



Daily Report

Wednesday, 27 April 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 27 April 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 27 April 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

■ Prosecutions

Steve Reed:

[\[157550\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the (a) total number and (b) proportion of prosecutions in each offence group is in each (i) region and (ii) local justice area of England and Wales that have stopped post-charge because a victim did not provide evidence or has withdrawn in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

The total number and proportion of prosecutions for cases that have stopped post-charge because a victim did not provide evidence or has withdrawn, is not publicly available for each crime type by region and local justice area of England and Wales, in the format that has been requested. Figures for victim attrition for all crime by region are included in the local criminal justice scorecards, which can be found at www.criminal-justice-scorecard.justice.gov.uk/.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Advanced Research and Invention Agency: Directors

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[155716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he expects to announce the new chief executive of the Advance Research and Innovation Agency.

George Freeman:

We are in the process of recruiting the Advanced Research and Invention Agency's first CEO. An appointment will be announced in due course.

■ Apprentices: Public Sector

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[155711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has met the public sector apprenticeship target in each of the last five years.

George Freeman:

The Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy is currently collating and quality assuring data on apprenticeships for 2021/22. Final figures are not yet available. The Cabinet Office, on behalf of the Civil Service, will be publishing a full breakdown of departmental performance on apprenticeships in the Autumn in line with previous years.

Data for all departments between 2017 and 2021 is available on gov.uk here.

■ **Business: Cybersecurity**

Chris Elmore:

[\[155866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans on including cyber risk management as a core part of the forthcoming corporate governance reforms.

Paul Scully:

Chapter 3 of the Government's White Paper on 'Restoring Trust in Audit and Corporate Governance', published in March 2021, set out proposals for companies to report on their resilience planning, and invited views on whether the management of cyber risks (among other things) should form part of a company's 'Resilience Statement'. The Government has been carefully considering responses to the consultation on the White Paper and will publish its response in due course, including with regard to the proposed Resilience Statement.

■ **Competition and Markets Authority: Staff**

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[155721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he made of the adequacy of staffing levels at the Competition and Markets Authority.

Paul Scully:

As a non-ministerial department, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is responsible for managing its own resources and for ensuring that it has adequate staffing levels to fulfil its commitments. Government is supporting the CMA with additional funding to hire skilled staff to carry out its new functions. At the last Spending Review, the CMA received an increase to its budget to support the roll-out of the Digital Markets Unit. Dependent on legislative progress of the proposed digital competition regime, by 2024-25 the CMA will have a budget of £130.5 million.

The CMA is directly accountable to Parliament and reports on its staffing levels and remuneration in its annual report.

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[156407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish its next set of spending transparency data.

George Freeman:

BEIS published the latest set of departmental spending transparency data (October, November and December 2021) on 22 April.

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

Jonathan Reynolds: [155714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department's flexible working policy was last updated.

George Freeman:

The BEIS flexible working policy was last updated in December 2021.

Jonathan Reynolds: [155715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what percentage of requests for flexible working by staff working in his Department were granted in each of the last five years.

George Freeman:

Requests from employees for all types of flexible working, and decisions to grant or refuse requests, are managed locally, and the information is not held centrally.

The department recognises the benefits that flexible working can bring and is committed to supporting a variety of flexible working arrangements. Managers are required to consider all requests for flexible working fairly and evenly and on their individual merits, taking account of the needs of the business and the team with those of the individual. It is the aim of BEIS to grant flexible working wherever possible.

■ DP World: Freeports

Jonathan Reynolds: [156430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the suitability of DP World as preferred partners for freeports.

Paul Scully:

Freeports were selected through an open and transparent process based on consideration of the criteria in the Freeports Bidding Prospectus (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freeports-bidding-prospectus>), and in accordance with the Freeports Decision-Making Note (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freeports-bidding-prospectus/english-freeports-selection-decision-making-note>).

Freeport selection is a matter for HM Treasury.

■ Employment: Disability

Jonathan Reynolds: [155713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure that it retains its leader status in the disability confident employer scheme.

Lee Rowley:

The Department achieved Disability Confident Leader status in 2017 and undertook a further self-assessment in 2020, which was validated by Business Disability Forum. The Department regularly reviews the self-assessment and feedback to ensure that BEIS continues to meet the criteria.

■ Energy Bills Rebate: Birmingham Selly Oak**Steve McCabe:**[\[155574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of the absence of an opt-out mechanism for the Energy Bills Rebate scheme on residents in Birmingham, Selly Oak constituency.

Greg Hands:

The Energy Bills Support Scheme, as announced by my rt. hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3 February, is currently the subject of a Government consultation issued on 11 April.

The implementation of the policy will be reviewed following the conclusion of the consultation. Allowing consumers to opt out of receiving the reduction on their bills would likely increase the administrative costs of the scheme. This applies equally to the constituents of Birmingham, Selly Oak.

■ Energy: Prices**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[155712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether has made an assessment of the effect of increases in energy prices on the cost of running buildings owned by his Department.

Greg Hands:

The Department is committed to reducing energy consumption and has carried out a number of energy efficiency measures at its headquarters (which is leased through the Government Property Agency) at 1 Victoria Street, London, to reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. These include upgrading lighting to LEDs, upgrading the Building Management System (BMS) and central building services, installing electrical sub-metering throughout the building, and installing Artificial Intelligent BMS software. The Department monitors its energy consumption and reports on its greenhouse gas emissions as part of the Greening Government Commitments.

Vicky Foxcroft:[\[155839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the level of support provided by energy suppliers to disabled customers through programmes such as benefit entitlement checks and debt write-off.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem requires energy suppliers to support disabled customers, including protection from disconnection during the winter, and the provision of additional services through a Priority Services Register. Ofgem monitors compliance with their rules protecting vulnerable consumers and its most recent report is available at:

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/Ofgem%20Consumer%20Protection%20Report%20Autumn%202021_Final.pdf.

Under the Warm Home Discount scheme, Ofgem provides a breakdown in its annual report of the Industry Initiatives that support fuel poor and vulnerable households, including through benefit entitlement checks and debt write-off. The 2020-2021 report is available at: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/warm-home-discount-annual-report-scheme-year-10>.

Vicky Foxcroft:**[155840]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what targets have been set for energy suppliers to meet in terms of identifying and supporting disabled customers.

Greg Hands:

The Priority Services Register is a free support service to help people in vulnerable situations offered by energy suppliers. Each supplier keeps its own register and disabled, and other vulnerable, customers may contact their supplier and apply to be added.

■ Energy: Standing Charges**Derek Thomas:****[155863]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the level of increases to daily standing charges in energy usage; what comparative assessment he has made of the impact of those increases on (a) low income and (b) other households; and whether he plans to take steps to encourage energy companies to return to previous levels.

Greg Hands:

The setting of the standing charge is a commercial matter for individual suppliers. The standing charge reflects the on-going costs that fall on a supplier to provide and maintain a live supply to a customer's premises. One component of these costs relates to transmission and distribution costs, which have recently increased due to the Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR) levy. The majority of the levy consists of purchasing wholesale energy, at current high prices, to serve transferring customers. Standing charges are capped under the price cap and ensure millions of households pay a fair price for their energy.

■ EURATOM and Horizon Europe: Grants

Chi Onwurah:

[\[155734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timeline is for (a) UKRI to guarantee funding for successful UK Horizon Euratom grant applications and (b) providing the second wave of successful UK Horizon Euratom grant applications with the safety net funding; how much money will be dedicated to that safety net; and if he will make it his policy to ensure that the second wave of researchers who have secured Horizon Euratom grants will be covered by UKRI's grant extension guarantee.

George Freeman:

Funding for UK entities, successful in the latest Euratom Research & Training research call, is covered by the existing UKRI guarantee. This ensures UK entities can sign agreements and collaborative nuclear fission projects can go ahead. Relevant Euratom stakeholders have been contacted regarding the availability of the guarantee. £4m of funding has been agreed to provide this guarantee. It remains our policy to associate to Euratom R&T. Contracts for the next wave of Euratom R&T are unlikely to be signed before late 2023 and relevant teams across government will continue to work towards ensuring UK entities have the confidence to apply for the second wave of grants.

■ Fuel Oil: Prices

Allan Dorans:

[\[155919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to regulate the cost of (a) domestic and (b) non-domestic heating oil.

Greg Hands:

It is essential that consumers of heating oil get a fair deal. There is an open market for the supply of both domestic and non-domestic heating oil in the UK. This provides the best long-term guarantee of competitive prices.

■ Horizon Europe

Chi Onwurah:

[\[156445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to secure association to Horizon.

George Freeman:

The UK stands ready to formalise our association to EU programmes at the earliest opportunity. However, the EU's delays to the UK's association are putting long term science collaboration at risk.

We are urging the Commission to finalise the UK's participation in Horizon as soon as possible. My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have raised the ongoing delays with our counterparts in Europe, including Germany, France, Italy, Ireland, the

Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. The UK also discussed association and the delays at the EU-UK Specialised Committee in December 2021.

Supporting the UK's research and development sector through this period of uncertainty remains our top priority. In order to provide reassurance, the UK Government has guaranteed funding for the first and second waves of eligible successful applicants to Horizon Europe. And if the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe we will be ready to introduce a comprehensive alternative programme of international science, research and innovation collaborations.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[156448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Minister for Science, Research & Innovation's open letter of 15 March 2022 entitled Horizon Europe Guarantee extension announcement for the UK's R&D sector, when the results of the Government's consultation with the research community on the offering of the UK global research programme will be published.

George Freeman:

The Government's position remains to associate to Horizon, at the earliest opportunity. However persistent delays from the EU are causing uncertainty for the UK's R&D sector. Supporting the UK's research and development sector through this period of uncertainty is our top priority. If the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe soon and in time to make full use of the opportunities it offers, the Government will introduce a comprehensive alternative programme of international science, research and innovation collaboration, building on those outlined in the R&D Roadmap.

Jim Shannon:

[\[158957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress he has made on the ratification of the UK's association with the EU's Horizon Europe programme.

George Freeman:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central to Question UIN 156445.

■ Horizon Europe: Finance

Chi Onwurah:

[\[156446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the guarantee for the first and second waves of successful UK Horizon applications represents; and what budget heading that funding is under.

George Freeman:

The Government remains committed to and has taken unprecedented steps to support association to Horizon Europe. This includes detailing our financial commitments in the Spending Review and, as an exceptional step, setting out a guarantee to eligible, successful UK applicants to Horizon Europe, covering calls

where grant agreements are signed by December 2022. This will ensure that important individual and collaborative projects can go ahead as planned.

Funding for the guarantee is demand-driven and will depend on the success rates of UK applicants to the Horizon Europe programme, as well as the duration of time the guarantee is operational.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[156447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timeline for eligible UK Horizon applications is from the first and second waves to receive the safety net funding.

George Freeman:

The Government has always been clear that our priority is to support the UK's research and development sector during this period of uncertainty. The guarantee extension announced on March 15, ensures that UK researchers can continue their work and that important international collaborations can continue. This second wave covers all eligible successful applicants to Horizon Europe, covering calls where grant agreements are expected to be signed by December 2022. Details regarding the scope and terms of the guarantee are available on the UKRI (UK Research & Innovation) website.

The guarantee delivered by UKRI allows awardees to receive the full value of their funding, subject to the terms of the guarantee. Detailed guidance on how to access the guarantee funding, and how payments are made, is available on the UKRI website.

■ **Innovate UK: Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[155733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason Innovate UK has decided not to exercise its right to join the board of the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre.

George Freeman:

Innovate UK didn't have the right to appoint board members to VMIC Ltd's Board of Directors. Innovate UK and the Vaccines Taskforce did attend VMIC Ltd's Board meetings as Observers.

■ **Metals: Recycling**

Henry Smith:

[\[153893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of the metals recycling sector on the potential impact on their businesses of the loss of their entitlement to use red diesel.

Lee Rowley:

The Government recognised that the changes to red diesel entitlements announced at Budget 2020 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. As part of this, the Government engaged directly with a wide variety of organisations from all parts of the UK and carefully analysed all consultation responses received, including from the British Metals Recycling Association.

The metals recycling sector is eligible for support through the £289 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (IETF) and the £34 million Scottish IETF. These programmes provide capital support to industrial sites, helping them to become more energy efficient and to switch away from fossil fuels to lower carbon alternatives. We have recently promoted this funding opportunity with the British Metals Recycling Association, welcoming applications from sites impacted by the removal of the red diesel rebate.

■ Natural Gas and Oil: Prices

John Spellar:

[\[155578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of market speculation on oil and gas prices.

Greg Hands:

Fuel and gas prices are primarily driven by the underlying price in the global market of crude oil and natural gas. These are also influenced by exchange rates and a range of other supply and demand factors, including stock levels, logistics and distribution costs and seasonal demand variations.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[155658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with Ofgem on a report it commissioned from Oliver Wyman Ltd on the potential impact, costs, risks, legal implications and timing of four options to reduce wholesale prices for gas and electricity.

Greg Hands:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has regular discussions with Ofgem's CEO on a range of issues relating to the impact of high global gas prices, including wholesale energy markets. Ofgem, as the independent regulator of Great Britain's gas and electricity markets, continues to examine ways to reduce the impact of the recent unprecedented rise in wholesale gas prices on energy consumers.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[155659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has received a copy of the report commissioned by Ofgem from Oliver Wyman Ltd on the potential impact, costs, risks, legal implications and timing of four options to reduce wholesale prices for gas and electricity.

Greg Hands:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, does not record receipt of reports submitted by external organisations.

■ Offshore Industry and Shipping: Pay**Kenny MacAskill:****[157611]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 154422, on Offshore Industry and Shipping: Pay, whether he plans to extend the scope of the National Minimum Wage Act 1999 to the offshore renewables sector operating beyond the limits of UK territorial waters but within the UK Exclusive Economic Zone.

Paul Scully:

We are committed to making this country the best place in the world to work and grow a business, this includes business in the renewables sector as it is crucial to our target to reach Net Zero by 2050.

We will continue to consider and review the needs of the renewable energy sector and take action when appropriate.

■ Post Boxes: Ealing**Dr Rupa Huq:****[155849]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the impact on residents of reduced hours for postal collection recently introduced by Royal Mail for post boxes in Ealing.

Paul Scully:

Changes to local collection hours are operational matters for Royal Mail in ensuring an efficient and sustainable universal postal service.

Ofcom, as the independent regulator for postal services, requires Royal Mail to publish and maintain clear and updated information on specified collection times.

■ Post Office: ICT**Jonathan Reynolds:****[155720]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications to the Historic Shortfall Scheme his Department has processed.

Paul Scully:

Publicly available information relating to the amount of offers processed can now be found on the Post Office's website (<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/historical-matters/historical-matters-progress/historical-shortfall-scheme-information-on-progress>). This page will be updated on a monthly basis.

As of 08 April, out of the 2,522 applications received, 1,215 offers have been issued and 899 have been paid out.

■ Post Offices: ICT**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[155722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral contribution of the The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on 22 February 2022, Official Report column 456, what recent assessment he has made of whether 95 percent of claims to the Historic Shortfall Scheme will be processed by the end of this year.

Paul Scully:

As of 8th April, Post Office have issued offers to 51% of eligible applicants, therefore BEIS is content that on current progress, the Historical Shortfall Scheme target will be met.

■ Prices: Emergencies**Gareth Thomas:**[\[157574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to prevent price gouging by exploitative vendors at times of national emergency, such as during the covid-19 pandemic; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The Government has actively sought to address consumer issues arising from the pandemic and remains committed to tackling consumer rip-offs and bad business practices, including profiteering.

The CMA monitors firms suspected of profiteering to challenge unjustifiable price increases and stands ready to take enforcement action where there is evidence that competition or consumer protection law has been broken.

The Government published its response to last year's consultation exercise on reforming competition and consumer policy and intends to legislate to give the CMA administrative enforcement powers to tackle those businesses not treating customers fairly.

The Government continues to monitor the operation of consumer markets and keeps all options under review to ensure good value and service for consumers.

■ Renewable Energy: Construction**Bim Afolami:**[\[155896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to engage with local communities on the building of renewable energy projects, such as onshore wind farms.

Greg Hands:

The Government wants to encourage renewable energy developers to continue to engage with local communities as the Government increased deployment to reach net zero.

The Government recognises there are ranges of views on onshore wind and the Government wants to put communities in control of hosting onshore sites. In the British Energy Security Strategy, the Government committed to develop onshore wind partnerships in England. This will enable supportive communities to host new onshore wind infrastructure and enjoy the benefits of doing so, through developers supporting local energy discounts and new community infrastructure projects.

The Government will consult on the partnerships scheme later this year.

Small Businesses: Coronavirus**Damien Moore:**[\[155907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to support small businesses that are experiencing operational challenges as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Paul Scully:

Small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) are the backbone of our economy and have a key role to play in driving economic growth. The Government has provided an unprecedented and comprehensive package of support to help as many businesses as possible during this challenging period.

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme (CLBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) were instrumental in providing vital cashflow to businesses affected by the pandemic, unlocking almost £80bn of finance and reaching almost a third of SMEs in the UK. This has been supplemented by the Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS) which ensures they can continue to access loans and other kinds of finance as they grow and recover from the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. The RLS is still open to applications from SMEs until 30 June 2022. We have also implemented business rates relief worth £7 billion over five years.

This government is providing support on access to finance through the British Business Bank and our new 'Help to Grow' scheme will help small businesses across the UK learn new skills, reach new customers and boost profits.

Warm Home Discount Scheme**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[155835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who will qualify for the Warm Home Discount under the new Core Group 2.

Greg Hands:

The full eligibility criteria, including a list of the qualifying benefits, can be found in the recently published [Government response](#) on the scheme.

Ed Davey:[\[156344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the criteria are for qualifying for the Warm Home Discount under the new Core Group 2.

Greg Hands:

The full eligibility criteria, including a list of the qualifying benefits, can be found in our recently published [Government response](#) on the scheme.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Disability**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[155836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he will make an assessment of the potential merits of revising the planned reforms to the Warm Home Discount eligibility criteria so all those in receipt of Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance are eligible for the support.

Greg Hands:

Introducing non-means-tested benefits, such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA), into the eligibility criteria would mean that many households on lower incomes and in deeper fuel poverty would be disadvantaged.

Around 62% of PIP and DLA recipients also receive one of the qualifying means-tested benefits and so would be considered low-income under the Core Group 2 criteria. Those households with high energy costs would be eligible for a rebate.

Recipients of AA, a pension-age benefit, who claim Pension Credit Guarantee Credit will, in most cases, qualify for a rebate through Core Group 1.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Reform**Ed Davey:**[\[156345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will reverse planned reforms to the Warm Home Discount eligibility criteria so that all those in receipt of Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance are eligible for that support.

Greg Hands:

Introducing non-means-tested benefits, such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA), into the eligibility criteria would mean that many households on lower incomes and in deeper fuel poverty would lose out.

Around 62% of PIP and DLA recipients also receive one of the qualifying means-tested benefits and so would be considered low-income under the Core Group 2

criteria. Those households with high energy costs would be eligible for a rebate. Recipients of AA, a pension-age benefit, who claim Pension Credit Guarantee Credit will in most cases qualify for a rebate through Core Group 1.

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Business: Innovation**

Chris Elmore:

[\[155865\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when his Department intends to open the National Cyber Innovation Centre.

Michael Ellis:

The National Cyber Innovation Centre is a commitment in the 2022 National Cyber Strategy which said: "We will transform the Cheltenham Innovation Centre, which includes the cyber accelerator 'NCSC for Startups', into a true international centre of innovation: the National Cyber Innovation Centre". It is part of the "Golden Valley" development which is led by Cheltenham Borough Council, with support from the government and GCHQ/National Cyber Security Centre.

Funding for Golden Valley has been secured from the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (£22 million) and Cheltenham Borough Council. They announced their preferred development partners, Henry Boot PLC and Factory, last summer. Based on the developers' plans, the Centre is set to open in 2025/26, subject to planning permission.

■ **Chequers: Official Hospitality**

Angela Rayner:

[\[157602\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2022 to Question 151141 on Chequers: Official Hospitality, whether the location of meetings, including those held at Chequers, is included within the ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings category of Ministerial returns.

Michael Ellis:

The data collated for Ministerial transparency returns is published in the Ministerial transparency returns.

■ **Civil Servants: Pay**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[157537\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of recent civil service pay freezes on employee recruitment and retention.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Recruitment and retention data covering the period of the public sector pay pause is not currently held. In 2020/21, Civil Service turnover (includes all moves out of the Civil Service) was 5.9%.

In light of the pay pause, which was necessary in order to help protect public sector jobs and protect investment in public services, the Government ensured that the lowest paid across all of the public sector were protected. Anyone below a full time equivalent salary of £24,000 received an uplift of £250 or the new National Living Wage rate, whichever was greater. This was c.128,000 civil servants around the time the pay pause was announced in November 2020.

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on October 27th 2021, the temporary public sector pay pause will be lifted. Pay awards will be made to public sector workers over the next three years as we return to a normal pay-setting process. It is for departments to monitor and consider their recruitment and retention challenges when determining future pay awards.

■ Cybersecurity

Chris Elmore:

[155864]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department plans to collate current incident reports and threat information to help create a nationwide measurement of cyber threats.

Michael Ellis:

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) issues strategic warnings, regular advisories and guidance to individuals, organisations and government. This includes a [weekly threat report](#) which is drawn from open source reporting and the NCSC Annual Review which includes details of the cyber threat to the UK and the NCSC's actions to respond to and deter these threats.

As it responds to nationally significant cyber incidents, the NCSC constantly tracks the evolution in cyber threats and uses the most appropriate mechanism to share updates with stakeholders across the UK. It may be through:

- updates on its website, as it [did recently](#) in response to the situation in Ukraine;
- via published advisories, including in concert with its international partners, such as the [recent alert on Russian and criminal threats to critical national infrastructure](#) ;
- through the [Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership](#) (CiSP); or
- tailored briefings to key sectors where required.

This is part of a broader approach to Cyber resilience, as set out in the National Cyber Strategy, launched in December 2021, by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster ([HCWS484](#)). The Strategy sets out how we will ensure the UK continues to be a leading, responsible and democratic cyber power and able to protect and promote our interests in the rapidly evolving online world. This includes our approach to making the UK more resilient to cyber attacks and countering cyber threats. The strategy is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-cyber-strategy-2022/national-cyber-security-strategy-2022>.

■ England Infected Blood Support Scheme

Ian Lavery:

[\[157370\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions (a) he or (b) Ministers in his Department have had with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury regarding ongoing funding of the Infected Blood support scheme payments; and what discussions his Department has had with interested parties regarding financial settlements recommended by Sir Robert Francis in his report.

Michael Ellis:

Ongoing funding of the Infected Blood support scheme payments is a matter for the Department of Health and Social Care.

I recognise how important it is that the views of infected and affected people are reflected in Sir Robert's study. It is for this reason that infected and affected core participants to the Inquiry, and their Recognised Legal Representatives were consulted not only on the Terms of Reference of the study, but also contributed significantly to Sir Robert's information gathering process. It is my intention to publish the Study and the Government response, in time for the Inquiry and its core participants to consider them before Sir Robert gives evidence to the Inquiry.

■ Immunosuppression: Coronavirus

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[157612\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many deaths due to covid-19 of immunocompromised people there were (a) in the last week, (b) in the last month and (c) since January 2022.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 22 April is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_Response_to_PQ157612 (1).pdf]

■ Ministers: Codes of Practice

Ruth Jones:

[\[155915\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the fixed penalty notices issued to hon Members of Her Majesty's Government in April 2022, if he will undertake a review of the adequacy of the Ministerial Code.

Michael Ellis:

The Ministerial Code is the responsibility of the Prime Minister of the day, as befits his or her constitutional position as the Sovereign's principal adviser, and is customarily updated and issued upon their assuming or returning to office.

Section 1.6 of the Ministerial Code sets out that Ministers are personally responsible for deciding how to act and conduct themselves in the light of the Code, and for justifying their actions and conduct to Parliament and the public.

With reference to the fixed penalty notice, I would refer you to the Prime Minister's statement to the House of 19 April 2022.

■ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman: Standards

Richard Fuller: [\[157325\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment has been made of the (a) effectiveness of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO), (b) quality of PHSO customer service and (c) PHSO responsiveness to enquiries from hon. Members.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is a crown servant that reports directly to Parliament. The Ombudsman is not accountable to the government for its performance and sets its own standards for how it delivers its objectives. Further to this, the Honourable Member may wish to write to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee that acts as the scrutiny body for the Ombu

■ Procurement and Public Sector

Nigel Mills: [\[155741\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his planned timeline is for the Government issuing its responses to the (a) Boardman report on the development and use of supply chain finance, published in August 2021 and (b) Committee on Standards in Public Life's report on standards, published in November 2021.

Nigel Mills: [\[155743\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department has taken to set up a centrally coordinated, cross-government compliance function for ensuring compliance with governance processes and the wider regulatory framework as recommended by Nigel Boardman.

Nigel Mills: [\[155744\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department has taken to (a) collate all departmental transparency releases and (b) publish those releases in an accessible, centrally managed and searchable database with transparency returns published monthly, as recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Nigel Mills: [\[155745\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress his Department has made towards drawing up a new code of practice for direct ministerial appointments, as recommended by Nigel Boardman.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the Hon Member to [HCWS500](#).

The Government has set out that a policy statement in response to the Upholding Standards in Public Life Report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life and the review into the development and use of Supply Chain Finance in government by Nigel Boardman will be published in due course.

Ministers and Permanent Secretaries are responsible for ensuring compliance with internal and external requirements in their departments in line with legislation, the relevant Codes of Conduct and requirements of Managing Public Money. They are supported by legal, HR and finance professionals in discharging these obligations. The Cabinet Office and HM Treasury provide a coordination role across such functions and can provide advice and guidance in specific cases.

Direct Ministerial appointments reflect the successive practice of administrations in engaging eminent individuals to provide independent views and advice to Government on specific areas. Such appointments should, by nature, be flexible to the circumstances of the situation and in line with wider public law duties.

Appointments are made by Ministers. Appointees must abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life and the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies, and should ensure that any relevant interests are declared to the Senior Civil Servant sponsoring their work to ensure that no actual or reasonably perceived conflicts arise.

Departments are responsible for their own transparency releases as they hold the information required to generate them and must take steps to ensure the accuracy of the information. The Cabinet Office provides central guidance to ensure consistency of information.

■ Public Service Ombudsman Bill (Draft)**Daisy Cooper:**[\[157509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to introduce the Public Service Ombudsman Bill, as drafted in December 2016, to Parliament.

Michael Ellis:

The government has no plans at this time to introduce the 2016 Public Service Ombudsman Bill to Parliament. Whilst the government will consider specific proposals on Ombudsman reform we do not currently view more large scale Ombudsman reform as a priority for this Parliament.

■ Senior Civil Servants: Parents and Qualifications**Emily Thornberry:**[\[155612\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022 said they had been eligible for free school meals during their school years.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155630\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022, describe their ethnicity as (a) White, (b) Black, (c) Asian and (d) Mixed Race.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155631\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all government Departments at the end of March 2022, described themselves as coming from a lower socio-economic background.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155632\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022, started their civil service career as members of the Civil Service Fast Stream.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155633\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022 were aged (a) below 35 years old, (b) 35-44 years old, (c) 45-54 years old, (d) 55-64 years old and (e) in 2010 or later.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155634\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022 started their civil service career (a) before 1980, (b) between 1980-89, (c) between 1990-1999, (d) between 2000-2009 and (e) in 2010 or later.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155635\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022 (a) do not have a university degree or (b) did not obtain their first degree at (i) Oxford or Cambridge University, (ii) a non-Oxbridge Russell Group university, (iii) a non-Russell Group UK university and (iv) a non-UK university.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155636\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022 said they had attended (a) state-funded non-selective secondary school, (b) a state-funded secondary

school selective on the basis of academic, faith or other grounds and (c) an independent secondary school.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[155637\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022 said that at the time they were aged 18, they did not have a parent with formal educational qualifications.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[155638\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022 said that at the time they were aged 18 they had at least one parent who had obtained (a) a university degree or (b) qualifications below degree level as their highest educational qualification.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[155639\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his Department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022, said that at the time they were aged 14, they had at least one parent working in (a) a higher managerial, administrative or professional occupation, (b) an intermediate occupation or (c) a routine or manual occupation.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[156405\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Senior Civil Service database maintained by his department, what proportion of senior civil servants employed across all Government departments at the end of March 2022, described their gender as (a) male and (b) female.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Declaration on Government Reform and the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, 2022-2025, commits the Government to drawing on talent from all backgrounds. Representation is increasing and whilst this trend is positive, we remain committed to improving representation across the broadest range of diversity across our workforce and in particular at our most senior grades.

To build on the progress made over recent years and target where improvement is still needed, the Government will take a holistic approach to SCS recruitment to identify and remove barriers to underrepresented groups entering and progressing in the SCS. There are a number of initiatives aimed at supporting colleagues to reach the Senior Civil Service from a diverse range of backgrounds including the Civil Service Fast Stream, Future Leaders Scheme and Senior Leaders Scheme.

Information on the diversity of the Senior Civil Service for 2022, sourced from the SCS Database, is not yet available. In responding to these PQs we have, therefore, used the latest available finalised annual SCS Database which is as at 1 April 2021.

All figures are a percentage of only those SCS that have made a positive declaration (i.e. they do not include prefer not to say, not known or not applicable responses in the denominator).

SCS by ethnicity, as at 1 April 2021

ETHNICITY	PERCENTAGE OF SCS (WHERE ETHNICITY IS KNOWN)
White	91.8%
Black	1.4%
Asian	4.2%
Mixed	1.8%
Other	0.8%

SCS by age, as at 1 April 2021

AGE CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF SCS (WHERE AGE IS KNOWN)
Below 35	4.8%
35-44	34.1%
45-54	38.4%
55-64	21.5%
65+	1.1%

SCS by sex, as at 1 April 2021

The SCS Database currently only captures data on the sex of individuals. As at 1 April 2021, 47.3% of SCS members, where sex has been provided, were reported as women, with 52.7% reported as men. At present, data is not collected in the SCS database on gender.

Entry year to the Civil Service for SCS, as at 1 April 2021

DATE OF ENTRY	PERCENTAGE OF SCS (WHERE ENTRY DATE KNOWN)
Before 1980	1.1%
1980-89	11.9%
1990-99	16.9%

DATE OF ENTRY	PERCENTAGE OF SCS (WHERE ENTRY DATE KNOWN)
2000-2009	37.7%
2010 or later	32.4%

SCS who were members of the Fast Stream, as of 1 April 2021

As at 1 April 2021, 20.4% of SCS members, where Fast Stream status has been provided, responded that they were successful in the Central Fast Stream selection process. This figure will also include members that were successful in applying to the Central Fast Stream after their initial entry to the Civil Service.

SCS holding university degrees, as of 1 April 2021

As at 1 April 2021, 11.2% of SCS, where degree status is known, did not have a university degree.

For those with a degree, where degree status and University is known:

- 80.1% did not obtain their first degree at Oxford or Cambridge University,
- 63.1% did not obtain their first degree at a non-oxbridge Russell Group university, and
- 56.8% did not obtain their first degree at a non-Russell Group UK university, and
- 98.0% did not obtain their first degree at a non-UK university.

SCS by socio-economic background, as of 1 April 2021

Response rates in the SCS Database to questions relating to Socio Economic Background are currently below acceptable quality thresholds. It is therefore not possible to provide data on SCS by :

- Self-declared socio-economic background;
- Formal educational qualification of parents;
- Type of secondary school attended;
- Parental occupation; and
- Eligibility for free school meals.

■ Universal Credit: Vulnerable Adults

Ms Karen Buck:

[156353]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what date the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit commissioned research into the experiences of vulnerable people claiming Universal Credit.

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[156354\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which (a) ministers and (b) officials were on the circulation list for the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit report in 2019 on the experiences of vulnerable people claiming Universal Credit.

Michael Ellis:

Information about the report is available as a Deposited Paper in the Libraries of the House (Ref: [Dep2021-0836](#) Paper No. 7a)

■ **Vetting: Aviation**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[157392\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people are currently waiting for their airside security vetting to be completed by the UK Security Vetting.

Michael Ellis:

To reveal the number of National Security Vetting (NSV) checks in progress is likely to prejudice national security. It would also impact the protective measures employed in safeguarding Her Majesty's Government (HMG). Security checks are being processed in a timely manner with no current delays.

In line with the practice followed by successive administrations, the Government does not otherwise comment on security matters.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ **Church of England: Leicester**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[153706\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2022 to Question 141113, and with reference to the finding of the report Growing Deeper that where there is an increase in stipendiary clergy, there is a greater likelihood of growth, a decrease in stipendiary clergy is more likely, on average, to lead to decline, what impact is expected on the size of the worshipping community (as defined in Statistics for Mission) in the Diocese of Leicester, as a result of implementing Shaped by God Together, in which each Minister Community may have only one ordained oversight minister; and what the five-year budget forecast is of giving across the Leicester Diocese as a result of the implementation of Shaped by God Together.

Andrew Selous:

The plan referred to has been developed by the diocese of Leicester, which is responsible for the mission of the Church of England in that diocese. All dioceses are seeking to grow their worshipping communities and wherever possible to create financially sustainable churches, in order to sustain the mission of the Church across the entire country.

■ Church of England: Lincoln

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[153707]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2022 to Question 141113, and with reference to the finding of the report Growing Deeper that where there is an increase in stipendiary clergy, there is a greater likelihood of growth, a decrease in stipendiary clergy is more likely, on average, to lead to decline, what impact is expected on the size of the worshipping community (as defined in Statistics for Mission) in the Diocese of Lincoln, as a result of implementing A Time to Change Together, in which across the new Deanery Partnerships the total number of stipendiary ministers will fall; and what the five-year budget forecast is of giving across the Lincoln Diocese as a result of implementation of A Time to Change Together.

Andrew Selous:

The plan referred to has been developed by the Diocese of Lincoln, which is responsible for the mission of the Church of England in that diocese. All dioceses are seeking to grow their worshipping communities and wherever possible to create financially sustainable churches, in order to sustain the mission of the Church across the entire country.

■ Church of England: Liverpool

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[153708]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2022 to Question 141113, and with reference to the finding of the report Growing Deeper that where there is an increase in stipendiary clergy, there is a greater likelihood of growth, a decrease in stipendiary clergy is more likely, on average, to lead to decline, what impact is expected on the size of the worshipping community (as defined in Statistics for Mission) in the Diocese of Liverpool, as a result of implementing Fit for Mission, in which teams will cover bigger areas; and what the five-year budget forecast is of giving across the Liverpool Diocese as a result of implementation of Fit for Mission.

Andrew Selous:

The plan referred to has been developed by the Diocese of Liverpool, which is responsible for the mission of the Church of England in that diocese. All dioceses are seeking to grow their worshipping communities and wherever possible to create financially sustainable churches, in order to sustain the mission of the Church across the entire country.

■ Church of England: Wigan

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[149136]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to the Transforming Wigan project in the Diocese of Liverpool, if the Church of England will provide figures for the worshipping community in

each of the (a) 29 former parishes and (b) 7 new parishes in the deanery of Wigan in the Diocese of Liverpool in each year from 2016 to 2021.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[149137\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to the Transforming Wigan project in the Diocese of Liverpool, if the Church of England will provide figures for parish giving in each of the (a) 29 former parishes and (b) 7 new parishes in the Deanery of Wigan in the Diocese of Liverpool in each year from 2016 to 2021.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[149138\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to the pastoral reorganisation of Wigan in the Diocese of Liverpool, Scheme 08072019, if the Diocese will provide figures for the (a) requested and (b) donated Parish Share in each of the 29 former parishes and the 7 new parishes in each year from 2016 to 2021.

Andrew Selous:

[Holding answer 31 March 2022]: While financial accounts of parishes are publicly available on the Charity Commission's website, it is not the policy of the National Church Institutions to publish the data on attendance and finances that they request from individual parishes, because the right to publish is not given by parishes when they provide the data to the national Church.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences

Marion Fellows: [\[157405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's Zero Tolerance policy published on 30 March 2022, whether the policy of ensuring that those found guilty of sexual offences will be administratively discharged from service with no option to serve elsewhere will apply to historic charges of sexual offence.

Marion Fellows: [\[157406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's Zero Tolerance policy published on 30 March 2022, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure that those policy changes apply to those convicted of sexual offences historically.

Leo Docherty:

The policy is not intended to apply retrospectively, in keeping with the general principle that policy changes are not made retrospective to ensure fairness and the integrity of decisions made under previous policies. In relation to historic cases, those individuals will have been considered for Administrative Action (including discharge) in line with the policy in place in the relevant Service at the time.

■ Army: Training

John Healey:

[\[156380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in each Army (a) division and (b) unit, how many personnel are trained to use next generation light anti-tank weapons.

James Heappey:

The Next generation Light Anti-tank Weapon (NLAW) is held by Infantry, Cavalry and Ranger units, as standard, who are trained on them and can increase numbers at short notice.

Army personnel are taught to use the NLAW on various courses at the School of Infantry (SCHINF) and in their units. The number of individuals that the SCHINF train annually on courses that cover the NLAW is c. 2,300. However, it is harder to give the number of personnel trained at unit level.

Therefore, due to the variety of ways NLAW training can be delivered, the total number broken down by division or unit is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Challenger Tanks

Mark Pritchard:

[\[158901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish his timetable for the introduction of the Challenger 3 tank into service with the British Army.

Jeremy Quin:

Challenger 3 is scheduled to enter service in 2027. The next major milestone is the Critical Design Review in late 2022.

■ Clyde Naval Base: Flood Control

Dave Doogan:

[\[157504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that HMNB Clyde is protected from flooding; and how much do those measures cost.

Jeremy Quin:

We closely monitor and track potential risks to our infrastructure, including flooding both now and into the future.

HM Naval Base Clyde has an extant Climate Infrastructure Risk Assessment that has modelled the potential impact of Climate Change on Sea Defences and Site Infrastructure. This has been independently validated by Ministry of Defence specialists and the Assessment concludes that HMNB Clyde's Sea Defences are adequate to meet potential sea level changes.

The risk of flooding has been integrated within new build project work at the Base, including increased provision of surface drainage and risk mitigating landscape features.

Specific funding for flood prevention is incorporated within Maintenance work and new build projects and is not separately identified.

■ Devonport Dockyard: Climate Change

Dave Doogan:

[\[157581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the report entitled Climate Change UK Nuclear Military, published by Dr Paul Dorfman, Nuclear Consulting Group in September 2021, what assessment he has made of the risk of the nuclear submarine base at HMNB Devonport being regularly underwater due to rising sea levels by 2050.

Jeremy Quin:

We closely monitor and track potential risks to our infrastructure, including from flooding, both now and in the future.

We are aware of the content of this report, which is based on a worst-case scenario. The Ministry of Defence invests significant resources to regularly assure protection against all possible threats and we have absolute confidence in our robust measures to keep our submarines safe and secure.

In terms of future proofing, HM Naval Base Devonport has an extant Climate Infrastructure Risk Assessment that has modelled the potential impact of climate change on sea defences and site infrastructure. This has been independently validated by Ministry of Defence specialists and the Assessment concludes that HMNB Devonport's Sea Defences are adequate to meet potential sea level changes.

■ Kenya: White Phosphorus

Kenny MacAskil:

[\[157545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Army has fired white phosphorus mortar rounds during exercises in Kenya.

James Heappey:

The British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) have used white phosphorus mortar rounds on training exercises, where conditions have permitted their use.

White phosphorus mortar rounds are used to provide white light illumination for training at night, as well as for smoke screening purposes.

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft

John Healey:

[\[158864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Poseidon maritime aircraft will reach full operational capability.

Jeremy Quin:

RAF Poseidon MRA Mk1 will reach Full Operating Capability in 2024.

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Cost Effectiveness

Mr Kevan Jones:

[155599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how his Department achieved efficiency savings in respect of the P-8 MPA programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence achieved efficiency savings on the P-8A Poseidon procurement programme by leveraging economies of scale through the Foreign Military Sales arrangement with the United States Government. By placing its order alongside those of the US Navy and other P-8A customers it secured a better unit price cost.

The UK also conducted extensive analysis of US Navy data on required spares holdings and gained further experience using US Navy support arrangements for an interim period. This provided the evidence with which to optimise the contracted national follow-on platform support with Boeing Defence UK. Furthermore, the UK has established a co-funding arrangement on the Atlantic Building at RAF Lossiemouth with Boeing, which includes an opportunity for Boeing to seek licensed third-party revenue-generation activity.

The decision to base the E7 Wedgetail at RAF Lossiemouth alongside Poseidon will also allow MOD to exploit future synergies of operating the two Boeing 737 type aircraft at the same location, making better use of existing RAF Lossiemouth infrastructure, including the Poseidon Strategic Facility, delivering better value for money overall.

■ Military Bases

Kevin Hollinrake:

[157610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) locations and (b) sizes are of defence bases his Department will have vacated between 2015-2030.

Jeremy Quin:

A list of bases identified for future disposal are detailed on the Ministry of Defence's disposal database, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House and can be accessed online via the following link Disposal database: House of Commons report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Details of bases sold between 2015 and 2022 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Attachments:

1. 157610 - List of MOD Bases Sold 2015-2022 [157610 - List of MOD Bases Sold Between 2015-2022.xlsx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Staff

John Healey:

[\[156382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's planned civilian staff numbers are for each year between 2022 and 2030.

Leo Docherty:

Ministry of Defence (MOD) civilian staff indicative planned full-time equivalent figures, rounded to the nearest ten, are in the table below. These figures are for the period of the current Strategic Review, beyond which forecasts have not yet been determined. It should be noted that these are indicative numbers used for planning purposes, they are not a target, and represent business decisions subject to ongoing variation. It should also be noted these figures represent only one part of MOD's workforce and actual figures may be impacted by changes to the size and shape of other workforce types such as contractors, military staff etc.

FINANCIAL YEAR	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Projected civilian staff	63,070	62,270	60,820

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Rachael Maskell:

[\[155821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress he has made on repurposing the Ministry of Defence estate for the resettlement of 12,000 Afghan refugees who remain in bridging hotels.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) continues to work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and with the Home Office to support cross-Government efforts in identifying housing and settling requirements for eligible Afghans as they start their new lives in the UK.

The MOD has assessed that up to 550 Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties can be leased for between 12 months and five years, dependent on location, without impacting on Defence operations or Service families, and these properties have been offered up to Local Authorities to house ARAP families.

The Government aim is to provide long term, settled accommodation in local communities for Afghan families as they build new lives in the UK, and as of 22 April, 4,523 ARAP individuals had moved into such settled accommodation.

Steve McCabe:

[\[155639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking in respect of people who have applied for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme and who have not yet been contacted by his Department.

James Heappey:

The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world. It is not time-limited and will endure, facilitating the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families.

The ARAP Casework team will contact the applicants for requests for information during the eligibility process, and to provide updates on their application. We continue to receive ARAP applications at an unprecedented rate and more than 115,000 have been received since ARAP began in April 2021. I would like to assure the hon.

Member that we are working at pace to consider each application on a case-by-case basis as quickly as possible and respond to applicants as soon as we can.

Applicants who wish to have updates of their case may contact the ARAP Casework team.

Russia: Defence Equipment**John Healey:**[\[156379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has any evidence of components that were manufactured in the West being used in Russian military equipment which is being used in Ukraine.

James Heappey:

Given the wide range of components used in Russian military equipment, including dual-use items that are not controlled, it is highly likely that Western-manufactured components are present in such equipment, including that used in Ukraine. Western restrictions, particularly since 2014, have made procurement more difficult. The UK continues to enforce export controls rigidly and also work with Allies and partners to this end.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**Broadband: Shropshire****Mark Pritchard:**[\[158899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to support Shropshire SMEs to roll out broadband into harder to reach rural areas and where major suppliers refuse to operate.

Julia Lopez:

We want all telecoms providers to be able to be a part of Project Gigabit, from small, specialist suppliers reaching hard-to-reach communities to larger firms able to tackle large areas at pace.

The Project Gigabit procurement process for the Shropshire area will commence shortly. Market engagement in advance of the procurement has confirmed strong interest from a number of suppliers including SMEs and the procurement approach will be designed to utilise this as effectively as possible.

Alongside Project Gigabit procurements, the £210m [Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme](#) is also a key tool in incentivising and encouraging suppliers to connect some of the hardest to reach premises in the UK. To date, over 220 premises in Shropshire have claimed and received payment for a voucher through the scheme, with a further 590 premises awaiting completion, for a combined value of over £2.5m. Shropshire Council has also invested £2m into a local top-up scheme that further increases the level of funding available for voucher projects.

As a direct result of voucher funding, over 140 telecoms providers are currently actively building in challenging rural areas. Their ambitions have also grown, with the average size of projects increasing four-fold since 2019, meaning they are covering larger, contiguous areas and increasingly including the very hardest-to-reach premises.

■ **Casinos: Gambling**

Jim Shannon:

[\[156467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to help ensure that casinos are not able to take advantage of gambling addicts.

Chris Philp:

Casinos like other licensed gambling operators must comply with provisions in the Gambling Commission's licence conditions and codes of practice which are intended to protect children and vulnerable people from harm and exploitation. For instance, they must monitor play and intervene to protect a customer where there is risk of harm. Breaches of provisions in the Commission's social responsibility code may lead it to review an operator's licence with a view to suspension, revocation or the imposition of a financial penalty. Our Gambling Act Review is considering the powers and resources of the Commission as well as the wider regulatory framework, including around land-based gambling.

■ **Channel Four Television: Privatisation**

Chris Elmore:

[\[159040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether a full impact assessment was carried out before the decision was made to privatise Channel 4.

Chris Elmore:

[\[159041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to publish the responses in full to the consultation on a change of ownership of Channel 4 Television Corporation.

Julia Lopez:

The Government consulted extensively on a change of ownership of Channel 4, and the views and evidence gathered from a wide range of stakeholders has informed the government's assessment of any potential impact of a change of ownership.

The Government will publish a sale impact analysis shortly. It will also publish its response to the consultation. This will include a summary of the responses received.

■ Gambling

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[156560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of existing legislation on gambling in protecting those at risk from gambling-related harm.

Chris Philp:

The Government is conducting a wide-ranging and evidence-led Review of the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure that the regulation of gambling is fit for the digital age. This includes ensuring we have the right protections in place to prevent vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited. We are considering the evidence carefully and will publish a White Paper in the coming weeks.

Sir Mike Penning: [\[157288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she will publish the Gambling Review White Paper.

Chris Philp:

The Gambling Act Review is wide-ranging and aims to ensure that the regulation of gambling is fit for the digital age. We will publish a white paper setting out our conclusions and next steps in the coming weeks.

■ Gambling: Public Health

Rachael Maskell: [\[155806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government's policy on tackling gambling-related harm considers the public health implications of that harm.

Chris Philp:

The Government considers gambling-related harm to be a public health issue. As such, gambling legislation and the requirements placed on operators by the independent regulator, the Gambling Commission, are intended to offer a wide range of protections for the population as a whole as well as more targeted interventions for those experiencing harm from their gambling.

Our wide-ranging Review of the Gambling Act 2005 aims to ensure that the protections in place to prevent harm are appropriate and effective for the digital age.

■ Internet: Disinformation

Emily Thornberry: [\[155617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will publish the full Statement of Requirements for which her department tendered a contract on 31st

March under procurement reference 102915, regarding the monitoring and analysis of potentially harmful misinformation and disinformation online.

Chris Philp:

The contract opportunity is a re-tender of an existing contract for misinformation and disinformation monitoring and analysis services to support the Counter Disinformation Unit to provide a comprehensive picture of the scope, scale, and reach of misinformation and disinformation.

The contract has been published in accordance with relevant transparency requirements pursuant to the Public Contracts Regulations (2015) and is currently live. Given the sensitive nature of the contract opportunity relates in part to national security, a statement of requirement is only available upon signing a non-disclosure agreement.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[156414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the contract tendered by her Department on 31 March 2022 with procurement reference 102915, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) level and (b) adequacy of knowledge and understanding of (i) civil servants and (ii) Government Ministers relating to harmful misinformation and disinformation online.

Chris Philp:

The contract opportunity is a re-tender of an existing contract for misinformation and disinformation monitoring and analysis services to support the Counter Disinformation Unit, which brings together capabilities and expertise from across Government to provide a comprehensive picture of the scope, scale, and reach of misinformation and disinformation.

Ministers and officials work closely with a range of partners with different expertise, including social media platforms, academia, civil society organisations, and commercial partners to ensure a whole society approach to tackling the evolving threat of disinformation and misinformation online.

■ **Semiconductor Devices: Supply Chains**

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[906611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions the Government has had with relevant counterparts on the resilience of international supply chains of semiconductors.

Chris Philp:

The Government recognises the importance of semiconductor technology to the global economy. Semiconductors are a fundamental enabling technology for electronic devices and there is significant attention being paid to the sector internationally, not least because a confluence of unexpected events have caused a global chips shortage with global ramifications. The supply chains for semiconductor

products are incredibly complex, spanning a large number of countries and the government understands the potential for future disruptions to the supply chain.

This is an inherently international challenge, and the government is working with like-minded international partners and industry stakeholders from across the world to review its approach to the semiconductors sector. We are considering how best to mitigate the risk of future disruption to technology supply chains, and ensure that the UK can continue to get access to the chips it needs.

EDUCATION

■ Children: Day Care

Carla Lockhart:

[154518]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase the affordability of childcare for low income families.

Will Quince:

Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only. Devolved administrations have their own specific offers. Information on funding can be found here: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/applying-funded-pre-school-place-202223>.

The department recognises that the cost of childcare is a key concern for parents, which is why the government has made an unprecedented investment in childcare over the past decade, with over £3.5 billion spent in each of the past three years on our early education entitlements.

We have also introduced Tax-Free Childcare, which is available for working parents of children aged 0-11 (or up to 16 if their child is disabled). This scheme can save parents up to £2,000 per year (or up to £4,000 for children with disabilities) from their childcare costs.

Working parents on a low income, including those returning from maternity leave, may also be eligible for help with up to 85% of their childcare costs through the childcare element of Universal Credit. This is subject to a monthly limit of £646 for one child or £1108 for two or more children aged 0-16.

The government's range of childcare offers includes 15 hours free early education for all three and four year olds, regardless of parental income or working status. This helps children to develop social skills and prepare them for school, regardless of their background.

Working parents of three and four-year-olds may also be eligible for an additional 15 hours of free childcare, known as 30 hours free childcare. To be eligible for 30 hours free childcare, a lone parent must earn from just over £7,400 a year, and a couple, where both parents are working, from just over £14,800 per year, to access 30 hours.

■ Children's Play

Steve McCabe:

[\[156363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the UCL Institute of Education report, entitled School break and lunch times and young people's social lives: A follow-up national study, published May 2019, what assessment he has made of the possible adverse impact on children's mental wellbeing of the declining opportunity for play whilst attending school.

Will Quince:

The department has not made a specific assessment related to play in schools, but the government is clear about the importance of play to children and young people.

The department recognises the important role lunchtime play and activities have in providing enriching activities which support children's physical and mental health, as well as the development of skills and attitudes which promote their wellbeing. It can provide children with an opportunity to connect with peers, develop friendships, and be physically active, all of which may contribute to a range of outcomes including enjoyment of school, social development and learning.

The department considers supporting access to play as part of what nurseries, schools and colleges can do to support the mental wellbeing and physical, social and emotional development of children and young people. We work closely with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Health and Social Care counterparts on how that links into wider provision, opportunities and support for children and families.

We think it is right that decisions on how to structure a school day, including ensuring opportunities for children to engage in play, should be made by schools. However, as set out in the department's recently published Schools White Paper, we have set a minimum expectation on the length of the school week of 32.5 hours for all mainstream state-funded schools. This will provide pupils with increased opportunities for learning, socialisation with peers and enrichment activities including chance to play.

Under Ofsted's inspection framework, which took effect in September 2019, inspectors will look at how the curriculum is implemented through teaching and the wider experience of pupils in school. In the early years of education, Ofsted would expect play to be part of this. Inspectors would want to look at how the wide spectrum of play develops children's communication skills, and demonstrates how behaviour is taught and managed, and how staff identify what a child needs to learn and how to learn it, either through explicit teaching or through play. When staff are clear on what children already know and can do, and what their next steps are, they can decide effectively on the teaching activities, including play, that will help children progress. Play should not, however, be evaluated separately, but as part of the curriculum, underlining its role in supporting and embedding learning.

■ Education: Central Bedfordshire

Andrew Selous:

[157566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the employer representative body for Central Bedfordshire has been constituted; who the proposed members of that body are; whether that body has met; and what its objectives are.

Alex Burghart:

There are not currently any designated employer representative bodies for local areas in England. Subject to the Royal Assent of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, the department intends to launch an open and competitive 'expressions of interest' process shortly for eligible employer representative bodies in all areas of England who are interested in being designated to lead the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans. Further details will be announced in due course.

■ Free School Meals

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[158880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will take steps to ensure that local authorities, schools, academies and free schools are issued with guidance on the continuation of transitional protection of free school meal eligibility during the 2022-2023 academic year for children from families in receipt of Universal Credit.

Will Quince:

When the government introduced the new free school meals (FSM) eligibility criteria in April 2018, they introduced transitional protections that would apply during the universal credit roll out period to ensure that no child would lose their eligibility to FSM. These protections were enacted in our Commencement Order with the end date of March 2022, the date the rollout was then due to end.

When the end date moved to March 2023, the government confirmed that it had extended the end date of the protections to match this. Whilst the rollout is in progress, the government will continue to keep its guidance under review and will make any necessary changes ahead of March 2023.

The extended date of March 2023 has been confirmed in the school census guidance available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1047457/2021-](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1047457/2021-22_School_Census_Business_and_Technical_Specification_Version_1.7_publishing.pdf)

[22_School_Census_Business_and_Technical_Specification_Version_1.7_publishing.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1047457/2021-22_School_Census_Business_and_Technical_Specification_Version_1.7_publishing.pdf) and is also available at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>.

Rachael Maskell:

[158997]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether provision is in place for supplying free school meal vouchers to children who are registered at a school but are unable to attend for prolonged periods and who are entitled to free school meals.

Will Quince:

The department's overall preference is for pupils to be in school wherever possible as that is the best place for learning.

Free school meals (FSM) are intended to support children in education, not to cover circumstances where a pupil is unable to undertake school activities. The department recognises, however, that there may be cases where a pupil is well enough to undertake education remotely.

Where pupils eligible for benefits-related FSM are receiving remote education, the department have published advice for schools to state that schools should work with their school catering team or food provider to provide good quality lunch parcels. This will ensure that eligible pupils continue to be supported for the short period they are unable to attend school. The full FSM guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities>.

There is already guidance in place to help schools deal with longer term absences on a case-by-case basis. This can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/illness-child-education>.

■ Pupils: Computers**Robert Halfon:****[157561]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of school children that do not have a personal laptop or tablet.

Mr Robin Walker:

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department has delivered over 1.95 million laptops and tablets to schools, trusts, local authorities, and further education providers for disadvantaged children and young people. This is part of a £520 million government investment to support access to remote education and online social care services.

The laptops and tablets distributed through the department are owned by schools, trusts, local authorities, or further education providers who can lend these to children and young people who need them the most. These laptops and tablets are an injection of support on top of an estimated 2.9 million already owned by schools before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These devices are intended to give schools the flexibility to provide remote education support and can continue to be used in the longer term either in the classroom or from home.

■ Pupils: Nutrition**Jim Shannon:****[156463]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to encourage healthy eating in primary schools.

Will Quince:

School food is a devolved matter. This answer only applies to England.

The department supports the provision of nutritious food in schools to enable pupils to be well nourished, develop healthy eating habits, and concentrate and learn in school. The government does this by providing the Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 (school food standards) to ensure the provision of healthy school food, providing free school meals to every pupil in reception, year 1 and year 2 and providing free school meals to the most disadvantaged pupils.

The school food standards regulate the food and drink provided at both lunchtime and at other times of the school day. This includes breakfast clubs, tuck shops, mid-morning break, vending, and after school clubs. Compliance with the standards is mandatory for all maintained schools, including academies and free schools.

Schools also provide children with a free piece of fruit or vegetable each day through the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, jointly funded by the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social Care.

In February 2022, the Levelling Up White Paper outlined a number of things the department is doing to strengthen adherence with the school food standards. This includes piloting work with the Foods Standards Agency, investing up to £200,000 in a pilot governor training scheme, and encouraging schools to complete a statement on their school websites setting out their school approach to food. The government will say more about these in the forthcoming Food Strategy White Paper.

Since September 2015, Ofsted inspectors look at how provision supports pupils' knowledge on how to keep themselves healthy, including through exercising and healthy eating. Healthy eating and opportunities to develop pupils' cooking skills are covered in the design and technology curriculum in Key Stages 1-3. The principles of a healthy and varied diet are also covered in health education, which became compulsory in state-funded schools in England from September 2020.

Schools: Sports**Rehman Chishti:****[157344]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will provide a longer-term funding commitment for the School Games and primary PE and Sport Premium.

Will Quince:

The department is considering arrangements for the primary physical education and sport premium for the 2022/23 academic year and future academic years. We will confirm our position in due course.

The government can confirm that funding for the School Games Organisers will be available for the full 2022/23 financial year. The government is considering arrangements for the School Games Organiser network beyond that point and will confirm its position as soon as possible.

■ Special Educational Needs

Henry Smith:

[156423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how (a) local authorities and (b) other commissioners and service providers will be held to account if they fail to meet their legal duties in respect of support to children with SEND and their families.

Will Quince:

It firmly remains a priority for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, that local authorities and other providers fulfil their statutory duties in providing the right support at the right time for children and young people with SEND and their families. The Secretary of State is committed to holding them to account where these statutory obligations are not met.

From May 2016, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) began inspecting local areas (including local authorities and other commissioners and service providers) on their effectiveness in fulfilling their duties for children and young people who have SEND.

Under the current framework, Area SEND inspections consider how effectively the local area identifies and meets the needs of different groups of children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability, as defined in the Children and Families Act 2014 and set out in the SEND Code of Practice. The inspections also consider how effectively the local area improves the outcomes of these children and young people. They may also provide evidence for local areas to receive appropriate external support and intervention.

The department has commissioned CQC and Ofsted, with the support of the Department of Health and Social Care, to develop a new area SEND inspection framework to launch after the existing inspection cycle has finished. Taking account of learning from the first cycle, this framework will include a greater focus on the experience of children and young people with SEND and their families and give more prominence to the quality integration and commissioning of education, health, and care services.

The SEND and AP Green Paper proposes to strengthen accountability measures, including through Ofsted and CQC inspections and strengthened oversight via the department's new Regions Group.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Welfare

Caroline Lucas:

[151038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if the Government will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce an Animals Abroad Bill early in the next parliamentary session to deliver the commitments set out in its Action Plan for Animal Welfare; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

As set out in the Government's Action Plan for Animal Welfare, we are committed to promoting high animal welfare standards both at home and abroad. This includes delivering a range of measures to promote the welfare of animals beyond UK borders, setting a global example for high welfare and conservation standards.

We are moving forward with our plans to deliver one of the toughest bans in the world on the import of hunting trophies from thousands of endangered and threatened species. The Government is firmly committed to the ban, and this will be brought forward as soon as Parliamentary time allows. We are also looking at further measures to protect animals abroad, including banning the import and export of detached fins, and taking action against low welfare animal experiences. Regarding both fur and foie gras, we are continuing to review the evidence and consider next steps.

Birds of Prey: Conservation**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[153823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's report, entitled Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit Report: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, published in August 2021, which states that raptors are being persecuted by organised crime groups, if the Government will (a) recognise raptor persecution as serious and organised crime and (b) allocate additional resources to help tackle raptor persecution.

Rebecca Pow:

We welcome this report and the fact that it recognises the UK's global leadership in fighting wildlife and forestry crime. We invited the UN to undertake this analysis and we are proud to be the first G7 country to request this assessment. While raptor persecution is not linked to organised crime groups, this government takes it very seriously and Defra has this year more than doubled its funding of the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) from £165,000 per year to over £1.2 million over the next three years to target wildlife crime priorities including the illegal killing of birds of prey.

The report does, however, link the illegal trade of raptors to organised crime. This government recognises illegal wildlife trade (IWT) as a serious crime, which is sometimes carried out by organised criminal groups, and advocates that approach worldwide. From August 2021 the Home Office has provided additional funding for the NWCU to tackle money laundering related to IWT, aligning directly to G7 commitments to intensify the combating of illicit finance from IWT. This is intended to be a three-year project.

We will carefully consider all of the UN report's recommendations to help us build on the positive progress we have made in tackling wildlife crime. The UK is already committed to protecting endangered animals and plants from poaching and illegal trade to benefit wildlife, local communities, the economy and protect global security. We are investing over £46m between 2014 and 2022 to counter international illegal

trade by reducing demand, strengthening enforcement, ensuring effective legal frameworks and developing sustainable livelihoods.

■ **Birds: Conservation**

Jim Shannon:

[\[158954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help protect the habitats of song birds in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

This Government is committed to halting the decline in species abundance by 2030, through a world-leading and legally binding target under the Environment Act. We recently published a Green Paper which will look at how we can drive the delivery of that target, including through our sites and protections for species. Other actions under the Environment Act are likely to support song bird recovery, such as biodiversity net gain for development including nationally significant infrastructure projects.

We have taken significant action to make new space for nature, creating over 260,000 hectares of new priority habitat since 2010. This has been supported by policies such as the Nature for Climate Fund, worth over £750 million and the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, and will be further supported by the establishment of the Nature Recovery Network.

Our Agri-environment schemes continue to be the principal means of improving habitat for farmland birds (which includes many species considered to be songbirds) and the wider environment on farmland in England. We are introducing three environmental land management schemes: the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery, and Landscape Recovery. These schemes will pay for activities to create, manage and restore habitats, connecting isolated habitats to form networks, and species management, all of which have the potential to benefit songbirds.

■ **Compost: Peat**

Douglas Chapman:

[\[154037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking with the horticulture and gardening industry to tackle regulatory and fiscal barriers to peat alternatives in growing media composts.

Douglas Chapman:

[\[154038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to support research and development into alternative materials to peat in growing media that meets the requirements of consumer and professional horticulturists.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has always been clear about the need to end the use of peat and peat-containing products in horticulture in England.

We have worked with the horticulture industry to develop a Responsible Sourcing Scheme for Growing Media, which allows manufacturers and retailers to make informed choices of growing media inputs to peat free products, based on environmental and social impacts.

We continue to support industry in their efforts to go peat free, this has included over £1 million on a project to provide the necessary applied science to help underpin the development and management of alternative growing media. We are co-funding monitoring with the horticultural industry on the composition of growing media (including peat) supplied for amateur and professional use in the horticultural market.

While there has been some progress, the voluntary approach to phasing out the use of peat in horticulture has not succeeded. The Government therefore published a full consultation on banning the sale of peat and peat-containing products in the amateur sector by the end of this Parliament in England and Wales. The Government also asked for any evidence stakeholders can provide on the impacts of ending the use of peat and peat-containing products, we will publish our response to this consultation in due course.

We will continue to work across Government, and the private sector, to find solutions that will enable the use of peat and products containing peat to end. This includes the ground-breaking work being conducted by Forestry England to reduce peat use within tree nurseries; and identifying regulatory barriers in respect of potential peat replacement products.

■ Domestic Waste: Waste Management

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[157543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has issued guidance to allow residents to utilise a neighbouring local authority's refuse and recycling sites when they are the nearest facility for a household.

Jo Churchill:

I have not issued any guidance on this subject. However, the law governing the provision of places to deposit waste from households is set out in Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which requires waste disposal authorities to provide places for persons resident in its area to deposit household waste. Each place must be situated in the area of the authority or so that it is reasonably accessible to people resident in its area.

Waste disposal authorities may include arrangements for the deposit of household waste for people outside of their area but they are able to charge for this.

■ Elephants: India

Ruth Jones:

[\[156586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to protect Asian elephants from being victims of trophy hunters.

Rebecca Pow:

We have pledged to bring forward legislation to ban imports of hunting trophies from thousands of species, including the Asian elephant.

This ban will be among the strongest in the world, leading the way in protecting endangered animals. We intend to bring this forward as soon as parliamentary time allows.

■ Flood Control: River Ouse (Yorkshire)**Rachael Maskell:**[\[156533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to take steps to help ensure that future flood risks on the River Ouse are tackled through installing upper catchment management measures now to meet future requirements when current defences are predicted to be challenged.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) has received £64 million since 2015 to better protect properties within York city and local communities. A series of projects are being delivered to better protect properties, including upper catchment management measures. That is in addition to £38 million to upgrade the Foss Barrier following the flooding in York in December 2015.

Climate change predictions indicate upper catchment wide flood alleviation measures will be required past 2039 to provide York with the same level of protection currently being delivered. Catchment-wide measures would aim to slow the flow of water and ultimately lower water levels through the city in times of flood. Opportunities include engineered storage areas and natural flood management.

The EA is currently undertaking initial modelling work to assess potential locations for engineered storage areas upstream of York and collaborating with City of York Council to deliver future upper catchment flood measures.

As part of this, City of York Council are leading on the £6 million York and North Yorkshire Natural Catchment Flood Risk Solutions Project, which is part of Defra's £150 million Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme. This project will develop a range of incentivised natural flood risk management opportunities across the River Swale, Ure, Nidd and Ouse catchments.

■ Inland Waterways**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[155829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Canal & River Trust on securing the long-term future of canals and waterways and the wider benefits they provide.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is working with the Canal and River Trust on the current review of the Government's annual grant funding for the Trust, as required by the 2012 Grant

Agreement. The review will inform a decision about any future grant funding from 2027.

■ Rivers: Swimming

Alex Sobel: [\[157589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will provide guidelines on enforcing the whole designation stretch applied for under the bathing water regulations for inland, riverine bathing water.

Rebecca Pow:

The Bathing Water Regulations 2013 set out that following a decision by the Secretary of State to designate a bathing water, the Environment Agency determines a sampling point, monitors the site and assess whether action is needed to improve water quality.

Alex Sobel: [\[157590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the existing process for applying for an inland, riverine bathing water designation.

Rebecca Pow:

My department provides guidance to assist those in making an application for a new bathing water designation. As part of the review of bathing waters policy in England, we plan to produce revised guidance this year to make it easier for water community groups to understand the criteria for bathing water status and ensure only necessary information is requested.

Alex Sobel: [\[157591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals relating to inland, riverine bathing waters.

Rebecca Pow:

My officials are currently undertaking a review of bathing waters policy in England.

■ Sewage: Waste Disposal

Seema Malhotra: [\[153972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Environment Agency takes in the event that a water company discharges untreated sewage into UK waterways and coastal regions outside periods of heavy rainfall; and how many water companies have faced enforcement action for those discharges since 2015.

Rebecca Pow:

Storm overflows must only be used under strict permitted conditions that control their environmental impact. The Environment Agency investigates breaches of permit conditions and considers all circumstances surrounding a breach and applies its

published Enforcement and Sanctions policy in determining its enforcement response. This can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-enforcement-and\[1\]sanctions-policy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-enforcement-and[1]sanctions-policy)

We are holding the industry to account on a scale never seen before. Since 2015 the Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted seven water companies for breaching permit conditions relating to storm discharges, with some companies prosecuted multiple times. A number of the cases brought together several offences within a single prosecution and included discharges that occurred outside of heavy rainfall conditions or that were caused by sewer blockages or pump failures.

In November 2021, new information came to light suggesting that some water companies in England may indeed not be complying with their permits, resulting in excess sewage spills into the environment, even in dry periods. On account of this, Ofwat and the Environment Agency launched major investigations into all water and wastewater companies in England and Wales. If proven, water companies will be in breach of their permits and failing to meet their legal duties. Government, along with the sector's regulators, will not hesitate to hold companies to account if this is the case.

The Environment Agency and new duties in the landmark Environment Act have driven increased monitoring and reporting of storm overflows. The Act places new duties directly on water companies to publish spill data in near real time and monitor water quality impacts upstream and downstream of all storm overflows and wastewater treatment works. Almost nine in ten storm overflows already have monitoring devices installed, and all overflows will have monitors by the end of 2023. This technology provides vital information about the use of storm overflows, which can be used to hold water companies to account and drive environmental protections and future investment. £1.1 billion of investment is already planned for the next four years.

The Government is currently consulting on the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan which outlines a step change in how water companies tackle the number of discharges of untreated sewage. The Government has been clear that the current use of sewage overflows is completely unacceptable and we will not hesitate to take further action if we don't see the pace of change we expect to see.

■ Soil: Flood Control

Rachael Maskell:

[156534]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the extent to which good soil health reduces flood risk.

Rachael Maskell:

[156535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking (a) through research and applied science to assess the extent to which good soil health reduces flood risk and (b) to help improve soil health.

Rachael Maskell:

[156536]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will establish pilot schemes to assess the effectiveness of using high quality soil health to (a) slow river flow and (b) reduce flooding risk.

Rachael Maskell:

[156537]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has for funding research into practical solutions to mitigate flood risk, including into improving soil health, in each of the next three years.

Rebecca Pow:

Soil is one of our greatest assets, essential for delivering a range of natural capital benefits including, food production, biodiversity, carbon storage and flood mitigation. Improving soil health is a key aspect of a range of natural flood management measures that can slow water flows and improve water storage to reduce flood risk.

From July 2017-21, the Government delivered a £15 million natural flood management programme across England. The programme funded 26 catchment scale projects and 34 community scale-projects and developed the natural flood management evidence base. The Environment Agency will publish a full peer reviewed evaluation of the natural flood management programme in 2022. Evidence from this programme is feeding into the Government's [evidence directory on working with natural processes to reduce flood risk](#). The directory includes a chapter summarising the existing evidence on run-off management including soil and land management.

We are continuously considering the developing evidence base in our policy, including the Natural Environment Council's ongoing Natural Flood Management Research Programme. Within this programme, the LANDWISE project and Q-NFM projects will evaluate the effectiveness of natural flood management measures including soil infiltration.

Further testing of practical and innovative solutions to mitigate flood risk is also taking place through the £200m Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme 2021-27. This includes funding 25 local areas to take forward innovative actions that improve their resilience over six years, such as nature-based solutions where relevant.

A Soil Health Action Plan for England is being developed to deliver a strategic and coherent plan for preventing soil degradation and improving soil health. The Action Plan will encourage changes to land management practices that help improve and protect soil health and make it more resilient to the impacts of climate change, including flooding.

■ Water Supply

Alex Sobel:

[\[157588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the current environment and economic regulatory framework of the water sector.

Rebecca Pow:

Strong environmental and economic regulatory frameworks are key to delivering the Government's ambitions for the water sector. The Government and regulators will continue to work together to drive improvements that benefit both customers and the environment and hold water companies to account, where necessary through strong enforcement action. We have set clear expectations of the sector and will not hesitate to take further action if we do not see the necessary action.

The Government is committed to the system of independent economic regulation. Since privatisation, the private water sector model has unlocked around £150 billion of investment. This is equivalent to around £5 billion annually and has delivered a range of benefits to customers and the environment.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Afghanistan: Females

Matt Vickers:

[\[155949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help support women and girls in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

The Government is committed upholding the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan; educated, empowered women will contribute to economic development as well as peace and stability. We continue to raise rights of women and girls in our political engagement with the Taliban. We have made clear our condemnation of the Taliban's 23 March decision not to re-open girls secondary schools, including through statements from the G7+, women foreign ministers and the UN Security Council, and we continue to press the Taliban to ensure that women play a full, equal role in national life.

As the Foreign Secretary said on 31 March, at least 50% of those we reach with our aid should be women and girls. The Foreign Secretary has announced £286 million of aid for Afghanistan this financial year and we are funding child protection support and supporting access to gender-based violence services. Ministers and officials regularly meet Afghan women to discuss our support; most recently, on 24 March Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia, held a roundtable with a diverse group of Afghan women leaders.

■ Christianity: Oppression

Derek Thomas:

[\[155861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to implement the recommendations in the final report of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review into persecuted Christians before the three year review in 2022.

Vicky Ford:

Promoting freedom of religion or belief is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities. We are making good progress on implementing the Bishop of Truro's 22 recommendations to support members of all faiths, beliefs and those of no religious belief.

We have achieved thirteen of the recommendations, a further six are close to being achieved and we are making good progress on the remaining three.

■ Colombia: Trade Unions

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[157393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when her Department last discussed trade union rights with her Colombian counterpart.

Vicky Ford:

UK Ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues with the Colombian Government. Most recently, Lord Ahmad discussed our concerns with President Duque during the United Nations Security Council meeting on Colombia earlier this month. The Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Vicky Ford MP, also raised these same human rights concerns in her call to Vice President Ramirez in February.

Through our Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which has provided £69 million in support of peace agreement implementation, security, and stability in Colombia since 2015, we will continue to prioritise funding interventions to protect human rights defenders, including trade unionists and social leaders.

Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we consistently raise our concerns regarding violence against human rights defenders and social leaders at the UN Security Council. We look to the Colombian Government to expand its presence in conflict-affected areas, and strengthen the institutions that can improve the security of citizens and investigate and prosecute the criminal actors responsible for violence. We will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia.

■ Development Aid: Vaccination

Layla Moran:

[\[157490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2022 to Question 150287 on Development Aid:

Vaccination, how many vaccines have been donated with an expiry date of three months or shorter since the beginning of the donation period; and whether the vaccines with less than three months to expire, or those destroyed, count towards the total number of vaccines donated.

Amanda Milling:

As set out in response to question 150287, we donate vaccines in consultation with recipients, having sought assurances that they are likely to be able to use them, regardless of their expiry date.

Where possible we donate vaccines with at least 8 weeks until expiry as recommended by the World Health Organisation. Of the 6.7 million doses we have donated bilaterally to date, 5.5 million were donated with over 8 weeks until expiry. 1.15 million doses were donated with just under 8 weeks until expiry. Of the doses donated through COVAX our first donation of 3 million doses had the shortest window from donation to expiry due to the time taken to create agreements for dose-sharing, and work through regulatory issues. They were accepted by COVAX with over seven weeks until expiry. All UK donations to COVAX have gone straight from the manufacturer to maximise shelf life.

■ **Eastern Europe: Democracy**

Matt Vickers:

[\[155944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help safeguard democracy across eastern Europe.

James Cleverly:

The UK will defend democracy at the frontier of freedom in Eastern and Central Europe as part of a Network of Liberty. We are strengthening our partnerships in the region, including on trade and technology and supporting transparent, accountable political processes through the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, OSCE and other institutions. On 7 April, the Foreign Secretary met with NATO Foreign Ministers and affirmed our commitment to defend and deter threats to alliance members in Eastern and Central Europe.

■ **EU Countries: Energy**

Jim Shannon:

[\[156468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions the Government has had with the EU on steps that can be taken together to reduce energy bills.

James Cleverly:

The PM, BEIS Secretary of State and the Foreign Secretary are regularly engaging with a range of European counterparts on energy security. We are working closely with partners across the G7, including Germany, Italy, France and the European Commission, International Energy Agency (IEA), OPEC+ and others to stabilise energy prices. In particular, ministers have been intensively engaging with major

OPEC+ and other oil producing countries to press for measures to stabilise oil prices, and with the IEA and our allies on strategic oil reserve releases.

■ **Finland and Sweden: NATO**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[156384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in Finland and Sweden regarding each of those countries' prospective applications for NATO membership.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government engages regularly with Finland and Sweden, including on security issues. The UK fully supports Sweden and Finland's relationships with NATO as Enhanced Opportunities Partners (EOP) and we also cooperate through the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force. As two of only six EOP countries, Sweden and Finland make significant contributions to NATO operations and have enhanced opportunities for dialogue and cooperation with Allies. Any application for NATO membership must be a decision taken by Sweden or Finland alone. The UK will continue to support and respect Finnish and Swedish decisions related to their own security policy.

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

Emily Thornberry:

[155615]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to her declaration of ministerial travel published on 31 March, if she will publish an itemised breakdown of the £26,100 costs incurred through her use of the RAF Airbus Voyager ZZ336 between 19 and 23 September 2021.

James Cleverly:

In accordance with the Ministerial Code the FCDO publishes the costs related to overseas visits made by the Foreign Secretary as part of the Quarterly Transparency Return <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/minister-data#2020>.

Emily Thornberry:

[155616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to her declaration of ministerial travel published on 31 March, whether the published £14,941.73 cost of her visit to Mexico from 23 to 25 September 2021 included (a) first class or (b) business class air tickets to travel from (A) New York to Mexico or (B) Mexico to London; and what the stand-alone costs of those tickets were.

James Cleverly:

In accordance with the Ministerial Code the FCDO publishes the costs related to overseas visits made by the Foreign Secretary as part of the Quarterly Transparency Return <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/minister-data#2020>.

Horn of Africa: Droughts**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[157564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Geneva conference on drought in the Horn of Africa on 26 April 2022, whether her Department has plans to allocate additional funding to help prevent famine in that region.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is deeply concerned by the worsening humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa and welcomed the timely conference on drought in the region convened by the UN and the EU in Geneva on 26 April. In January, I announced a £17 million package of emergency humanitarian assistance to address critical needs in Ethiopia (£5 million), South Sudan (£3 million), Somalia (£8 million) and Kenya (£1 million). In February, a further £5.5 million of support was allocated for Somalia, and in March a further £1.6 million to support the drought response in Ethiopia. On 26 April, I announced a further £25 million in aid to provide vital services to almost a million people in Somalia, including food relief and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) support, as the country teeters on the brink of widespread famine.

Our response to the drought builds on long-established resilience building programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. In Kenya this includes support to the Hunger Safety Programme, which has provided 600,000 people in drought prone areas with regular financial assistance alongside efforts to promote strengthened national disaster management capacity. In Ethiopia, the UK funded Productive Safety Net Programme has benefitted some 8 million people via financial welfare provision and community public works projects, which promote soil and water conservation. In Somalia the UK has been supporting over 220 rural communities through its multi-year resilience programme and in three large urban cities with durable solutions initiatives for internally displaced persons. These programmes, coupled with additional investments, have enabled the UK to reach nearly 8 million individuals as a part of its emergency humanitarian response.

The UK remains committed to promoting peace and security across the Horn of Africa.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[157592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will urgently (a) commit to and (b) disburse new and additional funding to avert the most devastating effects of drought ahead of the upcoming conference on the Horn of Africa drought on 26 April 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is deeply concerned by the worsening humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa and welcomed the timely conference on drought in the region convened by the UN and the EU in Geneva on 26 April. In January, I announced a £17 million package of emergency humanitarian assistance to address critical needs in Ethiopia (£5

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The UK remains committed to promoting peace and security across the Horn of Africa.

■ India: Foreign Relations

Matt Vickers:

[\[155951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps she has taken to strengthen the UK's economic and security relationship with India.

Vicky Ford:

In May last year, the UK and India committed to strengthening our relationship through a new Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and a 2030 Roadmap which, comprising five pillars and more than 100 lines of activity, reflects the breadth of UK-India relations. Our economic and security relationship is set to grow further still following visits to India by the Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister in March and April, which deepened trade and defence cooperation.

During the Foreign Secretary's visit to India on 31 March, she discussed, with India's Minister of External Affairs Dr Jaishankar, the importance of democracies working together to deter aggressors and strengthen global security in the wake of the ongoing conflict and humanitarian situation in Ukraine. The visit also focussed on deepening defence-related trade and co-operation between our two countries. The Foreign Secretary also visited Delhi and Mumbai on 22-23 October 2021, where discussions focused on technology and infrastructure cooperation with India, alongside forging stronger UK-India security and defence links. The Prime Minister's visit to India in April focused on the UK and India's strategic defence, diplomatic and

economic partnership, and drove forward progress on the Free Trade Agreement negotiations launched earlier this year.

■ **India: Islam**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[156562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations she has made to her Indian counterpart regarding reports of increased (a) violence and (b) persecution against Muslims in India.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all and promoting respect and tolerance between different religious and non-religious communities. We condemn any instances of discrimination because of religion or belief, regardless of the country or faith involved. We engage with India on a range of human rights matters and where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at Ministerial level. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, also regularly speaks to the High Commissioner of India, and human rights including freedom of religion or belief forms part of that dialogue.

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions across India regularly meet religious representatives and have run projects supporting minority rights. For example, we project public support for diverse faith communities through hosting Iftars to celebrate the important contribution Indian Muslims and other communities have made to Indian society. At a virtual Iftar held in May 2021, the British High Commission were joined by over 100 Muslim and civil society contacts from across India. Moreover, for the second year, we are supporting a UK-India Interfaith Leadership Programme for a cohort of emerging Indian leaders of diverse faith backgrounds, creating an opportunity to exchange UK-India experiences on leading modern, inclusive communities.

■ **Linn Htut**

Rushanara Ali:

[\[155747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has taken steps to verify the reported 16-year hard labour sentence handed to the former Chief Minister of Shan State, Linn Htut, in Myanmar, and if she will make a statement.

Amanda Milling:

The UK has repeatedly condemned the arbitrary detention and politically motivated sentencing of those who oppose the coup. We are deeply concerned by reports that former National League for Democracy leader, Linn Htut, was arrested on 28 January 2022 on trumped up corruption charges and has received a prison sentence. Some 12,000 people have been detained since the coup, with credible reports of torture and sexual violence. Immediately following the coup, the former Minister for Asia made a statement to the house, which called on the military to release those arbitrarily

detained. On 17 February 2021, our former Ambassador raised our strong objections to the arrest and detention of protestors and political figures with the military, in his role as Chair of the Joint Peace Fund. On 8 December 2021, following the sentencing of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Win Myint, we secured a UN Security Council Resolution which called for the release of all those arbitrarily detained. In February 2022, to mark a year since the coup, the UK coordinated a joint statement, agreed by 36 countries, which called for the release of all those in arbitrary detention and a return to the democratic process, and we secured a strong UN Security Council Press Statement which called for the release of all those arbitrarily detained.

■ **Mubarak Bala**

Sir Edward Leigh:

[\[155580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions officials in her Department have had with their counterparts in the Government of Nigeria on the human rights of Mubarak Bala.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government has followed Mr Bala's case closely, and has raised his case on multiple occasions with the Nigerian authorities, including following his recent sentencing. We believe that the right of individuals to express opinions is essential to a free and open society.

We are concerned by the severity and length of sentence received by Mr Bala at trial. The British High Commissioner has expressed these concerns to the Kano State Government and the Nigerian President's Chief of Staff. We will continue to follow developments in Mr Bala's case closely, and will continue to stress the importance of Mr Bala being treated in full accordance with his human rights, the rule of law, and the Nigerian constitutional right to freedom of religion or belief.

■ **Myanmar: Political Prisoners**

Rushanara Ali:

[\[155746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the reported increase in the number of political prisoners in Myanmar since the military coup on February 1, 2021, what steps her Department is taking to increase the pressure on the Myanmar military junta to release all political prisoners.

Amanda Milling:

The UK has repeatedly condemned the arbitrary detention and politically motivated sentencing of those who oppose the coup. We are deeply concerned by reports that former National League for Democracy leader, Linn Htut, was arrested on 28 January 2022 on trumped up corruption charges and has received a prison sentence. Some 12,000 people have been detained since the coup, with credible reports of torture and sexual violence. Immediately following the coup, the former Minister for Asia made a statement to the house, which called on the military to release those arbitrarily detained. On 17 February 2021, our former Ambassador raised our strong objections

to the arrest and detention of protestors and political figures with the military, in his role as Chair of the Joint Peace Fund. On 8 December 2021, following the sentencing of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Win Myint, we secured a UN Security Council Resolution which called for the release of all those arbitrarily detained. In February 2022, to mark a year since the coup, the UK coordinated a joint statement, agreed by 36 countries, which called for the release of all those in arbitrary detention and a return to the democratic process, and we secured a strong UN Security Council Press Statement which called for the release of all those arbitrarily detained.

■ North Korea: Nuclear Weapons

Mr David Lammy: [\[156358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her international counterparts on the recent North Korean missile tests.

Mr David Lammy: [\[156359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government is planning to make representations before the UN Security Council on North Korea's recent missile testing.

Mr David Lammy: [\[156360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the level of tensions in the Korean peninsular.

Amanda Milling:

The UK condemns the DPRK's escalation of ballistic missile testing, all in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. We strongly encourage the DPRK to change course and to abandon its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. As the Foreign Secretary and G7 counterparts made clear in March, we call on the DPRK to accept the repeated offers of unconditional dialogue put forward by all relevant parties. The UN Security Council meeting on 25 March, convened by the UK, US and like-minded countries, was the first open session on DPRK since December 2019. We are clear that until the DPRK returns to dialogue, all countries must fully implement UNSC Resolutions, including the enforcement of sanctions agreed by the UNSC to curtail the DPRK's prohibited programmes. We remain committed to securing peace on the Korean peninsula, working closely with allies and partners in upholding the rules-based international system and securing an end to DPRK's illegal activities.

■ Russia: Sanctions

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[156388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of imposing further

sanctions on (a) Russia and (b) Russian allies as a result of the continued conflict in Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

The UK does not speculate on future sanctions. However, we will continue to increase pressure on Putin and his regime to ensure he is unable to fuel his war machine. In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine we have announced an unprecedented package of sanctions. We have now sanctioned over 1500 individuals and entities since the invasion. We have also implemented sanctions against Belarusian individuals and organisations in response to the role the country is playing in Russia's invasion, including facilitating the invasion from within its borders.

■ **Russia: War Crimes**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[156385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations she has made to the International Criminal Court on ensuring that President Putin and his regime are held to account for any war crimes committed in Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

We have led efforts to refer the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has now secured the support of over 40 other countries. The UK will provide assistance to the ICC to support its Ukraine investigations, including an additional £1 million contribution. We have mobilised UK expertise, including through deployments of specialist UK expertise such as the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Team of Experts, to support Ukraine's domestic investigations into war crimes and to recommend how the UK can further add value to the response.

■ **Rwanda: Migrants**

Yvette Cooper:

[\[157277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether spending on the UK-Rwanda Migration Partnership will be counted as Overseas Development Assistance.

James Cleverly:

The funding for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda is not from the Official Development Assistance budget.

■ **Somalia: Somaliland**

Ruth Jones:

[\[157501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will update her department's travel guidance for Somalia to better reflect the constitutional and territorial differences between Somaliland and Somalia.

Vicky Ford:

The FCDO Travel Advice provides information and advice to help British nationals make informed decisions about foreign travel. FCDO Travel Advice provides travellers with updates and information, including the latest advice on issues such as coronavirus, safety and security, entry requirements and travel warnings. Area-specific advice, including in relation to travel to Somaliland, is contained within the FCDO travel advice for Somalia.

■ **Somaliland****Ruth Jones:**[\[157502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of granting Somaliland diplomatic recognition.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government's position on recognition is consistent with the entire international community, which does not recognise Somaliland's unilateral declaration of independence. The UK Government considers that it is for Somaliland and the Federal Government of Somalia to come to any agreement about their future relationship. Any new arrangements would need to be recognised by the African Union and neighbours in the region. The UK continues to encourage dialogue between Mogadishu and Hargeisa on this issue.

■ **Sri Lanka: Crimes of Violence****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[156561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made representations to her Sri Lankan counterpart regarding recent reports of unlawful violence being perpetrated by police authorities against civilians in Sri Lanka.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government is concerned by recent reports of violence during protests in Sri Lanka and encourages all sides to find a peaceful, democratic and inclusive approach to resolve Sri Lanka's political and economic challenges.

The Minister of State for South Asia, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has urged for the right to protest peacefully to be protected and for violence to cease.

The UK High Commissioner to Sri Lanka met the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka on 20 April. The High Commissioner has called for an independent and transparent investigation into the loss of life during protests in Rambukkana on 19 April.

We regularly discuss our concerns about human rights with the Government of Sri Lanka. Lord Ahmad raised the need to improve human rights and deliver justice and accountability with the Sri Lankan President and Foreign Minister when he visited Sri

Lanka. The Foreign Secretary raised the importance of upholding human rights when she met Foreign Minister Peiris.

■ **Ukraine: Armed Conflict**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[156387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to (a) increase security, (b) help prevent Russian interference and (c) support refugees in (i) Moldova and (ii) other neighbouring countries that share a border with an active war zone.

James Cleverly:

The UK has worked closely with partners in the region to increase regional security, support refugees and prevent Russian interference.

We are supporting defence sector reform in Moldova, including through the NATO Defence Capacity Building Initiative. The UK is doubling the number of defence personnel in Estonia and sending additional military equipment. The Prime Minister also agreed with his Polish counterpart a programme to ensure our current cooperation on European security is broadened and strengthened for the years and decades to come.

On 26 March, the UK announced £25 million in funding to the UN Refugee Agency and £10 million to the International Federation of the Red Cross to support countries neighbouring Ukraine to receive and care for refugees. Our humanitarian field teams in the region provide logistical support and advice and coordinate with governments and the UN in neighbouring countries. UK support will reach over 140,000 refugees in the region, providing protection, shelter and cash for the most vulnerable groups and for people with specific needs.

■ **Ukraine: Diplomatic Relations**

Matt Vickers:

[\[155946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps her Department is taking to support Ukraine.

Matt Vickers:

[\[155947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her international counterparts on Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary continues to lead the diplomatic effort, regularly meeting and speaking with Foreign Minister counterparts, including the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, G7 Foreign Ministers and NATO Foreign Ministers.

■ Ukraine: India**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[156386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Indian counterpart on New Delhi's neutral stance on the war in Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

The UK is working with international partners, including India, to coordinate the international response to Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine. The Foreign Secretary visited India on 31 March where she discussed with India's Minister for External Affairs the importance of democracies working closer together to deter aggressors, reduce vulnerability to coercion and strengthen global security. The Prime Minister also visited India on 21-22 April where he discussed the issue with Prime Minister Modi. The two leaders released a statement after their meeting unequivocally condemning civilian deaths, and reiterating the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

■ Ukraine: Military Aircraft**Jim Shannon:**[\[156455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with the Polish Government on the UK's position on supplying aircrafts to Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary visited Poland on 5 April and discussed Polish and UK support to Ukraine with the Polish Government. We have also proposed with the Polish Government a Poland-UK Joint Commission to help Ukraine modernise its military, identify its needs and support Ukraine with the long-term co-ordination of arms supplies and training.

■ USA: Visits Abroad**Emily Thornberry:**[\[155614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to her declaration of ministerial travel published on 31 March, for what reason the RAF Airbus Voyager ZZ336 she used when visiting the United States between 19 and 23 September 2021 was described in her declaration as a private charter plane.

James Cleverly:

The misdescription of the RAF aircraft was an accidental data processing error.

■ West Africa: Climate Change and Terrorism**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[155850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her West African counterparts on tackling (a)

terrorism, (b) climate change and (c) piracy in those countries; and what steps the Government is taking to support West African countries to tackle those threats.

Vicky Ford:

Regional security was a core focus of my recent visits to Senegal, Nigeria and Ghana, during which I met with the Foreign Minister of each country to discuss insecurity and how the UK can support. I was able to see first-hand the training offered by UK military personnel to Senegal, Nigeria and Ghana, including support to tackle the growing threats of terrorism and piracy. For example, in Nigeria, I observed Royal Navy personnel training Nigerian counterparts on counter-piracy. Earlier this month I met for a second time with the Vice President of the Economic Community of West African States to discuss insecurity across West Africa, including in the Sahel. On 5 April, the Prime Minister met with the President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, to discuss how the UK and Ghana can strengthen our security partnership.

At the UK-Nigeria Security and Defence dialogue in February, we agreed future cooperation to respond to shared threats, and to support Nigerian efforts to tackle a range of security challenges. Last year we also committed £12.6 million to support efforts to counter terrorist groups in the Lake Chad Basin. We are also committed to building counter-piracy and maritime security capabilities in the region through the implementation of the Yaoundé maritime security architecture. In 2021, the UK was co-chair with Senegal of the maritime security group, the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, and supported the launch of the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Collaboration Forum, to help build capacity and collaboration between regional navies. We also deployed HMS Trent to the region during our G7 Presidency.

On climate change, at COP26 the UK committed £143.5 million to support African countries to adapt to the impact of extreme weather and changing climate. During my visit to Nigeria, I was pleased to announce substantial new UK investments to support renewable and climate change projects. Our COP26 Regional Ambassador visited Senegal and the Gambia in March this year, to take part in the World Water Forum and further our ambitions from COP26.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Ambulance Services: Standards

Daisy Cooper:

[\[157546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average ambulance waiting time is across all NHS ambulance trusts; which of those trusts have the longest waiting times; and how that compares to ambulance waiting times in (a) 2019 and (b) 2015.

Edward Argar:

The following table shows the average ambulance waiting times in England and in each National Health Service ambulance trust in 2021/22.

AVERAGE AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIMES 2021/22 HOURS:MINUTES:SECONDS

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
England	00:08:39	00:41:17	02:13:40	02:49:43
East Midlands Ambulance Service	00:08:52	00:47:21	02:40:21	02:39:29
East of England Ambulance Service	00:09:50	00:45:42	02:20:00	02:49:23
Isle of Wight Ambulance Service	00:09:37	00:26:20	01:14:06	01:27:26
London Ambulance Service	00:06:51	00:38:17	01:37:16	03:24:40
North East Ambulance Service	00:06:56	00:36:40	01:52:50	01:32:34
North West Ambulance Service	00:08:42	00:47:39	02:53:32	04:08:31
South Central Ambulance Service	00:08:12	00:28:03	01:50:29	02:17:02
South East Coast Ambulance Service	00:08:43	00:30:07	02:33:31	03:28:37
South Western Ambulance Service	00:10:20	01:01:57	02:43:54	02:53:03
West Midlands Ambulance Service	00:07:50	00:32:53	02:08:48	02:31:01
Yorkshire Ambulance Service	00:09:16	00:36:06	01:47:39	02:24:48

In 2021/2022 South Western Ambulance Service had the longest waiting time for category 1 and category 2 ambulance calls. North West Ambulance Service has the longest waiting time for category 3 and category 4 ambulance calls.

The following table shows the average ambulance waiting times in England and in each National Health Service ambulance trust in 2019/20.

AVERAGE AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIMES 2019/20 HOURS:MINUTES:SECONDS				
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
England	00:07:18	00:23:50	01:11:04	01:26:09
East Midlands Ambulance Service	00:07:42	00:30:30	01:24:17	01:31:36
East of England Ambulance Service	00:08:04	00:28:28	01:34:58	01:37:24
Isle of Wight Ambulance Service	00:11:14	00:26:05	01:14:59	01:46:00
London Ambulance Service	00:06:51	00:23:48	01:08:57	01:42:54
North East Ambulance Service	00:06:33	00:29:28	01:32:08	01:18:37
North West Ambulance Service	00:07:23	00:26:00	01:22:42	01:29:38
South Central Ambulance Service	00:07:12	00:17:47	00:54:47	01:17:17
South East Coast Ambulance Service	00:07:35	00:20:02	01:36:10	02:00:59
South Western Ambulance Service	00:07:03	00:28:38	01:17:17	01:33:56

AVERAGE AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIMES 2019/20 HOURS:MINUTES:SECONDS				
West Midlands Ambulance Service	00:06:57	00:13:20	00:45:22	01:01:15
Yorkshire Ambulance Service	00:07:12	00:20:34	00:48:09	00:52:33

In 2019/20 the Isle of Wight Ambulance Service had the longest waiting time for category 1 ambulance calls. East Midlands Ambulance Service had the longest waiting time for category 2 ambulance calls. South East Coast Ambulance Service had the longest waiting time for category 3 and category 4 ambulance calls.

A direct comparison to waiting times in 2015 is not possible as the current ambulance response time standards were introduced in England in 2017.

■ Cancer: Mortality Rates

Chi Onwurah: [\[155731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he made of the impact of the number of CT scanners and MRI units per capita on cancer survival rates in (a) the UK, (b) Germany and (c) other comparable European countries.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made due to the number of different factors affecting cancer survival.

■ Care Workers: Career Development

Mike Amesbury: [\[156584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of career development for senior care workers; and what steps he is taking to provide a meaningful career structure in adult social care that enables career development.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific assessment has been made. As announced in the White Paper 'People at the Heart of Care', the Department has committed £500 million to develop and support the adult social care workforce over the next three years. This will include additional training places and the development of a Knowledge and Skills Framework to set out the knowledge, skills, learning and development which staff need to deliver high quality care and develop and progress their career in social care. The Framework will also complement the existing skills offer delivered by colleges and training providers in England, including the Department for Education's skills offer and apprenticeships.

■ Coronavirus: Care Homes

Karin Smyth:

[\[154128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the date by which all care homes will have been visited (a) once and (b) twice to deliver covid-19 spring booster vaccinations.

Gillian Keegan:

The vaccination programme is ensuring that as many visits as necessary take place to ensure that those eligible for the spring booster dose receives it.

■ Coronavirus: Deaths

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[R\] \[155700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report published by Collateral Global entitled Understanding Definitions and Reporting of Deaths Attributed to COVID-19 in the UK, whether he is taking steps to create a systematic process based on consistent definitions for verifying covid-19 deaths.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) provides a daily number of deaths in people with a positive COVID-19 test, to rapidly report numbers of deaths each day and provide surveillance of trends in mortality and underlying transmission. There are two definitions of a death in a person with COVID-19 in England:

- A death in a person with a positive COVID-19 test who died within 28 days of the first positive specimen date of the most recent episode of infection; and
- A death in a person with a positive COVID-19 test who died within 60 days of the first specimen date of the most recent episode of infection.

Verifying the number of people who have died from COVID-19 related illness is complex and this is one of several measures of deaths used by the Government, including death certificates and excess deaths. Multiple data sources are triangulated to provide the most accurate picture of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[R\] \[155702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report published by Collateral Global entitled Understanding Definitions and Reporting of Deaths Attributed to COVID-19 in the UK, if he will take steps to reduce the use of aggregate data as severity markers during potential future pandemics as a result of the heterogeneity of definitions of cases and attribution of deaths.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency publishes data on deaths in England on the GOV.UK COVID-19 Dashboard by age, sex, date of death and local authority to understand population level trends in the pandemic while reducing the risk of deductive disclosure of individual patient information. Aggregate data on hospitalisations is based on data reported to NHS England and NHS Improvement.

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**Angela Rayner:**[\[127426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 February 2022 to Question 114760 on Coronavirus: Protective Clothing, if his Department will make and publish an estimate of the costs of storage and warehousing for PPE from August 2021 to date; and whether his Department has made an estimate of the current daily, weekly or monthly costs of storage and warehousing for PPE.

Edward Argar:

The information is not held in the format requested. The Department reports on storage costs on a quarterly basis based on invoiced expenditure. Between 1 September 2021 to 30 November 2021, the latest information available, the total cost for personal protective equipment (PPE) storage in the United Kingdom was £72.4 million and £5.8 million for storage in China.

We estimate current storage costs to be approximately £3.3 million a week. This is a reduction of 82% compared to October 2020.

■ Coronavirus: Surveys**Caroline Lucas:**[\[144875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 March 2022 to Question 140419, on Contact tracing: software, what the funding has been for the Office for National Statistics' COVID-19 Infection Survey since its inception; what funding has been allocated for the continuing operation of that survey; if he will set out reasons for changes in funding allocated; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

In 2020/21, expenditure on the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) COVID-19 Infection Survey was approximately £401.9 million. Confirmed expenditure in 2021/22 is not yet available as it is currently being audited. The ONS' funding allocation for 2022/23, excluding testing, is £268.1 million. A proportion of this funding will be paid directly to other service suppliers and this allocation does not include the costs of processing tests.

The scale of the survey is planned to be reduced by approximately 25% with 300,000 tests completed per month. The study will also transition to a more cost effective, transformed model guided by a framework of 'digital-first with remote sampling'. The goal is to continue the provision of high-quality COVID-19 data and analysis, whilst significantly reducing costs and creating a more sustainable solution.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Chi Onwurah:**[\[155728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to pages 44 and 45 of the report by The King's Fund entitled The Covid 19 vaccination programme: Trials, tribulations and successes, which states that Foundry pulled together some 350 different

sources of data, how consent for that data was obtained; and how that data is being stored.

Gillian Keegan:

Consent for the processing of confidential patient information (CPI) in relation to the COVID-19 Data Store is not required. NHS England and NHS Improvement are operating under Regulation 3 of the Health Service (Control of Patient Information) Regulations 2002 and supporting Control of Patient Information notices issued, under Regulation 3(4) of those Regulations, by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which require CPI to be processed for COVID-19 purposes.

Data relating to patients in Foundry is anonymised in line with the Information Commissioner's Office's Code of Practice under secure conditions by NHS England data teams, prior to flowing to the Foundry platform. The Foundry Data Store is held on a secure platform under contract to NHS England and NHS Improvement. NHS England and NHS Improvement remain responsible under the law for its use of that data and the security measures applied to its storage, including compliance with National Health Service information security requirements.

■ **Dental Services: Contracts**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[155815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to (a) complete the negotiations over the NHS dental contract and (b) implement the new contract.

Maria Caulfield:

Due to the protected nature of the negotiations, the Department is unable to provide a date for negotiations to be completed. We will set out an implementation timetable when negotiations conclude. The development of further proposed changes will then be progressed.

■ **Dental Services: Finance**

Judith Cummins:

[\[154012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many additional units of NHS dental activity were provided by the additional £50 million of funding announced by the Government in January 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 21 April 2022]: The information requested is not currently held centrally as National Health Service dentists have two months to submit FP17 dental activity data forms after completing a course of treatment. We expect this data will be available from June 2022.

■ Dental Services: NHS

Judith Cummins: [\[155772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many dentists in England are offering NHS appointments in 2022 compared with 2019.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Information on the number of dentists delivering National Health Service dental care is published annually by NHS Digital. Data for 2022/23 is not yet available. The next annual report is due to be published in August 2022 and will include information for the 12-month period to 31 March 2022. Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, 24,684 dentists delivered NHS activity.

■ Dentistry: Training

Rachael Maskell: [\[155810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the role (a) medical and (b) dental schools in the future expansion of the NHS dental workforce.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: No specific assessment has been made. We continue to monitor the number of dental and medical school places in England to ensure that the National Health Service has the dental and medical workforce that it needs.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Procurement

Angela Rayner: [\[145885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish minutes or records of the meeting on 18 March 2020 between the then Minister for Life Sciences, Randox and relevant suppliers.

Angela Rayner: [\[157548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 145885 tabled by the hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne on 23 March 2022.

Edward Argar:

The Department holds a record of the meeting on 18 March 2020 between the former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Lord Bethell), Government officials and relevant suppliers, including Randox. A copy of the minute is attached, which has been redacted to remove personal information.

Attachments:

1. PQ145885 & PQ157498 - Minutes Redacted [PQ145885 & PQ157498 - Minutes Redacted.pdf]

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Randox Laboratories

Caroline Lucas:

[\[148141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Question 72393 and with reference to the phone call between the then health minister, Lord Bethell, and the former Rt. Hon Member for North Shropshire and Randox on 9 April 2020, whether his Department holds any documents relating to (a) the discussions at that meeting and (b) progress on the action points for the Secretary of State and No.10 listed in the redacted copy of the Ministerial briefing note provided in advance of the discussion; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 31 March 2022]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Angela Rayner MP) on 1 February 2022 to Question 81967. The Department does not hold information on progress against the action points.

■ Disability: Children

Caroline Lucas:

[\[155685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Education on the finding on page 6 of the report by the Disabled Children's Partnership entitled *Left Behind: 6 Months On*, that the emotional or mental health of two in three disabled children has deteriorated as a result of not having access to the right support; what steps he is taking to ensure that the policy proposals in the SEND green paper improve the mental health of disabled children; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

There have been no specific discussions. However, we are working with the Department for Education on implementation of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Review to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive the appropriate support.

■ Disabled Facilities Grants

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[155955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending the means testing of the Disabled Facilities Grant in response to the cost of living and inflationary pressures.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: The Government has announced £573 million for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in each year from 2022/23 to 2024/25 and committed to consult on reforms to the DFG in 2022, including the means test. We will consider how the means test could be aligned with charging reforms and the cost of living and inflation will be taken into account.

■ Doctors: Education

Jon Trickett: [157274]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the educational backgrounds of doctors.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: No specific assessment has been made.

The Medical Schools Council's report 'Selecting for Excellence' sets out its work on selection and widening participation, including data on the backgrounds of medical students. The report is available at the following link:

<https://www.medschools.ac.uk/our-work/selection/selecting-for-excellence>

■ Endometriosis

Carla Lockhart: [154507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of endometriosis cases treated by the NHS in each of the last 5 years.

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not held in the format requested. However, the following table shows the number hospital finished admissions episodes with a primary diagnosis of endometriosis in each year from 2016/17 to 2020/21.

2016/17	20,568
2017/18	21,160
2018/19	22,298
2019/20	21,888
2020/21	13,675

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Digital

Notes:

1. This information does not show a count of people, as the same person could be admitted to hospital or receive outpatient care on more than one occasion.
2. Some treatments will often take place outside a hospital environment.

■ Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Diagnosis

Feryal Clark: [139608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the implementation of (a) NICE guidance on the diagnosis and management of endometriosis, and (b) the NICE clinical knowledge summary on PCOS.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. We expect National Health Service commissioners, providers, and healthcare professionals to take account of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidelines and clinical knowledge summaries when planning and delivering services and providing care and treatment to patients.

■ Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Finance**Feryal Clark:**[\[139604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated to (a) endometriosis and (b) PCOS in each year since 2010.

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not held centrally as central funding is not allocated by specific health condition. Provision for endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome is commissioned by local clinical commissioning groups which have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services to meet the needs of their whole population.

■ Enhanced Protection Programme**Rosie Cooper:**[\[155668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, who leads the enhanced protection programme; and what the process is for designating charities and patient organisations as stakeholders for that programme.

Maggie Throup:

The Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency, Dame Jenny Harries, is the Senior Responsible Owner for the COVID-19 enhanced protection programme (EPP). The EPP is a tripartite scheme run by the Department, NHS England and the UK Health Security Agency.

Ministers and officials regularly engage with charities and organisations representing those who are immunocompromised and immunosuppressed. There is no formal process for designating patient organisations as stakeholders for the programme.

■ Foetal Anticonvulsant Syndrome**Cat Smith:**[\[135544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the information noted in the Answer of 4 March 2022 to Question 131221 reaches patients through healthcare professionals.

Maria Caulfield:

The Pregnancy Prevention Programme (PPP) is available to health care professionals, including general practitioners, maternity staff, health visitors, dispensers and parents. Healthcare professionals seeking to prescribe valproate to

their female patients must ensure they are enrolled in the PPP. This includes the completion of a signed risk acknowledgement form when the treatment is reviewed annually by a specialist.

Healthcare professionals receive a printed copy of the updated educational materials annually from the PPP. These are used to inform patients of the risks associated with the use of valproate in pregnancy. The information is also available online for both healthcare professionals and patients. A statutory patient information leaflet should always be provided with a medicine containing valproate, even if dispensed in a pharmacy box.

■ Food: Advertising

Ben Bradley: [\[159063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the proposed restrictions on the promotion of foods high in fat, salt or sugar on the cost of living.

Ben Bradley: [\[159064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what parameters for success his Department will utilise when assessing the effectiveness of restrictions on promotions and placement of high fat, salt and sugar products; and whether a further assessment of the impact of the policy on businesses will be conducted.

Maggie Throup:

The impact assessment for volume promotions such as 'buy one get one free' shows that spending increases by 20% by encouraging households to purchase more than they need or intended to buy. The impact assessment for location promotions shows the placement of products within stores also significantly affects household spending, with end of aisle displays increasing sales of soft drinks by over 50%.

The Government is committed to reviewing the Regulations within five years of coming into force. The National Institute for Health Research's Policy Research Programme has commissioned the National Centre for Social Research to assess the extent and nature of location-based promotions of food and drink high in fat, salt or sugar in supermarkets in England. Officials are developing further plans to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of this policy.

■ General Practitioners: Recruitment

Daisy Cooper: [\[154419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the value for money and effectiveness of the (a) training, (b) administration and (c) staff time costs incurred by GP practices of administering the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[154420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of Primary Care Networks that have borrowed funding from their member GP practices to pay staff costs as a result of the time taken for payment under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme.

Maria Caulfield:

The Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) currently offers 15 roles to assist general practices provide patient care and is designed to be used solely for reimbursing the salaries and on-costs of roles included in the Scheme.

As a new scheme, the ARRS is monitored to assess progress in recruiting staff and feedback is sought on aspects of administering the scheme from Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and the constituent general practitioner (GP) practices. NHS England and NHS Improvement committed to undertake a review of the ARRS by 2023, which will consider feedback received on the Scheme. As GP practices and PCNs are independent businesses, the Government does not have access to data concerning the financial decisions taken at individual practice or PCN level. PCNs experiencing issues with the Scheme should consult the local clinical commissioning group.

■ Health Services and Social Services

Mike Amesbury:

[\[156583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Health and social care integration: joining up care for people, places and populations White Paper, published on 8 February 2022, what estimate his Department has made of the funding required to deliver those proposals.

Gillian Keegan:

The measures set out within the white paper will be delivered within the funding provided to the National Health Service. The Spending Review in 2021 provided £23.2 billion for the NHS over the next three years, supported by the new Health and Social Care Levy, and £5.4 billion for adult social care reform. This is in addition to the long-term settlement for the NHS, where funding will increase by £33.9 billion a year between 2019/20 and 2023/24. We expect local areas to make use of existing NHS funding. As progress on integration accelerates, we will consider the implications for other existing funding mechanisms.

■ Hospitals: Discharges

Rachael Maskell:

[\[157422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to recruit sufficient social care staff to support cases of delayed discharges (a) nationally and (b) in York.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[157423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to encourage people to begin a career working in social care.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[157425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on support for those bodies to help address shortages in the social care system.

Gillian Keegan:

Supporting hospital flow and reducing delayed discharges requires a whole system approach across the National Health Service, adult social care, housing, the voluntary sector and others. Hospital discharge services are therefore supported by staff across a range of health and social care professions in England and in York.

We have committed at least £500 million to develop the social care workforce, including for training places and for initiatives to improve wellbeing. We are also promoting adult social care careers through national recruitment campaigns, such as 'Made with Care' which ran between November 2021 and 31 March 2022. A further campaign for 2022/23 is in development. We are also working with the Department of Work and Pensions to promote adult social care careers to jobseekers. Care workers have been made eligible for the Health and Care Visa and added to the Shortage Occupation List to allow social care employers to recruit eligible workers from overseas.

In winter 2021/22, we made £462.5 million available to local authorities to increase workforce capacity via the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Funds, including £1,410,240 allocated to York. We have regular discussions with stakeholders, including local government representatives, on a range of issues including the adult social care workforce.

■ Human Papillomavirus: Males

Justin Madders:

[\[155796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 March 2022 to Question 144931 on Human Papillomavirus: Males, what format the data requested is available in.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency conducts surveillance of the prevalence of human papillomavirus infection in females and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men aged 16 to 45 years old.

■ Immunosuppression: Coronavirus

Kate Hollern:

[\[127428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the removal of domestic covid-19 restrictions on the health and wellbeing of clinically vulnerable and immunocompromised people.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 25 February 2022]: No specific assessment has been made.

However, we have made antiviral and other therapeutic treatments available for the most vulnerable patients and a targeted vaccination programme. On 1 April 2022, we issued updated guidance for those most at risk from serious illness as a result of COVID-19 infection, including those previously considered as clinically extremely vulnerable and the immunocompromised. We are also continuing to engage with patients and relevant stakeholder groups to review the impact of these measures.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[155670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the total number of people in the UK who (a) are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed and (b) were formerly identified as clinically extremely vulnerable in the latest period for which figures are available.

Maggie Throup:

Those whose immune systems mean they continue to be at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 may be eligible for therapies in the community, including antivirals and monoclonal antibodies, which can reduce the risk of becoming hospitalised. In England, more than 1.3 million people are eligible for monoclonal antibody treatment and antivirals.

The national shielding support programme closed at the end of September 2021. Data held by NHS Digital showed that 3,694,273 individuals were registered for care in England and previously considered as clinically extremely vulnerable or at 'high risk' of complications from COVID-19.

The information requested elsewhere in the United Kingdom is not held, as it is a devolved matter.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[155674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent discussions the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of providing financial support for severely immunocompromised people who need to continue shielding and are unable to return safely to the workplace.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[155675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing financial support for severely immunocompromised people who need to continue shielding and cannot safely return to the workplace.

Maggie Throup:

There have been no specific discussions. The national shielding programme closed on the 15 September 2021. On 4 April 2022, updated guidance was issued for those whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19. The guidance is available at the following link:

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

■ **Junior Doctors: Training****Jon Trickett:****[157273]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of junior doctors who started their training in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The following table shows the number of applicants who accepted foundation year one medical training posts in the United Kingdom each academic year from 2017 to 2021. The foundation programme is a UK-wide.

2017	7,481
2018	7,470
2019	7,499
2020	7,577
2021	7,694

Note:

This data represents the numbers of accepted posts. The number of applicants which started these posts in trusts may vary with some withdrawals.

■ **Kidney Diseases: Health Services****Peter Dowd:****[154033]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2022 to Question 135529 on Kidney Diseases: Health Services, what his planned timetable for the reporting of findings from the Renal Services Transformation Programme's Clinical workstreams on (a) improving access, (b) identifying best practice and (c) developing solutions to (i) chronic kidney disease, (ii) acute kidney injury and (iii) dialysis and transplant.

Peter Dowd:**[154034]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2022 to Question 135529 on Kidney Diseases: Health Services, what selection

process was used for participation in the Renal Services Transformation Programme's five clinical workstreams.

Peter Dowd: [\[154035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2022 to Question 135529 on Kidney Diseases: Health Services, when the 11 renal clinical networks will report on local renal priorities.

Peter Dowd: [\[154036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2022 to Question 135529 on Kidney Diseases: Health Services, what steps he is taking to implement the National Outpatients Transformation Programme's guidance on specialist advice in renal services and implementing personalised care follow up for CKD and transplant patients in England.

Peter Dowd: [\[157397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Renal Services Transformation Programme's clinical workstreams on (a) improving access, (b) identifying best practice, (c) developing solutions to chronic kidney disease, (d) acute kidney injury and (e) dialysis and transplant plan to report their findings.

Peter Dowd: [\[157398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what selection process her Department used for selecting the participants of the Renal Services Transformation Programme's five clinical workstreams.

Peter Dowd: [\[157399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the 11 renal clinical networks established by NHS England and NHS Improvement will report on local renal priorities.

Peter Dowd: [\[157400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to help ensure that the implementation of the National Outpatients Transformation Programme's guidance on improving personalised care follow up for chronic kidney disease and transplant patients in renal services across England.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 April 2022]: All Renal Services Transformation Programme workstreams intend to make key deliverables available by April 2023. This will include documentation outlining best practice, a data dashboard of metrics to support better decision making and support the review of the renal service specification led by NHS England and NHS Improvement's Renal Clinical Reference Group.

The clinical leads for the five workstreams were appointed by a competitive process. Once in post, clinical leads, supported by the programme team, recruited individuals with expertise in the relevant areas of the overall work plan. The teams are multi-

professional with involvement by patient and public voice partners. Membership is not funded and is under continual review to ensure representation from relevant subject matter experts. Membership will continue to evolve as the workstreams develop. The clinical networks are at varying stages of resourcing and developing annual work plans. These workplans will include their local renal priorities and are currently being developed for review and agreement by regional commissioning teams by the end of the first financial quarter in 2022.

Guidance has been developed for specialist advice and the implementation of personalised care follow up for chronic kidney disease and transplants. This is available to providers via the National Outpatient Transformation Programme Futures platform. While NHS England and NHS Improvement do not intend to mandate the guidance, its use will be recommended to support providers and networks in the recovery of outpatient services following the pandemic.

■ Long Covid: Children

Damien Moore:

[155911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department will increase capacity for children at Long Covid clinics.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department continues to keep arrangements for children with the long term effects of COVID-19 under review, including ensuring that there is sufficient capacity within the services to support them. NHS England has established 14 Post COVID-19 specialist paediatric hubs to provide support to local paediatric services through multidisciplinary assessment and advice for children and young people with the most complex needs, to the age of 18 years old.

The hubs bring together expert clinical teams, including paediatricians, physiotherapists, nurses and occupational therapists, to provide a holistic assessment. The Post COVID-19 specialist paediatric hubs are collecting data and improving data quality to enable the publication of activity including referrals, assessments and waiting times in summer 2022, which will inform decisions on future service provision. Following assessment in the Post COVID-19 services, appropriate treatment including rehabilitation will be provided locally to the child or young person.

■ Medical Records: Paper

Emma Hardy:

[157489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 151254 on Medical Records: Paper, whether he has made an assessment of the current practice of printing out the entire patient record for archival storage on the occasion of a patient's death or emigration; and if he will take steps to ensure the roll out of electronic patient records.

Gillian Keegan:

Due to amendment to the 2022/23 GP Contract, most general practitioner (GP) practices will no longer be required to print and send copies of the electronic record to Primary Care Support England (PCSE), although it can continue to store physical records of deceased patients. PCSE will continue to deliver transit labels and collect physical records. The management of patient records in the event of emigration is a matter for local decision and is often dependent on whether GP practices can easily print the entire record.

Medical Treatments**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[141168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to accelerate the approval of therapies and medicines that were approved by the European Medicines Agency but have not yet been approved for use in the UK by the MHRA.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 March 2022]: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is currently reviewing its licensing procedures, including optimising its processes, the deployment of skills and resource and how applications are differentiated based on risk to prioritise urgent applications. The MHRA is engaging with pharmaceutical companies to ensure early access to innovative medicines in the United Kingdom.

Members: Correspondence**Angela Rayner:**[\[119910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to the letter of 7 January 2022 from the hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne regarding PPE Medpro and Baroness Mone.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the Rt hon. Member on 27 April 2022.

Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome: Research**Stella Creasy:**[\[157348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what research projects his Department has funded into neuroleptic malignant syndrome since 2016.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: There have been no research projects into neuroleptic malignant syndrome funded by the Department since 2016. The Department funds research into rare diseases through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR is the nation's largest funder of health and care research, spending over £1 billion on research every year, with research proposals in all areas competing for the funding available. Applications are subject to peer review

and judged in open competition, with awards being made based on the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

■ NHS Trusts: Voting Rights

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[154200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that Mental Health NHS Trusts have updated policies and strategies on voting rights for people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities; and whether those policies and strategies are published in easy read format.

Gillian Keegan:

The Electoral Commission is the central regulator responsible for publishing official information on elections for the public and provides useful guidance for voters concerning accessibility issues. Legislation is clear that mental illness or disability is not an impediment to the right to vote.

The Electoral Commission, in conjunction with Mencap and United Response, produces easy read guides to support voters with learning disabilities ahead of scheduled polls. The Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust also sits on the Government-chaired Accessibility of Elections Working group and promotes voting rights for people with mental illness.

■ NHS: Compensation

Rachael Maskell:

[\[154168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much compensation the NHS has paid out in respect of (a) complaints and (b) litigation in each of the last five years.

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ NHS: Legal Costs

Rachael Maskell:

[\[154167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS has spent on defending litigation claims in each of the last five years.

Maria Caulfield:

The following table shows expenditure by NHS Resolution on defending litigated claims in the National Health Service in England in each of the last five years.

FINANCIAL YEAR	PAYMENTS TOWARDS NHS LEGAL COSTS
2016/17	£111,691,528
2017/18	£111,685,314

FINANCIAL YEAR	PAYMENTS TOWARDS NHS LEGAL COSTS
2018/19	£114,798,134
2019/20	£109,041,051
2020/21	£98,562,596

Notes:

1. The definition for 'litigated claims' used is 'cases where legal proceedings have been commenced'. Many claims are resolved before being litigated and are not included in these figures. These figures only relate to cases handled by NHS Resolution.
2. NHS bodies deal directly with other types of litigation such as employment and contractual disputes, which are not included within these figures.

■ **Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate**

Cat Smith:

[\[155801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of the number of pregnant women prescribed sodium valproate in the latest period for which figures are available.

Maria Caulfield:

The latest available data from 2019/20 shows that 81 women on the Medicines and Pregnancy Anti-Epileptics Registry were prescribed valproate during their pregnancy. This represents a decrease of almost 15% from 2018/19, where 95 women were prescribed sodium valproate during their pregnancy.

Women should not be prescribed valproate without a Pregnancy Prevention Programme (PPP) in place. The Registry allows us to monitor implementation of and adherence to the PPP and understand changes in the use of valproate and the impact on women and their children.

■ **Protective Clothing: Contracts**

Joanna Cherry:

[\[156509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report published by the National Audit Office on 30 March 2022 on their investigation into the management of PPE contracts, what measures were put in place to check the background of companies and their ability to deliver PPE items.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: All offers received a rigorous financial, commercial, legal and policy assessment, led by officials in various Government departments. The final decision on whether to enter a contract was made by the appropriate Accounting Officer in the Department. Due diligence checks on offers of personal protective

equipment were performed by the PPE Cell, the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence which confirmed United Kingdom supplier financial accounts information; company health checks such as profitability, financial ratios and supplier information; international supplier accounts; and serious organised crime footprints.

Angela Rayner:

[157379]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 122676, on Protective Clothing: Contracts, whether his Department holds data on what proportion of assessments made included a traffic-light rating of the potential supplier.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The information requested is not held centrally. All offers received a rigorous financial, commercial, legal and policy assessment led by officials in various Government departments, using a number of different processes to complete due diligence checks. A proportion of the assessments made included a red, amber or green rating. However, as multiple systems were used to record these checks, the proportion of assessments where a traffic-light rating was given is not held.

Angela Rayner:

[157380]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 145886, on Radox Laboratories: Contracts, on how many contracts for supply of personal protective equipment his Department has carried out international price benchmarking since October 2020.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: Since October 2020, all new purchases of personal protection equipment have been made under NHS Supply Chain framework contracts, which are let and managed by the Supply Chain Coordination Limited (SCCL), rather than directly by the Department. Purchases have been made for gloves, FFP3 masks and aprons. Competitive pricing is a key part of any tender evaluation that SCCL undertake prior to the award of framework contracts, which are compliant with Public Contract Regulations.

■ Surgery: Waiting Lists

Wes Streeting:

[155842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what services his Department contracted from external providers in financial year 2021-22 to assist with the design, delivery or maintenance of the My Planned Care website; and what the total cost of each relevant contract was in that period.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: No external providers were contracted. My Planned Care was developed within the National Health Service.

Wes Streeting:

[\[155843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much public expenditure in total was allocated by his Department in financial year 2021-22 to support the design, delivery or maintenance of the My Planned Care website.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: In 2021/22, expenditure on the design, delivery and maintenance of the My Planned Care website was approximately £200,000.

Wes Streeting:

[\[155844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many full time equivalent staff employed by (a) his Department or (b) NHS England were deployed in financial year 2021-22 to support the design, delivery or maintenance of the My Planned Care website.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: In 2021/22, two full time equivalent staff were employed for 12 weeks by NHS England to support the My Planned Care website. No Departmental staff were employed.

Wes Streeting:

[\[155845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much public funding has been allocated by his Department for financial year 2022-23 to support the maintenance of the My Planned Care website; and what proportion of that expenditure will be spent on external contractors.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: In 2022/23, £150,000 has been budgeted for enhanced functionality to the My Planned Care Patient Platform, based on patient feedback. Expenditure will be incurred within the National Health Service rather than external contractors.

HOME OFFICE

■ Abduction: Children

Jim Shannon:

[\[157366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of child abductions in the UK in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The number of offences of child abduction in England and Wales recorded by the police in the previous five years is presented in the table below.

Table 1, Police Recorded Crime, England and Wales

YEAR	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	JANUARY 2021 – SEPTEMBER 2021
Number of child abduction offences	1,094	1,189	1,255	1,144	983	768

This is published on the Home Office website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

The Home Office does not hold information on the number of child abduction offences in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

■ Animals in Science Regulation Unit

Drew Hendry:

[151193]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of reducing in-person assessments by the Animals in Science Regulation Unit on compliance with regulations.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: The Animals in Science Regulation Unit has recently strengthened its regulatory oversight processes to better deliver protections to animals used in science. This has included the process of in-person assessments. The Regulator has published its process for rigorous full system audits at: www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-research-technical-advice#process-and-standards-for-establishment-full-system-audits. At audit the Regulator requires evidence for assessment of compliance against all legal licence conditions, including those for animal welfare, which are available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-research-technical-advice#process-and-standards-for-establishment-full-system-audits. The frequency of the audits meets the requirements specified in law.

■ Ansar Allah

Alison Thewliss:

[154095]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential consequences of proscribing Ansar Allah as a terrorist organisation on providing humanitarian assistance.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The Government condemns the recent attacks by the Houthis, and maintains that there is no military solution to the conflict. An inclusive political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and

to address the worsening humanitarian crisis, and the UK is using its position as the Yemen penholder at the United Nations to further this cause.

Any decision to proscribe a group is only ever made after careful consideration is given to whether the statutory test – whether the group is concerned in terrorism – is met, and whether the exercise of discretion to proscribe is proportionate.

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

■ **Antisocial Behaviour: Newport West**

Ruth Jones:

[\[156588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of police response to reports of antisocial behaviour in Newport West.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is committed to tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour (ASB). We know the serious impact that persistent anti-social behaviour can have on both individuals and communities.

We provided the police, local authorities, and other local agencies with a range of tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to ASB through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

However, it is for local areas to decide how best to deploy these powers depending on the specific circumstances. They are best placed to understand what is driving the behaviour in question, the impact that it is having, and to determine the most appropriate response.

Home Office statutory guidance was updated in January 2021. It supports for local areas to make effective use of the anti-social behaviour powers. The guidance highlights the importance of multi-agency approaches (this is not limited to use of powers).

On 20 April, I was delighted to chair a roundtable with PCCs to share best practice in responding to ASB.

■ **Asylum: Applications**

Kate Osborne:

[\[154436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many UK asylum applications are currently outstanding; and what is the average time taken to process an application.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: The Home Office publishes data on asylum and resettlement in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of

asylum applications awaiting an initial decision or further review (outstanding applications) are published in table Asy_D03 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets.

Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to December 2021. Data for the period relating to January – March 2022 is set to be published on the 26 May 2022.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

■ Asylum: Interviews

Kate Osborne:

[154435]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have waited (a) over three months, (b) over six months, (c) over one year and (d) over two years for an interview after submitting an application.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: The Home Office are unable to state how many seekers have waited over three months, over six months, over one year and over two years for an interview after submitting an application or the overage time taken to process an application as this information is not published or held in a reportable format.

The Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration, for main applicants only. This data can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics up to: List of tables - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

■ Biometric Residence Permits

Steve McCabe:

[156368]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Biometric Residence Permit cards were issued within the seven to ten day service standard set by her Department once confirmation had been given to the applicant that they could remain in the UK between January and March 2022.

Kevin Foster:

We aim for all BRP's to be delivered within 7 working days of the immigration decision being made.

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

Between January and March 2022, DVLA produced all BRPs within 48 hours of the production request, of which 88.2% were produced within 24 hours. FedEx then attempted to deliver 99.74% of BRPs within the following 48 hours, during this period.

■ Biometric Residence Permits and Work Permits

Dame Meg Hillier:

[153818]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) biometric residence cards, (b) biometric residence permits and (c) frontier working permits were issued in the last 12 months for which data is available.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The information requested is not available in a reportable format.

■ Body Searches: Children

Sarah Jones:

[159048]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish data on the number of strip-searches carried out on children by police forces in England and Wales in each of the last five years.

Rachel Maclean:

The Home Office have recently introduced a data collection on strip searches to the Annual Data Requirement. Police forces will be providing this data for 2021/22 on a voluntary basis, and it is due for publication towards the end of 2022. The data collection will include details on the age of persons strip searched by the police in England and Wales.

However, prior to April 2021 we do not hold data on strip searches

■ Crime: Newport West

Ruth Jones:

[156587]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the trends in the levels of crime in Newport West constituency.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office publishes data on police recorded crime at the level of Police Force Area and Community Safety Partnership. This data is published on the Home Office website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

The Home Office does not publish data at the level of parliamentary constituencies.

■ Crimes of Violence

Emily Thornberry:

[155648]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's report, The economic and social costs of domestic abuse, published on 2 January 2019, whether her Department has made an assessment of what crimes are typically experienced by victims on a repeated and ongoing basis outside of the context of domestic abuse.

Rachel Maclean:

The Home Office has published two reports capturing the costs of crimes that are experienced by victims on a repeated and ongoing basis outside the context of domestic abuse. These reports are namely the 'Economic and social costs of modern slavery' (2018) and 'The economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse' (2021). The methodology applied to calculate costs of repeated offences is consistent between the reports.

The ONS publishes data from the Crime Survey in England and Wales on the proportion of victims who were victimised more than once, and the proportion of incidents experienced by repeat victims in the period between May 2020 and March 2021 (available at [Crime in England and Wales: Annual Trend and Demographic Tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/crimeandjustice/crimeandjusticeinenglandandwales/crimeandjusticeinenglandandwalesannualtrendanddemographicstables), Table D8-9).

Data on repeat victimisation is also available for sexual offences in the year ending 2018 (Available at [Sexual offences: appendix tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/crimeandjustice/crimeandjusticeinenglandandwales/crimeandjusticeinenglandandwalessexualoffencesappendixtables), Table 17)

References:

[The economic and social costs of domestic abuse \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse)

[Economic and social costs of modern slavery - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/economic-and-social-costs-of-modern-slavery)

[The economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-cost-of-contact-child-sexual-abuse)

■ Domestic Abuse: Older People

Daisy Cooper:

[156597]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many domestic abuse charities specialising in support for older people receive funding from the Government.

Rachel Maclean:

Tackling domestic abuse is a key commitment for this Government. That is why we introduced our landmark Domestic Abuse Act to further protections to victims as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators. Last month, we published our Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan which sets out four key areas to improve the response to domestic abuse; Prioritising Prevention, Supporting Victims, Pursuing Perpetrators and creating a Stronger System.

We understand the importance of specialist and 'by and for' services in providing the tailored support that victims and survivors of domestic abuse need. That is why in the

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, the Government committed £1.5 million of funding to specialist services. This funding's core objective is to ensure there is no funding gap in specialist 'by and for' service provisions, including, but not limited to, elderly victims.

The Home Office has also funded Hourglass, a specialist elder abuse charity, for a number of years. In 2020/21, we provided Hourglass with £50,000 of funding to support activity. An additional £106,000 was provided to further bolster their services as part of the response to the Covid-19 crisis, to ensure victims could continue to access support. In 2021-22, the Home Office provided Hourglass over £200,000 to support their work in enhancing their helpline, providing casework support, and training specialist IDVAs, with over 3000 victims being supported in 2021-22 alone. The most recent grant award was £33,000 for an eight-month period of funding for 2022.

Alongside this, our Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan commits over £230 million of new funding, including £140 million on supporting victims of domestic abuse and up to £7.5 million for improving doctors, nurses, midwives and other healthcare professionals' ability to spot, support and refer victims to appropriate services.

The Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care are also jointly leading the Safe Care at Home Review. The review is looking at the protections and the support available to adults at risk of or experiencing abuse in their own homes from people providing their care. As part of the review, we are coordinating inputs from organisations representing those with lived experience, including the elderly, carers and other interested parties. The Review is expected to complete before the end of 2022 and the Terms of Reference for the review have been published on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

■ Fraud

Jonathan Reynolds:

[156426]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of funding available to effectively (a) investigate and (b) prevent fraud and other economic crime.

Damian Hinds:

In total, the SR21 settlement and the Economic Crime Levy represent an overall package of circa £400 million to tackle economic crime over the next three years, including support for the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) and law enforcement.

This investment will allow us to: continue to deliver our in-flight Suspicious Activity Reporting and Illicit Finance programmes, as well as investing in new fraud and anti-money laundering capabilities. For fraud, we will invest in the law enforcement response, work with industry to remove the vulnerabilities that fraudsters exploit online, and replace the current Action Fraud system with a new Fraud and Cyber Reporting and Analysis Service.

■ Fraud: Internet

Jim Shannon:

[157358]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle online financial fraud.

Damian Hinds:

Online fraud is a devastating and pernicious crime can cause devastating financial and emotional harm to victims. The Government has been working with partners in the public and private sectors to keep the public safe and bring these fraudsters to justice.

We have introduced the Online Safety Bill, which will tackle online fraud and fraudulent advertising. Fraud is included as priority offence on the face of the Bill. This means that companies will have to take robust, proactive action to ensure that user-generated fraud is not readily published or exposed to users on their platforms. The Online Safety Bill also contains a fraudulent advertising duty covering Category 1 & 2A companies (user-to-user services with the highest reach and search functions). These duties will have significant impact on some of the highest harm fraud types, including romance, pension and investment frauds.

DCMS is also leading work on developing the Online Advertising Programme, which will be considering further regulation of online advertising which will also help to reduce online fraud.

We have also been working closely with the National Cyber Security Centre who launched their Suspicious Email Reporting Service in April 2020. This has already led to over 11 million reports received and the removal of over 78,000 scams and 144,000 harmful websites to date. 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.

Industry have been working hard on tackling the threat of online fraud, including through the Online Fraud Steering Group (OFSG), which is a public-private group co-chaired by the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC), UK Finance and Tech UK.

■ Health Services: Refugees

Rachael Maskell:

[155816]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if York Hospital and health services will receive additional funding in the light of the proposals for Linton on Ouse centre for refugees.

Kevin Foster:

Supported asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute are entitled to NHS care whilst their claim for international protection is considered. The Home Office does not directly fund Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's), the funding of healthcare is a matter for the Department of Health and Social Care.

The Home Office will work closely with national and local health partners to discuss healthcare provision for Linton-on-Ouse and ensure the services commissioned are appropriate, minimising the impact on local health services.

■ Hillsborough Families' Experiences Review

Caroline Lucas:

[\[156419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to use the forthcoming Queen's Speech to bring forward proposals for a Hillsborough law, based on the recommendations set out in the 2017 Government commissioned report by The Right Reverend James Jones KBE, *The Patronising Disposition of Unaccountable Power*; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office is coordinating the Government's overarching response to the Bishop's report and has been working closely with its partners in the relevant government departments and organisations to carefully consider all of the points of learning, including the Hillsborough Law.

The Home Secretary has committed to engaging with the bereaved families of the Hillsborough disaster on the Government's proposed responses to the points of learning prior to publishing a full response this year.

■ Home Office: Information Officers

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[154026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many communications staff in her Department are employed (a) full time, (b) part time and (c) under flexible working arrangements.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The number of staff working in the Home Office to deliver the communications function currently is 134.

129 are employed on full time contracts and 5 are employed on part time contracts.

Working from home is an indicator of a flexible working arrangement and all staff in the Communications Directorate at the Home Office work to a hybrid model.

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[154027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department spends on communications staff on average each year.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: Expenditure on communications staffing in the Home Office in this financial year is £8.7m.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme**Dame Diana Johnson:****[143628]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how long her Department expects DBS checks to take on UK households offering shelter to Ukrainian refugees.

Rachel Maclean:

In relation to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as at 21 April 2022, DBS has continued to complete 80% of Enhanced with Barred List Checks within 14 calendar days, and 80% of Basic checks in 2 calendar days, as set out in published service standards. From initial modelling, the DBS are confident that they can manage likely demand for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and to continue to meet published service standards.

For Enhanced checks, additional time may sometimes be needed – for example if further police information is required - but at the end of February the average DBS turnaround time for an Enhanced check was 8.8 days, significantly quicker than the 14-day target.

The DBS provide daily data to Home Office on performance on turning around Homes for Ukraine checks and I am delighted to say current performance highlights 82.96% of basic checks are being turned around in 2 days and 99.8% of enhanced checks in 14 days, this exceeds our service standards.

Your constituents can track the progress of their DBS applications online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/track-a-dbs-application>

Caroline Lucas:**[156420]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Homes for Ukraine applications have been received to date; and of those applications, how many have been processed (a) within the 48-hour target turnaround time, (b) within seven days, (c) within 14 days and (d) in a timespan longer than 14 days.

Caroline Lucas:**[156421]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Homes for Ukraine applications were submitted in March 2022; and of those applications how many (a) have been processed, (b) are under consideration and (c) are yet to be processed by her Department.

Kevin Foster:

Information on the number of visas granted under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme can be found in our published data on the GOV.UK webpage: [Ukraine Schemes: application data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-schemes-application-data).

Information requested that is not contained within this published data is not routinely captured. To capture numbers would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

Emma Hardy: [156574]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to publish a step-by-step guide to the Homes for Ukraine scheme to enable full understanding of the process for applicants.

Emma Hardy: [156575]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the current waiting period in the Homes for Ukraine scheme from registering interest to receiving an update from the Home Office regarding the status of an application.

Kevin Foster:

The current guidance for those wishing to apply to the Homes for Ukraine scheme is available on the GOV.UK webpage: [Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions).

Dave Doogan: [157547]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 154538 on Homes for Ukraine Scheme, whether any applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme made on 18 and 19 March 2022 have been lost.

Dave Doogan: [157579]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 154539 on Homes for Ukraine Scheme, how many and what proportion of applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme have been lost as of 21 April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office is not aware any applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme have been lost.

We have received thousands of applications for the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme and in just five weeks, over 71,000 visas have now been issued so people can rebuild their lives in the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Vetting

Sarah Olney: [150250]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time taken is for a DBS check to be completed for applicants to the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Rachel Maclean:

In relation to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as at 21 April 2022, DBS has continued to complete 80% of Enhanced with Barred List Checks within 14 calendar days, and 80% of Basic checks in 2 calendar days, as set out in published service standards. From initial modelling, the DBS are confident that they can manage likely demand for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and to continue to meet published service standards.

For Enhanced checks, additional time may sometimes be needed – for example if further police information is required - but at the end of February the average DBS turnaround time for an Enhanced check was 8.8 days, significantly quicker than the 14-day target.

The DBS provide daily data to Home Office on performance on turning around Homes for Ukraine checks and I am delighted to say current performance highlights 82.96% of basic checks are being turned around in 2 days and 99.8% of enhanced checks in 14 days, this exceeds our service standards.

Your constituents can track the progress of their DBS applications online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/track-a-dbs-application>.

■ Immigration: Veterans

Dan Jarvis: [155749]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 February 2022, HCWS624, on Outcome of Public Consultation on Settlement Fees for Non-UK Service Personnel, whether people who qualify under the new policy will be able to make an application in the Visa Application Centre in Tappoo City, Suva, Fiji.

Dan Jarvis: [155750]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 February 2022, HCWS624, on Outcome of Public Consultation on Settlement Fees for Non-UK Service Personnel, whether non-UK veterans who qualify under the new policy living outside the UK will be required to pay the immigration health surcharge to regularise their immigration status.

Dan Jarvis: [155751]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 February 2022, HCWS624, on Outcome of Public Consultation on Settlement Fees for Non-UK Service Personnel, whether her Department has plans to introduce a bespoke application form for people who qualify under the new policy.

Dan Jarvis: [155752]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 February 2022, HCWS624, on Outcome of Public Consultation on Settlement Fees for Non-UK Service Personnel, whether non-UK veterans who qualify under the new policy living outside the UK will be required to meet criteria on (a) minimum income requirement, (b) sponsorship and (c) proof of accommodation; and whether her Department plans to offer support to help people to meet qualifying criteria.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Applications for settlement from non-UK HM Armed Forces veterans under Appendix Armed Forces are made online. Applicants outside of the UK can choose, in the online form, any Visa Application Centre to attend and complete the application process. There is no requirement to pay an immigration

health surcharge in a settlement application. This is also the case for those who qualify for the settlement fee waiver policy which came into effect on 6 April.

To avoid creating a separate, bespoke application form, the existing settlement application forms have been updated with questions to identify those who qualify for the settlement fee waiver.

Non-UK HM Armed Forces veterans who apply for settlement by themselves, whether inside or outside the UK, are not required to meet criteria on a minimum income requirement, sponsorship, or proof of accommodation.

■ **Martin Banks**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[153709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the circumstances leading to the detention of journalist, Martin Banks, by the UK Border Force on 26 February 2022.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: We do not comment on individual cases.

Border Force's number one priority is to maintain a secure border, and we will not compromise on this.

While it is not possible to reveal the details of how security checks at the border operate, Border Force undertakes to perform 100 per cent checks on scheduled passengers arriving in the UK.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Alison Thewliss:

[\[154096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to issue a response to constituent, Ozbey Dinler, awaiting confirmation of his naturalisation application which was granted 4 January 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Responses have been sent to Mr Dinler's email address on 4 January and 30 March in accordance with his declared preference. A paper copy has now been sent to his postal address.

■ **Money Laundering and Terrorism: Africa**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[157314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to include assessments of the cross-border money laundering risks faced and posed by the UK to countries in Africa in the next National Risk Assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing.

Damian Hinds:

The UK National Risk Assessment (NRA) of money laundering and terrorist financing sets out how criminals try to move illicit funds through the UK and the risks this poses.

The NRA is primarily a domestic assessment of businesses and sectors that are vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist financing risks. It does not include information on the risks posed by the UK to other jurisdictions. However, it does include an assessment of cross-border risks. In the most recent NRA (2020), Africa is referenced in relation to organised immigration crime, international terrorism and the portability of luxury and wholesale goods across borders.

Africa may feature in the next NRA if countries are identified as a risk, based on the NRA methodology and the intelligence picture at that time.

Motor Vehicles: Theft**Jim Shannon:****[157360]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help tackle the theft of keyless vehicles.

Kit Malthouse:

We are continuing to work closely with police and motor manufacturers through the National Vehicle Crime Working Group to tackle vehicle-related thefts. This includes taking forward discussions with manufacturers about how to further build intelligence to prevent thefts of vehicles using electronic compromise.

The National Vehicle Crime Working Group has established a horizon-scanning group to identify potential future trends, threats and vulnerability in vehicle security and vehicle-related crime. Through this group we engage closely with academics, vehicle manufacturers and policing leads to undertake research and implement actions to mitigate future opportunities to criminally exploit technological and design changes in the automotive industry.

National Crime Agency: Standards**Ms Lyn Brown:****[157313]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 March 2022 to Question 143639, if she will publish data relating to the proportions of (a) money laundering cases under investigation, (b) value of assets subject to restraint, (c) value of assets confiscated, (d) value of assets enforced, (e) value of assets returned from confiscation work and (f) other performance measures in relation to (i) geographic regions of the countries affected, and (ii) income levels of the countries affected.

Damian Hinds:

Statistics on the proceeds of crime restrained and confiscated are published every year by the Home Office in the Asset Recovery Statistical Bulletin. The link to the latest release can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/asset-recovery-statistics>.

Annex B of the Statistical bulletin sets out the total value of proceeds of crime returned to foreign governments under the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and where the UK exercises its discretion to return funds in appropriate cases when it is not otherwise mandated under UNCAC.

■ Passports: Applications

Gavin Newlands:

[154090]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for British passports were awaiting issuance more than (a) 10 weeks, (b) 14 weeks, (c) 18 weeks, (d) 26 weeks and (e) 39 weeks after the application as of 1 April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

The information requested is not currently held in a reportable format and could therefore only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mick Whitley:

[154410]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle delays in the (a) processing and (b) issuing of passports.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Due to COVID-19, over 5 million people have delayed applying for a British passport in 2020 and 2021. Since April 2021 British passport applicants have been advised to allow up to ten weeks to get their passport. However, Her Majesty's Passport Office continues to ensure its customers receive their passport as quickly as possible and has worked alongside its suppliers to develop ways to maximise its ability to cope with and level at unprecedented demand.

HM Passport Office has deployed a range of tried and tested contingency arrangements, which includes the increasing of resources through recruitment and enabling the flexing of resources from across the Home Office and other government departments. In addition, technical solutions, such as its latest application system, mean more passport applications are securely processed with fewer manual interventions to enable them to be processed more quickly.

In March 2022 HMPO decided over a million passport applications, the highest recorded in any month to date.

Navendu Mishra:

[155936]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications are refused each year due to failing to meet the counter-signatory eligibility criteria.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: A passport application will not be refused on the basis of an unacceptable countersignatory or digital referee. If the person helping to confirm the applicant's identity is not accepted, the customer will be asked to provide a new, acceptable countersignatory or digital referee.

The number of countersignatories or digital referees who have not been accepted is not held in a reportable format and could therefore only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

■ Police National Computer

Naz Shah: [158984]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she will review the national retention rules for the police national computer system to bring them in line with the management of police information principles of proportionality and necessity.

Kit Malthouse:

The retention rules for the Police National Computer are set by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), and are currently under review.

The NPCC, working closely with criminal justice partners, the Home Office, the Information Commissioner's Office as well as key stakeholders, are exploring as part of this review whether any changes should be made.

In doing so, the review team will consider the implications of the five chief constables case and the more recent Broadfoot judgment ([2021 PNC retention judgment](#)).

■ Police: Training

Claire Hanna: [154479]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to help ensure that specialist mandatory training for all police and other relevant government agencies is in place to support black women and girls affected by domestic abuse.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is committed to ensuring that all victims of violence against women and girls get the support they need. The Valerie's Law petition calls for police and agency training to help them better understand the lived experiences, needs and barriers of black women affected by domestic abuse. We know that domestic abuse affects a disparate group and that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate, especially for ethnic minority victims. Training is an important part of tackling and responding to domestic abuse, but this needs to form part of a wider approach of guidance and support.

We recognise the aims of the Valerie's Law petition and agree it is essential that police receive the right training to respond effectively, regardless of the victim's background. The College of Policing's foundation includes police ethics and self-understanding, hate crimes, ethics and equalities, and policing without bias. Specialist training for officers dealing routinely with public protection issues explores these issues in more depth and detail.

The College of Policing has also developed specialist training, the 'Domestic Abuse Matters' programme, which helps first responders dealing with an incident or report. This considers the needs of different victims, including those from a diverse black

community and ethnic minority communities. This training is being delivered to the majority of forces already, and the Home Office will provide up to £3.3 million over three years to support further delivery.

The new full-time National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls, DCC Maggie Blyth, has included building trust and confidence as a key pillar for delivery: this includes working with charities supporting ethnic minority women and girls to avoid their specific needs being overlooked.

Finally, the Government committed during the Parliamentary debate to meeting with the College of Policing and with representative community organisations to ensure that police training continues to address these issues fully and effectively.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Steve McCabe:

[\[153717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress her Department has made on processing applications to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Over 15,000 people were supported to come to the UK directly following the evacuation of Afghanistan, and a further 2,000 have since arrived. The Home Office will publish the number of people being offered protection under UK Resettlement programmes in its quarterly Immigration Statistics. The next publication will be in May 2022.

■ Refugees: Linton-on-Ouse

Rachael Maskell:

[\[155817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to ensure that hon. Members are (a) briefed and (b) kept up to date with developments at Linton-on-Ouse relating to proposals for refugees.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[155819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to ensure that applications for asylum from people placed in Linton-on-Ouse are processed in a timely manner to prevent deportation and subsequent re-patronisation to the UK.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[155820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to ensure that refugees identified for placement at Linton-on-Ouse who have a family connection in the UK are able choose where they stay in the UK.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[155822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with relevant stakeholders on how York City of Sanctuary may be able to support refugees in Linton-on-Ouse.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: As part of the plans to use Linton-on-Ouse as asylum accommodation, the Home Office intends to support asylum seekers to undertake their asylum application. This support involves processing their claims on site and supporting those who would otherwise be destitute

Destitute asylum seekers who are supported under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 may be accommodated by the Home Office. Where individuals have a connection in the UK with friends or family, they are entitled to reside with them. As part of ongoing engagement and prior to the site opening, The Home Office will engage with relevant and key stakeholders. Non-Government Organisations will also be encouraged to support the social and cultural needs of residents at Linton.

The Home Office will work closely with local political leaders (including their officials), the Local Authority and other partners to discuss developments at Linton-on-Ouse. Key local partners and stakeholders were notified of the plans for Linton at the earliest opportunity and we will continue to engage and consult with key partners and stakeholders as plans develop through scheduled meetings and forums including the Multi-Agency Forum.

■ Refugees: Russia**Ian Murray:****[155691]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department provides (a) schemes and (b) support to Russian nationals fleeing repression and wishing to join their Ukrainian families seeking asylum in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: There are a range of safe and legal routes for individuals to come to the UK should they wish to join family members here, or to work or study. They would need to meet the requirements of the relevant Immigration Rule under which they were applying to qualify for a visa.

While we do not allow asylum claims from abroad, all asylum claims lodged from within the UK, which includes those from Russian nationals, are given full and careful consideration so we do not remove anyone who faces persecution or serious harm on return to their country of origin. Protection is normally granted where a claimant has a well-founded fear of persecution under the Refugee Convention or their circumstances engage our obligations under Article 3 ECHR.

With regards to the Ukraine Family Scheme, this provides an immediate pathway for people from Ukraine with family already in the UK to come here. This is open to Ukrainians with immediate or extended family settled in the UK. Ukrainians can apply to the scheme from any country, including the UK. The Ukraine Family Scheme allows immediate and extended family members of British nationals, people settled in the UK, and certain others resident here, to come to the country. We continue to keep our support under review and will adapt and develop the visa routes in place to ensure they keep pace with the rapidly shifting situation in Ukraine.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Mary Kelly Foy:

[154407]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many emails to the Ukraine Urgent MP Enquires address were awaiting response as of 1 April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: The Home Office does not capture data specifically covering the number of enquiries to the urgent inbox, but all enquiries to this inbox are dealt with as a priority.

Ben Lake:

[155884]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what financial support is available for individuals who enter the UK under the Ukraine Family Visa Scheme and their UK based families.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme are given access to work, benefits and public services as laid down in the Appendix Ukraine to the Immigration Rules, details of which can be found at:

[Immigration Rules Appendix Ukraine Scheme - Immigration Rules - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-ukraine-scheme)

Darren Jones:

[157487]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what financial support is available to individuals who are supporting refugees entering the UK via the Ukraine Family Visa scheme.

Kevin Foster:

There is no specific financial support available to those who choose to sponsor family members to join them in the UK. This includes those sponsoring under the Ukraine Family Scheme.

However, Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme are given access to work, benefits and public services as laid down in Appendix Ukraine to the Immigration Rules, details of which can be found at:

[Immigration Rules Appendix Ukraine Scheme - Immigration Rules - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-ukraine-scheme)

■ Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships

Ben Lake:

[156570]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of enabling the registration of deaths to take place remotely, rather than requiring attendance at a register office to formally register a death.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Regulations have been introduced which will allow information to be collected by telephone before attendance at a register office to formally register a death.

The General Register Office for England and Wales is exploring options to bring forward amendments to primary legislation which would allow for registration to be completed by telephone in the future.

■ Sexual Offences and Stalking**Emily Thornberry:****[155647]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's report, The economic and social costs of domestic abuse, published on 2 January 2019, whether her Department has produced estimates for the cost of (a) indecent exposure, (b) sexual touching and (c) stalking outside of the context of domestic abusive.

Rachel Maclean:

The Home Office has published multiple reports that cost the impact of crimes outside the context of domestic abuse (which is covered in 'The economic and social costs of domestic abuse', 2019). Reports that incorporate costs of indecent exposure, unwanted sexual touching, or stalking are outlined below.

The Home Office report 'The economic and social costs of crime' (2018) provides an estimate for the cost of indecent exposure and unwanted sexual touching. These are considered part of the broader category of "other sexual offences", which includes indecent exposure, unwanted sexual touching, and assault by penetration excluding rape (as recorded by the Crime Survey England and Wales). The unit cost for these sexual offences is estimated at £6,520.

Separately, the Home Office has costed the impact of sexual touching alongside other contact offences in the context of child sexual abuse captured in 'The economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse' (Home Office, 2021). The unit cost for contact child sexual abuse is estimated at £89,240. However, as this unit cost aggregates the impact of sexual touching with other crimes found in the context of child sexual abuse such as rape it is not directly comparable to the unit cost referenced in previous paragraph.

Home Office has produced cost estimates for stalking only in the context of domestic abuse which was published in 'The economic and social costs of domestic abuse' (2019). The ONS publishes information on the nature of stalking, including information on all stalking incidents as well as domestic abuse-related stalking.

[Stalking: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

References:

[The economic and social costs of domestic abuse \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[The economic and social costs of crime \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[The economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

■ Temporary Accommodation: Migrants

Gordon Henderson:

[153917]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many migrants were housed in hotels in the latest period for which figures are available.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The Home Office accommodates some supported asylum seekers and resettled Afghans temporarily in hotels. The number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority, although not broken down into hotels or other accommodation can be found at Asylum and resettlement datasets - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 24 February 2022. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in May 2022. There are currently over 12,000 resettled Afghans in bridging accommodation. This cohort includes Afghan nationals who may be eligible for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and British nationals.

■ Terrorism: Birmingham

Peter Kyle:

[156551]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on the potential merits of a public inquiry on the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings.

Damian Hinds:

The attacks on the Mulberry Bush and Tavern In The Town public houses on 21 November 1974 were horrific events. I recognise the desire to see those responsible brought to justice.

There is an ongoing criminal investigation by West Midlands Police into the bombings. It would be inappropriate to make a decision on whether to establish a public inquiry into the circumstances of the bombings before the investigation has concluded.

■ Visas

Christine Jardine:

[155885]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many holders of Tier 1 Investor visas have claimed non-domiciled tax status in each of the last ten years.

Christine Jardine:

[155886]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many holders of Tier 1 investor visas who have been sanctioned have claimed non-domiciled status in the UK in each of the last ten years.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Eligibility for entry and stay under the Tier 1 (Investor) route has not been dependent on any specific legally available tax statuses. The Home Office does not therefore routinely hold data concerning the tax status of applicants. The use of available tax provisions and by whom is ultimately a matter for the tax authorities.

■ **Visas: Applications****Sir Geoffrey Cox:**[\[150104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to simplify the online visa application process; what recent assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the format of that process; and if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of making that process available in (a) Ukrainian and (b) other languages.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: The Home Office is continually making efforts to simplify the application process for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion, and keeps this under regular review.

As a result of this continuing review, the webpage for the Ukrainian Family scheme and the factsheet for Ukrainians looking to apply for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme are available in English, Russian and Ukrainian.

Julian Sturdy:[\[153927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff were working in European visa centres during the weeks commencing (a) 7, (b) 14, (c) 21 and (d) 28 March 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The number of staff working in the Visa Application Centres (VACs) in Europe, which are operated by TLS Contact on behalf of UKVI, is not publicly available. However, in response to the recent increased demand in some VACs neighbouring Ukraine, UKVI surged additional staff to help meet demand and support people through the process as quickly as possible and significantly increased the number of appointments available in those locations.

■ **Visas: Migrant Workers****Mr Alistair Carmichael:**[\[149176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the visa waiver for foreign workers on offshore windfarms will be extended beyond July 2022.

Kevin Foster:

The offshore wind farm worker concession was extended earlier this year on 2 July until 1 July 2022, to allow foreign nationals to work in the construction and maintenance of offshore wind projects in UK territorial waters.

The Government is committed to promoting job opportunities for local labour and will always encourage employers to look to the domestic workforce first.

We regularly review all concessions and will be considering the future of this concession and its place in the wider immigration system ahead of it expiring in July.

■ Visas: Seasonal Workers

Carla Lockhart:

[154511]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people applied to the Government's temporary visa scheme for poultry workers, pork butchers or heavy goods vehicle drivers to transport food.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: Paragraph 1.3.2 on the Gov.Uk page below provides the published statistics for HGV Drivers, Poultry Workers and Pork Butchers.

[Why do people come to the UK? To work - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-work)

■ Visas: Ukraine

Julian Sturdy:

[153925]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the total number of hours staff in her Department spent on processing visa applications for Ukrainian refugees during the weeks commencing (a) 7, (b) 14, (c) 21 and (d) 28 March 2022.

Julian Sturdy:

[153926]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many full-time equivalent staff in her Department were processing visa applications for Ukrainian refugees during the weeks commencing (a) 7, (b) 14, (c) 21 and (d) 28 March 2022.

Kevin Foster:

We have received thousands of applications submitted to one of the fastest and largest visa programmes in UK history.

We are committed to ensuring our operational teams have the resources they need to run an efficient and effective system. We actively monitor workflows to ensure sufficient resources are in place to meet caseworking demand of the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme which we have launched in response to the refugee crisis.

The Home Office and the commercial provider operating our Visa Application Centres have surged staff across Europe to meet demand and UKVI staff in the UK are working seven days a week to process applications.

To capture the detailed information on staff numbers and hours worked would incur disproportionate cost.

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[154020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to enable (a) Ukrainians and (b) Ukrainians with a biometric passport to travel to the UK without a visa.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The Government has no plans to enable Ukrainians to travel to the UK without a visa.

From 15 March, Ukrainians who are eligible for the Ukraine Family Scheme or Homes for Ukraine Scheme with valid passports have been able to apply and get permission to come to the UK, fully online, from wherever they are; and have been able to give their biometrics once in the UK.

Visas are an important security tool. There is a risk hostile actors or other individuals with links to serious and organised crime or corruption could exploit the arrangement to travel to the UK undetected if security checks are not in place and we will not unnecessarily put the UK's security at risk. Already, people have presented at the border with fake documents pretending to be Ukrainian.

The visa process also allows safeguarding checks to be preformed in relation to vulnerable adults and children travelling to the UK.

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[154021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to enable Ukrainians in the UK whose visas expired prior to January 2022 to apply for the Ukraine Extension Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

Ukrainian nationals will only be able to qualify under the Ukraine Extension Scheme if they were in the UK with immigration permission on 18 March 2022, or if their last permission ended after 1 January 2022. The Government has no plans to change these criteria, although those whose visas expired before this date may be eligible for other routes to regularise their status, providing they meet the eligibility criteria.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[154405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Ukrainian nationals have had visas revoked before entry to the UK as of 1 April 2022.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[154406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how long the average wait for visas applied for under the Homes for Ukraine scheme is as of 1 April 2022.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[154408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many pregnant women were allocated visas via (a) the Ukrainian Family Scheme and (b) the Homes for Ukraine scheme as of 1 April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Information on the number of visas granted under the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme can be found in our published data on the GOV.UK webpage: Ukraine Schemes: application data - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Information requested not contained within this published data is not routinely captured. To capture numbers would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

Stephen Farry:[\[154492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in what order visa applications under the Homes for Ukraine scheme are being processed.

Kevin Foster:

Applications are normally processed in date order from when your documents were uploaded, or after an appointment at a visa application centre.

Mr Barry Sheerman:[\[155589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people under the Ukraine Family Scheme visa have settled in the Huddersfield constituency since 24 February 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Information on the number of visas granted under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme can be found in our published data on the GOV.UK webpage: Ukraine Schemes: application data - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Information requested that is not contained within this published data is not routinely captured. To capture numbers would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

Hywel Williams:[\[155592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the ability for individuals granted Ukraine Family scheme visas under exceptional circumstances to fully access benefits and public services.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Applicants coming to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme, including those granted under exceptional circumstances, are given access to work, benefits and public services as laid down in Appendix Ukraine to the Immigration Rules, details of which can be found at:

[Immigration Rules Appendix Ukraine Scheme - Immigration Rules - Guidance - GOV.UK \(\[www.gov.uk\]\(http://www.gov.uk\)\)](#).

Paul Blomfield:[\[155696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the conditions are for Ukrainians in the UK on (a) family visas and (b) the Homes for Ukraine Scheme regarding

leaving the UK and returning; and whether there are restrictions regarding their leave and visa conditions such as those in the UK on Tier 2 and Tier 4 visas.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Ukrainians in the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme are not subject to conditions linked to leaving and returning to the UK. Successful applicants are granted three years' leave to remain, and can work and access public services during this time.

Sarah Olney:

[\[156567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Department has a policy in place to ensure that visa applications for members of the same Ukrainian family are processed simultaneously, to help ensure that whole families are able to receive their visas at the same time and travel together.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Applications are normally processed in date order from when documents were uploaded, or after an appointment at a Visa Application Centre (VAC).

However, as part of the Home Office's commitment to make it easier for applicants to apply to our schemes, Ukrainians with valid passports no longer need to go to a Visa Application Centre to give their biometrics before they come to the UK. This revision to the process can mean that applicants who submitted their applications at the same time, but via different biometric routes, may not receive their visas at the same time.

Yvette Cooper:

[\[157276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting times are between a visa being issued and a decision letter being sent to applicants under the (a) Ukraine Family Scheme and (b) Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The information you have requested is not contained within published data. To provide this information would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Department for International Trade: Visits Abroad

Emily Thornberry:

[\[155609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April 2022 to Question 149191 and her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 23 January 2020, whether the total cost to the public purse of her predecessor's accommodation, meals and other expenses excluding travel when visiting New York in September 2019 was £3.00; and who paid for any costs incurred above that amount.

Penny Mordaunt:

There was a typo in my answer of [6 April](#). The correct cost of the flight was £5,575.72. The department's transparency return published in January 2020 included flight costs only.

Transparency returns include the best information available to the department at the time of publication. On some visits, accommodation, transport and other services are provided by Embassies or host governments. Information on the costs of these services is not centrally held.

Emily Thornberry:[\[155622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April to Question 149189 and her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 23 January 2020, (a) whether the total cost to the public purse of her predecessor's accommodation, meals and other expenses excluding travel when visiting Washington DC in August 2019 was £0.00; and (b) who paid for any costs incurred above that amount.

Emily Thornberry:[\[155623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April 2022 to Question 149190, on Department for International Trade: Aviation, and her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 23 January 2020, whether the total cost to the public purse of her predecessor's accommodation, meals and other expenses, excluding travel, when visiting New Zealand, Australia, Japan in September 2019 was £0.00; and who paid for any costs incurred above that amount.

Emily Thornberry:[\[155624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April 2022 to Question 149192, on Department for International Trade: Aviation, and her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 4 February 2021, whether the total cost to the public purse of her predecessor's accommodation, meals and other expenses, excluding travel, when visiting Washington DC in August 2020 was £274.12; and who paid for any costs incurred above that amount.

Emily Thornberry:[\[155625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the answer of 6 April 2022 to Question 149193, on Department for International Trade: Aviation, and her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 15 July 2021, whether the total cost to the public purse of her predecessor's accommodation, meals and other expenses, excluding travel, when visiting India in February 2021 was £509.65; and who paid for any costs incurred above that amount.

Emily Thornberry:[\[155626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April 2022 to Question 149194, on Department for International Trade: Aviation, and her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 21 October 2021, whether the

total cost to the public purse of her predecessor's accommodation, meals and other expenses, excluding travel, when visiting the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in April 2021 was £259.87; and who paid for any costs incurred above that amount.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April 2022 to Question 149195, on Department for International Trade: Aviation, and her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 21 October 2021, whether the total cost to the public purse of her predecessor's accommodation, meals and other expenses, excluding travel, when visiting Israel in June 2021 was £989.39; and who paid for any costs incurred above that amount.

Penny Mordaunt:

Transparency returns include the best information available to the department at the time of publication. On some visits, accommodation, transport and other services are provided by Embassies or host governments. Information on the costs of these services is not centrally held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 146, on Trade Agreements: Japan, whether she plans to correct her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 7 May 2021 to reflect the accurate cost to the public purse of her predecessor's subsistence and other expenses excluding travel when visiting Japan in October 2020.

Emily Thornberry: [\[155629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, further to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 147, whether she plans to correct her Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 7 May 2021 to reflect the cost to the public purse of her predecessor's accommodation, subsistence and other expenses excluding travel when visiting Singapore and Vietnam in December 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

The declaration will be updated in the next 30 days.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia and New Zealand

Emily Thornberry: [\[150119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much departmental expenditure she has allocated over the next four years for the costs of implementing the UK's trade agreements with (a) Australia and (b) New Zealand.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department has begun preparing for implementation of the Australia and New Zealand Free Trade Agreements. This is a cross-government effort, with teams considering pre-entry into force legislative and domestic preparations, and implementation post entry into force.

DIT has allocated £46.3m in 2022-23, £48.3m in 2023-24 and £48.5m in 2024-25 for the negotiation and implementation of free trade agreements, however, it is not possible to identify funding solely for the implementation of the UK's trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand. The Department has no allocated funding for 2025-26.

■ Trade Agreements: Females

Ms Anum Qaisar:

[\[906472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the extent to which UK free trade agreements support women's rights and gender equality.

Penny Mordaunt:

Promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment is central to the Government's 'Modernising Trade' agenda and features explicitly in UK negotiation objectives.

We are using our FTAs to open new opportunities for women. We have already secured dedicated chapters with Japan, Australia, and New Zealand as well as important additional commitments across these agreements.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Mr Peter Bone:

[\[906470\]](#)

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

Penny Mordaunt:

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

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade attended the first UK-US Future of Atlantic Trade Dialogue last month and hosted the second in Aberdeen this week to progress mutual priorities with USTR Katherine Tai.

■ World Trade Organization: China

John Spellar:

[\[155575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment her Department has made of the level of compliance by China of its World Trade Organisation obligations.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK statement at China's World Trade Organization Trade Policy Review in October 2021 sets out the Department's position on China's level of compliance.

We recognise China's progress but have called on China to fully meet the commitments set out in its Accession Protocol. We have concerns about lack of

transparency in various areas, including subsidies and state-owned enterprises, and practices which distort markets.

The statement can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/wto-trade-policy-review-of-china-uk-statement>.

JUSTICE

■ Family Proceedings

Emily Thornberry: [155653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's report, Assessing risk of harm to children and parents in private law children cases, published on 25 June 2020, when he expects the President of the Family Division to (a) promote the statement of practice recommended in Section 11.3 of the report and (b) incorporate that statement of practice into the Child Arrangements Programme.

Emily Thornberry: [155654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's report, Assessing risk of harm to children and parents in private law children cases, published on 25 June 2020, what contact he has had with the President of the Family Division regarding the implementation of the Practice Direction recommended in Section 11.3 of that report.

James Cartlidge:

In response to the Expert Panel's report 'Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Children Cases', the Government committed to working with all key partners in the family justice system to design a statement of practice for cases raising issues of domestic abuse or other risks of harm. This statement of practice will take into account provisions made in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the recently published [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#), and learning from the development of the Integrated Domestic Abuse Court investigative approach pilots. Work on developing this statement will be progressed jointly by system leaders with oversight from the Family Justice Board. The Family Justice Board is jointly chaired by Ministers from the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education. Any decision to incorporate a new statement of practice into the Child Arrangements Programme will be made by the President of the Family Division.

■ Judges: Family Proceedings

Emily Thornberry: [155655]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adherence of judges in Family Courts to Practice Directions; and what steps he is taking to help ensure adherence to those Directions.

James Cartlidge:

The Government has not made any overall assessment of the adherence of Family Court judges to Practice Directions. The independence of the judiciary is a fundamental principle in the constitutional separation of powers and the rule of law, and it would be inappropriate for ministers to comment on individual judicial decision making or the individual adherence of family court judges to Practice Directions. In 2019, the government announced a Call for Evidence to consider how effectively the family courts respond to allegations of domestic abuse and other risk of harm to children and parent victims in private law children proceedings, overseen by an Expert Panel. This call for evidence and the final report of the Expert Panel considered, amongst other things how Practice Direction 12J, Practice Direction 3AA and Part 3A of the Family Procedure Rules were being applied.

The Government is now working to deliver the commitments set out in the Implementation Plan published in response to the final report. As part of this, we are working with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and Victims Commissioner to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism to better understand what is happening in private law proceedings involving domestic abuse.

Emily Thornberry:[\[155656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will implement mandatory training of judges in Family Courts in relation to domestic abuse to help increase their understanding of the issues they are dealing with in private law children cases.

James Cartlidge:

It is not constitutionally appropriate for judicial training to be mandated, monitored and/or overseen by the Secretary of State. 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. Training responsibilities are exercised through the Judicial College. The judiciary and professional staff in the Judicial College are responsible for the design, content, and delivery of judicial training.

Refreshed and updated specialist digital training on domestic abuse was launched in October 2021 for all family judges and magistrates. This training year (2022/23), the Judicial College is also running bespoke training on domestic abuse for all family and civil judges and new training that addresses the attitudinal and behavioural issues raised in recent caselaw, the MoJ Harm Report and the Domestic Abuse Act will be rolled out from April 2022.

■ Ministry of Justice: Public Expenditure**Emily Thornberry:**[\[155657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department last published monthly transparency data for spending over £25,000; what month that data covered; and when her Department plans to publish spending data for subsequent months.

James Cartlidge:

The Department's last published monthly transparency data for spending over £25,000 was for the month of March 2021, published on 22 April 2022.

Further data is currently going through the Department's formal clearance process. The Department plans to publish data up to the end of November 2021 within the next month.

■ Personation: Prosecutions**Steve Reed:****[157371]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what data his Department holds on the number of successful prosecutions for identity fraud in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

The number of prosecutions for identity fraud cannot be identified separately from broader fraud offences in data held centrally and published here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063892/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2020-revised.xlsx.

Information on identity fraud may be held on court records, but to be able to identify these cases would require examining individual court transcripts which would be of disproportionate cost.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Information Officers****Deidre Brock:****[155781]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many communications staff are employed by his Department (a) full time, (b) part time and (c) on flexible working arrangements as of 19 April 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

As of 19 April 2022 this Department's communications function employed 73 payroll staff, of which 68 were (a) full time and 5 were (b) part time staff. 2 of those working full time have a formal (c) flexible working arrangement in place.

Deidre Brock:**[156498]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much his Department spent on communications staff in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

Eddie Hughes:

Expenditure on communications staffing across the following financial years are: (a) 2019-20: £4,309,000

(b) 2020-21: £4,497,000

(c) 2021-22 : £4,256,000

■ Evictions

Rachael Maskell:

[156528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of the use of section 21 notices for properties to subsequently be changed from a private rented or student rented house into a short-term holiday let.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department does not hold data on the prevalence of the use of section 21 notices for properties to subsequently be changed from a private rented or student rented house into a short-term let.

The Department is committed to increasing security of tenure by abolishing section 21 evictions and we will publish a landmark White Paper later this Spring that will set out proposals to create a fairer and better quality private rented sector.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is also planning to launch a call for evidence in 2022 to seek views on a range of issues that arise from the increase in short-term letting, including housing supply, health and safety regulations compliance and anti-social behaviour. The call for evidence will be followed by a consultation, which will enable the Government to put forward proportionate policy options based on a firm evidence base.

■ Help to Buy Scheme

Navendu Mishra:

[155937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department will reassess the limit on the Help to Buy scheme to reflect current property valuations.

Stuart Andrew:

In 2021 the new Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme introduced regional property price caps which set the maximum purchase price in each region. They are all set at 1.5 times the forecast regional average first-time buyer price, in line with the Office of Budget Responsibility's house price inflation forecast for 2021/22, up to a maximum of £600,000 in London.

The caps were designed to support the purchase of properties that are more consistent with the wider first-time buyer market. This in turn helps optimise the resources available to enable purchasers to achieve the dream of home ownership. The Government has reviewed the caps and continue to be satisfied they allow good availability of first-time buyer type properties in each region. For customers who are not able to utilise the Help to Buy scheme, the Government has a range of other housing products. For more information see: <https://www.ownyourhome.gov.uk/>

■ Housing: Energy

Sally-Ann Hart:

[\[157524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help ensure that new builds, including residential developments, are energy efficient particularly in respect of renewable energy.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government remains committed to meeting its target of net zero emissions by 2050 and recognises the important contribution that the energy efficiency of buildings has to make in meeting it.

From 2025, the Future Homes Standard will ensure that new homes produce at least 75% fewer CO₂ emissions compared to those built to the 2013 standards. These homes will have very high fabric standards and be extremely energy efficient.

Similarly, the Future Buildings Standard will ensure that new non-domestic buildings are highly efficient and have the best fabric standards possible.

In December 2021 the Government introduced an uplift in energy efficiency standards that delivers a meaningful reduction in carbon emissions and provides a stepping-stone to the Future Homes and Buildings Standards. Once the uplift comes into force, in June 2022, new homes will be expected to produce around 30% fewer CO₂ emissions and new non-domestic buildings will be expected to produce 27% fewer CO₂ emissions.

Our approach remains technology-neutral and developers will therefore retain the flexibility they need to use the materials and technologies that suit the circumstances of a site and their business to achieve these targets. This includes the use of solar panels where appropriate. The development of the 2021 energy efficiency targets included consideration of solar panels and thus we expect that many new buildings, where appropriate, will use this technology to meet the new standard.

■ Park Homes

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[157551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what records the Government holds on park homes site owners and managers not deemed fit and proper for the financial year 2021-22.

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[157552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what records the Government holds on park homes site owners and managers not deemed fit and proper for the financial year 2020-21.

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[157553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what records the Government holds on park homes site owners and managers not deemed fit and proper for the financial year 2019-20.

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[157554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what records the Government holds on park homes site owners and managers not deemed fit and proper for the financial year 2018-19.

Eddie Hughes:

The fit and proper person test was implemented in two stages. The first part came into effect on 1 July 2021 to allow local authorities to set up and prepare to receive applications. By 1 October 2021, all site owners were required to have submitted their applications. There is therefore no data from financial years 2018-2021. The department is aware of site owners and managers who have been deemed not fit and proper since the regulations came into effect, however, as these are the subject of appeals it would not be appropriate to share this information at this time.

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[157555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what support his Department has provided to local authorities to enable them to enforce the fit and proper person test for park home site owners and managers.

Eddie Hughes:

To assist local authorities enforcing the fit and proper persons test the department published non-statutory guidance on the implementation and the setting of fees in June 2021 and gave additional advice to authorities as required. We also provided local authorities with new burdens funding to support them in enforcing the test and continue to engage with and support local authorities to ensure the test is applied fairly and consistently.

■ **Park Homes: Fees and Charges**

Drew Hendry:

[157598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of commissioning fees in the mobile homes market.

Eddie Hughes:

A mobile home site owner is entitled to a maximum 10% commission on the sale of a mobile home by a resident. The department commissioned research on the likely impacts on residents and site owners of a change to the 10% commission paid on the sale of a park home. The research was carried out by the University of Liverpool last year and the final report submitted on 12 January 2022. While considering the findings it was decided further research was required to ensure the report was comprehensive. The final report has now been received by the department and it is currently being reviewed and prepared for publication. It will be published as soon as possible.

■ Park Homes: Sales**Justin Madders:**[\[155792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2022 to Question 104350 on Park Homes: Property Transfer, when he plans to release the report on the effect of the 10 per cent commission fee on the sale of mobile park homes.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department received the preliminary report on 12 January 2022. While considering the findings it was decided further research was required to ensure the report was comprehensive. The final report has now been received by the Department and it is currently being reviewed and prepared for publication. It will be published as soon as possible.

■ Right to Buy Scheme**Justin Madders:**[\[155791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his timetable is for the Government's response to the evaluation of new pilot areas for the Voluntary Right to Buy scheme.

Stuart Andrew:

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

■ Supported Housing**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[157335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his planned timescale is for the implementation of the measures regarding supported exempt accommodation announced on 17 March 2022 in written statement HCWS696.

Eddie Hughes:

We are actively engaging with stakeholders to develop the detail of the measures announced on 17 March. We will introduce any measures requiring legislation when parliamentary time allows.

NORTHERN IRELAND■ **Exports: Northern Ireland****Caroline Ansell:**[\[906586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to support exporters in Northern Ireland.

Conor Burns:

The Government is committed to supporting Northern Ireland exporters, who I regularly visit.

Through the New Deal, we have invested £8 million to expand Invest NI's presence overseas.

I am pleased that exporters, including some who I have visited such as Armagh Cider Company, Mash Direct, and Kiverco, are reaching out to access the specialist support offered by the DIT hub in Northern Ireland, which also includes access to the Export Academy, to help businesses trade globally.

■ **Northern Ireland****Fay Jones:**[\[906585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to support the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Sally-Ann Hart:[\[906589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Brandon Lewis:

The Government continues to implement the New Decade New Approach agreement and is united around the ambition for a strong functioning Executive delivering a more prosperous, shared future for Northern Ireland. The people of Northern Ireland are going to the polls on 5 May. It is vital that we give people the space to make that choice in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect, to ensure that fully functioning devolved institutions are restored at the earliest possible moment.

Gareth Bacon:[\[906588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen Northern Ireland's place in the Union.

Brandon Lewis:

I can assure my hon. Friend that this Government is taking every opportunity to strengthen Northern Ireland's place in this United Kingdom.

The Government's record investment in Northern Ireland proves that we are immeasurably stronger together, including the £15bn Spending Review settlement for the Executive, the largest settlement since devolution in 1998; our ambitious levelling

up agenda; and our work to build a safer, more prosperous and integrated future that will benefit the whole community.

■ **Northern Ireland Government**

Damien Moore: [\[157587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent assessment he has made of progress on restoring the Northern Ireland Executive.

Conor Burns:

The people of Northern Ireland are going to the polls on 5 May. It is vital that we give people the space to make that choice in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect, to ensure that fully functioning devolved institutions are restored at the earliest possible moment.

We encourage the parties to form an Executive as soon as possible. The people of Northern Ireland need strong local political leadership and a stable, accountable executive that works with the Government to deliver on the issues that matter most.

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Carbon Emissions**

Stuart Anderson: [\[159075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to contribute to efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Conor Burns:

My Department is committed to making our estate and operations more sustainable and resilient, and supports, where possible, the delivery of this Government's Greening Government Commitments. We are a small department, with a low carbon footprint arising from our accommodation and corporate travel requirements, and we choose to act sustainably when conducting every part of our business. As an example, we are taking steps to reduce our carbon emissions by utilising technology to enable virtual meetings rather than staff flying short haul between London and Belfast to attend all meetings face to face.

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Information Officers**

Deidre Brock: [\[156502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much the Department spent on communications staff in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

Conor Burns:

Departmental spend on communications staff was £358,430 in 2019-20, £331,262 in 2020-21 and £564,014 in 2021-22.

PRIME MINISTER■ **Jagtar Singh Johal****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[157593\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what recent discussions he has had with the Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi, on the detention of UK national, Mr Jagtar Singh Johal.

Boris Johnson:

I had a wide-ranging discussion with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 April in Delhi covering a number of bilateral and international issues. This included raising our concerns about the detention of Jagtar Singh Johal. We continue to look to raise this case at all appropriate occasions.

■ **Muslims: India****Kim Leadbeater:**[\[157533\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he had discussions with prime minister Modi during his visit to India on the issue of (a) Islamophobia and (b) discrimination and violence against Muslims in that country.

Boris Johnson:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all and promoting respect and tolerance across different religious and non-religious groups. We condemn any instances of discrimination because of religion or belief, regardless of the country or faith involved. We engage with India on a range of human rights matters and where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at Ministerial level. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, also regularly speaks to the High Commissioner of India, and human rights including freedom of religion or belief forms part of that dialogue.

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions will continue to follow reports of violence closely, while recognising that these are matters for India. Our network of High Commissions across India regularly meet religious representatives and have run projects supporting minority rights. Over the last three years, they have worked with local NGOs to bring together young people of diverse faith backgrounds to work together on social action projects in their local communities and promote a culture of inter faith tolerance. For the second year, we are supporting a UK-India Interfaith Leadership Programme for a cohort of emerging Indian leaders of diverse faith backgrounds, including Muslims, creating an opportunity to exchange UK-India experiences on leading modern, inclusive communities.

■ **Taxation: Domicil****Layla Moran:**[\[155904\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he has ever claimed non-domiciled status.

Boris Johnson:

No.

In relation to other Ministers of the Crown, I would add that Section 41 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 provides that all MPs and sitting peers are automatically deemed to be resident and domiciled in the UK for tax purposes.

SCOTLAND

■ Railways: Scotland

Damien Moore: [\[157586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of rail links between Scotland and Southport.

Mr Alister Jack:

I have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on a number of different issues, including the quality of transport links throughout the United Kingdom. The recently concluded Union Connectivity Review (UCR) assessed transport connectivity between the four nations of the UK, and the Government response to the UCR will be published later this year.

I recently met with my hon Friend to discuss how reopening the Burscough Curves could increase connectivity between Southport and Scotland, and I am committed to working with him and the Secretary of State for Transport on this proposal.

■ Scotland Office: Information Officers

Deidre Brock: [\[155783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many communications staff are employed by his Department (a) full time, (b) part time and (c) on flexible working arrangements as of 19 April 2022.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Department does not employ staff directly. All the department's staff are employed by the Scottish Government, Ministry of Justice, or other UK Government departments.

The number of staff working at the department as of 19 April 2022 to deliver the communications functions was 12. Categories with numbers less than 5 cannot be provided, as this would make individuals potentially identifiable.

Deidre Brock: [\[155500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department spent on communications staff in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

Mr Alister Jack:

Departmental spend on communications staff for 2019-20 was £870,159, for 2020-21 it was £906,177, and for 2021-22 it was £944,645.

TRANSPORT**■ Airports: Security****Ruth Cadbury:**[\[157391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact on (a) passenger safety, and (b) security of allowing individuals with temporary airside passes to have unaccompanied access on airside locations in Airports in England.

Robert Courts:

The security measures in place at UK airports to protect airside locations are carefully assessed. All persons entering the airside area of an airport are security screened/searched to ensure they are not carrying or concealing a prohibited article. All persons with temporary airside passes are escorted at all times by a full security pass holder whilst airside.

■ Airports: Vetting**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[157389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has received representations from the Home Secretary on the merits of relaxing the rules for security vetting for airside crew at Airports in England.

Robert Courts:

National Security Vetting is led by the Cabinet Office. The security measures in place to protect airside locations at UK airports are carefully assessed by the appropriate authorities including the CAA and are kept under continual review. We regularly engage with other Government departments as part of our work on aviation security, including vetting.

Ruth Cadbury:[\[157390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions trade unions on any proposed changes to vetting requirements for airside crew at Airports in England.

Robert Courts:

We are not proposing any changes to the national security checks being undertaken by Government for staff entering airside areas at UK airports and there have been no discussions with trade unions. The travelling public must have confidence that appropriate security measures are in place at airports. They would expect nothing less of government.

■ Aviation: Taxation

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[156563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a frequent flyer levy.

Robert Courts:

Taxation is a matter for HM Treasury (HMT) which includes consideration of a frequent flyer levy.

Last year, the Government consulted on aviation tax reform and as part of this sought views on whether a frequent flyer levy could replace APD as the principal tax on the aviation sector.

Following the consultation, the Government published a response which outlined that it was minded to retain APD as the principal tax on the aviation sector.

■ DP World and P&O Ferries: Contracts

Louise Haigh:

[\[157437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 April 2022 to Question 145938, on DP World and P&O Ferries: Contracts, whether that review of contracts in place with P&O Ferries and DP World has concluded.

Robert Courts:

The government's review of contracts continues. The government will take action where it is appropriate to do so.

■ Driving Licences

Daisy Cooper:

[\[157507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the DVLA on ensuring that drivers whose licences are due to expire by 31 August 2022 are notified of the expiry date.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency sends a renewal application form to all drivers who are due to renew their photograph on their licence and those due to renew their bus/lorry entitlement 56 days before the licence expires. Renewal application forms are sent to drivers aged 70 or over, or those renewing a medically restricted licence, 90 days before the licence expires. Renewal reminders can be used to renew a licence online or at a post office.

■ Driving Licences: Applications

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[157519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many licence applications are currently pending at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency; and how do these figures compare to July 2021.

Trudy Harrison:

The quickest and easiest way to apply for a driving licence is by using the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online service. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their licence within a few days.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application and the DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail every day. The Government understands the impact that delays in processing paper applications can have on the daily lives of individuals and the DVLA is working hard to reduce waiting times. The DVLA has introduced additional online services, recruited more staff, increased overtime working and has opened new customer service centres in Swansea and Birmingham to reduce backlogs and provide future resilience. These measures are having a positive impact.

The backlog of vehicle paper applications has already been eliminated. Straightforward vocational driving licence applications and renewals are being processed within five working days with no backlog. The DVLA is on track to return to normal turnaround times on all paper driving licence applications which do not involve a medical condition by the end of May. On 21 April 2022, the DVLA had 189,067 applications for a driving licence awaiting processing. This compares with 636,473 applications on 30 July 2021.

Ms Anum Qaisar:[\[157532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the data his Department holds on the size of the backlog of applications to the DVLA (a) in total and (b) by Parliamentary constituency as of 21 April 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

The quickest and easiest way to apply for a driving licence is by using the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online service. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their licence within a few days.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application and the DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail every day. The Government understands the impact that delays in processing paper applications can have on the daily lives of individuals and the DVLA is working hard to reduce waiting times. The DVLA has introduced additional online services, recruited more staff, increased overtime working and has opened new customer service centres in Swansea and Birmingham to reduce backlogs and provide future resilience. These measures are having a positive impact.

On 21 April 2022, the total number of paper applications awaiting processing at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) was 832,314. This is a significant reduction from the peak of 1.6 million in September 2021. It is important to note that the DVLA normally has around 400,000 paper applications awaiting processing at any one time as the DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail each day. This information is not held by Parliamentary constituency.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Jim Shannon:

[\[157363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will allocate additional funding for electric vehicle charging ports across the UK.

Trudy Harrison:

On 25th March the Government published the Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure Strategy, setting out our vision and commitments to make EV charging cheaper and more convenient than refuelling at a petrol station. Of the £2.5 billion of Government funding committed to the EV transition since 2020, over £1.6 billion will be used to support charging infrastructure.

■ Ferries: Minimum Wage

Louise Haigh:

[\[157608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) enforcement powers and (b) access to enforcement bodies the Government plans to provide to British ports that refuse access to ferry companies that do not pay the national minimum wage.

Robert Courts:

We will publish in coming weeks a full public consultation that will detail our proposed enforcement regime, including the role of Ports and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. This will seek views on how this could work in practice and seek views on other workable solutions respondents have.

Louise Haigh:

[\[157609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to provide new statutory powers to British ports to refuse access to regular ferry services which do not pay their crew the National Minimum Wage.

Robert Courts:

Legislation will be introduced as soon as possible into Parliament that intends to make access to UK ports conditional on the payment of seafarers equivalent to National Minimum Wage for vessels visiting UK ports on a frequent and scheduled basis. This is to close gaps in legislation to ensure seafarers with a close connection to the UK receive this pay protection. We will shortly be publishing a public consultation on this, setting out full details of the proposals, and seeking views on the scope and enforcement.

■ Maritime and Coastguard Agency: Enforcement

Louise Haigh:

[\[157446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what criteria the Maritime and Coastguard Agency plans to apply to its review of enforcement policies to ensure that those policies are fit for purpose now and in future.

Robert Courts:

The Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) implements and enforces its policies in line with safety conventions agreed internationally. The MCA will continue to judge its performance against agreed international standards.

■ Pedestrian Areas: Females**Rachael Maskell:**[\[157427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing on ensuring that the safety of women is taken into account when pedestrian routes are designed.

Rachael Maskell:[\[157428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government issues guidance on how pedestrian route designs can best incorporate the safety of women.

Rachael Maskell:[\[157429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what routes are available for women to raise concerns on pedestrian routes identified by them as unsafe.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department for Transport is committed to improving the safety of women at every step of every journey, as part of the government's strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.

The Department is currently updating Manual for Streets, our key piece of design guidance on creating streets for people. Last year the Department ran a call for evidence on personal safety measures in streets and public spaces. This was to find out more about how people, particularly women, feel unsafe using the street and experience harassment, intimidation or unwanted sexual behaviour in public spaces. The aim was to gather information to understand the problem, identify possible solutions, to inform the advice in the updated Manual for Streets.

Responsibility for traffic management, including street design for pedestrians, rests with the relevant local authority, as they are best placed to consider how local needs can be effectively met. It is entirely a matter for individual authorities to decide on the nature and scope of policies and to balance the needs of residents, emergency services, local businesses and those who work in and visit the areas.

In September 2021, Government launched the pilot of an online tool, StreetSafe, which enables the public to anonymously report public places where they feel unsafe because of environmental issues, for example street lighting, or because of the behaviour of others.

To date, the tool has received almost 14,000 reports. These have been used by local policing teams to work with local authorities and community partnerships to inform targeted safety activities.

■ Railways

John Redwood: [\[158852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of commuter miles that will be travelled on the railways in 2022-23 compared with pre-covid levels.

Wendy Morton:

In line with our published guidance, the Department has developed a number of scenarios of possible rail demand to reflect uncertainty including how passengers respond post-Covid-19. The Department considers a wide range of evidence for our project appraisals and policy decisions.

■ Railways: Concessions

John Redwood: [\[158853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an estimate of the expected cost to the (a) railway industry and (b) public purse of offering discounted tickets on certain railway journeys from 25 April to 27 May 2022.

Wendy Morton:

Government has supported industry to develop and deliver the sale; the scheme is run on a commercial basis.

■ Railways: Finance

John Redwood: [\[158848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the projected reduction in rail losses and rail subsidy is for the 2022-23 compared to 2021-22.

Wendy Morton:

The Department's Main Estimate in 2022/23, for both support for rail passenger services and to deliver reforms, is £3bn. This is a reduction from an estimated outturn of c.£5bn in 2021/22, primarily due to an increase in revenue. Actual 2021/22 outturn will be published in due course as part of the Department's Annual Report and Accounts.

■ Shipping: Conditions of Employment

Louise Haigh: [\[157450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which unions and operators his Department has contacted to agree a common level of seafarer protection.

Robert Courts:

The Department has spoken with the seafarers' unions - Nautilus International and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) - and with the UK Chamber of Shipping and its members in the ferry sector.

Louise Haigh:

[\[157597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the details are of the common level of seafarer protection that his Department is discussing with unions and operators.

Robert Courts:

Our discussions with unions and operators are focused on protections relating to the employment, safety and training of seafarers, and are ongoing.

■ **Shipping: Mental Health**

Louise Haigh:

[\[157448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department plans to take to support seafarer mental health; and how that support will be made accessible.

Robert Courts:

The Department and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (the MCA) have taken action in a number of ways in recent years to support seafarer mental health. The MCA has published “Wellbeing at Sea – A Guide for Organisations” and “Wellbeing at Sea – A Pocket Guide for Seafarers” and supporting posters.

The Agency worked with the Merchant Navy Training Board on the introduction of mental health awareness training as part of the mandatory “Personal Safety and Social Responsibility” training which every seafarer must undergo when joining the industry. The MCA also contributed to the work of the Maritime Charities Group on a new, elective training course for seafarers supporting those with mental health issues.

The MCA and the Red Ensign Group sponsored International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network's (ISWAN) project “Social Interaction Matters”, which aims to help shipping and ship management companies to positively impact the wellbeing of their seafarers by improving social interaction on board. The final report will be published later this year.

Currently, the MCA is piloting a cadet wellbeing support programme to prepare cadets for their time at sea (working with the Taptit Academy). A new Wellbeing at Sea Tool will be launched in the summer to help shipping companies to monitor the wellbeing of their employees and focus help where it is needed. The wellbeing tool will take the form of an anonymous survey which seafarers will complete. The results will give management insights into areas where wellbeing could be improved. The survey can be repeated as changes are made to ensure that wellbeing initiatives have the desired impacts. Seafarers' will be provided with tailored information and advice to improve their wellbeing based on their responses.

■ **Shipping: Minimum Wage**

Louise Haigh:

[\[157596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the locations are of the proposed minimum wage corridors.

Robert Courts:

We are committed to working with international partners to boost seafarer protections and welfare. We have written to several states with close ferry connections to the UK, including Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands so far, to explore how we can work together on protections and the potential creation of bilateral minimum wage corridors.

We shall also be leading integrational engagement at the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) to put minimum wages for all seafarers, everywhere, at the top of the agenda.

■ Shipping: Training**Louise Haigh:**[\[157449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what training and skills will be provided by the proposed global framework for maritime training and skills.

Robert Courts:

The Cadet Training & Modernisation Programme, coordinated by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), commenced in late 2021 and draws input in from around the maritime sector. The programme has set up a group to perform a comprehensive review of seafarer training that will modernise the UK's maritime training standards. The UK will take forward these initiatives to the applicable forum at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the proposed comprehensive review of seafarer training.

The development and evolution of training must meet accelerating changes within shipping. This will become part of the UK's negotiating position on change and we will take a key role in ensuring an appropriate global framework for maritime training and skills.

■ Shipping: Working Hours**Louise Haigh:**[\[156543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 19 April 2022 to Question 150233 on Shipping, what the (a) working time and (b) rest hours are under that convention.

Robert Courts:

There are international standards for rest hours under both the International Labour Organization's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC) and the International Maritime Organization's Convention on the Standards for Training, Certification and Watchkeeping, 1978 as amended (STCW).

The MLC allows ratifying countries to fix either a maximum number of hours of work which shall not be exceeded in a given period of time, or a minimum number of hours of rest which shall be provided in a given period of time.

The maximum hours of work set by the MLC are 14 hours in any 24-hour period and 72 hours in any seven-day period. The minimum hours of rest for seafarers set by both the MLC and STCW are 10 hours in any 24-hour period and 77 hours in any seven-day period. Hours of rest may be divided into no more than two periods, one of which shall be at least six hours in length, and the interval between consecutive periods of rest must not exceed 14 hours. The United Kingdom legislation fixes minimum hours of rest in accordance with the above provisions.

■ Trams: Nottingham

Ben Bradley:

[\[157495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to provide funding for tram concessions in Nottingham, similar to the funding provided to bus concessions in that city.

Ben Bradley:

[\[157496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing funding for concessionary fares, as provided to Nottingham's bus service, to the tram service in that city.

Ben Bradley:

[\[157497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing funding for concessionary fares, as provided to Nottingham's bus service, to the tram service in that city.

Trudy Harrison:

The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) provides free off-peak bus travel to those with eligible disabilities and those of state pension age to ensure that no older or disabled person in England need be prevented from bus travel by cost alone.

Funding for this is provided through the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Revenue Support Grant: a Grant that supports a wide range of activities to ensure that each local transport authority receives the funding that they need. This funding is not ringfenced to enable local authorities to make spending decisions that more closely align with local needs and circumstances.

This means that local authorities can use this funding to provide further discretionary concessions in addition to buses. Nottingham City Council has already chosen to extend this to their tram system.

TREASURY■ **Airports: PAYE**

Louise Haigh: [156539]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC have withdrawn personal statement PAYE validation services for airport staff awaiting security clearance.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC has not withdrawn any such services and continues to make employment history available to any employee. This can be found through the HMRC app: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-official-hmrc-app/the-free-hmrc-app> and the employee's digital Personal Tax Account: <https://www.gov.uk/personal-tax-account>. There are also arrangements in place to support those unable to access their digital tax account. HMRC would be happy to investigate any specific claims where it appears that such services have been withdrawn.

■ **Customs Grant Scheme**

Angus Brendan MacNeil: [158889]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many businesses made use of HMRC's Customs Training Grants in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

Lucy Frazer:

3542 grants to support training were offered through the Customs Grant Scheme in the 2019-21 period, from a wider cohort of 8,274 unique businesses that were supported with grants made available to invest in training, IT, and recruitment as part of this scheme.

Additionally, in 2021, the Small Business Brexit Support Fund offered 3,034 grants to support Small and Medium-Sized enterprises with training, from a total of 4,174 businesses that were helped to invest in either training or professional advice.

■ **Heating: VAT**

Dr Luke Evans: [157518]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including infrared heat panels in zero rating VAT policy in respect of energy saving measures.

Lucy Frazer:

The Chancellor announced at Spring Statement 2022 that the VAT relief for the installation of energy saving materials (ESMs) will be expanded in Great Britain.

From 1 April 2022, complex eligibility conditions to access the relief have been removed and wind and water turbines have been reinstated as qualifying materials. Qualifying installations will also now benefit from a VAT zero-rate until April 2027. Overall, this represents an additional £280 million of support for investment in ESMs over the next 5 years.

This will support the uptake of products that are used to increase the energy efficiency and decarbonisation of residential accommodation. These improvements are key to reducing gas dependency and household bills and are also a vital part of the UK's transition to Net Zero.

While infrared heat panels were not added to the list of materials which qualify for the relief, the Government keeps all taxes under review and continues to welcome representations on how the tax system can be improved.

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that policy remains in step with the rapid pace of technological development in the ESMs market and the changing policy context since this particular relief was first introduced.

That said, requests for further changes should be viewed in the context of over £50 billion of requests for relief from VAT received since the EU referendum. Such costs would have to be balanced by increased taxes elsewhere, increased borrowing, or reductions in Government spending.

■ Help to Buy Scheme

Mick Whitley:

[\[159079\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reforming the eligibility criteria for the Help to Buy ISA in response to the increase in average house prices since 2013.

John Glen:

While the Government keeps all aspects of savings policy under review, the Help to Buy: ISA scheme aims to help those struggling to save enough to get onto the housing ladder at the lower end of the market. The property price cap of £250,000 for those properties outside London (£450,000 within London) therefore allows the Government to target support at the people the scheme is intended to help across the country.

The latest statistics show that since the scheme was launched in 2015, 460,567 property completions have been supported through the scheme with a mean property value of £175,680, compared to an average first-time buyer house price of £230,593.

■ Holiday Accommodation: Taxation

Rachael Maskell:

[\[156526\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment of the potential merits of applying additional taxation to short-term holiday lets; and what options he has considered as part of that assessment.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government announced on 14 January 2022 that it is closing a tax loophole which allowed owners of second homes to claim that their often-empty properties were holiday lets, so that they received Small Business Rates Relief instead of paying Council Tax.

The new, fairer rules mean that from April 2023 second homeowners will have to prove holiday lets are being rented out for a minimum of 70 days a year and are available to let for a minimum of 140 days a year to access Small Business Rates Relief.

All tax policy remains under review, however, it would not be appropriate to comment on the likelihood of future tax changes outside of fiscal events.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Fleur Anderson:

[\[157541\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of taxes due to self-employment income support scheme grants on the disposable income and wellbeing of self-employed workers.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government has supported UK households throughout the pandemic with nearly £400 billion of COVID support, including through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which provided over £28 billion in grants to 2.9 million individuals.

The SEISS was designed to support those whose income had dropped temporarily due to COVID-19. Like self-employed income, SEISS grants are subject to Income Tax and self-employed National Insurance contributions at the recipient's rate of Income Tax in the year the grant was received. This was set out by the Chancellor when announcing the scheme in March 2020, and in subsequent SEISS guidance throughout the scheme's lifetime.

The Government has implemented an unprecedented package of support for taxpayers struggling with paying tax liabilities. HMRC has scaled up its longstanding Time to Pay policy, which allows any business or individual in temporary financial difficulty to schedule their tax debts into affordable, sustainable, and tailored instalment arrangements.

Anyone experiencing difficulties paying their tax bill can discuss payment options with HMRC, who are committed to supporting taxpayers through difficult times and will agree a Time to Pay arrangement wherever possible. There are further details available on GOV.UK.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[157542\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of self-employed workers paying taxes due to self-employment income support scheme grants are now using payment plans for their tax payments for the previous financial year.

Lucy Frazer:

An estimate of the proportion of self-employed workers paying taxes due to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grants, who are now using payment plans for their tax payments for the previous financial year, is not available.

The tax paid on a SEISS grant will depend on an individual's profits, any other taxable income, and allowances to which a person is entitled. The grants are taxable at the recipient's rate of Income Tax in the year they were received.

The Government has implemented an unprecedented package of support for taxpayers struggling with paying tax liabilities. HMRC has scaled up its longstanding Time to Pay policy, which allows any business or individual in temporary financial difficulty to schedule their tax debts into affordable, sustainable, and tailored instalment arrangements.

■ Shipping: Minimum Wage

Louise Haigh:

[157434]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 1 April 2022 to Question 145936, on Shipping: Minimum Wage, how many inspections of businesses HMRC has undertaken to ensure that seafarers and other maritime persons who work or ordinarily work in the UK or in UK territorial waters are paid the national minimum wage.

Louise Haigh:

[157447]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many vessels the HMRC has assessed for compliance with the minimum wage; and what resources HMRC has allocated to undertaking those compliance assessments.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government is determined that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) receives it.

HMRC will not hesitate to take action to ensure that workers receive what they are legally entitled to and continue to crack down on employers who ignore the law. Since 2015, HMRC have secured over £115 million for more than 1.1 million workers.

HMRC considers all complaints from workers. If anyone thinks they are not receiving at least the minimum wage, they can contact Acas, in confidence, on: 0300 123 1100, or report their employer online here: www.gov.uk/minimum-wage-complaint.

HMRC do not just rely on complaints. They also undertake proactive enforcement activities, such as selecting cases for investigation based on their own risk modelling and undertaking outreach activities to help employers understand their obligations and making sure workers know their rights. Alongside this, they consider all intelligence and/or information shared with them.

When HMRC investigates for potential NMW breaches, they look at the whole workforce for an employer. Between the 2015-16 financial year and the 2021-22 financial year, they carried out 18 investigations into employers working in the maritime sector.

HMRC deploy resources to risk, flexing deployment to respond to complaints from workers and using their own detailed risk identification processes to assess and respond to the level of risk in a sector.

On 1 October 2020, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy changed the law so that seafarers, and other maritime persons, who work or ordinarily work in the UK or in UK territorial waters (generally 12 nautical miles from the seashore) are generally entitled to NMW. This is regardless of where the vessel is registered or whether the worker ordinarily resides in the UK.

HMRC has worked with maritime worker representatives and employers to raise awareness of the new NMW legislation that came into force on 1 October 2020. HMRC have written to employers in the maritime sector, asking them to check that they are paying all their workers the correct minimum wage and pointing them to available guidance.

■ Tax Avoidance

Hywel Williams: [\[157567\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people who will become bankrupt as a result of paying loan charge payments.

Lucy Frazer:

I refer the Hon Member to the answers that were given to the Hon Member for Hemsworth on 9 December 2021 to UIN 87576 and UIN 87577.

Hywel Williams: [\[157568\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people affected by the loan charge has Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs referred to suicide prevention organisations since that charge was introduced.

Lucy Frazer:

Any loss of life is a tragedy, and my thoughts are with the families of those affected. The Government takes concerns about the wellbeing of all taxpayers seriously and recognises that the Loan Charge can add significant pressures for some taxpayers.

Individuals are supported on a case-by-case basis and all HMRC call handlers and case workers are trained to identify taxpayers who might need extra help, including those in distress. The support HMRC provides could be in relation to their tax affairs, or by signposting to specialist voluntary and community organisations, such as Mind or Samaritans. However, we do not keep a composite record of taxpayers that HMRC has referred to these specialist organisations.

The Government is working with HMRC to consider what additional specialised support could be provided to taxpayers who need extra help.

■ Tourism: VAT

Derek Thomas: [\[157483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of (a) raising the VAT threshold and (b) implementing a smoothing mechanism to reduce tax and administrative barriers to opening outside peak season for businesses in communities reliant on tourism.

Derek Thomas:

[\[157484\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a pilot scheme to raise the VAT threshold for businesses on the Isles of Scilly, to assess the impact on businesses of having fewer barriers to a longer season.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government recognises that accounting for VAT can be a burden on small businesses. This is why we maintain the highest VAT registration threshold in the OECD, and when compared to EU Member States, at £85,000. This keeps the majority of UK businesses out of VAT altogether.

Views on the VAT registration threshold are divided and the case for change has been regularly reviewed over the years. While some businesses have argued that a higher threshold would reduce administrative and financial burdens, others contend that a lower threshold would provide a fairer competitive environment.

Whilst the Government keeps all taxes under review, we announced at Budget 2021 that the VAT threshold will be maintained at its current level of £85,000 until 31 March 2024.

■ **Treasury: Staff**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[155620\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer of 4 April to Question 148086, if he will provide the comparable figures for total, not full time equivalent, staff headcount both for (a) his immediate Department on its own and (b) his Department's full group, including the Office of Budget Responsibility, National Infrastructure Commission, Government Internal Audit Agency, UK Government Investments and UK Debt Management Office.

Helen Whately:

This information is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost threshold.

■ **Treasury: USA**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[157565\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 151026, on HM Treasury: USA, and his Department's declaration of ministerial travel published on 31 March 2022, whether the total cost to the public purse of his accommodation, meals and other expenses, excluding travel, when visiting San Francisco in December 2021 was £0.00; and who paid for any costs incurred above that amount.

Helen Whately:

Any expenses aside from travel were covered by the Chancellor personally.

WALES■ **Air Pollution: Wales**

Geraint Davies: [\[157262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh government on legislative proposals for a Clean Air (Wales) Bill.

Simon Hart:

Wales Office Ministers have had no discussions to date with the Welsh Government in regard to the Clean Air (Wales) Bill.

■ **Wales Office: Carbon Emissions**

Stuart Anderson: [\[159077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps his Department is taking to contribute to efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

David T C Davies:

The Department is committed to reducing emissions and energy consumption to reduce costs. The Department's current targets to make progress on reducing emissions have been published as part of the Greening Government Commitments. The Government's recently published British Energy Security Strategy will protect the UK from price spikes in the future by accelerating our move towards cleaner, cheaper, home-grown energy.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES■ **LGBT+ People**

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[153851\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether the Government has undertaken research on the effect on people of having their sexuality or gender identity maliciously revealed without their consent; what steps she is taking to support people who have been affected by having their sexuality or gender identity revealed in that way; and whether the Government has plans to amend legislation to enable people who have had their sexuality or gender identity revealed in that way to seek justice.

Mike Freer:

We are clear that a person's sexuality and gender identity is a personal issue, and fully support people's right to privacy.

In certain circumstances, maliciously revealing a person's sexual orientation or gender reassignment status without their consent could be found to be harassment under the Equality Act 2010.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 also provides robust protection for trans people with a Gender Recognition Certificate from unwanted disclosure of their gender history, making it a criminal offence for anyone who has acquired information about a

Gender Recognition Certificate holder's gender history in an official capacity to disclose that information to anyone else, save for in a small number of exempted contexts.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Employment: Alcoholism**

Dan Carden:

[R] [\[155899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support people with a history of alcohol dependence into work.

David Rutley:

DWP has a range of interventions in place to support individuals with a history of alcohol dependence into work.

The Department has commissioned the Individual Placement and Support for Drug and Alcohol Dependency programme. Delivered by the Office for Health Improvements and Disparities, this provision blends intensive job-search and in-work support with clinical treatment to enable individuals with a dependency to overcome barriers to employment. The programme is currently being delivered in 46 Local Authority areas, including Birmingham, Sheffield, and Leeds, and will be expanded to all 150 Local Authority areas in England by the end of 2024/25. This brings the total investment in the programme to over £39 million across the next three years.

Individuals with a history of alcohol dependence can also receive tailored support from our dedicated work coaches, such as the adjustment of Universal Credit work-search requirements and access to the Access to Work grant for any adaptations required in the workplace. They are also able to gain priority access to the Work and Health Programme, which supports people to enter into and stay in work.

■ **Flexible Support Fund: North Devon**

Selaine Saxby:

[\[156637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants have accessed the Flexible Support Fund in North Devon in each of the last five years.

David Rutley:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

We do not hold information about the number of individual claimants who have received support from Flexible Support fund and information is not recorded by Parliamentary constituency.

Selaine Saxby:

[\[156639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what was the purpose of claims made to the Flexible Support Fund in North Devon in the last 12 months.

David Rutley:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided for the whole of North Devon at disproportionate cost as we do not record this information by Parliamentary constituency.

Of the three Jobcentres that serve the North Devon constituency, Barnstaple Jobcentre is the only office with its claimant base entirely within the North Devon constituency. For Barnstaple Jobcentre, Flexible Support Fund which is issued on top of benefits spend has been recorded in each of the following categories for the last 12 months, from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022:

- Travel – Training
- Travel - Work Related Interview
- Travel - Job Interviews
- Claimant Equipment for Work
- Other Claimant Expenses to remove barriers
- In Work Emergency Fund
- Up Front Childcare
- Travel – Sector Based Work Academies Programmes

Housing Benefit**John Spellar:****[156375]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the overall outturn spending on housing benefit was in the latest year for which figures are available.

David Rutley:

In 2020/21 the spending on Housing Benefit was £17.3bn. This includes Housing Benefit within Welfare Cap, Housing Benefit outside Welfare Cap and Housing Benefit funded by Local Authorities. Figures were published after the Autumn Budget 2021 and they are available here:

[Benefit expenditure and caseload tables 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-expenditure-and-caseload-tables-2021)

Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing**Justin Madders:****[154070]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment of the continuation of the spare room subsidy.

David Rutley:

Such an assessment has not been made.

Ministers continue to fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and to consider the equality impacts when taking decisions about policy changes.

The removal of the spare room subsidy is an important tool to make better use of the existing social housing stock, enable mobility within the social rented sector as well as strengthening work-incentives.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available for those who need additional housing support. Since 2011 we have provided almost £1.5billion in DHP's to local authorities.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[157304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she intends to respond to the letter dated 07/03/2022 from the Hon. Member for West Lancashire reference ZA58930 regarding the DWP Kickstart Programme.

Guy Opperman:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member by the Minister for Employment, on behalf of the Secretary of State, on 22 April 2022.

■ **Personal Independence Payment**

Rachael Maskell:

[159000]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have been waiting for more than (a) three, (b) four, (c) five and (d) six months from the time they applied for personal independence payment to the time they (i) were offered an assessment appointment and (ii) received a decision as of 25 April 2022; and what the average time that people are waiting is to (A) be offered an assessment appointment and (B) receive a decision.

Chloe Smith:

With respect to parts (i), (ii) and (A) of your question, the information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

With respect to part (B) of your question, data on processing times for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Normal Rules New Claims to January 2022 (the latest available data) is published in Table 1A of the PIP Statistics tables which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1060540/tables-pip-statistics-to-january-2022.xlsx

■ **Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit: Appeals**

Rachael Maskell:

[159001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time is for a mandatory decision to be reached on (a) universal credit limited capability for work and (b) personal independence payment as of 25 April 2022.

Chloe Smith:

Information on mandatory reconsiderations for Universal Credit WCA is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Information on PIP new claims and DLA reassessment MR clearance times can be found on the Personal Independence Payment statistics to January 2022 Publication – within table 4A of the excel spreadsheet.

[Personal Independence Payment statistics to January 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-statistics-to-january-2022)

■ Social Security Benefits: Learning Disability and Mental Health**Marion Fellows:****[156515]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to draw up a legally binding agreement to commit to an action plan that meets the needs of benefit recipients with mental health impairments and learning disabilities.

Marion Fellows:**[156516]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her planned timetable is for publishing a legally binding commitment with the Equality and Human Rights Commission that commits her Department to an action plan to meet the needs of benefit recipients with mental health impairments and learning disabilities.

Marion Fellows:**[156517]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ensure that the Equality Act 2010 is enforced in the benefits system.

Chloe Smith:

Since March 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has been corresponding with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) about the Department's duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people pursuant to the Equality Act 2010.

The Department is committed to continuously improving services and delivering in a way that is compassionate and responsive to claimant needs. However, DWP considers it complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and has not identified any systemic unlawful action.

For that reason, DWP has not reached or entered into a legal agreement with the EHRC and therefore there is no timetable planned for publishing a legally binding commitment.

The Department will continue to work collaboratively with the Commission towards fulfilling shared goals and addressing any of their concerns.

■ **Universal Credit**

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[156352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on how many occasions an issue at the Universal Credit Programme Board has been escalated to the Portfolio Board in each year since 1 January 2018.

David Rutley:

There have been no escalations of an issue from the UC Programme Board to the Change Portfolio Board to date.

■ **Universal Credit Complex Needs Steering Group**

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[156347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 4 April 2022 to Question 147023 on Universal Credit Complex Needs Steering Group, who chaired her Department's Complex Needs Steering Group.

David Rutley:

The Universal Credit Complex Needs Steering Group was co-chaired by the Universal Credit Programme and Universal Credit Operations.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Long Covid: Children

Dan Carden:

[\[63856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to diagnose long covid in young children.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 29 October 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement has established **1415** paediatric hubs to coordinate care for children and young people with 'long' COVID-19. Any parent or guardian concerned that their child may be exhibiting symptoms should seek advice from their general practitioner, who will be able to refer the child for assessment if appropriate.

We have so far invested £50 million into research for 'long' COVID-19. This includes £1.4 million over three years for The CLoCk Study on 'long' COVID-19 among non-hospitalised children and young people.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Energy Update

Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Greg Hands):

[\[HCWS789\]](#)

Today I will lay before Parliament a Departmental Minute describing a contingent liability arising from the issuance of letters of credit for the Energy Administrators acting in the Special Administration Regime for Bulb Energy Limited ('Bulb'). These letters of credit replace previous ones provided in January, announced within a Written Ministerial Statement on the 06 January, which has now expired.

It is normal practice when a Government Department proposes to undertake a contingent liability of £300,000 and above, for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Department concerned to present Parliament with a minute giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances.

I regret that, due to negotiations with the counterparties only concluding late and Parliamentary recess, I have not been able to follow the usual notification timelines to allow consideration of these issues in advance of issuing the letter of credit.

Bulb entered the Energy Supply Company Special Administration Regime on 24 November 2021. Energy Administrators were appointed by court to achieve the statutory objective of continuing energy supplies at the lowest reasonable practicable cost until such time as it becomes unnecessary for the special administration to remain in force for that purpose.

My Department has agreed to provide a facility to the Energy Administrators, with letters of credit issued, with my approval, to guarantee such contract, code, licence, or other document obligations of the company consistent with the special administration's statutory objective. I will update the House if any letters of credit are drawn against.

The legal basis for a letter of credit is section 165 of the Energy Act 2004, as applied and modified by section 96 of the Energy Act 2011.

HM Treasury has approved the arrangements in principle.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Plan for Protecting the Taxpayer

Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg):

[\[HCWS794\]](#)

The Efficiencies and Value for Money Committee, established at the request of the Prime Minister and chaired by the Chancellor, is meeting for the first time today.

At the Committee, the Chancellor will launch his Plan for Protecting the Taxpayer which will drive efficiency, effectiveness, and economy across government. This efficiency drive will ensure that government departments justify their projects with clear value for money and will challenge departments that are not delivering.

As part of this plan, the government is developing a new counter fraud body which will tackle economic crime across the public sector. The new authority will be funded with £25 million, as announced by the Chancellor in the Spring Statement. The authority will bolster the existing Government Counter Fraud Function, based in the Cabinet Office, to create the new Public Sector Authority (PSFA), which will jointly report to HM Treasury.

The new authority will be staffed by fraud experts and backed by cross-government data analytics tools. It will focus on increasing counter-fraud performance across the public sector. This data driven focus on countering fraud is in line with business best practice and will improve fraud prevention and the pursuit of fraudsters for both the opportunistic individual and organised economic crime.

The efficiency drive will also include reviews that scrutinise the work and effectiveness of public bodies, aiming to identify a minimum of 5% savings for each organisation, and doubling the NHS efficiencies target.

The full membership of the Efficiencies and Value for Money Committee - confirmed today - is the Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP (Minister without Portfolio) and the Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP (Minister for the Cabinet Office and HM Paymaster General). The Committee is chaired by the Chancellor and is deputy co-chaired by Simon Clarke (Chief Secretary to the Treasury) and myself (Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency, the Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP).

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Correction to PQ62745

Minister of State (Minister for Health) (Edward Argar):

[[HCWS793](#)]

I would like to inform the House that I wish to correct the formal record in relation to written answer 62745 to the Hon. Member for Aberavon on 28 October 2021.

The reply stated that neither the Department nor the former Public Health England has any collaborative, commercial or contractual links to the Beijing Genomics Institute or its subsidiaries.

The correct answer is that BGI Genomics UK Ltd were awarded a call-off contract from a framework contract held by Public Health England in August 2021 following a mini competition. This call-off contract lapsed on 14 November 2021 and no further contract with BGI has been let.

HOME OFFICE**■ Independent review into the impact of the ending of freedom of movement on the adult social care sector**

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safe and Legal Migration (Kevin Foster): [\[HCWS792\]](#)

Today, the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) published its independent review into the impact of the ending of freedom of movement on the adult social care sector. This report (CP 665) has been laid before both Houses today, and it will also be published on www.gov.uk.

This review came about during the passage of the Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020, when the Government committed to commission and publish an independent report into the impact of ending free movement on the adult social care sector.

In July 2021, the Government commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee – as experts in both the immigration system and wider labour market issues - to undertake this review. The MAC has been working closely with the social care expert advisory group, utilising its insight and experience, to produce this report.

The MAC made an interim recommendation, in its annual report published on 15 December 2021, to add care workers and home carers to the Shortage Occupation List as well as making them eligible for the Health and Care visa. On 24 December, the Government announced we were accepting this recommendation.

We laid revised Immigration rules on 24 January 2022, and these came into force on 15 February. We are already seeing many providers seeking to take advantage of the new rules, to become sponsors and to bring in much needed additional care workforce capacity.

I would like to thank Professor Brian Bell and the MAC for their continued work and to all those who have been involved for this report for their valuable contributions.

The Government will consider the report and its recommendations carefully before deciding what steps to take next.

■ Publication of Forensic Information Databases Strategy Board annual report and updated governance rules

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse): [\[HCWS791\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that I am today publishing the Annual Report of the Forensic Information Databases Strategy Board for 2020-21 and the updated Governance Rules. This report covers the National Fingerprints Database and the National DNA Database (NDNAD).

The Strategy Board Chair, DCC Ben Snuggs, has presented the Annual Report of the National DNA Database to the Home Secretary. Publication of the Report is a statutory

requirement under section 63AB(7) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 as inserted by section 24 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The Report shows the important contribution that the NDNAD and the National Fingerprint Databases (policing collections) make to supporting policing and solving crimes. I am grateful to the Strategy Board for their commitment to fulfilling their statutory functions.

Both the report and governance rules have been laid before the House and copies will be available from the Vote Office.

JUSTICE

■ Terrorism in Prisons Update

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Dominic Raab):

[\[HCWS790\]](#)

In accordance with section 36 of the Terrorism Act 2006, Jonathan Hall QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (IRTL), has prepared a report on Terrorism in Prisons which was laid before the House today.

Today, I am publishing our response to the IRTL's report, setting out how we are implementing the changes that he has recommended. This will also be published on GOV.UK.

I welcome the IRTL's review of terrorism in prisons, and thank him for carrying out such a detailed and thorough review. His findings present an invaluable opportunity for us to assess progress and further strengthen our approach in prisons, covering areas including; terrorist risk behaviour, Governor accountability, Separation Centres, joint working and legislation.

In his report, the IRTL acknowledges the significant improvements made to the Counter-Terrorism system since the horrific terrorist attacks in 2019/20 at Fishmongers' Hall, Streatham, Reading and in HMP Whitemoor. We have already strengthened the law through the Terrorist Offenders (Restriction of Early Release) Act 2020 and the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Act 2021, putting an end to the automatic early release of terrorist offenders, and introducing tougher sentences for the most serious terrorist offences. We have also invested in our ambitious Step Up programme which provides a step change in our Counter-Terrorism capabilities through a raft of improvements including a joint intelligence hub to boost information sharing between security partners, a Counter Terrorism Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre to research, implement and evaluate rehabilitative interventions, and overhauling our Counter-Terrorism training offer to frontline staff.

These measures are critical to strengthening our approach to fighting terrorism in prisons, but we are determined to go further. That is why I have accepted 12 of the IRTL's recommendations, partially accepted another, and in some areas propose going beyond them.

We will invest an additional £1.2m over three years to create a new Separation Centre and High-Risk casework team. The specialised team will ensure that decisions to place prisoners in Separation Centres are taken in an effective and targeted way, in order to avoid the dissemination of poisonous ideology, prevent terrorist recruitment, and more generally protect the public.

We will also invest £6.1m over three years to create a new Close Supervision Centre unit with an extra ten cells, increasing our capacity by 20 percent. These will hold some of the most violent men in the prison system who pose a significant risk of harm to our staff and other prisoners.

We have collaborated widely in considering each of Jonathan Hall's recommendations, and I am grateful to the Home Secretary and partners across the criminal justice system for supporting this work. We honour the victims, families and communities that have been traumatised by terror by doing all we can to prevent future atrocities.