

Daily Report

Thursday, 28 April 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 28 April 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (02:54 P.M., 28 April 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/

	CONTENTS			
ΑN	ISWERS	12	Heating: Regulation	25
АТ	TORNEY GENERAL	12	■ Horizon Europe	25
	Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe	12	Industry	26
	JSINESS, ENERGY AND DUSTRIAL STRATEGY	12	Innovate UK: Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation	
	Buildings: Energy	12	Centre	26
	Coal Authority: Climate		Insolvency Service: Finance	26
	Change	12	Iron and Steel	27
	Companies Act 2006	13	Iron and Steel: Import Controls	27
	Companies House: Staff	13	Minerals	27
	Consumers: Subscriptions	13	■ P&O Ferries: Redundancy	27
	Electricity: Prices	14	■ Post Offices: ICT	28
	Energy and Food: Prices	14	Property: Foreign Companies	29
	Energy and Fossil Fuels	14	Renewable Energy	30
	Energy Company Obligation:		Royal Mail: Regulation	30
	Disability	15	Solar Power: Agriculture	31
	Energy Supply: Disability	16	Solar Power: Batteries	31
	Energy Supply: Disabilty	18	Solar Power: Buildings	32
	Energy: Data Protection	19	■ Tidal Power	32
	Energy: Disconnections	19	■ Tidal Power: Finance	33
	Energy: Meters	19	■ Warm Home Discount Scheme	33
	Energy: Prices	20	■ Warm Home Discount	
	Energy: Standing Charges	22	Scheme: Reform	34
	Fuel Oil: Prices	23	CABINET OFFICE	35
	Fuel Poverty	23	Airports: Vetting	35
	Fuel Poverty: Disability	24	Cabinet Office: Social Media	35

	Cabinet Office: Travel	35		Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid	46
	Coronavirus: Deaths	36		Ukraine: Military Aid	47
	Coronavirus: Public Inquiries	36	DIC	GITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND	
	Efficiency and Value for		SP	ORT	47
	Money Committee	36		Allwyn Entertainment: National	47
	EU Law: Scotland	37	_	Lottery	47
	Infrastructure: Iron and Steel	37	-	Arts: Finance	48
	Members: Correspondence	38	-	Casinos: Taxation	48
	Pharmacy: Coronavirus	38	-	Chelsea Football Club: Sales	49
	Processed Food	38		Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport:	
CC	DP26	39		Aviation	49
	Development Aid	39		Department for Digital,	
DE	FENCE	39		Culture, Media and Sport:	
	Afghanistan: Refugees	39		Railways	49
	Air Force and Army: Teesside			Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport:	
	International Airport	40		Social Media	50
	Ajax Vehicles	40		Flats: Holiday Accommodation	50
	Ajax Vehicles: LE TacCIS	41		Football: Defibrillators	51
	Programme Antitank Missiles: Procurement	41		Holiday Accommodation	51
				Internet: Bullying	52
_	Armed Forces: Pay	42		Spotify: Antisemitism	52
	Armed Forces: Recruitment	42		Swimming Pools	53
_	Armoured Fighting Vehicles	43		Swimming: Children	54
	Defence Equipment: Finance	43		Unboxed: Cost Effectiveness	54
	Defence Equipment: Public Appointments	43		Unboxed: Finance	54
	European Fighter Aircraft:	.0		Youth Investment Fund:	0.
_	Advanced Short-range Air-to-			Bradford	55
	air Missile	44		Youth Services: Finance	56
	Members: Correspondence	44	ED	UCATION	56
	Military Aid: Ukraine	44		Apprentices: Finance	56
	Ministry of Defence: Staff	44		Children: Body Searches	57
	RAF Cosford	45		Children: Day Care	57
	Serbia: Military Aircraft	45		Department for Education:	
	Type 23 Frigates	46		Information Officers	57

	Extended Services	58		Department for Environment,	
	Higher Education: Admissions	58		Food and Rural Affairs: Information Officers	74
	Higher Education: Standards	59		Deposit Return Schemes	7 4 75
	Music: Education	60	-	·	73
	Pupils: Coronavirus	60		Deposit Return Schemes: Glass	75
	Schools: Carbon Emissions	60		Dogs: Animal Breeding	75
	Schools: Costs	61		Dogs: EU Countries	76
	Sexual Harassment: Curriculum	61	•	Dogs: Republic of Ireland and Romania	76
	Special Educational Needs	63		E. Coli: Rivers	77
	Special Educational Needs:			Environment Protection	77
	Coronavirus Students: Disability	64 64		Environmental Land Management Schemes	78
	Students: Loans	64		Environmental Land	70
	Tony Sewell	64	-	Management Schemes: Water	78
	Training	65		Exports and Imports: Insects	79
ΕN	IVIRONMENT, FOOD AND			Farmers: Finance	79
RL	JRAL AFFAIRS	65		Fertilisers	79
	Agriculture: Brazil	65		Fertilisers: Prices	80
	Agriculture: Subsidies	65		Fertilisers: Production	82
	Agriculture: Trade Agreements	66		Fisheries	83
	Agriculture: Urea	67		Fisheries: Finance	83
	Animal Experiments	67		Floods	84
	Animal Feed	68		Fly-tipping	86
	Animal Welfare: Tourism	68		Food Supply	86
	Avian Influenza	69		Food: Prices	88
	Biodiversity	69		Food: Shortages	89
	Carbon Emissions	70		Food: Supply Chains	89
	Chemicals: Regulation	71		Foxes: Rural Areas	89
	Convention on Biological Diversity	72	•	Furs and Pâté de Foie Gras: Imports	90
	Cosmetics: Chemicals	73		GM Inspectorate	90
•	Crops: Production	73		Harper Adams Agricultural College: Research	91

	Land: Local Government	91		Climate Change: Development	
	Livestock Worrying: West		_	Aid	104
	Midlands	91		Coronavirus: Vaccination	104
	Marine Environment: Shellfish	92		Darfur: Armed Conflict	105
	Members: Correspondence	92		Democratic Republic of	405
	Nutrition	92	_	Congo: Military Intervention	105
	Outdoor Recreation	92		Diplomatic Service	105
	Pets: Imports	93		Ethiopian Airlines: Accidents	106
	Pets: Travel	93		Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office:	
	Pigs	94		Expenditure	106
	Plastics	94		Hong Kong: Assets	106
	Plastics: Waste	94		Iran: Travel Restrictions	107
	Rivers: Sewage	95		Israel: Education	107
	Rural Areas: Devon	95		Israel: Riot Control Weapons	107
	Rural Areas: Regional			Morad Tahbaz	107
_	Planning and Development	95		National Bank Trust	108
	Seafood: Imports	96		Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe	108
	Soil: Conservation	97		Refugees: Afghanistan	109
	Tree Planting	97		Rwanda: Debts	109
	Water: Cumbria	97		Rwanda: Development Aid	109
	Wheat: Production	98		Sudan: Humanitarian Aid	110
	REIGN, COMMONWEALTH ID DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	98		Syria: Armed Conflict	110
	Afghanistan: Humanitarian Aid	98		Syria: Development Aid	110
_	Afghanistan: Refugees	99		Syria: Refugees	111
_	Afghanistan: Taliban	99		Taliban: Human Rights	111
_	Africa: Bilateral Aid	99		Tanzania: Education	112
_	Africa: Coronavirus	99		Tigray: Humanitarian Aid	112
	Africa: Foreign Relations	100		Torture: British Nationals	
	African Development Bank:	100		Abroad	112
	Carbon Emissions	101		Turkey: Terrorism	113
	Belarus: Russia	101		Ukraine: Armed Conflict	113
	British Nationals Abroad:			Ukraine: Development Aid	113
	Torture	101		Ukraine: Food Supply	114
	Cameroon: Russia	104		Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid	114

	Ukraine: International			Coronavirus: Drugs	127
	Assistance	114		Coronavirus: Immune	
	Ukraine: Refugees	115		Thrombocytopenic Purpura	128
	World Food Programme	115		Coronavirus: Medical	400
	Yemen: Development Aid	116		Treatments	128
HE	EALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	116	-	Coronavirus: Quarantine	128
	Abortion	116	-	Coronavirus: Research	129
	Agency Workers: Expenditure	116	-	Coronavirus: Screening	129
	Alcoholic Drinks: Advertising	117		Coronavirus: Vaccination	131
	Alcoholic Drinks: Children and			Covid-19 Inquiry	133
	Young People	117		Covid-19 Testing Taskforce: Andrew Feldman Associates	133
	Antibiotics: Drug Resistance	117		COVID-19 Vaccines Benefit	133
	Brain: Coronavirus	118		Risk Expert Working Group	134
	Brain: Tumours	118		Cystic Fibrosis and Sickle Cell	
	Cancer: Medical Treatments	118		Diseases: Health Services	134
	Cancer: Research	119		Dementia: Diagnosis	135
	Cardiovascular Diseases	119		Dental Services	135
	Care Homes: Coronavirus	119		Dental Services: Devon	136
	Care Homes: Energy	121		Dental Services: Finance	137
	Care Homes: Insurance	121		Dental Services: Internet	137
	Care Homes: Labour Turnover	121		Dental Services: Location	137
	Care Homes: Staff	121		Dental Services: Shropshire	138
	Care Workers: Coronavirus	121		Dental Services: Standards	138
	Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Coronavirus	122		Department of Health and Social Care: BGI Group	138
	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	122		Department of Health and Social Care: Public Opinion	139
	Clinical Trials	123		Department of Health and	
	Clinical Trials: Females	123		Social Care: Randox	
	Community Nurses: Standards	123		Laboratories	139
	Coronavirus Certificates:			Department of Health and	4.40
	Children	123		Social Care: Recruitment	140
	Coronavirus: Advocacy	124		Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions	140
	Coronavirus: Care Homes	124		Dialysis Machines: Costs	140
	Coronavirus: Disease Control	124		Dialysis Macillics. 00515	140

	Disability Aids: Children	141		Hormone Replacement	
	Domestic Abuse: Mental			Therapy: Procurement	150
	Health Services	141		Hormone Replacement	450
	Drugs: Misuse	141	_	Therapy: Shortages	150
	Endometriosis: Mental Health			Hormone Replacement Therapy: Supply Chains	151
_	Services and Pain	142		Hospitals: Discharges	151
	Epilepsy: Medical Equipment	142	-	Hospitals: Morecambe	151
	Evusheld	142	-	Immensa Health Clinic:	131
	Evusheld: Coronavirus	144		Wolverhampton	152
	General Practitioners	144		Immunosuppression:	
	General Practitioners and		_	Coronavirus	152
_	Pharmacy: Publicity	145		Infectious Diseases: Children	154
	General Practitioners: Yorkshire and the Humber	145		Integrated Care Systems:	
		145		Apprentices	155
	Glaucoma: Diagnosis	145		Junior Doctors: Pay	155
	Health			Leeds General Infirmary:	
	Health and Care Bill	146		Finance	155
	Health and Social Care Levy: Small Businesses	146		Leukaemia: Health Services	156
	Health Services: Asylum	146		Low Alcohol Drinks: Marketing	156
-	Health Services: Coronavirus	147		Maternity Services: Shropshire	157
-		147		Medical Records: Data	
	Health Services: Obesity	147		Protection	157
	Health Services: Small Businesses	147		Medical Records: Databases	158
	Health Services: Staff	148		Members: Correspondence	158
_	Healthy Start Scheme: Social	1 10		Morquio Syndrome: Diagnosis	159
_	Security Benefits	148		Mortality Rates: Diagnosis	159
	Heart Diseases: Health			National Institute for Health	
	Services	149		Research: Finance	159
	Heart Diseases: Mortality			NHS: Agency Nurses	160
	Rates	149		NHS: Databases	160
	Hereditary Diseases:			NHS: Research	160
_	Screening	149		NHS: Workplace Pensions	160
	Hormone Replacement	150		NHSX	161
	Therapy	150		Oral Tobacco: Health Hazards	161

7

	Pectus Excavatum: Medical Treatments	162		Asylum: Ealing Central and Acton	171
	Pharmacy: Delivery Services	162		Asylum: Immigration Controls	172
	Pregnancy: Ethnic Groups	162		Asylum: RAF Linton-on-Ouse	172
	Prescription Drugs: Allergies	163		Asylum: Rwanda	174
	Prescription Drugs: Pharmacy	163		British Nationals Abroad:	
	Prescriptions: ICT	163		Ukraine	178
	Probiotics: Labelling	164		Burglary: Rural Areas	178
	Protective Clothing: Contracts	164		Cannabis: Medical Treatments	178
	Radiotherapy: NHS	165		Deportation: Rwanda	178
	Sepsis: Hospitals	165		Domestic Abuse: Victim	400
	Sickle Cell Diseases: Health		_	Support Schemes	180
	Services	165		Educational Visits: EU Nationals	180
	Smoking	166		Fraud	180
	Social Services: Statutory Sick		ī	HM Passport Office:	100
_	Pay	167	_	Government Assistance	180
	St Bartholomew's Hospital: Private Sector	167		HM Passport Office: Lost	
	St George's Hospital Tooting:			Property	181
	Surgery	167		HM Passport Office: Members	181
	Streptococcus: Clinical Trials	168		Home Office: Development Aid	182
	Tobacco: EU Law	168		Home Office: Recruitment	182
	Tobacco: Health Hazards	168		Home Office: Rwanda	182
	Unispace Global: Protective			Homes for Ukraine Scheme	182
	Clothing	169		Homes for Ukraine Scheme:	
HC	OME OFFICE	169		Telephone Services	184
	Abuse: Mental Health Services	169		Hostage Taking: Victims	184
	Animal Experiments	169		Immigration	184
	Animal Experiments:			Immigration: Children	185
	Inspections	170		Immigration: EU Nationals	185
	Animals in Science Regulation Unit: Annual Reports	170		Immigration: Fees and Charges	186
	Arrests: Disclosure of			Immigration: Ukraine	186
	Information	170		Immigration: Veterans	186
	Asylum: Applications	171		Nationality and Borders Bill	187

	Offences against Children: Reviews	187		Hormone Replacement Therapy: Companies	201
	Overseas Students	187		Hormone Replacement	
	Police: Proof of Identity	189		Therapy: Shortages	202
	Police: Rural Areas	189		Spirits: Brazil	202
	Refugees	189		Spirits: Nigeria	202
	Refugees: Afghanistan	190		Supply Chains: Agriculture and Food	203
	Refugees: Applications	190			203
	Refugees: Housing	191		Trade Agreements: Gulf States	203
	Refugees: Rwanda	192		Trade Agreements: India	203
	Refugees: Ukraine	193		Trade Agreements: Poverty	203
	Seasonal Workers: Pay	194		Trade Barriers: Ukraine	204
	UK Visas and Immigration: Telephone Services	194		UK Trade and Business Commission	204
	Violence Reduction Units	195	i.	Whisky: China	204
	Visas: Afghanistan	195	JU	STICE	205
	Visas: Applications	195		Criminal Proceedings:	
	Visas: Disability	196		Midlands	205
	Visas: Ukraine	196		Debt Collection	206
	Voyeurism: Prosecutions	198		Family Courts: Standards	207
	Windrush Compensation			Magistrates' Courts: Hartlepool	208
	Scheme	199		Magistrates' Courts: Plymouth	208
	DUSE OF COMMONS DMMISSION	199		Ministry of Justice: Information Officers	208
	Parliamentary Estate:	100		Oakhill Secure Training Centre	208
	Coronavirus	199		Prisons: Staff	209
IN	TERNATIONAL TRADE	200		Secure Training Centres and	
	Beef and Pigmeat: China	200		Young Offender Institutions:	000
	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for		_	Staff	209
	Trans-Pacific Partnership:		-	Sentencing: Attendance	209
	Dispute Resolution	200		Sexual Offences	210
	Dairy Farming: Trade Agreements	201		Wormwood Scrubs Prison: Prison Governors	211
	Export Credit Guarantees: Iran	201		Young Offenders: Civil Proceedings	211

9

	VELLING UP, HOUSING AND DMMUNITIES	212		Social Rented Housing: Construction	220
	Children: Day Care	212		Visas: Ukraine	221
	Community Assets	212	PR	RIME MINISTER	221
	Council Housing: Repairs and Maintenance	212		10 Downing Street: Taxis Prime Minister: Black Country	221
	Council Tax	213	-	Day	221
	Council Tax: Energy Bills			Prime Minister: Lord Lebedev	222
	Rebate	213		Rishi Sunak: Fines	222
	Council Tax: Valuation	213	SC	COTLAND	222
	Disabled Facilities Grants	213		Scotland Office: Carbon	
	Holiday Accommodation:			Emissions	222
	Taxation	214	TR	ANSPORT	222
	Homes for Ukraine Scheme	214		Air Pollution: Fines	222
	Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Birmingham	216		Aviation and Travel Agents: Repayments	223
	Homes for Ukraine Scheme:			Aviation: Accidents	223
_	Vetting	216		Department for Transport:	
	Housing: Bicycles	216		Apprentices	223
	Housing: Older People	217		Driver and Vehicle Licensing	
	LEASE	217		Agency: Medical Examinations	224
	Leasehold	217		Driver and Vehicle Licensing	224
	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: Parish Councils	218		Agency: Staff Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Standards	224
	Local Government Finance:	210		Electric Scooters: Pilot	227
_	Spelthorne	218	_	Schemes	225
	Local Plans: Floods	218		Electric Vehicles: Speed Limits	225
	Members: Correspondence	219		Heathrow Airport: China	225
	Parking: Key Workers	219		P&O Ferries: Staff	226
	Planning: Floods	219		Public Transport: Standards	226
	Refugees: Children	219		Railways: Fares	227
	Refugees: Ukraine	220		Railways: Freight	227
	Regional Planning and			Railways: Research	229
	Development	220		Restoring Your Railway Fund	229
	Resettlement: Hong Kong	220		Roads: Freight	229

	Travel: Coronavirus	230		Equality	242
TR	EASURY	230	W	ORK AND PENSIONS	242
	Apprentices: Taxation	230		Children: Maintenance	242
	Carers: Cost of Living	230		Department for Work and	
	Coronavirus: China	231		Pensions: Exeter	242
	Cost of Living	231		Department for Work and Pensions: Leeds	0.40
	Customs	232	_		243
	Customs Grant Scheme	232		Department for Work and Pensions: Location	244
	Customs Intermediaries: Regulation	233	ı	Department for Work and Pensions: Stratford	245
	Customs Intermediaries:			Disability: Cost of Living	246
	Vacancies	233		Disability: Public Consultation	246
	Developing Countries: Debts	234		Employment Schemes	247
	Financial Services: Environment Protection	234		Employment:	
	Freezing of Assets: Russia	235		Immunosuppression	248
	Fuels: Excise Duties	235		Flexible Support Fund: North Devon	248
	Individual Savings Accounts:			Household Support Fund	248
_	Greater London	236		Independent Case Examiner	249
_	Local Government Finance	236		Independent Case Examiner:	
	National Bank Trust: Foreign Exchange	237		Staff	249
	Public Sector: Pay	237		Jobcentres: Public Transport	250
_	Sanctions: Russia	238		Kickstart Scheme	250
_	Shein: Taxation	238		Kickstart Scheme: Closures	253
_	Shein: VAT	238		Kickstart Scheme: Fraud	254
_	Taxation	238		Members: Correspondence	255
_	Treasury: Communication	239		Pension Rights: Cohabitation	255
_	Treasury: Deloitte	239		Pensions: Inflation	255
_	Treasury: Procurement	239		Pensions: Tax Allowances	256
— \Λ/.	ALES	241		Universal Credit	256
V V /	Wales Office: Information	241		Universal Credit: Children	256
	Officers	241		Universal Credit: Publicity	257
W	OMEN AND EQUALITIES	241		Universal Credit: Yorkshire	05-
	Conversion Therapy	241		and the Humber	257

	/inter Fuel Payment: British ationals Abroad	258		REIGN, COMMONWEALTH D DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	267
MINIS	STERIAL CORRECTIONS	259		Afghanistan: Humanitarian	
HEAL	TH AND SOCIAL CARE	259		Situation	267
■ Co	oronavirus: Mortality Rates	259		Provisional Statistics on	
HOMI	E OFFICE	259		International Development 2021	269
■ As	sylum: Rwanda	259	HE	ALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	269
■ H	MC Protector	260		Correction to PQ113125	269
M	embers: Correspondence	260		Correction to PQ53263 and	
■ Pa	assports: Applications	260		PQ53380	270
WRITTEN STATEMENTS		262		Covid-19 Update	270
CABII	NET OFFICE	262	НО	ME OFFICE	271
■ Br	rexit Opportunities	262		Report of the Independent	
	OV.UK Verify Sign up ontract extension	263		Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation on the operation in 2020 of the Terrorism Acts	271
	TAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND	000	INT	ERNATIONAL TRADE	271
SPOF		263		Switzerland Trade Policy	
	roadcasting Update	263		Update	271
Co Er	valuation of the Voluntary, ommunity, and Social nterprise Covid-19			•	
Er	mergency Funding Package	266			

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

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Tulip Siddiq: [157462]

To ask the Attorney General, what is the status under UK law of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's (a) 2016 and (b) conviction by the Revolutionary Court in Iran.

Alex Chalk:

A determination of the status in UK law of the findings of courts in foreign jurisdictions is a matter for the UK courts, as and when the need arises for such a determination in domestic proceedings.

The Government is delighted that after years of detention, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is safely home and has been reunited with her family and loved ones.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Buildings: Energy

Sarah Olney: [160539]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of number of (a) businesses and (b) individuals qualified to implement retrofitting measures in homes and buildings across England in the latest period for which figures are available.

Greg Hands:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Coal Authority: Climate Change

Caroline Lucas: [157336]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April 2022 to Question 149218, on Coal Authority: Climate Chang, whether it is his policy that the climate emergency is an exceptional circumstance when considering the powers of the direction.

Greg Hands:

It has not proved possible to respond to the Hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

■ Companies Act 2006

Daisy Cooper: [<u>156600</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will review section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 with a view to creating a legal requirement for companies to align their social and environmental impact with their existing duty to shareholders.

Paul Scully:

Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 already requires directors to have regard to the impact of their company's operations on the community and the environment, amongst other things. The Government strengthened this requirement in 2019 by requiring directors to make an annual statement explaining how they have discharged their section 172 duty in practice over the previous reporting year.

The Government believes the most effective way to encourage companies to address environmental and other challenges is through a transparent corporate reporting framework. This month, the UK became the first G20 country to introduce mandatory reporting in line with the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, for economically significant UK companies. This will ensure that businesses consider the risks and opportunities they face on climate change and encourage them to set out their emission reduction plans and sustainability credentials. The Government has also published a landmark Roadmap on Sustainable Investing, the first phase of which will introduce new economy-wide sustainability disclosure requirements.

Companies House: Staff

Jonathan Reynolds:

[<u>156424</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of staffing levels at Companies House.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to ensuring that Companies House has the resources and staffing it needs to carry out its functions. The Department regularly engages with Companies House to ensure it has the resources it needs and £63m of investment will be made over the Spending Review period to support transformation of the agency.

Consumers: Subscriptions

Jonathan Reynolds:

[158944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals to tackle subscription traps.

Paul Scully:

On 20 April 2022, the Government published its response to the consultation 'Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy – Driving growth and delivering

competitive markets that work for consumers'. The response reaffirmed our commitment to boosting consumer rights and preventing scams and rip-offs, including proposals to tackle subscription traps. The Government will legislate to implement the reforms when Parliamentary time is available.

■ Electricity: Prices

Alan Brown: [158993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) stated in the Energy Security Strategy will include the assessment of locational marginal price in Scotland.

Greg Hands:

As part of the REMA programme we intend to consider a full spectrum of policy options, including locational marginal pricing. We look forward to receiving evidence from stakeholders following the publication of our consultation in the summer which will help us evaluate them, as well as bring other policy options to our attention.

Energy and Food: Prices

John Spellar: [155579]

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 rising food and oil and gas prices.

Greg Hands:

Increases in international food commodity prices have been driven by a range of factors recently. The Government views the price changes to food have been caused primarily by market fundamentals rather than speculation on futures markets.

Fuel and gas prices are primarily driven by the underlying price in the global wholesale 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.

Energy and Fossil Fuels

Gareth Thomas: [157576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment he has made of the financial cost of developing and producing (a) tidal energy, (b) onshore wind, (c) solar, (d) nuclear energy and (e) fossil fuel extraction; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Department's Electricity Generation Cost Report, published at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/energy-generation-cost-projections#2020, sets out levelised cost of electricity estimates for a range of technologies, including renewables, nuclear energy and fossil fuels.

15

■ Energy Company Obligation: Disability

Vicky Foxcroft: [155837]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the changes in support for disabled people through the Energy Company Obligation scheme, whether an assessment has been made of the impact on the finances of disabled people affected by this change.

Greg Hands:

ECO4 has been designed to focus support on households with the lowest incomes and alleviate fuel poverty. This will include households with disabled people on the lowest incomes. The scheme is designed to improve the energy efficiency of homes, through the installation of insulation or heating measures. Households benefitting from improvements could save an average of £300 per annum.

Ed Davey: [156343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has been made of the financial impact on individuals affected by the decision to remove support for disabled people through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme.

Greg Hands:

ECO4 has been designed to focus support on households with the lowest incomes and alleviate fuel poverty. This will include households with disabled people on the lowest incomes. The scheme is designed to improve the energy efficiency of homes, through the installation of insulation or heating measures. Households benefitting from improvements could save an average of £300 per annum.

Charlotte Nichols: [156612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the decision to reduce support for disabled people through the Energy Company Obligation scheme, whether an assessment has been made of the impact on the finances of disabled people affected by this change.

Greg Hands:

The current Energy Company Obligation scheme, ECO4, has been designed to focus support on households with the lowest incomes and alleviate fuel poverty. This will include households with disabled people on the lowest incomes. The scheme is designed to improve the energy efficiency of homes, through the installation of insulation or heating measures, rather than provide a specific financial benefit.

Marion Fellows: [157408]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the decision to reduce support for disabled people through the Energy Company Obligation scheme, whether an assessment has been made of the impact on the finances of disabled people affected by that change.

Greg Hands:

The current Energy Company Obligation scheme, ECO4, has been designed to focus support on households with the lowest incomes and alleviate fuel poverty. This will include households with disabled people on the lowest incomes. The scheme is designed to improve the energy efficiency of homes, through the installation of insulation or heating measures. Households benefitting from improvements could save an average of £300 per annum.

Energy Supply: Disability

Ed Davey: [156342]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has set targets for energy suppliers to meet in regards to identifying and supporting disabled customers.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem already has measures in place to require energy suppliers to support disabled customers. These include protection from disconnection during the winter, and the provision of additional support through a Priority Services Register. Ofgem monitors compliance with their rules protecting vulnerable consumers. Their 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 their annual reports of the Industry Initiatives supporting fuel poor and vulnerable households through measures that include benefit entitlement checks and debt writeoff. The 2020-2021 report is available at:

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/warm-home-discount-annual-report-schemeyear-10.

Charlotte Nichols: [156615]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what targets he has set for energy suppliers to identify and support disabled customers.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem require energy suppliers to support disabled customers, including protection from disconnection during the winter, and the provision of additional services through a Priority Services Register (PRS).

The Priority Services Register is a free support service offered by energy suppliers to help people in vulnerable situations. Each supplier keeps their own register and disabled, and other vulnerable, customers may contact their supplier and apply to be added. Organisations such as Citizens Advice, charities and local authorities will be aware of the PRS.

Ofgem monitors compliance with their rules protecting vulnerable consumers. Their most recent report is available at:

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

Marion Fellows: [157407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent 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 require energy suppliers to support disabled customers. This includes protection from disconnection during the winter, and the provision of additional support through a Priority Services Register. Ofgem monitors compliance with their rules protecting vulnerable consumers. Their 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 their annual reports of the Industry Initiatives supporting fuel poor and vulnerable households through measures that include 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.

Damien Moore: [157580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of setting targets for energy suppliers in respect of (a) identifying and (b) supporting disabled customers.

Greg Hands:

The department has not set targets on this item as Ofgem already has measures in place to require energy suppliers to support disabled customers. This includes protection from disconnection during the winter, and the provision of additional support through a Priority Services Register. Ofgem monitors compliance with their rules protecting vulnerable consumers. Their 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 their annual reports of the Industry Initiatives supporting fuel poor and vulnerable households through measures that include 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.

Damien Moore: [157582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the level of support provided by energy

suppliers to disabled customers through (a) benefit entitlement checks, (b) debt write-off and (c) other related schemes.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem require energy suppliers to support disabled customers. This includes protection from disconnection during the winter, and the provision of additional support through a Priority Services Register. Ofgem monitors compliance with their rules protecting vulnerable consumers. Their 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 their annual reports of the Industry Initiatives supporting fuel poor and vulnerable households through measures that include 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.

Energy Supply: Disabilty

Charlotte Nichols: [156614]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy 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:

Some evidence suggests that households with a disability have higher than average heating costs. Within the fuel poverty strategy Sustainable Warmth the Government outlines our vulnerability principle, under which we specifically consider the needs of low income households most at risk from the impact of living in a cold home while designing fuel poverty policy.

Under the Warm Home Discount scheme, Ofgem reports on the Industry Initiatives supporting vulnerable households through measures including 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.

Ofgem require energy suppliers to support disabled customers through a Priority Services Register. Ofgem monitors compliance with their rules protecting vulnerable consumers. Their most recent report is available at:

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

19

Energy: Data Protection

Chris Bryant: [<u>158872</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is giving to customers of energy companies that have gone into administration to retrieve their personal data.

Greg Hands:

When an energy supplier fails the customers are transferred by Ofgem to a new supplier under the Supplier of Last Resort process. This includes the personal data necessary to set up an account with the new supplier and ensure the customer's credit balance with the failed supplier is honoured.

Insolvency practitioners are appointed to administer the failed company and must comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act in relation to any personal data that remains within the failed company. Customers rights regarding data protection and access to personal data remain unaffected.

■ Energy: Disconnections

Hilary Benn: [<u>160448</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what data his Department holds on the number of disconnections of customers in England for non-payment of (a) gas and (b) electricity bills in each of the last five years.

Greg Hands:

It has not proved possible to respond to the rt. hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Energy: Meters

Mr Richard Holden: [154463]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives of energy companies on the reasons for the increase in the day-to-day connectivity charge for smart metering for (a) existing and (b) new customers.

Greg Hands:

Energy consumers are not subject to a day-to-day connectivity charge for having a smart meter.

Energy suppliers may apply standing charges, a fixed charge that suppliers pass on to cover the cost of providing a live supply, for each metering point whether for a smart or traditional meter.

20

Energy: Prices

Vicky Foxcroft: [155833]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment he has made of the impact of disability and health status on energy costs; and if he will take steps to ensure that the eligibility criteria for the Warm Home Discount reflects the outcome of that assessment.

Greg Hands:

Some evidence suggests that households with a disabled person have higher heating costs than average. No household-level data is available that could be factored into specifically targeting those with the highest heating costs through the Warm Home Discount.

Vicky Foxcroft: [155838]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason, the Government did not take forward proposals for £5 million of Industry Initiatives to support disabled people who are struggling with energy costs but may not be eligible for a rebate; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

Respondents to last year's consultation raised concerns that the proposal, especially if contributions from energy suppliers were made mandatory, risks overlapping with the support that suppliers can already provide to people with disabilities and health conditions.

The Government will continue to work with interested industry partners and thirdparty organisations to explore options based on voluntary contributions from energy suppliers, similar to other measures currently delivered through Industry Initiatives.

Ms Marie Rimmer: [1**565**18]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who are currently outside the energy price cap due to the use of a 100 per cent renewables energy provider can switch to a provider that falls within the energy price cap policy.

Greg Hands:

It has not proved possible to respond to the Hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daisy Cooper: [156599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will launch a review into the energy costs incurred by those who need to power 24/7 medical equipment at home; and what assessment he has made of the merits of introducing new tariffs for disabled people with those needs.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem has updated its Consumer Vulnerability Strategy which set out its priorities to help protect gas and electricity consumers in vulnerable situations until 2025.

The energy price cap ensures prices for households fairly reflect the underlying costs of supply. The Government is faced with supporting households with the current high costs of energy with a £9.1bn package including an energy bills discount and Council Tax rebate.

A scheme operated by the NHS enables householders who use oxygen concentrators at home to receive a refund of the electricity costs used by the equipment.

Charlotte Nichols: [156607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of a person's disability and health status on energy costs; and if his Department will take a person's disability and health status into account in the eligibility criteria for the Warm Home Discount.

Greg Hands:

Some evidence suggests that households with a disability have higher heating costs than average. However, no household-level data is available that could be factored into specifically targeting those with the highest heating costs.

The Warm Home Discount reforms will better target automatic rebates to fuel poor households on the lowest incomes. Our analysis models an increase in the number of recipients who declare they have a long-term illness or disability by 160,000. The proportion of rebates received by households with a disability or long-term illness will remain higher than the proportion of the fuel poor population or overall population with a disability.

Charlotte Nichols: [156609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the disproportionate energy costs faced by disabled people.

Greg Hands:

We are monitoring and assessing the impact of price increases on vulnerable consumers and coordinating work across regulated sectors to support households impacted.

Ofgem require 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. Their most recent report is available at:

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

Charlotte Nichols: [156613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason the Government did not progress proposals for £5 million of Industry Initiatives to support disabled people who are struggling with energy costs but may not be eligible for a rebate; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

Respondents to the <u>Government's consultation</u> on the reformed Warm Home Discount last summer raised concerns about the risk of the proposed dedicated Industry Initiative duplicating support measures energy suppliers can already provide, including through existing Industry Initiatives. We will continue to work with interested industry partners and third-party organisations to develop an Industry Initiatives measure providing direct support for people with disabilities and significant health conditions. This will be subject to interest from energy suppliers and it will not be mandatory for suppliers to contribute.

Damien Moore: [157583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the level of energy costs faced by (a) disabled and (b) non-disabled people.

Greg Hands:

Some evidence suggests that households with a disability have higher heating costs than average.

BEIS does not determine the price of gas or electricity as these are set by global market conditions however Ofgem's price cap ensures that the price of tariffs is fair and that customers do not experience a loyalty penalty.

The Government is aware of the impact that high global wholesale energy prices are having on consumers and has put in place additional support worth £9.1bn on top of existing measures to support vulnerable households.

Energy: Standing Charges

Mr Richard Holden: [154462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the increase by energy companies in standing charges on energy bills; and if he will make an assessment of the reasons for that increase given that the pure cost of connection has not risen.

Greg Hands:

The standing charge is a fixed charge that suppliers pass on to their customers to cover the cost of providing a live supply. One component of these costs relates to transmission and distribution costs, which have increased recently, as the Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR) levy is paid via network costs. The SoLR levy covers the unrecoverable costs of a supplier taking on the customers of a failed supplier and reflects the significantly higher costs of purchasing wholesale energy since August. The standing charge is passed on to consumers as a flat rate per day, rather than as a percentage charge, based on how much energy they use.

■ Fuel Oil: Prices

Dr Luke Evans: [157516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy price competitiveness in the domestic heating oil market.

Greg Hands:

The Government believes it is essential that consumers of domestic fuels get a fair deal. There is an open market for the supply of heating oil in the UK as we believe this provides the best long-term guarantee of competitive prices. Changes in the price of heating oil are mainly driven by those in the underlying price of crude oil. The Department publishes regular price data at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/oil-and-petroleum-products-monthly-statistics.

The supply of domestic bulk domestic heating oil is also subject to UK competition law and consumer protection through a regulatory scheme under the Competition and Markets Authority.

Dr Luke Evans: [<u>157517</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he is having with industry leaders to help ensure price competitiveness of the domestic heating oil market.

Greg Hands:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly meets with industry leaders and discusses a range of issues. Heating oil issues have been raised in recent meetings with leading industry representatives.

Fuel Poverty

Charlotte Nichols: [156608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the fuel poverty target has included an estimate of higher energy costs and usage by disabled people.

Greg Hands:

The fuel poverty target is to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030. Its aim is to target energy efficiency support to low income households.

The 2030 target does not include estimates of energy costs.

Progress against the target is reported on in the annual fuel poverty statistics, which can be found https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics.

■ Fuel Poverty: Disability

Vicky Foxcroft: [155834]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether higher energy costs and usage experienced by disabled people are accounted for in his Department's 2030 fuel poverty target.

Greg Hands:

The fuel poverty target is to ensure that as many fuel poor homes, as is reasonably practicable, achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030.

The 2030 target does not include estimates of energy costs, including estimates for any specific groups.

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is the best way to tackle fuel poverty in the long term, contributing to energy bill reductions. Disabled people living in low-income households may be eligible for support through energy efficiency schemes such as the Local Authority Delivery Scheme, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Energy Company Obligation.

Marion Fellows: [157409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department's fuel poverty target numbers take into account the higher average energy costs and usage incurred by disabled people.

Greg Hands:

The fuel poverty target is to ensure that as many fuels poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030. Its aim is to target energy efficiency support to low-income households.

The 2030 target does not include estimates of energy costs including what the energy costs will be for disabled people.

Progress against the target is reported on in the annual fuel poverty statistics, which can be found https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics.

Damien Moore: [157584]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the extent to which fuel poverty target numbers adequately recognise disabled people's higher energy costs and usage.

Greg Hands:

The fuel poverty target is to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030. Its aim is to target energy efficiency support to low income households.

The 2030 target does not include estimates of energy costs, including estimates for any specific groups.

Progress against the target is reported on in the annual fuel poverty statistics, which can be found https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

Heating: Regulation

Ms Lyn Brown: [158909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to introduce a regulatory body for heat network providers with a role equivalent to that of Ofgem; and what steps he is taking to protect households reliant on heat networks from price increases in excess of the energy price cap.

Greg Hands:

Legislation will provide Ofgem regulatory powers to investigate and intervene on networks where prices for consumers appear to be disproportionate, if prices are significantly higher than those consumers would expect to pay if they were served by an alternative heating system.

All energy users are having to deal with rising energy costs, which have been caused by global factors. To help consumers, including those on heat networks, government have introduced support worth more than £9bn for vulnerable households, through initiatives such as the Energy Bill Rebate and the Household Support Fund adding to the help provided throughout winter 2021.

Horizon Europe

[159062] Layla Moran:

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy,, what steps he has taken to ensure that the UK's associate membership of the Horizon Europe programme is ratified to prevent the European Research Council (ERC) from withdrawing funding for scientists and academics.

George Freeman:

The UK stands ready to formalise our association to EU programmes at the earliest opportunity but the EU are not honouring commitments made when the TCA was agreed. My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have raised delays with our counterparts in Europe, including through the EU-UK Specialised Committee meeting in December 2021.

Delays from the EU have led to uncertainty for researchers, businesses and innovators in the UK, including ERC applicants. In order to provide reassurance, the Government has guaranteed funding for eligible successful applicants to Horizon Europe who are expected to sign grant agreements by December 2022. The guarantee means that eligible ERC applicants will receive the full value of their funding at a UK host institution and do not need to leave the UK.

If the UK is unable to associate to Horizon soon, and in good time to make full use of the opportunities it offers, we will be ready to introduce a comprehensive global science, research and innovation programme for the benefit of the UK research community.

Industry

Rachael Maskell: [160528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to assess the future industrial opportunities of towns, cities and regions.

Lee Rowley:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Innovate UK: Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre

Chi Onwurah: [156442]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what role Innovate UK took in assessing the bids for the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre; and what criteria were used to assess those bids.

Chi Onwurah: [<u>156443</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance his Department provided to UKRI over the sale of the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre.

Chi Onwurah: [156444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre has received from (a) the University of Oxford, (b) the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, (c) Imperial College London, (d) Johnson & Johnson, (e) Merck and (f) Cytiva.

George Freeman:

The bids were assessed by the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC Ltd) and VMIC Ltd and its Boards of Directors decided which bids to progress. The criteria used by VMIC Ltd to assess bids is commercially confidential information.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, through the VTF, and UKRI-Innovate UK worked together closely up to and during the sale of the VMIC facility to ensure Government objectives were met.

Questions regarding VMIC's Ltd's non-government sources of funding should be directed towards VMIC Ltd.

Insolvency Service: Finance

Jonathan Reynolds:

[156427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of funding provided to the Insolvency Service to perform its duties effectively.

Paul Scully:

Funding arrangements for the Insolvency Service over the next three years were considered at the recent Spending Review. The Insolvency Service regularly reports to the Department on its finances, its use of resources and its performance.

Iron and Steel

Mr Richard Holden: [160565]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure an adequate supply of cobalt steel for UK industry following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Lee Rowley:

It has not proved possible to respond to my hon Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

Iron and Steel: Import Controls

Mr Richard Holden: [160566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that steel required for UK manufacturing that is not produced in the UK is accessible to UK industry in the context of the impact of import quotas on market access to that product.

Lee Rowley:

It has not proved possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

Minerals

Cherilyn Mackrory: [159081]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish the UK's critical minerals list.

Greg Hands:

It has not proved possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.

■ P&O Ferries: Redundancy

Louise Haigh: [159018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Insolvency Service will report on the formal and civil investigations into the circumstances surrounding the redundancies made by P&O Ferries in March 2022.

Paul Scully:

On 1 April, the Insolvency Service wrote to my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy confirming that, following its enquiries, it has commenced formal criminal and civil investigations into the circumstances

28

surrounding the recent redundancies made by P&O Ferries. As these are ongoing investigations, it is not appropriate for the Insolvency Service to provide any comment or information before the investigations have concluded.

Post Offices: ICT

Jonathan Reynolds:

[156425]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of convictions given to sub-postmasters during the Post Office Horizon scandal being overturned.

Paul Scully:

Officials have attended two roundtables where relevant prosecuting authorities have discussed this issue and actions that can be taken.

Mr Kevan Jones: [<u>160453</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the entire cost to the public purse has been for the establishment of the Historical Shortfall Scheme.

Paul Scully:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr Kevan Jones: [<u>160454</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much money from the public purse has been paid out by the Historical Shortfall Scheme to date.

Paul Scully:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr Kevan Jones: [160455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Historical Shortfall Scheme: Information on Progress published by the Post Office, what assessment he has made of the reasons that 44 applications to the Historical Shortfall Scheme remain in the dispute process.

Paul Scully:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr Kevan Jones: [160456]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether money paid out under the Historical Shortfall Scheme comes directly from his Departmental budget.

Paul Scully:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr Kevan Jones: [160457]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the amount of public money expected to be paid out under the Historical Shortfall Scheme.

Paul Scully:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Property: Foreign Companies

John Spellar: [<u>156373</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether anonymous foreign owners will be required to register their identities on the UK property register as well as the Register of Overseas Entities.

Paul Scully:

Created under the powers of the Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act, the Register of Overseas Entities will require overseas companies owning or buying property in the UK to give information about those with more than 25% ownership or control of their company to Companies House.

The Register will require the name, date of birth and nationality of the beneficial owner to be submitted, as well as their usual residential address, a service address, details on the basis of on which grounds they are a beneficial owner, and if the person is part of the UK Sanctions List.

The Register will be publicly accessible online, allowing anyone scrutinising data held by the UK's land registries to quickly seek relevant further information from the Register of Overseas Entities.

John Spellar: [156374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what (a) financial and (b) personnel resources will be allocated to the Register of Overseas Entities.

Paul Scully:

Companies House will operate the Register of Overseas Entities. Companies House will be receiving £63million announced at the Spending Review in order to implement its transformation programme which includes implementing the Register of Overseas Entities. Work is already underway to implement the Register.

Renewable Energy

Geraint Davies: [157263]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Rural Community Energy Fund.

Geraint Davies: [157264]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to support the development of community owned renewable energy schemes.

Geraint Davies: [157265]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department has spent supporting the community-owned renewable energy sector in each year since 2015.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises that community energy groups have a role to play in the Department's efforts to decarbonise the economy.

Through the introduction of UK-wide growth funding schemes, such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Government is enabling local areas to tackle net zero goals in ways that best suit their needs. The Government encourages community energy groups to work closely with their local authority to support the development of community energy projects within these schemes.

The Government also plans to reintroduce the Community Energy Contact Group to strengthen engagement with the sector.

There have been a range of government initiatives from different Government Departments that have supported the community energy sector since 2015. This includes grant funding through the £15 million Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) from Defra and BEIS, and broader schemes which have been open to community energy groups as well as other organisations, such as the Feed in Tariff scheme, the Towns Fund, and the Community Renewal Fund, where spend is not shown explicitly for community groups.

RCEF projects are currently in the delivery stage, and we expect to review the scheme in due course.

Royal Mail: Regulation

Catherine West: [159039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that Ofcom takes effective and timely regulatory action in relation to Royal Mail when required.

Paul Scully:

It is for Ofcom, as the independent regulator of postal services, to set and monitor Royal Mail's service standards and decide how to use its powers to investigate and take enforcement action should Royal Mail fail to achieve its obligations without good justification.

Ofcom is preparing to review Royal Mail's performance for the 2021/22 financial year and has stated that it will not hesitate to act where necessary.

The Government's sets out its strategic priorities and desired outcomes for telecommunications, the management of radio spectrum and postal services in the Statement of Strategic Prioritise which is available online at www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-of-strategic-priorities. Ofcom is required to have regard to the Statement when exercising its regulatory functions.

Solar Power: Agriculture

Alicia Kearns: [159099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the suitability of agricultural land for large scale solar plants, in the context of the relative output of UK solar plants and those in hotter climates.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises the need to preserve the UK's arable farmland. Planning guidance prioritises effective land use and encourages deploying large solar on previously developed land. The Government also supports solar co-located with other functions, such as agriculture, Projects should be designed to avoid, mitigate, and compensate for impacts.

Solar is a cheap, effective, and versatile technology that works better at cooler temperatures and can generate large amounts of electricity even on cloudy days and from indirect sunlight. Solar generation is predictable and can be part of grid balancing to complement other energy sources.

Solar Power: Batteries

Anne Marie Morris: [156479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Department has made of the level of risk of exploding battery energy storage systems associated with solar panels.

Greg Hands:

Electricity storage is a critical technology for ensuring security of supply and decarbonisation of the energy system. When installed, maintained and decommissioned correctly, electricity storage poses minimal risks. A robust health and safety regime is in place with appropriate provisions to ensure that battery storage at all scales can be operated safely in a range of environments. The government is currently working with the industry-led Storage Health and Safety

Governance Group to establish common standards for product development and installation of domestic/small-scale battery storage and develop guidance for grid-scale storage.

Solar Power: Buildings

Daisy Cooper: [159090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has undertaken an assessment of the amount of non-residential building roof space that is (a) available and (b) suitable for the installation of solar panels.

Greg Hands:

Data estimating the floor area of non-domestic properties, from which commercial roof space can be inferred, is available on www.gov.uk here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/non-domestic-national-energy-efficiency-data-framework-nd-need-2020. However, not all rooves are suitable for solar panels due to shading, orientation, and location.

Solar is key to the Government's strategy to decarbonise energy. The Government is supporting commercial rooftop solar deployment through capital allowances for spend on solar panels, exempting solar and storage used on site from business rates from 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2035, and changes to energy performance standards for non-domestic buildings.

Tidal Power

Gareth Thomas: [157575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the (a) viability and (b) efficacy of increasing the proportion of tidal energy in the UK's energy mix; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets regularly with his cross-departmental counterparts to discuss key national priorities. The Government has committed over £175m in innovation funding to the marine energy sector, as well as a £20m annual budget for the procurement of tidal stream energy via the ongoing Contracts for Difference fourth allocation round, and it is for tidal power developers now to demonstrate the cost efficiency and proof of scalability that is required from the UK's sources of low carbon generation. The Secretary of State has no plans to make a specific statement at this time.

Gareth Thomas: [157577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the UK's energy is targeted to be tidal energy by (a) 2025, (b) 2030, (c) 2040 and (d) 2050; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets regularly with his cross-departmental counterparts to discuss key national priorities. The Government has no specific target for the proportion of tidal power in the Britain's energy mix. The Government has committed over £175m in innovation funding to the marine energy sector, as well as a £20m annual budget for the procurement of tidal stream energy via the ongoing Contracts for Difference fourth allocation round. Tidal power developers need to demonstrate the cost efficiency and proof of scalability of this technology.

■ Tidal Power: Finance

Gareth Thomas: [157578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of further increasing funding for tidal energy; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Government announced in November that the fourth Contracts for Difference allocation round will feature a £20 million annual ringfenced budget for tidal stream energy.

The Government remains open to considering well-developed proposals for harnessing the tidal range energy in the bays and estuaries around the UK's coastlines, including barrage schemes and other alternatives. Any proposal would need to demonstrate strong evidence of value for money when the Government takes a view on its potential.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme

Charlotte Nichols: [156610]

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 Warm Home Discount Core Group 2 will focus support to low-income households who are struggling to heat their homes. Eligibility will be linked to receipt of a qualifying means-tested benefit and tax credits and having high energy costs derived from property characteristics. These reforms will ensure that rebates are provided to fuel poor households on the lowest incomes.

The full eligibility criteria, including a list of the qualifying benefits, can be found in our recently published <u>Government response</u> on the scheme.

Mike Amesbury: [157500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Warm Home Discount, if he will reverse the proposed change to the criteria of eligibility for financial support towards energy bills that would mean those in receipt of

disability living allowance, personal independence payment and attendance allowance will no longer be able to claim from the discount scheme.

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 meanstested 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

Charlotte Nichols: [156606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he intends to bring forward the relevant legislative proposals to implement the reforms to the Warm Home Discount for winter 2022-23.

Greg Hands:

The Government intends to lay the Regulations for the reformed Warm Home Discount scheme in England and Wales in Parliament in the coming weeks, with the reforms coming into force from the 2022/23 scheme year.

The Government will consult, and lay separate Regulations for the Warm Home Discount scheme in Scotland.

Charlotte Nichols: [156611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will reconsider planned reforms to the Warm Home Discount eligibility criteria to enable those in receipt of Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance to be 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 lose out.

Around 62% of PIP and DLA recipients also receive one of the qualifying meanstested 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

Airports: Vetting

Louise Haigh: [159014]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many FTE staff are working on processing the security checks required for airport staff to begin employment.

Louise Haigh: [159015]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average time taken is to process the government security checks required for a single employee of airport staff to begin employment.

Michael Ellis:

I am unable to confirm staffing levels in United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV) for security reasons but can confirm that there are measures in place to fast track applications submitted from the aviation sector. UKSV works closely with customer groups and authorities to understand their forecasted demand for the provision of vetting services. In turn this allows for an appropriate resourcing forecast.

I am also unable to reveal the number of National Security Vetting (NSV) checks in progress as this is likely to prejudice national security. It would also impact the protective measures employed in safeguarding Her Majesty's Government (HMG). However, I am able to report that security checks are being processed in a timely manner and that there are no delays.

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

Cabinet Office: Social Media

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [158870]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department is enrolled on any trusted flagger programmes with social media companies.

Nigel Adams:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport lead on social media companies and related trusted flagger programmes. Therefore, the Cabinet Office does not hold any information on this subject.

Cabinet Office: Travel

Rachel Hopkins: [160584]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what is the total cost to the public purse of the (a) travel, (b) accommodation and (c) printing costs of the Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency's visits to civil service offices across the country in the last (i) 7, (ii) 14, (iii) 21 and (iv) 28 days.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

Since being appointed, the Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency has visited Glass Wharf, Bristol, on Friday 22 April. Travel was provided by the Government Car Service. No accommodation costs were incurred. Costs for printing in support of the visit were not outside that usually provided.

The Minister also regularly attends government offices within London for meetings as part of his duties. Travel is usually provided by the Government Car Service and printing costs did not materially differ from those usually incurred.

Coronavirus: Deaths

36

Mr Steve Baker: [R] [155701]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference 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 require establishments to regularly verify a subset of deaths using autopsies with full medical documentation in any potential future pandemic.

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 14 April is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_Response_to_PQ155701 (1).pdf]

Coronavirus: Public Inquiries

Layla Moran: [160546]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has instructed No. 10 staff to preserve evidence for the inquiry into the Government's handling of the covid-19 outbreak.

Michael Ellis:

All departments are aware that the Covid inquiry will bring with it substantial obligations to provide relevant records, information and data, and that preparation for the inquiry includes the need to ensure that no material of potential relevance to the inquiry is destroyed. The Cabinet Office raised this to the attention of all departments across Whitehall in June 2021 and again in February 2022.

Efficiency and Value for Money Committee

Deidre Brock: [157402]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, who will appoint members to the Efficiency and Value for Money Committee.

37

Deidre Brock: [157403]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the selection criteria are for membership of the Efficiency and Value for Money Committee.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Domestic & Economic (Efficiency and Value for Money) Committee is a Cabinet Committee.

Membership of Cabinet Committees is decided by the Prime Minister. GOV.UK is updated regularly with the list of Cabinet Committees, their terms of reference, and membership.

Deidre Brock: [157404]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Efficiency and Value for Money Committee will publish the minutes of its meetings.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Domestic & Economic (Efficiency and Value for Money) Committee is a Cabinet Committee.

It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

■ EU Law: Scotland

Patrick Grady: [158988]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the Scottish Government on his Department's review into retained EU law in the UK.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Government remains committed to engaging with devolved governments on the reviews into retained EU law, including engaging at Ministerial level.

To date, there have been regular official level discussions with the devolved administrations. We will continue to engage at an official level in areas of interest.

Infrastructure: Iron and Steel

Louise Haigh: [157445]

To ask the Minister of the Cabinet Office, whether the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline has a target for the use of UK steel.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline reports on forecast and projected infrastructure investment across the public and private sectors, and includes projections regarding skills demand. The Pipeline does not include targets for any sector, including UK steel.

This government is committed to creating the right conditions in the UK for a competitive and sustainable steel industry. It publishes a separate Steel Procurement Pipeline setting out the UK government steel requirements over the next 10 years, together with data on how departments are complying with steel procurement guidance. This enables UK steel manufacturers to better plan and bid for government contracts.

■ Members: Correspondence

Angela Rayner: [157549]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when he plans to respond to the letter dated 14 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne.

Michael Ellis:

The advice of Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests has now been published and is available on GOV.UK. This sets out the Independent Adviser's judgement that the requirements of the Ministerial Code have been adhered to by the Chancellor, and that he has been assiduous in meeting his obligations. The Prime Minister has accepted this advice and considers the matter closed. I have replied to the Rt Hon Member's letter in that light.

■ Pharmacy: Coronavirus

Feryal Clark: [159111]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many pharmacists, as defined by the ONS occupation code 2213, pharmaceutical technicians as defined by ONS code 3217, and pharmacy and other dispensing assistants as defined by ONS occupation code 7114, died during the covid-19 pandemic in England in the period 1 March 2020 to 31 March 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 25 April is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [ACFrOgDKisVUWSp4e0kSX4JJD3byA_FRpJPrZFYeFaBANoX4M9TWgSjAyZTuoTFxIKEy j0d6WUR5ZHYGYj8IpazGrhLEBoLmio9Cl00ha6YJ5AYp0tYly-tar6YpZWw=.pdf]

Processed Food

Emily Thornberry: [158882]

To ask the Minister of the Cabinet Office, how many people in the UK were employed in the semi-processed food industries at the end of the financial years (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2021-22.

Emily Thornberry: [158883]

To ask the Minister of the Cabinet Office, what the total gross value added to the UK economy was from semi-processed food industries during the financial year (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2021-22.

Emily Thornberry: [158884]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people in the UK were employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing industries at the end of the financial year (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2021-22.

Emily Thornberry: [158885]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total gross value added to the UK economy was from agriculture, forestry and fishing industries during the financial year (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2021-22.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

It has not proved possible to respond to the Rt hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

COP26

Development Aid

Chris Law: [160505]

To ask the President of COP26, with reference to the Statistics on International Development: Provisional UK Aid Spend 2021, if he will provide a breakdown of Official Development Assistance spending on COP26 in 2021.

Alok Sharma:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey: [156378]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 7 March 2022 to Question 131056 on Afghanistan: Refugees, how many and what proportion of ARAP applications received by his Department in March 2022 (a) have been processed with a final decision given and (b) await a decision on eligibility.

James Heappey:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Please see the relevant figures below:

MONTH	APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS MADE
March	2,991	451

Air Force and Army: Teesside International Airport

Mr Kevan Jones: [160458]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 153770 on Air Force and Army: Teesside International Airport, how many military aircraft have visited Teeside International Airport under Prior Permission Required protocols in each of the last ten years.

Jeremy Quin:

As each military flight to Teeside is booked as part of routine pre-flight planning by each respective aircraft crew, the information is not collated centrally by the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) publishes comprehensive details of overall aircraft movements at civil airports, in their statistical publication series 'Annual airport data'. For 2021 Teeside Airport reported a total of 544 military movements. However, that data may include movements for aircraft of overseas Air Arms alongside those of the MOD.

Ajax Vehicles

John Healey: [<u>158859</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department has made of what the whole life cost of the Ajax Programme will be, including the contract cost and support costs.

Jeremy Quin:

The whole life cost of any platform includes the initial procurement, support, maintenance, associated infrastructure and disposal costs over its decades-long life cycle. An estimate of whole life costs was provided to the NAO and is set out on Page 23, Paragraph 1.20 of the NAO report.

John Healey: [158861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many critical milestones on the Ajax Programme are outstanding; and how late each of those milestones is.

Jeremy Quin:

As highlighted in the NAO report the contract contains payment milestones. However the details of these remain commercially sensitive.

John Healey: [<u>158862</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the National Audit Office report, The Ajax Programme, published 11 March 2022, how many of the 136 open

concerns raised by DSTL that his Department were tracking as of October 2021 have been resolved; and what each of those 136 concerns relates to.

Jeremy Quin:

The National Audit Office report, published in March 2022 noted that 136 concerns relating to the Ajax programme were raised by DSTL in October 2021. Such issues relate to aspects of the capability that could be improved, may be at risk or would benefit from additional design, test or trials evidence. This is a live list and is primarily managed through Technical and Trials Expert Working Groups that include both the MOD and General Dynamics. Ultimately, it is the Joint Assurance Verification and Acceptance Team that reviews evidence to determine whether contracted requirements have been met.

John Healey: [158863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many concerns relating to the Ajax Programme that have been raised by DSTL are open; what each of those concerns is; and what the status is of each of those concerns.

Jeremy Quin:

DstI has an important role in flagging risks with incoming defence platforms that could be improved or addressed through design modification, increased testing or adaptation. However as these risks may potentially impact operational capability I am withholding the information to protect the operational effectiveness of the UK Armed Forces.

Ajax Vehicles: LE TacCIS Programme

Mr Kevan Jones: [160459]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the integration and deployment of Morpheus with AJAX is a requirement for the AJAX programme to reach Full Operational Capability.

Jeremy Quin:

The delivery of Morpheus is not a requirement for the Armoured Cavalry Programme to achieve Full Operating Capability.

Antitank Missiles: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [160461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has placed any new orders for NLAW in each of the last two months.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 March 2022 (Official Report, col.556) to the right hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne (John Healey).

Attachments:

1. NLAW [Hansard 28 March 2022.docx]

42

Armed Forces: Pay

Marco Longhi: [160562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the salary sacrifice scheme to members of the armed forces to enable them to pay for items such as cars and bikes directly through their payroll.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has no plans to introduce salary sacrifice schemes for members of the Armed Forces. However, the MOD continually reviews the overall offer to Service personnel with the aim of making it as attractive as possible, supporting maximum levels of recruitment and retention within available resources.

Armed Forces: Recruitment

Mr Mark François: [<u>160462</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 153776, on Armed Forces: Recruitment, which company is the NCSC Assured Provider of Cyber Incident Response services.

Leo Docherty:

The NCSC Assured Provider of Cyber Incident Response services for the defence recruitment system incident was Accenture.

Mr Mark Francois: [<u>160463</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 153788, on Armed Forces: Recruitment, which company, other than Capita, bid for the Defence Recruitment System contract.

Leo Docherty:

The other company that bid for the Defence Recruitment System contract was Serco Ltd.

Mr Mark Francois: [160466]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he will publish the review of the data leak of the Capita Defence Recruiting system on 13 March; and if he will make a statement.

Leo Docherty:

As a result of the report and other investigative work, a series of improvements have been identified, some of which have been or are being implemented, while others are being prioritised and resourced. These improvements will enhance the security of the Defence Recruitment System (DRS).

Due to the nature of the report, it will not be published as its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces, as well as prejudice commercial interests.

43

Armoured Fighting Vehicles

John Healey: [<u>158860</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which armoured vehicles will be kept in service for longer than initially planned in the event that the Ajax Programme has not reached full operating capability by 2025.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 21 March 2022 to Question 140391 to the right hon. Member for North Durham (Kevan Jones).

Attachments:

1. 140391 - Ajax Vehicles [uin 140391.docx]

■ Defence Equipment: Finance

John Healey: [158866]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 156381, on Defence Equipment: Finance, how many of the £7 billion of planned cost reductions are accompanied by detailed plans on how those reductions will be made.

Jeremy Quin:

As outlined in the recent Equipment Plan 2021, the Department's top level budget holders (TLBs) have planned £7 billion of cost reductions over ten years. The total includes some of the savings decisions taken in the Integrated Review to delete or descope large programmes for which there are clear plans. £4 billion out of the £7 billion are reductions in costs in areas of spending consisting of many smaller projects, which make up a substantial portion of the equipment plan, and further savings. Based on previous experience, the Department judges the scale of savings as achievable, and are now developing more detailed plans to build confidence in delivery.

Defence Equipment: Public Appointments

Mr Mark François: [160465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the new head of Defence Equipment and Supply will commence his appointment; what the salary band of that role is; what the anticipated term of office is; and whether his Department paid that person's previous employer to release him from his previous contract.

Jeremy Quin:

The new Chief Executive Officer of Defence Equipment and Support, Mr Andy Start, will take up his role in early autumn 2022 with a fixed term of appointment of three years, with the option to extend or make permanent by mutual agreement. The salary band of the role is between £275,000 and £279,999. The Ministry of Defence has not paid Mr Start's employer to release him from his contract.

■ European Fighter Aircraft: Advanced Short-range Air-to-air Missile

Mr Kevan Jones: [160460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missiles will be integrated onto Typhoon aircraft by the end of this calendar year.

Jeremy Quin:

The Block 6 standard Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile has been successfully integrated onto the Typhoon aircraft with Initial Operating Capability formally declared on 1 April 2022.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [157296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 9 February 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire regarding violence against women and girls, reference ZA58879.

Leo Docherty:

My response was sent to the hon. Member on 26 April 2022. I apologise for the delay in responding. This was due to an administrative error.

■ Military Aid: Ukraine

John Healey: [157572]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total amount spent by his Department on military support to Ukraine has been since 24 February 2022.

James Heappey:

The Department has committed more than £450 million in financial backing for the Ukrainian military.

Ministry of Defence: Staff

Mr Mark Francois: [160464]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 153789 on Ministry of Defence: Staff, if he will list the nine senior personnel who have applied for ACOBA clearance to join Capita over the last 10 years by (a) name, (b) appointment, (c) star-equivalent rank and (d) year that the ACOBA clearance was sought.

Jeremy Quin:

Details of all applications to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA), including names, appointment sought, rank, and date, have been published by ACOBA and can be found in their published reports.

Pre-2014 these details are given at Annex D of the ACOBA annual reports; post-2014, this information is provided in a separate ACOBA publication, which are available from the following links:

45

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396938/Twelfth_Annual_Report_2010-2011.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396936/ACOBA_Thirteenth_Annual_Report_2011-12.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381551/acoba_12-13_annual_report.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380879/acoba_13-14_annual_report.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/appointments-taken-up-by-former-crown-servants

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/appointments-taken-up-by-former-crown-servants-2019-2020

RAF Cosford

Mark Pritchard: [158902]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish his plans for the expansion of RAF Cosford.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence continues to develop its plans for expansion at RAF Cosford, which remains a core site for Defence. Final decisions are still to be taken, but we will confirm our plans in due course.

■ Serbia: Military Aircraft

Alicia Kearns: [159100]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has had discussions with NATO allies on the sale of military jets to Serbia; and whether his Department has made an assessment of the (i) level of risk of escalation in Bosnia and (ii) implications for its policies of the absence of Serbian sanctions against Russia in the context of that matter.

Alicia Kearns: [159101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions his Department has had with (a) NATO allies and (b) Cabinet colleagues on the sale of military jets to Serbia in the context of the (i) level of risk of escalation in Bosnia and (ii) failure of Serbia to sanction Russia.

Jeremy Quin:

The Government carefully considers its support to Defence exports given the range of opportunities they can provide to support the UK industrial base and expand our global economic and security partnerships. Export licences are granted only in accordance with the UK's robust Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, which provide a thorough risk assessment framework and require us to consider the possible impact

of providing equipment and capabilities. We do not issue licences where we determine there is a clear risk that the items would, overall, undermine peace and security.

■ Type 23 Frigates

Mr Mark François: [160467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Type 23 frigates remain in front-line service with the Royal Navy.

Mr Mark François: [160468]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when any Type 23 frigates which have now been retired left front-line service with the Royal Navy.

Mr Mark Francois: [160469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the status of each of the Royal Navy's thirteen Type 23 frigates is, as at 1 April 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

Twelve Type 23 frigates remain in service with the Royal Navy.

HMS MONMOUTH was decommissioned in June 2021. This was an element of the optimisation of the Type 23 programme announced in the Integrated Review, which will deliver improved availability across the next seven years. She was retired ahead of a lengthy refit period, during which she would have been unavailable. The savings from the cancellation of that refit period were re-invested into extending HM Ships ARGYLL, IRON DUKE and LANCASTER in service, maximising the return on the resource already invested in them.

As of 1 April 2022, HM Ships ARGYLL, IRON DUKE, SUTHERLAND and ST ALBANS are in long term refit, the remaining eight are available for operations.

Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid

John Healey: [158867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 1 April 2022 to Question 148045 Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid, how many (a) of the 700 Humanitarian Assistance Task Force personnel have been deployed and (b) requests for deployment have been made as of 25 April 2022.

James Heappey:

The answer I provided to Question 148045 on 1 April 2022 remains extant, subject to the following developments:

At present 82 personnel continue to maintain a vehicle fleet in Poland in support of the Humanitarian Assistance Task Force (HATF). The remainder of the personnel assigned to the HATF remain at readiness to support should they be called.

No further requests for deployment have been made as of 25 April 2022.

Ukraine: Military Aid

John Healey: [<u>158858</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many stormer vehicles the UK is sending to Ukraine.

James Heappey:

In the coming weeks, we will deliver a small number of Stormer armoured vehicles with day and night anti-air capabilities to Ukraine; these will be gifted in-kind directly from the Army.

The exact number will be formally agreed in the coming days, and I will update the House at the first opportunity.

John Healey: [158865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Harpoon missiles the UK has supplied to Ukraine since February 2022.

James Heappey:

We are currently not providing Harpoon launchers or missiles to Ukraine.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Allwyn Entertainment: National Lottery

Alex Davies-Jones: [159118]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 March 2022 to Question 147120, if she will publish the names of the Qualifying Direct Shareholders at Allwyn who are currently undergoing BPSS checks.

Alex Davies-Jones: [159119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of UK sanctions relating to Russia on the Gambling Commission's decision to award Allwyn Entertainment as the preferred operator to run the National Lottery from 2024; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The competition to award the licence to operate the 4th National Lottery licence (4NL) is run by the Gambling Commission. The National Lottery Act 1993 stipulates that the Commission can only grant a licence to operate the National Lottery if it is satisfied that the proposed licensee is a fit and proper person. In this context, the Commission carried out appropriate vetting checks on all the applicants to the 4NL competition and is now carrying out further vetting checks on Allwyn as the Commission's preferred applicant to operate 4NL. The Commission does not have any plans at present to list the names of those individuals subject to vetting checks.

The Gambling Commission has taken steps to assure itself that no applicant to the 4NL competition is or is likely to be impacted by the sanctioning of entities and individuals listed in the Consolidated List of Financial Sanctions Targets in the UK.

Arts: Finance

Sir Gavin Williamson: [157560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding Arts Council England has provided per capita in (a) South Staffordshire, (b) Birmingham, (c) Kensington and (d) Chelsea in the financial year 2021-22.

Nigel Huddleston:

Arts Council England (ACE) has advised that between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 it provided the following funding: (a) South Staffordshire (Non-Metropolitan District) received a total of £38,500 investment representing £0.34 funding per capita; (b) Birmingham (Metropolitan District) received £33,173,995 investment representing £29.09 funding per capita; (c&d) Kensington and Chelsea (London Borough) received £6,398,309 investment representing £40.79 funding per capita.

These data are accurate at the time of writing, but are subject to change due to factors such as underspends, withdrawals, and other similar grant adjustments. The figures include both Lottery and Exchequer funding, including one-off grant schemes, such as the Culture Recovery Fund.

As part of building back more strongly, in February 2022, the government announced a series of measures to significantly increase and better distribute ACE's funding, transforming the landscape for arts and culture to ensure that it benefits everyone. Additional funding announced at Spending Review 2021 for Arts Council England (£43.5 million) will be invested outside London in levelling up places. This means that access to arts and culture across the country will be transformed with plans to increase and better distribute funding for the sector in areas outside London by around £75 million by 2025.

Casinos: Taxation

Andrew Bridgen: [158958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of alternatives to a statutory levy on casinos to fund research, education and treatment of gambling addiction.

Andrew Bridgen: [158959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of the relative impact of a statutory levy to fund research, education and treatment into gambling addiction on land-based operators who carry fixed costs and support large numbers of local jobs in their venues, as compared to online operators.

49

Chris Philp:

The Government's Review of the Gambling Act called for evidence on how best to recoup the regulatory and societal costs of problem gambling. We will publish a white paper outlining our proposals for reform and vision for the sector in the coming weeks.

Chelsea Football Club: Sales

Daisy Cooper: [154421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had discussions with the directors of Chelsea FC on consulting supporters on the sale of the club through the creation of a democratically elected shadow board.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has been clear that it would like to see the club sold to an appropriate new owner before the end of the season. The process for any bid continues to be run by the club, and although we would welcome ongoing fan engagement, it will be for them to decide the precise terms of a proposed sale.

At the point the club has a preferred bidder we would expect them to apply for a licence to enable the sale. The Government will consider the merits of this licence application on its own terms, noting that we can only impose conditions on a licence which authorises the sale of the club if they are linked to the sanctions policy. The licence regime does not allow us to go further and insist on things which are not related to sanctions policy.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Aviation

Sarah Olney: [160540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 154260 on Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Aviation, what the total cost of the 246 domestic flights taken by officials in her Department was between April 2019 and March 2020.

Julia Lopez:

The total cost of domestic flights taken by Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport officials between April 2019 and March 2020 was £40,465.77.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Railways

Sarah Olney: [<u>160541</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 154260 on Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Aviation, how many rail journeys officials in her Department made between (a) London and Edinburgh, (b) London and Glasgow and (c) Southampton and Newcastle in 2019-2020.

Julia Lopez:

The total number of rail journeys to and from requested locations taken by Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport officials between April 2019 and March 2020 is broken down below:

London and Edinburgh: 15

London and Glasgow: 66

Southampton and Newcastle: 0

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Social Media

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [158869]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is enrolled on any trusted flagger programmes with social media companies.

Chris Philp:

DCMS engages regularly with a range of social media platforms. As part of our operational work, DCMS has trusted flagger status with major social media platforms to flag harmful content which is in violation of platform terms of service.

Flats: Holiday Accommodation

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[157396]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of holiday and short term rentals in apartment blocks on neighbouring long term residents.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Tourism Recovery Plan, published in June 2021, included a commitment to consult on a Tourism Accommodation Registration Scheme in England.

Ahead of this, the government intends to launch a call for evidence that will seek views on a range of issues that arise from the increase in short term and holiday letting.

First, I want to gather information that will improve the government's understanding of the benefits and challenges of the increase in short-term and holiday letting we have seen in England in recent years. Second, I want to gather initial views on what would and would not constitute a proportionate response to addressing some of the challenges.

This evidence will help us determine whether there are options the government should pursue through a consultation.

Football: Defibrillators

Damien Moore: [155912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to increase funding for grassroots football clubs to purchase defibrillators.

Nigel Huddleston:

Events at UEFA EURO 2020 last year have demonstrated the immense value of access to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and first aid training for anyone involved in sport.

At the grassroots sport level, all capital funding awards for sports venues made by Sport England, the government's arm's length body for community sport, must include AED provision if it is not already available.

For football facilities, The Football Association (The FA) and the British Heart Foundation have provided support over recent years to help ensure AEDs are available. I welcome the Premier League's Defibrillator Fund, which will fund AEDs at thousands of football clubs and facilities across the country. Each grant recipient will be required to have at least one person successfully complete The FA Education Sudden Cardiac Arrest free online course. Sport England is working with the Football Foundation in support of the Premier League initiative to put £3 million into providing AED equipment for grassroots football clubs.

The Defibrillator Fund will see AEDs provided to Football Foundation funded facilities which currently are without a device onsite. The second phase of the project now allows grassroots clubs that own their facilities to apply for funding for a defibrillator, with 1,538 applications to the fund received to date.

Holiday Accommodation

Rachael Maskell: [156522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will consult on licensing short-term holiday lets.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Tourism Recovery Plan, published in June 2021, included a commitment to consult on a Tourism Accommodation Registration Scheme in England.

Ahead of this, however, the government intends to launch a call for evidence that will seek views on a range of issues that arise from the increase in short term and holiday letting.

First, I want to gather information that will improve the government's understanding of the benefits and challenges of the increase in short-term and holiday letting we have seen in England in recent years. Second, I want to gather initial views on what would and would not constitute a proportionate response to addressing some of the challenges.

This evidence will help us determine whether there are options the government should pursue through a consultation.

Internet: Bullying

Kim Leadbeater: [159124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of provisions in the Online Safety Bill that cover physical harm caused by online trolling in relation to (a) epileptic seizures, (b) facial injuries, (c) concussions and (d) broken bones.

Chris Philp:

The Online Safety Bill has robust provisions in place to protect people from physical harm caused by online trolling. The Bill requires services in scope to have systems and processes to tackle illegal content on their services. This includes any illegal online abuse which crosses the criminal threshold.

The largest companies will also need to keep their promises to adult users by taking action against harmful content that is prohibited under their terms of service. All services likely to be accessed by children will also need to protect children from harmful or inappropriate content. Where relevant, platforms will have to address content that poses a material risk of significant physical or psychological harm to an appreciable number of adults or children.

We are also ensuring that criminal law captures a range of harms online. Clause 150 in the Bill, the harmful communications offence, will criminalise the sending of messages with the intention to cause serious distress without a reasonable excuse. This new offence will capture people sending flashing images to known sufferers of epilepsy with the intention of causing harm that amounts to serious distress. In addition, the Ministry of Justice is carefully considering the Law Commission's recommendation for a standalone offence for epilepsy trolling. The Government will set out its full response to the Law Commission's report, later this year.

Spotify: Antisemitism

Dr Rupa Huq: [160538]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking with Spotify to help ensure that anti-Semitic content on that platform is swiftly removed.

Chris Philp:

Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society. The UK is taking robust action to tackle harmful online content, including antisemitism. Tech companies may already be held liable for illegal third party content that they host if they are aware of it and fail to remove it expeditiously. Tech companies that publish illegal content are already liable for it.

We also introduced the Online Safety Bill to Parliament on 17 March 2022 and it passed its second reading in the House of Commons on 19 April.

The Bill will give online companies, such as Spotify, new duties of care for user-generated content that they host on their service. Companies will have duties to prevent the proliferation of illegal content, including illegal hate speech, on their platform, and ensure that children who use their services are not exposed to harmful or inappropriate content. They will also be required to have effective and accessible mechanisms for users and affected persons to easily report concerns and seek redress.

Swimming Pools

Rachael Maskell: [159007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to support public swimming pools to mitigate the rise in energy costs.

Rachael Maskell: [159008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will subsidise the energy costs of public swimming pools.

Rachael Maskell: [159009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact of the increase in energy costs on the cost of running public swimming pools; and what support he will provide to help public swimming pools meet that increase in costs.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the importance of ensuring public access to indoor and outdoor pools and that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. The responsibility of providing this access lies at Local Authority level, and the government continues to encourage Local Authorities to invest in swimming facilities.

We recognise the impact rising energy prices will have on businesses of all sizes. Ofgem and the government are in regular contact with business groups and suppliers to understand the challenges they face and explore ways to protect consumers and businesses.

The prices offered by energy suppliers are commercial decisions based mainly on the wholesale prices of gas and electricity in the UK's energy markets. The Government does not set these prices. The current increase in wholesale gas and electricity prices reflect movements in global commodity markets, driven by the rapid and substantial recovery of global energy demand since the beginning of the pandemic.

Sport England continues to support swimming and diving, investing over £24,575,700 since January 2017, including £16,119,002 of funding directly to Swim England. This is in addition to the £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund which supported the reopening of local authority swimming pools throughout the country after the pandemic, with 1,176 separate pools supported across 701 sites.

Swimming: Children

Mike Amesbury: [156585]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support local authorities in offering swimming lessons to children.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring public access to swimming pools and swimming lessons. Swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy as well as being a crucial life skill in terms of water safety. Swimming and water safety is an important part of the primary PE curriculum. The Government has published national guidance encouraging primary schools to use their share of the £320 million PE and Sport Premium to fund additional swimming lessons and train teachers.

The Government has provided a range of support for swimming pools during the pandemic. The £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund supported the reopening of local authority swimming pools throughout the country. Sport England continues to invest in access to swimming, awarding £9,112,544 in grassroots swimming and diving since 2019, including £6,230,502 directly to Swim England. This supports Swim England's work to develop the swimming workforce, including the Institute of Swimming which delivers training for swimming teachers.

Unboxed: Cost Effectiveness

Hywel Williams: [150101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the value for money of her Department's spending on Unboxed festival.

Nigel Huddleston:

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is an ambitious programme of ten major multi-site and digital creative projects designed to bring people together, inspire people of all ages, and invest in the creative talent of the future. With free large-scale events, installations and online experiences available to audiences across the UK, UNBOXED demonstrates our commitment to increase access to culture and major events for communities across the UK.

The first UNBOXED project, About Us, visited Caernarfon earlier this month, where it was seen by around 16,000 people, and included local people singing in the accompanying choir.

UNBOXED will be assessed through an independent evaluation setting out social, cultural, and economic impacts of the programme. A final report is due in early 2023.

Unboxed: Finance

Sarah Olney: [150247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate she has made of the total funds to be allocated for Unboxed: Creativity in the UK.

55

Nigel Huddleston:

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is an ambitious programme of ten major multi-site and digital creative projects. The programme objectives are to bring people together and celebrate our collective and unique offer to the world. To deliver this, UNBOXED is taking the projects to over 80 places across the UK which have not generally staged such events in the past, all for free.

This programme aims to deliver a wide range of social, cultural and economic benefits which will be independently assessed and a report will be published in early 2023. In particular, the programme will help contribute to people's happiness and wellbeing across the UK through taking part in and enjoying world-class cultural events, and help support the creative sector's recovery from the pandemic through employment opportunities and new partnerships. It will demonstrate innovative uses of technology, drive up engagement with science and technology, and showcase the very best of the UK's creativity to the world.

These benefits are already starting to be realised. For example, thousands of people have enjoyed 'About Us', a spectacular light and music production in Paisley, Londonderry, Caernarfon and Luton. Fifty young people are working on 'Storytrails', and hundreds of young people are contributing creative work to 'Tour de Moon'. 'Green Spaces Dark Skies' has invited 20,000 people to carry lights in areas of outstanding natural beauty across the UK to create a magical light show. There is an extensive learning and participation programme which includes hundreds of lesson plans, workshops, school trips and other learning resources inspired by the ten projects.

The total budget for UNBOXED is £120 million, of which £98 million has been allocated to DCMS, and the remainder made available to the Devolved Administrations via the Barnett Formula (led by HM Treasury).

Youth Investment Fund: Bradford

Imran Hussain: [158976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding Bradford will receive through the Youth Investment Fund.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Youth Investment Fund is a geographically targeted fund levelling up access to youth services in those areas that need it most. Ministerial decisions on eligibility criteria were taken on the basis of high quality, robust and publicly available data. The eligible areas and a detailed explanation of the methodology is available on the gov.uk website here. Bradford is not eligible for the Youth Investment Fund.

DCMS provides funding for a range of youth programmes benefitting young people in Bradford and right across England, such as the National Citizen Service (NCS). DCMS recently announced a new National Youth Guarantee, ensuring that by 2025, every young person in England will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and opportunities to volunteer.

Youth Services: Finance

Imran Hussain: [158977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will commit to YMCA England's request for long-term, sustainable revenue funding for youth services.

Rachael Maskell: [159010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the level of (a) demand and (b) funding required for detached youth work to support young people in the community.

Rachael Maskell: [159011]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to provide revenue funding for statutory youth services.

Nigel Huddleston:

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to allocate funding to youth services in line with local need, including detached youth work. This is funded from the Local Government settlement, which was over £12 billion last year. DCMS are currently reviewing the guidance associated with the statutory duty.

The Government recognises the vital role that youth services and activities play in improving the life chances and wellbeing of young people. The Government has committed to a National Youth Guarantee: that by 2025, every young person will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and opportunities to volunteer. This will be supported by a three year £560 million investment in youth services, reflecting young people's priorities and addressing the inconsistencies in national youth spending, with a firm focus on levelling up.

EDUCATION

Apprentices: Finance

Rachael Maskell: [158998]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether additional financial support is provided to apprentices who move away from home for an apprenticeship in the event that their wage is insufficient to cover rent and other living expenses; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the financial support available to apprentices who are in that position.

Alex Burghart:

Apprenticeships are paid jobs allowing people to earn while they learn and gain the necessary knowledge and skills needed to progress, or start an exciting career in a variety of industries.

Apprentices will need to cover their day-to-day expenses like living costs, rent and travel in most cases while undertaking an apprenticeship. Employers may offer work

57

benefits such as travel loans, company equipment such as a phone or a car and in some cases offer relocation allowance to support the apprentice with living costs.

In April 2022, the department increased the apprentice national minimum wage by 11.9% to £4.81, aligning it with the under 18 national minimum wage. This makes apprenticeships more attractive, particularly to young people from low-income backgrounds. The Low Pay Commission noted Department for Education research in its 2021 Report, showing most employers pay their apprentices more than the minimum wage. Further information is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/minimum-wage-rates-for-2022.

The department recognises that young care-experienced apprentices, usually living independently, are more likely to struggle with living costs while on an apprenticeship. This is why in 2018 the department introduced a £1,000 bursary for care leavers on apprenticeships. The government continues to support people in work on low incomes, including housing costs, through Universal Credit.

Children: Body Searches

Helen Hayes: [156558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the number of children strip-searched by police officers in (a) primary schools and (b) secondary schools in each year since 2017, and how many of these were conducted without a responsible adult present.

Mr Robin Walker:

Neither the Department for Education nor the Home Office holds figures on the number of pupils strip-searched by police officers in primary schools or secondary schools in each year since 2017, or how many of these were conducted without a responsible adult present.

Children: Day Care

Stephen Morgan: [160544]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase (a) recruitment and (b) retention rates among childcare providers in England.

Will Quince:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Department for Education: Information Officers

Deidre Brock: [155786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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.

Michelle Donelan:

As of 25 April 2022, the Communications Directorate in the Department for Education employed 96 Government Communications Service staff, including 76 full-time and 20 part-time.

Deidre Brock: [156503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much the Department spent on communications staff in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

Michelle Donelan:

The Department for Education's spend on Government Communications Service staff in the Communications Directorate, in the requested years, can be found in the table below. The expenditure includes pay, pension costs, overtime, and travel.

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND	
2019/20	£3,146,805	
2020/21	£4,978,933	
2021/22	£4,966,306	

Extended Services

Stephen Morgan: [159057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the current provision and take-up of extra-curricular activities and before and after-school clubs in schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Higher Education: Admissions

Imran Hussain: [160491]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of the proposed minimum entry criteria for the student finance system on equality of access to education.

Michelle Donelan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Imran Hussain: [160492]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the proportion of students on free school meals who will not qualify for students loans due to the minimum entry criteria for higher education.

59

Michelle Donelan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Higher Education: Standards

Imran Hussain: [160493]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the value of university courses.

Michelle Donelan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Imran Hussain: [160495]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's press release, Education Secretary calls for an end to low value degrees, published on 26 May 2019, whether his Department's assessment of a low-value degree takes into consideration the socio-economic backgrounds of students in the context of courses where 60 per cent of graduates do not go into professional employment or further study.

Michelle Donelan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Imran Hussain: [160496]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's press release, Education Secretary calls for an end to low value degrees, published on 26 May 2019, whether his Department's assessment of a low-value degree takes into consideration the gender composition of students in the context of courses where 60 per cent of graduates do not go into professional employment or further study.

Michelle Donelan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Imran Hussain: [160497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's press release, Education Secretary calls for an end to low value degrees, published on 26 May 2019, whether his Department's assessment of a low-value degree takes into consideration the ethnic backgrounds of students in the context of courses where 60 per cent of graduates do not go into professional employment or further study.

Michelle Donelan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Imran Hussain: [160498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's press release, Education Secretary calls for an end to low value degrees, published on 26 May 2019, whether his Department's assessment of a low-value degree takes into consideration the disabilities of students in the context of courses where 60 per cent of graduates do not go into professional employment or further study.

Michelle Donelan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Music: Education

Louise Haigh: [<u>159017</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the updated National Plan for Music Education will be implemented ahead of the 2022-23 academic year.

Mr Robin Walker:

The government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have access to a high-quality music education.

The government has been working with a panel of experts from across the music education sector to develop a refreshed national plan for music education. This will shape the future of music education in this country and follows the publication of the non-statutory Model Music Curriculum for Key Stages 1, 2, and 3 published last year.

The government will publish the refreshed national plan for music education by the end of this academic year. The department will continue to work with schools and the music education sector to ensure that the timetable for implementation is reasonable.

Pupils: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [160527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure pupils who have experienced detriment due to the covid-19 pandemic are able to access post-16 catch-up support in education and apprenticeships.

Alex Burghart:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Schools: Carbon Emissions

[159043] Sarah Olney:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many new schools built in England in each of the last 10 years have achieved net zero status.

61

Mr Robin Walker:

Over the past ten years, the department has designed schools that are good quality, easy to manage and maintain, and deliver low energy solutions.

In November 2021, the department launched its first specification to deliver schools that are net zero carbon in operation. All schools that are procured under this specification will not only be net zero in operation but will also incorporate a wider range of measures to tackle climate change. The department's full specification can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-design-and-construction#output-specification

Schools: Costs

Stephen Morgan: [159054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings in the Child Poverty Action Group and Children North East report, The Cost of the School Day in England: pupils' perspectives; and what plans his Department has to reduce school-related costs, including curriculum-related costs, school trips and learning resources.

Mr Robin Walker:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stephen Morgan: [159055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of curriculum-related costs on children at (a) primary and (b) secondary settings.

Mr Robin Walker:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stephen Morgan: [159056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on curriculum-related costs for children at (a) primary and (b) secondary settings.

Mr Robin Walker:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Sexual Harassment: Curriculum

Rachael Maskell: [158995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, in the context of the findings on the effectiveness of educational interventions in reducing violence against women and girls in the Government's strategy for tackling violence against women and girls, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reviewing the national curriculum to

include awareness of public sexual harassment; and if he will meet representatives of the Our Streets Now campaign to discuss the inclusion of public sexual harassment awareness in the national curriculum.

Rachael Maskell: [158996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that children are educated on (a) understanding and (b) reporting public sexual harassment.

Mr Robin Walker:

In primary schools, age-appropriate relationships education (RE) includes supporting children to learn about what healthy relationships are, their importance, and how to develop mutually respectful relationships in all contexts, including online. This is intended to provide a foundation for relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) at secondary school.

In secondary schools, RE broadens to become age-appropriate RSHE. It includes factual knowledge around sex, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships.

RSHE statutory guidance advises schools to be conscious of issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and gender stereotypes. It also advises to take positive action to tackle these issues.

The department expects young people to learn what positive, healthy relationships look like, to learn about consent and to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. This includes supporting pupils to recognise what constitutes abuse in a range of contexts, including in public, and to ensure pupils know where to seek help and report abuse. Pupils should also learn to address inappropriate behaviour, harassment, abuse, or exploitation. The topic being safe within RSHE covers a range of abusive behaviours. The department's teacher training module also includes a section on asking for help and support.

In March 2021, the former Secretary of State for Education commissioned Ofsted to undertake an immediate review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, including primary schools. The review was published on 10 June 2021 and the department accepted the findings of the review in full, committing to go further than its recommendations.

Following the publication of Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges in June 2021, the department is developing new non-statutory guidance. The guidance will provide more detail on when specific content around harassment and abuse, including consent, should be taught. Officials met with Our Streets Now to discuss the inclusion of public sexual harassment in the guidance.

Special Educational Needs

Grahame Morris: [158936]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the proposal in his Department's SEND review to allow families with disabled children to pick a school from a pre-defined list, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of that proposal on the health of disabled children in the event that schools on that list do not meet their needs.

Grahame Morris: [158937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the proposal in his Department's SEND review on determining the level of support that disabled children receive from a national banding system, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of that proposal with the aim of providing support to each disabled child based on individual need, as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Will Quince:

The SEND and AP green paper sets out our proposal to establish a single national SEND and AP system setting national standards for how needs are identified and met across education, health, and care to address inconsistency across the SEND system in how and where needs are assessed and met.

This includes consistent processes for how individual needs are identified and recorded and the appropriate provision to meet those needs, including best practice in reasonable adjustments for disabled children, such as those children with a sensory impairment and the full range of appropriate types of support and provision for meeting different needs.

The department is consulting on the proposals for a tailored list of placements and the development of a national framework of bands and tariffs and will fully consider the impact of these proposals on disabled children, including the impact on their health and meeting their individual needs as the department takes this forward.

Helen Hayes: [159031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department will publish an (a) braille and (b) easy read version of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities review; and what steps he is taking to help ensure that the open consultation on that review is fully accessible.

Will Quince:

The department is committed to making its consultation on the SEND and AP green paper fully accessible to all. This enables anyone to have a say on the proposals in the SEND and AP system.

The department will be publishing an easy read and British Sign Language version of the green paper alongside our other accessible versions in April 2022. This is to further support those with vision, motor, cognitive, or learning difficulties and deafness or impaired hearing to engage fully in the consultation. A braille version of the green paper is also available by contacting: SENDreview.consultation@education.gov.uk.

Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [160526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that school pupils with SEND are receiving sufficient catch up support to achieve their full potential, following the covid-19 outbreak.

Will Quince:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Students: Disability

Rachael Maskell: [160525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that young people with (a) sensory impairment or (b) physical can reach the same attainment as their peers in the education system.

Will Quince:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Students: Loans

Imran Hussain: [160494]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the Institute for Fiscal Studies' recently published research on proposed changes to the student loan system.

Michelle Donelan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Tony Sewell

Matt Western: [151229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has had discussions with hon. Members who wrote to the University of Nottingham on the withdrawal of the honorary doctorate of Tony Sewell.

Michelle Donelan:

I am deeply disappointed by the University of Nottingham's decision to withdraw the honorary doctorate it had previously intended to offer to Tony Sewell. Dr Sewell has a distinguished history of public service, including his work at Generating Genius and on the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, and is entirely worthy of recognition. There can be no doubt that the University of Nottingham's decision

contributes to the chilling effect on freedom of speech on campus, as well as sending an implicit message to any students and staff at the university who hold views similar to Dr Sewell that the University is not a welcoming place for them.

As universities are independent and autonomous organisations, you should be aware that this matter is ultimately a decision for the University of Nottingham.

Training

Sarah Olney: [<u>160542</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase the provision of (a) training programmes and (b) other support for people seeking to become qualified to fit retrofitting measures in homes.

Alex Burghart:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture: Brazil

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[158967]

65

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to increase his Department's outreach to the Brazilian agricultural Ministry MAPA for the purposes of streamlining import processes for UK exports, including whisky and gin.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to boosting the UK's agri-food export capability and growth around the world. Recognising the potential of the Brazilian market for UK agri-food exports, DEFRA is currently recruiting a new Agriculture, Food and Drink Attaché for Brazil. This new role will strengthen our agri-food engagement with the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, working directly with officials in Brazil to broaden market access and boost UK agri-food exports. This includes supporting the continued growth of whisky and gin exports to Brazil, which is now a top 20 market for UK exports of these commodities.

Agriculture: Subsidies

Sir Gavin Williamson: [157559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of postponing the phase out of direct payments to farmers until 2024 in the context of the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on global food production.

Victoria Prentis:

We are not going to change the profile of Direct Payments reductions.

Area based subsidy gave half the farming budget to 10% of landowners. The Basic Payment Scheme did not support food production and did nothing to stop the decline in nature. We must seize the opportunity to establish a different system of rewards and incentives in agriculture. I am pleased that we are supporting farmers with the choices that they make for their own holdings.

Defra has been engaging with industry via various forums to understand significant impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on individual industries and supply chains in Defra's sectors. No impacts have been reported that will severely disrupt entire markets.

Last month we announced steps to assist farmers with the availability of fertilisers for the coming growing season, to help address uncertainty amongst growers and help keep costs down for farmers.

The planned changes to the use of urea fertiliser will be delayed by at least a year, helping farmers manage costs and giving them more time to adapt to pressures on the supply of ammonium nitrate fertilisers. We are also encouraging farmers to make use of organic fertilisers. Farmers will be further supported by new slurry storage grants introduced this year.

Alongside this, we have published further details of the early rollout of Sustainable Farming Incentive. The scheme will help farmers move towards more sustainable farming practices over time; supporting farmers to build the health and fertility of their soil, and to reduce soil erosion which are essential for food production, helping to bolster food security and the longer-term resilience of the sector.

Defra will continue to keep the situation under review going forward.

Daniel Kawczynski: [158898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to review the impact of reductions in Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments to farmers in the period 2021-27 on the viability of English farms in the context of rising fertiliser and other input costs.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Agriculture: Trade Agreements

Daniel Zeichner: [158969]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the cumulative impact of trade deals on domestic agricultural output.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government publishes Scoping Assessments to assess the impacts of free trade agreements, in advance of negotiations. Following signature of an agreement, a full Impact Assessment is published prior to implementation. These assessments set out

67

the impact of each agreement at a sectoral level, including agriculture and the food sector.

The Impact Assessments for the free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand have been published. Modelling of the Australia agreement shows an expected reduction in UK agricultural output of 0.7%, and a 2.65% reduction in semi-processed foods output. For the New Zealand agreement, UK agricultural output is expected to fall by 0.35%, and semi-processed food output by 1.16%.

The analysis isolates the change stemming from the agreement against a background of the existing trade arrangements. The estimates can therefore not be simply added together but they reflect the relative significance of each trade agreement.

However, the exact impacts of trade agreements are uncertain. Defra continues to monitor and assess the impacts of market developments across the UK, alongside the Devolved Administrations. In addition, the Government is developing the tools and evidence for assessing the impacts of potential future trade agreements.

Agriculture: Urea

Daniel Kawczynski: [158894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the financial impact of delaying the changes to the use of urea by one year on the farming sector in England.

Jo Churchill:

Global fertiliser prices including urea and ammonium nitrate have more than trebled compared to fertiliser prices this time last year, due to key input costs of natural gas. Prior to the onset of these increases we estimated that adding a urease inhibitor to urea fertilisers will increase the cost of urea by around 10% and the overall annual average cost of this new requirement to be around £8.3m in England (to farmers under the Red Tractor scheme in England). Delaying the changes to urea during this time allows farmers to have broader choice in the fertiliser they use and to take advantage of any differences in price between urea and ammonium nitrate, and shores up supply chains.

Animal Experiments

Alex Cunningham: [158949]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of any increase in testing chemical and pharmaceutical products on animals as a result of different REACH regimes in the UK and EU.

Jo Churchill:

The UK has been at the forefront of opposing animal tests where alternative approaches could be used. This is known as the "last-resort principle", which have retained and enshrined in legislation through our landmark Environment Act.

We are determined that there should be no need for any additional animal testing for a chemical that has already been registered, unless it is subject to further evaluation that shows the registration dossier is inadequate or there are still concerns about the hazards and risks of the chemical, especially to human health.

The Health and Safety Executive, as the UK REACH Agency, will shortly be publishing its first report under Article 117(3) on the status of implementation and use of non-animal test methods and testing strategies under REACH. This report covers the first twelve months of UK REACH operation.

Animal Feed

Owen Thompson: [157453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using insect protein in pelleted chicken and pig feed.

Victoria Prentis:

Animal feed legislation permits the use of insects in animal feed, however, its use is subject to the requirements of both the Animal by Product (ABP) and Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) Regulations which restrict the use of certain feeds.

In the United Kingdom it is currently permissible to use live invertebrates as chicken or pig feed as they do not fall within the scope of these controls, but pellets are currently not permissible in Great Britain. The potential merits and uses for insect protein as a livestock feed (including for chickens and pigs) is currently being considered by Government.

Animal Welfare: Tourism

Rachael Maskell: [158994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to bring forward proposals for a domestic ban on the advertising and offering for sale of specific unacceptable animal practices in tourism abroad, as set out in the Government's Action Plan for Animal Welfare published on 12 May 2021, will be introduced in the next parliamentary session; what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of 2020 Populus polls showing 90 per cent support for such measures, 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 and we want to ensure that money from tourists from this country is channelled towards animal experiences abroad that practice the highest welfare and conservation standards.

Animals that are part of tourist attractions are often subjected to cruel and brutal training practices to ensure their compliance. This Government takes the welfare of all animals seriously. The Government has therefore considered how to reduce the

availability and visibility of such unacceptably low welfare experiences - to tourists from our own country - when making decisions about which activities to undertake when holidaying abroad. Such activities, attractions, and experiences are unacceptable, and it would be better for tourists from our own country to opt to visit higher welfare attractions and experiences abroad.

Avian Influenza

Shabana Mahmood: [157331]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what risk assessment process his Department requires local councils to follow before the closure of council land following an outbreak of avian flu.

Shabana Mahmood: [157332]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what processes his Department has in place to ensure that local councils regularly monitor and report outbreaks of avian flue.

Shabana Mahmood: [157333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to what extent decisions about closing council-owned land following an outbreak of avian flu are within the remit of (a) local authorities and (b) his Department.

Shabana Mahmood: 157334

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many local councils have decided to close or limit access to council-owned land due to an outbreak of avian flu in the last (a) 3, (b) 6 and (c) 12 months.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Biodiversity

Caroline Lucas: [158922]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the unique biodiversity loss challenges facing each sector of the economy, including those which go beyond deforestation; and if he will make it his policy to issue guidance on sectoral pathways to a nature positive economy.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has committed to leave the environment in a better state than we found it, and recognises the unique biodiversity loss challenges faced by every sector of our economy.

Through the Environment Act, the Government is introducing a statutory cycle of monitoring, planning and reporting on Environmental Improvement Plans (EIPs). The Outcome Indicator Framework provides one method of reporting on the progress of

the EIP. The Framework draws together a comprehensive suite of measures which collectively describe environmental change as it relates to the ten goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan (which will become the first EIP).

The Government has introduced a significant number of policies across the economy to support sectors to recover nature, from biodiversity net gain to environmental land management schemes. In 2018 the Green Book incorporated reference to natural capital for the first time. The 2020 version of the Green Book incorporated as its supplementary guidance Defra's 'Enabling a Natural Capital Approach' (ENCA) which provides further data, guidance, and tools to support policymakers in every Government Department on how to consider natural capital in all decision-making.

In our 2019 Green Finance Strategy, the government committed to transforming the frameworks for financial decision making. This includes supporting the finance sector to develop the tools and skills to price climate and biodiversity risk into financial models. As part of the strategy, we set a clear expectation for the finance sector to implement the recommendations of the global Taskforce on Climate related Finance Disclosures, to ensure that risks are properly understood. We also committed to catalyse international action on nature-related financial disclosures.

Since the publication of the Strategy, we have increased our ambition and accelerated the pace including the Chancellor's announcement in November 2020 setting a timetable for climate disclosures to become mandatory by 2024 and through the launch of a global market-led Taskforce on Nature Related Disclosures. The Chancellor also announced plans to legislate to create a Green Taxonomy, to provide clear guidelines to investors on the sectors, technologies and activities that can be considered compatible with the transition to a nature-positive economy in line with our long-term environmental policies. As part of the Strategy, we also set up a Green Finance Institute in partnership with the City of London to support and leverage the skills in our world leading financial sector.

Carbon Emissions

Valerie Vaz: [158942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the Government's policy is on creating a register of carbon offset schemes in the UK to monitor the purchase of viable agricultural land used for this purpose.

Jo Churchill:

The UK Land Carbon Registry is operated on behalf of the UK and Devolved Governments. It contains information about projects registered under the UK Woodland Carbon Code and the UK Peatland Code, the location of registered projects, and the quantity of carbon units issued to date and expected to be issued in future subject to verification of the carbon savings delivered (https://www.woodlandcarboncode.org.uk/uk-land-carbon-registry).

Agricultural and planning policies are devolved matters. In England Her Majesty's Land Registry publishes information on all companies (UK and overseas) which own

71

property in England and Wales (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry).

Chemicals: Regulation

Alex Cunningham: [158946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the additional costs to British chemical companies of registering with UK REACH.

Alex Cunningham: [158947]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact on trade with the EU for British chemical companies of having to operate within UK REACH and EU REACH.

Alex Cunningham: [158948]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of running and managing the UK REACH system.

Jo Churchill:

We want to minimise disruption for business and ensure a smooth transition to UK REACH. We have put in place provisions to minimise the costs for businesses and maintain market access to both the EU and GB markets

We recognise that transition to the UK REACH regime has presented some challenges for the chemicals industry, particularly around the cost of having to access and purchase data to support their registration.

We previously extended the transitional registration deadlines (from two years to a phased two, four, & six-year approach) to allow industry more time to adapt and comply with UK REACH and to spread costs over a longer period. We have now gone further and committed to exploring alternative arrangements for UK REACH transitional registrations that would reduce the need for companies to access EU REACH data packages whilst maintaining high standards to safeguard public health and the environment. Although it is too early to commit to this model, we wish to further explore its potential. We will engage fully with industry, NGOs and other interested stakeholders as part of this process. We have also committed to consult on further extending the transitional registration deadlines.

The cost to Government in running UK REACH includes the cost of further digital development and management of the Comply with UK REACH digital service and the cost of regulatory capacity in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Environment Agency (EA). In 2022/23 this will cost around £13 million. There will also be additional costs of Defra staff working on REACH.

Convention on Biological Diversity

Caroline Lucas: [157338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking in its COP26 presidency to encourage (a) wealthier nations and (b) other stakeholders to increase their finance contributions for the delivery of the Convention on Biological Diversity Global Biodiversity Framework.

Rebecca Pow:

Biodiversity loss is a global problem that needs a global solution. That is why the UK is committed to playing a leading role in developing an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) of finance and targets to be adopted at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

This is a crucial moment for donors and other public and private stakeholders to set out how they plan to contribute to an emerging finance target under the GBF. The UK Government is leading the way with our commitment to spend at least £3 billion of our £11.6 billion International Climate Finance pledge on protecting and restoring nature, alongside our commitment that all Overseas Development Assistance will do no harm to nature.

We are working closely with other donor Governments in advance of CBD COP15 to encourage others to make similarly ambitious commitments and to work towards aligning all international public finance with the GBF, once it has been agreed.

While necessary, international public finance will not be sufficient to finance the transition to a nature positive future. We are also working with private finance institutions to drive up investment in nature.

Caroline Lucas: [157339]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the outcomes of the Convention on Biological Diversity's COP15 meeting later this year (a) recognise and (b) support the contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities to protecting nature.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK recognises the leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), and the global contribution they make to climate change mitigation, biodiversity preservation, and sustainable development. As stewards of 80% of the world's biodiversity, IPLCs provide critical guardianship in protecting tropical forests and preserving vital ecosystem services.

At COP26 of the UNFCCC, the UK created a platform for IPLCs at the World Leaders' Summit Event. Tackling climate change requires global Governments to recognise and protect IPLC rights, and support their frontline role protecting forests and nature. The UK's ambition was translated into the \$1.7bn pledge by 23 public and private donors to advance IPLCs' forest tenure rights and support their role as guardians of forests and nature.

The UK is pushing for the CBD's post-2020 global biodiversity framework to recognise the important role and contribution of IPLCs as stewards of biodiversity and nature, and for it to be implemented through effective and meaningful consultation with Indigenous Peoples, through their own representative institutions.

Through our co-chairmanship of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, the UK is engaging with IPLC stakeholders, including the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, to ensure both that their views and concerns are reflected within the ongoing global negotiations, and that more explicit safeguards for IPLCs are integrated into the text of the global biodiversity framework.

Cosmetics: Chemicals

Catherine West: [157481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to ban the use of (a) butylphenyl methylpropional (lilial) and (b) zinc pyrithione in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

Under UK REACH – key legislation affecting chemicals in GB - companies must identify and manage the risks presented by the chemicals they manufacture or market in GB. These provisions apply to butylphenyl methylpropional (also known as lilial or lysmeral) and zinc pyrithione.

There are no plans to introduce further risk management measures under UK REACH for lysmeral or zinc pyrithione at this time. The Health & Safety Executive recently published initial assessments of substances, including lysmeral, that were added to the EU REACH Candidate List for authorisation in 2021. HSE proposed that no action be taken now on lysmeral because, as this substance is used as a fragrance, they assess it as unlikely to be used at high enough concentrations to pose a risk (see https://www.hse.gov.uk/reach/resources/svhc-assessment-summaries.pdf for further information). However, we will continue to keep lysmeral under review and consider if it is appropriate to prioritise for further action under UK REACH in the future.

To ensure that products placed on the GB market are safe, the Government keeps the regulatory framework under review, including the use of specific chemicals in particular cosmetic products. The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has responsibility for the regulation of cosmetic products and intend to prohibit the use of lysmeral and zinc pyrithione in these products. To do this OPSS will be laying the necessary statutory instrument before Parliament in due course.

■ Crops: Production

John Redwood: [158850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help secure more planting of greenhouse food crops in the context of high gas prices.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

Victoria Prentis:

74

An innovative, productive and competitive agricultural sector is one of the Government's key priorities, and we recognise the role greenhouse crop production has in ensuring a reliable and sustainable supply of fresh produce throughout the year.

ANSWERS

The Government is working with the sector on a forward-thinking approach. It is looking at innovative ways of growing crops, such as increased use of greenhouse crop production and other state of the art farming technology which can help maximise crop growth and increase productivity.

We are aware of the challenges facing greenhouse growers and other farming sectors, as a result of the recent increase in the cost of a range of inputs including high gas prices, and the impact this is having on the production of food crops.

We continue to keep the market situation under review through UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade and recent developments. We are increasing our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real time intelligence.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Information Officers Deidre Brock: [155779]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many communications staff his Department employs (a) full time (b) part time and (c) on flexible working arrangements.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra Group Communications is the first single employer shared service communications team in Whitehall, working for six organisations. Alongside the core department it also provides communications support for five of the department's largest Arm's Length Bodies including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Forestry Commission and the Rural Payments Agency. Defra Group Communications staff work to different organisations across policy and operational areas so it is not possible to provide details of number of full time and part time colleagues working to one organisation. The departmental communications team is approximately 98 FTE.

Deidre Brock: [156496]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much his Department spent on communications staff in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra Group Communications is the first single employer shared service communications team in Whitehall, working for six organisations. Alongside the core department it also provides communications support for five of the department's largest Arm's Length Bodies including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Forestry Commission and the Rural Payments

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

75

Agency. Defra Group Communications staff work to different organisations across policy and operational areas and the communications spend covers six organisations. The department communications budget for the last three years has been £15.3 million for 2019-20, £14.5million for 2020-21 and £14.1 million for 2021-22.

Deposit Return Schemes

Catherine West: [157480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness and (b) progress of the implementation of an all-in Deposit Return Scheme for recycling and reuse.

Jo Churchill:

Defra and the devolved administrations are continuing to consider representations received during the recent consultation on introducing a deposit return scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and expect to publish a response in due course.

Deposit Return Schemes: Glass

Mohammad Yasin: [159044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will include glass in the deposit return scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The full response to our consultation on a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will be published in due course.

However, as part of our response to the consultation on Extended Producer Responsibility, we announced any DRS in England and Northern Ireland would not include glass.

Concerns were raised that including glass in a DRS risked reducing the amount of glass available to remelt, whilst making reverse vending machines larger and more complicated, as well as causing extra risk to both shop staff and consumers.

Glass will be subject to regulation via Extended Producer Responsibility and continue to be recycled at the kerbside.

Dogs: Animal Breeding

Jim Shannon: [156464]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made a recent assessment of the prevalence of illegal puppy farming across the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Dogs: EU Countries

76

Kenny MacAskill: [160554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs entered the UK from the European Union in each month in 2022.

Jo Churchill:

Since we left the EU, the EU import data was collated from PIMS which is APHA's (Post Import Management System) and accounts for all Imports that have been entered using IPAFFS (*Import of products, animals, food and feed system*).

The information that we have provided is a true reflection of the information that we have access to. We can't guarantee the accuracy of this data, as we can only rely on the information that has been input into IPAFFS by traders.

APHA only holds data on GB imports.

Data for April 2022 not complete as not yet month end.

NUMBER OF DOGS FROM EU TO GB 1 JANUARY 22 TO 31 MARCH 22

Month	Number of Dogs
January -22	4983
February - 22	4999
March - 22	5236

Dogs: Republic of Ireland and Romania

Kenny MacAskill: [160553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs entered the UK from (a) the Republic of Ireland and (b) Romania in each month of 2022.

Jo Churchill:

Since we left the EU, the EU import data was collated from PIMS which is APHA's (Post Import Management System) and accounts for all Imports that have been entered using IPAFFS (*Import of products, animals, food and feed system*).

The information that we have provided is a true reflection of the information that we have access to. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data, as we can only rely on the information that has been input into IPAFFS by traders.

APHA only holds data on GB imports.

Data for April 2022 not complete as not yet month end.

Number of dogs entered GB1 January 22 to 31 March 22

Month Republic of Ireland Romania

NUMBER OF DOGS ENTERED GB1 JANUARY 22 TO 31 MARCH 22

Jan- 22	635	2529
Feb - 22	670	2365
March - 22	632	2531

E. Coli: Rivers

Jim Shannon: [156456]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to studies by the University of Suffolk and Woodbridge Town Council along the River Deben, if he will take steps to tackle the presence E. coli in rivers across the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

New measures introduced to tackle storm overflow discharges and agricultural pollution will help to address levels of E. Coli in rivers across England. We recently published the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan Consultation, which will drive the largest investment and delivery programme in tackling storm sewage discharges in history. New duties on water companies in the Environment Act require water companies to publish storm overflow spill data in near real time and monitor water quality impacts upstream and downstream of assets. Furthermore, designated bathing waters are monitored and protected from E. coli, due to the risk to bathers' health.

Farming reforms will also tackle run-off into rivers, and farmers will be paid for actions that improve the environment. We have increased coverage of the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme from 40% to 100% over the next three years and have increased funding for 85 extra EA farm inspectors to be recruited in this financial year.

Environment Protection

Caroline Lucas: [158921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to (a) publish and (b) lay before Parliament the environmental principles policy statement.

Rebecca Pow:

We will publish the environmental principles draft policy statement and lay it before Parliament as soon as possible.

Environmental Land Management Schemes

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[157270]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will prioritise environmental land management scheme funding for the Sustainable Farming Initiative in order to attract more farmers to the scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Environmental Land Management Schemes: Water

Rachael Maskell: [156532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to introduce incentives under the environmental land management schemes to hold water through (a) large and (b) small schemes.

Victoria Prentis:

Water storage can have multiple environmental benefits such as the provision of water resources and flood risk management.

The Sustainable Farming Incentive and Local Nature Recovery will support actions that improve smaller scale water storage and the slowing of run-off throughout the landscape. For example, paying for actions that improve soil structure can improve water infiltration, benefiting water quality, resources and flood mitigation. This will contribute to slowing water flows in large areas of the country. Landscape Recovery will support water storage and inundation associated with restoring and reconnecting rivers with their floodplains.

Through these schemes, farmers will be able to choose to manage their land differently, and put in place approaches which are which are compatible with the environmental needs of the catchment.

These voluntary actions implemented through the schemes will make a significant contribution to flood water storage and inundation management. They may reduce the need for the Environment Agency to put in place larger scale flood storage areas as part of its capital programme. However, these types of schemes will continue to be part of the range of tools that we use for managing flood risks.

In autumn 2021, we also launched the Farming Investment Fund, formed of two strands. The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund will support smaller investments from a prescribed list of items. The Farming Transformation Fund will support more substantial investments in equipment, technology or infrastructure, including, on-farm reservoirs and related infrastructure.

Exports and Imports: Insects

Owen Thompson: [157452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to reduce the cumulative costs of vet health checks and employing export and import agents for companies selling live insect eggs to the EU.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal and Plant Health Agency does not charge exporters for Export Health Certificates. Official Veterinarians operate in a private market and will charge exporters for certification. Decisions on the use of import and export agencies remain commercial matters for traders.

■ Farmers: Finance

Matt Vickers: [156632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help farmers invest in their businesses.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Fertilisers

Daniel Kawczynski: [151031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has prepared contingency plans to nationalise fertiliser production.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daniel Kawczynski: [153837]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans to provide support to the fertiliser industry in the context of the recent increase in gas prices.

Jo Churchill:

Agricultural commodity prices are closely linked to global gas prices. Farmers are facing increased input costs, including for fertiliser, feed and fuel. We are monitoring the situation closely, including through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group. Defra is in regular contact with key industry figures including the National Farmers Union, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and key sector representatives.

The Government announced on 30 March a number of actions to help mitigate the current issues and support farmers and growers ahead of the next growing season. These included changes to statutory guidance to the Environment Agency on how

they should implement the "Farming Rules for Water" to provide clarity to farmers on how they can use slurry and other manures during autumn and winter to meet agronomic needs.

The announcement also included new infrastructure grants to help farmers improve slurry storage and management from Autumn 2022 under the Farming Investment Fund; alongside measures in the Farming Innovation Programme to boost research, including on nutrient management; and a delay to changes to the use of urea by at least a year. When the urea restrictions are introduced, they will be related to the use of ammonia inhibitors rather than a complete ban.

We recognise that fertiliser pressures on the livestock and arable sectors may differ, particularly over the farming seasons. On 31 March, Minister Prentis hosted the first meeting of the Fertiliser Task Force with key industry bodies to discuss potential mitigations to the challenges which global supply pressures are causing. Ministers will continue to meet with key industry bodies for further fertiliser round-table sessions in the coming months, to help identify and mitigate potential risks.

Support in the form of guidance from fertiliser suppliers and agricultural organisations such as National Farmers Union can be found from various public sources. Defra is aware that AHDB have published many helpful public pieces of guidance, advice and webinar recordings on mitigating high fertiliser prices. They can be found on the AHDB website.

Fertilisers: Prices

Kate Griffiths: [154427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the recent increase in fertiliser prices on farming over the next five years.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Matt Vickers: [156629]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help support farmers with rising fertiliser costs.

Jo Churchill:

Agricultural commodity prices are closely linked to global gas prices. Farmers are facing increased input costs, including for fertiliser, feed and fuel. We are monitoring the situation closely, including through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group. Defra is in regular contact with key industry figures including the National Farmers Union, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and key sector representatives.

The Government announced on 30 March a number of actions to help mitigate the current issues and support farmers and growers ahead of the next growing season. These included changes to statutory guidance to the Environment Agency on how they should implement the "Farming Rules for Water" to provide clarity to farmers on how they can use slurry and other manures during autumn and winter to meet agronomic needs; increased grants funding to help farmers and growers boost research and development; and a delay to changes to the use of urea by at least a year. When the urea restrictions are introduced, they will be related to the use of ammonia inhibitors rather than a complete ban.

We recognise that fertiliser pressures on the livestock and arable sectors may differ, particularly over the farming seasons. On 31 March, Minister Prentis hosted the first meeting of the Fertiliser Taskforce with key industry bodies to discuss potential mitigations to the challenges which global supply pressures are causing. Ministers will continue to meet with key industry bodies for further Fertiliser Taskforce sessions in the coming months, to help identify and mitigate potential risks.

Support in the form of guidance from fertiliser suppliers and agricultural organisations such as National Farmers Union can be found from various public sources. Defra is aware that AHDB have published many helpful public pieces of guidance, advice and webinar recordings on mitigating high fertiliser prices. They can be found on the AHDB website.

Daniel Kawczynski: [158892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of fertiliser price rises in 2022 on the net farm business incomes of farmers in England.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daniel Kawczynski: [158893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has plans to provide support for farmers with developing farming techniques that reduce the need for ammonium nitrate fertilisers in the context of increases in fertiliser prices in 2022.

Jo Churchill:

The Government announced on 30 March a number of actions to help mitigate the current issues and support farmers and growers ahead of the next growing season. These included changes to statutory guidance to the Environment Agency on how they should implement the "Farming Rules for Water" to provide clarity to farmers on how they can use slurry and other manures during autumn and winter to meet agronomic needs.

The announcement also included new infrastructure grants to help farmers improve slurry storage and management from Autumn 2022 under the Farming Investment Fund; alongside measures in the Farming Innovation Programme to boost research, including on nutrient management; and a delay to changes to the use of urea by at

least a year. When the urea restrictions are introduced, they will be related to the use of urease inhibitors and timings of application rather than a complete ban.

Given current fertiliser prices, our priority must be to pioneer new technologies to manufacture more organic-based fertiliser products in future and we will support the development of these through the Farming Innovation Programme.

We must also look at alternatives to fertiliser, using techniques like nitrogen fixing legumes and clovers. We have therefore announced that the Government will pay farmers, through the Sustainable Farming Incentive, to help them with the costs of sowing nitrogen fixing plants and green manures in their crops – or in advance of their crops – to substitute some of their fertiliser requirements.

Daniel Kawczynski: [158895]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Fertiliser Taskforce will next be convened to discuss fertiliser prices; and whether the minutes of that taskforce will be published.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Fertilisers: Production

Daniel Kawczynski: [158896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to allocate funding to developing dry leachate from biodigestion plants to be used by farmers as an alternative to ammonium nitrate fertilisers.

Jo Churchill:

The Government announced on 30 March a number of actions to help mitigate the current issues and support farmers and growers ahead of the next growing season. These included changes to statutory guidance to the Environment Agency on how they should implement the "Farming Rules for Water" to provide clarity to farmers on how they can use slurry and other manures during autumn and winter to meet agronomic needs.

The announcement also included new infrastructure grants to help farmers improve slurry storage and management from autumn 2022 under the Farming Investment Fund; alongside measures in the Farming Innovation Programme to boost research, including on nutrient management; and a delay to changes to the use of urea by at least a year. When the urea restrictions are introduced, they will be related to the use of urease inhibitors and timings of application rather than a complete ban.

Given current fertiliser prices, our priority must be to pioneer new technologies to manufacture more organic-based fertiliser products in future and we will support the development of these through the Farming Innovation Programme.

We must also look at alternatives to fertiliser, using techniques like nitrogen fixing legumes and clovers. We have therefore announced that the Government will pay

83

farmers, through the Sustainable Farming Incentive, to help them with the costs of sowing nitrogen fixing plants and green manures in their crops – or in advance of their crops – to substitute some of their fertiliser requirements.

Daniel Kawczynski: [158897]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding his Department has allocated to fertiliser production plants in the UK in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022; and whether his Department plans to provide further funding to those plants in 2022.

Jo Churchill:

In September 2021, the government provided limited financial support for CF Fertilisers' operating costs for three weeks. The deal enabled CF Fertilisers' Billingham plant to continue to operate while global gas prices remained high. It meant that key sectors, including food processing and nuclear power, were ensured supplies of CO2. Details of this support will be published in the usual way in the 2021-22 BEIS Annual Report and Accounts.

Industry then came to an agreement in October without taxpayer support to ensure CF Fertilisers on Teesside could continue to operate for 3 months. This market-led agreement was renewed in January 2022 and continues at the current time, even with high global gas prices.

In the longer term, the government would like to see the market take measures to improve resilience, and we are engaging on ways this could happen.

Fisheries

Anna Firth: [160586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, following the consultation on the draft Joint Fisheries Statement, whether he has plans to consult Parliament on the future direction of UK fisheries management before publishing the final Joint Fisheries Statement in November 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Fisheries: Finance

Matt Vickers: [156633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the fishing industry.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Floods

Rachael Maskell: [160509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of storm water on surface water flooding; and what steps he is taking to mitigate flooding resulting from storms.

Rebecca Pow:

Surface water flood risk, caused by storm water and excessive rainwater, is localised and complex. It is difficult to predict, often happening quickly and is exacerbated by impermeable surfaces and overwhelmed drainage networks. In England 3.2 million properties are at risk of surface water flooding, more than the number at risk from river and sea flooding, and this is likely to increase due to the effects of climate change and population growth if no action is taken to mitigate it.

There is no single solution to mitigating surface water flooding but rather a holistic approach, where everyone has a role in how we manage water and mitigate the risks we face. This includes flood defence schemes and nature-based solutions (such as sustainable drainage systems and other blue-green infrastructure), property flood resilience measures and ensuring we have a robust drainage system now and for the future.

As a local flood risk, it is the responsibility of lead local flood authorities, who have the operational lead and are best placed to understand, mitigate and respond to it. All lead local flood authorities will work with local communities and other bodies, such as water companies, to mitigate the risk as part of their local flood risk management strategy.

The Government is also taking action and last year restated its commitment to ensuring surface water flood risk is tackled. In July 2021 we published a progress update, including where further action is required, on our Surface Water Management Plan, and our response to the independent review into surface water and drainage responsibilities:

(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/surface-water-management-a-government-update).

The Action Plan and Review include 22 actions and 28 recommendations respectively, for a wide range of stakeholders to deliver, including the Government, Environment Agency and lead local flood authorities.

The Government is investing £5.2 billion in 2,000 flood and coastal erosion defences in England to better protect a further 336,000 properties. Approximately a third of these schemes will mitigate surface water flood risk, following changes in 2020 to the Government's partnership funding rules.

Alongside this water companies, who are responsible for the maintenance and resilience of the drainage and wastewater networks, are producing the first cycle of non-statutory Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs), is currently ongoing. These plans are an important part of ensuring a robust drainage system and

will help fully assess network capacity and develop collaborative solutions with local authorities and other bodies who are responsible for parts of the drainage system. The Government will be making these plans a statutory requirement through the Environment Act when the first cycle ends.

Rachael Maskell: [160510]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of which infrastructure is most effective in removing excess storm water to help prevent flooding.

Rebecca Pow:

Surface water flood risk, caused by storm water and excessive rainwater, is localised and complex. It is difficult to predict, often happening quickly and is exacerbated by impermeable surfaces and overwhelmed drainage networks. In England 3.2 million properties are at risk of surface water flooding, more than the number at risk from river and sea flooding, and this is likely to increase due to the effects of climate change and population growth if no action is taken to mitigate it.

There is no single solution to mitigating surface water flooding but rather a holistic approach, where everyone has a role in how we manage water and mitigate the risks we face. This includes flood defence schemes and nature-based solutions (such as sustainable drainage systems and other blue-green infrastructure), property flood resilience measures and ensuring we have a robust drainage system now and for the future.

As a local flood risk, it is the responsibility of lead local flood authorities, who have the operational lead and are best placed to understand, mitigate and respond to it. All lead local flood authorities will work with local communities and other bodies, such as water companies, to mitigate the risk as part of their local flood risk management strategy.

The Government is also taking action and last year restated its commitment to ensuring surface water flood risk is tackled. In July 2021 we published a progress update, including where further action is required, on our Surface Water Management Plan, and our response to the independent review into surface water and drainage responsibilities:

(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/surface-water-management-agovernment-update).

The Action Plan and Review include 22 actions and 28 recommendations respectively, for a wide range of stakeholders to deliver, including the Government, Environment Agency and lead local flood authorities.

The Government is investing £5.2 billion in 2,000 flood and coastal erosion defences in England to better protect a further 336,000 properties. Approximately a third of these schemes will mitigate surface water flood risk, following changes in 2020 to the Government's partnership funding rules.

Alongside this water companies, who are responsible for the maintenance and resilience of the drainage and wastewater networks, are producing the first cycle of non-statutory Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs), is currently ongoing. These plans are an important part of ensuring a robust drainage system and will help fully assess network capacity and develop collaborative solutions with local authorities and other bodies who are responsible for parts of the drainage system. The Government will be making these plans a statutory requirement through the Environment Act when the first cycle ends.

Fly-tipping

Jim Shannon: [157362]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to provide additional funding to the devolved administrations for tackling illegal waste dumping using digital means.

Jo Churchill:

Waste regulation is a devolved matter.

However, working jointly with the devolved administrations, we are developing a digital waste tracking service and in 2019 we committed £7 million to fund this work.

The Environment Act 2021 gives devolved administrations the powers to make regulations to introduce digital waste tracking requirements and recover the costs incurred performing regulatory functions with regard to waste tracking.

Chris Clarkson: [906651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle fly tipping.

Jo Churchill:

Fly-tipping policy is a devolved matter. In England, we are taking action to crack down on fly tipping and support people to dispose of their waste properly. We have announced grants worth £450,000 to help councils in England use innovative methods to tackle fly-tipping and launched a consultation to close a loophole that allows recycling centres to charge for recycling DIY waste.

Food Supply

Ian Byrne: [156624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his policy is on making food more affordable as outlined in the Outcome Delivery Plan.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

87

Matt Vickers: [156630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the UK's food security.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, as demonstrated throughout the COVID-19 response. It is well equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption. Our high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. This provides us with the resilience we need in the face of risks such as adverse weather, animal or crop disease, or transport and border disruption.

Our production to supply ratio remains high in comparison with historical levels. We produce 60% of all the food we need, and 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year, and these figures have changed little over the last 20 years. UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply

Recognising the importance of food security, in the Agriculture Act 2020, the Government made a commitment to produce an assessment of our food security at least once every three years. The first UK Food Security Report (UKFSR) was published in December 2021. This report will serve as an evidence base for future policy work. The UKFSR covers food security in the widest sense from global food availability and sustainability to domestic supply chain resilience, household food security and food safety.

Afzal Khan: [906650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle food insecurity in the context of increases in the cost of living.

Gerald Jones: [906655]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle food insecurity in the context of increases in the cost of living.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a high degree of food security. Last year, we published the Food Security Report which includes a section on food security at a household level. The latest statistics point to an increase in household food security between 2019 and 2020. There are undoubtedly going to be pressures on food prices as a result of increased input costs – including gas, fuel and fertiliser. That will have to be passed through the system, but the Government is providing an additional £500 million to help provide targeted cost of living support for households most in need.

■ Food: Prices

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[153815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the food and drink supply chain with direct increases in food prices as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, well equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption. Our high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes.

As the global economy recovers from COVID-19, many economies are experiencing high inflation, in part due to pressures from rising energy and commodity prices, along with disruptions to global supply chains caused by a mismatch between elevated global demand and bottlenecks in supply as a result of the pandemic.

Our extensive work in this space has reinforced the long-standing view that the most effective response to food supply disruption is industry-led, with appropriate support and enablement from the Government. Consequently, Defra maintains a collaborative relationship with industry, and has for example recently expanded the membership of our longstanding UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group. We have also supported industry through, for example, removing tariffs on imports of sensitive agri-food products from the US and removing other technical barriers to trade. We continue to engage with the sector regarding supply chain disruption.

Munira Wilson: [154429]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help encourage supermarkets to ensure that low cost food ranges are stocked and accessible in smaller, high street stores.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra regularly engages supermarkets and discusses the cost-of-living issue, and we welcome the steps announced by some retailers to support both their workforce and customers. We will continue to explore the range of measures they can take to ensure the availability of affordable food, for example, by maintaining value ranges, price matching and price freezing measures. However, it is not for the UK Government to set retail food prices nor to comment on day-to-day commercial decisions by companies.

We recognise that people are facing pressures with the increasing cost of living and that some people continue to require extra support. From this month, the Government is providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1 billion.

John Spellar: [155576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of market speculation on food prices.

John Spellar: [155577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of market speculation on grain prices.

Victoria Prentis:

Increases in international food commodity prices have been driven by a range of factors, including rising energy prices, increased demand, and trade disruption. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has impacted the ability of Ukraine to produce and export key agricultural commodities. This suggests that the main driver of the observed price changes is due to Ukraine's inability to export. Previous assessments by Government economists have suggested there are good reasons to be sceptical that speculation in futures markets has been a significant cause of food price spikes. The department continues to monitor market developments closely alongside international partners like the Agricultural Market Information System.

■ Food: Shortages

Kate Griffiths: [154428]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle potential concerns about short-term food shortages resulting from decreasing global stocks and the war in Ukraine.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Food: Supply Chains

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[153816]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support he is providing to the food and drink sector to help mitigate increased supply chain costs resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Foxes: Rural Areas

Jim Shannon: [<u>158950</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to control the rural fox population.

Rebecca Pow:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Furs and Pâté de Foie Gras: Imports

Mr Barry Sheerman: [150091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will reconsider his policy on reversing bans on the import of (a) fur and (b) foie gras.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's position remains that for both fur and foie gras, we will review the evidence and consider next steps. This has not changed. Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000 and 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Regarding foie gras, the Government has made clear that the production of force-fed foie gras raises serious welfare concerns. The practice is already prohibited in England and Wales under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. We are now able to consider any further steps that could be taken in relation to foie gras that is produced overseas using force feeding practices, such as restrictions on import and sale. We continue to gather information and speak to a range of interested parties about the issues involved.

GM Inspectorate

Caroline Lucas: [156417]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the current annual budget is for the Genetic Modification Inspectorate (GMI) and whether the Government has plans to increase Government funding for the GMI if there is an increase in plantings of experimental GMO crops, following the Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Approximately £266,879 was spent by the Genetic Modification Inspectorate (GMI) in the 2021/22 financial year on inspection and enforcement related to the deliberate release of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and activity supporting management of adventitious GM presence.

The GMI has a key role in supporting enforcement around the regulation of genetic technologies. We will keep this activity under review in respect of any changes in demand resulting from increased plantings of experimental GMO crops as a consequence of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2022.

91

Harper Adams Agricultural College: Research

Mark Pritchard: [158900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support his Department is providing to Harper Adams University to research the potential merits of automated farms.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Land: Local Government

Shabana Mahmood: [157330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department requires local councils to take before those bodies (a) close council land or (b) ban certain activities on council land on the basis of public health.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Livestock Worrying: West Midlands

Mark Pritchard: [158905]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many successful prosecutions there were in the West Mercia Police region for (a) attacks on livestock and (b) livestock worrying in 2020-21 or the last 12 month period for which figures are available.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the issue of livestock worrying very seriously, recognising the distress this can cause farmers and animals, as well as the financial implications.

In West Mercia, the last 12 month period for which figures are available is 2018-2019. In that year, there was one prosecution for the offence of livestock worrying, and one conviction. Attacks on livestock and livestock worrying are both dealt with under the livestock worrying offence in the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953.

New measures to crack down on livestock worrying in England and Wales are to be brought in through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, which was introduced in Parliament on 8 June 2021.

The new measures will enhance enforcement mechanisms available to the police and expand the scope of livestock species and locations covered by the law. Improved powers will enable the police to respond to livestock worrying incidents more effectively – making it easier for them to collect evidence and, in the most serious cases, seize and detain dogs to reduce the risk of further incidents.

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill includes a range of ancillary orders available to the court following conviction, such as control, disqualification and destruction orders. These orders are aimed at targeting and reducing reoffending.

Marine Environment: Shellfish

Mr John Whittingdale:

[906654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help protect shellfish waters around the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

My department has designated 96 shellfish water areas in England where water quality is protected from harmful bacteria. Additional investment by water companies is being prioritised in waters with significant economic production of shellfish. In addition, we are delivering targeted action and practical support to farmers to reduce pollution from agriculture. This is on top of support to the sector through the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme.

Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [157294]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 9 February 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire regarding the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill, reference ZA58849.

Jo Churchill:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 22 April 2022.

Nutrition

Ian Byrne: [159115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the cost for (a) an adult and (b) a child to eat in line with the dietary advice contained in the Community Eatwell Guide in 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Outdoor Recreation

Caroline Lucas: [158924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 19 April 2022 to Question 148359 on Outdoor Recreation which stated that there are no plans to release the Agnew Review in a consolidated way, if he will place a copy of the (a) final report and (b) recommendations of the review, otherwise known as the Access to the Outdoors Commission, in the Library.

Rebecca Pow:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Pets: Imports

Kenny MacAskill: [160552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) dogs and (b) cats were imported under the Ballai Directive in each month of 2022.

Jo Churchill:

Since we left the EU, the EU import data was collated from PIMS which is APHA's (Post Import Management System) and accounts for all Imports that have been entered using IPAFFS (Import of products, animals, food and feed system).

The information that we have provided is a true reflection of the information that we have access to. We can't guarantee the accuracy of this data, as we can only rely on the information that has been input into IPAFFS by traders.

Data for April 2022 not complete as not yet month end.

Number of Cats and Dogs imported under the Balai Directive into GB 2022

Month	Dog	Cat
January	4983	384
February	4999	403
March	5236	438

Pets: Travel

Henry Smith: [155690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Dogs Trust's recommendation to move the focus of enforcement of the pet travel legislation from carriers to a qualified animal professional from a Government agency.

Jo Churchill:

Carriers work closely with operational colleagues at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and Border Force, and they are committed to preventing illegal imports of pet animals. Authorised pet checkers are trained by APHA prior to being granted approval and receive annual audits of their checking and processing to ensure they uphold our requirements. APHA regularly reviews its border enforcement work against known travel trends of those that seek to illegally import puppies to the UK, to keep pace with this rapidly evolving criminal activity. Part of this work includes intelligence-led targeting of suspected smugglers, alongside partner agencies,

including Border Force. Border Force operates a 24-hour service, seven days per week and alerts APHA to suspected non-compliant dogs and puppies. Targeted intelligence-led work often takes place outside of normal working hours as needed. The Government is satisfied with the workings of these current arrangements.

Pigs

Matt Vickers: [156631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the pig farming industry.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Jim Shannon: **157361**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with pig farmers on providing financial support for sow births to bacon units.

Victoria Prentis:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Plastics

Catherine West: [157478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will include a target to reduce the UK's single use plastic by 50 per cent by 2025 in the Consultation on environmental targets.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Plastics: Waste

Catherine West: [157479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to ban plastic waste exports from the UK by 2025.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has committed to banning the export of plastic waste to countries which are not members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and we plan to consult this year on the date by which this should be achieved.

Rivers: Sewage

Wera Hobhouse: [906652]

95

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of the water industry on tackling the illegal discharge of untreated sewage into rivers across the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

I have been repeatedly clear that the frequency of sewage discharges and pollution incidents is unacceptable. We are the first Government to introduce a legal duty to clean up our waterways, backed up by our direction to Ofwat. We are cracking down on water companies, putting in place ambitious targets, and we have launched a consultation on our plan to reduce storm overflows. On this side of the House we voted in favour of a whole package of measures to improve water quality – the Hon Lady and her colleagues opposite did not.

Rural Areas: Devon

Anne Marie Morris: [156478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of Devon's Campaign to Protect Rural England's suggestion that regenerative agriculture is a better use for Devon's greenfield land than solar panels.

Victoria Prentis:

We recognise the need to preserve our most productive farmland. As stated in the recently published British Energy Security Strategy, we will continue supporting the effective use of land by encouraging large-scale solar projects to locate on previously developed, or lower value land, where possible, and ensure projects are designed to avoid, mitigate, and where necessary, compensate for the impacts of using greenfield sites. The Government also supports solar that is co-located with other functions (for example, agriculture) to maximise the efficiency of land use.

Our new Environmental Land Management schemes will support and incentivise farmers who embrace sustainable, regenerative practices. Many farm businesses are already adopting and developing regenerative techniques such as the use of cover crops, strip tilling, and practices to reduce fertiliser or herbicide use. We believe that environmental improvements and producing food go hand in hand. We have recently increased the Farming Investment Fund for small technology grants from £17 million to over £48 million, supporting around 4,000 farmers with their investment plans.

Rural Areas: Regional Planning and Development

Matt Vickers: [156634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to level up rural areas.

Rebecca Pow:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Seafood: Imports

Kerry McCarthy: [158873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) documentary checks, (b) physical checks, (c) foreign supplier verification checks and (d) rejections of consignments have been undertaken on seafood consignments imported under the Sea Fishing (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) Order 2009 in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2021 and (iv) 2022 to date.

Kerry McCarthy: [158874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) documentary checks, (b) physical checks, (c) foreign supplier verification checks and (d) rejections of consignments imported with a catch certificate validated by China have been undertaken under the Sea Fishing (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) Order 2009 in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2021 and (iv) in 2022 to date.

Victoria Prentis:

Port Health Authorities (PHAs) are the independent competent authority responsible for checking the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing documentation for containerised imports of fish, working closely with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). The MMO has provided the following statistics.

		NUMBER OF REFUSALS UNDER
	NUMBER VERIFICATION	ARTICLE 18 OF THE IUU FISHING
	REQUESTS UNDER ARTICLE	REGULATION OR SECTION 7 OF
	17(6) OF THE IUU FISHING	THE SEA FISHING SEA FISHING
	REGULATION (REFERRED TO AS	(ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND
	"FOREIGN SUPPLIER	UNREGULATED FISHING) ORDER
YEAR	VERIFICATION CHECKS")	2009
2019	28 (1)	5 (0)
2020	129 (0)	0
2021	44 (3)	0
2022 (to date)	32 (1)	0

figures in brackets relate to Chinese IUU fishing document checks

It must be stressed that there are some limitations to this data. Although unlikely, PHAs are able to refuse consignments without involving the MMO. These numbers therefore reflect the data which is held centrally.

Furthermore, PHAs are not required to report their documentary or physical checks to the MMO with the result that not all the relevant data is held centrally. As a result, it is not possible to provide a complete update on the number of specific documentary and physical checks undertaken.

Soil: Conservation

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[906656]

97

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he taking to tackle soil degradation.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is developing a Soil Health Action Plan for England that aims to prevent soil degradation and improve soil health. It will deliver a strategic plan for multiple outcomes, encouraging appropriate land management practices that are sensitive to soil health, the environment and food production.

Tree Planting

Robin Millar: [906653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to increase tree planting.

Rebecca Pow:

We have committed to bring tree planting rates across the UK up to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this parliament. Through the England Trees Action Plan, we have launched our flagship England Woodland Creation Offer; our Woodland Officer Apprenticeship Scheme; and three new community forests to boost tree planting across the country. This is backed by the £760 million Nature for Climate Fund.

■ Water: Cumbria

Dr Neil Hudson: [159120]

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

Dr Neil Hudson: [159121]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to stop sewage discharges in Cumbria.

Rebecca Pow:

Restoring water quality in Cumbria and across England is a Government priority. The Environment Agency (EA) is currently working with the water sector to tackle threats to the water environment in Cumbria and reduce nutrient inputs into Windermere. For example, the EA has been working closely with United Utilities on delivering wastewater and agriculture interventions on the River Petteril catchment.

We are going further and faster than any other government to protect our rivers in Cumbria and across England. We have recently launched our consultation on new legally binding targets for water, which will provide a strong mechanism for driving long-term environmental outcomes. We have doubled investment in the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme to £30 million to help reduce impacts from agriculture, and the EA is hiring 50 more inspectors to ensure action is taken against noncompliance.

We have also launched our consultation on the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan, which proposes that water companies must completely eliminate all ecological harm to the environment from storm sewage discharges. The plan will revolutionise how water companies tackle sewage discharges and will represent the largest investment and delivery programme in tackling storm sewage discharges in history.

Wheat: Production

John Redwood: [158851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish an assessment of the impact of high fertiliser prices on the volume of planting of wheat in England in 2022.

Jo Churchill:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Afghanistan: Humanitarian Aid

Rachael Maskell: **157431**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to further the UK's contribution to the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

Our commitment to Afghanistan is enduring and work on priority areas, including responding to the humanitarian crisis remains one of our highest priorities. Last financial year the UK disbursed £286 million to partners to deliver lifesaving services to more than 6 million people. We have also been at the forefront of efforts to repurpose existing funds to support the Afghan people. In January, we successfully worked with the Asian Development Bank to make \$405 million available. In March the World Bank Board agreed to make over \$1 billion in the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund available for health, education, livelihoods and food security. The UK co-hosted the Afghanistan Pledging Conference with the UN, Qatar and Germany on 31 March which raised \$2.4 billion which will provide further humanitarian support to the Afghan people during 2022.

99

Afghanistan: Refugees

Rachael Maskell: [160520]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support people from the Hazara community find a safe passage out of Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

FCDO officials continue to raise human rights, in their meetings with the Taliban including during visits by senior officials to Kabul in October 2021 and February 2022, and in other meetings with Taliban leaders. We call on them to respect international humanitarian law and safeguard the rights of ethnic and religious minorities.

Afghanistan: Taliban

Rachael Maskell: [157430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of recent violence perpetrated by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

We condemn all violence in Afghanistan. We are aware of an increase in reprisals against former security forces and government officials, attacks against minority groups and detentions of civil society, as well as a recent uptick in terrorist attacks.

As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have said, we are working to hold the Taliban to account to ensure that they live up to the promises they have made. We call on the Taliban to respect the amnesty they issued in August for all Afghans and to carry out transparent investigations into all allegations of human rights abuses. All Afghans deserve to live in peace and safety.

Africa: Bilateral Aid

Chris Law: [160504]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to continue spending at least 50 per cent of the country/region-specific bilateral Official Development Assistance budget in Africa.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO is currently finalising Official Development Assistance allocations for the upcoming years, and these will be published in due course.

Africa: Coronavirus

Ms Lyn Brown: [157315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for (a) long-term continental health system strengthening and (b) covid-19 recovery in Africa if plans for production of the

Daily Report

Johnson & Johnson covid-19 vaccine in South Africa are ended as a result of a lack of orders.

Amanda Milling:

Increased and diversified manufacturing of affordable, quality and effective vaccines will save lives, strengthen health services, and improve preparedness for future pandemics. COVID-19 vaccine availability has improved across Africa since late 2021. The UK is working with COVAX to increase coverage further in countries with weak health systems, prioritising the most vulnerable such as the elderly. We are supporting the Africa Centres for Disease Control's "Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing" by providing detailed market analysis on priority vaccines for the region, to inform manufacturers' and investors' planning. We have also provided technical support to develop business cases for vaccine production in South Africa, Senegal, and Morocco. Our approach contributes to sustainable vaccine manufacturing in the medium and longer term across Africa through commercially viable businesses operating within a well-developed ecosystem of skilled workers, innovative technology, and effective regulation.

The UK works with COVAX, WHO, Unicef and other partners in Africa to support strong and resilient national health systems. This includes improving public health functions such as surveillance, community engagement and vaccine confidence to prevent and prepare for future disease outbreaks and managing COVID-19 through integrating vaccination and access to tests and treatment as part of primary health care.

Africa: Foreign Relations

[158906] Ms Lyn Brown:

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has plans to publish an Africa strategy; and what the status is of the Africa strategy within her Department.

Vicky Ford:

The Integrated Review sets out the Government's approach to working with African countries. The Foreign Secretary has agreed a strategy to deliver on that approach in conjunction with other departments and agencies. We continue to share information on the implementation of our approach through various channels including speeches, visits, articles, and social media. For example, I set out our priorities in a speech at Chatham House on 14 December 2021 and during the oral evidence session of the International Relations and Defence Committee on 26 January. The vision is to build a network of liberty through partnerships with African countries, one that promotes British interests and leads to countries, and indeed the continent, being freer, safer, more prosperous, healthier and greener.

African Development Bank: Carbon Emissions

Ms Lyn Brown: [158911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to PM launches new initiative to take Green Industrial Revolution global, published on 1 November 2021, and HCWS779, made on 25 April 2022, for what reason the value of the guarantee to the African Development Bank has reduced from \$2 billion equivalent to \$1.6 billion equivalent.

Vicky Ford:

In November 2021, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would provide a guarantee to the African Development Bank that would unlock up to \$2 billion of additional climate finance for Africa.

Since November, the FCDO has been working with the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI) and Credit Rating Agencies to finalise the financial structure of the guarantee. The impact of the guarantee remains the same, with the guarantee expected to unlock up to \$2 billion of climate finance for Africa. In the final structure, the FCDO will provide \$1.6 billion of cover and ATI will provide \$400 million of cover.

Belarus: Russia

Sir Mark Hendrick: [157279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in Belarus on that country's relationship with Russia.

James Cleverly:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

British Nationals Abroad: Torture

Tulip Siddig: [157467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to Answer of 19 April to Questions 32460 and 32461, what plans she has to conduct a review of how it could better support British nationals who have reported torture and mistreatment.

Tulip Siddig: [157471]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government takes to help prevent the torture of British citizens abroad.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO takes all allegations of torture and mistreatment very seriously, and will follow up with action appropriate to the circumstances of the case. The FCDO conducts annual reviews of all open torture and mistreatment cases. These reviews

include stakeholders from across the FCDO. These reviews provide feedback to staff managing cases, and identify broader themes and trends in reported torture and mistreatment cases. The reviews and summaries of the findings of those reviews contain sensitive personal data and are not published by the FCDO.

The FCDO also provides foreign travel advice on local laws and customs via the GOV.UK website to inform UK citizens on potential risks before travelling abroad.

Tulip Siddig: [157468]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2021 to Question 32462 on Prisoners: Torture, if she will instruct her Department to start collating statistics on (a) the proportion of allegations of torture of British citizens including dual nationals overseas raised with local authorities, (b) whether such allegations raised by her Department resulted in overseas prosecutions of overseas officials, (c) whether allegations would constitute torture or whether they would constitute other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, (d) the number and type of referrals made to the pro-bono medical panel in cases of torture or illtreatment, (e) the number of British citizens including dual nationals who request the Government to formally espouse their legal claims for damages following allegations of torture or ill-treatment by officials or agents of foreign governments and (f) the number of such claims that have been formally espoused.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO records all information about allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (mistreatment) reported to us by British nationals, and the action taken in response to those allegations, within individual case files.

The FCDO collates statistics on the number of cases which are included in FCDO Consular Transparency Data published on gov.uk.

Specific support and action is taken with the consent of the individual concerned and will vary according to the specific circumstances and local context.

The FCDO condemns the use of torture and mistreatment and takes all allegations of human rights violations seriously. We call on the responsible authorities to carry out a prompt and impartial investigation into all allegations to determine the facts and circumstances of each case.

Tulip Siddig: [157469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how allegations of torture of UK citizens by another country's police, security services or prison system are taken into account when awarding UK aid to that country; and whether the Government has ever conditioned or reduced UK aid to another country for the purposes of encouraging that country to cease the torture of British citizens.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government condemns the use of torture without exception. We take all allegations or concerns of torture and mistreatment of British nationals overseas

extremely seriously and will follow up with action appropriate to the circumstances of the case. In considering aid in specific countries a number of different aspects are taken into account, including the commitment to respecting human rights and other international obligations.

Tulip Siddig: [157470]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government takes to exercise its obligations under the Convention Against Torture where British citizens are being tortured abroad.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government unreservedly condemns the use of torture. It is an abhorrent violation of human rights and human dignity. Its impact on societies and individuals is devastating. We take all allegations or concerns of torture and mistreatment of British nationals overseas very seriously and will follow up with action appropriate to the circumstances of the case. Preventing torture and tackling impunity for those who torture are essential components of safeguarding our security and are integral to a fair legal system and the rule of law. We continue to actively contribute to international efforts to prevent torture globally, working with organisations such as Association for the Prevention of Torture and Reprieve.

Tulip Siddig: [157472]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether consular cases where a UK citizen is being tortured or is at risk of torture are treated differently to other consular cases; and in what way they differ.

Tulip Siddiq: [157473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department takes to help protect British citizens from torture abroad once such torture is alleged.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO aims to assess the needs of all individuals promptly and provide effective assistance based on their individual circumstances and local conditions. The FCDO considers that someone is vulnerable when they cannot protect themselves from significant physical or emotional harm, or be protected by others. There are many types of consular cases involving British nationals which we would almost always treat as vulnerable. This includes where an individual alleges torture and mistreatment.

We take all allegations or concerns of torture and mistreatment very seriously and will follow up with action appropriate to the circumstances of the case.

Cameroon: Russia

Ms Lyn Brown: [<u>157316</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the defence agreement recently signed between the Republic of Cameroon and the Russian Federation.

Vicky Ford:

We are aware of reports that Cameroon has recently signed a military cooperation deal with Russia. This follows an earlier Russia/Cameroon military agreement, signed in 2015. We continue to closely monitor security developments in the region.

■ Climate Change: Development Aid

Tommy Sheppard: [160508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government's announcement on 23 September 2019 to commit £11.6 billion to international climate finance over the next five years, whether the Government still plans to commit that amount to international climate finance; and if she will set out how much of that funding has been allocated to date.

Vicky Ford:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Chris Law: [160501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the OECD DAC ODA Levels in 2021- Preliminary data, Detailed Summary Note, on total vaccine donations, how many doses of the covid-19 vaccine were donated and allocated as Official Development Assistance in 2021.

Amanda Milling:

In 2021 the UK donated 30.8 million Astra Zeneca vaccines. The cost of these was scored as Official Development Assistance.

Chris Law: [160502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the OECD DAC ODA Levels in 2021- Preliminary data, Detailed Summary Note, how many vaccines donated and allocated as Official Development Assistance spend in 2021 had more than 10 weeks left until expiry when they were donated.

Amanda Milling:

In 2021 the UK donated 30.8 million Astra Zeneca vaccines as Official Development Assistance spend. Where possible we donated vaccines with at least 8 weeks until expiry as recommended by the World Health Organisation. Of the 5.5 million doses donated bilaterally in 2021, 4.3 million were donated with over 8 weeks left until

expiry and all were donated with assurances that the recipient could use them. All UK donations to COVAX have gone straight from the manufacturer to recipient country, maximising shelf life.

Chris Law: [160503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the OECD DAC ODA Levels in 2021- Preliminary data, Detailed Summary Note, on total vaccine donations, what price the Government allocated to a single dose of the covid-19 vaccine when it was donated and counted as Official Development Assistance.

Amanda Milling:

In 2021 the Government donated 30.8 million Astra Zeneca COVID-19 vaccines, reported 'at cost', in line with guidance from the OECD's Development Assistance Committee.

Darfur: Armed Conflict

Ms Lyn Brown: [158907]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to (a) support investigations into the killings in the Krink region of West Darfur, Sudan, on 24 April 2022, including reports of the complicity of Rapid Support Forces, and (b) help prevent further violence in that region.

Vicky Ford:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Military Intervention

Ms Lyn Brown: [158908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support (a) inclusiveness, (b) accountability, (c) human rights protections, (d) financial sustainability and (e) African Union and United Nations mandates for any regional intervention force that is created to address violence and abuses in the eastern regions of Democratic Republic of Congo.

Vicky Ford:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Diplomatic Service

Tulip Siddiq: [157461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what criteria her Department uses to assess whether to refer a case to be handled by the Special Cases team in her Consular Department; and whether those criteria are publicly available.

Amanda Milling:

Every request for consular assistance is discussed internally and allocated to the relevant consular official or team depending on a variety of factors. Our approach to complex case work is judged on a case-by-case basis and we will always act in the way that we judge is most likely to be in the best interests of the affected individual and their family.

Ethiopian Airlines: Accidents

Dame Diana Johnson: [160470]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Ethiopian (a) Government and (b) Minister for Transport on the release of the final air accident report for Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, which crashed on 10 March 2019.

Vicky Ford:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Expenditure

Emily Thornberry: [156406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when her 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.

Vicky Ford:

All FCDO transparency and freedom of information releases are published on Gov.uk. FCDO is committed to transparency and is working to ensure we are up to date with these publications.

Hong Kong: Assets

Layla Moran: [159059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will audit the assets of Hong Kong officials located in the UK.

Amanda Milling:

There are currently no Hong Kong citizens designated under the Global Human Rights sanctions regime. It is not appropriate to speculate on who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

Iran: Travel Restrictions

Tulip Siddiq: [157466]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she intends to amend her Department's travel advice for Iran to make explicit mention of the risk of torture.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Travel Advice provides information to help British nationals make informed decisions about foreign travel. It remains under constant review to ensure the advice reflects our latest assessment of risks to British nationals.

FCDO travel advice for Iran (https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/iran) advises British-Iranian dual nationals against all travel to Iran. It states that there is 'a risk that British nationals could be arrested without clear cause, questioned by the security services or arbitrarily detained' and there is 'a significantly higher risk to British-Iranian dual nationals.' Advice further states that 'In all cases of detention in Iran, the FCDO has serious concerns that the subsequent judicial process falls below international standards'.

Israel: Education

Sarah Champion: [160479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Israeli counterpart on its responsibility for protecting the right of all children to access education safely.

Amanda Milling:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Israel: Riot Control Weapons

Sarah Champion: [160478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Israeli counterpart on the use by its military of tear gas and other chemical materials in and around school premises.

Amanda Milling:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Morad Tahbaz

Tulip Siddiq: [157460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to hold Iran to account following Iran reneging on its

agreement to keep Morad Tahbaz out on furlough; and whether the Government has requested that any restrictions be imposed on Iran's access to IMS funds as a result.

James Cleverly:

108

The Iranian Government committed to releasing Morad from prison on indefinite furlough and has failed to honour that commitment. Continuing his horrendous ordeal sends a clear message to the international community that Iran does not honour its commitments. We continue to urge the Iranian authorities at every opportunity to release him immediately. Morad is a tri-national and we are working closely with the United States to secure his permanent release and departure from Iran.

Felicity Buchan: [160567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Iranian counterpart on the (a) release of Morad Tahbaz and (b) the removal of travel restrictions imposed by that country on Mr Tahbaz's wife.

James Cleverly:

The Iranian Government committed to releasing Morad from prison on indefinite furlough alongside the lifting of his wife, Vida's, travel ban and has failed to honour that commitment. Continuing his horrendous ordeal sends a clear message to the international community that Iran does not honour its commitments. We continue to urge the Iranian authorities at every opportunity to release him immediately and allow his wife to leave Iran. Morad is a tri-national and we are working closely with the United States to secure both his and his wife's permanent release and departure from Iran.

National Bank Trust

Christine Jardine: [159053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason the Government has not imposed sanctions on the National Bank Trust.

Amanda Milling:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Tulip Siddiq: [157463]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department took between October 2021 to March 2022 to (a) challenge the convictions of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe by the Iranian Revolutionary Courts and (b) demand that those convictions be annulled by Iran.

James Cleverly:

Despite multiple requests, officials have not been granted access by the Iranian Authorities to visit detained dual British nationals or to attend their trials. Iran does not

recognise dual nationality nor grant consular access to our dual national detainees. Although we have never been granted either consular access or sight of the judicial process, our Ambassador in Tehran has consistently requested consular access alongside raising health concerns and mistreatment allegations. FCDO negotiators held intensive discussions with senior Iranian officials and our Ambassador in Tehran has been in regular talks with Iranian Ministers and senior officials. It was always entirely in Iran's gift to release Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and the UK does not, and never will, accept our nationals being used as diplomatic leverage.

Refugees: Afghanistan

Wera Hobhouse: [159046]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when Chevening programme students will receive confirmation of eligibility on the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

Amanda Milling:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rwanda: Debts

Claudia Webbe: [160583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the the potential merits of forgiving Rwanda's international debt, which accounts for 50 per cent of the countries' GDP.

Vicky Ford:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rwanda: Development Aid

Claudia Webbe: [160581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much humanitarian aid has been provided to Rwanda in each of the last ten years prior to the agreement to enter into an offshoring refugee partnership.

Vicky Ford:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK's humanitarian aid to Rwanda was reduced due to the under the reduction in Overseas development aid in the last two years.

Vicky Ford:

110

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Sudan: Humanitarian Aid

Sir Mark Hendrick: [157571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of whether aid is needed by Sudan following reports by the UN predicting extreme hunger in that country over the coming months.

Vicky Ford:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Syria: Armed Conflict

Patrick Grady: [158986]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with representatives of the UNHCR on the establishment of credible mechanisms to actively monitor the protection situation inside Syria and the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified return to Syria for refugees who wish to do so.

Amanda Milling:

While the UK Government hopes that Syrian refugees will, ultimately, be able to return home, we agree with the UN judgement that conditions in Syria do not currently allow this. We are engaged with the UNHCR on its framework review which will address these issues more closely. However, only a political solution under UN Security Council Resolution 2254 can ensure conditions safe for returns. UN Envoy Geir Pedersen has our full support in this effort.

Syria: Development Aid

Patrick Grady: [158985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make it her policy to increase the UK's contribution to the UN country-based pooled fund at the 6th Brussels Conference on supporting the future of Syria and the Region on 9 to 10 May 2022.

Amanda Milling:

The Syrian crisis is one of the UK's top priorities and we are one of the largest bilateral donors to the regional crisis, having committed over £3.7 billion since 2012. We will continue to provide support to humanitarian efforts and to increasing sustainable interventions to help Syrians support themselves, and will set out our pledge at the 6th Brussels Conference in due course.

Syria: Refugees

Patrick Grady: [158987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to monitor and reduce the number of forced deportations of Syrian refugees from (a) Lebanon, (b) Turkey and (c) other neighbouring countries.

Amanda Milling:

Syrians have a right to return to their homes voluntarily, in safety and dignity, in line with International Refugee, Human rights and Humanitarian Law. Any Syrian refugees volunteering to return to Syria must be doing so of their own free will as verified by UNHCR. Involuntary or forced returns (refoulement) are a violation of International Refugee, Human rights and Humanitarian Law.

The UK recognises the generosity of Turkey, Lebanon and other neighbouring counties in hosting millions of refugees from Syria and elsewhere. Our strong bilateral relationship and dialogue with Turkey on humanitarian and development issues ensure we remain engaged on the issue of refugees.

Likewise with Lebanon and other neighbouring countries where we have made it clear it is important they abide by the international commitments they have made on refugees and continue to uphold the principles of non-refoulement to enable refugee registration by UNHCR to resume.

Taliban: Human Rights

Sir Mark Hendrick: [157280]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made recent representations to the Taliban to uphold international human rights standards.

James Cleverly:

FCDO officials continue to regularly raise human rights in their meetings with the Taliban including during visits by senior officials to Kabul in October 2021 and February 2022, and in other meetings with Taliban leaders. We are pressing them on key issues, including to ensure that women play a full, equal role in national life, girls of all ages can go to school, there is freedom of expression and rights of members of ethnic and religious minorities are respected.

The Foreign Secretary and other Ministers raise the importance of upholding human rights in Afghanistan in international fora. The UK Government 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. The Foreign Secretary raised the importance of upholding human rights, including the rights of women and girls and ethnic and religious minorities, in her speech at the Afghanistan pledging conference that the UK cohosted on 31 March.

■ Tanzania: Education

Ms Lyn Brown: [<u>153845</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to her Department's press release entitled, UK launches £89 million Shule Bora education initiative in Tanzania, published on 4 April 2022, whether that £89 million replaces the unspent funds of £119,460,376 originally planned to be allocated to that project for the period from 3 March 2020 to 31 March 2026.

Vicky Ford:

The significant impact of the pandemic on global economies, including the UK, forced us to take hard but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on Official Development Assistance (ODA) globally and in Tanzania. The original figure of £119 million published for the Shule Bora education initiative was reduced to £89 million. This remains a significant investment in the UK's commitment to supporting 12 years of quality education for all girls. The Shule Bora programme will reach over 4 million children in Tanzania and will help strengthen the impact of education investments. It is specifically focused on testing innovations in education, improving the overall quality of education and independently verifying results. The Foreign Secretary remains committed to restoring the overall budget across the FCDO for women and girls.

■ Tigray: Humanitarian Aid

Preet Kaur Gill: [159047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress she is making to deliver humanitarian assistance and supplies to Ethiopia's Tigray region during the ceasefire.

Vicky Ford:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Torture: British Nationals Abroad

Tulip Siddiq: [157464]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department's guidelines on how FCDO staff should respond to allegations of torture by British nationals overseas have been revised since the Guidance for FDCO staff on reporting torture and mistreatment was issued in March 2011.

Tulip Siddiq: [157465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the 2011 Guidance for Foreign Office Staff on reporting torture and mistreatment, what guidance is given to consulate staff on how to respond to situations where British nationals abroad are asked to sign forced confessions.

Amanda Milling:

The Torture and Mistreatment Reporting Guidance of 2011 sets out the process for FCDO staff and other staff working in Her Majesty's diplomatic missions and offices for reporting information about torture and mistreatment. An independent review of the guidance has not been commissioned since its publication in 2011.

There is internal guidance and training for consular staff on what to do in cases involving allegations of torture by British nationals. Internal FCDO guidance for consular staff is regularly reviewed and updated. This includes guidance related to allegations of torture and mistreatment and allegations of fair trial violations from British nationals overseas.

■ Turkey: Terrorism

Tommy Sheppard: [158990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her (a) Turkish and (b) Iraqi counterpart on Turkey's Operation Claw Lock.

James Cleverly:

We are following closely the situation in northern Iraq, including monitoring of Turkey's Operation Claw Lock. We reiterate to all parties the need for dialogue and cooperation between Turkey and Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to combat terrorism, ensure regional security, and protect civilians. Our diplomatic missions are in regular contact with Turkish and Iraqi authorities.

Ukraine: Armed Conflict

John McNally: [160507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of available peaceful methods of de-escalation of conflict in Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Ukraine: Development Aid

John Redwood: [158847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much additional aid for Ukraine she plans to allocate from the Official Development Assistance budget.

Amanda Milling:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Ukraine: Food Supply

114

Sir Mark Hendrick: [157570]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to tackle global hunger and food inflation linked to the conflict in Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

We are working with the international community including our G7 and humanitarian partners to track the impact of food insecurity in the most affected countries, scale up efforts to prevent famine and enhance global production. This includes support for Ukrainian farmers to enable them to continue to produce food, and advocacy for the protection of food supplies to the World Food Programme against export barriers. The UK supports the Central Emergency Response Fund and welcomes the recent announcement to allocate \$100 million to counter disruption to global food markets. The UK succeeded in securing agreement at the Spring Meetings last week that the World Bank Group would commit \$50 billion over the next three months, which will include support to countries most vulnerable to food insecurity. The UK has also allocated £10 million to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) for rapid agriculture investments in countries vulnerable to food insecurity.

Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid

Layla Moran: [159061]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding her Department has allocated to support for Ukraine in each month in the last year.

James Cleverly:

The UK has committed £394 million in aid to the current crisis in Ukraine. This includes £220 million for humanitarian assistance (allocated in April 2022); £100 million for energy security and reform (allocated in February 2022) and £74 million direct fiscal support through the World Bank (allocated in March 2022).

Ukraine: International Assistance

Jonathan Edwards: [157343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the UK Government plans to allocate to the Administered Account, established by the International Monetary Fund to help Ukraine meet its balance of payments requirements, budgetary needs and provide economic stability.

James Cleverly:

We welcome the establishment of the IMF Administered Account for Ukraine. The Government of Ukraine has expressed their preference for financial assistance to come through International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to enable streamlined and large-scale support. We encourage contributors to provide support through the International Monetary Fund or World Bank as is most appropriate for them. The UK

ANSWERS 115

has already mobilised over \$1 billion of additional financing (\$950 million guarantees and a \$100 million grant) through the World Bank.

Ukraine: Refugees

Munira Wilson: [159092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of (a) Afghan refugees and (b) refugees from any third country that were resident in Ukraine prior to the invasion by Russian troops on 24 February 2022.

Munira Wilson: [159093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support has been put in place to assist (a) Afghan refugees and (b) refugees of other non-Ukrainian nationality who were resident in Ukraine prior to the invasion by Russian troops on 24 February 2022.

James Cleverly:

According to The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), prior to Russia's invasion, there were 5,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Ukraine, mainly from Afghanistan. The UNHCR is providing support to these and other individuals through its Appeal for Ukraine. The UK is a leading humanitarian donor on Ukraine, pledging £220 million. This includes providing crucial humanitarian assistance through the UNHCR, such as blankets, kitchen sets and hygiene kits. The (UK's) DEC Appeal has currently raised over £300 million for Ukraine: this total includes the UK's largest ever government aid-match at £25 million.

World Food Programme

Navendu Mishra: [159104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the UN's World Food Programme eligibility criteria.

Amanda Milling:

The UK works to ensure that all humanitarian assistance reaches the most in need. The humanitarian principle of impartiality guides humanitarian actors to provide aid to those most in need without distinction of nationality, age, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions. We continually engage with the World Food Programme (WFP) and other partners through our overseas missions to ensure that those in greatest need are prioritised for UK Aid-funded food assistance.

The FCDO assessment is that WFP has a clear and transparent process for beneficiary targeting and prioritisation. We work closely with our operational partners to ensure they rigorously assess vulnerability and needs at country level. Targeting and prioritisation assessments are made on the basis of the most urgent needs. Eligibility criteria are validated and improved through regular and rigorous

consultations with affected communities. Only then is the list of eligibility criteria finalised and applied to activities.

Yemen: Development Aid

Fleur Anderson: [160557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much aid the UK (a) plans to provide to Yemen in 2022 and (b) has provided to that country in each of the last 5 years.

Amanda Milling:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Abortion

Bob Blackman: [158938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that advances in perinatal medicine are brought to the attention of the Government so as to inform the setting of the upper gestational limit on abortion based on the most current understanding of fetal viability.

Maggie Throup:

Officials keep new evidence on fetal viability under review. There is currently no clear consensus from the medical profession that the age of viability has reduced below 24 weeks.

Parliament decided the circumstances under which abortion can legally be undertaken, including gestational time limits. It would be for Parliament to decide whether to make any changes to the law on abortion. As with other matters of conscience, abortion is an issue on which the Government adopts a neutral stance and allows hon. Members to vote according to their moral, ethical or religious beliefs.

Agency Workers: Expenditure

Rachael Maskell: [154165]

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

Edward Argar:

The information requested is shown in the following table. Data for 2021/22 is not yet available.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total agency	£2,406,798,000	£2,399,645,000	£2,380,153,000	£2,436,415,000

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
expenditure				
Medical/dental agency expenditure	£949,883,000	£937,865,000	£918,618,000	£918,880,000

Alcoholic Drinks: Advertising

Kenny MacAskill: [160555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of product placement regulations for (a) alcohol and (b) low or zero alcohol on television.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Alcoholic Drinks: Children and Young People

Derek Thomas: [150240]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that parents are aware of the Chief Medical Officer Guidance on the Consumption of Alcohol by Children and Young People published in 2009.

Maggie Throup:

The Department promotes the guidelines in England which apply to children and young people through online platforms such as NHS.UK, the Talk to FRANK online resource and GOV.UK. Local authorities promote these guidelines as part of their public health duties.

Antibiotics: Drug Resistance

Jim Shannon: [157367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help address antibiotics that have become ineffective due to overuse.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Brain: Coronavirus

118

Jim Shannon: [156461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people who have experienced a decline in brain function since being diagnosed with covid-19.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement operate 90 post-COVID-19 assessment services in England. Services are currently recruiting expert clinical teams, including psychologists, physiotherapists, nurses and occupational therapists to support those experiencing symptoms associated with the long-term effects of COVID-19, such as cognitive impairment, and direct them to appropriate care pathways.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence have published 'COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing the long-term effects of COVID-19'. The guideline includes a recommendation to use a validated screening tool to measure any impairment and impact, if a person reports new cognitive symptoms. The guideline is available at the following link:

https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188/chapter/Recommendations

■ Brain: Tumours

Catherine West: [125373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the size of the backlog in diagnosis and treatment for brain tumours; and what steps he is taking taken to reduce that backlog.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Cancer: Medical Treatments

Chi Onwurah: [156433]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to what extent have the NHSE guidelines on improving multidisciplinary meetings for cancer treatment been rolled out across the whole NHS.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Cancer: Research

Chi Onwurah: [156435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) increase the diversity of the UK cancer research workforce and (b) ensure it has the capability and capacity to advance research.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Chi Onwurah: [156437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide a breakdown by region of clinical cancer research funding.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Cardiovascular Diseases

Henry Smith: [157562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for cardiovascular disease, including heart valve disease, to remain a priority in the updated NHS Long Term Plan.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Health Service will continue to ensure cardiovascular disease services remain a priority in the updated NHS Long Term Plan, including diagnostic and treatment services for patients with heart failure and heart valve disease. The NHS is investing in cardiac networks to support whole pathway improvements, from prevention, diagnosis, treatment through to end of life care.

Henry Smith: [157563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing a ten year plan to tackle cardiovascular disease, similar to the ten year plans for cancer and mental health in development.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made.

Care Homes: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon: [157369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take urgent steps to enable care homes, that have remained in continuous lockdown on due to staff infections, access to family and friends.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Steve McCabe: [160443]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of support provided to care homes following the publication of the Government's guidance entitled Living with Covid-19 on 21 February 2022.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Steve McCabe: [160444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure adequate supplies of covid-19 (a) PCR and (b) lateral flow tests for care homes.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Steve McCabe: [160445]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the sick pay policy for care home staff who are off sick with covid-19.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Steve McCabe: [160446]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the affordability of covid-19 testing for people who are visiting relatives in care homes.

Gillian Keegan:

Visitors are no longer asked to test before entering a care home although they are encouraged to take necessary precautions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe, including staying away from the care home if they are symptomatic or test positive for COVID-19. However, free asymptomatic testing is available for visitors providing personal care before entering the care home, up to twice weekly if visiting more than twice. While visitor testing is no longer required, we will continue to ensure that COVID-19 tests are available through the private market for those who wish to purchase them.

Care Homes: Energy

Steve McCabe: [160441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support care homes in the context of the rising cost of energy.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Care Homes: Insurance

Steve McCabe: [160442]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support care homes in the context of the rising cost of insurance.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Care Homes: Labour Turnover

Steve McCabe: [160439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve staff retention in the care home sector.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Care Homes: Staff

Steve McCabe: [160440]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle the high number of staff vacancies in the care home sector.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Care Workers: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [102688]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent representations he has received on the number of social care workers who were dismissed as a result of not having had a covid-19 vaccine.

Gillian Keegan:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mick Whitley: [159080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support social care staff who were dismissed from employment following the introduction of the covid-19 vaccine mandate.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Coronavirus

Vicky Foxcroft: [146688]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2022 to Question 128369 on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Coronavirus, whether he plans to publish that list of eligible groups before 1 April 2022.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 29 March 2022]: Patients at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19 and who are potentially eligible for treatments continue to have access to free lateral flow device tests. This treatment cohort is outlined in the United Kingdomwide clinical access policy for non-hospitalised individuals at highest risk from COVID-19, which is available at the following link:

https://www.cas.mhra.gov.uk/ViewandAcknowledgment/ViewAlert.aspx?AlertID=1031 91

The highest risk patient groups have been contacted by email or letter to confirm their continued access to treatments and testing and received a pack of lateral flow device tests for use should they begin to experience symptoms. A copy of this letter is available at the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/letter-to-patients-important-information-about-new-treatments-for-coronavirus/

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Jim Shannon: [151110]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Core20PLUS5 programme will increase the number of disease management reviews for at-risk COPD patients.

Gillian Keegan:

The Core20PLUS5 programme will not directly increase the number of disease management reviews for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients. However, there has been significant engagement with National Health Service health and care staff through the Core20PLUSConnectors programmes, raising awareness of the importance of offering COVID-19, flu and pneumonia vaccinations as part of ongoing disease management reviews.

123

Increasing the uptake of COVID-19, flu, and pneumonia vaccination through the Core20PLUS5 approach will improve population health and reduce acute, infective exacerbations of COPD. It will also reduce emergency admissions, accident and emergency attendances and subsequent elective respiratory follow up care. This will increase capacity in urgent and emergency care, improve the flow of patients through hospitals and shift care towards primary care chronic disease management.

Clinical Trials

Chris Green: [158982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many participants were recruited into National Institute for Health and Care Research supported phase 3 trials for (a) dementia, (b) cancer, (c) stroke and (d) coronary heart disease in each of the last 10 years.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Clinical Trials: Females

Chris Green: [158983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women have been enrolled in (a) cancer, (b) stroke and (c) dementia clinical trials in each year since 2017.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Community Nurses: Standards

Emma Hardy: [157488]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Queen's Nursing Institute report entitled Workforce Standards for the District Nursing Service, published in February 2022, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of that publication; whether his Department or NHS England has held any discussions with relevant stakeholders about that document and implementing its recommendations, since its publication; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: We have had no specific discussions or made such an assessment.

Coronavirus Certificates: Children

Charlotte Nichols: [154452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to introduce covid-19 passports for children aged between five and 11 years.

Maggie Throup:

124

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

ANSWERS

Mary Kelly Foy: [160549]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing proof of covid-19 vaccination for children under the age of 12.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Coronavirus: Advocacy

Andrew Gwynne: [153809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the Government suspended the Disability and Health Charity Communication Forum; and how patient organisations can communicate patients' concerns and experiences in respect of covid-19 to the Government.

Maggie Throup:

The Disability and Health Charity Communication Forum was administered by the National Resilience Hub External Affairs team which has since been disbanded. Patient organisations can communicate any concerns and experiences directly with the Department. We continue to meet with stakeholders, including patient organisations, on a regular basis.

Coronavirus: Care Homes

Karin Smyth: [154129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will set a target for the proportion of care home residents to receive a covid-19 spring booster vaccination.

Gillian Keegan:

While the Government has not set targets for COVID-19 vaccines uptake, we strongly recommend that all those who are eligible should accept the offer for the spring booster dose.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell: [107614]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in the context of high covid-19 infection rates, what the evidential basis is for removing covid-19 public health measures from 19 January 2022.

Rachael Maskell: [122731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for bringing forward the lifting of covid-19 restrictions in the context of the weekly average number of covid-related deaths being in excess of 1,000.

Maggie Throup:

The Government's decision to remove COVID-19 public health measures from 19 January 2022, nothwithstanding the context of high COVID-19 infection rates and, sadly, continuing deaths from the virus, was supported by data from the Office for National Statistics indicating infection rates were falling in England; advice from scientific advisers that the Omicron wave had likely peaked nationally; National Health Service data showing that hospital admissions and patients in hospital had stabilised; and that numbers in intensive care and in ventilator beds had remained relatively low and had been falling since early January.

The Government has published the scientific advice on which these decisions have been taken which is available at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

121766]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish all (a) documents, (b) evidence and (c) research on the Government's decision to not allow bereavement support bubbles during the lockdowns in the covid-19 outbreak.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daisy Cooper: [131319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the ways his Department communicated with clinically extremely vulnerable people during the outbreak of covid-19 with reference to (a) shielding and (b) the vaccination programme; and if he will publish any lessons learned.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Florence Eshalomi: [137460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19, published February 2022, whether an equality impact assessment for that document.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 14 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daisy Cooper: [149388]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the equality impact assessment in respect of the guidance published on 21 February 2022, entitled COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19.

Maggie Throup:

126

[Holding answer 19 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Justin Madders: [155790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of (a) the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on time taken for health diagnoses and (b) whether that has contributed to the number of ill-health dismissals.

Edward Argar:

The percentage of patients waiting more than six weeks for a diagnostic test was 24% in February 2022, compared to 2.8% in February 2020. We are investing £2.3 billion in diagnostics to reduce waiting times and the 'Help us help you' campaign is encouraging people to seek urgent care and treatment if they need it.

No formal assessment has been made of delayed diagnosis in primary care or the potential impact on ill-health dismissals. General practitioners continue to support patients, with NHS 111 and community pharmacy teams.

Rachael Maskell: [155808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what further steps he is taking to ensure that NHS and Social Care staff are protected against the ongoing transmission of covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

John Redwood: [91818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the evidential basis supporting the decision to move to covid-19 Plan B.

Maggie Throup:

Prior to the move to Plan B on 8 December 2021, the available data at that time suggested that the confirmed prevalence and transmission of cases of the Omicron variant was high. The Government evaluated a range of emerging evidence and metrics including those discussed in the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies' meetings 97 to 101 and associated meetings, such as meetings of the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group, the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling, Operational sub-group, the COVID-19 Clinical Information Network and the Environmental Modelling Group. These meetings were minuted and published on GOV.UK. Data from the COVID-19 dashboard was also assessed, including the Office for National Statistics' population survey, the UK

Health Security Agency's vaccine coverage and effectiveness data, National Health Service data, rates of positive tests and international data.

Rachael Maskell: [96962]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the increase in rates of covid-19, what criteria he is using to assess whether stronger public health measures are required.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 10 January 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Coronavirus: Drugs

Vicky Foxcroft: [159025]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the estimated 1.3 million immunocompromised patients who received authorised antiviral treatments within the recommended five days since first symptoms following infection with covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

No specific estimate has been made. Individuals eligible for community COVID-19 treatments via COVID Medicines Delivery Units (CMDUs) are outlined in the United Kingdom-wide clinical access policy for non-hospitalised individuals at highest risk from COVID-19. This includes patients who are immunocompromised.

Since December 2021, CMDUs have provided antiviral or monoclonal antibody treatments to over 40,000 patients in England. The average time for patients to receive treatment is 3.5 to four days from symptom onset and this average includes all four treatment options currently available via the CMDUs. Oral antivirals are suitable to be taken at home, whereas other treatment options must be administered intravenously within a clinic setting. As such, treatment times are normally faster for oral antivirals.

Daisy Cooper: [159088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 151279, on Evusheld, how long the Antivirals and Therapeutics Taskforce or its predecessor took to assess and make a recommendation on the available antiviral treatments for covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daisy Cooper: [159089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 151279, on Evusheld, whether the UKHSA conducted similar

testing against the covid-19 omicron variant for the therapeutic treatments available for that disease.

Maggie Throup:

We have tested other licensed therapeutics, where available from companies, against Omicron BA.1. While the data has been provided to Department, it is covered by confidential disclosure agreements with the relevant companies. We are currently completing testing against Omicron BA.2.

■ Coronavirus: Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura

Sir Christopher Chope:

[142426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2022 to Question 100420, on Coronavirus: Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura, if he will publish the evidence relied upon in reaching the determination that an association between the AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine and TTS was likely.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[<u>156492</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of eligible people at highest risk of becoming seriously ill with covid-19 were not contacted during their isolation period to be offered antibody and antiviral treatments for use at home via the NHS since those treatments have been available.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Coronavirus: Quarantine

Dan Jarvis: [148201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of ending self-isolation rules for people with covid-19 on immune-suppressed transplant recipients' (a) mortality and (b) quality of life.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 31 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Gavin Newlands: [154086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish his Department's policy applicable on and before 14 December 2021 for calculating refunds to individuals subject to the managed quarantine service who were granted early exemption from quarantine.

Maggie Throup:

"It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation."

Gavin Newlands: [154087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of refunds relating to early release from the managed quarantine service as a result of policy changes made on 15 December 2021.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Gavin Newlands: [154088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many complaints have been made to the managed quarantine service regarding refunds for unused days of quarantine since 1 January 2021.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Coronavirus: Research

Rachael Maskell: [159012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the SARS-CoV-2 virus has been purified and isolated.

Maggie Throup:

The virus has been purified and isolated.

Rachael Maskell: [159013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the SARS-CoV-2 virus been purified and isolated.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Coronavirus: Screening

Daisy Cooper: [131323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the decision to end the free provision of covid-19 tests, what modelling his Department has made of the financial costs of procuring covid-19 (a) lateral flow tests and (b) PCR tests for (i) schools, (ii) care homes, (iii) NHS primary care services, (iv) NHS secondary care services and (v) NHS tertiary care.

Maggie Throup:

130

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has carried out financial cost modelling to determine the estimated testing costs for care homes and National Health Service primary, secondary and tertiary care services. In 2022/23, the estimated total cost for lateral flow device and polymerase chain reaction testing is approximately £830 million. The UKHSA has not carried out specific modelling for school settings in 2022/23.

Free symptomatic testing will continue for patients in hospital, for whom a test is required for clinical management or to support treatment pathways; those who are eligible for COVID-19 treatments as they are at higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19; and individuals who live or work in high-risk closed settings, such as those in the National Health Service, social care, prisons and other places of detention.

The Department will continue to fund some asymptomatic testing in NHS, adult social care and hospice services during periods of higher prevalence, including for staff and patients. Asymptomatic testing of care home and hospice residents will also be provided on admission and during an outbreak. The UKHSA will continue to review such modelling, planning assumptions and related costs within all settings.

Ruth Cadbury: [151149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people who are clinically vulnerable and eligible for free priority covid-19 PCR tests have received them.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Alan Brown: [154161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 lateral flow test kits have been purchased by his Department; and what was the total cost to the public purse of these kits.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Alan Brown: [154162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what has the total cost to the public purse of the Government PCR testing programme been to date; and how many PCR tests have been completed.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency is unable to provide the information requested on the total cost of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing programme as it is commercially sensitive.

Between April 2020 and March 2022, 147 million PCR tests have been reported as 'processed' through laboratories.

Alan Brown: [<u>154163</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost of the purchase of covid-19 PCR test kits has been to date; and how many of those kits have been purchased.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is unable to provide the information requested on the cost of purchasing of COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests as this information is commercially sensitive.

PCR test kits are comprised of several components which are individually purchased, prior to assembly. Between April 2020 and March 2022, the UKHSA purchased materials which were manufactured to make 154 million test kits.

Feryal Clark: [154472]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the prevalence of covid-19 tests available on the market that have not been approved by his Department.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Geraint Davies: [158855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will hold discussions with representatives of NHS Test and Trace on the use of the results of privately purchased covid-19 antigen tests to ensure that (a) the spread of covid-19 is tracked and (b) people who may have been in close contact with an infected person are alerted.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Sarah Olney: [111674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much public funding the Government has spent on promoting covid-19 vaccine uptake.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daisy Cooper: [156598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will enable children aged five to 11 who are clinically vulnerable or live with clinically vulnerable people to book

their second covid-19 vaccination via the National Booking System after an eight week interval, as recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Maggie Throup:

Those aged between five and 11 years old can book first and second doses via the National Booking System (NBS). Second dose appointments are offered via the NBS at least twelve weeks after the first dose for those under 18 years old, as recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Those aged between five and 17 years old in a clinical risk group or a household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed, are able to book an earlier second vaccination eight weeks after their first dose through a walk-in vaccination site or their general practitioner.

Jim Shannon: [<u>158956</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to fund research into intra-nasal covid-19 vaccines.

Maggie Throup:

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) have cofunded rapid research to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including on the nasal administration of vaccines. Approximately £580,000 was awarded to Imperial College London towards a study on the safety and lower airway immunogenicity of two candidate COVID-19 vaccines administered to the respiratory tract. Additionally, the NIHR is providing infrastructure support to two phase one studies in this area, including the study at Imperial College London. As the largest public funder of health and care research, the NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including intra-nasal COVID-19 vaccines.

Anne Marie Morris: [160477]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of allowing fourth dose of Coronavirus vaccines to be made available to those with severe physical and/or learning disabilities who have diminished or no capacity to exercise their own judgment.

Maggie Throup:

On 21 February 2022, the Government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on offering a further dose as a precautionary measure for those at most at risk of severe disease. As a result, a 'spring dose' is being offered to all adults aged 75 years old and over, residents in care homes for older adults and individuals aged 12 years and over who are immunosuppressed. The JCVI has not specifically recommended a further dose for those with severe physical and/or learning disabilities, unless they are eligible in these patient cohorts.

If an adult has been assessed as lacking capacity to make their own decisions about vaccination, it may be possible to proceed with immunisation under the principle of

acting in their 'best interests'. Healthcare workers considering immunising under a 'best interests' decision have a statutory duty to follow the Code of Practice and checklist set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Julian Sturdy: [62713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to revise the current covid-19 booster vaccination criteria to include people vaccinated early, but who are too young to receive a booster vaccine under the current criteria.

Maggie Throup:

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency observed limited waning in vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation and death more than 20 weeks post-vaccination with Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) or Comirnaty (Pfizer). This was less evident in younger adults not in a clinical risk group, suggesting that if such individuals were vaccinated early, they should still be protected for longer than older individuals.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advised that booster vaccines should be offered to those more at risk from serious disease and who were vaccinated during phase one of the programme in priority groups one to nine. Younger, healthy individuals may be expected to generate stronger vaccine-induced immune responses from primary course vaccination compared to older individuals.

■ Covid-19 Inquiry

Layla Moran: [<u>160545</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has instructed his Department to preserve evidence for the inquiry into the Government's handling of the covid-19 outbreak.

Maggie Throup:

The Department is undertaking the appropriate preparatory work ahead of the final Terms of Reference for the Inquiry being announced.

Well-established records management processes are in place across Government and all Departments are aware of the need to keep a full and clear record of their part in events. This includes the decisions they take, the process by which those decisions were reached, the reasons for those decisions and the evidence and data used to support them.

Covid-19 Testing Taskforce: Andrew Feldman Associates

Angela Rayner: [151130]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2022 to Question 101744 on Covid-19 Testing Taskforce: Andrew Feldman Associates, whether he plans to correct the register of ministerial meetings in relation to (a) the meeting of 13 April 2022 for which his Department holds no records and (b) the meeting of 15 April 2022 for which his Department holds records but is not recorded on the register.

Edward Argar:

The Government is committed to publishing details of Ministerial meetings with external organisations. The transparency register will be updated.

■ COVID-19 Vaccines Benefit Risk Expert Working Group

Sir Christopher Chope:

[142427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) roles, (b) qualifications, (c) relevant experience of and (d) dates of appointment for the members of the Vaccine Benefit Risk Expert Working Group.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Cystic Fibrosis and Sickle Cell Diseases: Health Services

Marsha De Cordova: [135634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much public funding has been spent on (a) research, (b) new treatments and (c) clinical care for (i) sickle cell disease and (ii) cystic fibrosis in each of the last five years.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department funds research on health and social care through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The following table shows the total award expenditure on NIHR-funded research programmes relating to sickle cell disease and cystic fibrosis in each of the last five years.

FINANCIAL YEAR	SICKLE CELL DISEASE	CYSTIC FIBROSIS	
2017/18	£150,396	£1,297,912	
2018/19	£131,709	£831,339	
2019/20	£99,063	£144,976	
2020/21	£196,198	£615,475	
2021/22	£943,602	£2,440,800	

In the last five years the NIHR has also supported the delivery of 54 studies relating to sickle cell disease and 130 studies relating to cystic fibrosis via its Clinical Research Network (CRN). However, information on expenditure for specific CRN-supported studies is not available in the format requested.

There are a range of care and treatments available for sickle cell disease. Information on the total funding of new treatments or clinical care for sickle cell disease in England is not held in the format requested.

The following table shows total expenditure on high-cost drugs, which includes the cost of new treatments, and clinical care for cystic fibrosis.

YEAR	HIGH-COST DRUGS £	CLINICAL CARE £	
2017/18	13,438,326	45,641,077	
2018/19	80,524,960	108,454,676	
2019/20	116,568,939	123,425,771	
2020/21	316,447,363	127,204,405	
2021/22 to December 2021	360,783,738	99,406,649	

Source: NHS contract monitoring information system – Secondary User Services Note:

Data collected in 2017/18 may not be comparable to data in other years due to the way in which the information was collected.

In 2020/21, half of patients benefited from home monitoring with £1,165,200 made available to provide remote spirometry. This was to allow clinical teams to monitor and support people with cystic fibrosis who were advised to shield and reduce the need for face-to-face assessments and hospital visits.

Dementia: Diagnosis

Felicity Buchan: [159109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in national dementia diagnosis rates in England from March 2021 to March 2022.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Felicity Buchan: [159110]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to improve dementia diagnosis rates in the 2022-23 financial year.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Dental Services

Rachael Maskell: [157417]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions she plans to have for the purposes of establishing centres for dental development; and what

136 Daily Report

> assessment she has made of the stakeholders that will be required to take part in those discussions.

Rachael Maskell: [157418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his planned timetable is for announcing the locations of centres for dental development; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of locating one of those centres in York.

Rachael Maskell: [157419]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria he plans to use to determine the locations for establishing a centre for dental development.

Rachael Maskell: [157420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many centres for dental development he will develop.

Rachael Maskell: [157421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the key functions of a centre for dental development will be.

Maria Caulfield:

Health Education England's (HEE) 'Advancing Dental Care Review Report' explored the concept of Centres for Dental Development to bring together dental education and training at all levels with service delivery models, particularly in localities where there is a shortage in provision of dental services. HEE's review recommended that the concept of Centres for Dental Development should be explored on a system-wide partnership basis based on local population and workforce need, as part of the Dental Education Reform Programme. It is likely that the model will be adjusted to reflect the local resources and funding available. There is no current commitment on numbers, locations or functions of such centres.

Dental Services: Devon

Neil Parish: [153924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to NHS dentistry in Devon.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked National Health Service dental practices in England to deliver at least 95% of contracted units of dental activity between April and June 2022 to improve access for patients safely. Patients can contact NHS England's Customer Contact Centre for assistance in finding a local dental practice or NHS 111 if seeking urgent dental care.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with Health Education England and Bristol and Peninsula Dental schools as part of the South West Dental Reform programme to address the challenges facing NHS dentistry in the region. We are also Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

currently developing further proposals for dental system reform with the aim of improving access for patients.

Dental Services: Finance

Judith Cummins: [155773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding the Government plans to allocate to NHS dentistry in England in the next financial year.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: This information is not yet available. The National Health Service commits £3 billion to dentistry each year.

Dental Services: Internet

Caroline Lucas: [116907]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 56597, what progress he is making on ensuring that all NHS dental practices comply with the request to review and update their profile information on the nhs.uk website to help patients find information about available care; what assessment he has made of the number of NHS dentist profiles on the NHS website that are up to date; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Dental Services: Location

Navendu Mishra: [159102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has undertaken an assessment of the location of NHS dental surgeries compared to the demand for NHS dental services.

Maria Caulfield:

Health Education England (HEE) have assessed the distribution of the National Health Service dental workforce and the demand for dental care, based on the annual number of dentists who have undertaken NHS activity by region. Data held at regional level on the oral health needs of the population is also used to assess the adequacy of provision.

HEE are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement to align NHS provision against patient need. In its Advancing Dental Care Review Report, HEE has made recommendations to tackle recruitment, retention and attracting dentists to areas which are currently less well served and improve the distribution of training posts.

Dental Services: Shropshire

138

Mark Pritchard: [158904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure an adequate number of NHS dentists in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Dental Services: Standards

Justin Madders: [154079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department made an assessment of dental capacity prior to the introduction of the 95 percent Unit of Dental Activity target from 4 April 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have set activity thresholds for dentists which have gradually increased throughout the pandemic. This is in accordance with infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance and based on data which indicated the level of activity National Health Service dental practices have safely achieved to date.

This data on dental capacity informed the new unit of dental activity threshold for the first quarter of 2022/23. NHS England and NHS Improvement considered the impact of the reduction in dental capacity due to the Omicron variant and adherence to IPC guidance on access to dental services. Contractors continue to be supported to enable a return to pre-pandemic levels of activity as soon as is safely possible.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: BGI Group

Catherine West: [103631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2021 to Question 62745 on Department of Health and Social Care: BGI Group, and with reference to the contract award National Microbiology Framework - Lot 1: Diagnostic Goods and Services published by the UK Health Security Agency (HSA), whether his Department has a direct working relationship, including on contractual or commercial terms, with the Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI) or any of its subsidiaries; and whether his Department has made an assessment of any potential security implications of the relationship between the HSA and the BGI.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 18 January 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Department of Health and Social Care: Public Opinion

Angela Rayner: [156486]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department spent on (a) focus groups and (b) polling services in 2021.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: Research and insights into United Kingdom public attitudes enables the government to listen to the views of taxpayers and customers, tailoring the delivery of public services to suit the needs of its users, and ensuring that communications are targeted and effective, and improve people's lives.

In 2021, the total expenditure on research, including focus groups and polling services, was £164,171 in the central Department and £449,765.50 in the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities which includes the former Public Health England until 1 October 2021.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Randox Laboratories

Angela Rayner: [119607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to response to the Return to an Address of the Honourable the House of Commons on 17 November 2021, for specified minutes, notes, and correspondence relating to Government contracts awarded to Randox Laboratories Ltd, HC1072, for what reason there is no entry in the register of ministerial meetings of (a) the Microsoft Teams meeting between the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation and Randox on August 7 2020 to discuss a letter sent by the CEO of Randox to the Secretary of State on August 6 2020 (b) the calls between the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation, Randox and Owen Paterson of 14 May 2020 and (c) the telephone call between the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation and the CEO of Randox over the weekend of 5-6 April 2020; and whether his Department holds minutes of these meetings.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 10 February 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rachel Hopkins: [119900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Return to an Address of the Honourable the House of Commons dated 17 November 2021 for specified minutes, notes, and correspondence relating to Government contracts awarded to Randox Laboratories Ltd, HC1072, laid before the House on 3 February 2022, Ref 2, page 6, for what reason the entry in the register of ministerial meetings relating to the Testing Taskforce meeting 8 April 2020 does not list Randox or Peter Fitzgerald as attending; and whether his Department holds a minute of that meeting.

Edward Argar:

140

[Holding answer 10 February 2022]: Departmental records confirm that a meeting of the COVD-19 Testing Taskforce took place on 8 April 2020 with Randox and Peter Fitzgerald by telephone. The Department holds a record of this call.

The Government is committed to publishing details of ministers' meetings with external organisations. The transparency register will be updated.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Recruitment

Angela Rayner: [157603]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department spent on external recruitment consultants in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021; how many full time equivalent posts were filled as a result of that expenditure; and how many of those posts were filled by individuals recruited from outside the civil service.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [144922]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will answer Question 121766 tabled on 9 February 2022 by the hon. Member for South Shields.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 28 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Dialysis Machines: Costs

Anne Marie Morris: [153964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what system his Department has in place to help ensure that NHS trusts reimburse patients who dialyse at home for the cost of the energy required to run their dialysis machines.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 21 April 2022]: For adult home dialysis, NHS England do not reimburse patients directly. Patients' additional direct utility costs, which may include electricity, water, gas and telephone, are met through the payment of the national tariff to providers, which provide reimbursement to the individual. The costs reimbursed should be based on documentary evidence, such as copies of utility bills before and after the specialised equipment was introduced. The costs should be agreed between the provider and the individual patient.

For paediatric home haemodialysis, there is currently no national tariff and as such, it is at the discretion of individual providers as to whether they reimburse additional direct utility costs for patients.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy monitors the energy market in the United Kingdom to ensure it meets the need of all consumers, including those receiving medical treatment at home.

Disability Aids: Children

Dr Lisa Cameron: [156493]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for disabled children to receive community equipment assessments.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Domestic Abuse: Mental Health Services

Caroline Lucas: [160472]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to assess the (a) length of waiting times for women domestic abuse survivors needing to access specialist mental health support and (b) levels of partnership working between (i) health bodies and (ii) specialist domestic abuse services; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Caroline Lucas: [160473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to provide a minimum of £409 million per year for domestic abuse services in England for survivors of domestic abuse in respect of their mental health needs and to holistically support their recovery; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Drugs: Misuse

Mike Amesbury: [156579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of services to help prevent drug-related problems before they occur.

Maggie Throup:

The Government published 'From harm to hope: A 10-year drug strategy to cut drug crime and save lives' in December 2021 in response to Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs, which found that more needed to be done to prevent drug misuse. The strategy focuses on delivering three strategic priorities including

achieving a shift in demand for drugs. This will include preventing the onset of drug use among children and young people through universal education and protecting vulnerable children and young people to ensure they are less likely to start taking drugs.

Endometriosis: Mental Health Services and Pain

Fleur Anderson: [160558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure NICE updates its guidelines on endometriosis to provide better support for (a) pain management, (b) mental health and (c) endometriosis outside the pelvic cavity.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Epilepsy: Medical Equipment

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[158878]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK residents will be able to import epilepsy seizure monitors following the UK's transition from European Medical Device Regulation.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[158879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that epilepsy seizure monitors are available to purchase at an affordable price.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Evusheld

Henry Smith: [158928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 March 2022 to Question 141960 on Evusheld, what progress has been made on the assessment of Evusheld for treating immunocompromised patients.

Henry Smith: [158929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 March 2022 to Question 141960 on Evusheld, when patients in the UK will have access to Evusheld as a preventative treatment for covid-19.

Layla Moran: [159058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement from the MHRA of 17 March 2022 on Evusheld, how long Evusheld will take to manufacture; when it will be available; and how people will be prioritised to receive it.

Maggie Throup:

Any public announcement on the procurement of therapeutics would be made after an agreement is reached with companies, as this information is commercially sensitive. The Department continues to examine the potential introduction of prophylaxis, which includes deployment and administration processes. Any such therapeutic treatment must provide evidence that it is clinically cost-effective, does not contribute to the generation of new variants and demonstrate sufficient efficacy against Omicron and new variants.

The Therapeutics Clinical Review Panel is providing advice on the most appropriate patient cohorts for new COVID-19 therapeutics, including preventive treatments such as Evusheld. Final clinical policies and eligibility would be determined by the National Health Service and the devolved administrations.

Henry Smith: [158930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what timeframe the UK Health Security Agency are working to in order to assess the effectiveness of Evusheld against the Omicron variant of covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daisy Cooper: [159085]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 151279, on Evusheld, when the UKHSA began testing Evusheld's effectiveness against the covid-19 omicron variant; and whether UKHSA has guidance on how long that testing should take.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daisy Cooper: [159086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2020 to Question 151279, on Evusheld, what other covid-19 variants Evusheld is being tested against.

Maggie Throup:

Evusheld has been tested against the Alpha, Beta, Delta and Omicron BA.1 variants. It is currently being tested against Omicron BA.2.

Daisy Cooper: [159087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 151279, on Evusheld, whether the UKHSA has reviewed studies published by the US Food and Drug Administration and European Medicines Agency on the effectiveness of Evusheld against the covid-19 omicron variant; and for what reason the UKHSA has decided to undertake duplicate studies on the effectiveness of that drug.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Evusheld: Coronavirus

144

Henry Smith: [158931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of immunocompromised individuals who have (a) been hospitalised and (b) died as a result of covid-19 since the MHRA authorised Evusheld for use in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

General Practitioners

Debbie Abrahams: [158961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average number of patients registered per full-time equivalent GP is in (a) England and (b) each of the NHS regions in each year from 2015 to 25 April 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

The attached table shows the median average number of registered patients per full time equivalent (FTE) general practitioner (GP) in England and each National Health Service region in each year from September 2015 to September 2021. Data for 25 April 2022 is not held.

Attachments:

1. Average number of patients per FTE GP [TABLE PQ158961.docx]

Debbie Abrahams: [158962]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GP appointments there were per full time equivalent GP in (a) England and (b) each of the 7 NHS regions in each year since 2015 to date.

Maria Caulfield:

This data is not available in the format requested.

General Practitioners and Pharmacy: Publicity

Feryal Clark: [160568]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 154467 on Primary Health Care, how much money has been allocated to (a) a national campaign to increase awareness of access routes to general practice services and (b) developing a campaign to promote the services of community pharmacy in 2022-23; and which companies were successful in those tenders.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

General Practitioners: Yorkshire and the Humber

Jon Trickett: [156383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GP surgeries there were in the Yorkshire and Humber region in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

There were 661 practices registered in the Yorkshire and Humber region in February 2021. In February 2022, 655 practices were registered in this region.

A reduction in practice numbers can be for a variety of reasons, including practice mergers or closures and does not mean a reduction in the quality of care. Practice mergers can offer benefits such as consolidation of back-office functions and sharing of staff expertise and skills between practices. Where a practice closes, patients are informed and advised to register at another local practice of their choice within their area. Practices and commissioners must put in place appropriate measures to ensure that the affected patients have access to general practitioner services.

■ Glaucoma: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon: [<u>156470</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to make the Kowa nonmyd WX3D Stereo Fundus Camera available within the NHS to detect the early signs of glaucoma.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement commission National Health Service sight testing services from high street primary eye care providers. When undertaking such tests, ophthalmic practitioners have a duty to carry out such examinations to detect signs of injury, disease or abnormality and refer the patient for further investigation or treatment if necessary. The NHS does not define the procedures which should be included in a sight test as this will vary with changing techniques and technology and according to the clinical needs of the patient.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

Health

Jim Shannon: [156457]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of (a) the Royal College of Nursing and (b) other trade unions on the relationship between hearing loss, epilepsy and Parkinson's disease.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Health and Care Bill

Angela Rayner: [151135]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2022 to Question 109233 on Health and Care Bill, if he will place a copy of the minute of the meeting on 21 May 2021 between the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Innovation, Lord Farmer, RK Trinity and Virgin Care, in the Library, with redactions if necessary.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Health and Social Care Levy: Small Businesses

Sir Gavin Williamson: [157558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using the Health and Social Care Levy to provide support for SMEs who provide training and support for the NHS.

Edward Argar:

No specific assessment has been made.

■ Health Services: Asylum

Dr Rupa Huq: [159034]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional resources he is making available to health providers in areas with high numbers of asylum seekers accommodated in hotels; and what particular support he is providing for those with trauma and mental health issues.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Health Services: Coronavirus

Geraint Davies: [113674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the allocation by the Government of £270 million to private hospitals to help tackle an Omicron surge, if he will publish the contracts between NHS and private hospitals in respect of the allocation of that funding.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 2 February 2022]: We are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive. However, NHS England plans to publish the contract award notices in line with the deadlines set out in the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Health Services: Obesity

Andrew Gwynne: [158875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department undertook an impact assessment prior to the suspension of the £100 million of funding for weight management services, announced on 4 March 2021.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Health Services: Small Businesses

Sir Gavin Williamson: [157556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to support staff in healthcare focused SMEs to develop IT management skills.

Edward Argar:

We have no specific plans to do so. It is the responsibility of individual employers and service providers to ensure that staff have the appropriate IT management skills for their roles.

Sir Gavin Williamson: [157557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support healthcare focused SMEs with apprenticeship programmes.

Edward Argar:

The Government is increasing funding for apprenticeships to £2.7 billion by 2024/5. This will support apprenticeships in non-levy employers, including small and medium enterprises, where the Government will continue to pay 95% of training costs.

Health Services: Staff

Debbie Abrahams: [158960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what long-term workforce plan he has in place to increase (a) full time equivalent GPs of all contract types, (b) practice nurses and (c) other primary care clinical staff.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England and the profession to increase the general practice workforce in England. This includes measures to increase recruitment, address the reasons why doctors leave the profession and encourage them to return to practice. In December 2021, there were an additional 1,672 full time equivalent doctors in general practice compared to December 2019.

The Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) enables Primary Care Networks to employ a range of roles for 100% reimbursement of salary and on-costs. Through the GP Contract framework, NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to review the effectiveness of the ARRS by 2023. We are currently on schedule to increase the number of registered nurses by 50,000, with nursing numbers 29,000 higher in January 2022 compared to September 2019. This commitment will be achieved through increased domestic and international recruitment and improved retention.

Healthy Start Scheme: Social Security Benefits

Vicky Foxcroft: [107645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the decision was taken to not allow new parents on legacy benefits access to the Healthy Start scheme; and which Minister took that decision.

Maggie Throup:

Legislation on eligibility for the Healthy Start scheme for pregnant women and families on legacy benefits was introduced in 2005 and 2008. In 2005, the Minister responsible for the legislation was the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, the former hon. Member for Don Valley (Caroline Flint). In 2008, the Minister responsible for the legislation was the Minister of State for Public Health, the former Rt hon. Member for Bristol South (Baroness Primarolo).

New parents, with children under four years old who were in receipt of adult-only legacy benefits were able to apply for Healthy Start through Child Tax Credit.

Those who are on legacy benefits and have a change in status such as a new child, would move to Universal Credit in order for their benefit claim to accommodate their change in status, and therefore will be eligible for the Healthy Start Scheme.

Heart Diseases: Health Services

Jess Phillips: [160482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the regions of NHS England that have the best-performing cardiology service on the basis of the number of patients treated as a proportion of the whole population of that area; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Jess Phillips: [160483]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what examples of best practice within NHS England his Department holds in respect of the reduction of waiting lists for cardiac treatment by Clinical Commissioning Groups; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Heart Diseases: Mortality Rates

Jess Phillips: [160480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish data at regular intervals on the mortality rates of patients who have been on the waiting list for treatment within NHS England's cardiology service; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Jess Phillips: [160481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to reduce mortality rates for patients awaiting treatment within NHS England's cardiology service; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Hereditary Diseases: Screening

Jim Shannon: [156460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of new tests available to diagnose genetic diseases.

Maria Caulfield:

150

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy

Wes Streeting: [159028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on the review of the feasibility of combining two hormone treatments into a single HRT prescription, announced by the Government in October 2021.

Maria Caulfield:

Work is currently focused on reducing the cost of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for all patients. We are working with the NHS Business Services Authority to implement a new HRT Prescription Prepayment Certificate as soon as possible. From April 2023, the annual cost for all HRT products will be the cost of two prescription charges, which is currently £18.70. This will ensure that women on combination therapies pay no more than women on single therapies.

Hormone Replacement Therapy: Procurement

Ruth Cadbury: [157600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of supply chain delays on the availability of hormone replacement therapy treatments.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages

Wes Streeting: [159026]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what meetings he has had with hormone replacement therapy product manufacturers in 2022 to discuss supply shortages.

Maria Caulfield:

We will shortly hold a meeting with suppliers to discuss how the supply of hormone replacement therapy products can be improved in the short and long term. On 31 March 2022, we met with the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry and the British Generic Manufacturers Association to discuss supply issues.

Wes Streeting: [159027]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what meetings he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the supply shortages of menopause hormone replacement therapy products.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Supply Chains

Ruth Cadbury: [158970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assistance his Department has provided to companies (a) producing and (b) supplying hormone therapy replacement treatments in relation to delays in the supply chains of those treatments.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Hospitals: Discharges

Rachael Maskell: [157424]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with shadow Integrated Care Systems on the steps required to reduce bed occupancy by patients whose discharge has been delayed.

Edward Argar:

We have had no specific discussions. However, work is underway to support safe and timely hospital discharge and minimise discharge delays. Recently updated discharge guidance is supporting existing National Health Service commissioning bodies and local authorities to plan and deliver hospital discharge services. We have also established a national discharge taskforce to identify long-term, sustainable changes to reduce delayed discharges and ensure patients are only in hospital for as long as they need to be.

■ Hospitals: Morecambe

David Morris: [145872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust has submitted plans for a new single site hospital to his Department.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 30 March 2022]: The Department has provided both the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust with £3.7 million to develop plans for improving facilities at each Trust. The Trust has not submitted any formal plans for a single site hospital to the Department.

Immensa Health Clinic: Wolverhampton

Andrew Gwynne: [146573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to publish the full independent quality audit carried out at the Wolverhampton site of Immensa laboratories; and if his Department will publish provide details of that audit, including (a) who carried it out and (b) when they did so.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 29 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Immunosuppression: Coronavirus

Andrew Gwynne: [114663]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish any risk assessments carried out by SAGE and the UK Health Security Agency on the potential impact of the removal of covid-19 measures announced on 19 January 2022 on (a) people who are severely immunosuppressed and therefore less or not protected by vaccines and (b) formally clinically extremely vulnerable people.

Andrew Gwynne: [114664]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish any risk assessments carried out by SAGE and the UK Health Security or any other bodies on the potential impact of plans to remove the legal requirement for people who test positive for covid-19 to self-isolate on (a) people who are severely immunosuppressed and therefore less or not protected by vaccines and (b) formally clinically vulnerable people.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 3 February 2022]: The COVID-19 Taskforce has advised that the Government is unable to provide the information requested as it relates to the formulation of Government policy.

Mr Clive Betts: [128162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department will carry out an impact assessment of the Government's Living Safely with Covid strategy on any potential risk posed by that strategy to people who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 29 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mark Tami: [128188]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department will carry out an impact assessment of the Government's Living Safely with Covid strategy on any potential risk posed by that strategy to people who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mark Tami: [128191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with charities supporting immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups to discuss what the Government will do to support them to live safely with covid-19.

Rosie Cooper: [<u>155667</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with representatives of charities supporting severely immunocompromised groups to discuss their involvement in co-creating and disseminating communication and guidance to people on safely managing their risk after 1 April 2022.

Maggie Throup:

We have regular meeting with charities representing and supporting patients in immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups. The Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency, Dr Jenny Harries, is the clinical lead for programmes supporting these patients and has met with charities at stakeholder engagement sessions.

On 4 April 2022, updated guidance was issued for those whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness if they become infected with COVID-19, which 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/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk

Kerry McCarthy: [132202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what impact assessment the Government has made of the proposals set out in the Government's Plan for Living with Covid-19 on people who are immunocompromised.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 8 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Holly Lynch: [142040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that covid-19 safety information is accessible to immunosuppressed people who do not have access to the internet.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Henry Smith: [158932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many immunocompromised people remain shielding against covid-19; and what assessment he has made of the impact of that shielding on people's social interactions, mental health and economic activity.

Maggie Throup:

The information requested is not held centrally as the shielding programme ended in September 2021. The Office for National Statistics' 'Coronavirus and clinically extremely vulnerable people in England' survey includes information on the behaviours of clinically extremely vulnerable people and their health and wellbeing, which is available at the following link:

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/datasets/coronavirusandclinicallyextremelyvulnerablepeopleinengland

Henry Smith: [158933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has assessed the number of immunocompromised patients who have received antiviral treatment in response to covid-19 and who have subsequently (a) been hospitalised and (b) died as a result of covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Henry Smith: [158934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of immunocompromised patients received antiviral treatments within five days of the first symptoms, as recommended by the MHRA.

Maggie Throup:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Infectious Diseases: Children

Emma Hardy: [82057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish data on the number of hospitalisations among children aged 0 to 18 as a result of (a) flu, not flu and pneumonia, (b) measles, (c) varicella, (d) mumps, (e) rubella, and (f) whooping cough in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018, (iv) 2019, (v) 2020 and (vi) 2021 to date.

Maggie Throup:

The attached table provides a count of finished admission episodes by financial year with a primary diagnosis of flu excluding pneumonia, measles, varicella, mumps, rubella, and whooping cough for patients aged 0 to 18 years old from 2016/17 to 2020/21. Finalised data for 2021/22 will be published in September 2022.

Attachments:

1. TABLE [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE HES table.docx]

Integrated Care Systems: Apprentices

Rachael Maskell: [108561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support Integrated Care Systems (ICS) to engage with health-based apprenticeships; and how he plans to roll out the ICS programme.

Edward Argar:

Health Education England's national apprenticeship programme is working with employers in integrated care systems (ICS) to provided information and technical expertise on planning and implementing apprenticeships, based on local workforce needs. Integrated care boards will also support the health and care workforce locally, including apprenticeships.

Statutory ICSs will be established formally from July 2022 and the Department and NHS England will support ICSs to implement these new responsibilities.

Junior Doctors: Pay

Mr Virendra Sharma: [160471]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to increase the pay of junior doctors in line with inflation.

Edward Argar:

Junior doctors are currently in a collectively agreed four-year pay deal from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023. The deal states that the investment in each year is a total of 2.3% in 2019/20 and 3% in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Of this, 2% each year was used to provide an annual pay uplift, whereas the remaining investment of approximately £90 million was used to fund other specific changes. These changes cover a new higher nodal point, an uplift to the weekend allowance, an enhanced rate of pay for shifts that finish after midnight and by 4am, a £1,000 a year less than full-time allowance, changes to the academic pay premia and extension of transitional pay protection. This was agreed by both staff side and employers as part of their negotiations. The Department continues to honour the agreement entered into with trades unions.

Leeds General Infirmary: Finance

Hilary Benn: [150094]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will publish decisions on funding for the Leeds General Infirmary building project to provide a new adult hospital, maternity centre and the new Leeds Children's Hospital.

Edward Argar:

156

[Holding answer 19 April 2022]: The Government is committed to the delivery of 48 hospitals by 2030, including Leeds General Infirmary. Individual allocations for trusts will be determined once the respective full business cases have been reviewed and agreed.

All hospital schemes in the programme are working with the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement, with the support of regional, system and local trust leadership, to design and deliver these projects. The programme will support these new hospitals to implement efficiencies from economies of scale and benefit from building concurrently. The programme has ongoing discussions with the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust regarding the development of its plans, supporting the 'Building the Leeds Way' approach.

Leukaemia: Health Services

Virginia Crosbie: [157529]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that chronic lymphocytic leukaemia patients on active monitoring receive sufficient tailored support to maintain their mental and physical wellbeing.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: Data from Cancer Alliances in March 2021 showed that approximately 83% of all cancer multi-disciplinary teams had implemented Personalised Care and Support Planning based on Holistic Needs Assessments. This will ensure that all cancer patients, including those with chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, are empowered to self-manage their care where appropriate and providing a route back into the system if they notice any worrying changes or need to seek help.

The National Health Service is supporting adults experiencing cancer with access to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) mental health services. IAPT services provide evidence-based psychological therapies for people with anxiety disorders and depression. IAPT Long Term Condition pathways have been identified as a priority to support integration of mental health and physical health services for people with co-morbid long-term conditions, such as cancer.

Low Alcohol Drinks: Marketing

Kenny MacAskill: [160556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of requiring zero or low alcohol products to be named and branded differently from existing alcohol products.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made.

Products above 0.5% alcohol by volume (ABV) are subject to the UK Advertising Codes and the Portman Group Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and

Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks. The Portman Group Code is consistent with the UK Advertising Codes and both are in place to ensure that alcohol is marketed in a socially responsible way and that children and young people are suitably protected.

The Committee of Advertising Practice and the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice are consulting on new rules and guidance to regulate alcohol alternative products and provide clarity to advertisers for products of products at and below 0.5% ABV.

■ Maternity Services: Shropshire

Mark Pritchard: [158903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve maternity services at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust since the publication of the Ockenden Review.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust to implement all the local actions set out in the final Ockenden Report. The Trust has participated in the Maternity Safety Support Programme since 2018. This programme involves senior experienced midwives and obstetricians providing intensive support to the Trust through visits, mentoring, peer support, review of key documents, sharing good working practice and leadership development to improve maternity services.

The Trust remains within the Maternity Safety Support programme and has a full-time dedicated Maternity Improvement Adviser (MIA) to improve its maternity services. The Deputy Chief Midwifery Officer, Sascha Wells-Munro, and the National Specialty Adviser for Obstetrics, Professor Donald Peebles, plan to meet the leadership team at the Trust on 12 May 2022 to agree any further support required, working with the MIA.

Medical Records: Data Protection

Chi Onwurah: [157349]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recommendations of the Goldacre Review, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating a single, national data controller for all NHS records; and what steps he taking to (a) recruit people with technical data skills and knowledge to senior roles in the NHS and (b) train staff in senior roles in the NHS in the basics of data analysis.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Medical Records: Databases

Chi Onwurah: [<u>157351</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he taking to promote and resource reproducible analytical pipelines as the minimum standard for academic and NHS data analysis; and assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating an NHS Data Analyst Service modelled on the Government Economic Service and Statistical Service.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Members: Correspondence

Sir Mike Penning: [141155]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will respond to correspondence from the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead of 3 August 2021 on problems encountered at Watford General Hospital and the lack of local health care, reference case number MP70952.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rosie Cooper: [157297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 9 February 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire regarding hospital visiting restrictions, reference ZA58887.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rosie Cooper: [157299]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 18 February 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire regarding access to A&E services, reference ZA58950.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rosie Cooper: [157306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 3 March 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, reference ZA59077, regarding mental health care provision.

Edward Argar:

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

Paul Maynard: [158920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will respond to the correspondence of 1 February 2022 from the hon. Member for Blackpool North and Cleveleys on vaccine mandates in the private sector on behalf of a constituent.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr John Baron: [160451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to respond to letters dated (a) 6 January, (b) 8 February, (c) 9 March and (d) 11 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay in respect of his constituent, reference JB35637.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Morquio Syndrome: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon: [<u>158953</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in the UK have been diagnosed with mucopolysaccharidosis in each of the last 5 years.

Maria Caulfield:

This information is not held in the format requested.

Mortality Rates: Diagnosis

Jess Phillips: [160484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to provide a regular publication of mortality data broken down by diagnosis of specific conditions.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

National Institute for Health Research: Finance

Martyn Day: [<u>159023</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase the annual budget of the National Institute for Health Research.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ NHS: Agency Nurses

160

Esther McVey: [153939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS has spent on temporary NHS bank and agency nurses in each of the last three years.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is shown in the following table.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Nursing bank expenditure	£1,127,729,000	£1,254,899,000	£1,538,238,000
Nursing agency expenditure	£843,282,000	£878,521,000	£837,823,000

NHS: Databases

Chi Onwurah: [160474]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data privacy requirements his Department is considering in the competition for a new Federated Data Platform.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

NHS: Research

Martyn Day: [159024]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase NHS staff's access to protected time for research.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

NHS: Workplace Pensions

Dr Dan Poulter: [<u>158925</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 153887, on NHS: Workplace Pensions, what assessment he has made of the impact on NHS staffing and retention of the (a) £40,000 annual pension threshold for both pension contributions and (b) annual increase in total pension value.

Edward Argar:

It is not possible to isolate the impact of a single factor such as the annual allowance on staff choosing to reduce their working hours or take early retirement. The annual increase in pension value for the vast majority of National Health Service staff is expected to be within the £40,000 annual allowance for tax-free pension saving and is unlikely to impact retention.

However, the highest earners within the NHS will find that the generosity of the NHS Pension Scheme means they exceed their annual allowance. Where this occurs, the Scheme Pays facility is a proportionate means to meet the cost of an annual allowance charge from the value of pension benefits.

The Department monitors retirement patterns and hours worked by senior doctors. NHS Digital's workforce statistics and data from the NHS Business Services Authority show that the average contracted hours per person for consultants and the number of consultants taking voluntary early retirement as a proportion of all consultant retirements has been stable for several years. NHS England and NHS Improvement are delivering a retention programme focused on employers making flexible employment offers to staff, engaging higher earners on pension tax issues and demonstrating the benefit of delaying retirement.

■ NHSX

Chi Onwurah: [160475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether post-employment restrictions have been placed on the former director of artificial intelligence for NHSX following her departure from that role on 31 March 2022.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Oral Tobacco: Health Hazards

Martyn Day: [156550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2022 to Question 112640 on Tobacco: Mortality Rates, if he will conduct a comparative assessment of the public health risks of snus in comparison to smoking tobacco.

Maggie Throup:

The Department has no plans to conduct such an assessment. Snus is banned in the United Kingdom and we have no plans to introduce additional tobacco products to the market. Alternative tobacco-free products exist, such as nicotine pouches.

Pectus Excavatum: Medical Treatments

Dr Rupa Huq: [<u>159036</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing treatment for pectus excavatum on the NHS in England.

Edward Argar:

There are a range of surgical and non-surgical treatments available through the National Health Service in England to manage the condition and individuals with a pectus deformity may be referred to a thoracic surgical clinic for advice. Treatment options are assessed according to the type of pectus deformity, degree of deformity, simple versus mixed deformity and determination of whether the deformity is isolated or part of a syndrome. In most cases, while surgery can correct the chest wall deformity, surgical intervention does not take place, as the majority of patients experience mild physical or psychological symptoms. Non-surgical options include posture, exercise programmes, bracing and psychological support.

Pharmacy: Delivery Services

Charlotte Nichols: [159097]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide funding for prescription deliveries for people who are unable to attend their local pharmacy.

Maria Caulfield:

The medicine delivery service was funded during the pandemic for clinically extremely vulnerable patients and for people who were self-isolating. This service has now been decommissioned. A range of providers of pharmaceutical services such as distance selling and local pharmacies deliver to patients as part of their service.

Pregnancy: Ethnic Groups

Alicia Kearns: [159098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will review whether the NHS's determination of full term gestation appropriately accounts for different ethnic minority gestation periods.

Maria Caulfield:

There are no current plans to do so. Gestational age is measured in weeks, from the first day of the woman's last menstrual cycle to the current date. Pregnant women are offered an ultrasound scan at approximately 10 to 14 weeks of pregnancy. One of the purposes of this scan is to confirm the gestational age of the baby and the estimated date of delivery. Most babies are born between 37 weeks and 41 weeks of pregnancy. Those born at 37 to 38 weeks are considered to be 'early-term' and those born at 39 to 40 weeks are considered to be 'full-term'.

Antenatal surveillance of fetal growth is an essential part of good maternity as fetal growth restriction is directly associated with stillbirth and perinatal morbidity. The

Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle includes an element on 'Risk assessment and management of babies at risk of fetal growth restriction'. This stipulates that maternity care providers may choose to use uterine artery Doppler assessment, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Green-Top Guideline 31: The Investigation and Management of the Small for Gestational Age Fetus, or the Growth Assessment Protocol, which uses growth charts customised for constitutional variation such as ethnic origin, maternal size and parity, to monitor standardised fundal height and estimated fetal weight.

Prescription Drugs: Allergies

Jim Shannon: [156462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made a recent estimate of the number of people under the age of 18 who are on prescribed antihistamines.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Prescription Drugs: Pharmacy

Jonathan Edwards: [158926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of supply of medical drugs to pharmacies.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Jonathan Edwards: [158927]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent representations he has received from the Welsh Government on the supply of medical drugs to pharmacies.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Prescriptions: ICT

Feryal Clark: **[154466]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on the implementation of an electronic prescribing service in secondary care.

Edward Argar:

We are engaging with all secondary care system suppliers regarding the implementation of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS). During the pandemic, secondary care was provided with tailored access to the existing EPS system used in primary care. This enabled its use for outpatient prescriptions for community pharmacy and homecare prescribing. Secondary care system suppliers will now undertake the necessary development to ensure EPS can be utilised. There has been increasing use of electronic prescribing and medicines administration systems to support prescribing and medicines administration and discharge prescribing for inpatients within secondary care.

■ Probiotics: Labelling

Jim Shannon: [<u>157368</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, following the UK's departure from the European Union, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of labelling food that contain probiotic microorganisms as probiotic.

Feryal Clark: [159112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of allowing the term probiotic to be used on food labels.

Maggie Throup:

The term 'probiotic' can be used on food labels where it is accompanied by a relevant authorised health claim for the specific strain used, to avoid misleading consumers. Applications to authorise a new health claim on food are assessed by the UK Nutrition and Health Claims Committee (UKNHCC) in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006. In discussions with industry, we have indicated that the UKHNCC could provide a scientific opinion on criteria needed for the use of the term 'probiotic'.

To date, the Department has received no applications either for considering claims on specific strains or for the assessment of the term 'probiotic', nor were any relevant claims authorised by the European Union prior to the United Kingdom's exit.

Protective Clothing: Contracts

Joanna Cherry: [156510]

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, whether the Government (a) consulted with or (b) made use of any third-party organisations who have experience in detecting fraud or identifying fake or counterfeit products.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Joanna Cherry: [156511]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report published by the National Audit Office entitled Investigation into the management of PPE contracts, published on 30 March 2022, what steps were taken to corroborate the

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

legitimacy of (a) certification paper work and (b) factory credentials and product and process certificates when offering contracts to organisations for the supply of personal protective equipment.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Angela Rayner: [157376]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 122676, what systems were used to record the results of the due diligence checks on suppliers of PPE during the covid-19 pandemic.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Radiotherapy: NHS

Jim Shannon: [<u>158955</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when gamma knife surgeries will be available on the NHS.

Edward Argar:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Sepsis: Hospitals

Jim Shannon: [157359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in NHS hospitals have contracted sepsis in each of the last three years.

Maria Caulfield:

Data on the number of people in National Health Service hospitals who have contracted sepsis is not currently held centrally. Reliable estimates of incidence and prevalence of sepsis are not available due to an inconsistency in definitions used to describe sepsis and in coding practice between professionals and organisations. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working to achieve more consistent early identification and treatment of sepsis to improve survival rates and long term outcomes for patients.

Sickle Cell Diseases: Health Services

Marsha De Cordova: [135131]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 31 January 2022 to Question 111706 on Health: Disadvantaged, what plans he has to steps to help tackle potential inequalities in sickle cell care and treatment.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Marsha De Cordova: [135637]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the inequalities in health outcomes for sickle cell disease in (a) mothers and (b) ethnic minority communities; and what steps his Department is taking to improve outcomes for those groups.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Martyn Day: [<u>159021</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to work with its devolved counterparts to adopt a whole-UK approach to tackle the health inequalities experienced by patients with sickle cell disease.

Maria Caulfield:

The United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework outlined a national vision for improving the lives of those with rare diseases, including sickle cell disease. Each nation is currently developing action plans to implement the Framework.

Martyn Day: [159022]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the APPG for Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia's Inquiry report entitled No One's Listening, published on 15 November 2021, what steps his Department is taking to reduce regional variation in access to treatment and care for people living with sickle cell disease.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department will work with relevant organisations to consider the recommendations in the report. NHS England and NHS Improvement's National Healthcare Inequalities Improvement Team have created Core20PLUS5 to support the reduction of health inequalities, with a focus on those living in areas of high deprivation and certain ethnic groups, such as black, Asian and ethnic minority groups where thalassemia and sickle cell disease is most common.

Smoking

Mike Amesbury: [159071]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of (a) current trends in levels of smoking and (b) whether those trends are on track to deliver the Government's smoke free target by 2030.

Maggie Throup:

Smoking rates continue to decline and are currently approximately 13.5%. However, with variations across the country, there is further work to be done to meet the

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

ambition to be smoke-free by 2030. We have established an independent review of tobacco control policies, which is expected to report in May 2022.

Social Services: Statutory Sick Pay

Anne Marie Morris: [160476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of Statutory Sick Pay for (a) full- and (b) part-time staff working in the care sector in the context of continued requirements for staff who test positive for covid-19 to self-isolate.

Gillian Keegan:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

St Bartholomew's Hospital: Private Sector

Ms Lyn Brown: [157317]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the plans for a new private hospital called Nuffield Health at St Bartholomew's Hospital to be located within NHS St Bartholomew's Hospital premises, if he will make an assessment of the reasons why NHS Hospital Trusts are leasing out premises to private providers rather than expanding NHS services to meet local demand.

Edward Argar:

Under the National Health Service Act 2006, NHS trusts can raise additional income from marketing spare capacity resulting from a hospital's non-core functions. The use of income generation schemes has played an important role in supporting NHS services for some time and has enabled investment in infrastructure and services.

Such schemes should not interfere with the delivery of services to patients in line with required standards. NHS bodies must ensure that commitments to these schemes do not divert significant management resources or otherwise prejudice the delivery of core services.

St George's Hospital Tooting: Surgery

Felicity Buchan: [154464]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ask St George's Hospital Trust and NHSI to review urgently the findings of the Lewis Review into Cardiac Surgery at St George's Hospital, in the context of the Senior Coroner Professor Wilcox of Westminster Coroner's Court having called into question the conclusions of that Report in the 38 cases which have been been heard before the Court and for which the GMC has decided that there is no need for a formal investigation into the medical professionals involved.

Edward Argar:

168

[Holding answer 21 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Streptococcus: Clinical Trials

Feryal Clark: [160569]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to encourage hospitals to participate in the GBS3 clinical trial.

Maria Caulfield:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Tobacco: EU Law

Daniel Kawczynski: [157311]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the role of UK tobacco harm reduction policies in reducing smoking prevalence at a faster rate than that of other EU nations.

Maggie Throup:

No formal assessment has been made. However, smoking rates in the United Kingdom have reduced to 13.5% through investing in local stop smoking services, delivering targeted public health campaigns, introducing a strong regulatory framework and by encouraging smokers to switch to vaping to help them quit.

■ Tobacco: Health Hazards

Daniel Kawczynski: [157307]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the impact of the absence of combustion in heat-not-burn and snus products and combustion in cigarettes on the level of harm caused to users of those products.

Daniel Kawczynski: [157308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has established a technical distinction between (a) heat-not-burn products, (b) Snus and (c) other reduced risk products, to help distinguish them from more harmful tobacco products.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: Public Health England's evidence review of ecigarettes and heated tobacco products in 2018 suggests that heat-not-burn products still pose harm to users and bystanders, although they are likely to be less harmful than conventional cigarette smoking. Snus is banned in the United Kingdom and there is evidence it is associated with risk of adverse health effects and higher all-cause mortality.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

The Department has not established a technical distinction between heat-not-burn products, snus and other reduced risk products, to distinguish them from other harmful tobacco products. The Government is committed to helping people quit all forms of tobacco use, which includes the use of safer nicotine delivery such as vaping.

Unispace Global: Protective Clothing

Dawn Butler: [<u>156394</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 117746 on Unispace Global: Protective Clothing, what proportion of the supplies purchased by the Government under the £603 million Unispace Global Ltd contract (a) were received and (b) met safety standards.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: We are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive.

HOME OFFICE

Abuse: Mental Health Services

Mark Logan: [159108]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that cases of emotional abuse are afforded the same priority as physical abuse cases.

Rachel Maclean:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Animal Experiments

Emma Hardy: [<u>156573</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of commissioning a scientific review of the knowledge gained from animal experiments with respect to their relevance to human biology.

Kit Malthouse:

The UK's rigorous regulatory system ensures that no animal testing or research takes place if there is a non-animal alternative that would achieve the scientific outcomes sought.

The National Centre for the 3Rs (NC3Rs) is the UK's leading scientific based organisation dedicated to replacing, refining and reducing the use of animals in scientific research and testing. The NC3Rs supports the research community to use the latest science and technology to replace animal studies, providing new

approaches for biomedical research and avoiding the time and cost associated with animal models.

Animal Experiments: Inspections

Fleur Anderson: [157539]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Animals in Science Regulation Unit's change programme, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact on animal welfare of the proposed decrease in unannounced in-person inspector visits to animal testing sites.

Kevin Foster:

Each Establishment Licence Holder has the responsibility at all times for the welfare of the animals within their establishment. Establishment licence holders are required to have governance systems in place to ensure all Personal and Project Licence Holders comply with the requirements of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) and to maintain compliance with the conditions on their own establishment licence. These requirements are defined in the Standard Conditions of licences.

The Regulator's audit programme for compliance assurance purposes will be delivered in accordance with the requirements defined in the legislation. This includes unannounced visits to licensed establishments.

The Regulator has strengthened its regulatory oversight and published its process of full system audits at: www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-research-technical-advice#process-and-standards-for-establishment-full-system-audits.

The UK legal framework requires each Establishment which uses animals in science to have strong governance systems which are published in the Standard Conditions of licences found on the Regulator's website at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals.

Animals in Science Regulation Unit: Annual Reports

Emma Hardy: [<u>156572</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the Animal and Science Regulation Unit Annual Report for 2019-20.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office intends to publish the Animal and Science Regulation Unit Annual Report for 2019-20 by summer recess.

Arrests: Disclosure of Information

Louise Haigh: [160534]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Common Law Police Disclosure applies in respect of the arrest and charging of hon. Members.

Kit Malthouse:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Asylum: Applications

Rachael Maskell: [157412]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of integrating asylum applicants in local communities while those people are waiting for their application to be processed.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rachael Maskell: [160524]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in what timeframe she expects her Department's average processing times for asylum applications to be completed within six months.

Kevin Foster:

As part of work to fix our broken asylum system via the New Plan for Immigration, Asylum Operations are working to reintroduce a service standard, which will be supported by the passage of the Nationality and Borders Bill ensuring we can focus resources on those who need our support, rather than those seeking to game the system by making repeated applications designed to frustrate their removal from the UK.

Our intention to reintroducing a service standard aligning with the recommendation from the recent Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's (ICIBI) published report - An inspection of asylum casework (November 2021).

Asylum: Ealing Central and Acton

Dr Rupa Huq: [159035]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have been waiting for a decision on eligibility for Section 95 support for longer than (a) three months, (b) six months (c) nine months and (d) 12 months; and how many asylum seekers in each of those categories are accommodated in Ealing Central and Acton constituency.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Asylum: Immigration Controls

Ms Lyn Brown: [153840]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policies of offshore immigration processing schemes used by other countries, including the impact of these schemes on asylum seekers and migrants' (a) safety, (b) access to legal recourse and (c) freedom from persecution.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: The Migration and Economic Development Partnership between the UK and Rwanda is a completely new and innovative approach. Individuals deemed inadmissible to the UK's asylum system may have their asylum claim considered in Rwanda rather than in the UK, with a view to receiving the protection they need in Rwanda if their claim is granted. Rwanda will accept physical and legal responsibility for the relocated individuals. Anyone granted protection will be supported in Rwanda to build a safe and prosperous new life, supported for 5 years with integration support, accommodation and healthcare.

Everyone considered for relocations will be screened, interviewed, and have access to legal advice in the UK prior to relocation. Decisions will be taken on a case-bycase basis and nobody will be removed if it is unsafe or inappropriate for them.

Rwanda has a strong history of welcoming refugees, gaining international recognition for improving their lives, employability and integration in local communities.

Rwanda will process claims in accordance with the UN Refugee Convention, national and international human rights laws, and will ensure their protection from inhuman and degrading treatment or being returned to the place they originally fled.

Asylum: RAF Linton-on-Ouse

Stuart C McDonald: [160485]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to use a person's asylum claim type, including the admissibility or inadmissibility of that claim, to determine whether that person will be accommodated at the proposed new asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stuart C McDonald: [160486]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, at what stage in a person's asylum claim will they be accommodated at the proposed new asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stuart C McDonald: [160487]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of legal support for residents at the proposed new asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stuart C McDonald: [160488]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what legal advice provision will be available at the proposed new asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse; and whether she has made an (a) estimate of the number of legal firms in the local area and (b) assessment of whether those firms have the (i) capacity and (ii) necessary expertise to take on clients from that site.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stuart C McDonald: [160489]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether facilities will be in place for (a) asylum screening interviews and (b) asylum substantive interviews to be conducted at the proposed new asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Stuart C McDonald: [160490]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the likely healthcare needs that residents at the proposed asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse will have; what healthcare provision will be available onsite; whether residents will be registered with local GPs off-site; what estimate she has made of the number of GP practices in the local area; and what assessment she has made of the (a) capacity of those practices to take on new patients and (b) levels of experience in working with asylum seekers and refugees.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [160550]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether planning permission is required to convert the site at RAF Linton-on-Ouse into an asylum accommodation centre.

Kevin Foster:

174

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [160551]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the new asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse will be operated under an existing Asylum Accommodation and Support Contract (AASC).

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Asylum: Rwanda

Patrick Grady: [155799]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether (a) she, (b) Ministers in her Department and (c) officials in her Department had discussions with representatives of the UN High Commission for Refugees on the UK and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership before its publication.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: The UK Government works closely with UNHCR on a whole range of issues and as such the Home Office is in regular contact at all levels.

The UK/Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership was negotiation between two states.

Representatives from across Government have since met with the UNHCR regarding the partnership with further engagement also planned.

Rachael Maskell: [155818]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her proposal to transport asylum seekers to Rwanda of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: There is nothing in the UN Refugee Convention which prevents removal to a safe country.

Rwanda is a State Party to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the seven core UN Human Rights Conventions. It is a fundamentally safe and secure country with respect for the rule of law.

The Migration and Economic Migration Partnership agreement requires Rwanda to process claims in accordance with the UN Refugee Convention, national and international human rights laws, and ensure protection from inhuman and degrading treatment or for those recognised as having a protection need, from being returned to the place they originally fled.

Ruth Jones: [155914]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the potential cost per person of transporting people from the UK to Rwanda to have their asylum claims processed in that country.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: The UK is funding the processing costs for each individual who is relocated to Rwanda. Every person's needs are different, but we anticipate the amount would be comparable to processing costs incurred in the UK. Funding is only provided while a person remains in Rwanda.

Steve McCabe: [156364]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the cost of deporting an individual to Rwanda under her recently announced asylum seeker scheme.

Steve McCabe: [156365]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to prevent an individual who has been identified for deportation to Rwanda under the recently announced asylum seeker scheme from absconding.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: The UK is funding the processing costs for each individual who is relocated to Rwanda. Every person's needs are different, but we anticipate the amount would be comparable to processing costs incurred in the UK.

As this is a long-term partnership over five years, payments will depend on the outcomes delivered including the number of people relocated. Funding is only provided while a person remains in Rwanda.

We are aware of the risk that people might seek to abscond. Individuals may be placed in an Immigration Removal Centre prior to their transfer.

Yvette Cooper: [157278]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether spending on the UK-Rwanda Migration Partnership will come out of the existing Home Office departmental budget.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: Funding for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership has been agreed as part of the Home Office settlement with HMT.

176

[157381]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish details of the (a) procurement process for awarding the contract to transfer asylum seekers to Rwanda under the UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership and (b) company that has been awarded that contract.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[157410]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she received assurances that Rwanda will release the findings from its investigations into the shooting of 12 people at Kiziba refugee camp in 2018 prior to signing the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the processing of asylum seekers in that country.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The Rwandan National Human Rights Commission released the findings of its inquiry into this tragic event in Kiziba. The UK - Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership contains strong protections both on the treatment of migrants as well as their access to services like appropriate accommodation, food and healthcare.

Mr Alistair Carmichael:

[158871]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 155600 on Asylum: Rwanda, what the evidential basis is for her statement that the cost to the public purse, per person, for transporting asylum seekers to Rwanda and processing their claims there would be comparable to processing costs in the UK; and if she will publish a cost estimate breakdown of the expected cost to the public purse, per person, under that scheme.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

[158910] Ms Lyn Brown:

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the proportion of asylum applications that will result in a grant of refugee status or humanitarian protection in Rwanda.

Tom Pursqlove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Patrick Grady: [158989]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether asylum seekers from Rwanda arriving in the UK on small boats will be sent to Rwanda to claim asylum under the terms of the UK and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership.

Tom Pursglove:

In line with our international obligations a Rwandan who fails their asylum claim or becomes a foreign national offender can be removed under the usual process.

Claudia Webbe: [160573]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the grant rate for asylum applications at her proposed offshore processing centres in Rwanda.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160575]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Rwanda published 14 April 2022, when the monitoring group will be established and whether its findings and recommendations will be published before this House.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160579]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that children mistakenly assessed as adults are not sent to Rwanda during the pilot stage of their offshoring agreement.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Ms Anum Qaisar: [160585]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her proposed arrangements to send asylum seekers to Rwanda on the level of risk to women and children's safety whilst travelling to or entering the UK; and what equality impact assessment her Department conducted with regard to the potential impact of that proposal on the (a) availability of safe routes for women and children to reach the UK and (b) risk to women and children of exploitation, violence or harm whilst travelling to or entering the UK.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

British Nationals Abroad: Ukraine

Mr Steve Baker: [150151]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on UK citizens returning from combat in Ukraine; and if she will make a statement.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Burglary: Rural Areas

Helen Morgan: [107757]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help increase the proportion of people who commit burglaries in rural parts of England being identified.

Kit Malthouse:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Cannabis: Medical Treatments

Shabana Mahmood: [158917]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many medical cannabis licences have been granted to pharmacies in (a) England, (b) the West Midlands and (c) Birmingham Ladywood in each of the last 12 months.

Shabana Mahmood: [158918]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the average time taken to award medical cannabis licences to pharmacies following their initial application.

Shabana Mahmood: [158919]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of applications for medical cannabis licences made by pharmacies in each the last 12 months.

Kit Malthouse:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Deportation: Rwanda

Stuart C McDonald: [157394]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who were (a) nationals and (b) not nationals of Rwanda were removed to that country in each of the last twelve months.

Stuart C McDonald: [157395]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been removed to Rwanda under paragraph 345C of the Immigration Rules since 1 January 2022; and how many of these removals were of persons who had neither been previously present or had a connection with Rwanda within the terms of that paragraph.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: Relating to PQ 157394

The Home Office publishes data on the number of returns from the UK in each quarter in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly release'. The latest data on returns are published in Ret_D01 where the data are broken down by nationality and return destination group, and Ret_D02 of the returns detailed dataset where the data are broken down by destination. The latest data relate to the year ending September 2021.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook.

The Home Office seeks to return people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK, which includes people who:

- Enter, or attempt to enter, the UK illegally (including people entering clandestinely and by means of deception on entry)
- Are subject to deportation action; for example, due to a serious criminal conviction
- Overstay their period of legal right to remain in the UK
- Breach their conditions of leave
- Have been refused asylum

Data for October 2021 onwards will be published in future immigration statistics publications. Future immigration statistics publication release dates can be found on the research and statistics calendar.

Relating to PQ 157395:

The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release '. Data on inadmissibility, including individuals returned, are published in the chapter 'How many people do we grant asylum or protection to?'.

The latest data cover up to the end of December 2021. The next release, covering January to March 2022, will be published on 26 May 2022. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar '

Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

Stuart Anderson: [159078]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to (a) support groups for victims of domestic abuse and (b) increase the availability of such groups.

Rachel Maclean:

180

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Educational Visits: EU Nationals

Dr Rupa Huq: [159032]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact on the number of European school parties visiting the UK of changes to travel document requirements which mean that a full passport is now required for each student.

Dr Rupa Huq: [159033]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assistance she is providing for tour operators and other businesses who have been negatively impacted by new travel document requirements for European school parties visiting the UK.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Fraud

Gareth Thomas: [157573]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people scammed by fraudulent (a) texts, (b) emails and (c) calls in each year since 2010; and if she will make a statement.

Damian Hinds:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ HM Passport Office: Government Assistance

Navendu Mishra: [159106]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help support the Passport Office with increased numbers of passport (a) applications and (b) renewals.

Kevin Foster:

Due to COVID-19, over 5 million people have delayed applying for a British passport in 2020 and 2021. In March 2022 HM Passport Office decided over a million passport applications, the highest recorded in any month to date.

Since April 2021 British passport applicants have been advised to allow up to ten weeks to get their passport. However, HM Passport Office continues to endeavour to ensure its customers receive their passport as quickly as possible and is working alongside its suppliers to develop further ways to maximise its ability to cope with an 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 digital application system, mean more passport applications are securely processed with fewer manual interventions to enable them to be processed more quickly.

■ HM Passport Office: Lost Property

Navendu Mishra: [159105]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department are taking to reduce the level of misplaced documents in the Passport Office.

Kevin Foster:

During the period January to March 2022, 12 documents were confirmed as lost at a Her Majesty's Passport Office site. This number of lost documents represents 0.0005% of the applications that were handled during this period.

The safety of customers' personal data is of paramount importance, and all confirmed losses are reported to the Home Office's Office of the Data Protection Officer. HM Passport Office works closely with affected customers to replace any lost document at the earliest opportunity.

■ HM Passport Office: Members

Navendu Mishra: [159107]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will provide MP offices with a direct enquiry line to the Passport Office.

Kevin Foster:

We recognise there have been unacceptable delays in answering HM Passport Office calls on the MP Enquiry Line. We are therefore increasing resource to improve waiting times and provide a more effective service.

Home Office: Development Aid

182

Chris Law: [160500]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will provide a breakdown of her Department's £915 million Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend in 2021.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

■ Home Office: Recruitment

Alex Sobel: [156577]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many immigration (a) caseworkers and (b) entry clearance workers were recruited in each month between August 2021 and March 2022.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Home Office: Rwanda

Sarah Olney: [<u>155868</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her recent trip to Rwanda, what was the cost of (a) the return flights (b) any hospitality and accommodation, and (c) the trip as a whole.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: This information will be published in the 2022 Quarterly Ministerial Transparency returns that will be published later this year. The current cost of the trip is being verified, including finalising invoices and hospitality costs.

Sarah Olney: [155869]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) officials from her Department and (b) other Government staff accompanied her on her trip to Rwanda in April 2022.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Alison McGovern: [153934]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) target response time for visa applications through the Homes for Ukraine scheme is and (b) current response time is.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Peter Kyle: [155848]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason there are delays between her Department deciding to approve permission to travel for an applicant to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and that applicant receiving an email with confirmation of that decision.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Caroline Lucas: [156422]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many extra case workers have been brought in to process Homes for Ukraine paperwork and applications from (a) from other processing teams in (i) her Department and (ii) other Government departments and (b) as new externally recruited staff.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has surged staff across its operations to meet demand, and other departments like HM Revenue and Customs have loaned staff to assist.

UKVI staff in the UK are working seven days a week to process applications as quickly as possible.

Tim Farron: [157319]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visa applications under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have been (a) received and (b) granted for each day since that scheme opened on 18 March 2022.

Tim Farron: [157320]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visas have been granted to adults under the Homes for Ukraine scheme for each day since that scheme opened on 18 March 2022.

Tim Farron: [157321]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visas have been granted to children under the Homes for Ukraine scheme for each day since that scheme opened on 18 March 2022.

Tim Farron: [157322]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to ensure that visa application decisions for refugees travelling together under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme are considered and granted at the same time.

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).

Daisy Cooper: [157510]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme were received by UKVI between 18 March and 25 March 2022; and of those how many had received a permission to travel letter as of 18 April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Telephone Services

Daisy Cooper: [<u>157512</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with regards to her Department's MP hotline and Option 2 (Homes for Ukraine scheme), what the average call wait time is until calls are answered.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Hostage Taking: Victims

Tulip Siddig: [157474]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what procedures her Department has in place for victims of hostage taking; and whether she plans to develop safeguarding guidance for public authorities and staff.

Damian Hinds:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Immigration

Justin Madders: [156507]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to table CDM 01A, Cost per decision for migration applications, in country and overseas, published as part of the Visas and Citizenship data: Q3 2021, for what reason the cost per decision for migration applications, in country and overseas, increased from £155 per decision in 2019-20 to £407 per decision in 2020-21.

Kevin Foster:

The increase in the cost per migration decision reflects that while costs associated with operating the migration and borders system have remained broadly static, there Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

has been a significant reduction in the number of visa applications due to the Covid global pandemic resulting in a significant spike in the unit cost per application.

Justin Madders: [156508]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to table VC_02, Percentage of applications, for each route, processed within service standards, published as part of the Visas and Citizenship data: Q3 2021, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the proportion of applications for leave to remain meeting the eight week service standard in quarters one and two of 2021.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Immigration: Children

Patrick Grady: [154097]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many young people under 18 who hold limited-leave to remain are resident in each of the nations of the UK; and what estimate she has made of number of under 18s holding limited-leave to remain will be resident in each of the nations of the UK in the next 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Chi Onwurah: [157357]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether children with limited Leave to Remain may join football academies and register for academy leagues.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Immigration: EU Nationals

Florence Eshalomi: [159123]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the time taken to complete administrative reviews into EU Settlement Scheme applications.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Immigration: Fees and Charges

Peter Kyle: [157607]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2022 to Question 100624 on Immigration: Fees and Charges, when he plans to publish the revised policy on overseas fee waivers.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Immigration: Ukraine

Dame Diana Johnson: [<u>158881</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 141939 on Immigration: Ukraine, whether Ukrainian refugees, who have used either the family scheme or the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and have had to pay application fees, will be eligible for refunds on those fees.

Kevin Foster:

Both the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine sponsorship have always been free of charge for applicants, with no application fee needing to be paid.

Immigration: Veterans

Dan Jarvis: [156472]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 11 March 2022 to Question 134358 on Immigration: Veterans, whether non-UK veterans living outside the UK who were discharged more than two years ago will qualify under the policy; and what support her Department plans to provide to help them regularise their immigration status.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Louise Haigh: [159016]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email of 12 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley regarding Ukraine refugee case LH20372.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Nationality and Borders Bill

Stuart C McDonald: [158975]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the evidential basis is for her statement that the Nationality and Borders Bill puts safe and legal routes into statute, and to which clauses of that Bill she was referring, during the statement on the global migration challenge, 19 April 2022, Official Report, col 41.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Offences against Children: Reviews

Louise Haigh: [160529]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the External Reference Group for the Review into group-based child sexual exploitation was appointed.

Louise Haigh: [160530]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether DBS checks were undertaken in respect of appointees of the External Reference Group for the Review into group-based child sexual exploitation.

Louise Haigh: [160531]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the criteria were for the appointment of members to the External Reference Group for the Review into group-based child sexual exploitation.

Louise Haigh: [160532]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will review the advice provided by the hon. Member for Wakefield to the Review into group-based child sexual exploitation.

Louise Haigh: [160533]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will confirm whether members of the External Reference Group for the Review into group-based child sexual exploitation had access to sensitive material.

Rachel Maclean:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Overseas Students

Matt Western: [94485]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education regarding plans to extend the time incoming

exchange students can stay in the UK from 6 months to one academic year without having to apply for a Student Visa.

Kevin Foster:

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

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

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

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

Gavin Newlands: [154092]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current (a) median and (b) mean lengths of times are between a passport renewal application being received by her Department and its issuance to the applicant.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Charlotte Nichols: [154450]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications are currently pending approval.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Yvette Cooper: [160449]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many UK passport applications her Department processed in each quarter since 2015.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Yvette Cooper: [160450]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications processed by her Department missed the 10-week processing target in each year since 2015.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Kevin Brennan: [160452]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to improve the time taken to process passport applications for (a) immigrants, and (b) refugees not related to schemes for Ukrainian refugees.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rachael Maskell: [160523]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the average time taken to process a passport application in the latest period for which data is available; and how that average compares to pre-covid-19 pandemic levels.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Police: Proof of Identity

Sarah Jones: [157544]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether data exists on the number of police warrant cards currently unaccounted for in Police Forces in England and Wales.

Kit Malthouse:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Police: Rural Areas

Helen Morgan: [107756]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help increase the number of police officers in rural parts of England.

Kit Malthouse:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Refugees

Stuart C McDonald: [158974]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the statement on the global migration challenge on 19 April 2022, Official Report, col 25, what the evidential basis is for the figures provided in her statement that the UK has welcomed more than 185,000 people through safe and legal routes, including from Syria, Hong

Kong, Afghanistan and Ukraine, and 40,000 people in recent years through refugee family reunion routes.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Refugees: Afghanistan

Stella Creasy: [153944]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what comparative assessment her Department has made of the cost of housing refugees evacuated from Afghanistan in hotels versus the cost of housing the same refugees in privately rented accommodation.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Rachael Maskell: [157416]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that the faith needs of Afghan refugees are met during the month of Ramadan.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rachael Maskell: [160522]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has set a target for the timeframe for resettling Afghan refugees residing in bridging hotels.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

Refugees: Applications

Stuart C McDonald: [154013]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to proposals in the Nationality and Borders Bill on Differential treatment for refugees, on whom the burden of proof will fall in relation to establishing whether a person is a group one or group two refugee.

Stuart C McDonald: [154014]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to proposals in the Nationality and Borders Bill on Differential treatment for refugees, what standard of proof will apply for establishing whether a person is a group one or group two refugee. Stuart C McDonald: [154015]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to proposals in the Nationality and Borders Bill on Differential treatment for refugees, if she will make it her policy to require decision makers to make proactive enquiries into the availability, accessibility and adequacy of status determination procedures in the relevant country or countries through which the applicant has passed when deciding whether a person is a group one or group two refugee.

Stuart C McDonald: [<u>154016</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to proposals in the Nationality and Borders Bill on Differential treatment for refugees, if she will make it her policy to require decision makers to assess whether given the personal circumstances of the individual applicant they could reasonably believe that they would not be safe in the country concerned.

Stuart C McDonald: [154017]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to proposals in the Nationality and Borders Bill on Differential treatment for refugees, if she will make it her policy to ensure that that decision makers have discretion to grant a more generous form of leave even to someone who does not meet the criteria for a group one refugee.

Stuart C McDonald: [154018]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to proposals in the Nationality and Borders Bill on Differential treatment for refugees, if she will make it her policy that good cause must be interpreted in the context of international law including the Refugee Convention.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: The detail of the Government's differentiation policy will be set out in guidance in due course. The Home Office has solicited views on the guidance from a wide range of external stakeholders, which are currently under careful consideration.

Decision makers will always be expected to consider the individual circumstances and vulnerabilities of an asylum seeker as a part of a grouping decision.

Refugees: Housing

Rachael Maskell: [157414]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of introducing a homes for refugees programme whereby UK residents are able to open their homes to refugees irrespective of their country of origin.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rachael Maskell: [157415]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make a comparative estimate of the cost of (a) a potential homes for refugees scheme, whereby UK residents are able to open their homes to refugees irrespective of their country of origin, and (b) accommodating a person in a bridging hotel according to costs as of 21 April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Refugees: Rwanda

Claudia Webbe: [160570]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department made an assessment of the human rights situation in Rwanda prior to the partnership agreement on the hosting of refugees in Rwanda.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160571]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of whether Rwanda is a safe country to which to send LGBT+ refugees.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160572]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to publish guidelines that protect LGBT+ refugees in relation to her proposals to offshore refugees to Rwanda.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160574]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her proposals to offshore refugees to Rwanda will only apply to single men.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160576]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the plans to offshore refugees to Rwanda, whether people arriving in the UK because they have family members in that country will be considered eligible to be sent to Rwanda.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160577]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of her proposals to offshore refugees to Rwanda on family reunion as a safe route of entry to the UK.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160578]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of her proposals to offshore refugees to Rwanda will have on refugee (a) women and (b) children.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Claudia Webbe: [160580]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that (a) women and (b) people that are assessed to be vulnerable will not be offshored under their plans to offshore refugees to Rwanda.

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Refugees: Ukraine

Rachael Maskell: [129848]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what accommodation she plans to make available for refugees from the Ukraine.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 2 March 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Deidre Brock: [154053]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to speed up the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in the UK who are receiving ongoing medical treatment.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stephen Farry: [154494]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department requires undocumented Ukrainians living in the UK to comply with immigration enforcement measures, including detention and the requirement to report at immigration centres.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: Ukrainians living in the UK will need to comply with all immigration rules and procedures, with those who remain undocumented or without status in the UK liable to be placed on immigration bail with appropriate conditions applied, depending on the circumstances of the individual case.

Seasonal Workers: Pay

Dave Doogan: [149384]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason a rate of pay in excess of the national living wage has been mandated by her Department for seasonal workers.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not provide accommodation to migrants to the UK.

The Home Office does though have a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered.

The total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ho-annual-reports-and-accounts.

We do not publish a breakdown of costs of our accommodation & support contracts by location or property type as such detail is considered commercially sensitive.

UK Visas and Immigration: Telephone Services

Gerald Jones: [160536]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of UKVI passport hotline.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Gerald Jones: [160537]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will increase levels of staffing on UKVI passport hotline following the widespread delays experienced by customers.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation

■ Violence Reduction Units

Mike Amesbury: [156578]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will (a) expand the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) model beyond the current 20 police force areas and (b) commit to long-term funding for that Unit; and what steps her Department is taking to strengthen local efforts to tackle serious violent crime.

Kit Malthouse:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Visas: Afghanistan

Margaret Ferrier: [154000]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made in progressing Afghanistan related cases, in the context of the UK co-hosting the United Nation's pledging summit on Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Visas: Applications

Stephen Kinnock: [153985]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing visa applicants to receive a digital permission to travel document.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Visas: Disability

Damien Moore: [155910]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that the visa application process is accessible for people with disabilities.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Visas: Ukraine

Kirsty Blackman: [<u>151143</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average processing time is for visas for Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Kirsty Blackman: [<u>151144</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Ukrainian refugees who were already matched with a sponsor when they applied for a visa under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, have received their visas.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mohammad Yasin: [154263]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the time between a visa application centre making a decision in respect of a Ukrainian visa application and issuing a permission to travel letter.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daisy Cooper: [157511]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, for what reason there is a delay between a positive decision to issues a visa and the provision of a Permission to Travel document.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Stephen Farry: [157525]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending seasonal workers' visas for Ukrainian nationals beyond 31 December 2022, to bring it in line with the three-year visas granted by the Ukraine Family Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The UK Government does not have any plans to extend the Seasonal Workers' visas for Ukrainian nationals beyond 31 December 2022.

From 3 May 2022 Ukrainian nationals who had permission to stay in the UK on or before 18 March 2022 or permission which expired after 1 January 2022 will be able to apply to stay in the UK under the Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES). Eligibility for permission to stay will include those who were in the UK as Seasonal Workers.

In line with the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, the Ukraine Extension Scheme will be free of charge and individuals will get 3 years leave to remain in the UK and will have the right to work, study and access public funds. In our assessment this is a much better option for those Ukrainian Nationals currently in the UK on a Seasonal Agricultural Workers visa than extending their existing visa beyond 31 December 2022.

Stephen Farry: [157526]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of access to healthcare and prescription medication for Ukrainian nationals with seasonal workers visas and no access to public funds.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Steve McCabe: [158857]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, how many visa applications, made by groups with both adults and children included in them, are currently outstanding as a result of being held up by one or more of the applications made on behalf of any children in that group.

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mike Amesbury: [159070]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the likelihood that UK residents who previously applied to host Ukrainian refugees under the family visa route may also now apply under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, due to the financial assistance available; and of whether it is possible, should this occur, that duplicate visas may be issued.

198 Daily Report

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Munira Wilson: [159091]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason third country citizens resident in Ukraine with family members in the UK were excluded from the Ukraine Family Visa scheme.

Kevin Foster:

As set out in the Home Secretary's statement to the House on 1 March, a fee free, bespoke Ukraine Family Scheme has been introduced. The route allows both the immediate family members (spouse, civil partner, durable partner, minor children) and extended family members (parent, grandparent, adult children, grandchildren, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, in laws and their immediate family) to join their relatives in the UK. The UK-based sponsoring relative must be a British citizen, a person who is present and settled in the UK (including those with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme), a person in the UK with refugee leave or with humanitarian protection or an EEA or Swiss national in the UK with limited leave under Appendix EU (pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme). This route was launched on 4 March.

Applicants to the scheme must be Ukrainian nationals unless they are applying as part of a family group where their immediate family member, who is a Ukrainian national, qualifies under this scheme. In this circumstance non-Ukrainian nationals will also qualify under the Ukraine Family Scheme.

Third country nationals who are not part of a family group with a Ukrainian national would normally be expected to return to their country of nationality. However, each case will be judged on merit taking into account the individual circumstances of the case.

Voyeurism: Prosecutions

Wera Hobhouse: [159045]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were charged with upskirting in each year since 2019.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home office publishes the number of charges resulting from the investigation of police recorded crime in the 'Crime Outcomes statistics'.

The latest figures can be found at:

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

The offence of upskirting falls under the offence category 88E: Exposure and Voyeurism.

Windrush Compensation Scheme

Kate Osamor: [154218]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Windrush Compensation Scheme claimants have requested a review of a decision under that scheme; and of those how many have received a decision from the adjudicator as at 14 April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Kate Osamor: [<u>154219</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason payments to Windrush Compensation Scheme claimants are delayed in the event that they request a review of a decision under that scheme.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Parliamentary Estate: Coronavirus

Valerie Vaz: [<u>158941</u>]

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many positive covid-19 cases were recorded on the Parliamentary estate in each month from November 2021 to March 2022.

Sir Charles Walker:

Following the change to Government guidance in February 2022 individuals were no longer required to inform their workplace if they tested positive for Covid. The figures below therefore represent the number of positive cases where an individual chose to share their result.

As the original case information has now been deleted in line with our privacy policies, only a summary per week is available.

25 March–1 April: 47 18–24 March: 75 11–17 March: 51 4–10 March: 47 25 February–3 March: 11 18–24 February: 15 11–17 February: 18

The numbers below represent the number of validated case numbers, using data held by the UKHSA and the Parliamentary test and trace team.

4–10 February: 63 28 January–3 February: 61 21–27 January: 89 14–20 January: 68 7–13 January: 69 31 December–6 January: 110 24–30 December: 119 17–23 December: 128 10–16 December: 193 3–9 December: 66 26 November–2

December: 38 19-25 November: 34 12-18 November: 31 5-11 November: 20 29

October-4 November: 28

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Beef and Pigmeat: China

Jim Shannon: [158951]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps is he taking to help increase the level of exports of (a) pork and (b) beef from the UK to China.

Mike Freer:

China is the number one export destination for UK pork in terms of value and quantity, despite the challenges of Covid-19.

The UK continues to negotiate with China to lift the ban on exporting British beef, which came into force last year following a single case of BSE. The Chief Veterinary Office wrote to Chinese officials at the end of 2021 on this issue.

The UK government's agriculture, food and drink counsellor, based in Beijing, supports UK food and drink companies to successfully export to China. Increasing exports of pork and regaining market access for beef are among DIT's top priorities for that market.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Dispute Resolution

Ruth Cadbury: [158972]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 155768, in addition to the scoping assessment published on 22 June 2021, whether her Department has made additional assessments of the potential impact of investor-state dispute settlements on the UK's Net Zero policy.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK has Investor-State Dispute Settlement arrangements with 90 treaty partners and has never lost a case or even been taken to a tribunal under these provisions. UK firms have over £100 billion invested in Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) countries, including pension funds. The CPTPP investment chapter offers protection for UK investments and businesses abroad. CPTPP protects countries right to regulate and will not undermine the UK's net zero objectives.

Ruth Cadbury: [158973]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has made an assessment of the financial cost to the Exchequer of potential ISDS claims against the UK on entering the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK has never lost a tribunal under Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions despite having such arrangements in place with over 90 treaty partners. UK firms have over £100 billion invested in Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) countries, which will be protected by CPTPP's investment chapter.

Dairy Farming: Trade Agreements

Stuart Anderson: [159074]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that dairy farmers (a) benefit from trade agreements and (b) have standards retained.

Penny Mordaunt:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Export Credit Guarantees: Iran

Tulip Siddiq: [157459]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Answer of 28 February 2020 to Question 15096 on Export Credit Guarantees: Iran, whether the £28.4 million debt owed by Iran to UK Export Finance (UKEF) has (a) been closed or (b) is still being pursued by UKEF following the settlement of the IMS dispute in March 2022.

Mike Freer:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Hormone Replacement Therapy: Companies

Ruth Cadbury: [157599]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many meetings officials in her Department have had with representatives of companies (a) producing and (b) supplying hormone replacement therapy treatments in the UK in each of the last six months; and on what dates those meetings took place.

Mike Freer:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: Department for International Trade (DIT) officials in the UK and around the world regularly engage with a large number of companies. These engagements are focussed on export and inward investment opportunities, which is DIT's remit.

Thursday, 28 April 2022

Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages

Ruth Cadbury: [157601]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether (a) she and (b) her officials have had discussions with Ministers and officials in the Department for Health and Social Care on the shortage of hormone replacement therapy treatments.

Mike Freer:

[Holding answer 27 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Spirits: Brazil

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[158963]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of the potential to increase UK spirits exports to Brazil as part of an enhanced trade partnership.

Mike Freer:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Spirits: Nigeria

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[158964]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of the potential to increase UK spirits exports to Nigeria.

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[158965]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the Government's plans are to increase trade with Nigeria; and what recent assessment she has made of the potential for an enhanced trade partnership with Nigeria along the lines of the partnership proposed for Brazil.

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[158968]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to help support British businesses trying to secure hard currency in Nigeria.

Mike Freer:

Increasing and promoting trade with Nigeria is a priority for the UK Government. Total trade in goods and services between the UK and Nigeria was £3.5 billion last year (ending Q3 2021), an increase of 1.9% or £65 million from the previous year. At the most recent bi-annual UK-Nigeria Economic Development Forum government to government dialogue, held on 26 April, Ministers from both countries agreed to start a working group to discuss how to enhance the bilateral trading relationship.

Officials are working to support British business access foreign exchange facilities through the Economic Development Forum and the associated Finance and Financial Services Working Group.

From 2016 to 2021 UK exports of spirits to Nigeria increased by 92.1%. DIT continues to offer a wide range of support for British alcohol and spirit producers wishing to export into Nigeria. Through our work, import adjustment tax is now no longer applicable on Scotch Whisky exports to Nigeria.

Supply Chains: Agriculture and Food

Sir Mark Hendrick: [153760]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of the war in Ukraine on international food and agriculture supply chains.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Trade Agreements: Gulf States

Ruth Cadbury: [158971]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 154006 on Trade Agreements: Gulf States, if she will publish (a) which organisation is conducting research for the Department's internal use relevant to ongoing negotiations, (b) over what timeframe that research has been conducted and (c) to which countries that research relates.

Penny Mordaunt:

Research is being conducted by Ipsos Mori between February and May 2022. It covers member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. This research will be used to inform negotiations.

Trade Agreements: India

Navendu Mishra: [155938]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to Answer of 8 March to Question 131344, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of a Free Trade Agreement with India on jobs and investment in Stockport.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Trade Agreements: Poverty

Sir Mark Hendrick: [129741]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to ensure future trade deals tackle poverty in line with the Government's commitments to deliver the sustainable development goals.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

Penny Mordaunt:

204

Our Free Trade Agreements are a key means to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to reduce poverty and inequality. In line with the Government's levelling up agenda, we are committed to ensuring that our Free Trade Agreements deliver opportunities for the whole of the UK.

Our recent Free Trade Agreement with Australia is expected to boost the economy by £2.3 billion and add £900 million to household wages each year in the long run. Government analysis suggests that the West Midlands, North East, North West, South East, South West and Wales are set to see the biggest gains.

Trade Barriers: Ukraine

Jim Shannon: [156466]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has plans to amend or remove any trade regulations imposed since the UK's departure from the EU for the purposes of facilitating the shipping of aid and donations to Ukraine.

Mike Freer:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

UK Trade and Business Commission

Daisy Cooper: [<u>159084</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make it her policy to implement the 21 recommendations in the first annual report from the UK Trade and Business Commission.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government is getting on with the job, setting up engagement mechanisms to make sure the United Kingdom's position is well-informed and reflects the interests of the British people. These engagement mechanisms include the Ministerially-chaired Strategic Trade Advisory Group (STAG), eleven sector-specific Trade Advisory Groups (TAGs), and ten cross-government Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) currently.

Whisky: China

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

158966]

ANSWERS

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her Department's plans are to support Scotch whisky exports to China (a) in general and (b) through supporting continued adherence to a high whisky standard in domestic regulation.

Mike Freer:

UK food and drink, including Scotch whisky, is renowned worldwide for its quality and provenance. In 2021, whisky was the highest value UK food and drink export to China and amounted to £200.1m. The UK government's agriculture, food and drink

counsellor in China works closely with the Scotch Whisky Association and whisky companies to promote whisky in China. This includes supporting the protection of intellectual property and whisky tasting and educational events and promotions, including via digital media. Our success is built on our strong domestic standards and the quality and safety of our products.

JUSTICE

Criminal Proceedings: Midlands

Dr Luke Evans: [<u>159094</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what support has been provided to reduce the backlog of criminal cases in (a) Leicester Crown Court and (b) the Midlands.

James Cartlidge:

The Government is committed to supporting the recovery of the courts. We recognise that the impact of the pandemic in courts has been uneven across the country, with the Midlands being one of the areas experiencing a greater increase in caseload.

In order to tackle the backlogs, we have extended 30 Nightingale courtrooms beyond the end of March 2022. Two of these are in the Midlands, Park Hall Hotel in Wolverhampton and Maple House in Birmingham. We are also working with the judiciary to explore moving cases across regional boundaries to areas with spare capacity, where appropriate, and using a national, flexible pool of judges for some regions, including the Midlands, to draw from as required.

We opened a new 'super courtroom' in Loughborough to expand capacity for multihander cases, which involve three or more defendants, that have built up during the pandemic as they were harder to hear with social distancing measures in place. This 'super courtroom' will create the space needed to hear trials and free up capacity elsewhere in Leicestershire and the Midlands, allowing up to an extra 250 cases a year to be heard across England and Wales.

We have once again removed the limit on sitting days in the Crown Court for this financial year to allow courts to work at full capacity, delivering swifter justice for victims and reducing the backlog of cases. To secure enough capacity to sit at the required levels in 2022/23 and beyond we are expanding our plans for judicial recruitment.

To provide additional capacity in the Crown Court we are extending magistrates' court sentencing powers from 6 to 12 months' imprisonment for a single Triable either Way offence to allow more cases to be heard in the magistrates' court and help to drive down the backlog of cases over the coming years.

These measures are already working, and as a result we expect to get through 20% more Crown Court cases this financial year than we did pre-Covid. Following an increase in funding as part of the Ministry of Justice's Spending Review settlement,

we aim to reduce the number of outstanding cases in the Crown Court to 53,000 by March 2025.

Debt Collection

Shabana Mahmood: [158912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has undertaken an assessment of the adequacy of the process used by debt collection agencies to ascertain the address of people against whom judgments have been made.

James Cartlidge:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Shabana Mahmood: [158913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps a debt collection agency is required to take to verify the personal details, including home address, of the individual they are attempting to collect debt from.

James Cartlidge:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Shabana Mahmood: [158914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps people can take to appeal court decisions made in their absence as a result of the court holding an incorrect home address.

James Cartlidge:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Shabana Mahmood: [158915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of people found guilty in their absence in civil debt cases; and how many of those cases were as a result of the defendant not being aware of the summons due to the Court holding an incorrect home address.

James Cartlidge:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Shabana Mahmood: [158916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps are the Courts required to take to ensure that (a) they have the correct personal details of defendants and (b) defendants are aware of their summons.

James Cartlidge:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Family Courts: Standards

Catherine West: [157482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce backlogs in family court cases.

James Cartlidge:

We continue to take action to tackle the impact the pandemic has had on our courts and tribunals system. We invested £250 million to support recovery in our courts in the 2020/21 financial year. This included £76 million to increase our capacity to hear cases in the family and civil courts, as well as in tribunals. The recent Spending Review has also provided £324 million over the next three years to improve waiting times in the civil and family courts, and tribunals.

We increased Cafcass' budget by £8.3 million for 2021/22 so that they have more capacity and can manage the additional pressures caused by the pandemic. We also provided Cafcass with an additional £491,000 to support work in the areas of the country where their resources are most under pressure.

We are maximising sittings from the judicial capacity available to work through our caseload. With the removal of Covid restrictions on 1st April 2022, face-to-face physical capacity is returning to business as usual during April although remote hearings will continue to play a part in the overall recovery effort.

Last financial year (2021/22) we undertook one of our most ambitious programmes of judicial recruitment ever, so that we can hear as many cases as possible. In the same year we lifted the number of days fee-paid judges can sit from 30 days to 80 for the second year in a row.

We are also managing demand in the family courts to ensure the capacity can be used most effectively to tackle the outstanding caseload. In March 2021 we launched a Family Mediation Voucher Scheme for those seeking to resolve private law matters relating to a child. Since its introduction, over 7,700 families have successfully used the scheme to access mediation and help resolve disputes outside of court.

In public family law, the outstanding caseload, by child, stood at 21,800 cases in January 2022. In 2021, average monthly disposals were roughly 200 more than they were in 2020. In private family law, the outstanding caseload, by child, in January 2022 stood at 83,000 cases, below the August 2021 peak of 85,000. In 2021, average monthly disposals were roughly 1,100 more per month than they were in 2020.

■ Magistrates' Courts: Hartlepool

208

Alex Cunningham: [158945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with stakeholders on (a) plans to re-open and (b) plans for alternative uses of Hartlepool Magistrates' Court.

James Cartlidge:

There are no plans to re-open this court. Hartlepool Magistrates' and County Court closed in 2017 following a full public consultation and workloads were successfully transferred to Teesside Magistrates' Court and Middlesbrough County Court.

The property is owned by the local council and HMCTS are contracted under a long lease agreement that allows the property to only be used for court operations. HMCTS are in conversation with the local council to find a suitable alternative use for the building, which will benefit the local community.

We will continue to keep our court and tribunal estate under close review to make sure it meets our operational requirements.

Magistrates' Courts: Plymouth

Luke Pollard: [159072]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to install solar panels on the roof of Plymouth Magistrates Court.

James Cartlidge:

There are currently no plans to install solar panels on the roof of Plymouth Magistrates Court.

Ministry of Justice: Information Officers

Stuart C McDonald: [154031]

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

James Cartlidge:

The number of staff working in MoJ HQ to deliver the communications functions is 104.

91 are employed on full time contracts, 13 are employed on part time.

The data does not capture flexible working arrangements.

Oakhill Secure Training Centre

Anna McMorrin: [159052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many occasions has the monitor appointed to Oakhill secure training centre reported allegations against custody officers,

in accordance with section 8(3)(b) Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, in the 12 month period ending (a) 31 March 2022, (b) 31 March 2021 and (c) 31 March 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Prisons: Staff

Anna McMorrin: [159050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison staff were dismissed for conducting inappropriate relationships with child prisoners in each year since 2010.

Victoria Atkins:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Secure Training Centres and Young Offender Institutions: Staff

Anna McMorrin: [159051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many police investigations have been launched in response to allegations against staff working in (a) young offender institutions and (b) secure training centres in each year since 2010.

Victoria Atkins:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Sentencing: Attendance

James Wild: [155932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what powers judges have to require the attendance of offenders in court for sentencing.

James Cartlidge:

Where an offender is remanded on bail whilst they are awaiting sentencing (as opposed to being remanded into custody), they are under a duty to surrender themselves to the custody of the court at the next appointed time for a sentencing hearing. Where the offender fails in this duty, the court may issue a warrant for their arrest.

Where an offender is being held on remand in custody and they are directed to attend court for a sentencing hearing, a judge has no power to force them to attend the hearing if they refuse to do so.

The Secretary of State is considering the matter.

Sexual Offences

Wera Hobhouse: [157594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were (a) charged, (b) prosecuted, and (c) convicted for trespassing with intent to commit a sexual offence in each year since 2015.

Wera Hobhouse: [157595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were (a) charged, (b) prosecuted and (c) convicted for committing an offence with intent to commit a sexual offence in (i) 2015, (ii) 2016, (iii) 2017, (iv) 2018, (v) 2019, (vi) 2020 and (vii) 2021.

Wera Hobhouse: [157604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were (a) charged, (b) prosecuted and (c) convicted for other miscellaneous sexual offences in (i) 2015, (ii) 2016, (iii) 2017, (iv) 2018, (v) 2019, (vi) 2020 and (vii) 2021.

Wera Hobhouse: [157605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were (a) charged, (b) prosecuted and (c) convicted for administering a substance with intent to stupefy or overpower to engage in sexual activity in (i) 2015, (ii) 2016, (iii) 2017, (iv) 2018, (v) 2019, (vi) 2020 and (vii) 2021.

Wera Hobhouse: [157606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) charges, (b) prosecutions and (c) convictions there were for indecent exposure, broken down by gender, in the years (i) 2015, (ii) 2016, (iii) 2017, (iv) 2018, (v) 2019, (vi) 2020 and (vii) 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions, convictions up to December 2020, available in the following tool pivot tool:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063892/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2020-revised.xlsx.

Within the pivot tables, filter for:

(Offence code: Detailed offence)

Indecent exposure

08809: Exposure

88B Other miscellaneous sexual offences (Offence)

- 08805: Administering a substance with intent to stupefy or overpower to engage in sexual activity
- 08806: Committing an offence with intent to commit a sexual offence
- 08807: Trespass with intent to commit a sexual offence

175 Sexual Offences- Miscellaneous (Offence)

17504: Sexual activity in a public lavatory

To breakdown an offence by sex, filter for the required offence and move the 'sex' filter, in the pivot table field list, to the rows area.

Filter 'year of appearance' to 2015-20.

Figures for 2021 are due to be published 19th May 2022.

The figures given in the data tool relate to defendants for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When an offender has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed.

Information on charges issued by the police is not held by this department.

Wormwood Scrubs Prison: Prison Governors

Andy Slaughter: [158876]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has plans to develop the former governor's house at HMP Wormwood Scrubs.

Andy Slaughter: [158877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has undertaken a risk assessment in respect of plans to develop the former governor's house at HMP Wormwood Scrubs.

Victoria Atkins:

A Full Planning Application has been submitted. Various reports and assessments have been undertaken as part of the application, including a security assessment. Details of the Planning Application can be viewed via the following link:

https://public-access.lbhf.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=R4J1WQBIGO600&activeTab=summary

Young Offenders: Civil Proceedings

Anna McMorrin: [159049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many civil claims against (a) HM Prison Service and (b) private providers have been brought by current or former children detained in (i) juvenile young offender institutions and (ii) secure training centres in each year since 2010.

Victoria Atkins:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Children: Day Care

Stephen Morgan: [160543]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what data his Department holds on the number of councils providing business rates relief to childcare providers in England as of 26 April 2022.

Kemi Badenoch:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Community Assets

Nadia Whittome: [157531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he will publish a strategy for Community Spaces and Relationships.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government will set out the next steps for the development of the new Strategy for Community Spaces and Relationships in due course.

Council Housing: Repairs and Maintenance

Rachael Maskell: [156530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to help encourage local authorities to utilise the Housing Revenue Account to insulate and retrofit local authority housing stock to help improve their sustainable standards.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government is committed to seeing the social housing sector play a leading role in decarbonising the country's homes—as shown by its commitment to a £3.8 billion Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, to which over £1 billion has already been allocated. Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) are the means by which councils pay for all investment in housing quality, including decarbonisation. Social housing quality standards already mandate up to date insulation standards in council homes

In the Social Housing White Paper, we committed to review the Decent Homes Standard to ensure it is delivering what is needed for safety and decency now and the Levelling Up White Paper set out our intention to consult on making the Decent Homes Standard a regulatory requirement in the Private Rented Sector. We have set an ambition to halve the number of non-decent homes in all rented sectors by 2030 with the biggest improvements in the lowest-performing areas. Part 1 of the Decent Homes Review, which looked at the social sector only, concluded last year.

Council Tax

Beth Winter: [157522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of transferring responsibility for payment of council tax from tenants to owners.

Kemi Badenoch:

Council tax is a tax on the occupiers of homes to help fund local services. The Government has no plans to transfer liability from tenants to owners.

■ Council Tax: Energy Bills Rebate

Chris Grayling: [158868]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he expects local authorities to have funding in place to provide the planned cost of living rebates to council tax payers.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government made payments to councils on 30 March covering the full allocation for the council tax rebate and discretionary fund. Many councils have already started paying the rebate to households.

Council Tax: Valuation

Beth Winter: [157521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of conducting a revaluation of existing residential property for council tax purposes.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has no plans to carry out a council tax revaluation in England. A revaluation would be expensive to undertake and could result in increases in bills for many households. The council tax revaluation in Wales resulted in 33% of homes being placed in a higher band compared to 8% of homes that were placed in a lower band. A revaluation would risk penalising those on lower incomes, including pensioners, who might have seen their homes appreciate in value, but not be able to afford higher council tax.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Damien Moore: [157585]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that people with disabilities are able to obtain Disabled Facilities Grants without delay.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Holiday Accommodation: Taxation

Rachael Maskell: [156524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to take steps to ensure that short-term holiday lets are subject to local taxation requirements; and what options are available in respect of that matter.

Kemi Badenoch:

All holiday lets are assessed by the Valuation Office Agency for council tax or business rates purposes. The government has legislated so that, from April 2023, holiday lets will only be assessed for business rates if they were actually rented out for short periods totalling at least 70 days in the previous year.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Alyn Smith: [<u>156593</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many civil servants are working on Homes for Ukraine scheme applications.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

[158940] Paul Blomfield:

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of Question 155695 on Homes for Ukraine Scheme, whether Ukrainians who have fled Ukraine and been granted refugee status in another EU country are still eligible for the UK's Homes for Ukraine scheme if they were resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Liz Saville Roberts: [159038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department has taken to verify the authenticity of organisations that contact sponsors directly under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the rt. hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mike Amesbury: [159065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, what advice his Department provides to sponsors who subsequently have withdrawn their offer of accommodation but may still be matched to people in the system; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential

risk of that circumstance in respect of Ukrainians (a) arriving in the UK without a host and (b) presenting as homeless.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mike Amesbury: [159066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, what advice his Department provides to local authorities who have individuals that have decided not to take up the offer from a sponsor that are still matched on their system; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential risk of that circumstance in respect of willing sponsors who may not get rematched with new guests.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mike Amesbury: [159067]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, what advice his Department provides to local authorities when an accommodation check has failed.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mike Amesbury: [159068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of information produced by RESET with regards to unmatched guests and sponsors; and what steps his Department is taking to provide improved data on unmatched sponsors to local authorities so that they can commence pre-checks earlier.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mike Amesbury: [160547]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, what steps his Department is taking to (a) support refugees and (b) find new accommodation in the event that the relationship between the sponsor and the refugee breaks down after their arrival.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Birmingham

Steve McCabe: [153727]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme from people in Birmingham her Department has (a) received and (b) approved as of 6 April 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Vetting

Mike Amesbury: [159069]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, what advice his Department provides to local authorities in the event that people fail a DBS check following a social worker review.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Housing: Bicycles

Andrew Selous: [157283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to take steps to assist leaseholders who are enjoined by the terms of the lease not to store their bicycles in their properties, but whose landlord does not provide a secure bicycle store.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. We are therefore taking forward a wide-ranging programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market.

The exact terms of individual deeds or leases will vary. Where deeds of covenant or leases place restrictions on the use of a property, this is a matter for individual homeowners to raise with the party with whom they have agreed the lease. If a leaseholder wants to vary or remove a restrictive covenant from their lease, they should first try to reach an agreement with the relevant party. Where the relevant party will not agree to vary or remove a restrictive covenant, the leaseholder can apply to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) for it to be discharged or modified under section 84 of the Law of Property Act 1925.

Housing: Older People

Alexander Stafford: [159122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of Homes England's role in delivering suitable homes for older people.

Stuart Andrew:

We are investing £11.5 billion in the new Affordable Homes Programme, which includes the delivery of specialist or supported housing, including retirement housing. Homes England is our key delivery partner for the programme (outside of London, where the programme is delivered by the Greater London Authority).

More broadly, this government is committed to improving the supply and diversity of housing options available to older people. As set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, we intend to launch a new taskforce which will look at ways we can provide more choice, better quality and greater security of housing for older people. Further information on the remit, timing and membership of the taskforce will be announced shortly.

LEASE

Sir Peter Bottomley: [158854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when LEASE last initiated purposeful engagement with (a) leaseholders' cladding groups, (b) the National Leasehold Campaign, (c) the Leasehold Knowledge Partnership and (d) hon. Members known to be concerned with leasehold and commonhold reforms.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Leasehold

Fleur Anderson: [160560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps the Government is taking to abolish marriage value.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Fleur Anderson: [160561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to abolish marriage value.

Eddie Hughes:

■ Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: Parish Councils

Daisy Cooper: [<u>157508</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department intends to publish a response to the 2015 consultation to extend the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman to certain parish and town councils.

Kemi Badenoch:

218

The 2015 consultation regarding the remit of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) was overtaken by the development of the Public Service Ombudsman Bill. The Government has no plans at this time to introduce the 2016 Public Service Ombudsman Bill to Parliament.

The LGSCO has published its Triennial Review for the 2021-24 period in December, which contains proposals to extend its remit to include certain parish and town councils. The Government is considering the Triennial Review's proposals and will respond in due course.

Local Government Finance: Spelthorne

John Spellar: [156372]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment his Department has made of the financial position of Spelthorne Council.

Kemi Badenoch:

It is the responsibility of all local authorities to manage their own finances and ensure that they set and maintain a balanced budget position. It is also for local authorities to determine their own borrowing and investment strategies, but in doing so they have to appropriately comply with the Prudential Framework and its four statutory Codes. The government has made clear that authorities should not borrow to invest for profit. The government is taking actions to strengthen the capital system and continues to monitor risks across the sector including local authorities' borrowing profile and associated risks, and engages with individual local authorities where appropriate.

Local Plans: Floods

Rachael Maskell: [160512]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure that Local Plans prioritise land use according to flooding risk.

Stuart Andrew:

Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [<u>157301</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 24 February 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire regarding the Building Safety Bill, reference ZA59011.

Stuart Andrew:

A response to the Hon Member has been issued.

Rosie Cooper: [157302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 15 February 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, reference ZA58919, regarding council tax.

Kemi Badenoch:

A response has been issued.

Parking: Key Workers

Luke Pollard: [159073]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 154372 on Parking: Key Workers, how much of that funding will come from his Department's budgets.

Neil O'Brien:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Planning: Floods

Rachael Maskell: [160511]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help ensure that new planning developments include a focus on surface water flooding prevention.

Stuart Andrew:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Refugees: Children

Preet Kaur Gill: [151220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to provide (a) mental health, (b) language and (c) other support for local schools and communities for child refugees.

Eddie Hughes:

Refugees: Ukraine

220

Steve McCabe: [153734]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department has taken to ensure appropriate vetting and safeguarding measures are in place during the matching process of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to protect lone female refugees from exploitation.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Regional Planning and Development

Chi Onwurah: [<u>157355</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to provide a statutory basis for the missions in the Levelling Up White Paper.

Neil O'Brien:

As set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government will legislate to create a statutory duty to publish an annual report on progress towards meeting the Levelling Up missions when Parliamentary time allows.

Resettlement: Hong Kong

Charlotte Nichols: [154448]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to renew funding to support the integration of Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa holders after the end of April; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Social Rented Housing: Construction

Rachael Maskell: [156531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to assist local authorities with a significant deficit with the Housing Revenue Account to be able to borrow to build new social housing.

Stuart Andrew:

In 2018 the Government removed the cap on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing, freeing councils to borrow to build new housing stock, or to undertake major repairs, or other capital work on existing stock. All councils, including those with HRAs carrying significant debt, nevertheless have to maintain their borrowing within prudential limits

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing, our £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) will provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country should economic conditions allow and we are keen to see local authorities playing a key role in the delivery of the AHP alongside housing associations.

We have also given councils greater flexibility in how they spend retained receipts from Right to Buy sales to support their plans to develop and deliver new social housing.

Visas: Ukraine

Charlotte Nichols: [150274]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure that the number of visas issued to Ukrainian refugees is matched by the accommodation offered by UK nationals to those refugees from Ukraine.

Eddie Hughes:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

PRIME MINISTER

10 Downing Street: Taxis

Emily Thornberry: [156409]

To ask the Prime Minister, what the total cost to the public purse was incurred from the ordering of vehicles on Downing Street's travel account for mini-cabs in each month of (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

Boris Johnson:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Prime Minister: Black Country Day

Stuart Anderson: [160548]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he has plans to celebrate Black Country Day on the 14 July 2022.

Boris Johnson:

Prime Minister: Lord Lebedev

Holly Lynch: [150228]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he met Alexander Lebedev in April 2018 in any capacity.

Michael Ellis:

[Holding answer 19 April 2022]: I refer the Rt hon. Member to my answer to PQ 139374 on 17 March.

Rishi Sunak: Fines

Charlotte Nichols: [156605]

To ask the Prime Minister, what discussions he has had with his Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests on the Chancellor of the Exchequer receiving a fixed-penalty notice for breaching covid-19 regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Boris Johnson:

I refer the Hon. Member to the statement issued by my Rt Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 12 March; this has been placed in the Library.

SCOTLAND

Scotland Office: Carbon Emissions

Stuart Anderson: [159076]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps his Department is taking to contribute to efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Scotland Office is committed to reducing emissions and energy consumption to reduce costs. Greenhouse gas emissions are published annually in the Greening Government Commitments Annual Reports.

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.

TRANSPORT

Air Pollution: Fines

Steve McCabe: [157271]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a payment plan system for those in financial hardship who have incurred fines for non-compliance with the Clean Air Zone rules.

Trudy Harrison:

Local authorities are responsible for the implementation and the enforcement of Clean Air Zones. Therefore, Penalty Charge Notices issued as a result of the non-payment of a Clean Air Zone charge would be an enforcement policy matter for them.

Aviation and Travel Agents: Repayments

Navendu Mishra: [159103]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions his Department has had with (a) airlines and (b) travel agents to ensure that customers are fully and promptly refunded for cancelled flights.

Robert Courts:

The Aviation Minister and Department for Transport officials regularly hold discussions with representatives from the travel industry, including airlines and travel agents that includes consumer protections and policy reform.

In addition, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) have written to airlines and airports during the recent disruptions, setting out expectations around legal obligations to passengers, including informing consumers of their rights for cancelled and delayed flights.

Aviation: Accidents

Sarah Olney: [<u>159042</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many incidents have been reported of objects and other material falling out of planes and landing on property under the flight path in each of the last five years (a) in the area around Heathrow Airport and (b) nationally.

Robert Courts:

The DfT does not maintain a log of such incidents.

Department for Transport: Apprentices

Louise Haigh: [157439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the public sector apprenticeships target, how many apprentices were employed in his Department in the financial year 2021-22; and what proportion of the total workforce in his Department in that year were apprentices.

Andrew Stephenson:

Department for Transport 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 and shows the department recruited 182 apprentices, equivalent to 2.3% during 2020/21.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Medical Examinations

Louise Haigh: [159019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate she has made of the size of the backlog of medical assessment approvals at the Driver and Vehicle License Agency.

Trudy Harrison:

224

As of 26 April 2022, there are 317,286 driving licence applications where a medical condition is being investigated before a licence can be issued.

The length of time taken to deal with an application depends on the medical condition(s) involved and whether further information or clinical tests are required from medical professionals. This has been impacted by the availability of NHS doctors during the pandemic. Most applicants renewing an existing licence will be able to continue driving while their application is being processed. More information can be found online here.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Staff

Louise Haigh: [159020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff currently work for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency on signing-off medical assessments.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) currently employs 565 members of staff who make decisions on driving licence applications where a medical condition must be investigated.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Standards

Steve McCabe: [160437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the causes for the reported backlogs at the DVLA; and what steps he is taking to resolve these issues.

Steve McCabe: [160438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the DVLA on reports that staff have been off work on full pay in the context of an application backlog.

Trudy Harrison:

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

The delays in processing paper applications were significantly exacerbated by six months of industrial action by the Public and Commercial Services union, which was targeted at the areas that would have the most impact on the motoring public.

Without this industrial action, the backlog at the DVLA would by now have been cleared.

To reduce waiting times for customers, the DVLA has introduced additional online services, recruited more staff, increased overtime working and has opened new customer service centres in Swansea and Birmingham.

These measures are having a positive impact and vehicle paper applications are now being processed within normal timescales as are straightforward vocational driving licence applications and renewals. The DVLA is on track to return to normal turnaround times on all non-medical paper driving licence applications by the end of May.

Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes

[159083] **Daisy Cooper:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Government trials on e-scooters will conclude.

Trudy Harrison:

E-scooter trials will run until 30 November 2022. This is the second extension to the trials and will allow us further opportunity to gather evidence. We have taken what we have learned from the trials to date and made some changes to ensure they are as safe and well run as possible.

Electric Vehicles: Speed Limits

Daisy Cooper: [159082]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the assisted speed limit of electric bikes in the UK to 20mph.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department's position is that the safety disbenefits of doing so would outweigh the potential benefits.

Heathrow Airport: China

Jim Shannon: [158952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help increase the number of direct flights between Heathrow and mainland China.

Robert Courts:

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, China has prohibited direct passenger air services from the UK since December 2020. Officials continue to liaise closely with airlines and Chinese authorities, both directly and through our embassy in Beijing, to ensure that such services can resume once the Chinese restrictions are lifted. Direct air cargo services continue to operate frequently between our two countries.

■ P&O Ferries: Staff

Imran Hussain: [160499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Health and Safety Executive on the safety of employees aboard P&O Ferries vessels.

Robert Courts:

The Health and Safety Executive do not have jurisdiction over the crew of ferries. This jurisdiction lies with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency have a memorandum of understanding with the Health and Safety Executive and Marine Accident Investigation Branch, published online in May 2021, which sets out the responsibilities of each respective agency in the matter of health and safety enforcement and accident investigation.

As the Maritime and Coastguard Agency has full jurisdiction for the safety of seafarers whilst working onboard vessels, the Department for Transport and Maritime and Coastguard Agency have not had discussions with the Health and Safety Executive regarding the safety of the crews onboard P&O Ferries vessels.

■ Public Transport: Standards

Rachael Maskell: [160519]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to provide funding for end-to-end journey research to help improve passenger experiences on public transport.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department has a large research programme into the passenger experiences on public transport, including end to end journeys. This includes research and evaluation projects to build the evidence base on what works to improve public transport, and measure the impact of public transport investment for passengers, including:

- Research to segment the bus market with the aim to better understand how Government can drive improvements in passenger experience and target interventions to improve bus services and increase bus usage.
- Ongoing surveys and statistical publications, including the National Travel Survey, which measure changes in travel behaviours and passenger satisfaction.
- Evaluation of the Inclusive Transport Strategy (ITS) to improve understanding of disabled people's experiences using the transport network, including individual modes and the journey as a whole, and the impact of the ITS upon this.
- Future evaluation of bus improvement pilots and large public transport investments including City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) and bus transformational funding through Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs), as well as on Enhanced Partnerships and the wider National Bus Strategy. CRSTS and BSIP funding allocations for both funds were announced on 4 April 2022.

Railways: Fares

Peter Kyle: [159030]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Government will extend the Great British Rail sale over the school summer holidays.

Wendy Morton:

The Government has announced the Great British Rail Sale, with passengers being offered Advance tickets at up to a 50% discount. Tickets went on sale on 19 April, for journeys commencing on 25 April through to the 27 May.

In developing the Great British Rail Sale, the industry identified routes and times where there is spare capacity to support additional passenger demand and avoid overcrowding already busy services.

Railways: Freight

Rachael Maskell: [160513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support investment in sustainable freight locomotives.

Wendy Morton:

Our Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) set out our ambition to remove all dieselonly trains (passenger and freight) from the network by 2040. We will continue to work closely alongside operators and manufacturers on deploying the most appropriate traction technology, this includes looking at alternate fuels including renewable hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO), hydrogen, battery or bi-mode and hybrid traction technology. Trials are currently being undertaken by freight operators to assess the use of renewable HVO as a short-term replacement for traditional diesel used in the interim during transition to zero emission alternatives.

In both the TDP and the William Shapps Plan for Rail we committed to introducing a rail freight growth target and to incentivising the early take up of low carbon traction to help operators have the confidence they need to invest in green technologies.

Rachael Maskell: [160514]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to (a) decarbonise and (b) increase efficiency in the rail freight sector.

Wendy Morton:

Pursuant to the answer of 27/04/2022 to question 160513 "To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support investment in sustainable freight locomotives." Government remains committed to its ambition of removing all diesel-only trains (passenger and freight) from the network by 2040, as set out in our Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP).

We are working closely with industry to better understand opportunities for decarbonisation, including electrification, renewable hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO), hydrogen, battery or bi-mode traction technology. For example, in 2021/22,

228 Daily Report

> Government funded a Connected Places Catapult-led R&D project to identify lowemission technologies for use in the rail freight estate towards stimulating innovation in the sector. We will also build extra capacity on our rail network to meet growing passenger and freight demand, supporting modal shift and incentivising the take up of low carbon traction for rail freight.

Regarding increased efficiency in the rail freight sector, Government is committed to unlocking the benefits rail freight can deliver by working towards maximising utilisation of the network and increasing rail freight's role in supporting resilient supply chains We continue to work closely with Network Rail (NR) and Freight Operating Companies (FOCs) to increase rail freight capacity, including: increasing the number of train paths available from Felixstowe Port and through the running of longer and heavier trains. We have also committed to introducing a rail freight growth target, which will reflect the sectors own business growth ambitions.

Rachael Maskell: [160515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he will take help improve rail freight capacity.

Wendy Morton:

Government continues to explore improving rail freight capacity across the network. We remain committed to publishing the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) update, and we have also taken steps to improve rail freight capacity by increasing the number of train paths available from and to Felixstowe Port. There have also been a range of longer and heavier freight trains which have been authorised to run on the network. In addition, we have also committed to introducing a rail freight growth target, which will reflect the sectors own business growth ambitions.

There have, in recent months, been a range of new rail freight services launched; from Liverpool and Immingham Ports and from Doncaster to Mossend.

Rachael Maskell: [160516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the proportion freight that will transfer from road to rail in each of the next five years.

Wendy Morton:

The Government is fully committed to growing rail freight and unlocking the economic and environmental benefits that the sector can deliver. We continue to encourage and incentivise modal shift from road to rail through the Mode Shift Revenue Support Scheme (MSRS), which financially supports the carriage of freight by rail and water on routes where road haulage has a financial advantage. The £20m scheme delivers high value for money and in 2020/21 removed around 900,000 HGV lorries off our congested road network, saving 58,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

Furthermore, in both the William-Shapps Plan for Rail and the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Government committed to introducing a rail freight growth target which will contribute towards broader Government objectives of modal shift.

Railways: Research

Rachael Maskell: [160518]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will provide support for the future of the rail industry through a research and development bicentenary challenge for the rail sector.

Wendy Morton:

The 200 year anniversary is a nationally important moment to mark and celebrate. The DfT will work with the whole industry to make this a special event for workers and passengers alike.

We will look for opportunities to consider how we can promote research and development in rail during the bicentenary. The DfT currently works with Innovate UK and the Rail Safety and Standards Board to deliver research, development, and innovation programmes. One of the commitments of the William-Shapps Plan for Rail is a thirty-year strategy which will provide a clear, long-term plan for transforming the railways to strengthen collaboration, unlock efficiencies, and incentivise innovation.

Restoring Your Railway Fund

Alicia Kearns: [160563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on reviewing bids by local authorities for the Restoring Your Railways Fund.

Wendy Morton:

The £500m Restoring Your Railway Fund is supporting over 45 schemes at different stages of development with funding and advice. The Department received a Strategic Outline Business Case for the Melton Mowbray to Nottingham proposal in August 2021. The Secretary of State for Transport and I are considering next steps for projects, including Melton Mowbray to Nottingham, with a decision on the next tranche to progress anticipated soon.

Roads: Freight

Rachael Maskell: [160517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to tackle (a) climate, (b) workforce and (c) capacity issues in the road haulage sector.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government recognises the important contribution that the road haulage sector and its workforce make to the nation's economy and is working with the industry to support change and improvements across all three areas.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

230

Gareth Thomas: [158856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to (a) provide covidrelated advice for travellers and (b) regulate pricing for travel-related PCR testing; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The UK removed all mandatory border health measures on 18 March and Gov.uk guidance has been updated. Passengers travelling from the UK should always check the latest FCDO Travel Advice which covers other countries' entry requirements.

There are no post-arrival tests required for passengers entering the UK but the government's focus will continue to be on ensuring that there is accuracy and transparency of pricing in the private testing market.

TREASURY

Apprentices: Taxation

Peter Kyle: [159029]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of the apprenticeship levy on businesses in Northern Ireland.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Firms across the UK pay the Apprenticeship Levy on the same basis. Further details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-apprenticeship-levy.

Skills policy, including apprenticeships, is devolved, making it the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive.

As agreed at Spending Review 2021, the Northern Ireland Executive will receive £15 billion per year in funding which can be used in devolved areas, including supporting apprenticeships. These annual block grants are the largest, in real terms, of any spending review settlement since the devolution Acts in 1998.

Carers: Cost of Living

lan Byrne: [159114]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the basic cost of living for an informal carer.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Every informal carer's situation will vary depending on their personal circumstances, so it is not possible to come to a generalised conclusion about the basic cost of living for an informal carer.

Carers and their vital contribution to society are also recognised within the welfare system. Carers can receive additional support through Carer's Allowance, the Carer Element in Universal Credit and through Pension Credit. The weekly rate of Carer's

Allowance has increased to £69.70 (April 2022). Around 360,000 carer households on Universal Credit can receive an additional £1,965 a year through the Carer Element, ensuring that extra support is focused on those carers who need it most. This amount has increased from April 2022, benefitting carers across the country.

At each fiscal event HM Treasury has regularly published distributional analysis of the impact of tax, welfare and spending decisions on households. Distributional analysis published at Spring Statement 2022 shows that in 2024-25, the tax, welfare and spending decisions made since Spending Round 2019 will have benefitted the poorest households most (as a percentage of income). The government will continue to keep the situation under review.

Coronavirus: China

Rachel Reeves: [158939]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the impact that further non-pharmaceutical interventions to limit the spread of covid-19 in China may have on the UK economy; and if he will place a copy of that assessment in the Library.

John Glen:

The Government is mindful of both the domestic and international risks that might affect the UK economy. We monitor these risks closely, including the recent rise in Covid-19 cases in China. The Government remains committed to supporting businesses, people, and jobs.

In its December 2021 record, the Financial Policy Committee of the Bank of England noted that "the interim results of the 2021 Solvency Stress Test indicate that the UK banking system is resilient to the direct effects of a severe downturn in China and Hong Kong, as well as indirect effects through sharp adjustments in global asset prices".

Cost of Living

Ian Byrne: [159113]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the basic cost of living for a family comprised of two adults and three or more children.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has increased the price and volatility of energy and some other commodities, and has added to disruption in global supply chains. This has started to affect the prices that UK consumers pay for goods including for fuel and domestic energy. Based on market prices taken after Russia invaded Ukraine, the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast inflation to peak at 8.7% in Q4 2022 before falling back towards the 2% target in late 2023.

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. These are global challenges, however the government is providing support worth over £22 billion in 2022-23 to help families with these pressures.

This includes providing millions of households with up to £350 to help with rising energy bills and helping people keep more of what they earn. The government has cut the Universal Credit taper rate, frozen alcohol duty and has further increased the National Living Wage to £9.50 an hour from April 2022. The Spring Statement went further, with the government announcing an increase to the annual National Insurance Primary Threshold and Lower Profits Limit to £12,570, a cut to fuel duty, and an additional £500m to help with the cost of essentials through the Household Support Fund.

This builds on action the government has already taken that will help families with the cost of living. Since 2017 the government has offered eligible working parents of 3- to 4-year olds 30 hours of free childcare per week. We have also introduced Tax-Free Childcare, where for every £8 parents pay into their childcare account, the Government adds £2 up to a maximum of £2,000 in top up per year for each child up to age 11 and up to £4,000 per disabled child until they're 17. Alongside this, £500m to transform 'Start for Life' and family help services for parents and babies, and carers and children in half of the council areas across England and over £200 million a year to continue the Holiday Activities and Food programme and deliver the government's Flexible Childcare Fund commitment.

At each fiscal event HM Treasury has regularly published distributional analysis of the impact of tax, welfare and spending decisions on households. Distributional analysis published at Spring Statement 2022 shows that in 2024-25, the tax, welfare and spending decisions made since Spending Round 2019 will have benefitted the poorest households most (as a percentage of income). The government will continue to keep the situation under review.

Customs

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[158891]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to take steps to reduce customs border requirements.

Lucy Frazer:

The 2025 UK Border strategy sets out the Government's vision for the UK border to be the most effective border in the world. At its core, that strategy is about making it as straightforward as possible for businesses to comply with customs requirements whilst keeping the UK safe and protecting our fiscal interests. To do that, we are embracing innovation and technology, including by investing £180 million to build a UK Single Trade Window which will streamline how traders share information with the Government.

Customs Grant Scheme

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[**158888**]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the scope of HMRC's Customs Training Grants to private individuals

who wish to undertake qualifications at the Institute of Export and UK Customs Academy in the context of the shortage of trained customs professionals.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government provided support to the intermediary sector through the grant scheme. We made over £80 million available to the intermediaries sector via the intermediaries grant scheme to help it scale up. This included grant funding for customs IT, training, and recruitment of staff. The fund has now been fully allocated and no further applications are being accepted.

The customs intermediary sector has significantly increased its capacity to meet demand following the introduction of full customs controls from 1 January 2022.

HMRC continues to closely monitor the capacity of the sector, and its ability to respond to demand through regular engagement and surveys. HMRC continue to engage closely with the sector to understand how it is responding and to keep their support measures under constant close review.

To further support traders, on 15 March 2021 HMRC launched the £20 million SME Brexit Support Fund to support small and medium sized businesses to adjust to new customs, Rules of Origin, and VAT rules when trading with the EU. The fund has now closed.

Customs Intermediaries: Regulation

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[<u>158890</u>]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government plans to take steps to regulate customs intermediaries.

Lucy Frazer:

The customs intermediary sector has significantly increased their capacity to meet demand following the introduction of full customs controls from 1 January 2022. It is a government priority to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the customs intermediary market to support UK traders.

Following the recent period of significant change to and scaling of the customs intermediary sector, we want to understand how the sector is performing and ensure that all traders, including Small and Medium-Sized enterprises, are able to access a customs intermediary at an affordable cost and that the service they receive is of high quality. To gather insight from industry, HMRC and HM Treasury have recently published a call for evidence which includes a section on the customs intermediary sector. The call for evidence opened on Monday 7 February 2022 and closes on Monday 2 May 2022.

Customs Intermediaries: Vacancies

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[158886]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the shortage of qualified customs professionals.

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[158887]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of demand for trade compliance professionals following the UK's departure from the EU.

Lucy Frazer:

The customs intermediary sector has significantly increased their capacity to meet demand following the introduction of full customs controls from 1 January 2022.

HMRC is closely monitoring the capacity of the sector, and its ability to respond to demand, through regular engagement and surveys. HMRC continue to engage closely with the sector to understand how it is responding and keep their support measures under constant close review.

HMRC publishes an intermediary register to make traders aware of businesses offering customs services. The register shows whether the intermediary is taking on clients and the services they offer including out of hours support. As of 26 April 2022, there are 1622 intermediaries. 987 say they have capacity to take on new business.

Developing Countries: Debts

Liam Byrne: [<u>157569</u>]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to encourage countries at risk of debt distress to engage in the G20 Common Framework; and if she will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Common Framework was agreed in November 2020 by the UK, along with the G20 and Paris Club, to help deliver a long-term, sustainable approach for supporting low-income countries to tackle their debt vulnerabilities. It considers debt treatments on a case-by-case basis and is driven by requests from eligible debtor countries. If countries are facing significant debt vulnerabilities, they can – if eligible – request a treatment under the Common Framework.

In its February 2022 communique, the G20 reiterated its commitment to step up efforts to implement the Common Framework in a timely, orderly and coordinated manner. Our priority is to work with our G20 partners to implement the Framework for those who have requested it and to support new countries who come forward.

Financial Services: Environment Protection

Caroline Lucas: [158923]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of incorporating and implementing just transition principles into plans for Sustainable Disclosure Requirements as part of the Green Finance Roadmap.

John Glen:

The document 'Greening Finance: A Roadmap to Sustainable Investing' sets out the Government's plan to introduce coordinated Sustainability Disclosure Requirements (SDR) across the economy.

As set out in the Roadmap, the Government intends to green the financial system in phases. The first is informing investors and consumers – addressing the information gaps in the market and ensuring a flow of decision-useful information on sustainability factors from corporates to financial market participants. This is the main aim of SDR: to increase transparency for market participants to ensure they have the information they need to factor sustainability into their investment decisions.

Phase two in the Roadmap is about acting on that information. The government set out its expectation that, as this information becomes available and develops over time, the UK's investment sector – investors, asset managers, asset owners, and the service providers that support them – will have the data to act as effective and responsible stewards of capital.

Freezing of Assets: Russia

Layla Moran: [<u>159060</u>]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total value is of assets frozen under sanctions relating to Russia.

John Glen:

Relevant firms are legally obliged to report to the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) if they hold frozen assets of a designated person or entity they suspect to be on the list of asset freeze targets. OFSI is currently receiving a high volume of reporting about assets being frozen relating to sanctions imposed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This information is being collated and assured. Fuller details will be released in due course and will mark a substantial increase on previous assets reported as frozen under Russia sanctions.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Sir John Hayes: [160447]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of enabling cemeteries and crematoria to continue using rebated fuel.

Helen Whately:

Following consultation in 2020, the Chancellor confirmed at Spring Budget 2021 that the Government would remove the entitlement to use red diesel from most sectors from April 2022. This more fairly reflects the negative environmental impact of the emissions produced and helps to ensure that the tax system incentivises the development and adoption of greener alternative technologies.

The Government did not believe that the cases made by sectors that will not retain their red diesel entitlement outweighed the need to ensure fairness between the different users of diesel fuels and the Government's environmental objectives.

Individual Savings Accounts: Greater London

Fleur Anderson: [160559]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will increase the £450,000 cap of the Lifetime ISA for London residents given that the average property price in London is £667,000.

John Glen:

236

The Lifetime ISA is intended to support younger people to save for their first home or for later life by offering a generous government bonus of 25% on up to £4,000 of savings each year. These funds, including the government bonus, can be used to purchase a first home up to the value of £450,000.

This price cap remains above the average price paid by first-time buyers for all regions of the UK, except for inner London where property prices are distorted by boroughs with significant property values. The Government therefore considers that the £450,000 price cap is suitable to support the majority of first-time buyers across the UK, who typically purchase less expensive properties than other buyers, while also ensuring sustainable public finances. The most recent Office for Budget Responsibility forecast stated that bonus payments will have an exchequer cost of £3.5 billion between 2021 and 2027. The price cap ensures that this significant investment of public money is more precisely targeted towards households that may find it more difficult to get onto the property ladder.

First-time buyers who can purchase a home valued over £450,000 are likely to have an income significantly above that of the average household in the UK and are therefore more likely to be able to purchase a first home without the support of this scheme.

However, the Government continues to keep all aspects of savings policy under review.

■ Local Government Finance

Beth Winter: [157520]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reforming local authority revenue-raising powers in relation to (a) existing property and (b) future property developments.

Mr Simon Clarke:

As outlined in the Levelling Up White Paper, alongside the upcoming revaluation in April 2023 the UK Government will explore with the Combined Authorities further flexibilities to enable them to raise their own funding through the business rates system to fund local priorities, whilst also considering the impacts on business.

Regarding council tax, the Government gives Local Authorities flexibility over how they set council tax bills, although a limit is set on how bills are increased by without a referendum, and does not plan to change this.

Regarding property development, the government is exploring the introduction of a new 'Infrastructure Levy' to replace Section 106 planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy and will be set in a way which captures at least as much value as the existing system. The proposed levy will be set and collected by a local authority to reflect local circumstances and to make sure that revenues go toward affordable housing and wider investments in infrastructure that those communities need.

National Bank Trust: Foreign Exchange

Christine Jardine: [160587]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Russian Central Bank can recover funds in pound sterling in the UK via the National Bank Trust.

John Glen:

I am unable to comment on individual cases. However, the UK has imposed sanctions that prohibit UK persons from providing financial services for the purposes of foreign exchange or asset management of the Central Bank of Russia, the Russian Ministry of Finance, and the National Wealth Fund of Russia. These restrictions apply to all transactions in pound sterling.

Public Sector: Pay

Fleur Anderson: [157538]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the recent civil service and public sector pay freeze on the disposable income and wellbeing of civil service and public sector workers.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our economy, and in delivering our world class public services.

In the face of huge uncertainty and the unprecedented impact COVID-19 had on the economy, the Government took the difficult decision to temporarily pause pay rises for the majority of public sector workers at Spending Review 2020.

This helped protect jobs at a time of crisis and ensure fairness between the private and public sectors as the private sector saw suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies.

The Government also protected the lowest paid, with 2.1 million public sector workers earning less than £24,000 (Full Time Equivalent) receiving a minimum £250 increase. Due to the uniquely challenging impact COVID-19 had on our health services, the Government also provided a 3% pay award to over 1 million NHS staff.

On average, those working in the public sector have a better remuneration package than those in the private sector, including substantially more generous pensions. COVID-19 has also demonstrated the significant value of job security in the public

sector. The temporary freeze meant the gap between the public and private sector did not widen further.

Spending Review 2021 confirmed that all public sector workers will see pay rises across the whole Spending Review period (22/23-24/25).

Sanctions: Russia

Johnny Mercer: [160535]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the number of licences given by the Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation to British law firms in respect of Russian operations; and whether that organisation allows licensed firms to continue representing Russian state-related companies.

John Glen:

Data on licences issued will be provided in OFSI's Annual Review 2021-22 which is due to be published this year.

Shein: Taxation

James Murray: [159096]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC have conducted investigations into the payment of (a) VAT, (b) corporation tax and (c) any other UK taxes by the Chinese fashion firm, Shein.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC cannot comment on identifiable taxpayers.

Shein: VAT

James Murray: [159095]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what VAT receipts have been received for items sold to UK customers by the Chinese fashion firm Shein (a) since 1 January 2021 and (b) between 1 January 2021 and 5 September 2021.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC cannot comment on identifiable taxpayers.

Taxation

John Redwood: [158849]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what analysis he has undertaken on the potential impact of recent tax rises on consumer confidence and retail sales.

Lucy Frazer:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publish monthly statistics on retail sales. According to latest data, retail sales volumes in Great Britain decreased by 1.4 per cent on the month in March 2022 but remain 2.2 per cent above February 2020 levels. The ONS does not publish official data on consumer confidence.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) set out its latest assessment of the impact of tax changes on the economy in the Economic and Fiscal Outlook, published at Spring Statement 2022. In its latest forecast, the OBR expects household consumption to grow by 5.4 per cent in 2022.

Further details can be found in the OBR's latest Economic and Fiscal Outlook published in March 2022: https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2022/.

■ Treasury: Communication

Tulip Siddiq: [156564]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide a breakdown of his Department's communications budget for the year 2021-22.

Helen Whately:

Expenditure on communications staffing was £2,629,182, and non-pay related items/services for the communications team was £763,291 in 2021-22.

■ Treasury: Deloitte

Emily Thornberry: [155644]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the contract HMT OSCAR II Procurement, published by his Department on 24 April 2019, how much his Department has paid to Deloitte LLP under the terms of the contract as of 22 April 2022; and how much public expenditure has been allocated for further payments under the terms of the contract in (a) the rest of 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24.

Mr Simon Clarke:

£9.734m has been paid to Deloitte LLP under the terms of the OSCAR II contract as of 19th April 2022. (The question was received, and the system interrogated on 20 April 2022. Data is only final following the close of each day, so it was necessary to use 19 April 2022)

For 22-23 there is a £1.2m budget for project milestones and £1.6m budget for the managed service costs.

For 23-24 there is a £302k budget for project milestones and £774k for the managed service costs (this is less than 22-23 because this contract ends in November 2023).

Treasury: Procurement

Emily Thornberry: [155645]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 4 April 2022 to Question 148116 on Treasury: Procurement, what element of the contract HMT OSCAR II Procurement, published by his Department on 24 April 2019, gave rise to the dispute for which a £0.9 million settlement was paid by his Department; and in which month of 2020-21 that payment was made.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Schedule 4, Part B, 2.1 of the HMT OSCAR II Procurement contract gave rise to the dispute for which a £0.9 million settlement was agreed. Specifically, "The Customer shall use its reasonable endeavours to provide to the Supplier all data for the purposes of migration in the agreed format (inc. quality, format, cleansing and mapping of data)."

Issues arose for HMT in extracting the necessary data from the legacy system OSCAR II is replacing. This caused delays that consequently caused additional costs for the supplier.

It was agreed that payment of the £0.9 million would be paid in stages. Payments have been made in March 2021, March 2022 and 15% is due this financial year likely September 2022.

Emily Thornberry: [155646]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 4 April 2022 to Question 148116 Treasury: Procurement, with reference to the contract HMT OSCAR II Procurement, published by his Department on 24 April 2019, which of the payment milestones listed in Annex 7 of the contract's schedule of services have been reached as of 22 April 2022; and when any outstanding payment milestones listed in Annex 7 are expected to be reached.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Project milestones reached as of 22 April 2022:

- **Discovery & Strategy Complete**
- Platform & Hosting Available
- Core Solution Available
- Financial Consolidation Available
- Analytical Reporting Available
- Additional Reporting Available
- Operational Running (including Hosting and Helpdesk) complete per quarter meeting downtime and other SLAs. This is ongoing and reached on a quarterly basis.

Project milestone partially reached as of 22 April 2022:

- Core Reporting Available
- o This milestone has been aligned to process go-lives and there are three remaining:
- o Budgeting & Estimates (expected September 2022)
- o Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis (expected September 2022)
- o Country Regional Analysis (expected December 2022)

Project milestones not reached as of 22 April 2022:

- API Based Data Collection Available (expected December 2022)
- Project Completion (Expected December 2022)
- Contract Exit (due November 2023)

WALES

■ Wales Office: Information Officers

Deidre Brock: [160506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department spent on communications staff in (a) 2016-17, (b) 2017-18 and (c) 2018-19.

David T C Davies:

The total salary costs (including National Insurance and pension costs) spent on communications staff in 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 is shown below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	SALARY COSTS £	
2016-17	312,560	
2017-18	282,381	
2018-19	344,975	

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

Conversion Therapy

Afzal Khan: [154367]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what data her Department holds on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals who have undergone conversion therapy in (a) the UK, (b) Manchester and (c) Manchester Gorton constituency since 2018.

Mike Freer:

The most recent data currently available about the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals who have undergone conversion therapy in the UK is from the National LGBT Survey, published in 2018. Evidence from that shows that 5% of the over 108,000 respondents said they had been offered conversion therapy, and a further 2% said they had received it. This data is not available at a local or constituency level.

In October 2021, we published an evidence assessment and qualitative study on conversion therapy undertaken by Coventry University.

The Government's recent public consultation on how to ban conversion therapy included a question about people's experiences of conversion therapy in the UK and abroad and we are currently analysing responses.

Equality

Rachael Maskell: [160521]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a principle of respect and dignity for people with protected characteristics.

Kemi Badenoch:

Every individual has protected characteristics, so I think the hon. Member is describing the UK's commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection for everyone against behaviour which unlawfully violates their dignity because of a protected characteristic, and the General Duty of the Equality and Human Rights Commission includes encouraging and supporting the development of a society in which there is respect for the dignity and worth of each individual.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Children: Maintenance

Drew Hendry: [158992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of enabling data sharing between the Child Maintenance Service and HMRC to help ensure accurate income assessments of non-resident parents.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) already uses data received directly from HMRC to ensure child maintenance liabilities are based on accurate income information. The CMS can also access a wide range of income information, including income from property, savings, and investments (including dividends) and other miscellaneous income.

Department for Work and Pensions: Exeter

[160432] Mr Ben Bradshaw:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of jobs that will be affected by the closure of the Department for Work and Pensions' processing site at Clarendon House, Exeter.

Mims Davies:

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [160433]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether compulsory redundancies will result from the closure of the Department for Work and Pension's processing site at Clarendon House, Exeter.

Mims Davies:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [160434]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish her Department's (a) equality and (b) socio-economic impact assessment in respect of the closure of the Department for Work and Pension's processing site at Clarendon House, Exeter.

Mims Davies:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [160435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what date the Department's processing site at Clarendon House, Exeter will close.

Mims Davies:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [160436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will provide details of the civil servants affected by the closure of the Department's processing site at Clarendon House in Exeter by (a) age, (b) ethnicity, (c) gender and (d) disability.

Mims Davies:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Department for Work and Pensions: Leeds

Imran Hussain: [158978]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what date the Department for Work and Pensions' site on Leeds Road, Bradford will close.

Imran Hussain: [158979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether compulsory redundancies will result from the closure of the Department site on Leeds Road, Bradford.

Imran Hussain: [158980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of jobs that will be affected by the closure of the Department for Work and Pensions site on Leeds Road, Bradford.

Imran Hussain: [158981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will provide details of the civil servants affected by the closure of the Department site on Leeds Road, Bradford by (a) age, (b) race, (c) gender and (d) disability.

Mims Davies:

As part of the Department's plans to reshape how, when and where the Department works, (resulting in a smaller, greener and better estate); we plan to relocate all 198 colleagues and our services from Bradford East, Leeds Road to Bradford, Ambler Mill which is approximately 1.5 miles away by 14 October 2022.

While it is anticipated that, due to the close proximity of the offices, colleagues will be able to move to Bradford Amber Mill, for those colleagues who are unable to move because of their individual circumstances, redeployment will be the priority.

DWP is making every effort to fully support colleagues through this process. As a responsible employer, the Department will make provision for redundancies as necessary. However, this will be a last resort after all efforts to retain, retrain and redeploy colleagues, either within DWP or other Government Departments in the area, have been exhausted.

The Department is fully compliant in its duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. To understand the potential impact of changes to our estate, both for DWP employees and people using its services, Equality Analyses have been carried out wherever our plans are to close an office or relocate colleagues. The findings have been used to understand the potential impact of changes to our estate on people. The initial assessment is based on self-declared data provided by employees and held on the Department's HR data system. It is only once the one-to-one process is complete that we will have the full detail of the impact on individuals and be able to consider appropriate solutions for colleagues.

Department for Work and Pensions: Location

Steve McCabe: [153730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her oral contribution of 17 March 2022, Official report 1031, on the closure of DWP processing centres, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of those closures on the processing of social security payments.

Steve McCabe: [153731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her oral contribution of 17 March 2022, Official report 1031, on the closure of DWP processing

centres, how many staff are working at the 13 offices that have not been offered an alternative site to which to relocate.

Mims Davies:

The Department's strategic ambition for its back of house estate, announced on 17 March, will reshape how and where the Department works, resulting in a smaller, greener and better estate. This is not about reducing headcount. The Department's priorities while delivering these changes will be to retain, retrain, and redeploy either within DWP or other government departments in order to ensure we maintain the processing and payment of benefits, where necessary, moving work across the wider delivery network to ensure continuity of service to claimants.

Impacted colleagues are currently having one-to-one discussions with local leaders where their individual circumstances, including any potential impact for those with protected characteristics are discussed and potential options considered therefore we do not have figures on the number of staff offered a relocation until these discussions are completed.

Tommy Sheppard: [158991]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will reconsider her plans to close 41 of her Department's processing sites, as announced in March 2022.

Mims Davies:

The Department has too much estate. There is currently capacity for over 158,000 people across the Department's estate, against a requirement for space for approximately 90,000. We therefore need to reduce our estates capacity, while retaining our national footprint. The Department's plans for transformational change will support delivery of the Government priorities for getting people back into employment, deliver long-term savings and meet Government modernisation commitments. Reshaping how, when and where the Department works, will result in a smaller, greener and better estate.

Department for Work and Pensions: Stratford

Ms Lyn Brown: [153852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the closure of the Department of Work and Pensions' London Stratford Jubilee House office, how many (a) job losses and (b) compulsory redundancies are expected as a result of that closure.

Ms Lyn Brown: [153853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the closure of the Department of Work and Pensions' London Stratford Jubilee House office, when she expects one on one conversations about the impact of the move on staff with protected characteristics to take place between staff and managers at Stratford Jubilee House; and whether any concerns about the impact on staff with protected characteristics raised during one on one conversations with managers will be addressed early enough to mitigate any disproportionate impacts.

Mims Davies:

246

As part of the Department's plans to reshape how, when and where the Department works, which will result in a smaller, greener and better estate, we plan to move colleagues and services from London Stratford, Jubilee House to Ilford, Wentworth House which is approximately 7.6 miles away. Impacted colleagues are currently having one-to-one discussions with local leaders where their individual circumstances, including any potential impact for those with protected characteristics are discussed and potential options considered. For those colleagues who are unable to move to Ilford, Wentworth House, redeployment within DWP or other Government Departments will be the priority.

The Department is making every effort to fully support staff through this process. As a responsible employer, the Department will make provision for redundancies as necessary. However, this will be a last resort after all efforts to retain, retrain and redeploy colleagues, either within DWP or other Government Departments in the area, have been exhausted.

Disability: Cost of Living

Mike Amesbury: [157498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of disabled people who have less than £10 per week to spend on food and other essentials after paying for housing, tax and other bills across the UK; and what steps her Department is taking to support disabled people in response to the increase in the cost of living.

David Rutley:

No such assessment has been made. The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. In 2022/23 we will spend over £64bn on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions in Great Britain and spending on the main disability benefits – PIP, DLA and Attendance Allowance – will be over £6bn higher in real terms than in 2010.

We know that living with a long-term illness or disability can impact on living costs and financial support is available to those, or those who care for them. People who have a health condition or disability which restricts the amount of work they can do could receive over £350 a month on top of the Universal Credit standard allowance.

Disability: Public Consultation

Dr Rupa Huq: [154209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of publishing a plan for consulting with disabled people on the National Disability Strategy.

Chloe Smith:

Employment Schemes

Bim Afolami: [155891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the Government's Plan for Jobs on (a) Hitchin and Harpenden and (b) England.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is committed to supporting everyone who has been affected by the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the labour market. We want everyone to be able to find a job, progress in work and thrive in the labour market, whoever they are and wherever they live. To meet demand for Jobcentre's services and to ensure that people looking for work receive the right support, DWP successfully recruited 13,500 new Work Coaches across the country.

Throughout the pandemic the UK Government has provided historic levels of support to the economy – a total of over £400 billion. This includes key DWP programmes as part of the Plan for Jobs, such as Restart and Kickstart alongside other measures to boost work searches, skills, and apprenticeships. Our support was in addition to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Furlough) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Our Plan for Jobs will be complemented by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK. As part of Plan for Jobs in England 137,600 jobs have been started through the Kickstart programme – with 11,600 of these being in the East of England.

We have also launched Way to Work - a concerted drive across the UK to help half a million currently out of work people into jobs by the end of June 2022.

Data for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 shows that as of 27 th March 2022, there was a total of 149,980 starts to a Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP) nationally.

The employment rate in Hitchin and Harpenden has grown in recent years. Data from the independent Office for National Statistics shows that the employment rate was 81.8% in Hitchin and Harpenden in the latest data (covering Jan 2021-Dec 2021) compared to 75.8% before the pandemic (January 2019-December 2019).

Employment is growing in England – up 30,000 on the quarter and 310,000 on the year to stand at 27.510 million in Dec 2021-Feb 2022, according to ONS figures. Employment in England is up from a low in the pandemic of 27.186 million - though it is below its pre-COVID level, underlining the need for Way to Work to support more people into jobs.

■ Employment: Immunosuppression

Henry Smith: [158935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether Work Coaches are being given guidance on immunocompromised patients; and whether that guidance includes avoiding recommendations for in-person work for those individuals.

Mims Davies:

248

The Department is committed to providing the best possible support for all claimants to meet their individual circumstances. Claimants with a health condition or disability, including those who are immunocompromised, continue to have tailored commitments agreed based on their personal circumstances, including considering the impact of their health and wider situation.

Any work-related requirements are set in discussion with the claimant, tailored to their individual capability and circumstances, making them realistic and achievable. The guidance available to DWP staff outlines the easements which may be applied including that work search reflects the type and location of jobs which are appropriate to the individual.

Although DWP does not routinely provide guidance specifically on supporting people who are immunocompromised, we do ensure that staff are aware of the sources of information available to them relating to medical conditions that are associated with this. Staff are signposted to tools, guidance support and websites to effectively use resources from both internal and external sites, such as information directly from the NHS.

This ensures that staff can access the most up to date advice and can use this to inform how they support individual customers.

Flexible Support Fund: North Devon

Selaine Saxby: [156638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much and what proportion of the Flexible Support Fund has been claimed in North Devon in each of the last five years.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Household Support Fund

Sir Gavin Williamson: [158943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will issue guidance to local authorities to prioritise families who rely on non-price capped fuel for the Household Support Fund.

David Rutley:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Independent Case Examiner

Rachael Maskell: [159002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time is from receipt of a complaint about (a) her Department and (b) the Child Maintenance Service to the Independent Case Examiner to the commencement of any investigation.

Guy Opperman:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rachael Maskell: [159003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have been waiting for more than (a) three, (b) six, (c) 10, (d) 12 and (e) 18 months from receipt of a complaint to the investigating officer (i) being assigned and (ii) commencing the investigation as of 25 April 2022.

Guy Opperman:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Rachael Maskell: [159005]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints have been received by the Independent Case Examiner in each year since financial year 2010-11.

Guy Opperman:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Independent Case Examiner: Staff

Rachael Maskell: [159004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many full-time equivalent investigating staff were employed by the Independent Case Examiner in each year since financial year 2010-11.

Guy Opperman:

■ Jobcentres: Public Transport

250

Sarah Owen: [<u>154431</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of locating all job centres on (a) affordable and (b) easily accessible public transport routes.

Mims Davies:

The DWP considers a number of different factors in areas where we expect a demand for our services. The Department seeks properties in both major cities or more rural locations that meet the business requirements for a Jobcentre. We currently have over 800 Jobcentre offices across all constituencies in Great Britain with over 190 new sites opened as part of Plan for Jobs.

Accessible transport links for both colleagues and customers is included in the planning process.

Kickstart Scheme

Shabana Mahmood: [157328]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what due diligence her Department conducted on the Kickstart scheme gateways it recommended to employers.

Mims Davies:

All Gateways are subject to financial checks by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). These checks included using the Cabinet Office Spotlight Tool which complemented existing pre and post-award checks. Further information on the Spotlight Tool can be found https://example.com/here.

Kickstart District Account Managers, Work Coaches and other officials are encouraged to highlight any concerns they have about any organisation involved in the Kickstart Scheme, including those acting as a Gateway. This would include any concerns about the quality of the Kickstart experience or questions about the suitability of the roles. Issues raised are investigated and where issues are identified DWP will take appropriate action, which may include reducing the number of jobs offered by the organisation or in the most serious cases, rescinding the Grant Agreement entirely.

Caroline Ansell: [R] [159037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Kickstart Scheme placements have been (a) approved, (b) advertised and (c) started by young people by (i) nation, (ii) region and (iii) sector as of 22 April 2022; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

The most recent data available is for the 24 April 2022. At that point over 162,000 Kickstart jobs had been started by young people. The last Kickstart jobs were started by young people on 31 March 2022, and we expect the number of starts to increase further as employers report commencement of employment.

We have previously published the number of jobs approved and advertised as of 31 January 2022 <a href="https://example.com/here.c

Below are tables listing the number of Kickstart jobs which have been made available and started by young people to date by geographical area of Great Britain and work sector. The figures used are correct as of the 24 April 2022 and these figures have been rounded according to departmental standards.

Jobs made available (advertised) and job starts quoted here include some unfunded Kickstart jobs. Also included in the Great Britain total are a small number of jobs made available (less than 100 in total) that have an unrecorded job location.

The number of approved jobs is defined as the number of jobs associated with approved applications recorded on the Kickstart application system on the date above. This total excludes approved jobs that have been withdrawn from the Kickstart Scheme by agreement with employers and gateways. This is generally because, over time, some previously approved jobs were removed where the employer chose not to follow up the application.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system, which has been developed quickly.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics but is provided in the interests of transparency. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of information available for the programme.

Table 1: Number of Kickstart total available jobs and job starts, Great Britain, by nation and region (figures rounded to nearest 1000*)

	TOTAL JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	TOTAL JOBS STARTED
Region / Nation Split	(DATA RETAINED FROM 31/01/22)	(DATA EFFECTIVE 24/04/22)
Total, Great Britain	235,000	162,000
England	204,000	141,000
East Midlands	14,000	10,000
East of England	18,000	12,000
London	51,000	33,000

	TOTAL JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	TOTAL JOBS STARTED
North East	11,000	8,000
North West	30,000	21,000
South East	26,000	17,000
South West	14,000	10,000
West Midlands	21,000	16,000
Yorkshire and The Humber	19,000	14,000
Scotland	19,000	14,000
Wales	12,000	8,000

Table 2: Number of Kickstart total available jobs and job starts, Great Britain, by Sector (figures rounded to the nearest 10*)

SECTOR SPLIT	TOTAL JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	TOTAL JOBS STARTED
	(DATA RETAINED FROM 31/01/22)	(DATA EFFECTIVE 24/04/22)
Administration	57,350	39,920
Animal Care	1,610	1,330
Beauty & Wellbeing	1,720	1,320
Business & Finance	8,500	5,910
Computing Technology & Digital	15,840	12,340
Construction & Trades	7,230	5,170
Creative & Media	20,990	16,700
Delivery & Storage	6,380	4,430
Emergency & Uniform Services	520	360
Engineering & Maintenance	7,080	4,890
Environment & Land	4,620	3,450
Government Services	1,000	710

SECTOR SPLIT	TOTAL JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	TOTAL JOBS STARTED
Healthcare	6,140	3,460
Home Services	1,560	900
Hospitality & Food	26,380	14,030
Law & Legal	650	520
Managerial	960	660
Manufacturing	6,430	4,390
Retail & Sales	34,970	26,410
Science & Research	990	790
Social Care	4,740	2,640
Sports & Leisure	5,920	4,150
Teaching & Education	11,000	6,790
Transport	900	460
Travel & Tourism	1,110	580

^{*}Due to rounding, sum of figures may not match declared total

Kickstart Scheme: Closures

Shabana Mahmood: [157326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is obligated to take in the event that a Kickstart scheme gateway closes down.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has established grant agreements between employers and gateways operating through the Kickstart Scheme. These agreements set out the responsibilities of a gateway ceasing to operate. Specifically, a Gateway has a responsibility to notify DWP within two working days of any actual or potential failure to comply with any of their obligations under the Grant Agreement, which includes any administrative, financial or managerial difficulties.

In the event that a Gateway is no longer in a position to deliver on its responsibilities, DWP will provide support to young people and employers. Prior to the closure of Kickstart to further young people on 31 st March, these might have included placing a young person in a different Kickstart job, or, in the case of an employer, directing them to another gateway or encouraging them to apply to participate in Kickstart directly.

Shabana Mahmood: [157327]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of Kickstart scheme gateways that have closed down since that scheme began.

Mims Davies:

We have made no estimate of the number of Gateways who have closed since the scheme began.

Gateways have brought diversity of employment opportunities and volumes of jobs to the Kickstart Scheme and have provided robust employability support for Kickstart participants. More than 900 Gateways have helped us to deliver the Kickstart Scheme.

Gateways are subject to financial checks by the DWP and any concerns regarding a Gateway are investigated. Some Gateways came on board to support a specific group of employers to offer Kickstart jobs. Once the final young person completed their Kickstart job with those employers and the final grant payment is made the department doesn't necessarily have any further engagement with that Gateway. Other Gateways have had a more rolling approach to adding employers and jobs to their portfolios.

Kickstart Scheme: Fraud

Shabana Mahmood: [157329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of instances of fraud committed by Kickstart scheme gateways.

Mims Davies:

We embedded a number of controls and checks in the design of the Kickstart Scheme to reduce the risk of fraud and error, including using the Cabinet Office Spotlight tool to support financial checks on applicants. Further information on the Spotlight Tool can be found here.

Where an allegation of fraud is made, or criminal activity suspected, the Department will investigate. If there is sufficient evidence, the Department will refer the case to the Crown Prosecution Service, or Crown Office/Procurator Fiscal Service in Scotland, to consider a prosecution.

All Kickstart participants have Employment Contracts, meaning they are entitled to legal protections, and DWP will advise individuals on how to take action in the rare case that the is not resolved through DWP channels.

We are unable to disclose details regarding suspected fraud. If cases are under investigation, releasing any information could prejudice those investigations.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022 ANSWERS 255

Members: Correspondence

Peter Grant: [157411]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she will respond to the correspondence dated 9 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Glenrothes on delays with state pensions in summer 2021, reference PG5490.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 26 April 2022]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Pension Rights: Cohabitation

Stephen Farry: [157527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending spousal pension rights to long term cohabitees.

Guy Opperman:

The legislative framework governing pension rights for spouses and civil partners applies to legacy State Pensions and members of contracted out occupational schemes. The New State Pension is fundamentally based on an individual's own National Insurance contributions, subject to certain arrangements.

Most occupational pension inheritance rights are either determined by the members when they choose how to draw down their pension pot, or are set out in scheme rules, and are therefore a matter for the sponsoring employer to determine as part of their reward and retention strategy.

The Government has no plans for legislative change.

Pensions: Inflation

Jim Shannon: [156465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of inflation on the value of people's pensions.

Guy Opperman:

The Social Security (Up-rating of Benefits) Act 2020 raised the State Pension by 2.5% from April 2021, although CPI was 0.5% and earnings were negative. From April 2022, the state pension increased 3.1% in line with CPI. The full yearly amount of the basic State Pension will be around £720 more in 2022/23 than if it had been up-rated by prices since 2010. That's a rise of over £2,300 in cash terms. In addition there is widespread support through winter fuel payment, pension credit and other associated benefits. The Chancellor has also put forward on February 3rd 2022 a multi billion pound support package to address costs of living and energy bills.

Legislation requires all occupational defined benefit pension rights earned from April 1997 onwards to be increased annually in payment.

Pensions: Tax Allowances

Mr Richard Holden: [160564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department reviewed the (a) thresholds for and (b) amount of pension tax credit in each of the last five years; and what changes were made to those (i) thresholds and (ii) amounts at each of those reviews.

Guy Opperman:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Universal Credit

Rachael Maskell: [158999]

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, (d) six and (e) 12 months from the time they applied for additional help from universal credit for limited capability for work 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 is that people are waiting to (A) be offered an assessment appointment and (B) receive a decision.

Chloe Smith:

Information on wait times for Universal Credit Work Capability Assessments is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Universal Credit: Children

Drew Hendry: [151191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of the immediate removal of the two child limit for the Universal Credit Child Element for all claimants to enable Ukrainian nationals arriving in the UK are not (a) subject to limitations in available family support, and (b) made to disclose if they have being the victims of sexual violence used as a weapon of war in order to receive support for any children who may have being conceived in nonconsensual conception above the two child limit.

David Rutley:

No assessment has been made. The policy applies to all children born on or after 6 April 2017 regardless of the nationality of the child.

We recognise that some claimants are not able to make the same choices about the number of children in their family.

That is why exceptions have been put in place to protect certain groups, including those likely to have been born as a result of non-consensual conception. This includes rape or where the claimant was in a controlling or coercive relationship with the child's other biological parent at the time of conception. In this case, before a claim is approved, claimants are asked to contact a suitable third-party professional

who can confirm the claimant's circumstances, as described by them, are consistent with the criteria for the exception. The third-party professional does not judge the credibility of the claimant's statement or require any further evidence.

Furthermore, On 9th July 2021, the Supreme Court handed down the judicial review judgement on the two-child Policy. The court found the two-child Policy lawful and not in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Universal Credit: Publicity

Kate Osamor: [154234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the paper entitled Tackling misconceptions and improving the reputation of universal credit, presented to Universal Credit Programme Board by officials on 14 May 2019, whether that Board received a paper following the Advertising Standards Authority's investigation which found the adverts in The Metro to be exaggerated and misleading and ordered that they should not be published again; and what steps the Board took following that investigation.

David Rutley:

The independent BBC documentary and the campaign work with the Metro was very successful in improving people's understanding of Universal Credit, achieving its objectives, and therefore we did not need a further paper.

The high profile 'Universal Credit Uncovered' Metro partnership was a key element of the Department's strategy to tackle negative perceptions and Universal Credit misinformation that were affecting claimant understanding. The Department went to great lengths to ensure factual accuracy by consulting extensively with the ASA throughout the campaign, which was clearly identifiable as an advertising feature from DWP.

The Department was disappointed with the ASA findings; however, to ensure the Department continues to adhere to the highest standards of advertising across all DWP campaigns, a number of steps have been taken. This includes regular senior and operational level engagement with the ASA and their Copy Advice Team on campaign development, combined with internal training sessions on ASA guidelines.

Universal Credit: Yorkshire and the Humber

Rachael Maskell: [159006]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many in-person work capability assessments for universal credit have been carried out for people living in (a) York Central, (b) York local authority and (c) Yorkshire and the Humber in each year since 2015-16.

David Rutley:

The information requested is not available.

258 Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022 ANSWERS

Winter Fuel Payment: British Nationals Abroad

John Spellar: [156370]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will reconsider the policy of including French tropical islands in the calculation of French winter temperatures for the purposes of winter fuel payments.

Guy Opperman:

Winter fuel payments were introduced in winter 1997/98 and has been honoured by successive Governments. There are no plans to review this policy.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Coronavirus: Mortality Rates

Rachael Maskell: [142028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the trends in the levels of mortality as a result of covid-19 in (a) York and (b) England.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 April 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Maggie Throup:

As of 17 March 2022, COVID-19 mortality rates within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test continue to decline in York and England.

In England, recent data shows that mortality rates within 28 days of a positive test steadily declined from the start of 2022, and since late February, vary at approximately **70 7** to 80 deaths per day. The current stable trend in levels of COVID-19 deaths is consistent across all regions and age-groups up to mid-March 2022.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) continues to monitor COVID-19 levels nationally and regionally. UKHSA's regional teams have regular contact with Directors of Public Health and local authority public health teams to discuss trends in local data and offer guidance regarding measures required to address cases in identified settings.

HOME OFFICE

Asylum: Rwanda

Ms Lyn Brown: [158910]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the proportion of asylum applications that will result in a grant of refugee status or humanitarian protection in Rwanda.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 April 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Tom Pursglove:

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership, once an individual is relocated to Rwanda, they will accept physical and legal

responsibility for processing their claims and supporting them. The granting of refugee status or humanitarian protection will be for Rwanda to decide on each case.

HMC Protector

Mr Kevan Jones: [31339]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what amount the Government paid for the purchase of HMC Protector.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 16 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Chris Philp:

We can confirm we purchased HMC Protector from the Finnish Border Guard for £3.7m, in August 2013.

We can confirm we purchased HMC Protector from the Finnish Border Guard for £3.7m, in August 2013.

Members: Correspondence

Mr David Lammy: [155567]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will respond to the letter of 24 March 2022 from the Rt. hon. Member for Tottenham, reference ZA56017.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 April 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Tom Pursglove:

The Minister will respond within the 20 - working day service standard for MP's correspondence.

A response was issued on 21st April.

Passports: Applications

Justin Madders: [154084]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current average processing time is an (a) new and (b) renewed passport for (i) children and (ii) adults.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 April 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Kevin Foster:

It has not proved possible to respond to this question in the time available before Prorogation. Ministers will correspond directly with the Member.

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

Daily Report Thursday, 28 April 2022

Gavin Newlands: [154093]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current (a) median and (b) mean lengths of time are between an application for a new passport being received by her Department and its issuance to the applicant.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 April 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Kevin Foster:

"It has not proved possible to respond to this question in the time available before Prorogation. Ministers will correspond directly with the Member.

It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

Brexit Opportunities

Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg): [HCWS796]

When the UK left the European Union (EU), we regained the right to manage our own borders in a way that works for Britain. This includes how we manage imports into our country from overseas. British businesses and people going about their daily lives are being hit by rising costs caused by Russia's war in Ukraine and in energy prices. It would therefore be wrong to impose new administrative burdens and risk disruption at ports and to supply chains at this point. The remaining import controls on EU goods will no longer be introduced this year - saving British businesses up to £1 billion in annual costs.

Instead the Government is accelerating our transformative programme to digitise Britain's borders, harnessing new technologies and data to reduce friction and costs for businesses and consumers. This is a new approach for a new era, as Britain maximises the benefits of leaving the EU and puts in place the right policies for our trade with the whole world.

Introducing controls in July would have replicated the controls that the EU applies to their global trade. This would have introduced complex and costly checks that would have then been altered later as our transformation programme is delivered. The challenges that this country faces has underlined that this is not the right thing to do for Britain.

No further import controls on EU goods will be introduced this year. Businesses can stop their preparations for July now. We will publish a Target Operating Model in the Autumn that will set out our new regime of border import controls and will target the end of 2023 as the revised introduction date for our controls regime, which will deliver on our promise to create the world's best border on our shores.

This new approach will apply equally to goods from the EU and goods from the rest of the world. It will be based on a proper assessment of risk, with a proportionate, risk-based and technologically advanced approach to controls. This includes the Single Trade Window which will start to deliver from 2023, the creation of an Ecosystem of Trust between government and industry, and other transformational projects as part of our 2025 Borders Strategy.

The controls that have already been introduced will remain in place.

Specifically, the following controls which were planned for introduction from July 2022 will now not be introduced:

- A requirement for further Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks on EU imports currently at destination to be moved to Border Control Post (BCP).
- A requirement for safety and security declarations on EU imports.

Prohibitions and restrictions on the import of chilled meats from the EU.

The Border Operating Model will be updated to reflect this and a copy will be placed in the libraries of both Houses in due course.

■ GOV.UK Verify Sign up contract extension

Parliamentary Secretary (Mrs Heather Wheeler):

[HCWS797]

I would like to update the House on the GOV.UK Verify programme, following the Written Ministerial Statement in April 2021 made by my colleague (the Minister of State for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure, Julia Lopez MP). As confirmed in the most recent Spending Review, under the One Login for Government programme, the government is building a single way for citizens to prove their identity and access central government services online.

While this new product is being developed, we are continuing to support the connected services which rely on GOV.UK Verify. As such, we have extended the period in which new users of these services will be able to set up an account until December 2022. Users with an existing account for connected services will be able to continue to use GOV.UK Verify until it closes in April 2023.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Broadcasting Update

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries): [HCWS802]

Our TV and radio industry is the envy of the world. Production studios across the country are booming, and British-made shows like 'I May Destroy You' and the 'Great British Bake Off' are celebrated all over the globe.

Our public service broadcasters (PSBs) are absolutely central to that success. Sitting at the heart of our broadcasting system, they help to develop skills and talent across the country; they drive growth right across the creative industries; and they deliver distinctive, instantly-recognisable British content that you would not find anywhere else.

But broadcasting has changed dramatically over the past few decades. The last time broadcasting regulation was overhauled, in 2003, Netflix was a DVD rental business. Today, it is one of several American streaming giants offering viewers a daily selection of new content – from Amazon Prime to Disney+ to Hulu to Apple TV and beyond.

Viewers increasingly watch programmes on their laptops, phones or smart TVs, choosing what to watch, and when to watch it.

In this new broadcasting world, the competition for audience share is fiercer than ever. In recent years, as streaming services have enjoyed a 19 percent rise in subscribers, the

share of total viewers for 'linear' TV channels like the BBC and ITV has fallen by more than 20 percent.

The Government is focused on ensuring British broadcasters can not only hold their own in this fight, but also flourish in projecting the best of British across the world.

Today, I am therefore publishing a White Paper that proposes major reforms to the sector that will update our analogue rules, and enable our broadcasters to thrive in the streaming age.

The White Paper contains a number of key proposals.

First, we want to ensure that in a world of smart TVs and online platforms, our PSBs continue to receive the exposure they deserve.

On a traditional TV, our PSBs are given "prominence": they hold exclusive rights to the first five channels on every television set in the UK.

We plan to update those rules for the digital age, by passing legislation that will ensure public service content is always carried and easy-to-find on all major platforms – including on smart TVs and fire sticks.

Secondly, while the UK boasts a vibrant and diverse broadcasting system, we need to ensure consumers are protected in this fast changing landscape.

We are therefore proposing a new Video-on-Demand Code that will hold streaming services to similar standards as traditional broadcasters like the BBC and ITV – particularly when it comes to protecting audiences from harmful material.

We also plan to overhaul and simplify the complicated public service remit so that our PSBs can focus on the things they do best – such as creating distinctively British programmes and providing impartial and accurate news.

We are also proposing reforms to the listed events regime, so that PSBs have exclusive rights to bid first for the crown jewels of the sporting calendar – including the FIFA World Cup and Wimbledon.

Finally, over the past year we have been carefully considering the future of one broadcaster in particular: Channel 4.

Channel 4 is a key part of our national, economic and cultural life. Since the broadcaster was established in the early 1980s, it has more than fulfilled the original aim for setting it up – shaking up the TV schedules with original, disruptive programming and boosting our independent production sector.

In the last few decades, the independent production sector has grown six-fold – from a £500 million industry in 1995 to £3 billion in 2019.

But the broadcasting world around Channel 4 has changed immeasurably during that same period.

Like every other broadcaster, it now faces huge competition for audience share – and many of its competitors have incredibly deep pockets.

Streamers such as Amazon Prime spent £779 million on UK original productions in 2020 – more than twice as much as Channel 4.

In addition, Channel 4 faces a series of unique challenges. Challenges that other public service broadcasters with different ownership models do not face.

While other PSBs such as the BBC and Channel 5 have the freedom to make and sell their own content, Channel 4 has no in-house production studio and its ownership model restricts it from borrowing money or raising private sector capital.

It is left almost entirely reliant on advertising revenues. Those revenues were already shifting rapidly online. As seen last week, the competition is only set to heat up now that Netflix has confirmed it intends to enter the advertising market.

It is our view that, under its current form of ownership, Channel 4's options to grow are currently restricted; with fewer options to invest and compete. Those are serious challenges, and anyone who chooses to dismiss them is burying their head in the sand.

As a responsible government, we are prepared to acknowledge those challenges head on, and do what is needed to protect one of our most important broadcasters not just today, but in the years to come.

The Government therefore believes it is time to unleash Channel 4's full potential, and open the broadcaster up to private ownership – while, crucially, protecting its public service broadcasting remit.

The sale of Channel 4 will not just benefit the broadcaster. Channel 4 was originally established to help boost independent production and it has been successful in that mission – so successful in fact, that we face a new and very positive challenge: production studios across the country are booming. They are so in-demand, in fact, that we need more and more people to work in them. I therefore intend to funnel some of the proceeds of the sale of Channel 4 into addressing that new challenge, and giving people up and down the UK the skills and opportunity to fill those jobs – delivering a creative dividend for all.

I want Channel 4's next chapter to be one in which it goes above and beyond what it has already done regionally, and plays a starring role in levelling up our creative industries.

But the sale of Channel 4 is just one part of a major piece of broadcasting reform. As set out in the White Paper I am publishing today, it is a reflection of the transformation that broadcasting has undergone in the last few years – and the need to make sure that our PSBs can keep pace with those changes.

Our TV and radio industry is already the envy of the world. Today, we are giving British broadcasters the backing and support they need to rule the airwaves for years to come.

In connection with the above, my department has made the following documents available on GOV.UK:

- Up Next: The Government's vision for the broadcasting sector
- Decision rationale and sale impact analysis for a change of ownership of Channel 4

- Government response to the consultation on a potential change of ownership of **Channel 4 Television Corporation**
- Government response to the consultation on audience protection standards on video-on-demand services
- Government response to the Digital Radio and Audio Review

I will also deposit copies of these documents in the Libraries of both Houses.

Evaluation of the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise Covid-19 Emergency Funding Package

Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society (Nigel Huddleston): **HCWS798**

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has today published a report evaluating the impact and delivery of the £750 million of government funding to support voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The report can also be found online.

This emergency COVID-19 funding package aimed to ensure that the VCSE sector could continue its vital work supporting the country during the coronavirus outbreak, including meeting increased and changing demand due to the pandemic. The package was one of several delivered by DCMS to support sectors through the pandemic, including the Culture Recovery Fund and Sport Survival Package, which have been assessed separately with evaluations to be published in due course.

This funding was disseminated to organisations via various funding streams such as the Big Night In, the Community Match Challenge and the Winter Loneliness Fund. These in turn awarded grants to over 14,000 organisations delivering a myriad of activities including encouraging social connection and tackling loneliness (59%); providing information and advice (44%) and supporting people's mental health (38%).

The grants reached an estimated 21.5 million service users. Common positive outcomes achieved for people and communities included: improved mental health and wellbeing (70%); more opportunity for social contact (62%); and reduced experiences of loneliness (58%).

The evaluation found "strong evidence" that the funding package had achieved its aims. Nearly all grantholders (97%) that used funding to cover core costs reported that the funding had helped their financial health during the pandemic, with nearly half (46%) saying it had helped a great deal. Without the funding 13% of grantholders said they would have had to close or stop services (with the funding, this only happened in 1% of cases).

The funding allowed around 40% of grantholders to maintain or recruit new volunteers, with some 12,000 new volunteers being mobilised, just from those organisations who completed the survey. This had positive outcomes on volunteers themselves, with 93% reporting more than one positive outcome from volunteering, and 63% saying that they would be certain to continue.

The majority of grantholders (76%) also reported that they found the process of applying for grants to be 'straightforward and proportionate'. They found the flexibility to use the money for core costs beneficial given the uncertainty of the pandemic.

The report also outlines eight recommendations based on the lessons learnt from this funding package which the Government will carefully consider.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Afghanistan: Humanitarian Situation

Minister for Europe and North America (James Cleverly):

[HCWS799]

My noble Friend, the Minister for South and Central Asia, North Africa, United Nations and the Commonwealth (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis remains severe. This is despite the massive response mounted since August 2021 preventing the UN and aid agencies' worst fears from being realised over the winter. Afghanistan faces acute hunger, over 6 million have been internally displaced and millions of children are out of school. The UK continues to be at the forefront of the humanitarian response in Afghanistan. It remains a priority for the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Ministers of State.

We have delivered on the Prime Minister's commitment to double assistance for Afghanistan in 2021/2022, delivering humanitarian assistance to over 6.1 million people. Working with aid agencies, we disbursed £286 million including £17 million for support to Afghan refugees in the region. A full breakdown appears in the annexes attached. All our humanitarian assistance is going to UN agencies and other experienced international partners.

On 11 January 2022, the UN launched an appeal for \$4.4 billion for 2022, the largest humanitarian appeal on record, reflecting the magnitude of the humanitarian challenge ahead. The UK was at the forefront in responding to this and on 31 March, alongside Qatar, Germany, and the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs the UK cohosted the 2022 Afghanistan Pledging Conference where \$2.4 billion was pledged.

On 30 March, the Foreign Secretary announced the UK pledge of £286 million for 2022/2023, the second highest commitment to the Humanitarian Response Plan for Afghanistan to date. This commitment reflects the UK's enduring commitment to the people of Afghanistan.

HMG officials continue to press the Taliban to respond to international concerns, including the protection of human rights, and especially the rights of women and girls. We regularly make clear to the Taliban that the provision of humanitarian assistance requires, among other things, a lack of interference with humanitarian operations, unconditional access for female aid workers, and the full access of women and girls to services.

We have also worked with the World Bank, United Nations, and the United States of America to find solutions which will allow international NGOs to access currency in Afghanistan. In January we successfully worked with the Asian Development Bank to make \$405 million available and on 1 March the World Bank Board agreed to make the remaining \$1 billion in the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund available for health, education, livelihoods, and food security.

The UK also played a key role in pressing for a resolution establishing a humanitarian exception under the UN Afghanistan sanctions regime. In line with UN Security Council 2615 the UK has passed legislation to provide an exception from the assets freeze against listed members of the Taliban solely for the provision of humanitarian assistance and other activities to support basic needs. This will save lives and reduce the impediments faced by humanitarian agencies in reaching those most in need.

On 17 March, the UK supported a UNSC resolution renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). This provided UNAMA with a robust and flexible mandate to facilitate humanitarian aid delivery, engagement with the Taliban, human rights monitoring and reporting, and a strengthened focus on gender mainstreaming throughout UN activities.

In addition to providing humanitarian assistance, we are also looking to the medium and longer term. The provision of basic services, such as health, education and livelihoods, remains critical to prevent a worsening of the humanitarian crisis. We continue to explore solutions for their delivery and support payment of front-line delivery workers with support to any service predicated on access to that service by all.

The Foreign Secretary committed to putting women and girls at the heart of the UK's response to Afghanistan. The Taliban have imposed unacceptable restrictions on women's ability to move around freely, to work, and to access education. Despite statements that schools would open for all students, the Taliban rescinded this commitment and announced on 23 March that all girls' schools from 6th grade upwards will remain closed until further notice. The UK, alongside international partners, have called on them to reverse this decision.

There are increasing restrictions on freedom of expression including media censorship and harassment of journalists. Members of religious and ethnic minority groups and LGBT+ continue to be attacked and to suffer discrimination. We are working with aid agencies to prioritise those most at risk, including households headed by women and people with disabilities, and ensure that marginalised groups have equal, safe and dignified access to assistance and services.

Ministers and officials continue to engage with a wide range of Afghans, including representatives from civil society, religious and ethnic minorities and women activists. Lord Ahmad regularly meets with prominent Afghan women to hear their concerns and consult on the UK's approach to Afghanistan; most recently on 24 March when he held a roundtable event with Afghan female leaders.

There is regular Parliamentary engagement on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan including the recent meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Afghanistan on 21

March. Lord Ahmad briefed Parliamentarians ahead of the UN Afghanistan Pledging Conference on 22 March.

Attachments:

1. Afghanistan - Humanitarian Situation (WMS Annexes) [Afghanistan - Humanitarian Situation (WMS Annexes).pdf]

Provisional Statistics on International Development 2021

Minister for Europe and North America (James Cleverly):

[HCWS795]

The Statistics on International Development: Provisional UK Aid Spend 2021 was published on 12 April. This set out that the UK spent almost £11.5 billion on Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2021, representing 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI).

In November 2020, my Rt Hon Friend the former Foreign Secretary confirmed to the House that the UK would temporarily reduce the aid budget from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%, as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the UK's economy. The Government intends to return to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA as soon as the fiscal situation allows: when on a sustainable basis the government is not borrowing for day-to-day spending and underlying debt is falling. On 13 July 2021, the Government gave Members of Parliament the opportunity to debate its proposed course of action and a pathway back to 0.7%. The House voted clearly to approve the approach set out in the Treasury's Written Ministerial Statement.

The publication of the report is the first official release confirming the UK has not met the target of spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA as required by the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015. That Act requires the Secretary of State to lay a statement before Parliament if the 0.7% target is not met explaining why it has not been met, as soon as reasonably practicable after laying the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts (see section 2(1) and 2(3) of the 2015 Act).

The FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts will be laid before the summer recess.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Correction to PQ113125

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health) [HCWS803] (Maggie Throup):

I would like to inform the House that a written answer given by Gillian Keegan on 2 February 2022, UIN 113125 to the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Philippa Whitford MP) was incorrect.

In the response to Question 113125, it was stated that the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines do not include specific guidelines on consumption of alcohol by children and young people. This remains the case. However, the answer should have stated that in 2009, the then Chief Medical Officer for England published

guidance on the consumption of alcohol by children and young people. A copy of the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines can be found here: Guidance on the consumption of Alcohol by children and young people (ias.org.uk).

No assessment has been made of the accessibility of this guidance, however the quidance document was erroneously archived from GOV.UK and has now been republished at: Alcohol consumption by children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The Department continues to promote the guidelines in England which apply to children and young people through online platforms such as NHS.UK and the Talk to FRANK online resource, and GOV.UK. Local authorities promote these guidelines as part of their public health duties.

Correction to PQ53263 and PQ53380

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care) (Maria Caulfield): [HCWS800]

I would like to inform the House that written answers I gave on 18 and 21 October 2021 Official Report 53263 and 53380 the hon. Member for Bootle were incorrect.

In the response to the Written Questions, I said that radioligand therapy is not yet licensed for the National Health Service (NHS) and has yet to receive approval from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). That was incorrect. A licenced radioligand treatment, Lutetium (177Lu) oxodotreotide, has been recommended by NICE for treating unresectable or metastatic neuroendocrine tumours (NICE Technology appraisal guidance [TA539] Published: 29 August 2018). The NHS funds Lutetium in line with NICE's recommendations and is treating the expected number of patients estimated by NICE:

https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta539/chapter/1-Recommendations

NICE is also now developing guidance on Lu vipivotide tetraxetan for treating PSMApositive hormone-relapsed metastatic prostate cancer after two or more therapies and currently expects to publish final guidance on 23 November 2022. This technology was granted a positive Early Access to Medicine Scientific Opinion in April 2022 and is currently available to NHS patients as an unlicensed treatment.

Covid-19 Update

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health) [HCWS804] (Maggie Throup):

The Government accepted the recommendation of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on 16 February that 5 to 11 year-olds should be offered 2 paediatric doses of the Pfizer vaccine. Vaccinations have been offered to this age group from 4 April. A minimum interval of 12 weeks between doses is required, except for those in a clinical risk group or a household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed where the minimum interval is 8 weeks. This is a non-urgent offer.

As part of our commitment to open up travel, on 28 April the Government is launching the NHS COVID Pass letter service for children aged 5 to 11 year-olds who have received a full primary course of COVID-19 vaccination.

There is a limited emerging international use-case for children in this age cohort to show their COVID-19 status for travel abroad, although other methods such as testing or entering with a parent or guardian with recognised COVID-19 status are available in those countries. Access to the NHS COVID Pass will save families with children in this cohort the cost of testing otherwise required for travel and ensure that young children are able to provide proof of their COVID-19 status on par with the rest of the population.

A person with parental responsibility for the child (such as the parent or guardian) will be able to request the letter online via the NHS website or by calling 119. The letter will only be sent to the address on the child's GP record.

This service will be available for children aged 5 to 11 resident in England, Wales and the Isle of Man. In Northern Ireland, parents or guardians of children aged 5 to 11 years can request a digital or printed Covid certificate on behalf of a dependant. In Scotland, a paper copy of the vaccination status of children aged 5 and over is available by calling the COVID Status Helpline on 0808 196 8565.

HOME OFFICE

Report of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation on the operation in 2020 of the Terrorism Acts

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):

[HCWS801]

Jonathan Hall QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, has prepared a report on the operation in 2020 of the Terrorism Acts.

In accordance with section 36(5) of the Terrorism Act 2006, I am today laying this report before the House and copies will be available in the Vote Office. The report will also be published on GOV.UK.

I am grateful to Mr Hall QC for his report. I will carefully consider its contents and the recommendations he makes and will respond formally in due course.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Switzerland Trade Policy Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan):

[HCWS805]

The Prime Minister and President Cassis of Switzerland held a meeting this morning, during which they discussed strengthening the bilateral relationship and boosting trade and investment ties. Following this, the call for input on an enhanced trade agreement with Switzerland has now been launched.

The UK is committed to our trade and investment relationship with Switzerland, our 10th largest trade partner with bilateral trade worth nearly £35 billion a year. The UK's current trading relationship is based on the 1972 EU-Switzerland agreement, rolled over on 1 January 2021. While this includes many provisions on trade in goods, intellectual property and government procurement, it crucially does not contain any agreements for services or digital trade, which account for half of our economic relationship with Switzerland and is a key reality of the global economy in the 21 st Century.

As two services powerhouses, negotiations for a bespoke UK-Switzerland Free Trade Agreement are a significant opportunity to build on our current trade agreement and negotiate an ambitious, unprecedented deal that will accelerate the growth of our already significant trading relationship, creating economic growth and supporting jobs in both countries.

The call for input will provide businesses, public sector bodies, individuals, and other interested stakeholders with the opportunity to give valuable feedback and highlight their priorities for a closer trading relationship with Switzerland.

The feedback received from stakeholders will be crucial when shaping our mandate, and will inform detailed negotiations preparation, and policy positions. The Department for International Trade is committed to ensuring future trade agreements and their provisions are informed by stakeholder needs and shaped by the demands of the British economy.

The launch of the call for input is a key step in our joint ambition to renegotiate a high quality and ambitious trade agreement, focused on creating even greater opportunities for UK businesses. Our trade with Switzerland has increased almost three-fold over the last 20 years, with service exports rising from £2.4 billion in 2000 to £12.2 billion in 2020. These new negotiations will allow us to increase this even further, while leveraging our respective strengths in talent and innovation to agree cutting edge digital provisions.

The UK and its partners in Switzerland share a desire to develop closer ties. While a timescale for negotiations will be confirmed and set out in due course following consultation with Swiss counterparts, the call for input will seek to support the goal of greater economic prosperity for businesses and will ensure that their needs are heard. The Government is committed to transparency and will ensure that Parliament, the Devolved Administrations, UK citizens and businesses have access to information on our trade negotiations.

The call for input can be accessed using the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/trade-with-switzerland-call-for-input