



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 17 May 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:34 P.M., 17 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Northern Ireland Protocol

Layla Moran: [1316]

To ask the Attorney General, what legal advice has she received on the Government's proposals to adjust or remove the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Alex Chalk:

It is a longstanding convention, accepted by governments of all parties, not to disclose whether the Attorney General has given legal advice or the contents of any advice. This extends to not commenting on the content of internal discussions in relation to the Attorney General's function as a Law Officer and chief legal adviser to the Government. This convention protects the Law Officers' ability to give full and frank legal advice on some of the most contentious and difficult issues the Government will be considering.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Coronavirus

Dr Matthew Offord: [215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people have been disqualified as company directors because of misuse of covid-19 loans scheme.

Paul Scully:

The Insolvency Service has secured 159 disqualifications of company directors as a result of COVID-19 financial support scheme abuse. This includes abuse of the Bounce Back Loan (BBL) Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), and Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS).

The Insolvency Service publishes official statistics of its enforcement outcomes, which provide a breakdown of figures in relation to COVID-19 financial support scheme abuse. This is available [here](#).

Dr Matthew Offord: [216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much and what proportion of funds obtained fraudulently through covid-19 loan schemes have since been (a) returned to or (b) reclaimed by his Department.

Paul Scully:

As of 30th April 2022 a total of £4,022,685 of funds, obtained fraudulently through covid-19 loan schemes, has been recovered by the National Investigation Service. Of

the funds recovered, £3,010,831 was returned to lenders and the remaining £1,011,854 has been or is in the process of being returned to the Government.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of covid-19 loans that were claimed fraudulently but cannot be retrieved.

Paul Scully:

We continue to work with lenders and enforcement agencies to recover fraudulently obtained loans.

The Department's 2020-2021 Annual Report & Accounts has a central estimate for fraud and error loss of relating to the Bounce Back Loan Scheme specifically. We do not hold a central estimate for fraud and error loss for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme or the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

The final level of loss will not be known for some time, as not all suspected fraud will necessarily translate into a fraud occurrence, and because some fraudulently obtained funds will be recovered or repaid.

■ **Cancer: Immunotherapy**

Jim Shannon: [\[250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to support research into cancer immune therapies.

George Freeman:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon on 25 March 2022 to Question [142442](#).

■ **Companies House: Reform**

Justin Madders: [\[811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 4 February 2022 to Question 113150, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to give Companies House powers to query and check information and identity verification.

Paul Scully:

The Government will be introducing a Bill on Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency this parliamentary session. The Bill will include reforms to broaden the Registrar of Companies' powers so that she becomes a more active gatekeeper over company creation and custodian of more reliable data – including new powers to check, remove or decline information submitted to, or already on, the Company Register. The Bill will also include identity verification checks for people who manage, own and control companies and other UK registered entities. This will improve the

accuracy of Companies House data, to support business decisions and law enforcement investigations.

■ **Construction: Finance**

Debbie Abrahams: [764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to reform the practice of retentions payments in the construction industry.

Debbie Abrahams: [765]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the scale of the loss of retention monies by construction small and medium sized enterprises since January 2018.

Lee Rowley:

While difficult to measure fully and comprehensively, the Government is aware of this important issue and continues to work with both officials and the Construction Leadership Council to implement a solution.

■ **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme**

Dr Matthew Offord: [218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the number of companies that claimed loans under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme without ever publishing company results before the pandemic.

Paul Scully:

The Department does not hold this data. In order to be eligible for a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan, a business had to have a borrowing proposal which the lender would consider viable, were it not for the pandemic.

■ **Coronavirus: Research**

Jim Shannon: [252]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of how the model of collaborative funding for covid-19 research at pace might be used to fund other research areas.

George Freeman:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 15 February 2022 to Question [119577](#).

■ **Disability Aids: Research**

Vicky Foxcroft: [365]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 3 February 2022 to Question 112643 on Disability Aids, what progress

his Department has made towards setting research and development budgets through to 2024-25.

George Freeman:

We have set out how BEIS' record £39.8 billion R&D budget will be allocated across our partner organisations over the next three years in our '[BEIS R&D: partner organisation allocation 2022/2023 to 2024/2025](#)' report published on 14 March.

BEIS will now be working with all partner organisations to determine detailed allocations within their envelopes, including at council level for UK Research and Innovation. Details of funding for specific programmes will be agreed by BEIS and partner organisations and set out in due course.

■ **Financial Services: Insolvency**

Owen Thompson:

[\[1235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will introduce new protections for policy holders with companies in administration, to ensure that they are reimbursed the full amount of their policy is worth if that policy becomes invalidated through no fault of their own.

Paul Scully:

Consumers who hold a policy with an insolvent company are usually classed as unsecured creditors. Other unsecured creditors might include employees and trade suppliers. Changing the order of ranking for policy holders would have a detrimental effect on these other unsecured creditors as well as having wider implications for the economy, including on the cost of borrowing for firms.

The Government continually reviews the insolvency framework and will make changes where it is necessary to do so. Insurance and other related policies, however, are often protected by other methods, including regulatory regimes which provide statutory protections for consumers.

■ **Housing: Repairs and Maintenance**

Sarah Olney:

[\[1264\]](#)

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:

In order to participate in government schemes, an installer business must be TrustMark registered, and PAS 2030:2019 or Microgeneration Certification Scheme certified. There are 1,690 installer businesses that meet those requirements, as of 28th April 2022. There are also 2,832 TrustMark registered Retrofit Coordinators and Retrofit Assessors.

■ **Insolvency Service: Birkenhead**

Mick Whitley: [\[960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether an equality impact assessment has been carried out for the closure of the Insolvency Service office in Birkenhead.

Paul Scully:

As part of the business case to restructure its estate, the Insolvency Service has carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on the plans to close offices including Birkenhead.

Mick Whitley: [\[961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the (a) local Chambers of Commerce or (b) Federation of Small Businesses was consulted on the decision to close the Insolvency Service office in Birkenhead.

Paul Scully:

The agency is engaging stakeholders as part of an on-going process.

■ **Living Wage**

Rachael Maskell: [\[855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing measures to ensure that no one receives less than the real living wage.

Paul Scully:

The National Minimum Wage is the statutory minimum rate of pay in the UK. The rates are set on the independent and expert advice of the Low Pay Commission, who take account of the impact on business and the economy. The Government commends all businesses who pay their workers more.

■ **Mineworkers' Pension Scheme**

Martyn Day: [\[344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's Response to the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21, Mineworkers' Pension Scheme, published on 29 June 2021, HC 386, What his timescale is for ensuring that Mineworker's pensions are paid and scheme members receive their full entitlement.

Greg Hands:

The Government guarantee ensures that all members of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme receive their full entitlement.

■ **Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board**

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress the Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board has made on considering the information and guidance available on pregnancy and maternity discrimination to ensure it remains relevant and is effective in supporting employers and employees.

Paul Scully:

The Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board has met on three occasions. It has agreed its scope and terms of reference and has had the opportunity to review the Health and Safety Executive guidance on pregnant women and risk assessments. At the most recent meeting the Board was able to consider the issues raised through Members' helplines and will use this to inform future work.

■ **Research**

Jim Shannon:

[\[249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to develop the UK R&D Roadmap into the forthcoming R&D Plan.

George Freeman:

The Government continues to implement and deliver the R&D Roadmap and subsequent People and Culture and Innovation Strategies, including through establishment of a Business Innovation Forum to galvanise action from the business community.

Publication of the Levelling Up White Paper has set out how the Government will maximise the contribution of innovation to levelling up by building on existing and emerging strengths across the country.

Progress continues on the Independently led Reviews of Research Bureaucracy and the Research, Development and Innovation Organisational Landscape.

■ **Researchfish: Data Protection**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[239\]](#)

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 reported breach of GDPR by Researchfish in respect of researchers who publicly criticised the application on social media.

George Freeman:

BEIS and its partner organisations take data protection very seriously. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) have issued a [public statement](#) on recent Researchfish activity.

BEIS and UKRI continue to work together to ensure systems and processes reinforce compliance with GDPR and that appropriate data protection guidance and training is available for all staff.

■ Science: Research

Jim Shannon: [\[251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to support scientific research consortia as a future funding model for domestic R&D.

George Freeman:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire on 31 March 2022 to Question [146649](#).

■ Scottish Limited Partnerships: Registration

Jonathan Reynolds: [\[753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many new Scottish limited partnerships have been registered in each of the last 10 years.

Paul Scully:

The official statistics on companies and the total size of the register are made publicly available online by Companies House. The most recent data can be found in this link [here](#) and shows that 2,270 limited partnerships were registered in Scotland in 2012/13, 3,499 in 2013/14, 3,884 in 2014/15 5,706 in 2015/16, 4,932 in 2016/17, 2,689 in 2017/18, 751 in 2018/19, 657 in 2019/20, and 591 in 2020/21.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pensions

Stephanie Peacock: [\[1272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications to (a) the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and (b) War Pensions have been rejected as a result of mental health diagnoses not being from psychiatrists of a consultant grade.

Leo Docherty:

The information requested is not held electronically and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Armed Forces: Bullying

Stephanie Peacock: [\[1280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department provides for people who have experienced assault or harassment as part of a military initiation.

Leo Docherty:

Initiation ceremonies are prohibited within Defence and are not tolerated. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to the welfare of its people and anyone who finds themselves a victim of any form of assault or harassment can access a range of support. This includes from the Service Police, from welfare officers, the chain of command, and pastoral support via the chaplaincy. Assisting Officers are also available to support people where cases are being investigated. In addition, we have an independent bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline run by trained professionals and local Diversity and Inclusion Advisers.

Independent support is also available via the charitable sector. For example, SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity) provides help to all Service personnel and veterans with mental or emotional health concerns. SSAFA can signpost individuals to specific organisations for further targeted support. In addition, the MOD works with The Samaritans and other charities to support Serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

Stephanie Peacock:[\[1281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to prevent assault and harassment occurring as part of military initiation rituals.

Leo Docherty:

Initiation ceremonies are prohibited within Defence and any form of involvement is considered unacceptable. We are clear that our people should not organise, participate in or be present at any form of initiation ceremony. Soliciting or coercing another person to undertake any such activity will also not be tolerated. Allegations concerning initiation ceremonies will be formally investigated, including by the Service Police if a crime is alleged to have been committed. If substantiated it may result in disciplinary, administrative, or misconduct action being taken.

The Ministry of Defence is committed to the welfare of its people, and we are taking a wide range of action to prevent any form of assault or harassment occurring, including through mandatory training.

■ Armed Forces: Helicopters**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[77\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of new NHM medium lift helicopters required for defence operations by the (a) Army and (b) RAF] in the next three years; what his timescale is for reaching a decision on the number of NHM to be procured by the Armed Forces; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

Current medium lift rotary wing tasks are being undertaken by existing capabilities. I expect that the formal competition, through the release of a Contract Notice will be announced soon.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Luke Pollard:

[\[1338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many reports of (a) leaking roofs, (b) broken boilers, (c) broken cookers, and (d) vermin have been recorded in Service Family Accommodation, excluding Substitute Service Family Accommodation, in each year since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

The category information held centrally in respect of call-outs since November 2014 and can be found in the table below;

PERIOD	ROOFING CALL OUTS	HEATING ENGINEER CALL OUTS	ELECTRICIAN CALL OUTS	PEST CONTROL CALL OUTS
1 Nov 2014 - 31 Oct 15	5,771	55,615	62,088	4,573
1 Nov 15-31 Oct 16	6,022	57,049	60,666	4,937
1 Nov 16- 31 Oct 17	4,647	59,561	59,875	4,436
1 Nov 17- 31 Oct 18	4,836	62,389	62,970	4,392
1 Nov 18-31 Oct 19	4,828	57,096	62,556	4,563
1 Nov 19- 31 Oct 20	5,654	54,867	63,000	4,440
1 Nov 20-31 Oct 21	5,302	55,023	65,290	4,814
1 Nov 21-31 Mar 22	2,312	26,397	27,121	1,662

■ Armed Forces: Offences against Children

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[1278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish all anonymised data his Department holds on the number of armed forces personnel who have experienced childhood abuse.

Leo Docherty:

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ Armed Forces: Recruitment**John Healey:**[\[1093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department's officials first learned of issues relating to the Capita run recruitment website for the armed forces.

Leo Docherty:

The Department first learned of potential issues, relating to the unauthorised disclosure of Army candidates' personal data, on the afternoon of 14 March 2022.

John Healey:[\[1094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he learned of issues relating to the Capita-run recruitment website for the armed forces.

Leo Docherty:

The Department first informed the Secretary of State for Defence, via a Ministerial Submission, on the morning of 16 March 2022.

John Healey:[\[1095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects technical issues with the armed forces recruitment website to be resolved.

Leo Docherty:

The intent is for the Internet Candidate Portal (ICP) to be operational by the end of May 2022. This has ensured that sufficient time has been allowed for appropriate hardening and testing of the Defence Recruitment System, prior to reconnection of the ICP.

John Healey:[\[1096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had direct discussions with Capita on technical issues relating to the armed forces recruitment website.

Leo Docherty:

The Army, in collaboration with Defence Digital, have worked closely in conjunction with Capita, throughout the investigation into the Defence Recruitment System issue.

I receive regular updates from the Army and I continue to monitor the situation.

John Healey:[\[1097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department is incurring costs to address technical issues with the Capita-run armed forces website.

Leo Docherty:

At this moment in time, as the joint investigation is still ongoing, the breakdown of the costs incurred is yet to be fully determined.

■ Armed Forces: Uniforms**Daisy Cooper:** [\[965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the Government's position is in response to the offer from ECOPEL, the manufacturers of faux fur, to support his Department with unlimited free faux bear fur until 2030.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question 121824 on 21 February 2022 to the hon. Member for York Central (Rachel Maskell). A faux fur alternative has to meet the required standards.

Attachments:

1. Queen's Guards: Uniforms [UIN 121824.docx]

■ Army: Recruitment**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[80\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the British Army recruitment website will be fully functional.

Leo Docherty:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 April 2022 to Question 149442 to the hon. Member for Wrexham (Sarah Atherton).

Attachments:

1. Army Recruitment [UIN 149442.docx]

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[81\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of how long the British Army recruitment website has not been fully functional.

Leo Docherty:

The Defence Recruitment System (DRS) has not been fully functional since 16 March 2022.

DRS was reconnected internally to the MOD Core Network (MCN) on 11 April 2022 and Recruiting Group (RG) staff are able to process current applications.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[82\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of malfunctions on the British Army website on overall recruitment to the armed forces.

Leo Docherty:

The Department, Army and Capita are working collaboratively and at pace to bring the Defence Recruitment System (DRS) back online, balancing cyber risks against the risk to Army capabilities of a reduction in inflow. Inflow into the Army remains a high priority.

This incident will, however, have a limited effect on recruitment this year. During the incident, DRS was disconnected from the both the intranet and internet. In today's recruiting environment, candidates favour an online application process, over the telephone-based or paper-based Business Continuity Plan in use to mitigate the loss of service.

The Army has been in contact with candidates in the recruitment pipeline, to keep them aware and engaged on next steps on their applications. This will continue as the functionality of DRS is restored to Full Operating Capability.

Mr Kevan Jones: **[83]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether public money was paid to Total Jobs UK as a result of the British Army recruitment website not achieving full functionality.

Leo Docherty:

The Recruiting Partnering Project (RPP) has a longstanding relationship with Total Jobs UK as part of its overall media plan.

The current advert on Total Jobs UK is therefore part of "Business As Usual" activity with an existing provider.

The costs for this advert are currently being met out of the extant RPP budget.

To date, no extra public money has been spent on the advert presented on Total Jobs UK.

■ Artillery: Armoured Fighting Vehicles

Jack Lopresti: **[195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 155693, on Artillery: Armoured Fighting Vehicles, whether tracked as well as wheeled vehicles will be considered for the Mobile Fires Platform.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave in response to his question 155693 which explained that we are evaluating all potential vehicle types against the requirement for Mobile Fires Platform.

Attachments:

1. Artillery; Armoured Fighting Vehicles [UIN 155693.docx]

Jack Lopresti: **[196]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 155693, on Artillery: Armoured Fighting Vehicles, what the timeframe is for the finalisation of key performance indicators, the request for proposal and contract award for the Mobile Fires artillery programme.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 25 April 2022 in response to his Question 155692.

Attachments:

1. Artillery Procurement [155692 - Artillery Procurement.docx]

■ Australia: LE TacCIS Programme

John Healey: [\[620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential possibility that the Battlefield Management Application programme could pose a security risk.

John Healey: [\[621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with the Australian government on security concerns relating to the Elbit Systems Battlefield Management Application.

John Healey: [\[622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his Australian counterpart on security concerns relating to the Elbit Systems Battlefield Management Application.

John Healey: [\[623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions his (a) Department and (b) British Army representatives have had with their Australian counterparts on security concerns relating to the Elbit Systems Battlefield Management Application.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence makes frequent assessments of the security risks of all software products, either in use or in development. It will not share details of those assessments for operational security reasons.

■ BOWMAN Combat Radio System

John Healey: [\[54\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the Bowman communications system to be retired.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer I gave on 10 September 2021 to Question 46934 to the right hon. Member for Rayleigh and Wickford (Mr Mark Francois) and on 8 September 2021 to Question 40637 to the Rt hon. Member for North Durham (Mr Kevan Jones).

Attachments:

1. Bowman Combat Radio System [46934 - BOWMAN Combat Radio System.docx]

■ European Fighter Aircraft: Decommissioning

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will reconsider the retirement of the first tranche of Typhoon.

Jeremy Quin:

The RAF is at the vanguard of a transformation to drive forward cutting-edge equipment programmes. This requires us to retire equipment that has increasingly limited utility against the most sophisticated combat air platforms. Tranche one Typhoon airframes simply do not have the necessary upgrade potential for this scale of combat due to their baseline architecture.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[71\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent progress has been made on the Fleet Solid Support programme.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer I gave on 26 January 2022 to Question 108625 to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mick Whitley).

Attachments:

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships [UIN 108625.docx]

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[72\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has set requirements on the amount of UK content which must be used for the Fleet Solid Support programme.

Jeremy Quin:

We have been clear that a significant proportion of the build work will be carried out in the UK, including integration of the ships in a UK shipyard.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[73\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the social value requirements for the Fleet Solid Support programme have been outlined by his Department to those parties engaged in the competition as of 10 May 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

Yes, it is an objective of the Fleet Solid Support ship competition to deliver UK social value in recognition of the opportunities for prosperity and levelling-up that the programme presents, maximising the social value contribution shipbuilding can make. This includes encouraging investment whilst balancing the need for value for money and a fully compliant solution.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the social value criteria used on the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract once it has been concluded.

Jeremy Quin:

The Social Value benefits offered by the winning bidder will be made public once the contract is placed for the Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships. It would not be appropriate to publish the social value evaluation criteria used in the FSS competition, as it may be prejudicial to the Ministry of Defence's commercial interests and its ability to conduct competitions and negotiations for future procurements.

■ Greece: Defence

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support UK defence exports to Greece.

Jeremy Quin:

The Government is actively supporting a number of defence export campaigns to Greece. I have personally made four visits to Greece in support of our strong relationship and partnership/export campaigns over the last two years and was able to raise these most recently with the Greek Defence Secretary and senior officials when I visited on 18 March 2022.

■ India: Technology

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[70\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department plans to take to support India's requirements for new technology.

Jeremy Quin:

The UK and India are due to finalise a Letter of Arrangement between the UK's Defence Science & Technology Laboratory and India's Defence Research & Development Organisation. This will help to deliver advanced security capabilities through joint research, co-design, co-development and joint production of defence technology and systems.

■ LE TacCIS Programme: Costs

John Healey: [\[55\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the full-life cost is of the Land Environment Tactical Communication and Information System.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 24 Jan 2022 in response to Question 105382 to the right hon. Member for North Durham (Mr Kevan Jones).

Attachments:

1. LE TacCIS Programme: Costs [105382 - LE TacCIS Programme.docx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Bullying and Harassment**Mr Kevan Jones:****[644]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to reduce incidences of bullying, harassment and discrimination in his Department.

Leo Docherty:

Unacceptable behaviour, which includes bullying, harassment and discrimination, is not tolerated in Defence. Those who fail to meet our values and standards will be dealt with appropriately, which includes the use of administrative, disciplinary or misconduct action.

Defence has a wide programme of work ongoing to prevent and tackle unacceptable behaviour. This includes implementing the recommendations of the Wigston and Gray Reviews, and those made by the House of Commons Defence Committee in their Women in the Armed Forces report.

Our behaviour and complaints policies were updated in June 2021 with a strong focus on prevention. We have introduced mandatory climate assessments across Defence; these are a tool to help leaders understand the local culture and identify areas for improvement. Access to Diversity and Inclusion Advisers has been widened to support people affected by unacceptable behaviour and resolve issues at the lowest level. We have also established a bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline staffed independently with trained professionals. And we have mandated active bystander training to equip people with the skills to intervene should they witness incidents. We continue to update our training and communications approach to drive improvements in our culture and behaviour.

■ Ministry of Defence: Empty Property**Jamie Stone:****[409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much it costs his Department on an annual basis to pay for and maintain empty properties owned by his Department; how much and what proportion of that amount is spent on renting those properties; and what the total annual cost is of his Department's residential property portfolio.

Jeremy Quin:

The cost of holding and maintaining empty Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties managed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in the UK in Financial Year 2021-22 was £37.9 million; of this, £33.8 million is attributed to rental costs.

The total cost of the MOD's UK residential property portfolio for Financial Year 2021-22 was £429 million.

The MOD has an active management programme to continue to reduce the number of empty properties it holds. The SFA void rate has reduced from 23% in 2018 to c18% on 1 May 2022. Currently, in the UK, 1,100 vacant houses are earmarked for

disposal and 2,600 are being kept vacant currently for modernisation and improvements. 25,000 moves were managed across the UK Defence Estate during the year 2021-22.

■ Nuclear Weapons: Procurement

Mark Pritchard: [\[138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on the replacement of the UK's nuclear warhead upgrade programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The programme to replace the UK's Sovereign Nuclear Warhead continues to progress and, following approval of the Strategic Outline Case in September 2021, has now entered its concept phase.

■ RAF Cosford: Training

Mark Pritchard: [\[136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the timetable for expanding RAF Cosford training facilities to develop the new Centre for Training Excellence.

Jeremy Quin:

The situation has not changed since the answer I provided the hon. Member on 28 April 2022 to Question 158902.

Attachments:

1. RAF Cosford [UIN 158902.docx]

■ RAF Lakenheath

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the US Department of Defense's Military Construction Program FY 2023 Budget and the proposal it contains for infrastructure investment at a special weapons storage site in the UK, what discussions he has had with the US Government on the potential use of RAF Lakenheath as such a storage site.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence is unable to comment on US spending decisions and capabilities, which are a matter for the US Government. It remains longstanding UK and NATO policy to neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at a given location.

■ RAF Waddington: Unmanned Air Vehicles

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether ground stations for the UK's Predator fleet will be transferred to RAF Waddington by 2024.

Jeremy Quin:

The Predator B is known as Reaper in UK service. The ground control stations for the Reaper fleet are split between RAF Waddington and Creech Air Force Base in the United States.

One of the US based ground control stations will be transferred to RAF Waddington for use as a simulator. The remainder will stay at their current US location to retain operational output and provide resilience until Reaper goes out of service in 2024, after which all the ground control stations will be disposed.

■ Russia: Ukraine**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[78\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the UK's ability to support its logistics chain in relation to its Enhanced Forward Presence in (a) Poland and (b) Estonia.

James Heappey:

As framework nation of NATO's enhanced forward presence in Estonia, the UK has successfully maintained two battlegroups in country since early March, increasing our previous presence in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Throughout this period our logistics chain has supported circa 1,800 personnel in Estonia and 250 in Poland (130 in support of the US-led Enhanced Forward Presence) alongside tanks and armoured fighting vehicles. To support this increase in personnel we have doubled our resupply deliveries when required, demonstrating our continued ability to successfully support the logistics chain for UK Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP).

Over the five years we have been the framework nation, the logistic support function has overseen the deployment of 10 battlegroups and successfully carried out approximately 10 Strategic Sealifts, and circa 80 flights in support of Strategic Airlifts. My assessment is that the logistics chain will continue to allow UK deployments in support of Allies in Estonia and Poland.

■ Trident Submarines**Mark Pritchard:**[\[137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent progress has been made on the Dreadnought programme as part of the UK's strategic nuclear defence.

Jeremy Quin:

On 9 May 2022, the Ministry of Defence announced entry into the next and most significant phase of the Dreadnought programme, known as Delivery Phase 3 (DP3), and has committed over £2 billion in initial contracts with its Alliance Partners, BAE Systems and Rolls Royce.

DP3 will include commitments to see the First of Class, HMS Dreadnought, exit the Barrow-in-Furness shipyard for sea trials so that she will be ready for patrol in the early 2030s. DP3 will in addition lay the foundations and progress the work for the delivery of the remaining three Dreadnought boats.

■ Trident Submarines: Finance**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the contingency budget applied to the Dreadnought programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review estimated that the Dreadnought programme is likely to cost a total of £31 billion (including inflation, over the 35 years of the programme) and set a contingency of £10 billion. The programme remains on track to deliver to schedule and within this budget.

■ USA: Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[1017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of Government cooperation with the US next generation air dominance programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The UK and US have a long-standing Combat Air relationship, having operated together for decades on many of the world's most pressing security challenges. Interoperability with our allies and partners remains at the heart of our approach and we work to ensure it continues across our current and future combat air fleets.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband: Birmingham****Steve McCabe:** [\[600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of household's access to ultrafast full fibre broadband in Birmingham.

Steve McCabe: [\[601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many homes have access to ultrafast full fibre broadband in Birmingham.

Steve McCabe: [\[602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans she has to help increase access to ultrafast full fibre broadband in Birmingham.

Julia Lopez:

Thanks to the government's work to promote competition and investment and bust barriers in the UK telecoms market, over 93% premises in Birmingham can now access the fastest gigabit-capable networks.

The commercial rollout is continuing at record pace, and for those premises where private sector deployment is not viable without subsidy, our £5bn Project Gigabit will contribute to nationwide coverage, with Birmingham and the Black Country set to benefit in phase 3 of the programme.

■ Gambling

Carolyn Harris: [\[336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her planned timetable is for the Gambling Commission to assess the single customer view technology trial; and whether a range of technology solutions for online gambling affordability assessment will be considered.

Carolyn Harris: [\[337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether (a) the Gambling Commission and (b) officials in her Department have met providers of online gambling affordability checks technology for the purposes of understanding the potential merits of alternative approaches to the single customer view project.

Carolyn Harris: [\[338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government plans to introduce online gambling affordability assessments as part of the gambling white paper, to be conducted independently of the industry.

Carolyn Harris: [\[339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether (a) the Gambling Commission and (b) her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of technology such as open banking to remove the need for customers to hand over financial information for affordability checks to multiple online gambling operators.

Chris Philp:

The Government and Gambling Commission are exploring how technology and data can be harnessed in a number of areas to better prevent harmful gambling online. We recognise the role that data sharing could play in supporting interventions across multiple operators, as well as the benefits of considering a player's financial circumstances as part of a rounded assessment of whether they are at risk of harm. The government's white paper on the Gambling Act Review will be published in the coming weeks.

It is important that any data-driven protections are proportionate, handle data securely, and are implemented in a way that is acceptable to consumers. Officials from the Department and the Commission have therefore met a range of technology providers to understand potential delivery options, including those which may cause less friction in the customer journey such as checks facilitated by open banking.

The Single Customer View project is currently in a pilot stage with GAMSTOP, which operates the national online self-exclusion scheme, as technical provider. This is taking place within the Information Commissioner's Office regulatory sandbox, and

progress will be closely monitored by Government and regulators. There will be ongoing evaluations once data sharing has started. The Gambling Commission's most recent update surrounding progress and next steps can be found [here](#), and the Information Commissioner's update on the sandbox can be found [here](#).

Justin Madders: [808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timetable is for the publication of the forthcoming Gambling Review White Paper.

Chris Philp:

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

■ **Gambling: Taxation**

Scott Benton: [506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government has considered introducing a non-statutory levy on the betting and gaming industry for research, education and treatment which has a lower rate for land-based operators and takes account of the higher fixed costs and numbers of jobs they support compared to online operators.

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 in the coming weeks.

■ **Leisure: Facilities**

Julie Elliott: [246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of rising energy costs on publicly-owned leisure facilities, including (a) swimming pools and (b) gyms.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the importance of ensuring public access to leisure facilities, which are great spaces for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy, and which play an important role within communities.

This is why throughout the pandemic we provided the £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund which ensured the survival of leisure centres and swimming pools during the pandemic, and supported their reopening after the pandemic.

We also 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 ongoing responsibility of providing access to public

leisure facilities lies at Local Authority level, and the government continues to encourage Local Authorities to invest in leisure facilities.

■ **Platinum Jubilee 2022: Medals**

Alicia Kearns:

[\[982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether St John Ambulance volunteers will be awarded the Platinum Jubilee Medal.

Chris Philp:

To qualify for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal recipients must be in an eligible public sector role in a frontline emergency service accessed via a call to the 999 emergency telephone number, or equivalent, and this does not include St John Ambulance volunteers.

■ **Public Records: Electronic Government**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to amend the Public Records Act so that the statute includes information held, transmitted or recorded through electronic communications.

Julia Lopez:

There are currently no plans to amend the Public Records Act regarding information held, transmitted or recorded through electronic communications. Section 10 (1) of the Act already encompasses not only written records but 'records conveying information by any other means whatsoever' including information held and recorded through electronic communications.

Guidance is also provided in Section 46 Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued by me as the Secretary of State for DCMS under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The Code was updated and published in July 2021 (as outlined in the Written Statement of 15 July 2021, HCWS185). It provides principle-based guidance for relevant public authorities on contemporary information management practice in the modern digital working environment.

There also exists a variety of supporting guidance at both departmental and cross government level that provides advice for ministers, private offices and civil servants on their record keeping responsibilities. This guidance is kept under review and updated in response to changes in technology and ways of working.

EDUCATION■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Peter Gibson:****[453]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of using audiobooks to engage wider participation in reading to support the Levelling Up agenda.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department wants children to develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information. Research suggests that reading for pleasure is more important for children's educational development than their parents' level of education. The national curriculum states that teachers are expected to encourage pupils to develop the habit of reading widely. It emphasises the importance of pupils listening to, discussing, and as their fluency increases, reading for themselves a wide range of stories, poems, plays and information books. The department has not undertaken research on the specific contribution or role of audiobooks, however, welcomes their use alongside other formats of books.

In March, the department published the Schools White Paper. This sets out our long-term vision for a school system that helps every child to fulfil their potential by ensuring that they receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

At its heart is the Government's Levelling Up mission. This aims that by 2030, 90% of children will leave primary school having achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. As part of this, the department is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards, ensuring all children can read fluently and with understanding.

Further information on the Schools White Paper can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-white-paper-delivers-real-action-to-level-up-education>.

■ **Children and Young People: Internet****Ian Lavery:****[257]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made recent representations to Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of allocating funding to ensure that children and young people have free internet access in households on universal credit.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department is supportive of the work done by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to promote access to social tariffs for households on universal credit. Social tariffs offer low-cost landline and broadband services for those on certain means-tested benefits. In April 2022, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport wrote to providers asking them to do more to promote their social tariffs to ensure low-income households know about the support available. The government will continue to engage industry in increasing awareness of the social tariffs available moving forward. In September 2021, the

government partnered with industry leaders to launch the Digital Inclusion Impact Group to tackle digital exclusion. One of the pilot programmes is Dell Donate to Educate, which supports children with the right access to technology at school and at home.

■ Children in Care

Andrew Lewer:

[443]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his Department's policy that Local Education Authorities must report how frequently they assess the appropriateness of education services for looked after children.

Will Quince:

Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, including those placed outside of their authority. They are required to appoint an officer, the local authority Virtual School Head, to ensure this duty is properly discharged.

Statutory guidance on the implementation of these duties can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>.

This requires Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children's Services to ensure that the authority's Children in Care Council regularly considers educational experiences, as reported by looked-after children, and is able to respond effectively to any issues.

Further, the guidance is clear that the Virtual School Head should ensure that the educational attainment and progress of children looked after by the local authority is monitored and evaluated as if those children attended a single school. It is also clear that there are systems in place to report regularly through the authority's corporate parenting structures. It requires Virtual School Heads to publish an annual report, which should include details of how they have managed the Pupil Premium Plus and Early Years Pupil Premium for looked-after children, and evidence of how the funding has supported the achievement of the children looked after by their authority. Ofsted inspectors are required to ask for the Virtual School Annual Report as part of the framework for Inspections of Local Authority's Children's Services.

■ Children: Speech and Language Therapy

Geraint Davies:

[578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether mainstream schools are able to use the School-Led tutoring grant to pay for additional speech and language therapy support, where children have fallen behind in their speech, language and communication development as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Robin Walker:

There are a limited number of speech and language therapists (SALTs) available in the sector and their remit must remain on providing speech and language therapy.

Therefore, the school-led tutoring (SLT) grant cannot be used to help subsidise the cost of SALTs. This applies to all schools, including special schools

However, special schools can use their higher rate of recovery premium funding to help subsidise the cost of SALTs should they wish to do so.

In special schools, the SLT grant can be used for tutoring to support catch-up in the broader curriculum, such as practising and consolidating techniques in speech and language therapy. In practice, tutors and internal staff will understand the pupils' individual learning needs and can ensure support is tailored accordingly. They may also choose to support pupils further by incorporating exercises set by the SALT into the tutoring session. It is important to note that this provision must be additional to a pupil's existing learning programme set out by the school or an education, health and care plan.

■ Department for Education: Staff

Stephen Morgan: [\[432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the total number of operational desks is in each of his Department's offices in England as of 10 May 2022.

Stephen Morgan: [\[433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many members of staff are based in each of his Department's offices in England as of 10 May 2022.

Stephen Morgan: [\[434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what staff attendance levels were in his Department's offices in England for each month this year.

Michelle Donelan:

The department operates from 12 locations, spread across the country. The total number of operational desks is 4,525.

SITE	DESKS (AS AT 6 MAY 2022)
London	1,425*
Sheffield	790
Coventry	1,113
Darlington	272
Manchester	500
Nottingham	164
Bristol	95
Watford	24

SITE	DESKS (AS AT 6 MAY 2022)
Newcastle	36
Cambridge	42
Croydon	40
Leeds	24
Totals	4,525

*Desk capacity for London has since been reduced to 1,100, which reflects the capacity at the site for department staff once planned tenants occupy the building.

There are 8,009 full time equivalent (FTE) employed by the department. This includes a number of remote workers who regularly attend other 'work settings' as part of their role, for example schools, colleges and learning providers.

SITE	FTE (AS AT 6 MAY 2022)
London	2,268
Sheffield	1,489
Coventry	1,257
Darlington	768
Manchester	1,249
Nottingham	343
Bristol	299
Watford	23
Newcastle	120
Cambridge	35
Croydon	48
Leeds	110
Totals	8,009

The department has introduced a policy of hybrid working to capture the benefits of both remote working and office attendance.

Since January 2022, attendance numbers have steadily increased, as staff have settled into hybrid working patterns. The vast majority of staff are now regularly attending their designated office.

The current average daily occupancy, across all 12 offices, is circa 60 to 70%. This is similar to pre-pandemic occupancy levels.

■ Education: Brighton

Sir Christopher Chope: **[1083]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish his Department's review of Brighton and Hove Council's Anti-Racist Education Strategy; and if he will make an assessment of whether Brighton and Hove Council is fully compliant with his Department's guidelines on political impartiality in schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department has worked with the sector to publish guidance that supports schools to teach about complex political issues, in line with their legal duties on political impartiality. This guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools>.

On being made aware of the issues raised in respect of Brighton and Hove City Council's strategy, department officials contacted the local authority to understand the detail of the matter and to ensure that the local authority was aware of their duties on political impartiality. It is for local authorities to ensure that they meet their legal requirements in respect of political impartiality in schools and to respond to complaints. The department would not normally intervene in a complaint about a local authority unless the local complaints process had been followed to conclusion. The department has not carried out a review of the strategy and is not planning to do so at this stage.

■ Overseas Students: Ukraine

Munira Wilson: **[1352]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the open letter sent by the Minister of State for Higher and Further Education to Ukrainian students on 27 April 2022, what criteria his Department plans to use to distribute the £4 million of additional funding being made available to universities to support Ukrainian students.

Michelle Donelan:

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and I have asked the Office for Students' (OfS) to use up to £4 million of funding in the 2022/23 financial year, through the Strategic Priorities Grant, for English higher education providers to support Ukrainian nationals and Ukrainian-domiciled students whose usual financial support has been impacted by events in Ukraine.

The process for dispersing this funding to providers can be found in guidance set out by the OfS, found here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and->

[guidance/regulation/information-for-providers-on-the-crisis-in-ukraine/funding-to-support-ukrainian-students/](#).

■ Schools: Digital Technology

Ian Lavery: [256]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will introduce a dedicated technology budget for state schools for the purposes of tackling the digital divide.

Mr Robin Walker:

Schools' technology is managed from their central budgets, and they have the autonomy to decide how this resource is spent so that they can prioritise their individual needs. The department has provided over 1.95 million laptops and tablets during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those devices are in the hands of schools who can decide how and when children should have access to them.

The department is setting standards so that school and trust leaders know what they need to do to get their technology estate in good shape. The department is also working with commercial providers to accelerate gigabit capable broadband rollout to schools, to enable all schools to have access to a high-speed connection by 2025. Additionally, up to £150 million will be invested to upgrade schools that fall below our Wi-Fi connectivity standards in priority areas.

■ Schools: Swimming

Stephen Morgan: [427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the (a) extent and (b) impact of swimming pool closures on school swimming and water safety attainment levels.

Stephen Morgan: [428]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the affordability of school swimming and water safety lessons in context of potential increases in pool hire costs as a result of rising energy prices.

Will Quince:

The department recognises that children have missed out on opportunities to learn to swim due to COVID-19 restrictions. To mitigate the impact of this, through the Oak National Academy, the government has provided new virtual water safety lessons to ensure that despite pool closures pupils had some access to water safety tuition. The department is working closely with Swim England and other swimming and water safety organisations to support pupils returning safely to swimming and promote water safety education. Sport England's annual Active Lives Children and Young People's Survey reports that in the 2020/21 academic year, 76% of children in year 7 were able to swim at least 25 meters, this represents no change in comparison to the 2019/20 academic year.

During phase 2 of the Opening School Facilities programme (March 2021 to March 2022), 115 schools used funding to extend their swimming offer with many using funding to assist with cleaning and water testing, and minor investments such as extending lifeguard time or providing CPD for school staff to train as lifeguards.

On 2 October 2021, the government confirmed nearly £30 million a year for improving and opening up school sports facilities and improving the teaching of Physical Education at primary school. This further funding provides scope to provide funding, advice, and guidance to schools to make better use of their pools.

The government continues to monitor the cost pressures that schools are facing. Future increases in funding have been frontloaded to rapidly get money to schools so that in the 2022/23 academic year alone core schools funding will increase by £4 billion compared to the 2021/22 academic year.

The department recognises the impact rising energy prices may have. 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.

■ Schools: Uniforms

Ian Lavery:

[255]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the levels of adherence to his Department's statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms in terms of whether schools are implementing an affordable uniform policy.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department published new statutory guidance in November 2021 to ensure the cost of school uniforms is reasonable and secures the best value for money for parents. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms>.

Schools are currently beginning to implement the guidance and will be engaging with their parents and pupils as they do so. The department expects governing boards to be compliant with much of the guidance by September 2022 and fully compliant by summer 2023.

Munira Wilson:

[498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions officials in his Department have had with their counterparts in the Treasury on the potential merits of removing VAT applied to school uniforms in the context of rising living costs.

Mr Robin Walker:

Officials at the department meet regularly with counterparts across government to discuss national priorities.

Under the current VAT rules, all children's clothing and footwear designed for young people less than 14 years of age, including school uniforms, attract a zero-rate of VAT. This means that no VAT is charged on the sale of these items.

The UK is one of only two countries among the 37 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development member countries to maintain a VAT relief for children's clothing. This costs Her Majesty's Treasury £2 billion per year. Expanding that relief would come at a further cost and would have to be balanced by increased taxes elsewhere or reductions in government spending.

The government is supporting the hardest hit with £22 billion of help with the cost of living, including cutting hundreds of pounds off household bills, and keeps all taxes under constant review.

■ **Special Educational Needs**

Stephen Morgan:

[\[430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the distance children with Education Health and Care plans have to travel to attend their educational settings.

Will Quince:

The information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Agriculture: Sustainable Development**

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what measures he plans to include in the (a) nutrient management and (b) integrated pest management Sustainable Farming Incentive standards.

Victoria Prentis:

The Sustainable Farming Incentive will pay farmers for actions they take to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable way, alongside food production. Actions will be grouped into simple packages known as standards, to make it as easy as possible for farmers to identify what actions are best suited to their land.

We are working closely with a range of environmental and agricultural stakeholders to collaboratively design the new standards, so they are fit for purpose.

We will only release standards into the live service when we are confident in their design and our ability to successfully deliver the service. Our current plan for the introduction of the nutrient management and integrated pest management standards into the scheme will be in 2023.

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of including organic farming system standards including zero-use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides in the (a) nutrient

management and (b) integrated pest management Sustainable Farming Incentive standards.

Victoria Prentis:

We recognise the benefits that organic farming can offer to the wider environment. We are currently exploring how the Sustainable Farming Incentive can reward organic producers and those wishing to convert to organic systems in line with the [payment principles we published in June 2021](#) – including considerations of whether to introduce a future organic standard, which provides an easily accessible, holistic package for organic farmers.

Organic farmers, like all types of farmers, can take part in the early rollout of the Sustainable Farming Incentive and are likely to be well placed to adopt the higher levels of ambition in the soils' standards and other standards in development such as Integrated Pest Management due to the specific farming practices they undertake. Organic producers can also join the Countryside Stewardship scheme in addition to a Sustainable Farming Incentive agreement. This is subject to the normal rules around not being paid for the same action twice, and not being paid to undertake incompatible actions on the same parcel of land.

Our current indicative plan for the introduction of the nutrient management and integrated pest management standards into the scheme will be in 2023. The roll out for organics is 2025. The development of the standards is being informed by stakeholder engagement, including with the organic sector.

■ **Animal Products: Imports**

Kirsten Oswald: [\[1187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the animals abroad bill was not included in the legislative programme announced in the Queen's Speech 2022.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[1188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the advertising and offering for sale of attractions, activities, or experiences that cause distress to animals, such as low welfare elephant venues.

Sarah Champion: [\[1511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason an Animals Abroad Bill was not included in the Queen's Speech; and if he will take steps to introduce a ban on the (a) advertising and (b) offering for sale of (i) attractions, (ii) activities and (iii) experiences at low-welfare elephant venues.

Munira Wilson: [\[1557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's Action Plan for Animal Welfare, published in May 2021, what plans his Department has to ban the import of (a) hunting trophies, (b) fur and (c) foie gras.

Jo Churchill:

We will bring forward one of the toughest bans on the import of hunting trophies in the world and we are exploring a range of legislative options to further protect animals abroad.

■ Beaches and Rivers: Swimming**Layla Moran:****[1318]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding his Department has made available to support organisations and charities seeking to make applications for bathing water status.

Layla Moran:**[1319]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding his Department has made available to support local authorities seeking to apply for bathing water status for beaches and waterways in their areas.

Rebecca Pow:

There is no funding made available but there is guidance to help applicants on gov.uk. The information requested is the minimum needed to assess whether the site meets the requirements of the Bathing Water Regulations 2013. My department has committed to revising its guidance to make it clearer and we will reduce burdens where possible.

■ Glass: Recycling**Daisy Cooper:****[478]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 16 June 2020 to Question 58093 on Glass: Recycling and the consultation response entitled Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging, published on 26 March 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the decision to exclude glass containers from the deposit return scheme on projected glass recycling rates.

Jo Churchill:

Where glass drinks containers are not included in a deposit return scheme (DRS), the Government assesses a recycling rate for all glass packaging of 84% by 2033. Feedback from stakeholders, including representatives of the glass industry, raised concerns that including glass in a DRS could reduce recycling, reduce the products that can be made from recycled glass and increase overall carbon emissions.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Development Aid****Sarah Olney:**[\[1265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will provide a breakdown of the £286 million of foreign aid pledged by the Government to be sent to Afghanistan in (a) 2021-22 and (b) 2022-23.

James Cleverly:

A full breakdown of the UK's £286 million contribution to Afghanistan in financial year 2021/22 is included as an annex in the Written Ministerial Statement laid on 28 April 2022.

Discussions with our partners to determine contributions in 2022/23 are ongoing, but we will continue to provide significant support to partners, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in addition to a variety of other UN agencies, NGOs and international organisations. Full details on financial allocations for this year will be communicated in due course.

■ Conflict Prevention**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[1136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of reports that Syria was used as a testing ground for Russian tactics now seen in Ukraine; and what steps she will take to strengthen conflict prevention programmes led by her Department as part of the UK's approach to containing rogue states.

James Cleverly:

Russia's actions in Ukraine will be familiar to millions of Syrians who have suffered at the hands of the Assad regime, with Moscow's backing. In both countries, Russia has been responsible for violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law. Their deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure and their callous disregard of civilian casualties has been a marked feature of both these operations.

The UK is working to ensure that there is no impunity for abuses committed in either country. We will continue to champion International Humanitarian Law and provide principled assistance at moments of crisis. The UK is a global leader in driving more effective approaches to crises. Preventing and anticipating future shocks and building resilience is a core objective in our new International Development Strategy. We will tackle the underlying drivers of crises, instability and extreme food insecurity and are at the forefront of driving more effective and innovative approaches to crisis prevention, preparedness, and response.

■ Developing Countries: Sanitation and Water

Stuart Anderson:

[\[955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to increase access to clean water for drinking and sanitation in developing countries, including desalination projects, in the last three years.

Amanda Milling:

The UK has strong track record of supporting people in developing countries with clean water and sanitation. In the five-year period to 2020, we helped over 60 million people to gain access to clean water and/or sanitation, having also reached over 60 million people from 2011 to 2015. This was achieved using a mix of technologies and approaches depending on the location and context. We have also supported WHO and UNICEF to strengthen national service delivery and track progress towards water and sanitation global goal targets.

Desalination processes are utilised in limited instances by FCDO partners including UNICEF, primarily in coastal areas where freshwater is scarce. The capital and operational costs of desalination can be high and care is needed to mitigate the environmental impact of the brine produced by these systems. Nevertheless, in some situations including emergencies, desalination may be less expensive than options such as water trucking from a distant source. Therefore, the UK will continue to consider desalination, alongside alternatives, where water supply is needed.

■ EU Reform

John Howell:

[\[149\]](#)

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 debate entitled Beyond the Lisbon Treaty, which took place at the Council of Europe on 26 April 2022.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government supports the intention to strengthen human rights protections in Europe through the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). However, we maintain our principled position that the EU must be bound to the ECHR on the same basis as other contracting Parties. The Government recognises the crucial work of the Council of Europe and in particular PACE in this sphere, noting that recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course for appropriate review.

■ Jim Fitton

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Iraqi counterpart in respect of the case of Jim Fitton.

Amanda Milling:

Consular officials in Iraq and the UK are providing assistance to Mr Fitton and his family. The British Ambassador in Baghdad has and will continue to, raise Mr Fitton's case with the Iraqi Government. This includes raising with the authorities the UK's strong opposition to the death penalty - both the possibility of it being applied in Mr Fitton's case and in all circumstances as a matter of principle.

Dr Rupa Huq:[\[378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Iraqi counterpart on the detainment of UK citizen, Jim Fitton.

Amanda Milling:

Consular officials in Iraq and the UK are providing assistance to Mr Fitton and his family. The British Ambassador in Baghdad has and will continue to, raise Mr Fitton's case with the Iraqi Government. This includes raising with the authorities the UK's strong opposition to the death penalty - both the possibility of it being applied in Mr Fitton's case and in all circumstances as a matter of principle.

Rwanda: Development Aid**Mr David Lammy:**[\[31\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of official development assistance she plans to allocate to Rwanda in 2022-23 in comparison to (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2021-22.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts will be laid in Parliament before the Summer recess, and will include further detail on FCDO's ODA spending.

Shanghai: British Nationals Abroad**Fiona Bruce:**[\[1159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take steps to assist Congleton constituents who are confined in a locked-down apartment compound in Shanghai due to covid-19 restrictions and who want to return to the UK.

Amanda Milling:

British nationals who require assistance in Shanghai should contact the British Consulate for assistance. For British nationals wanting to leave Shanghai there are commercial routes available and the British Consulate can arrange a letter of support for them to travel to the airport if this is required by their local community leader. Further information for British nationals living in China can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/china>.

■ Shireen Abu Akleh**Afzal Khan:**[\[1324\]](#)

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 killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.

Amanda Milling:

On 11 May, I publicly expressed my sadness upon hearing news of the tragic death of veteran Palestinian Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh and called for a thorough investigation. The Foreign Secretary also made this clear in a statement on 12 May. The UK Ambassador to Israel has reiterated the importance of an investigation with the Israeli authorities. The safety of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work.

■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict**John Howell:**[\[150\]](#)

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 debate entitled Consequences of the Russian Federation's continued aggression against Ukraine: role and response of the Council of Europe, which took place at the Council of Europe on 27 April 2022.

James Cleverly:

Russia's war is an unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack on Ukraine, and the very foundation of our societies and the rules by which we coexist - sovereignty, democracy and the UN Charter. The UK continues to work with our allies, united in support for Ukraine, to provide economic and defensive support. We recognise the crucial work of the Council of Europe and in particular PACE in this sphere, including at the 14-15 March session where the UK Delegation played a pivotal role in ensuring Russia's expulsion from the organisation. We note that recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course for appropriate review.

John Howell:[\[152\]](#)

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 debate entitled The Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine: ensuring accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and other international crimes, which took place at the Council of Europe on 28 April 2022.

James Cleverly:

We want to hold accountable those responsible for the atrocities that have been committed in Ukraine. The UK supports the International Criminal Court investigation into the situation in Ukraine, in its role as the primary international institution with the mandate to investigate and prosecute war crimes and other international crimes. The UK also welcomed the publication of the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism independent

report, which found evidence of multiple instances of clear violations of international law by Russian forces in Ukraine, and supports the UN Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry. We recognise the important work of the Council of Europe and in particular PACE in this sphere, including at the 14-15 March session where the UK Delegation played a pivotal role in ensuring Russia's expulsion from the organisation as a result of its invasion of Ukraine. We note that recommendations from PACE will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course for appropriate review.

■ Ukraine: British Nationals Abroad

Luke Pollard: [\[1332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate she has made of the total number of British nationals captured by Russian forces while fighting in Ukraine since 24 February 2022.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO is aware of 5 British nationals detained by Russian backed forces in Ukraine. We hold Russia responsible for the safety, wellbeing and timely release of these individuals.

Luke Pollard: [\[1333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate she has made of the number of British nationals fighting in Ukraine for (a) the Ukrainian military, (b) the Russian military, (c) the Wagner Group and (d) other pro-Russian paramilitary organisations.

James Cleverly:

The Government does not currently have an estimate of British Nationals fighting in Ukraine, but we are working with the Government of Ukraine to understand how many British Nationals have joined the Ukrainian Armed Forces. We do not have an estimate of British Nationals fighting in the Russian military, or with Russian-aligned forces.

■ Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[1267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much and what proportion of the £25 million match-funding to the DEC Appeal has been disbursed to date.

James Cleverly:

Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) has received £10 million of the UK Aid Match funding to date - 40% of the total £25 million match-funding. In partnership with DEC, FCDO has agreed a disbursement schedule for UK Aid Match funding that will ensure DEC are able to make timely disbursements to their implementing partners on the ground, alongside donations from the UK public.

■ Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

Dr Luke Evans: [\[503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made about the current impact of UK humanitarian aid on (a) malnourished Yemeni children and (b) Yemen.

Amanda Milling:

The UK will spend at least £88 million on aid in Yemen over the course of the current financial year. This will help feed at least 200,000 people every month, provide lifesaving health care for 800,000 women and children, and treat 85,000 severely malnourished children. The UK plays a leading role in the Yemen humanitarian response and has spent over £1 billion on aid since the conflict began.

■ Yemen: Politics and Government

Dr Luke Evans: [\[502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made about the current political situation in Yemen.

Amanda Milling:

The UK welcomes the UN-brokered two-month truce in Yemen, which began on 2 April, and the creation of a Presidential Leadership Council on 6 April. After over seven long years of conflict, a negotiated political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and end the humanitarian suffering. The UK will continue to use its diplomatic relations and role as penholder on Yemen in the UN Security Council to support efforts towards political dialogue and peace. The UK continues to encourage the conflict parties to engage constructively with UN-led peace efforts.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Botulinum Toxin: Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what existing regulations are in place to prevent the use of botulax during non-surgical aesthetic procedures.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent discussions with his counterpart in the Welsh Government on the use of botox substitutes during non-surgical aesthetic procedures in salons.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness of the risks of botox substitutes, such as botulax.

Maria Caulfield:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency monitors the safety of all medicines, any emerging new evidence in relation to any illegal use of medicines and will take regulatory action where necessary. Botulax is a brand of botulinum toxin not licensed for use in the United Kingdom. Botulinum toxins are prescription-only medicines and must be prescribed by a registered healthcare professional or medical practitioner. The prescriber may delegate the administration of the medicine to a secondary practitioner who is not required to be a healthcare professional. However, the prescriber retains responsibility for ensuring the treatment is provided safely.

While there have been no specific discussions with the Welsh Government, we are committed to improving the safety of cosmetic procedures. Advice for those considering receiving botulinum toxin injections for cosmetic purposes is available at NHS.UK. This includes ensuring that the chosen practitioner has the skills to perform the procedure safely and recommends asking the practitioner for the name of the product, whether it is licensed and how and where it is made.

■ Cancer: Health Services and Research**Matt Vickers:****[1003]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the efforts to (a) improve cancer services across the NHS and (b) find a lasting cure for cancer.

Maria Caulfield:

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to improve cancer services to increase the proportion of cancers diagnosed at Stage 1 and 2 to 75% by 2028. This aims to ensure that an additional 55,000 people each year will survive cancer for at least five years after their diagnosis. We are currently analysing the responses submitted through the call for evidence to develop the 10 Year Cancer Plan, which will be published later this year. The Plan will provide further detail on how we will improve cancer services.

The Department invests in health research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). In 2020/21, the NIHR's expenditure on cancer research was £73.5 million. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including treatments for cancer, and encourages researchers to submit high-quality research proposals in this area.

■ Cancer: Research**Martyn Day:****[347]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the recovery of UK clinical cancer research following covid-19 and (b) how that recovery compares with other leading scientific nations.

Maria Caulfield:

In 2021/22, the National Institute for Health and Care Research's Clinical Research Network recruited 73,691 participants across 1,060 cancer studies and established 412 new cancer studies. This compares to 1,191 clinical trials in 2019/20. Data from the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry shows variable recovery of commercial clinical research in other nations. As of July 2021, the United Kingdom's monthly rate of enrolments for commercial studies across all speciality areas had reduced by 41.7% from the 2019 baseline. This compares to a 41.5% reduction in France, 44.3% in Germany and 21.7% in Italy while Spain reported an increase of 6.3%.

Care Homes and Hospitals: Visits**Grahame Morris:**[\[1163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make available free covid-19 tests for people visiting friends and family in (a) hospitals and (b) care homes.

Maggie Throup:

Most visitors are no longer required to test before entering a care setting. Visitors to hospitals and care homes are asked to take necessary precautions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe, in line with the guidance for the general population.

Visitors who provide personal care to care home residents may be asked to test before entering, up to twice weekly if visiting more than twice, with free lateral flow device tests available. Symptomatic testing continues to be available for those in social care settings.

Care Homes: Visits**Grahame Morris:**[\[1162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to limit the risk of covid-19 in care homes from visitors.

Gillian Keegan:

We have published guidance on infection prevention and control in adult social care settings which encourages visitors to take necessary precautions. This includes wearing face masks and staying away from the care home if they are symptomatic or test positive for COVID-19. Visitors providing personal care are advised to test themselves up to twice weekly before entering the care home, with free asymptomatic testing available.

Care Workers: Re-employment**Sir Charles Walker:**[\[650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if, in cases where carers are rehired by their original employers, having lost their job due to being unvaccinated for covid-19, he will make it his policy to introduce measures whereby they do not lose their

accrued employment rights built up prior to their dismissal; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: The vaccination requirement for care homes was in force between 11 November 2021 and 14 March 2022. During that period, care homes were legally required to only deploy vaccinated or exempt staff. The re-employment of these staff is matter for each employer, including any accrued entitlements which may have been affected by breaks in service.

■ **Coeliac Disease: Health Education**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the development of a coeliac training programme for primary care physicians and other relevant healthcare professionals to improve understandings of the disease and support its diagnosis; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

No specific assessment has been made. The gastroenterology chapter of the Royal College of General Practitioners' curriculum for general practitioners (GPs) in training addresses the treatment of coeliac disease. Additionally, the Royal College has made online resources available on the topic and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidelines are tested in the Applied Knowledge Test assessment for GP training. Health Education England's training programmes offer educational sessions on the Royal College's curriculum for common gastroenterological conditions, which include coeliac disease assessment, investigation and management.

■ **Coronavirus Certificates: Children**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[980\]](#)

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:

Since 28 April 2022, the NHS COVID Pass travel letter has been available for five to 11 year olds who have received a full primary course of vaccination. A parent or guardian can request the letter via NHS.UK or 119. We are currently reviewing the provision of evidence of prior infection or recovery and a digital option.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[1224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to rollout a further covid-19 school vaccine programme to ensure that all eligible school children are vaccinated including those who were isolating or had recent infection when the previous school covid-19 vaccination programme was operating.

Maggie Throup:

In December 2021, all School Aged Immunisation Service providers in England were asked to deliver in-school COVID-19 vaccinations to 12 to 15 year olds starting in the 2022 spring term. It was expected most schools would require multiple visits to ensure children who had recently contracted COVID-19 had the opportunity to be vaccinated.

An out-of-school offer is also in place for eligible children and young people. The majority of five to 11 year olds will receive their vaccination at local centres or community pharmacies outside of school hours. These appointments are available through the National Booking System or via 119 and walk-in sites remain open.

Chris Green:[\[295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of reversing compulsory covid-19 vaccination requirements in all sectors that contain them.

Edward Argar:

Following a public consultation, the legislation to revoke vaccination requirements for all sectors came into force on 15 March 2022.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he expects the novavax covid-19 vaccine to be available for people in the UK.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 28 February 2022 to Question 43901 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, if he will seek an update from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on the roll-out of the novavax covid-19 vaccine in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

There is no current date when we expect Novavax to be available for people in the United Kingdom. We will continue to be guided by the advice of the independent Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on which vaccines should be deployed in the UK's vaccination programmes. The JCVI has discussed the potential use of Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine (Nuvaxovid) in the national vaccination programme. Its considerations will be published in due course and kept under review.

Mick Whitley:[\[460\]](#)

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:

We have no specific plans to do so as employers who dismissed unvaccinated care home workers between 11 November 2021 and 14 March 2022 were complying with the law at the time. The re-employment of former staff is a matter for each

organisation. Employers should continue to encourage and support to staff make the choice to receive COVID-19 vaccination to protect themselves, their colleagues and those they care for.

■ Dementia

Debbie Abrahams: [\[761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many times NHS England has met with representatives of dementia organisations since August 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

Since August 2021, NHS England has met with dementia organisations on 19 occasions and held 44 meetings or webinars with dementia networks and stakeholders in England. In addition to planned meetings and events, NHS England has engaged with the Alzheimer's Society, Alzheimer's Research UK and others on an ad hoc basis. NHS England has endorsed the Alzheimer's Society's revised dementia guide and delivered a joint webinar on the integration of dementia services.

■ Dementia: Health Education

Jim Shannon: [\[247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve public awareness of the first signs of dementia symptoms.

Mike Amesbury: [\[948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure people living with undiagnosed dementia are supported to (a) understand and (b) recognise potential dementia symptoms.

Gillian Keegan:

The NHS Health Check for adults in England aged 45 to 74 years old is designed to identify early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. Since 2018, dementia risk reduction has been incorporated in the NHS Health Check to increase dementia awareness and motivate people to make positive changes to reduce their risks. In addition, those aged 65 years old and over are made aware of the signs and symptoms of dementia and guided to memory clinics.

■ Dental Services

Judith Cummins: [\[793\]](#)

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

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not currently held centrally in the format requested. The annual data showing the number of dentists undertaking National Health Service activity in England in 2022 is due to be published in August 2022.

Justin Madders: [\[813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's timetable is for (a) announcing, (b) consulting upon and (c) introducing the planned dental contract reform.

Maria Caulfield:

We are currently negotiating proposed changes to the National Health Service contract for dentistry services with the British Dental Association. We will set out a timetable for implementation timetable when these negotiations have concluded.

■ Dental Services: Finance**Judith Cummins:** [\[794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding the Government will allocate to NHS dentistry in England in the next financial year.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England provides regional commissioning teams with a combined allocation for dental services, community pharmacy and primary care ophthalmology. In 2022/23 this allocation is £5,384 million.

■ Disease Control**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[1082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what consultation he will introduce for the proposed World Health Organisation Treaty on Pandemics; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

The World Health Organization is facilitating member state-led negotiations and is holding formal public hearings seeking views from all interested parties. We are continuing to engage with relevant stakeholders as this develops.

■ Epilepsy: Cannabis**Alberto Costa:** [\[828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to encourage consultants to prescribe medicinal cannabis to children with severe drug resistant epilepsy.

Maria Caulfield:

The prescription of any medicine is a clinical decision. The Government has enabled the prescription of cannabis-based products for medicinal use (CBPMs) where it is clinically appropriate.

The licensed cannabis-based medicine Epidyolex is routinely prescribed for two forms of epilepsy. However, clinical guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence demonstrate a clear need for further evidence to support routine prescribing and funding decisions for unlicensed CBPMs. We continue to encourage

manufacturers of these products to conduct research and we are working with regulatory, research and National Health Service partners to establish clinical trials to enable evidence based prescribing decisions.

■ Evusheld

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to approve Evusheld on the NHS to help prevent covid-19 infections in immunocompromised people who cannot be vaccinated.

Maggie Throup:

Evusheld was granted a conditional marketing authorisation by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on 17 March 2022. However, the initial positive trial data on Evusheld was published prior to the emergence of the Omicron variant. Following its approval, the MHRA had indicated uncertainty on the appropriate dose needed for protection against Omicron. The UK Health Security Agency is currently testing the efficacy of Evusheld against the Omicron variant and the Department and National Health Service are identifying appropriate patient cohorts and approaches to the potential deployment of pre-exposure prophylaxis. Determining the efficacy of Evusheld against the Omicron variant will be necessary prior to any procurement or deployment, to ensure ongoing effective therapy against COVID-19.

Immunocompromised patients are a priority cohort receiving novel effective COVID-19 treatments such as antiviral drugs, which are available in community settings.

Henry Smith: [\[689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 141960, what progress has been made on assessing Evusheld for treating immunocompromised patients.

Henry Smith: [\[690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 28 March 2022 to Question 141960, when he expects patients in the UK to have access to Evusheld as a preventative treatment for covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency has yet to complete testing on Evusheld's efficacy against the Omicron variant. The timing of these results is dependent on the testing assays being completed successfully, which will inform any decisions on potential deployment.

■ Fractures: Health Services

Zarah Sultana: [\[976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to ensure universal access to fracture liaison services; and what recent assessment his

Department has made of the impact of the absence of universal service availability on the health of those with osteoporosis and bone health conditions.

Gillian Keegan:

We are currently assessing the accessibility of fracture liaison services (FLS) through data collected in the national Falls and Fragility Fracture Audit Programme. This aims to identify any inequitable provision and improve services.

Services for those with osteoporosis and bone health conditions are commissioned locally. The Department expects musculoskeletal, fragility fracture and fall services to be fully incorporated into integrated care systems' planning and decision-making. This will allow greater collaboration, improve the coverage and sustainability of services and development of regional bone health clinical networks to support clinicians working in FLS.

■ **Heart Diseases: Diagnosis**

Steve McCabe:

[\[589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve incidental diagnosis rate of heart valve disease following the reduction of face-to-face GP appointments.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement's guidance states that general practitioner practices must provide face to face appointments, alongside remote consultations. Patients' views should be sought and practices should respect preferences for face to face care unless there are good clinical reasons to the contrary. In March 2022, 62% of appointments were face-to-face, excluding COVID-19 vaccinations. At the end of 2021/22, 66 community diagnostic centres were available to support Primary Care Networks to increase diagnostic capacity and improve the detection of conditions such as heart failure and heart valve disease.

■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[1000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing testosterone routinely within hormone replacement therapy.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guideline on the diagnosis and management of menopause published in 2015 recommended that testosterone supplementation should be considered for menopausal women with low sexual desire if hormone replacement therapy alone is not effective. Healthcare professionals should take NICE's guidelines fully into account in the care and treatment of individual patients. NICE is currently updating its guideline on menopause in light of new evidence and recently consulted on the draft scope of the revised guideline.

■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy: Prescriptions**

Justin Madders: [\[797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment her Department has made of the impact on women of postponing the introduction of a single annual prepayment certificate of £18.70 for HRT prescriptions until April 2023.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. The introduction of the hormone replacement therapy prescription prepayment certificate requires significant technical changes to existing systems and processes. We are working with the NHS Business Services Authority to implement the certificate as soon as possible.

■ **Independent Mental Health Advocates**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of independent mental health advocates for people detained in hospital under section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing an immediate allocation of an Independent Mental Health Advocate for all those detained in hospital under section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Gillian Keegan:

Later this year, we will publish a draft Mental Health Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny. This will set out proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act 1983 to ensure the legislation respects the patient's voice and empowers individuals to shape their care and treatment. We have also committed to enact legislative changes to extend eligibility of independent mental health advocate services to all mental health inpatients, including informal patients.

In December 2021, we announced the launch of culturally appropriate advocacy pilots. These pilots will develop advocacy models to support people from ethnic minority backgrounds to understand their rights under the Mental Health Act and state individual needs and choices about their care and treatment. This will be piloted in four regions in England in inpatient and community settings. The outcomes of these pilots will be shared with partners in health and social care to provide a framework to support commissioning and delivery of culturally appropriate advocacy.

■ **Kidney Diseases**

Justin Madders: [\[1191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 154082 on Kidney Diseases, how that information is held.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service Electronic Staff Record does not identify renal counsellors as a staff group. Local NHS organisations will record the number of staff identified as renal counsellors, although definitions of roles and responsibilities may differ between locations.

Maternity Services: Training**Peter Aldous:**[\[745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure that maternity staff do not undertake training on their own.

Edward Argar:

Individual National Health Service trusts are responsible for investing in post-registration training, ensuring that staff are trained and competent to carry out their role and are adequately supported throughout their training. All training undertaken by post-registration qualified staff should be in line with national and local guidelines covering the training being undertaken.

Members: Correspondence**Robert Largan:**[\[523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry of 2 March 2022 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL34456.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 16 May 2022.

Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[1018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference his letter dated 20 April 2022 to the Rt hon. Member for South West Surrey, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a statutory strategy for early intervention and school- and community-based measures for the mental health support of children and young people; and what assessment he has made of the potential risks of non-statutory measures failing to meet their stated objectives as a result of (a) changing circumstances, (b) differing interpretations and (c) possible cancellation.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: We have no plans to make a specific assessment. On 12 April 2022 we published a call for evidence to seek views on a range of issues from prevention to acute mental health care, which closes on 7 July 2022. This will support the development of a new 10-year cross-Government plan for mental health and wellbeing .

Caroline Lucas: [\[170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding is available for community-based counselling services for children and young people who do not meet the threshold for child and adolescent mental health services and will not have access to mental health support teams by 2023-24; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

The information requested is not collected centrally as funding for these services is a matter for local health and care commissioners.

We are investing an additional £2.3 billion a year to allow 345,000 more children and young people to access National Health Service-funded mental health services by 2023/24.

Bob Blackman: [\[199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the letter from the Minister of State for Care and Mental Health to the Rt hon. Member for South West Surrey of 20 April 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals on early intervention and school and community-based measures for the mental health support of children and young people.

Gillian Keegan:

We have made no specific assessment. On 12 April 2022, we published a call for evidence to seek views on a range of issues from prevention to acute mental health care, which closes on 7 July 2022. This will support the development of a new 10-year cross-Government plan for mental health and wellbeing.

In addition, we have accelerated the deployment of mental health support teams to schools and colleges to support approximately 35% of pupils by 2023. We are working with the Department for Education to provide early intervention and mental wellbeing support in education settings.

■ Mental Health: Research**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has been made of the level of funding into mental health research; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of that funding being made into that research.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department funds mental health research in the United Kingdom through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). In 2020/21, the NIHR spent £109.5 million on mental health research. We are also funding the Mental Health Research Initiative to expand current activity and build the capacity and capability of mental health research in regions which are currently underrepresented. While it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions, the NIHR's funding is available through open competition and we encourage researchers to submit applications in this area.

■ Midwives: Resignations

Peter Aldous: [\[741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department collects information when staff leave the midwifery profession on their reasons for leaving.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service Electronic Staff Record (ESR) collects information through a 'reason for leaving' data field linked to staff recorded as leaving active service.

■ NHS Trusts: Resignations

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[R\]](#) [\[645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which NHS Trusts conduct exit interviews for departing staff.

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[R\]](#) [\[646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the findings of exit interviews by NHS Trusts for departing staff are collated centrally.

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[R\]](#) [\[647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence is used to determine the cause of early departure of staff from the NHS.

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[R\]](#) [\[648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the most frequent reasons are given by staff for early departure from the NHS in order of frequency.

Edward Argar:

The information requested on trusts undertaking exit interviews is not held centrally. While exit interviews are recommended in the National Health Service learning handbook, it may not be appropriate for all staff, such as in cases of redundancy or dismissal. An updated, online, self-exit questionnaire was launched in October 2021, which includes staff survey questions and allows staff to explain their reasons for leaving. This is currently being promoted to all NHS trusts and is in use in approximately 83 organisations.

Reasons for leaving are noted in the Electronic Staff Record. Where detailed information for leaving was available, in 2021 the most frequent reasons were retirement; end of fixed term contract; work/life balance; relocation; and pay or reward.

■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures and Plastic Surgery: NHS

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[1115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to collect data on the costs of aftercare to the NHS, for patients who report adverse effects following (a) aesthetic and (b) cosmetic procedures.

Maria Caulfield:

We have no current plans to do so. However, as part of the introduction of a licensing scheme for non-surgical cosmetic procedures in England, the Department will work with stakeholders to collate data and gather evidence on the incidence of consumers seeking treatment through the National Health Service for complications following private cosmetic procedures.

■ Obesity: Health Services

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[99\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the suspension of the £100 million of funding for weight management services, announced on 4 March 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of that suspension on other weight management services run by local authorities that were already established prior to the announcement of extra funding in 2021.

Maggie Throup:

The Adult Weight Management Services Grant distributed for use in 2021/22 was in addition to local authorities' existing expenditure on adult tier 2 behavioural weight management services from the Public Health Grant. This funding must be used to commission new or expand existing services and was not intended to replace other funding. In 2022/23, the total Public Health Grant to local authorities is £3.417 billion. Decisions on how the Public Health Grant is spent are made by individual local authorities.

■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Paul Maynard:

[\[687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will amend the prescription charge medical exemptions list to include (a) cystic fibrosis and (b) other long-term conditions.

Edward Argar:

We have no current plans to do so. Approximately 89% of prescriptions are dispensed free of charge and there are arrangements in place to help those with the greatest need. Eligibility depends on the patient's age, whether they are in qualifying full-time education, whether they are pregnant or have recently given birth, or whether they are in receipt of certain benefits or a war pension. Those with cystic fibrosis or another long-term condition may meet the eligibility criteria for prescription charge exemptions and be in receipt of free prescriptions.

■ Risperidone: Research

John McDonnell: [\[581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what research is being undertaken on the combined effects of risperidone and covid-19 vaccines; and whether that research will be published.

Maggie Throup:

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The NIHR is not currently supporting any specific research on the combined effects of risperidone and COVID-19 vaccines. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including effects of COVID-19 vaccination.

■ Sleep

Martyn Day: [\[354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the State of the Market Report on Sleep published by Perrigo in November 2021, which found that 84 per cent of healthcare professionals surveyed believe sleep-related issues in the UK will become even more widespread in the next five years, whether his Department has plans to improve the public's knowledge of the (a) benefits of sleep and (b) potential impact of poor sleep on health.

Gillian Keegan:

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities provides guidance and resources to support good sleep via Every Mind Matters, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep/>

We have committed to review the evidence on sleep and health, including the impact of sleep on health and the findings will be published in due course.

■ Social Services: Statutory Sick Pay

Anne Marie Morris: [\[263\]](#)

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:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: The majority of staff working in the social care sector, either full-time or part-time, are employed by private sector providers which determine their pay and terms and conditions of employment. Statutory Sick Pay is available to those who are infected with COVID-19 and are unable to work, payable after four days. It is paid at £99.35 per week and is available across all sectors to those who earn more than £123 a week on average.

Social care staff who test positive for COVID-19 are expected to self-isolate to protect those they care for. All providers should support good health and safety practice, as for other risks and individual employers should determine how to ensure staff stay away from the workplace when there would be a health risk to those in their care. Social care staff have access to free lateral flow device tests and can return to work after receiving two negative tests.

■ Sotrovimab

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) availability and (b) accessibility of Sotrovimab in (i) Slough and (ii) England.

Maggie Throup:

Patient access to sotrovimab is clinically determined in line with the published clinical access policies. Individuals at highest risk from COVID-19 infection can access this treatment directly from COVID Medicines Delivery Units (CMDUs) or via the RECOVERY trial for patients admitted to hospital with COVID-19. The latest data shows that 24,798 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 have received sotrovimab in England, with the majority of these patients receiving treatment as non-hospitalised patients via a CMDU.

While the information relating to Slough is not held in the format requested, 2,175 patients suitable for treatment have been identified in the Frimley CDMU area, of whom 701 have been triaged for and treated with sotrovimab and 343 have received oral antiviral medication.

■ Surgery: Waiting Lists

Rachael Maskell: [\[852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) socioeconomic impact and (b) impact on (i) patients and (ii) the general public of the backlog in elective procedures.

Edward Argar:

No formal assessment has been made. However, the 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' published in February 2022 acknowledges the impact of long waiting times for treatment on patients and their carers, National Health Service staff and on health inequalities. The plan aims to minimise the impact of the backlog and to ensure the inclusive recovery of elective services.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Gavin Newlands: [\[819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many complaints have been made to the managed quarantine service on refunds for unused days of quarantine since 1 January 2021.

Maggie Throup:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Urinary Tract Infections: Antibiotics**Martyn Day:**[\[870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many individual providers of NHS services will be reporting data on the 2022/23 CCG2 CQUIN: Appropriate antibiotic prescribing for UTI in adults aged 16+ from 1 April 2022.

Maggie Throup:

NHS England and NHS Improvement expect that all providers commissioned to deliver acute services in England will submit this data.

■ Use of Health Data for Research and Analysis Review**Chi Onwurah:**[\[242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating a NHS Data Analyst Service, modelled on the Government Economic Service and Statistical Service, as recommended in the Goldacre review.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: We are currently developing a professional competency framework which can form the basis of a National Health Service Analytical and Data Professional Service. This framework covers three data professions - data analysis, data science and data engineering - as it is recognised that many roles within health and care are multi-disciplinary. The proof of concept framework is due to be launched during 2022/23.

■ Verbal Dyspraxia Awareness Day**Geraint Davies:**[\[576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has for marking Verbal Dyspraxia Awareness Day on 14 May 2022.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: While there are no specific plans, on 29 March 2022 we published a green paper on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision, which includes a public consultation. The consultation is seeking views on proposals for the provision of SEND services to improve outcomes for children and young people, including those with verbal dyspraxia and their families. The consultation is open until 22 July.

HOME OFFICE**■ Animal and Plant Health Agency: UK Border Force****Andrew Gwynne:****[1121]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March to Question 126597 on Animal and Plant Health Agency: UK Border Force, if she will update Members on the effectiveness of the Service Level Agreement between Border Force and the Animal and Plant Health Agency following its three month initial assessment.

Damian Hinds:

The introduction of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Border Force and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) commenced at 09:00 on the 24 January 2022 and the agreement has been reviewed.

During the review period, all detections have been dealt with at the port and there have been no incidents of Border Force securing information and releasing the animals for APHA inland action.

Border Force and APHA have reviewed the process and the SLA will remain in place for all but exceptional cases and will continue to monitor its effectiveness on a regular basis.

■ Diesel Fuel: Theft**Alicia Kearns:****[984]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to help prevent white diesel thefts following the changes to use of rebated diesel introduced from 1 April 2022.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is working closely with police and industry partners to do everything we can collectively to drive down acquisitive crime, including theft of diesel.

The Home Office funded the set-up of the National Infrastructure Crime Reduction Partnership (NICRP), which ensures national co-ordination of policing and law enforcement partners to tackle crime affecting rail networks, utility, agricultural and construction companies. Reports of fuel theft are being mapped through this Partnership to provide insights on the scale of these thefts and potential preventative measures.

Fuel users who store any type of diesel in tanks or in vehicles and machinery on their site(s) should continue to take steps to ensure this is stored securely. Practical crime prevention advice is published on the Secured by Design website, developed by the Police Crime Prevention Initiatives:

<https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/crime-prevention-advice/fuel-theft>.

■ Economic Crime

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[1134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 22 April 2022 to Question 150126 on Economic Crime, how many cases involving money linked to corruption flowing from African states into the UK were prosecuted following National Crime Agency investigations in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022 to date.

Damian Hinds:

The NCA has had no prosecutions in respect of money linked to corruption flowing from African states during 2021 and 2022.

The NCA does however have a number of long standing investigations with the Crown Prosecution Service, as these are live investigations it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Jonathan Reynolds: [\[754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to publish a new Economic Crime Plan when the current one elapses this year.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: In July 2019, the Government set out a comprehensive programme for addressing economic crime, in partnership with the private sector, in the July 2019 Economic Crime Plan, and May 2021 Statement of Progress.

The December 2021 Economic Crime Strategic Board formally commissioned the production of a second Economic Crime Plan to be developed with partners across the private sector. It is due to be published later this year.

■ Fraud

Emily Thornberry: [\[662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the estimated total cost of fraud was to the UK as of (a) 1984, (b) 1994, (c) 2004, and (d) 2014.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: The Home Office remit for fraud is fraud against individuals and businesses. We do not hold figures for estimated total cost of fraud for 1984, 1994, 2004, and 2014.

We do have the published estimate for the 2015/16 total cost of fraud against individuals: £4.7 billion. This figure can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime>.

■ HM Passport Office: Durham**Mary Kelly Foy:** [\[958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with HM Passport Office Durham on additional resources to support the current workforce.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: To support the processing of an unprecedented demand of passport applications, Her Majesty's Passport Office has increased its staffing numbers across the UK, including the Durham office. 500 new staff have joined HM Passport Office since April 2021, with plans for a further 700 to join this year.

■ HM Passport Office: Staff**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were employed at the Passport Office in (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021 and (d) 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: The table below shows the number of staff in post in Her Majesty's Passport Office on the 1 st April of each year.

Year - Number (FTE)

2022 - 4,417

2021 - 3,656

2020 - 3,914

2019 - 3,678

■ Home Office: Remote Working**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[1081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of whether the productivity of staff in (a) her Department and (b) the agencies for which it is responsible is (i) enhanced or (ii) reduced when they work from home; and if she will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

Productivity assessments are not held centrally. Therefore this information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Telephone Services**Ronnie Cowan:** [\[842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much it costs per minute to call the hon. Members telephone hotline for UK Visas and Immigration.

Ronnie Cowan: [\[843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many calls have been received by the Homes for Ukraine hotline from hon. Members' offices between 1 March and 11 May 2022.

Ronnie Cowan: [\[844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much monies her Department has received as a result of calls to the Homes for Ukraine hotline made by hon. Members' offices.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: 842 - The MP enquiry line is an 0345 number which is a local rate number, so calls to this line cost the same as calls to a geographic number and will be dependent on your telephone service provider. UKVI does not charge for calls to this number.

843 - The Ukraine option on the MP enquiry line has received 3223 calls between 1 March and 11 May 2022

844 - UKVI has not received any money as a result of calls to the MP Enquiry line, including the Ukraine specific option.

Members: Correspondence**Peter Grant:** [\[1210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will respond to the correspondence of 11 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Glenrothes on routes to settlement for Afghan refugees, reference PG5604.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office received the Member's correspondence on 3 March 2022 and responded on 8 March 2022.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to the emails of 4 January 2022 and 26 April 2022 from the office of the hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth regarding an outstanding asylum application.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 31 January 2022.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to the email of 21 March 2022 from the office of the hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth regarding an outstanding asylum application.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 12 May 2022.

■ Oxfam: India**Stephen Timms:** [\[27\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with her Indian counterpart on the Indian Government's decision to refuse the renewal of Oxfam India's Foreign Contribution Regulation Act license.

Kevin Foster:

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) license was most recently raised on 10 February 2022, during the annual UK-India Home Affairs Dialogue, co-chaired by Home Office Permanent Secretary, Sir Matthew Rycroft, and Indian Home Secretary Bhalla. The Permanent Secretary addressed the difficulties that some NGOs in India have faced due to the enforcement of the FCRA, which is impacting both on the work we are funding and the work of UK-headquartered global NGOs in India.

The British High Commissioner to India also met with the CEO of Oxfam India on 14 January to understand their concerns and offer support. We continue to monitor developments related to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, especially impacts on UK Government-funded programmes in India, and the work of British NGOs in India.

■ Police: Proof of Identity**Sarah Jones:** [\[1296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether data exists on the number of police warrant cards unaccounted for in police forces in England and Wales.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not centrally collect or hold information on the number of police warrant cards that are unaccounted for in police forces in England & Wales.

Policies on the return of force equipment, including warrant cards, are an operational matter.

■ Police: Violence**John Howell:** [\[155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the debate entitled Fighting and preventing excessive and unjustified use of force by law enforcement officers, which took place at the Council of Europe on 27 April 2022.

Kit Malthouse:

The government is committed to the principle that all police use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and this is set in law.

We recognise the crucial work of the Council of Europe and in particular the Parliamentary Assembly in this sphere, noting that recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course for appropriate review.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Sarah Olney:

[\[1266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Government plans to commence operation of the second pathway for referral under the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

Kevin Foster:

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

Regarding Pathway 2, we are working closely with UNHCR and continue to work towards receiving referrals shortly. Those referred by UNHCR will be assessed for resettlement by UNHCR using their established process, and in line with their resettlement submission categories.

■ Sanctions: Russia

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to ensure that Russian oligarchs who sold assets prior to sanctioning by the UK Government are held to account.

Damian Hinds:

We, working under an FCDO-led designation regime, have sanctioned an unprecedented and world-leading number of oligarchs linked to the Kremlin-regime with implementation of financial sanctions led by the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation in HM Treasury and criminal investigations led by the National Crime Agency.

We have established a Combatting Kleptocracy Cell in the NCA which will target corrupt oligarchs and their associates through their assets hidden in the UK, target the professional enablers of these corrupt oligarchs and support HMG sanctions delivery and enforcement.

The UK is also working with international partners to ensure there is nowhere for dirty Russian money to hide, including through the Russian Elites Proxies and Oligarchs (REPO) Task Force, which brings together international partners to ensure the effective enforcement of financial sanctions implemented against Kremlin-linked elites and entities.

■ Slavery

Holly Lynch:

[\[333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any consultation with survivors took place prior to the design and implementation of the Recovery Needs Assessment.

Holly Lynch:

[335]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to evaluate the Recovery Needs Assessment; and if she will make it her policy to include consultation with survivors and the anti-slavery and trafficking sector in any review of that assessment.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is committed to delivering tailored, needs-based support to assist victims of modern slavery in their recovery.

The Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) was introduced on 27 September 2019. Throughout the design and implementation of the Recovery Needs Assessment we engaged with our primary support provider, The Salvation Army, and our network of specialist support providers who work closely with victims on a daily basis.

We are committed to embedding survivor voice in our policy development. In 2020 we undertook work engaging with survivors directly, to better understand their recovery needs and their experiences of the National Referral Mechanism.

We are engaging with survivors, as well as the broader sector, on a new government strategy to tackle modern slavery, alongside ongoing work to improve the victim journey through the RNA process.

Holly Lynch:

[334]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the policy on data sharing is for providers subcontracted under the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract; and when the temporary restrictions placed on providers sharing data will be reviewed.

Rachel Maclean:

In March, a contract change was agreed within the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC).

This contract change specifically facilitates for the use of sensitive authority data (whilst providing better oversight of data protection risks) in research projects by sub-contractors of that contract.

■ Visas: Married People

Peter Grant:

[310]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the average time taken for a standard spouse visa to be processed.

Kevin Foster:

the Home Office would only be able to get the data via a manual trawl which would be at a disproportionate cost.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ Food: Parliament****Sarah Olney:****[389]**

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, how much public money was spent on subsidising food and drink in outlets on the Parliamentary estate in 2021-22.

Sir Charles Walker:

Final audited figures for the net cost of catering for 2021–22 will be published in July, and I shall write to the hon. Member when these figures are known.

■ Members: Safety**Michael Fabricant:****[1084]**

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what steps are being taken by the Commission to ensure that Members and their staff are not (a) harassed, (b) obstructed, (c) shouted at, or (d) intimidated by professional agitators in the proximity of the Palace of Westminster; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Charles Walker:

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is working with the Parliamentary Security Department to identify Members and staff who have reported the behaviour. This includes identifying those who are able and willing to provide a signed statement which with a statutory declaration can be used for criminal justice purposes. Officers are assessing each occasion that we are aware of, taking into account behaviour; the current law; and the latest guidance on protest from case law. This has taken time. Some witnesses do not want to give statements or are unwilling to go to court; without such testimony it makes any legal action very unlikely. In addition, some behaviour does not constitute a criminal offence when viewed in isolation; without witness statements, building a persuasive case around persistent behaviour is very difficult.

The Parliamentary Liaison and Investigation (PLaIT) are considering all options once they have identified what statements can be obtained, and assessing the evidence provided against the relevant legislation. PLaIT will work in consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), who are the ultimate decision maker on whether to prosecute and what for. It is worth noting that hearsay evidence is inadmissible in court, therefore statements need to be gathered from the principal witness, which outline the impact and can be tested in court. Even if a police officer witnessed the event, there would still need to be a victim statement which evidences the offences and impact.

There is a long history of protest outside Parliament and a number of pieces of statute legislation have been put in place to moderate protest activity. Article 9, 10 and 11 of the Human Rights Act 1998 gives the freedom of thought, expression and

assembly/association, and these rights mean that protest legislation remains one of the most contested in the courts; the resulting case law provides an ever changing interpretation of the laws. Therefore the use of legislation, especially new legislation, which interferes in the rights to protest needs to be carefully considered, be proportionate and likely to succeed.

JUSTICE

■ Admissibility of Evidence: Computers

Mr Kevan Jones:

[79]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has plans to assess the legal presumption of reliability of computer evidence.

James Cartlidge:

We have no plans to review the presumption, as it has wide application and is rebuttable if there is evidence to the contrary.

Nonetheless, given the concerns raised about Post Office Ltd's Horizon IT system, the Government wants to be fully assured that there is a public summary of the failings associated with the system and that lessons are learnt from this dispute. That is why the Inquiry into the Post Office Horizon IT dispute was converted into a statutory inquiry with effect from 1 June 2021, with new powers to require the production of evidence and documents. The full, updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Inquiry are available on the [Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry 2020 ToR page](#), and on [gov.uk](#).

The Inquiry will aim to submit its findings to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in Autumn 2022. The final report will be published by the Secretary of State and the government will respond in due course.

■ Burglary: Convictions

Steve Reed:

[1183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many convictions there were for burglary in (a) Crown and (b) Magistrates Courts in England and Wales, by (i) individual court and (ii) region for each of the last five years for which figures are available.

James Cartlidge:

Information on (i) could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions and convictions for burglary offences by police force area, in England and Wales, up to December 2020, available in the '[Court Outcomes by Police Force Area data tool](#)', which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063890/court-outcomes-by-PFA-2020-revised.xlsx.

■ Burglary: Prosecutions

Steve Reed: [1182]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prosecutions there were for burglary in each police force area in England and Wales in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions and convictions for burglary offences by police force area, in England and Wales, up to December 2020, available in the '[Court Outcomes by Police Force Area](#)' data tool, which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063890/court-outcomes-by-PFA-2020-revised.xlsx.

■ Crime

Steve Reed: [1186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) prosecutions and (b) convictions there were for (i) burglary, (ii) robbery, (iii) theft, (iv) shoplifting, (v) drug offences and (vi) arson in each year since 2010.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions, convictions and sentencing outcomes for the requested offences in England and Wales up to December 2020, available in the 'Outcomes by Offence' data tool, which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987715/outcomes-by-offence-2020.xlsx.

■ Dangerous Driving: Reoffenders

Steve Reed: [1184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of subsequent offences committed by defendants on bail while awaiting trial for dangerous driving in each police force area in each year since 2017.

Steve Reed: [1185]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of subsequent offences committed by defendants on bail while awaiting trial for drink and drug driving in each police force area in each year since 2017.

James Cartlidge:

This data requires linking Police National Computer data with courts data as well as a manual search and would therefore be of disproportionate costs.

■ Forced Marriage

Grahame Morris: [193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to extend the legislation on forced marriage to include the offence of predatory marriage.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government takes the issue of protecting the vulnerable, including the elderly, from being taken advantage of extremely seriously.

We will review the case for reforming the law in relation to predatory marriage in the light of two forthcoming reports from the Law Commission. One review is in relation to the law around marriage, due to report in July 2022, and the other on the law of wills, the report date of which is yet to be confirmed. Both reviews are exploring the potential to provide improved protection for vulnerable people, and we will respond to the recommendations of the reports once they have been received.

■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions

Theresa Villiers: [91]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to tackle delays in the enforcement of court orders for possession of residential property.

James Cartlidge:

MOJ and HMCTS have already taken steps to review County Court bailiff capacity and have introduced efficiencies, including the increased use of Warrant of Control Support Centres to reduce the administrative tasks undertaken by bailiffs. This has, and will, free up bailiff resource to focus on other enforcement activity which includes the enforcement of possession orders.

The most recent data for timeliness in landlord possession claims can be found at the following link: [Mortgage and Landlord Possession statistics: October to December 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-october-to-december-2021). This shows a consistent improvement in timeliness since the enforcement restrictions lifted at the end of Q2, enabling bailiffs once again to undertake enforcement activity.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Architecture

Tommy Sheppard: [1206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring all those who are permitted to design buildings to be a regulated architect.

Stuart Andrew:

On 16 August 2021 my Department launched the Review of Architects Regulation with a Call for Evidence. This Review considered the current form of regulation for

architects and the architectural sector in the UK and sought views on a range of topics including forms of regulation, access to the architectural profession, sustainability and innovation. The Call for Evidence included a section on 'Functions of an Architect,' which sought views on protected functions and a workshop on this matter, led by my officials, was undertaken on February 2022. The responses to the Review are currently being considered.

■ **Candidates: Disability**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[366]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Answer of 7 February 2022 to Question 113192 on Candidates: Disability, what progress his officials have made towards enhancing support and guidance for disabled councillors following their talks with the National Association of Local Councils and the Local Government Association.

Kemi Badenoch:

It is the Government's ambition to see more disabled people in public office.

DLUHC has developed a new scheme to support disabled people seeking to become local candidates and to support those who have been elected to local public office.

This work is a part of the 2022/23 local government improvement programme, delivered largely by the LGA, launched in April this year.

The scheme includes:

- a coaching programme for disabled councillors to support them as resilient and confident leaders of their communities
- a campaign to attract more people with disabilities to stand for council elections and a new 'Be a Councillor' guide for disabled candidates who are considering standing for the 2023 elections
- a bespoke leadership development programme for disabled councillors, which provides councillors with unique networking opportunities and support

The full 2022-2023 Sector Support Offer for local councils is available on the LGA website: <https://local.gov.uk/publications/sector-support-offer-2022-23>

■ **Combined Authorities**

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[63]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the likelihood that trailblazer deeper devolution deals being negotiated with West Midlands Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Combined Authority will be followed by other mayoral combined authorities.

Neil O'Brien:

In our Levelling Up White Paper, Government announced its intention to negotiate Trailblazer deals with the West Midlands Combined Authority and Greater

Manchester Combined Authority which will deepen the areas' devolution settlements. Since publishing the Levelling Up White Paper we have already begun negotiations with both Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the West Midlands Combined Authority, which will provide a blueprint for other MCAs and the GLA to follow. Government welcomes proposals from the existing MCAs and the GLA to deepen devolution arrangements, in line with the devolution framework.

■ Energy Bills Rebate

Dr Alan Whitehead: [1075]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many households liable for council tax in bands A-D (a) have received and (b) are yet to receive the £150 non-repayable council tax rebate as announced by the Government on the 23 March 2022.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [1076]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Answer of 25 February 2022 to Question 127248, on Energy Bills Rebate, how many households have so far received financial support from the £144 million discretionary fund to support households who need help with their energy bills but are not eligible for the core council tax scheme.

Kemi Badenoch:

My Department has just closed its first round of data collection which monitors delivery of the rebate up until 30 April. We intend to publish the results shortly.

Grahame Morris: [186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many local authorities adhered to the Government's Council Tax rebate guidance and delivered payments to all eligible households in April.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government's guidance advises councils to make council tax rebate payments as soon as possible from April. The Government is monitoring delivery progress and most councils have begun making payments.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Paul Blomfield: [725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to 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 in the event that they were resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

Yes. The eligibility guidance is set out at: www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme#eligibility .

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Lisa Nandy: [\[1167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many refugees have arrived in the UK under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and subsequently presented to local authorities as homeless as a result of the breakdown of their placement with a sponsor.

Lisa Nandy: [\[1168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many people have presented to local authorities as homeless having arrived in the UK without a visa under the (a) the Ukraine Family Scheme and (b) the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN [778](#) on 16 May 2022.

Stephen Kinnock: [\[779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many people who have arrived in the UK under (a) the Ukraine Family Scheme and (b) the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme have had to change accommodation since initially being assigned accommodation upon arrival.

Eddie Hughes:

This data is not held nationally. The Government is working with local authorities to support a minority of cases where Ukrainians, who have arrived under Homes for Ukraine, need to be re-matched with new sponsors.

■ Regional Planning and Development

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to encourage levelling up across the UK.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that no part of the UK is left behind as part of the levelling up agenda.

Neil O'Brien:

The Levelling Up White Paper provides a clear plan to level up every corner of the UK, underpinned by 12 ambitious “missions” over 10 years and tracked by an annual report that will monitor levelling up progress and ensure the government is held to account. It will address regional disparities across the UK, put more money in the pockets of those who need it most, and transform the UK economy by generating higher paid jobs and new investment.

The Government is taking a data-driven approach to assessing geographic areas, ensuring that we are focusing our efforts on the places that need the most support

and empowering local leaders and communities to seize their own destiny. Each place and its requirements are unique, and therefore the support it receives must reflect this.

■ Windrush Generation: Anniversaries

Helen Hayes: [\[891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to announce the 2022 Windrush Day Grant Scheme awards.

Kemi Badenoch:

This year's Windrush Day Grant Scheme awards will focus on bringing people together – across different ages and ethnic backgrounds – to commemorate, celebrate and educate communities about the contribution of the Windrush Generation and their descendants to our national life.

All application assessments for this year's scheme are complete and a formal announcement of the successful projects is set to take place soon.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation and Shipping: Russia

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to identify Russian-owned aircraft and ships located in the UK.

Robert Courts:

We are actively working with departments and agencies across government, with industry, and Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, to enforce sanctions against Russia – including the identification of Russian-owned aircraft and ships.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Russian-owned vessels have been seized at ports and airfields since sanctions have been introduced in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Robert Courts:

We are actively working with departments and agencies across Government to identify all aircraft and vessels, including leisure craft, that fall within the scope of the sanctions Regulations. To date, three aircraft have been detained, and two remain under a restriction of flying order pending investigation. At least 28 ships have been frustrated by the maritime sanctions, and one superyacht has been detained.

■ Driving Tests

Sarah Olney:

[\[390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of preventing automated BOTS from booking driving tests on the DVLA website.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) does not employ, encourage or licence anyone to provide a driving test cancellation checking service. The Apps/BOTS are not approved by the DVSA as they make it harder for candidates to get a test and can also result in people paying more for a test than the official test fee. Using such services also means that any changes to the driving test may not necessarily be relayed to the candidate.

The DVSA is taking steps to block cancellation services from accessing its booking system. As well as checking if the user accessing the system is human, using CAPTCHA checks, the DVSA has introduced Advanced Bot Protection into its firewall, which will allow the DVSA to have greater scrutiny of traffic on its booking services.

The DVSA will continue to inform candidates of the official channels for booking a test and has taken measures to encourage learners to use the official booking website by ensuring that it appears as high as possible on popular search engines and by promoting the official website on social media.

■ Driving Tests: Standards

Dave Doogan:

[\[1339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of people in (a) Angus and (b) the UK awaiting a practical driving test; and of those how many are awaiting those tests at the Arbroath remote testing centre.

Dave Doogan:

[\[1340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many practical driving tests were carried out per week on average in Arbroath (a) in 2019 and (b) between 1 January and 1 May 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

As of 13 May 2022:

- 135 people had a practical car driving test booked in Angus.
- 119,865 people had a practical car driving test booked in the UK.
- 60 people had a practical car driving test booked at Arbroath test centre.

The waiting time for a practical car test at Arbroath is five weeks.

In 2019, 11 practical car driving tests were carried out, on average, per week, at Arbroath. 12 practical driving tests were carried out, on average, per week, at Arbroath between 1 January and 1 May 2022.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Matt Western:** **[1291]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the costs of compliance with and (b) the wider impact of the Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021 on the electric vehicle charging industry.

Trudy Harrison:

The Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021 are estimated to have a net economic benefit of up to £1.1bn (with a central estimate of £500m) by reducing the need for expensive electricity system infrastructure. This is expected to translate into lower energy bills for all consumers and support the uptake of electric vehicles by facilitating their integration into the electricity system at least cost.

An Impact Assessment was published alongside the Regulations that includes a detailed assessment of the costs and benefits that were considered in developing the regulations:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015290/electric-vehicles-smart-charge-points-regulations-2021-impact-assessment.pdf

Matt Western: **[1292]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with the electric vehicle charging industry on its ability to comply with the Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021.

Trudy Harrison:

Government consulted on the Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Point) Regulations in 2019 and received 129 responses. Last August, the Government also published the final draft Regulations and notified the World Trade Organisation of intentions to lay these, offering UK and international trade bodies a further opportunity to provide comments. No responses were received.

Since the Regulations were made in December 2021, BEIS and Office for Product Safety Standards (OPSS) officials have continued to engage extensively with industry, both individually and via trade associations, to support them in compliance. Detailed guidance was published in February, and an updated version including further clarity on issues requested by industry will be published shortly.

Matt Western: **[1293]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department had discussions with the Office for Product Security and Safety prior to drawing up the Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021.

Trudy Harrison:

The Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021 were jointly developed by DfT and BEIS policy officials who worked closely with the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) in their development.

■ Eurotunnel: Bus Services

Emma Hardy: [\[1302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the financial impact on the coach industry of the decision by Eurotunnel to reduce the number of coach berths available and to increase charges for the available berths.

Wendy Morton:

Decisions regarding capacity and pricing are commercial ones for Eurotunnel as a private operator, noting that there are a number of options available to customers wishing to travel from the UK to Europe via the short Straits in what is a highly competitive market. Nevertheless, my officials will continue to engage with Eurotunnel and raise this important issue.

Greg Smith: [\[1355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of Eurotunnel regarding restrictions placed on coaches for the summer 2022 period.

Wendy Morton:

My officials engage with Eurotunnel on a range of issues on a regular basis, including recently discussing Eurotunnel's policy regarding coach bookings.

My officials will continue to engage with Eurotunnel on this and other issues.

■ Great British Railways

Rachael Maskell: [\[1213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what role the Great British Railways body proposed in the Queen's Speech 2022 is expected to have in developing innovations in operations and planning for the rail network.

Wendy Morton:

Great British Railways (GBR), will provide strong unified leadership across the rail network, bringing ownership of infrastructure, fares, timetables and planning of the network under a single point of operational accountability.

With the new relationship between GBR, train operators and innovators, innovations can be trialed and rolled out more rapidly. Central to this will be the better management and exploitation of data.

GBR will be well placed to coordinate data sharing, both across the established rail industry, and with innovators and the supply chain, enabling new innovations and the refinement of existing processes.

Rachael Maskell: [\[1214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will encourage Great British Railways to develop partnerships with companies that are leading rail innovations.

Wendy Morton:

The Government's vision is a railway that combines the focus on innovation, quality and customer service of the private sector with a new guiding mind for the railways, Great British Railways (GBR). GBR will be structured to promote closer working with the rail supply chain, including working with local innovators through its regional divisions. Through Passenger Service Contracts, GBR will also incentivise operators to innovate for the benefit of customers.

Rachael Maskell:[\[1215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of how Great British Railways will develop the skills required by the future rail network.

Wendy Morton:

Great British Railways will invest in skills, training and leadership across the rail sector to foster greater collaboration and openness to innovation and new technology, which will support vital long-term productivity improvements.

Rachael Maskell:[\[1216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of how Great British Railways will intersect with other transport modes to secure good intermodal connectivity.

Wendy Morton:

The Government is committed to further integration of rail with other transport modes, as emphasised in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. The Great British Railways Transition Team's recent call for evidence for the Whole Industry Strategic Plan, a 30-year strategy for the rail sector, sought responses on a range of topics including modal integration. We expect that findings from the Call for Evidence Report will be published shortly.

Once established, Great British Railways will provide strong unified leadership across the rail network and work in partnership with local and regional government to give local leaders a greater say in how transport services are delivered in their area.

Rachael Maskell:[\[1217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of how Great British Railways should work with new energy technologies to power the future of rail.

Wendy Morton:

The government is committed to providing a net zero rail network by 2050, and to do so we will electrify most of the network and deploy battery and hydrogen trains on some lines, where it makes economic and operational sense. To support this Great British Rail will bring forward costed options to decarbonise the whole network to meet the government's commitment to a net-zero society as part of the 30-year strategy. The 30-year rail strategy will provide clear, long-term plans to transform the rail, strengthen collaboration with industry and incentivise innovation in new energy technologies.

The government is currently supporting the development of battery and hydrogen technology in rail through innovation funding and research. This includes work on safety and wider issues that will have to be considered to allow battery and hydrogen trains smooth entry onto the network. As such, Great Western Railway has signed a deal that will see the UK's first battery-only train enter scheduled passenger service this year, trialling Vivarail's new fast charger. The trial is supported by £2.15m funding from the Department for Transport's Rail Network Enhancement pipeline (RNEP).

■ **Great British Railways: Location**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to establish a new headquarters for Great British Railways.

Wendy Morton:

A competition to select a national headquarters for Great British Railways was launched on 5 February and is being overseen by the Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT). GBRTT received 42 applications. A shortlist is being finalised, using GBRTT's published selection criteria. The towns and cities on the shortlist will go forward to a public consultative vote shortly. Ministers will then make a final decision later this year, based on all information gathered.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department will announce the location a new headquarters for Great British Railways.

Wendy Morton:

The shortlist of towns and cities for the Great British Railways headquarters will be announced shortly. Following an online consultative public vote, the location of the Great British Railways headquarters will be announced later this year.

■ **High Speed 2 Line: Project Bank Accounts**

Debbie Abrahams: [\[762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with HS2 on the use of Project Bank Accounts throughout their supply chain following the insolvency of HS2 contractor Roadbridge.

Andrew Stephenson:

DfT, including its Arm's Length Bodies, follow the principles of the Construction Playbook which sets out options to mitigate the risk of potential supplier insolvency, one of these options is the use of Project Bank Accounts.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Testing**

Charlotte Nichols: [\[510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to require motorists to have an MOT every 2 years.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government is always looking for ways to assist consumers with the cost of travel. During the time that the MOT system has been in place, cars have changed greatly including considerable safety improvements and there are new types of vehicle, in particular hybrid and electric cars. It is right that we keep the system under review.

■ Nature Conservation

Dr Lisa Cameron: [296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department plans to take to (a) increase the (i) number and (ii) scale of wildlife tunnels and bridges and (b) improve the maintenance of existing wildlife tunnels and bridges.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department for Transport is committed to conserving, restoring and improving biodiversity across its estate and delivering new requirements set out in the Environment Act 2021.

National Highways is increasing the number of wildlife tunnels and bridges on its network, ranging from simple wildlife tunnels and ledges to allow and encourage safe badger and otter movement, to large structures including green bridges where appropriate, which connect habitats and wildlife corridors. Green bridges are components of a number of National Highways' new road projects.

■ P&O Ferries: Inspections

Grahame Morris: [1165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Port State Control inspections of P&O Ferries vessels undertaken by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency since 17 March 2022, if he will take steps to publish the outcome of those inspections.

Robert Courts:

Reports of all Port State Control inspections are published on the Paris Memorandum of Understanding website, parismou.org, in the inspection database. Individual reports are published once an inspection is complete and in the case of a detention, after the vessel has been released.

Reports for individual vessels can be found by searching on its name and with a date range.

■ Shipping: Conditions of Employment

Sir John Hayes: [38]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the decision by P&O to dismiss 800 employees and replace them with sub-minimum wage agency workers, what steps his Department will take to uphold employment standards for seafaring workers.

Robert Courts:

P&O Ferries made 800 seafarers redundant on Thursday 17 March without consultation.

The Secretary of State made a statement in Parliament on the 30 March to announce a package of measures to ensure employment standards for seafarers are upheld, and wider seafarer welfare and health and safety is addressed. Measures include improving the long-term working conditions for seafarers, including working through international organisations.

We are committed to seafarer protections and welfare and this is being taken forward as part of our nine-point plan.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to ensure the Maritime Labour Convention applies to all vessels operating in UK territorial waters.

Robert Courts:

It is both the Department's policy, and the United Kingdom's legal obligation, as a country which has ratified the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC), to apply the standards of the MLC to UK flagged ships anywhere in the world and to foreign flagged ships calling at UK ports.

■ South Western Railway**Munira Wilson:**[\[973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with South Western Railway regarding the proposed timetable changes from December 2022.

Wendy Morton:

Department officials have been in regular communication with South Western Railway and are being kept informed of timetable developments and the latest passenger demand across their network.

■ Southeastern Trains: Cleaning Services**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 14 March 2022 to Question 136657, on Southeastern Trains: Cleaning Services, if he will publish the terms of the Service Contract between the Secretary of State, DOHL and SE Trains Limited.

Wendy Morton:

The Department published the Southeastern Service Contract on the Government website on 12 April 2022.

It is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-eastern-railways-2021-olr-rail-contract.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 14 March 2022 to Question 136656 on Southeastern Trains: Cleaning Services, whether under the terms of the Service Contract between the Secretary of State, DOHL and SE Trains Ltd, he has given a mandate to the Directors of SE Trains Ltd in relation to Churchill's pay arrangements.

Wendy Morton:

The Department has not provided Southeastern with a mandate in relation to this dispute. Pay arrangements are a contractual issue between Churchill and its staff.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2022 to Question 134390 on Southeastern Trains: Cleaning Services, if he will publish the outcomes of the meetings held between a Director of SE Trains Ltd and Churchill on 4 February and 11 March.

Wendy Morton:

The Department does not hold this information.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether under the terms of the Service Contract between the Secretary of State, DOHL and SE Trains Ltd, he has agreed a dispute handling policy with the Directors of SE Trains Ltd.

Wendy Morton:

Under the terms of the Service Contract, I can confirm that there is no provision to agree a dispute handling policy with Southeastern regarding third party contracts.

■ Taxis: Greater London**Julian Knight:** [\[796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has had discussions with Transport for London to ensure that private hire operators in the capital are compliant following the judgment in *Uber London Limited v Transport for London & Others* [2021] EWHC 3290 (Admin).

Trudy Harrison:

The Government sets the regulatory framework for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing, with licensing authorities responsible for licensing decisions and enforcement. Following the Divisional Court's judgment, Transport for London, the licensing authority for London, has amended its regulations governing private hire vehicle operator licences and in April 2022 issued guidance on complying with the legislation.

■ Transport: Infrastructure

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure an integrated transport system across the whole of England.

Wendy Morton:

The Department for Transport is committed to supporting closer integration between all forms of transport and it is a critical criteria as we assess our investments. Furthermore, we are delivering goals set out in our National Bus Strategy and Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail to better integrate bus and rail networks with each other, as well as connecting to onward travel options, including cycling and walking.

The Department also works closely with other departments across Whitehall such as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to ensure that our investments integrate with broader government investment plans.

■ Transport: Project Bank Accounts

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's position is on the use of Project Bank Accounts throughout the supply chain, including for Tier Two and Tier Three contractors, for transport-related construction and infrastructure projects.

Andrew Stephenson:

DfT, including its Arm's Length Bodies, follow the principles of the Construction Playbook which sets out options to mitigate the risk of potential supplier insolvency, one of these options is the use of Project Bank Accounts.

TREASURY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[1370\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the value of loans issued through the Bounce Back Loan Scheme at risk of being used to fund terrorist organisations.

John Glen:

Bounce Back Loans were offered by accredited lenders who were required to carry out appropriate anti-money laundering and know-your-customer checks on applications.

In the event that lenders have concerns in regard to a loan already issued, they are responsible for recovering funds or referring the organisations to law enforcement agencies for investigation and recovery. In order to support these efforts, at Spring

Statement the government provided £13.2m additional funding for the National Investigation Service to investigate fraud and financial crime against the scheme.

■ **Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the DSSI: Zambia**

Preet Kaur Gill: [403]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of Zambia's progress through the G20's Common Framework.

John Glen:

Zambia is one of three countries – along with Chad and Ethiopia - to have so far requested the Common Framework, which was designed to help deliver a long-term, sustainable approach for supporting low-income countries to tackle their debt vulnerabilities. Zambia reached a Staff-Level Agreement with the IMF in December, marking a step forward. At Spring Meetings, the IMF managing director indicated that China had agreed to join the creditor committee for Zambia. As a creditor to Zambia, it is a priority to work with the rest of the G20 to ensure swift progress on the debt treatment.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Fraud**

Abena Oppong-Asare: [1368]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many allegations of fraud in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme from whistleblowers HMRC has (a) received, (b) investigated and (c) concluded were fraudulent as of 12 May 2022.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC does not categorise intelligence reports, including allegations received from whistle-blowers, by fraud or other non-compliant behaviours and so is unable to provide the information requested.

■ **Eat Out to Help Out Scheme: Fraud**

Abena Oppong-Asare: [1369]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the value of Eat to Help Out funds that were claimed fraudulently.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC identifies claims for compliance checks where the amount of the claim is out of step with other information. The risk that a claim is incorrect may be due to either an honest mistake or fraud, and the reason cannot be established until the check is concluded.

Estimates for the proportion of error and fraud were published in November 2021, and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measuring-error-and-fraud-in-the-covid-19-schemes/measuring-error-and-fraud-in-the-covid-19-support-schemes-methodology-and-approach>.

■ Fiscal Policy: Cost of Living

Kirsten Oswald: [\[900063\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of his fiscal policies on the cost of living.

Afzal Khan: [\[900064\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to tackle increases in the cost of living.

Gerald Jones: [\[900068\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to help reduce the impact of the rise in the cost of living on households.

Gavin Newlands: [\[900072\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of his fiscal policies on the cost of living.

Alison McGovern: [\[900073\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to reduce the impact on households of the rise in the cost of living.

John Glen:

The government understands how the rising cost of living is making life harder for people. These are global challenges however, as set out in the Spring Statement, the government is providing support worth over £22 billion in 2022-23 to help families with these pressures.

For example, a typical family with 2 children where one adult is on the average employee salary and the other works 16 hours at the NLW will be around than £3,000 a year better off as a result of recent government action, notably the NICs primary threshold change, UC taper rate and work allowance changes, and increase in the National Living Wage, even taking account the introduction of the Health and Social Care Levy.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largin: [\[527\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak dated 4 March 2022, reference RL34445.

Lucy Frazer:

A response was sent to the hon. Member for High Peak on 12 May 2022.

■ Northern Ireland Protocol

Layla Moran: [1317]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the Government's economic impact assessment on unilateral action by the Government on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

John Glen:

It is for the Office for Budget Responsibility to provide and publish economic and fiscal forecasting.

The Government's overriding priority has been, and continues to be, preserving peace and stability in Northern Ireland. Peace in Northern Ireland is based on respect between all communities and the consent of those communities. We urge our partners in the EU to work with us to deliver changes to the Protocol. If we cannot find the solutions we need, we will take the steps necessary to protect all dimensions of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

■ Offshore Industry: Taxation

Richard Burgon: [1240]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total North Sea oil and gas receipts to Treasury was in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22; what the estimated total North Sea oil and gas receipts to the Treasury in (i) 2022-23, (ii) 2023-24, and (iii) 2024-25; and what estimate he has made of the total revenues of North Sea oil and gas companies in each of those years.

Helen Whately:

Forecasts for government revenues from oil and gas production are provided by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). Their most recent published forecast, provided for Spring Statement 2022 on 23 March, is available on the OBR website at <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2022/>.

Government revenues received from North Sea oil and gas operators between 1968 to 1969 and 2020 to 2021 are presented in Table 2 of HM Revenue & Custom's (HMRC) "*Statistics of government revenues from UK oil and gas production*" publication, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/government-revenues-from-uk-oil-and-gas-production--2>

Data for 2021 to 2022 onwards can be found in the "*HMRC tax receipts and National Insurance contributions for the UK*" tables, also available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmrc-tax-and-nics-receipts-for-the-uk>

■ Safe Hands Plans: Insolvency

Owen Thompson: [1232]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he had recent discussions with FRP Advisory on the collapse of Safe Hands Funeral Plans.

Owen Thompson: [\[1233\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will introduce a package of protection for previous policy holders with Safe Hands Funeral Plans.

Owen Thompson: [\[1234\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of the collapse of Safe Hands Funeral Plans on increases on the cost of living.

John Glen:

In January 2021, the government legislated to bring all pre-paid funeral plan providers and intermediaries within the regulatory remit of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) from 29 July 2022. When FCA regulation takes effect, funeral plan providers will need to be authorised by the FCA in order to enter into or carry out funeral plan contracts.

Safe Hands Plans has recently gone into administration. The government understands that this development will be concerning for customers of Safe Hands and continues to monitor the implementation of regulation in this sector closely.

I was very pleased to see Dignity's recent commitment to provide ongoing support to Safe Hands' customers for the next six months. This will ensure that any planholders who pass away during this time will receive a funeral without any additional charge.

While the FCA does not yet regulate funeral plan providers, it is supporting the administrators and the wider industry as they look to find a longer-term solution for Safe Hands' customers.

It is unfortunate but unavoidable that bringing a previously unregulated sector into regulation – whatever form that may take – creates a possibility that some providers are not able to meet the threshold for authorisation. However, a well-regulated market should promote effective competition and drive better outcomes for consumers in the long-term.

Where a provider is unable to obtain FCA authorisation because of underlying issues, it is important to understand that this is not an issue created by bringing the sector into regulation. Rather, bringing the sector into regulation exposes these unsustainable business models and prevents these problems from getting worse.

The government understands that the rising cost of living is making life harder for people. These are global challenges: however, as set out in the Spring Statement, the government is providing support worth over £22 billion in 2022-23 to help families with these pressures.

Sanctions: Russia**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[204\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of UK financial sanctions relating to Russia following the invasion of Ukraine.

John Glen:

The UK has imposed the most severe package of financial sanctions in history in response to Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine. Working with partners, we are effectively isolating Russia from the global economy, and making it far more difficult for Russian oligarchs and businesses to operate outside their own borders.

Our sanctions are having an impact on Russia's economy; Putin has acknowledged the "problems and difficulties" caused by sanctions and the IMF has estimated Russia's GDP will shrink by 8.5 percent this year.

We are cutting off Russia's access to finance – with asset freezes on major banks - including Russia's largest bank Sberbank - and the removal of selected banks from SWIFT. We have sanctioned Russia's largest banks with global assets worth £500bn pre-invasion. Over 3 million Russian companies are now barred from raising money on UK capital markets. The Russian state cannot raise funds in the UK.

Sanctions on Russia's central bank, in concert with international partners, prevent it from liquidating or moving its foreign currency reserves and assets, and undercut its ability to engage in foreign exchange transactions to support the rouble.

We will go broader, we will go deeper, and we will close loopholes. We are united with the G7 to bring this war to an end. And, together, we will encourage the widest possible set of countries to act with us, with a focus on those who can have the biggest impact on Putin and his war machine.

■ Taxpayer Protection Taskforce: Staff**Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[1366\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much of the Government's £100 million investment in the Taxpayer Protection Taskforce, announced in November 2021, has been used for (a) existing and (b) new HMRC staff.

Abena Oppong-Asare:[\[1367\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many staff have been (a) reassigned from other teams in HMRC into the Taxpayer Protection Taskforce and (b) hired by HMRC to replace those who have been reassigned.

Lucy Frazer:

The Covid Taxpayer Protection Taskforce is made up of 1,265 experienced compliance officers, and all its staff have been reassigned from other teams across HMRC. These staff were selected from those who have tax training and compliance experience. Once they joined the taskforce, staff were provided with additional training on the COVID-19 Schemes.

HMRC has recruited an additional 430 full-time equivalent staff, funded for five years, to backfill those colleagues who were deployed to the Covid-19 taskforce for two years.

The £100 million has been used to recruit new HMRC staff to backfill those who were reassigned into the Covid-19 taskforce.

■ Treasury: Catering

Emily Thornberry: [\[130\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department spent on outside catering services in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, (c) 2020-21, and (d) 2021-22.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury has spent the below totals on outside catering services in each of the financial years in question:

2018-19	£12,659.78
2019-20	£17,944.13
2020-21	£1,693.81
2021-22	£698.43

■ Treasury: Communication

Emily Thornberry: [\[126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much expenditure was allocated by his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, (c) 2020-21, and (d) 2021-22 to (i) internal communications and (ii) the employment of staff to work on internal communications.

Helen Whately:

The department allocated £0 to internal communications in all of the years listed.

We are unable to provide a breakdown of employment costs for the 3 members of staff that currently work in the internal communications team. The internal communications team is part of the Treasury communications team for which costs have previously be released in [UIN 156564](#), tabled on 20 April 2022 (answered by the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury on 28 April 2022) and [UIN 166535](#) tabled on 10 March 2021 (answer by the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury Kemi Badenoch on 15 March 2021).

■ Treasury: Consultants

Emily Thornberry: [\[124\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department spent in total on external management consultants in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, (c) 2020-21, and (d) 2021-22; and what ten projects or work areas in each of those financial years required the greatest expenditure on support from those consultants.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury's spend on consultancy is published and available for viewing within the Annual Report and Accounts. HM treasury is yet to lay its accounts for (d)2021-22 but this will be published and available prior to the summer recess. We have included the links to the published Annual Report and Accounts for each of the available years in question within the table below.

	FINANCIAL YEAR	PUBLICATION LINK	PAGE REFERENCE
(a)	2018-19	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019	Page 88
(b)	2019-20	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020	Page 104
(c)	2020-21	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021	Page 101

The top ten projects which were the main drivers for the spend totals included in the published annual reports and accounts are published and available on the GOV.UK contract finder service portal for which we have included a link to below.

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

■ Treasury: Digital Technology and Video Recordings

Emily Thornberry:**[128]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much expenditure was allocated by hi Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, (c) 2020-21, and (d) 2021-22 to (i) the production of digital and video content, (ii) the employment of in-house staff to produce digital and video content and (iii) the payment of external companies and individuals to produce digital and video content.

Helen Whately:

We are unable to provide a breakdown of employment costs for staff that – as part of their jobs – produce digital and video content. Almost all of HM Treasury's digital and video content for the requested time period has been produced in-house by the Treasury's communications team at no additional cost. Costs for that team have previously be released in [UIN 156564](#), tabled on 20 April 2022 (answered by the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury on 28 April 2022) and [UIN 166535](#) tabled on 10 March 2021 (answer by the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury Kemi Badenoch on 15 March 2021).

During the 2018-22 period HM Treasury has spent £3,042 on video content, as detailed here (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/913038/GPC_Over_500_May_2020_Publication_.CSV/preview).

There has been no other external spend on digital or video content in the years specified.

■ Treasury: Electricity and Heating

Emily Thornberry: [\[133\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department spent on heating and electricity bills within (a) the overall departmental estate and (b) the main departmental building at 1 Horseguards Road, London SW1A 2HQ in (i) 2018-19, (ii) 2019-20, (iii) 2020-21, and (iv) 2021-22.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury's heating and electricity costs for 1 Horse Guards Road for 2018-19 to 2020-21 can be found in the 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts at the following link on page 243.

[HM Treasury annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/102422/2020-21-annual-report-and-accounts)

Details on the heating and electricity costs for the Treasury's Norwich office for this period are not readily available as this information is included in other accommodation costs.

The 2021-22 costs will be published in the Annual Report and Accounts later in the year.

■ Treasury: Information Officers

Emily Thornberry: [\[127\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many individuals were employed by his Department to work on internal communications in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, (c) 2020-21, and (d) 2021-22.

Helen Whately:

The number of people employed by the department to work on internal communications from 2018-19 to 2021-22 is broken down as:

- a) 2.6 in 2018-19
- b) 2.8 in 2019-20
- c) 3.2 in 2020-21
- d) 3 in 2021-22

■ Treasury: Photographs and Video Recordings

Emily Thornberry: [\[129\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many photographers and video producers were employed by his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, (c) 2020-21, and (d) 2021-22.

Helen Whately:

All video and photography content is produced by the in-house communications team with staff working across a range of disciplines.

■ Treasury: Recruitment**Emily Thornberry:****[125]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department spent in total on external recruitment consultants in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, (c) 2020-21, and (d) 2021-22; 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.

Helen Whately:

The information requested on external recruitment consultant spend is not available as we do not hold this level of granularity on recruitment costs for any of the financial years in question. As a result we are also not able to identify the equivalent posts that were then filled as a result of this spend nor would we be able to identify the number of individuals who were recruited through these routes which existed outside of the civil service prior to joining the department.

■ Treasury: Taxis**Emily Thornberry:****[131]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total cost to the public purse was of ordering of vehicles on HM Treasury's travel account for mini-cabs in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, (c) 2020-21, and (d) 2021-22.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury's taxi costs for 2018-19 to 2020-21 can be found in the 2020-21 Annual report and Accounts at the following link on page 244.

[HM Treasury annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/900069/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021.pdf)

The 2021-22 costs will be published in the Annual Report and Accounts later in the year.

Taxis are defined as a car available with a driver for hire, including a minicab.

■ UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement**Stephen Farry:****[900069]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential economic impact of a suspension of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Lucy Frazer:

It is for the Office for Budget Responsibility to provide economic and fiscal forecasting.

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement ensures that the UK has control of our laws, borders, money and fisheries, ending any role for the European Court.

The UK Government's overriding priority has been, and continues to be, preserving peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

■ Uranium: Imports

Alan Brown:

[1211]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 154146, if he will publish the table showing the volume of Uranium imported into the UK by Country of Origin from 2016 to 2022.

Lucy Frazer:

As stated in the answer to UIN 154146, HMRC is responsible for the collection and publication of data on imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC releases this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics (OTS), which is available via their dedicated website: www.uktradeinfo.com. From this website, it is also possible to build your own data tables based upon bespoke search criteria: <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/ots-custom-table>.

The table showing the volume of uranium imported into the UK by country of origin from 2016-22 has already been provided in the answer to UIN 154146. UK imports by country of origin (including for uranium), are already publicly available within the bulk datasets available to download at: <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/latest-bulk-datasets/>.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Disability

Vicky Foxcroft:

[367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the Minister for Disabled People last met with the Government's Disability and Access Ambassadors; and what recent steps she has taken with those ambassadors on disability and access.

Chloe Smith:

The Minister for Disabled People will next meet with all Disability and Access Ambassadors (DAAs) in June, the date to be confirmed. Since the last meeting with them on January 17th she has attended events and met with several DAAs and there are other events in her diary. All DAAs have had, and continue to have, active involvement with Disability Unit projects. All DAAs remain active and busy in their sectors, and work is underway to recruit four DAAs to replace retiring posts.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 4 February to Question 113195 on Disability: Databases, what progress the Disability Unit has made towards establishing a panel of experts on the lived experience of disabled

people to (a) assess findings from research and (b) provide advice on data improvement projects.

Chloe Smith:

The government is committed to disability policy that supports all areas of life, and to taking action to create a society that works for everyone so we can build back better - and fairer.

The Secretary of State has sought permission to appeal the High Court's declaration in *Binder vs SSWP*, and whilst we await the outcome, the Secretary of State is considering how to proceed with policies, activities, and actions that fall within the department's remit. Next steps regarding lived experience research and data improvement projects will be set forth in due course.

■ **Disability Aids: Technology**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 4 February 2022 to Question 113194 on Disability Aids: Technology, what further progress her Department has made towards exploring how a Centre for Assistive and Accessible Technology might drive improvements in public services.

Chloe Smith:

The government is committed to disability policy that supports all areas of life, and to taking action to create a society that works for everyone so we can build back better - and fairer.

The Secretary of State has sought permission to appeal the High Court's declaration in *Binder vs SSWP*, and whilst we await the outcome, the Secretary of State is considering how to proceed with policies, activities, and actions that fall within the department's remit. Next steps regarding the Centre for Assistive and Accessible Technology will be set forth in due course.

■ **Disability Premium**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are in receipt of enhanced disability premium as of 10 May 2022.

Chloe Smith:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **Employment: Long Covid**

Mick Whitley:

[\[455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department is taking to facilitate a phased return to work for claimants with long covid, beyond the usual four week phased return period.

Chloe Smith:

The department is not involved in discussions regarding phased returns to work. This is a matter for the individual and their employer.

■ Foetal Anticonvulsant Syndrome: Social Security Benefits**Ben Lake:**[\[918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason people with fetal valproate spectrum disorder, which is a life-long disability, are required to re-apply for personal independence payment and disability living allowance.

Chloe Smith:

Entitlement to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is assessed on the basis of the needs arising from a health condition or disability, rather than the health condition or disability itself. Award rates and their durations are set on an individual basis, based on the claimant's needs and the likelihood of those needs changing, including where childhood developmental milestones are reached. Award reviews allow for the correct rate of DLA or PIP to remain in payment, including where needs have increased as a consequence of a congenital, degenerative or progressive condition.

■ Health and Safety: Non-ionizing Radiation**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of compliance in British workplaces with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection guidelines on non-ionizing radiations.

Chloe Smith:

In Great Britain, the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection guidelines are reflected in the Control of Electromagnetic Fields at Work Regulations 2016 (EMF regulations) and the Control of Artificial Optical Radiation at Work Regulations 2010 (AOR regulations).

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) enforces the EMF and AOR regulations, which make provisions for the protection of workers and others from the health risks associated with exposure to electromagnetic fields and artificial optical radiation during work activity. There has been no recent specific assessment of trends in regulatory compliance. However, HSE recently carried out the first 5-yearly post-implementation review of the EMF regulations, which was published in July 2021. The evidence gathered as part of the review showed no significant concerns with how the regulations were helping employers control the risks associated with electromagnetic fields.

Members: Correspondence**Rosie Cooper:** [\[1128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to the letter dated 9 March 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, reference ZA58735, regarding a personal independence payment claim.

Guy Opperman:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member by the Director for Disability Services, Decision Making and Working Age on behalf of the Secretary of State, on 13 May 2022.

Peter Grant: [\[1209\]](#)

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:

We are seeking to provide the hon. Member with a substantive response to the issue he raised in his correspondence and will provide an update as soon as possible.

Gerald Jones: [\[1241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to the enquiry of 10 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, reference POSCMP2022/20265.

Guy Opperman:

DWP contacted the office of Gerald Jones Labour MP for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney on Friday 13 May 2022, to provide a response in relation to his constituent's enquiry.

Afzal Khan: [\[1325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to reply to correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton on the 25 March 2022 regarding Kay Owen.

Guy Opperman:

A full written response was sent to the hon. Member on 17 May 2022.

Personal Independence Payment: Cystic Fibrosis**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with cystic fibrosis are in receipt of personal independence payment awards issued for (a) less than two years, (b) two to five years and (c) more than five years as of 11 May 2022.

Chloe Smith:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Universal Credit: Disability and Mental Illness

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[1012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to support (a) people with disabilities and (b) people with mental health issues with the managed migration to universal credit; and what assessment she has made of the potential merits of automatically migrating people who are disabled or who have mental health issues to universal credit.

David Rutley:

The Department believes it will be crucial that new claims are made to Universal Credit because we need to ensure data is as accurate and as up-to-date as possible when claimants move to Universal Credit. This will ensure that any errors will not be migrated from the existing benefit system to Universal Credit. In addition, as Universal Credit replaces legacy six different existing benefits, the Department may not have sufficient information to determine the full Universal Credit entitlement because some of this information is not available from the existing benefit data. For example, no information on capital or other benefits received is held in respect of tax credit claims.

Universal Credit is a different regime so the Department cannot simply assume that all existing claimants will want to make a claim, some form of consent from each claimant would be required. Requiring a claim to be made will provide that and it will be important that claimants understand the new Universal Credit regime into which they are moving and the corresponding responsibilities this will bring. This is especially important for vulnerable groups.”

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Departmental Contingent Liability Notification; Energy Supply Company Special Administration Regime**

Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Greg Hands): [\[HCWS33\]](#)

Today I will lay before Parliament a Departmental Minute describing a contingent liability arising from the issuance of a letter of credit for the Energy Administrators acting in the Special Administration Regime for Bulb Energy Limited ('Bulb'). This letter of credit replaces a previous one originally provided in December, which was extended in February and March, and which has now expired.

It is normal practice when a Government Department proposes to undertake a contingent liability of £300,000 and above, for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Department concerned to present Parliament with a minute giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances.

I regret that, as a result of continued negotiations with the counterparty and the reduced Parliamentary sitting period, I have not followed the usual notification timelines to allow the full 14-day consideration period of these issues in advance of issuing the letter of credit.

Bulb entered the Energy Supply Company Special Administration Regime on 24 November 2021. Energy Administrators were appointed by court to achieve the statutory objective of continuing energy supplies at the lowest reasonable practicable cost until such time as it becomes unnecessary for the special administration to remain in force for that purpose.

My Department has agreed to provide a facility to the Energy Administrators, with a letter of credit issued, with my approval, to guarantee such contract, code, licence, or other document obligations of the company consistent with the special administration's statutory objective. I will update the House if any letters of credit are drawn against.

The legal basis for a letter of credit is section 165 of the Energy Act 2004, as applied and modified by section 96 of the Energy Act 2011.

HM Treasury has approved the arrangements in principle.

■ **Ending BEIS ODA spending in China**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Science, Research and Innovation) (George Freeman): [\[HCWS32\]](#)

As one of the world's fastest growing economies, China plays a critical role in addressing many of the world's most urgent challenges such as tackling climate change and preventing Antimicrobial Resistance. It is important that we continue to work with China in

these areas and BEIS will build on our collaboration to date with China to address these key global challenges together, as set out in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

However, BEIS is bringing its bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding in China to an end.

BEIS will not be using ODA funding to support research and innovation partnerships with China as we have previously done through ODA vehicles, such as the Newton Fund and Global Challenges Research Fund. Existing ODA-funded activity with China through these will finish by the end of FY 22/23. The technical assistance we have provided through our UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions programme (UK PACT) is also no longer from our Official Development Assistance from the end of FY 21/22 and instead, technical assistance to China on climate change issues will be smaller in scale and use non-Official Development Assistance sources.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Public consultation on the code of practice for the extraction of information from electronic devices**

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse): [\[HCWS31\]](#)

Following the successful passage of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, I am pleased to announce that today I am launching a public consultation on the draft code of practice for the extraction of information from electronic devices.

It is vital that victims feel confident in coming forward to report crime, but we know that fear of intrusive demands for information can deter victims from reporting offences or from continuing to support investigations. The powers in Chapter 3 of Part 2 of the Act therefore strengthen the law to ensure that there is a consistent approach to requesting information from phones and other electronic devices that puts respect for an individual's privacy at the centre of every investigation.

This code of practice will be a vital tool in ensuring that all use of these powers is lawful and that the powers are used only where it is necessary and proportionate. The draft code makes it clear that the powers must only be used as a last resort. This will ensure that all those who are asked to voluntarily provide their devices and give agreement to the extraction of information, are given all the necessary information to enable them to make the decision that is right for them.

All authorised persons have a duty to have regard to the code when exercising, or deciding whether to exercise, the power. The code will also be admissible in evidence in criminal or civil proceedings and failure to act in accordance with it may be taken into account by the court.

Those who have an interest in the use of these powers and the protection of privacy for complainants are strongly encouraged to respond to this consultation and I welcome the views of all colleagues on this important piece of guidance.

I will arrange for a copy of the consultation and draft code to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Ratification of the Istanbul Convention

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS34\]](#)

Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a Government priority and these crimes have no place in our society. Last July, we published our new cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy to help ensure that women and girls are safe everywhere - at home, online and on the streets. We are committed to radically changing how we end VAWG with a whole system approach focusing on prioritising prevention, supporting survivors and pursuing perpetrators. And in March we published the first ever dedicated and complementary Domestic Abuse Plan, which seeks to transform the whole of society's response to domestic abuse.

The Council of Europe Convention on Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, commonly known as the Istanbul Convention, is a gold standard international charter for the protection of women and girls. This Government was proud to sign it in 2012, to signal our strong commitment to tackling VAWG. The Government has always remained committed to ratifying the Convention and since signing it we have worked to significantly strengthen our legislative framework and have introduced a wide range of tools to protect victims better. Our measures to protect women and girls from violence are some of the most robust in the world, and in some respects, we go further than the Convention requires.

The Government is now satisfied that it has the legislative framework and other necessary measures in place to meet the requirements of the Convention. I am therefore now pleased to confirm, as required by section 1(3)(a) of the Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017 ("the 2017 Act"), that the UK is compliant with the Istanbul Convention and in a position to seek Parliament's approval to ratify it. Ratification will send a strong message to women and girls in this country that the Government is committed to ensuring their safety and to ending VAWG. It will also send an equally strong message to our partners internationally which confirms that the UK remains at the forefront of tackling VAWG across the globe. I am pleased also to confirm that the Government is today laying the text of the Istanbul Convention in the form of a Command Paper in both Houses, alongside an Explanatory Memorandum. If no objections are raised to ratification of the Convention in either House within the next 21 joint sitting days, the Government will arrange to deposit its instrument of ratification. In line with the requirement under section 1(3)(b) of the 2017 Act I can therefore confirm that I would expect the UK to have ratified the Convention by 31 July 2022.

Article 78(2) of the Convention allows countries to make a reservation on certain provisions of the Convention. This means that the country will not be bound by that particular provision. The Government has decided to make reservations on two of those provisions. We will be applying a reservation on part of Article 44, which relates to the prosecution of UK residents for committing acts in another country which are crimes in

UK law but not under the law of that other country, and which reflects the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. We will also be applying a reservation on Article 59, which relates to migrant victims, to enable us to ratify the Convention before the evaluation of the Support for Migrant Victims scheme concludes, at which point we will consider the policy issues involved substantively, and whether that reservation should continue. Further detail on the reservations is contained within the Explanatory Memorandum published today.

I know that ratifying this Convention will send a strong message about the UK's commitment to tackling domestic abuse and violence against women and girls, and will help us to continue to lead the way in tackling these terrible crimes.

TRANSPORT

■ **The Motoring Agencies Business Plans for 2022-23**

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

[\[HCWS30\]](#)

My Noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Baroness Vere of Norbiton) has made the following Ministerial Statement

I am pleased to announce the publication of the 2022-23 business plans for the Department for Transport's Motoring Agencies - the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA).

The business plans set out:

- 1) the key business priorities that each agency will deliver and any significant changes they plan to make to their services, and;
- 2) the key performance indicators, by which their performance will be assessed.

These plans allow service users and members of the public to understand the agencies' plans for delivering their key services, progressing their transformation programmes, and managing their finances.

The business plans will be available electronically on GOV.UK and copies will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.