



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 12 May 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:44 P.M., 12 May 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Clinical Trials: Females

Chris Green: [\[293\]](#)

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:

Clinical trials are funded by a range of public, charity and commercial organisations, including by the Department, via the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). Information on the sex of patients enrolled in NIHR-funded clinical trials is not currently collected centrally. However, the forthcoming Women's Health Strategy aims to ensure that data collected through research improves women's health outcomes.

■ National Institute for Health Research: Finance

Martyn Day: [\[349\]](#)

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:

The Spending Review 2021 provides £5 billion for health-related research and development, with an increase of £605 million by 2024/25. This is shared between the National Institute for Health and Research (NIHR), Genomics England and the Office for Life Sciences. Planning for this funding is ongoing and budgets will be adjusted over the Spending Review period to meet priorities as they arise. However, the current allocation provides an increase in the NIHR's budget of more than 40% by 2024/25.

■ NHS: Research

Martyn Day: [\[348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to increase NHS staff's access to protected time for research.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) has prioritised engagement with the National Health Service workforce to support greater opportunities for research and deliver clinical research in the United Kingdom. 'The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery' published in March 2021 commits to create a positive culture for research in the NHS and develop a sustainable and supported research workforce, offering rewarding opportunities and careers for healthcare and research staff of all professional backgrounds.

■ Sickle Cell Diseases: Health Services**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of 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.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference 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:

No specific assessment has been made. However, the Department is considering the recommendations made in the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sickle Cell and Thalassemia's report 'No One's Listening'. We will work with relevant organisations to develop measures to improve the quality of care for sickle cell patients. The forthcoming white paper on improving the nation's health and reducing health disparities in England will address any inequalities in the care and treatment of sickle cell disease.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ Planning: Floods****Rachael Maskell:** [\[324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help ensure that new planning developments must focus on surface water flooding prevention.

Rachael Maskell: [\[325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help ensure that Local Plans account for flooding risk when prioritising land use.

Stuart Andrew:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was amended in July 2021 to make clear all sources of flood risk, including surface water, should be considered, to ensure that any new development is safe for its lifetime without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.

The NPPF prioritises the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for all development in areas at risk of flooding. The Framework is also clear that SuDS should be incorporated in all major developments, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.

Local Plans should be informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which should take account of climate change in levels of flood risk by applying guidance provided by the Environment Agency. The SFRA should inform the strategic identification of land for development in the Local Plan.

In October 2021 the Government commenced a review of the case for implementing Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 concerning SuDS. This will look at the benefits and impacts of implementation as well as alternative methods for ensuring that SuDS are incorporated in future developments. The review is expected to conclude August 2022.

Furthermore, as part of our wider ambitions for an improved planning system we intend to review the NPPF to ensure that it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaption as fully as possible.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Restart Scheme: Per Capita Costs

Alison McGovern:

[\[233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the cost per participant of the Restart Scheme.

Mims Davies:

The original estimate of the average cost per participant on the Restart Scheme is approximately £2,000.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Energy Infrastructure Planning Projects

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS17\]](#)

This Statement concerns an application for development consent made under the Planning Act 2008 by NNB Generation Company (SZC) Limited for the construction and operation of a nuclear power station near Leiston in Suffolk.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make a decision on an application within three months of the receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) of the Act to set a new deadline. Where a new deadline is set, the Secretary of State must make a Statement to Parliament to announce it. The current statutory deadline for the decision on the Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station application is 25 May 2022.

I have decided to set a new deadline of no later than 8 July 2022 for deciding this application. This is to ensure there is sufficient time to fully consider further information provided by the applicant and interested parties in response to the Secretary of State's post-examination consultation.

The decision to set the new deadline for this application is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

■ Warm Home Discount – England and Wales

Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Greg Hands): [\[HCWS18\]](#)

My noble friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility (Lord Callanan) has today made the following statement:

Upgrading our homes to be more energy efficient is the best long-term solution for reducing our energy costs and keeping ourselves warm in winter. However, this takes time, which is why the Warm Home Discount remains a key policy for tackling fuel poverty now. For eleven years, the Warm Home Discount has provided vital help with energy bills to households on the lowest incomes. Last summer, the Government consulted on the future of the Warm Home Discount scheme in England and Wales, and today, the Government has laid the regulations for extending, expanding, and reforming the scheme to 2026.

From this winter, the Government is expanding the Warm Home Discount scheme. The annual spending envelopes will increase from around £350 million to £475 million (in 2020 prices), and the value of the household rebates will rise from £140 to £150. As a result, around 2.8 million households in England and Wales will receive a rebate every year, 750,000 more compared to the previous scheme. We are also lowering the energy

supplier participation thresholds from 150,000 domestic customer accounts to 50,000 in 2022/23 and 1,000 in 2023/24, meaning that almost all customers will be with a participating supplier and thereby reducing the barriers for people switching energy suppliers.

Under the scheme, around 1 million low-income pensioners will continue to receive their rebates automatically through the Core Group 1 element of the scheme. It is right that we protect this low-income vulnerable group susceptible to the effects of living in a cold home.

From this winter, the Government is replacing the former application-based Broader Group element, under which low-income and vulnerable households had to apply to their energy supplier every year. Broader Group rebates have often been awarded on a first-come, first-served basis or by lottery, as there have been more eligible households than there were rebates available.

Instead, around 1.9 million households will receive rebates under a new Core Group 2. These households will be those on the lowest incomes and with high-energy costs, determined by using data on property characteristics. Through data-matching between Government departments and energy suppliers, the vast majority of these households will be identified automatically and receive their rebate without having to take any action. These reforms will improve the fuel poverty targeting of the scheme, ensuring more of the rebates go to households in, or at risk of, fuel poverty.

Lastly, the Government recognises the value of Industry Initiatives, taking the form of additional financial and energy-related support measures, that energy suppliers and industry partners provide to fuel poor households. It will therefore become mandatory for all energy suppliers participating in the scheme to provide or fund Industry Initiatives.

The Government is consulting on a Warm Home Discount scheme in Scotland for the period until 2026 and shall lay separate regulations, subject to the outcome of that consultation.

This expansion of the Warm Home Discount scheme forms part of the wider support to help households with rising energy bills. The Government has announced £9.1 billion of support through the Energy Bills Rebate in 2022/23. This includes: a £200 discount on energy bills this autumn for domestic electricity customers in Great Britain; a £150 non-repayable Council Tax Rebate for households in England in council tax bands A to D; and a £144 million Discretionary Fund to support households not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate. Meanwhile, the devolved administrations will receive around £565 million corresponding funding through the Barnett formula.

More information on the Warm Home Discount scheme will be made available over the summer on [gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme).

CABINET OFFICE■ **House of Lords Appointments****Minister for the Cabinet Office and HM Paymaster General (Michael Ellis):**[\[HCWS22\]](#)

On behalf of Her Majesty's Government, I am laying today before Parliament a set of documents (**HC 204**) in response to the Humble Address motion of the House of Commons passed on 29 March 2022, in respect of the appointment of Lord Lebedev to the House of Lords.

The Humble Address procedure

A Humble Address to Her Majesty is a request of Parliament to make its desires and opinions known to the Crown. The government occasionally makes use of the Humble Address to deposit materials before both Houses, but when the House seeks to use the procedure to call for papers, it is for the government to consider what documents are suitable for release.

The Humble Address of 29 March, seeking documents related to the nomination of an individual to the House of Lords (on which the Prime Minister advises the Sovereign to exercise the power conferred in the Life Peerages Act 1958), needs to be considered in the context of the government's responsibility to consider any adverse effect of releasing materials, including on the processes relating to the awarding of honours and dignities by the Crown.

Access to information and the public interest

The Government is and remains committed to openness and transparency to ensure that Parliament is able to scrutinise and hold the Executive to account. However, it is also the case that when considering requests for information from Parliament, the government has a responsibility to consider whether it is in the public interest to place information into the public domain.

This is a position set out in the Government's response to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's (PACAC) Fifteenth Report: "Status of Resolutions of the House of Commons" in March 2019 (HC 1587).

The Government noted:

"One of Parliament's key roles is to scrutinise the actions of the Government. In order to do this effectively, it is important that Parliament is able to access information from the Government. In providing information to Parliament, as set out in the Ministerial Code, 'Ministers should be as open as possible with Parliament', 'refusing to provide information only when disclosure would not be in the public interest, which should be decided in accordance with the relevant statutes and the Freedom of Information Act.' This principle was endorsed by Parliament in the Resolutions on Ministerial Accountability, passed by both Houses in 1997. [Footnote: The motion passed by both Houses stated "ministers should be as open as possible with Parliament, refusing to provide information only when disclosure would not be in the public interest, which should be decided in accordance

with relevant statute, and the government's Code of Practice on Access to Government Information". The Code of Practice was superseded by the Freedom of Information Act].

"The consideration of whether it will be in the public interest to place information into the public domain always involves a careful balancing exercise, weighing up the need for transparency and openness against other important and long standing, and often competing, principles and legislation (such as the Data Protection Act). Ultimately, Ministers have a duty not to release information where it is not in the public interest to do so. The use of the motion for return procedure to call for papers gives rise to a potential tension with that duty.

"The Government has been put in a very difficult position by some of the recent motions for return. The Government has in responding sought to balance competing pressures of providing information to Parliament and protecting the public interest. It has been possible to find this balance where Ministers have been able to agree with Select Committee Chairs the appropriate information to disclose and how. However, the Government would suggest that motions of returns which seek sensitive information to be made available in a way that makes that information public are not in the public interest and a threat to good governance."

The March 2022 motion recognised the need for non-disclosure on grounds of national security. However, as the government made clear during the debate in resolving not to oppose the motion, this does not override or restrict the government's need to also consider the wider public interest.

In passing the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Parliament and the then Labour Government both recognised that from time to time, the principle of transparency is secondary to a competing public interest in favour of non-disclosure of certain information. In the March 2019 response to PACAC, the government noted that "the government is under an obligation to balance...[the] competing interests" of transparency and other public duties but will "seek to find a way to balance these tensions and provide as much information as possible to the House".

It is in this context that, in responses to other Humble Addresses in this Parliament (on Westferry planning consent and Radox contracts), the government has duly applied Freedom of Information principles when assessing what documentation is appropriate to release into the public domain. This approach to Parliamentary scrutiny also reflects the long-standing approach of successive administrations as set out in the Osmotherly Rules (paras 39-40).

It also reflects the Ministerial Code provisions (noted above) that Ministers should refuse to provide information "only when disclosure would not be in the public interest, which should be decided in accordance with the relevant statutes and the Freedom of Information Act 2000".

As laid out in today's House of Commons paper, the disclosure of these documents reflects the need to protect national security, to maintain integrity in the system for the awarding of honours and dignities by the Crown, the vetting of nominees for probity and the data protection rights of individuals.

A Humble Address to Her Majesty is a message from Parliament to make its desires and opinions known to the Crown and is related to the exercise of Her Majesty's Royal Prerogative. This link to the Royal Prerogative supports the need for Her Majesty's Government in responding to such an Address to consider any adverse effect in relation to the exercise of other powers by Her Majesty such as the awarding of honours and dignities by the Crown.

The Intelligence and Security Committee

In the government response to the Procedure Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2017-19, "The House's power to call for papers: procedure and practice", HC 190, the government noted:

"The Government recognises that where it is in the public interest to provide sensitive information to Parliament, sharing information with select committees is a well established and effective mechanism for parliamentarians to review such information and ensure that information is disclosed in an appropriate way, or restricted if in the public interest."

"Where the House resolves that information should be shared publicly with the House as a whole, it removes the possibility that arrangements can be made to share information confidentially with the relevant select committee. The Government maintains that the existing mechanisms that enable the sharing of information with select committees is a more appropriate way for sensitive information to be shared with Parliament."

In that light, I can confirm that the Government has provided a response to the Intelligence and Security Committee, following a separate request from them for information relating to any national security matters arising. This has been provided in accordance with the Committee's statutory remit, as set out in the Justice and Security Act 2013 and the accompanying Memorandum of Understanding.

Whilst separate to the formal Humble Address response, I believe this sharing of information illustrates the government is acting in good faith in responding to Parliament's request for information. It also reflects a request made by the Shadow Home Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Vetting by the House of Lords Appointments Commission

Since 2002, crossbench and party political life peerage nominations to the House of Lords have been vetted by the independent House of Lords Appointments Commission. The Commission seeks advice from government departments and agencies where appropriate and these vetting procedures and the advice to the Prime Minister are confidential.

I can assure Parliament that proper consideration would be given to any information which indicated national security concern arising from a prospective appointment before a decision was made.

Were the Prime Minister to recommend a peerage against the Commission's formal advice on propriety, the Commission has previously undertaken to write publicly to the relevant Parliamentary Select Committee. This has happened in one case before in

December 2020. The Chair of the Commission, Lord Bew, has noted in evidence to PACAC last month that that was not the case in this appointment. He has also noted that no pressure was exerted on the Commission on this matter. The conclusion of the Commission's deliberations are clear.

The process by which an individual is nominated to the House of Lords is an established one. It is essential that the confidentiality of these arrangements are maintained as it is this that ensures the vetting procedures are suitably robust and command confidence, whilst also protecting the private and personal data of those individuals who have entered into the vetting process. The routine disclosure of such confidential information would undermine the Commission and Crown's ability to consider the probity of those nominated for a peerage and have long-term and damaging consequences for the peerage appointments system, and to individuals.

Such confidentiality also applies to recommendations for political peerages made by opposition parties. Honourable Members should be conscious that requests for information on the internal correspondence of the Commission could also be applied to such opposition recommendations (including those which are rejected or withdrawn). I do not believe it would be in the public interest for such internal correspondence to be used in the future for political point scoring.

The House of Lords has a valuable role to play as a scrutinising and revising Chamber. The preservation of these established arrangements is necessary to ensure that those nominated to the Lords are subject to a vetting process which is both fair and sufficiently robust to ensure high ethical standards are applied to holders of public office. Constitutionally, it is for the Prime Minister to recommend appointments to the Sovereign.

Good standing of Lord Lebedev

Lord Lebedev is a man of good standing. His public and personal works are reflected in the citation deposited in the House today as part of the Humble Address. No complaint has been made about his personal conduct. He has been vocal in his criticism of the Putin regime. Indeed, it was the Leader of the Opposition who personally congratulated him on his appointment as a peer.

Conclusion

Her Majesty's Government and the Prime Minister have been resolute in resisting Russian Government aggression and interference. These are matters of great importance and in lockstep with our allies, we are introducing the most severe economic sanctions that Russia has ever faced, and provided significant military support via the Ministry of Defence. We have also strengthened our domestic legislation to target those living and operating in the United Kingdom who support, enable, or facilitate Putin's regime.

We are working to cripple Putin's war machine and, as set out in the Queen's Speech, we will be bringing forward legislation that will provide intelligence agencies and the police with new powers to tackle any hostile state activity, including from Russia. This Government will be resolute in defending our democracy and our allies.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Announcements****Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid):**[\[HCWS23\]](#)

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) affects the lives of children and adults across the country. It can be an incredibly disabling condition with fluctuating symptoms making it difficult to take part in everyday activities, enjoy a family or social life, access services and engage in work or education – especially for the estimated 25% of people who have severe or very severe symptoms. Whilst there are currently no known cures or treatments for the condition, people with ME/CFS can be supported to manage their symptoms and maximise their quality of life.

Today, on World ME Day, I have two announcements to make to show that the Government is committed to better care and support for people living with ME/CFS and their families.

Firstly, I am pleased to welcome today the publication of the top ten (plus) research priorities for ME/CFS, published by Action for ME and agreed by the James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership on ME. This partnership included people with lived experience and clinicians working together to reach a consensus. I want to thank Action for ME and everyone who took part in this important work, recognising that for many this would have taken considerable effort.

To support these research priorities, I will co-chair a roundtable with my Department's Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Lucy Chappell, to bring together experts on ME/CFS, including people with lived experience to discuss what needs to happen next. The Chief Scientific Adviser has asked the UK Clinical Research Collaboration to convene a subgroup on ME/CFS to work with funders, researchers, charities, and people with ME/CFS to drive high-quality applications for research into ME/CFS and support the research community to build capacity and capability in this field. We are committed to funding research into this important area. Funding for high-quality research into ME is available through existing commitments of HM Government to research and development. The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) will work with the research community to respond to the priorities as set out in the Priority Setting Partnership, alongside other funding partners.

Secondly, I am announcing the Government's intention to develop a cross-Government delivery plan on ME/CFS for England, aligning with other devolved nations as appropriate. In particular, we are engaging with the Scottish Government to explore areas of potential shared interest and learning, especially in terms of research into ME/CFS.

This will build on the recommendations of the Priority Setting Partnership, the recently updated guideline for ME/CFS from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, and the comprehensive work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis to date.

At the heart of the delivery plan will be two core principles. Firstly, that we do not know enough about ME/CFS, which must change if we are to improve experiences and outcomes. Secondly, we must trust and listen to those with lived experience of ME/CFS.

Following this announcement, officials will work with stakeholders ahead of publishing the delivery plan later this year.

HOME OFFICE

■ National Security Bill

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS24\]](#)

I am pleased to say that my Department has introduced a National Security Bill to the House of Commons. This Bill brings together a suite of new measures to further protect our national security, the safety of the public and our vital interests from the hostile activities of foreign states.

This activity is a growing concern, even though it often takes place away from the public eye. The harm, which includes espionage and sabotage, foreign interference in our political system, and even attempted assassinations, is significant. This foundational legislation will provide tools and powers for our fight against state threats for years to come. It will keep our country safe by delivering the biggest overhaul of UK state threats legislation for a generation. Its measures will make it even harder for those working on behalf of foreign states to undermine our national security, economy and democracy. And while the core of the Bill focuses on countering hostile activity from foreign states, it will also include measures to combat the enduring threat of terrorism through reforms to restrict the access of convicted terrorists to civil legal aid.

The National Security Bill:

- Further protects our national security, the safety of the British public and safeguards our national interests from hostile activity from foreign states.
- Addresses the new state threats our country faces including from espionage and interference, sabotage and disinformation.
- Ensures our world class security and intelligence agencies and police have the modern tools, powers and protections they need to counter those who seek to do us harm.
- Protects us and makes the UK even harder target for those would attack or interfere with our national security, our vital interests and our democracy.

The Home Office has developed the Bill in partnership with wider Government and our world-class law enforcement and intelligence agencies, building on the support expressed for work to improve our toolkit in the public consultation we ran last year. In detail, the core state threats measures in the legislation will:

- For the first time, make it an offence to work covertly for a foreign intelligence service in the UK.

- Create a modern set of offences to protect the UK against espionage and other harmful conduct, focusing on the obtaining and disclosure of protected information and trade secrets, and the assisting a foreign intelligence service offences referred to above. It repeals and replaces existing espionage laws which were primarily designed to counter the threat from German spies before and after the First World War.
- Provide our law enforcement and intelligence agencies with new offences, tools and powers to detect, deter and disrupt threats from those acting on behalf of foreign states with a harmful purpose in the UK. For example, this includes seeking, by illegitimate means, to influence public figures or stealing our trade secrets.
- Modernise the regime which governs access to, in and around the UK's sensitive sites that require higher levels of deterrence against unlawful access.
- Modernise the existing search warrant power to enable the police to obtain evidence of state threats activities.
- Create new offences to tackle state-backed sabotage and foreign interference, as well as a preparatory conduct offence that will allow disruptive action to be taken at an earlier stage (thereby reducing the harm done).
- Require sentences for other offences where there is a state link (e.g. kidnap) to be aggravated (increased) to reflect the additional seriousness of the issue.
- Introduce a new suite of state threat 'Prevention and Investigation Measures' to use as a tool of last resort to manage those who pose a threat but whom it has not been possible to prosecute.
- Improve existing powers which grant police officers the ability to stop individuals at ports to ascertain their involvement in hostile activity by foreign states.
- To further strengthen our defence against foreign influence, we will bring forward a Foreign Influence Registration Scheme requiring individuals to register certain arrangements with foreign governments to deter and disrupt state threats activity in the UK. This scheme will be brought forward by government amendment to the National Security Bill as soon as possible. The Government is considering the scheme's requirements to ensure it is effective in dealing with the current threat and protects the interests of the UK.

The core of the Bill focuses on countering hostile activity from foreign states, and these proposals will apply UK-wide, as will measures to further enable the courts to freeze or limit civil damages being paid to convicted terrorists where these funds might support further acts of terrorism.

The Bill will also make minor reforms to the Serious Crime Act 2007 relating to the protections of those executing the functions of intelligence, law enforcement and defence when engaged in authorised information exchanges.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ India Trade Negotiations: Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS16\]](#)

The third round of UK-India Free Trade Agreement negotiations began on 25 April and concluded on 6 May. The official-level negotiations were conducted in a hybrid fashion, with some UK negotiators meeting counterparts in New Delhi, supported by the majority attending virtually from the UK.

During this third round, talks focused on draft treaty text. Technical discussions were held across 23 policy areas over 60 separate sessions, with draft treaty text advanced across the majority of chapters.

The negotiations were productive and reflected our shared ambition to secure a comprehensive deal to boost trade between our nations, currently worth £24.3 billion in 2021.

The fourth round of official-level negotiations is due to take place in June 2022.

We remain clear that any deal the Government strikes must be in the best interests of the British people and the economy.

The Government will keep Parliament updated as these negotiations progress.

TRANSPORT

■ Draft Legislation: Ship Safety – The Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2022

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts):
[\[HCWS20\]](#)

I have today published as a draft the Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2022 and an accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum. The draft Regulations revoke and replace the Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2015 (S.I. 2015/782) to implement the seafarer training, certification and watchkeeping standards contained in the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 ('the STCW Convention').

The draft Regulations are being published for 28 days. Following the conclusion of this period, and once any observations on the draft Regulations have been taken into account, they will be laid for approval by each House of Parliament. This procedure is required under paragraph 14 of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 because these Regulations revoke an instrument that was made, in part, under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972. Further details about why the changes are needed and the effect they will have on retained EU law are contained in the Annex to the draft Explanatory Memorandum.

The draft Regulations replace the existing legislation making provision for seafarer training and will implement the latest requirements for seafarers' training in the STCW Convention. This provision relates to new requirements for seafarers serving on ships subject to the International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-Flashpoint Fuels (IGF) and passenger ships. Implementing these amendments to the STCW Convention ensures that seafarers on these types of specialised ships can undertake the required additional training and be issued with the necessary certification to demonstrate the appropriate level of competency. This will allow United Kingdom seafarers to take up employment on these types of vessels.

The draft Regulations contain additional provision to ensure wider compliance with seafarer training requirements. The definition of "seafarer" has been clarified to ensure that all persons engaged in the operation or navigation of a pleasure vessel to which the draft Regulations apply (24 metres or over in length or 80 GT or over) are included within the definition. The provision and quality of training has been revised to enable the Secretary of State not only to approve a training provider, but also to suspend or cancel the approval; this is needed because the STCW Convention places obligations on Governments to ensure that training providers deliver all training in accordance with the Convention requirements. Amendments contained in the draft legislation also enable the Government to recoup the costs of carrying out the approval of training providers who deliver seafarer training.

The draft Regulations aim to meet the objectives in the Government's Maritime 2050 strategy to modernise and grow the British maritime sector, including alternative training provision for engineers on small vessels; this will support UK industry and boost employment opportunities for UK seafarers. Additionally, express provision to provide for seafarer training equivalent to that of the STCW Convention will help relevant sectors of industry to avoid being unnecessarily burdened with cumbersome certification requirements, while modernising and updating UK training and certification.

The draft Regulations also include an ambulatory reference provision to ensure that future amendments to the STCW Convention referred to in the draft Regulations will automatically become UK law when they enter into force internationally. As required by the Regulations, a Ministerial Statement will be provided to both Houses of Parliament ahead of any amendment to the STCW Convention referenced in the Regulations, prior to it coming into force in UK law by way of the ambulatory reference provision.

The draft Regulations and the accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

■ **Draft Legislation: The Motor Fuel (Composition and Content) (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2022**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Trudy Harrison):

[[HCWS19](#)]

I have today published the draft Statutory Instrument The Motor Fuel (Composition and Content) (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2022 and accompanying Explanatory Memorandum.

These Regulations amend The Motor Fuel (Composition and Content) Regulations 1999 to require the introduction of E10 petrol (petrol with up to 10% ethanol) at filling stations in Northern Ireland. Following the successful introduction of E10 in Great Britain in September 2021, this subsequent amendment will bring the ethanol content of standard grade petrol in Northern Ireland in line with rest of the UK. The Regulations also ensure the ongoing availability of E5 petrol (petrol with 5% or less ethanol) for those with vehicles and equipment unsuitable for use with E10.

At present, standard grade petrol in Northern Ireland contains up to 5% renewable ethanol (referred to as E5). Increasing the renewable ethanol content to up to 10% (E10) can reduce the CO₂ emissions from a petrol vehicle by the equivalent of around 2% per mile travelled. This, combined with increases to overall renewable fuel targets could cut overall transport CO₂ emissions by a further 750,000 tonnes a year, the equivalent of taking around 350,000 cars off the road. Transport is one of the biggest contributing sectors to carbon emissions in Northern Ireland, where 59% of new cars registered in 2019 were petrol powered – the reductions achieved through the introduction of E10 will help decarbonise the existing vehicle fleet and help meet climate change targets.

Introducing E10 will also help support UK farmers and domestic ethanol industry, reducing reliance on imported oil in accordance with the aims of the UK Energy Security Strategy and the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. Producing ethanol also creates the valuable by-products of high-protein animal feed and stored CO₂. These reduce reliance on imported products, in line with the government's Bioeconomy Strategy.

The Regulations are published in accordance with the procedure required by Schedule 8 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and agreed with Parliament. The draft Regulations will be available for review for 28 days before they are laid, and debates scheduled.

These Regulations were subject to open consultation. The policy detail, government response and impact assessment are available.

TREASURY**■ Notification of Contingent Liability**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak):

[[HCWS21](#)]

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England ("the Bank") decided at its meeting ending on 03 February 2022 to reduce the stocks of UK government bonds and sterling non-financial investment-grade corporate bonds held in the Asset Purchase Facility (APF) by ceasing to reinvest maturing securities. The MPC also agreed that the

Bank of England should initiate a programme of corporate bond sales to be completed no earlier than towards the end of 2023 that should unwind fully the stock of corporate bond purchases.

In response to this decision, the Governor and I jointly agreed that, as the size of APF holdings reduces, the authorised maximum size for asset purchases should be adjusted to reflect the size of the portfolio every six months.

Since 3 February 2022, the total stock of purchased assets of the APF have fallen from £895bn to £866.6bn. Following this, and in line with the approach agreed with the Governor in February 2022, the authorised maximum total size of asset purchases within the APF has been reduced from £895bn to £866.6bn.

The risk control framework previously agreed with the Bank will remain in place, and HM Treasury will continue to monitor risks to public funds from the APF through regular risk oversight meetings and enhanced information sharing with the Bank.

There will continue to be an opportunity for HM Treasury to provide views to the MPC on the design of the schemes within the APF, as they affect the Government's broader economic objectives and may pose risks to the Exchequer.

The Government will continue to indemnify the Bank, the APF and its directors from any losses arising out of, or in connection with, the facility. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal supply procedure.

A full departmental Minute has been laid in the House of Commons providing more detail on this contingent liability.