside this report we have also published a revised version of the Handbook to the Constitution. The Handbook explains each right, pledge and responsibility in the NHS Constitution. It is designed to give the public, patients, their carers and families, and NHS staff fuller information about what the Constitution means for them. This revision ensures the information given in the Handbook remains accurate and up to date.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Trade Policy Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS567\]](#)

The United Kingdom has today launched negotiations with the government of Greenland on a continuity free trade agreement to reduce the costs of trading and to identify areas of strategic interest for future cooperation. While we introduced temporary measures to secure some continuity of trade with Greenland at the beginning of 2021, we never closed the door to securing a more permanent arrangement at an appropriate time.

These negotiations will seek to ensure that British firms can once again import popular products from Greenland tariff free. This will also support processing industries in Scotland, the North East and North West of England. As Greenland is the largest supplier of cold-water prawns in the world, as well as being a leading source of fish, these negotiations will help ensure the stability and resilience of British supply chains for consumers and the hospitality sector. The negotiations will also lay the groundwork for potentially tackling market access barriers for British businesses in Greenland in the longer term, including by liberalising professional business services trade, facilitating inward investment, and agreeing mutual recognition and double taxation arrangements. These discussions will therefore pave the way to potentially unlocking significant new opportunities for British exporters and investors looking to extend their presence across the Arctic.

Additionally, Greenland is an important partner in the Arctic – an increasingly important geo-political area. These negotiations provide an opportunity to establish a dialogue

through which to broaden our cooperation with Greenland on our priorities, such as climate change, science and research, and potentially the supply of critical minerals.

As the Arctic continues to grow in strategic importance, Greenland will be a key partner in ensuring a secure, stable, and sustainable future for the region.

In parallel, we expect the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to enter into negotiations with Greenland on our access to Greenlandic fishing waters.

This agreement will constitute Greenland's first bilateral agreement with a third partner country, and we look forward to using this opportunity to solidify and strengthen our trading relationship in the future.

We will ensure Parliament is regularly updated on the progress of these negotiations.