



Daily Report

Monday, 23 May 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 23 May 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 23 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

■ Crime: Victims

Matt Vickers:

[\[2715\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking to ensure that correspondence sent by the CPS to victims of crime is suitable in tone and content.

Alex Chalk:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) fully recognises the importance of clear and open explanations of its decision-making, especially to victims of crime. The CPS' Victim Communication and Liaison scheme ensures that timely letters are sent to victims when a significant decision has been made on their case. These letters have recently been revised to increase clarity of language, empathy and to introduce signposting to sources of information on the role of the CPS within the criminal justice system and victims' rights.

The CPS recognises that it still needs to improve in its communication with victims and commissioned last year a significant piece of research to better understand victims' needs. It is using those findings, together with stakeholder engagement, to inform its future work on improving their communications with victims.

■ Criminal Liability

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[5345\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many people the CPS has acquitted on the defence of automatism in England and Wales as of 19th May 2022.

Alex Chalk:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not maintain a central record of any defence employed by defendants in criminal proceedings. This information could only be obtained by an examination of CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Standards

Matt Vickers:

[\[2718\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment she has made of the performance of the Crown Prosecution Service in (a) London South, (b) London North, (c) East of England, (d) Yorkshire and Humberside and (e) Wessex.

Alex Chalk:

Since February, Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) have published reports on the performance of 5 CPS Areas: London South, London North, East of England, Yorkshire and Humberside, and Wessex.

Despite the pressures of the pandemic, the reports found improvement had been made in all the Areas. In the two London Areas, increasing caseloads and challenges in recruitment were both acknowledged by HMCPsI. However, inspectors noted that both Areas added value in aspects of their work with victims and witnesses.

In East of England and Wessex, inspectors praised both Areas for their joint working with other criminal justice agencies and found quality decision-making around disclosure of unused material.

The Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) team in Yorkshire and Humberside were commended for seeking appropriate orders to protect complainants, witnesses and the public and consulting with witnesses in RASSO cases.

Although inspectors highlighted where improvements could be made, there were aspects of strength for all the Areas, which reflects the determination of the CPS to drive improvements.

■ Domestic Abuse and Stalking: Prosecutions

Matt Vickers: [\[2719\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment has she made of the ability of the CPS to effectively prosecute cases of stalking and coercive behaviour.

Alex Chalk:

This Government takes stalking and coercive behaviour very seriously. Since the implementation of legislation, the number of stalking and coercive behaviour cases brought to court has increased year on year.

To further improve the handling of these important cases the CPS has committed to key actions in the VAWG strategy and has recently published an updated programme of work on Domestic Abuse to help narrow the disparity between reporting and criminal justice outcomes, helping to secure justice in every possible case.

■ Economic Crime

Matt Vickers: [\[2716\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment has she made of the Serious Fraud Office's capacity to tackle serious economic crime in 2022-23.

Matt Vickers: [\[2717\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps the Government is taking to improve prosecution rates for (a) fraud and (b) other economic crime.

Alex Chalk:

In the last financial year, the Serious Fraud Office prosecuted two corporates, recovered over £45m in proceeds of crime and agreed three Deferred Prosecution Agreements. Between February 2022 and January 2023, the SFO has eight trials; 23 people have been charged with criminality worth over £550m.

The Law Officers meet regularly with senior officials at the Serious Fraud Office to discuss strategy and funding; through these meetings, as well as regular engagement between my Office and the Serious Fraud Office, I am confident that the organisation has the resource required for those trials.

The Government is committed to tackling fraud and economic crime, and the 10-year Fraud Strategy that will be published this year will set out plans to address the threat of fraud including the prosecution of fraudsters.

The majority of Serious Fraud Office cases already pass the 'no case to answer' stage. This is when the Judge rules that the prosecution's evidence is sufficient, the trial will proceed to enable a jury to consider its verdict. It is not within the gift of the Serious Fraud Office, or the Government, to influence this.

In addition to the Fraud Strategy, the Serious Fraud Office received a funding uplift in the 2021 Spending Review, which included £4.4m over three years to invest in technology. This investment will complement the wider work that they are doing to reduce case lengths over the same period. This will have a positive impact on the SFO's capacity to tackle serious economic crime.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Aluminium: Prices

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[1506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the impact on British businesses of rising aluminium costs.

Lee Rowley:

The Government regularly engages with industry to discuss impacts and opportunities for UK businesses. Whilst aluminium prices increased in March, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, they have since returned to pre-conflict levels.^[1]

[1] Prices peaked on 7th March and in steady decline since, and as at 17th May, are at \$2,800/t (Source – LME Aluminium)

■ CF Fertilisers UK: Subsidies

Dave Doogan:

[\[3728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether CF Fertilisers UK Ltd is in receipt of subsidies for maintaining production of CO₂ for use in the food and drink industry.

Lee Rowley:

No, CF Fertilisers UK Ltd is not currently in receipt of a Government subsidy to maintain production of CO₂. A market-led agreement to supply CO₂ is in place.

■ Climate Change and Environment: Research

Dr Alan Whitehead: [4442]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to ensure that the Advanced Research and Invention Agency invests in projects that are compatible with the (a) Climate Change Act 2008 and (b) Environment Act 2021.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [4443]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the Advanced Research and Invention Agency's budget will go towards supporting (a) climate and (b) environment-related projects in 2022-23.

George Freeman:

Decisions on which programmes and research to fund will be taken by ARIA's CEO once they are appointed and take office.

ARIA's sole focus will be to fund the most ambitious high-risk research with the potential to provide long-term benefits to our society and economy. ARIA's Framework Document will require ARIA to have regard to the contribution its projects and programmes make to the UK Government's climate change targets and environmental goals.

■ Companies House

Kate Green: [3580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his planned timetable is for reforms to Companies House; and if he will take steps to ensure that insolvency practitioners, when appointed to an insolvent company, are included in the category of those able to access the proposed new range of additional back office information collected by Companies House.

Paul Scully:

Reform of Companies House will be included in the forthcoming Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill. We are preparing the Bill at pace and expect it to be introduced early in the session.

The Government outlined plans to enable the Registrar to proactively disclose information to law enforcement and other relevant bodies, including insolvency practitioners, in its [Corporate Transparency and Register Reform White Paper](#).

Kate Green: [3581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of creating an administrative process to restore dissolved companies, in place of the current requirement to obtain a court order.

Paul Scully:

An administrative process to restore dissolved companies already exists under section 1025 of the Companies Act 2006. Such an application can only be made by a

former director or member of the company. Other parties can apply to restore a company under section 1029 of the Act, but they must demonstrate to the court that they have a relevant interest in the dissolved company. We consider it appropriate for the court to make that judgment and, therefore, have no plans to amend the existing approach.

Kate Green: [3582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many of the companies that were subject to a compulsory strike off process by Companies House were insolvent during the period 1 January 2019 to 17 May 2022.

Paul Scully:

If a company does not respond during the strike-off process and there are no objections to dissolution then Companies House will not receive information on the solvency of that company prior to striking it off the register. It is therefore not possible to say how many companies struck off over the period were insolvent.

Official statistics on dissolved and struck off companies are published each quarter (in Table 1e) of 'Incorporated Companies in the UK', with the latest release available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/incorporated-companies-in-the-uk-january-to-march-2022>.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Hikvision

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: [4452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Hikvision products are in use in his Department.

George Freeman:

It is not government policy to comment on the security arrangements of government buildings. Specific details regarding the make and model of security systems are withheld on national security grounds.

■ Diesel Fuel

Owen Thompson: [3679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure security of supply for diesel.

Greg Hands:

The Department has established an Oil Taskforce to work with the sector and support oil companies to identify additional sources of supplies of oil and oil products and manage the transition away from Russian oil products by the end of 2022.

The UK remains well-supplied for diesel from a diverse range of sources. UK demand for diesel is met by a combination of domestic production and imports. In 2021 UK production could have met over half of our demand for diesel. Imports in the same

year came from a diverse range of reliable suppliers beyond Russia including the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden.

■ Energy

Rachael Maskell:

[\[3661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether energy providers are under any obligations to (a) support the energy needs of customers and (b) take steps to enable those needs to be met.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem's licence rules require energy suppliers to provide support to customers on their energy costs. These include providing support for customers struggling to pay their energy bills and extra help for prepayment customers. Such support includes offering emergency credit to customers struggling to top up their prepayment meter and offering extra prepayment credit for households in vulnerable circumstances.

■ Energy Bills Rebate

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[4445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing vulnerable customers with an exemption from the £40 annual recovery levy under the Energy Bills Support scheme.

Greg Hands:

The Energy Bills Support Scheme is part of a wider package of interventions which is progressive overall. We are consulting with stakeholders on the implementation of the Scheme including representatives of vulnerable customers, and we are receiving inputs via a consultation.

■ Energy: Billing

Rachael Maskell:

[\[3662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to ensure that people who fall into arrears in paying for their energy have a one-to-one visit from the local authority services for the purposes of (a) discussing the reasons for which they have not paid and (b) helping to ensure that they are able to access the support they may require.

Greg Hands:

The Government has policies in place to ensure protection for consumers who struggle to pay their energy bills. Last year, we introduced the 'Breathing Space' scheme, which aims to address consumers' ability to tackle debt and offers legal protections from creditors for 60 days.

In December 2020, Ofgem introduced new licensing conditions, including an Ability to Pay Principle, which obligates suppliers to provide appropriate support for those

struggling to pay their bills by setting up appropriate repayment plans based on a customer's ability to pay, and by directing the customer to further support services.

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[4590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of the increases in the cost of living on the number of households in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England that have fallen into arrears with their energy supplier.

Greg Hands:

The Department has not undertaken an assessment of figures for these specific areas.

The Government recognises the impact rising energy prices is having on consumers and has put in place a package of support worth £9.1 billion to help domestic energy customers with the cost of living and rising energy bills.

The Government also has policies in place to ensure protection for consumers who struggle to pay their energy bills. Last year, we introduced the 'Breathing Space' scheme, which aims to address consumers' ability to tackle debt and offers legal protections from creditors for 60 days.

■ Energy: Meters

Rachael Maskell:

[\[3663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that people on an energy meter do not experience periods with no energy provision.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem has rules in place that require energy suppliers to provide extra support specifically for prepayment meter customers. These include an obligation on suppliers to make emergency and friendly-hours credit available to pre-payment meter customers. Where a supplier identifies that a prepayment customer is self-disconnecting or self-rationing their supply, they must offer additional support credit.

Consumers in financial distress should talk to their energy supplier, who will be able to discuss their personal circumstances and consider options to help, including reassessing, reducing or pausing payments. Ofgem requires all suppliers to provide a free Priority Services Register service for vulnerable consumers offering a range of services on safety, access and communication.

■ Energy: Prices

Rachael Maskell:

[\[3659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with representatives of energy companies on steps being taken to help ensure that people are not disconnected from their provider on the basis that they cannot pay their energy bills.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[3660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it mandatory for energy providers to make an assessment of a consumer's situation and ability to pay their bills before they are disconnected.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem's rules require energy suppliers to engage with customers in or at risk of payment difficulty and offer services to help with bill payment or debt repayment, based on a customer's ability to pay.

Ofgem's rules also prevent disconnections during the winter for non-payment of bills for older people or those under 18 and require suppliers to take all reasonable steps to avoid disconnection in winter for those with a disability or long-term illness.

Disconnection for non-payment of gas or electricity bills is rare, with Ofgem reporting that only one customer was disconnected in the first two quarters of 2021.

■ **Energy: Taxation**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[4444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his policy is on the extension of (a) existing levies and (b) new levies on energy customer bills to fund energy developments.

Greg Hands:

In recent years, environmental and social schemes, funded by levies on consumer bills, have been instrumental in driving the decarbonisation of the energy system. As set out in the Heat & Buildings and Net Zero Strategies, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy intend to publish a Fairness and Affordability Call for Evidence this year to set out the options for energy levies and obligations. This will consider options to support green choices, expand carbon pricing and remove costs from electricity bills, while seeking to limit the impacts on bills overall, especially for vulnerable consumers.

■ **Insolvency Service: Closures**

Chris Stephens:

[\[R\] \[3652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the gov.uk news story of 11 May 2022, Insolvency Service transitions to regional hubs as part of efficiency drive, if he will place in the Library a copy of the business case for the decision to close Insolvency Service offices.

Paul Scully:

It would not be appropriate to place in the Library a copy of the business case for the Insolvency Service's move to regional centres as it contains commercially sensitive information.

This transition involves closing 10 smaller sites and developing regional centres in 11 locations in which the Insolvency Service has offices. These centres will enable it to

provide services more efficiently, with greater flexibility to respond to future changes in demand for services. The Insolvency Service has put in place measures to support staff in affected offices to transfer to their nearest regional centre.

Chris Stephens:

[R] [3653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the gov.uk news story of 11 May 2022, Insolvency Service transitions to regional hubs as part of efficiency drive, whether his Department has consulted with (a) the public, and (b) the business community over the closure of Insolvency Service offices.

Paul Scully:

A key objective of the project to transition the Insolvency Service to a regional hub structure, is to ensure it continues to deliver high standards of service to business and the public. The regional hub structure will enable the Insolvency Service to operate more efficiently and effectively in the future.

There has been informal engagement with a number of stakeholders and this will continue as the transition to regional hubs is delivered over the next three years.

■ **Motor Neurone Disease: Research**

Jessica Morden:

[4525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to facilitate access for scientists who wish to access the £50 million funding for motor neurone disease research announced in November 2021.

George Freeman:

The committed funding can be accessed through applications to the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). We are working closely with DHSC, NIHR and UKRI to support the MND research community in submitting high quality applications to access funding. NIHR and Medical Research Council (part of UKRI) are also delivering a new £4.25 million partnership, co-funded by government and charity partners, to bring together the MND research community to coordinate research efforts, and develop programmes and proposals to boost access to research funds.

■ **National Grid: Wales**

Virginia Crosbie:

[4717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to work with the Welsh Government to ensure that the national grid transmission network is upgraded to have the necessary capacity to transmit electricity from both small scale community generation and large scale renewable generation projects such as offshore wind.

Greg Hands:

The Government works closely with Ofgem and network companies to ensure there is necessary capacity for renewable generation in Wales and across Great Britain

and is engaging with the Welsh Government on this. As part of the Government's Offshore Transmission Network Review, the National Grid Electricity System Operator will publish a Holistic Network Design by June 30th, which will accommodate 1GW of floating offshore wind capacity in the Celtic Sea.

■ **P&O Ferries: Redundancy**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[2439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what involvement The Insolvency Service has on the matter of redundancies at P&O Ferries; what the cost to the public purse of that engagement is; what assessment his Department has made of the solvency of P&O Ferries; and what plans the Government has to safeguard ferry services in the event that P&O Ferries becomes insolvent.

Paul Scully:

On 1 April 2022 the Insolvency Service commenced formal criminal and civil investigations into the circumstances surrounding the recent redundancies made by P&O Ferries. As these are ongoing investigations, no further comment or information can be provided at this time.

The Department for Transport regularly looks at resilience of businesses within the maritime sector.

■ **Self-employed**

Seema Malhotra:

[3804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the report by the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed entitled The Self Employed 2021 Landscape Report, published on 31 January 2022, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the reduction in self-employment levels identified in that report.

Paul Scully:

The Government continues to monitor labour market trends and consider their wider implications. The UK labour market is currently performing strongly with high employment and low unemployment.

The Government recognises that many self-employed people have encountered challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic but has supported the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) which paid out over £28 billion across all five grants to nearly 3 million self-employed individuals and has been one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

The Government remains committed to ensuring that the UK continues to be one of the best places in the world to work and grow a business.

■ Small Businesses: Energy

Sir Gavin Williamson:

[\[746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will provide a package of support to small businesses that are intensive energy users.

Lee Rowley:

The Government recognises the importance to secure a competitive future for our energy intensive industries (EIIs), and in recent years have provided them with extensive support, including more than £2 billion to help with the costs of energy and to protect jobs. As part of our Energy Security Strategy, we recently announced that we have extended the EII Compensation Scheme for a further three years and its budget will be more than doubled. That strategy also announced plans to consider increasing support offered by the EII Exemption Scheme. Small businesses will continue to be eligible to apply in each case.

■ Taxis: Diesel Fuel

Owen Thompson:

[\[3677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact on the taxi industry of current levels of supply of diesel.

Greg Hands:

The Department monitors the fuel supply market to remain aware of current supply levels, and publishes weekly national average forecourt stock levels.

Taxi drivers are able to purchase fuel from forecourts as for other drivers. There is no shortage of diesel availability at UK forecourts.

■ Universities: Research

Chi Onwurah:

[\[4578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to reduce the use of short-term research contracts in universities; and what plans he has he has to help reduce precarity for early career researchers.

George Freeman:

The R&D People and Culture Strategy recognises precarity facing researchers in early-career stages and sets out the actions that government and the R&D sector will take, working together, to address this.

BEIS has established a R&D People and Culture Ministerial Coordination Group to drive the successful implementation of the Strategy. One initial area of focus is supporting dynamic and sustainable career paths, which will look at the actions the sector can take individually and collectively to address early-career precarity alongside the government-led actions set out in the Strategy.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Civil Servants: Training****Kate Green:**[\[4566\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much was spent on training for civil servants across Government in each of the last five financial years for which data is available.

Kate Green:[\[4567\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants across Government received funded training in each of the last five financial years for which data is available.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Cabinet Office manages a set of commercial contracts through which the Civil Service can commission training. These central frameworks give the Civil Service access to specialist training expertise and in providing a central service, increased efficiency, provide better insight on value for money and training impact.

The Cabinet Office can report on the training that is delivered through these contracts. Research conducted in early 2022 suggests that just less than half of all training spend in the Civil Service is routed through these frameworks. The Cabinet Office cannot report on training which is not delivered through these frameworks. This data is held by individual departments and professions.

The data held by the Cabinet Office shows that:

OPERATIONAL YEAR	SPEND - £M	NUMBERS
2017 - 2018	41.3	432,432
2018 - 2019	48.3	429,768
2019 - 2020	46.6	338,114
2020 - 2021	49.9	551,629
2021 - 2022	65.6	327,549

■ Civil Servants: Workplace Pensions**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[3469\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many retired civil servants are members of the civil service classic scheme.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

A total of 660,782 individuals are in receipt of a pension under classic terms.

Of those, 552,327 are retired classic members, the rest are those in receipt of a dependent's pension.

This is split as follows:

MALE/FEMALE	DEPENDENT/PENSIONER	NUMBER
Male	Dependent	15,905
Male	Pensioner	273,565
Female	Dependent	92,550
Female	Pensioner	278,762

MyCSP, the pension administrator, is unable to provide a split between active and deferred members due to how their data is held.

This is due to the fact that a large number of cases still in payment relate to members retiring or crystallising their benefits before the advent of bespoke administration and payroll systems that would hold this information. All historic, legacy cases were processed manually and unfortunately this level of detail is not available for this population.

■ District Heating: Whitehall

Emily Thornberry: [\[4521\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 15 December 2008 to Question 242509 on District Heating: Whitehall, if he will publish the list of (a) Departments and (b) Government buildings served by the Whitehall District Heating System as of 31 March 2022.

Emily Thornberry: [\[4522\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 16 December 2008 to Question 242512 on District Heating: Whitehall, what total costs were charged to Government Departments by the Government Property Agency in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22 for the provision of heating through the Whitehall District Heating System.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

Whitehall District Heating has been renamed and is now called the Whitehall Boiler System. A number of departmental buildings have transferred ownership to the Government Property Agency and the details of buildings served by the Whitehall Boiler System are provided in the table below.

BUILDING	DEPARTMENT
MOD Main Building	Ministry of Defence
Government Office Great George Street	Government Property Agency
70 Whitehall	Government Property Agency

BUILDING	DEPARTMENT
10 Downing Street	Government Property Agency
Admiralty House	Government Property Agency
King Charles Street	Government Property Agency
Old Admiralty Building	Government Property Agency
Horse Guards	Ministry of Defence
Dover House	Government Property Agency
Northumberland House	Wellcome Trust
22-26 Whitehall	Government Property Agency
55 Whitehall	Government Property Agency
Banqueting House	Historic Royal Palaces
Gwydyr House	Government Property Agency
36 Whitehall	Government Property Agency
Civil Service Club	Civil Service Club

The total costs that were charged to Government Departments by the Government Property Agency for the provision of heating from the Whitehall Boiler System is as follows;

(a) 2019-20: £1.7m

(b) 2020-21: £1.5m

(c) 2021-22: £2.0m

These costs include standing charges for the operation and maintenance of the Whitehall Boiler System along with the cost of actual heat consumed by each building.

■ Government Departments: Recruitment

Kate Green:

[4568]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Government has spent on staff recruitment in each of the last five financial years for which data is available.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

This information is not held centrally. While the Cabinet Office holds data on recruitment from the Government Recruitment Services and its predecessor, many Government departments have individual recruitment teams.

The figures below, provided by the Government Recruitment Services, represent recruitment assessment services (including the growth in online testing), advertising and marketing and end to end recruitment management, including pre-employment checking. Central services have grown in the proportion to total Government recruitment over this period.

YEAR	SPEND (£M)
21/22	£32.144
20/21	£27.164
19/20	£21.426
18/19	£21.887
17/18	£13.933

■ Government Departments: Redundancy Pay

Kate Green:

[\[4569\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much was spent across Government on redundancies and severance payments for each of the last five years for which data is available.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

While the Cabinet Office holds data on the cost of redundancy payments paid out by departments over the last five years under the terms of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (CSCS), it does not hold data on any severance payments made that fall outside of this remit, including special severance payments. Only departments themselves will hold the complete set of information requested.

■ Public Sector: Fraud

Emily Thornberry:

[\[4524\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 662, if he will make an estimate of the cost of fraud to the public sector in (a) 1984, (b) 1994, (c) 2004, and (d) 2014.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

Data on public sector fraud prior to 2016 is unavailable.

■ Uyghurs: Forced Labour

Afzal Khan:

[\[4682\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of whether goods produced by the slave labour of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang are present in Government procurement contracts.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

HM Government is committed to preventing modern slavery occurring in public sector supply chains. The Cabinet Office has published commercial policy and guidance setting out the steps that all Government departments must take to identify and mitigate modern slavery and labour abuse risks throughout the commercial life cycle - focusing on the areas of highest risk. This policy is mandatory for all Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

The Government has taken a number of measures to help ensure that no British organisations are profiting from or contributing to human rights violations against the Uyghurs or other minorities. We have introduced new guidance for UK businesses on the risks of conducting business in Xinjiang, implemented enhanced export controls, and committed to introducing new procurement guidance for Government bodies as well as financial penalties for non-compliance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act.

The Procurement Bill, which was recently introduced to Parliament, will strengthen the approach to exclude suppliers from bidding for public contracts where there is clear evidence of their involvement in forced labour or other Modern Slavery practices.

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Radicalism****John Healey:****[4479]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the threat posed to UK security by Islamic extremism in Afghanistan.

James Heappey:

The Government's objective remains to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a place where terrorism flourishes, from which terrorist groups are able to threaten the West and our interests. The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) is the UK's independent centre for analysis and assessment of terrorism. JTAC keeps the UK national threat level under constant review. This is a systematic, comprehensive, and rigorous process, based on the very latest intelligence and analysis of internal and external factors which drive the threat, including Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and other international terrorist groups or individuals.

■ Afghanistan: Refugees**John Healey:****[1486]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan refugees are housed in (a) Service Family Accommodation and (b) Service Living Accommodation.

Leo Docherty:

The Government's aim is to provide long term, settled accommodation in local communities for Afghan families as they build new lives in the UK. As part of its contribution, the Ministry of Defence is helping to settle Afghans by making available 550 Service Family Accommodation homes to Local Authorities as a temporary measure. As of 18 May, Local Authorities have leased 55 of these homes, and 52 are now occupied by Afghan families. These are in addition to the 1,014 ARAP families, comprising 4,373 Afghans, who have now settled in permanent accommodation.

The ARAP Scheme does not offer Single Living Accommodation for individuals relocated to the UK.

■ Africa: Climate Change**John Healey:**[\[2359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment has he made of the defence implications of the effects of climate change in sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel.

James Heappey:

An external report commissioned by the MOD was published in 2021:

Crisis Response in a Changing Climate: Implications of Climate Change for UK Defence Logistics in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) Operations (publishing.service.gov.uk)

It considers the implications of climate change for UK Defence and handling crises worldwide. It recommended applying lessons we have identified, integrating across government, allies and more widely, designing a roadmap for resilience in defence infrastructure and offering education and training courses.

■ Armed Forces: Homosexuality**James Gray:**[\[3463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the chair of the independent review into the impact of the pre-2000 ban of homosexual personnel in the military will be appointed, and the remit of that group agreed.

Dan Carden:[\[R\]](#) [\[3706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Government's review into the impact of the pre-2000 ban on homosexual personnel in the military will commence.

Leo Docherty:

Defence remains proud of all our LGBT+ military and civilian personnel and the significant contributions they make to ensure our security, support our national interests, and safeguard our prosperity. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Office for Veterans' Affairs are jointly commissioning an independent review to better understand the impacts and implications of the pre-2000 ban on homosexuals serving in HM Armed Forces. The review underlines the MOD's unwavering commitment to understanding how best to support its veteran and LGBT+

community. Work is currently underway to appoint an independent review chair and the independent review is expected to commence in the near future, following their appointment. The independent review chair and the terms of reference for the review will be announced in due course.

■ **Armed Forces: Housing**

Luke Pollard: [\[1545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time taken was to resolve a maintenance request in (a) service family accommodation and (b) single living accommodation in each year since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

In the last five months (November 21 to March 22) the mean average time to complete maintenance tasks in Service Family Accommodation was 15.9 days. Data prior to this can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Single Living Accommodation information prior to 2018 is not held. Information from 2018 onwards is not held centrally.

Remaining properties are held for upgrade or disposal.

Luke Pollard: [\[1546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time taken was to resolve a lack of heating in (a) service family accommodation and (b) single living accommodation in each year since 2010.

Luke Pollard: [\[1547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time taken was to resolve a lack of hot running water in (a) service family accommodation and (b) single living accommodation in each year since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

We are reviewing information sources. I will write to the hon. Gentleman in due course and place a copy of my response in the library of the House.

Luke Pollard: [\[1548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service family accommodation dwellings were left without heating for more than (a) 24 hours, (b) two days, (c) three days and (d) a week in each year since 2010.

Luke Pollard: [\[1549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service family accommodation dwellings were left without hot running water for more than (a) 24 hours, (b) two days, (c) three days and (d) a week in each year since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

We are reviewing information sources. I will write to the hon. Gentleman in due course and place a copy of my response in the library of the House.

Luke Pollard:

[1550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service family accommodation dwellings had problems with vermin infestations that were unresolved after (a) a week, (b) a month, (c) two months and (d) six months in each year since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

Pest control requests are responded to within three hours if an emergency or up to 15 days in other circumstances.

The number of Pest Control requests in Service Family Accommodation can be found in the table below:

DATE	PEST CONTROL
1 Nov 14- 31 Oct 15	4,573
1 Nov 15-31 Oct 16	4,937
1 Nov 16- 31 Oct 17	4,436
1 Nov 17- 31 Oct 18	4,392
1 Nov 18-31 Oct 19	4,563
1 Nov 19- 31 Oct 20	4,440
1 Nov 20-31 Oct 21	4,814
1 Nov 21-31 Mar 22	1,662

Information prior to November 2014 is not held.

Luke Pollard:

[1554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of (a) single service substitute accommodation and (b) substitute service family accommodation that has combustible cladding.

Jeremy Quin:

In February 2020 a full review of substitute accommodation in high-rise buildings six storeys and over was completed. Personnel were moved out of this accommodation where external wall systems (EWS) with combustible components were identified and where there was no evidence to confirm further safety assessments had been carried out or remedial works would be completed by the building owner. All necessary remedial work identified for substitute accommodation in high rise buildings has been completed.

Subsequently, the MOD's housing contractor assesses all new high-rise substitute accommodation buildings to ensure none with unsuitable EWS are leased.

Given existing building regulations a similar assessment of the proportion of low-rise substitute accommodation buildings (five storeys and below) has not at this time been undertaken. However, the MOD has chosen to survey low rise buildings for combustible components in their EWS on its own estate to understand its position fully.

Luke Pollard:

[\[1555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what data he holds on the number of dwellings (a) owned or (b) managed by his Department that are deemed unfit for human habitation.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department holds data on which Service Family Accommodation (SFA) meet or exceed the Government's Decent Home Standard (DHS).

46,100 SFA properties (96.2%) of MOD SFA meet or exceed the DHS. Only these properties are allocated to Service Personnel and their families.

Remaining properties are held for upgrade or disposal.

■ Armed Forces: LGBT+ People

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[1527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his department is taking to support LGBT+ (a) service personnel and (b) veterans who are survivors of military sexual assault.

Leo Docherty:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 25 April 2022 to Question 155765 to the hon. Member for South Shields (Mrs Lewell-Buck).

Attachments:

1. Armed Forces: Sexual Offences [UIN 155765.docx]

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[1528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to help encourage research examining the long-term impact of military sexual assault on LGBTQ+ survivors.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not recognise the term 'military sexual assault', nor the associated term 'military sexual trauma' and has, therefore, no plans to encourage research of the type described.

The MOD is committed to the welfare of all its people. The Armed Forces promote equity in Service for all those affected by sexual assault and abuse, and there are multiple forms of support and assistance available, both within and external to Defence, for all our personnel, including the LGBTQ+ community, both during and post-service.

Whilst in service, available support includes unit welfare officers, the chain of command, and pastoral support via the chaplaincy. Further assistance is also available via the *Aurora* service which provides confidential independent support to any serving member who is experiencing sexual violence, domestic abuse, or stalking. There is also *Togetherall*, an independent digital mental health support tool operated by the NHS in partnership with the MOD, through which Service personnel, veterans, and their family members can anonymously access tailored self-help courses.

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 any mental or emotional health concerns. SSAFA can signpost individuals to specific organisations for further targeted support. The MOD also works with The Samaritans and other charities to support Serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

For LGBTQ+ personnel specifically, *Galop*, for instance, operates helplines which facilitate access to caseworkers who can design tailored assistance for LGBTQ+ personnel who have experienced abuse and violence. *Fighting with Pride* also signposts sources of help for LGBTQ+ veterans, and works with a wide range of organisations.

Stephanie Peacock:

[1529]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many LGBTQ+ people were serving in the armed forces in each of the last 10 years.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not hold accurate figures for the number of serving LGBTQ+ people. While sexual orientation is recorded on the MOD's Joint Personnel Administration system, this data is reliant on self-declaration by individuals, and declaration rates have not yet reached a high enough percentage to be representative.

■ Armed Forces: Recruitment

John Healey:

[2360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether personnel from his Department assessed the cyber security measures of the Capita-run Defence Recruitment System, prior to the contract being extended in 2020.

Leo Docherty:

Yes. Capita, in accordance with the Recruiting Partnering Project contract, are subject to external penetration tests and annual IT health checks.

Compliance with these assurance activities were a mandatory requirement with regards to any commercial discussions relating to the contract extension in 2020.

■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences

Dave Doogan:

[\[3725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many serving armed forces personnel have been (a) disciplined for sexual offences and (b) acquitted of alleged sexual offenses.

Leo Docherty:

The requested information is not held in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Dave Doogan:

[\[3727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department holds information on the number and proportion of sexual assault cases in military courts that included testimony about the defendant's military conduct or service record in each of the last five years.

Leo Docherty:

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ Army: Recruitment

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[4508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 82 on Army: Recruitment, for what reason the British Army website malfunctioned.

Leo Docherty:

The Army Jobs website did not malfunction. An investigation by a National Cyber Security Centre-Assured Provider of Cyber Incident Response services found no evidence of system compromise that would allow for exfiltration of candidate data from inside the Defence Recruitment System (DRS) itself.

The Army places the highest importance on the security of its data and the data of those who may wish to apply to join. For this reason, DRS was actively disabled in order to review the system and apply appropriate updates where necessary. The Army (with its strategic partners) will not compromise on ensuring that all measures are assured to set and adhere to the highest standards of data protection.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[2495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the (a) construction of the next generation of Royal Fleet Auxiliary's Fleet Solid Support vessels to begin and (b) delivery of those ships.

Jeremy Quin:

In respect of the details about the schedule for the Fleet Solid Support ships, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 26 January 2022 to Question 108625 to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mick Whitley).

Individual ship construction and in-service dates will not be determined until the Full Business Case is submitted and will be reliant on the delivery schedule agreed with the winning bidder when the manufacture contract is awarded.

Attachments:

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

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement

John Healey: [\[4464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2022 to Question 1105 on Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement, whether as of 18 May 2022 his Department has ordered any more jets in addition to the 48 referred to in that Answer.

John Healey: [\[4465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2022 to Question 1105 on Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement, whether his Department is in discussions with Lockheed Martin about ordering further F-35 jets beyond the 48 already ordered.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the Rt. Hon Member to the Answer I gave him on 19 May 2022 to Question 1104.

Attachments:

1. Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement [UIN 1104.docx]

Kenya: White Phosphorus

Kenny MacAskil: [\[3737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) type and (b) quantity of white phosphorus munitions were fired by the Army in Archer's Post, Kenya, in each of the last five years.

James Heappey:

The British Army Training Unit Kenya does use white phosphorus munitions, as part of controlled training exercises, at Archers Post Training Area.

For operational security reasons, the Ministry of Defence does not disclose details of munitions used, including type and quantity.

Kenny MacAskil: [\[3738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he last discussed the amount of white phosphorous held by the Army training unit in Kenya with his Kenyan counterpart.

James Heappey:

The Secretary of State for Defence and I have had a series of bilateral meetings with Kenyan interlocutors over the last two years. This topic has not been raised by either side in those discussions

Kenny MacAskill:[\[3739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 969, on Kenya: Army, what those obvious security reasons are in the context of white phosphorus only being used for illumination and screening purposes.

James Heappey:

The hon. Member misunderstands the response to Question 969. The security reasons referred to are not specific to white phosphorus but are instead generic to all ammunition. The UK does not share details of what ammunition is stored in any particular location.

LE TacCIS Programme**John Healey:**[\[4466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2022 to Question 624 LE TacCIS Programme, what the initial delivery date was for the Battlefield Management Application; and whether Elbit Systems has met this date.

Jeremy Quin:

The Battlefield Management Application was originally required in February 2020 as an integral part of the MORPHEUS project. Elbit were unable to meet this date as the MORPHEUS project has yet to deliver to its original schedule. The Ministry of Defence is in discussion with various parties to identify the optimum route to full MORPHEUS capability, including a re-evaluation of what is now required of a Battlefield Management Application.

Ministry of Defence: Clothing and Food**John Healey:**[\[2353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on food and clothing for civilian staff at its main building in each month since January 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

Civilian and military staff work in an integrated manner and across a large number of different areas within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Main Building. Therefore, this information is not held centrally. Civilian staff are unable to claim for clothing allowance except in specific circumstances, notably if uniform is required, for example guards or MOD police. There are also limited options to claim for clothing costs incurred if they are required to attend a location that requires a specific dress or climatic clothing that would not usually be owned for the climate in the UK. Nor are civilian staff able to claim for food at Main Building. However, the Department may provide food to civilian staff as part of an official function or to enable work outside of regular hours, for example in support of operations.

■ Ministry of Defence: Flags

Luke Pollard: [\[1551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in which country the Union flags flown from the Ministry of Defence Main Building are manufactured.

Jeremy Quin:

The Union flags flown from Ministry of Defence Main Building are manufactured in the UK.

■ Ministry of Defence: NATO

John Healey: [\[3472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 41, what UK led work the Government wants to see embedded in the NATO Strategic Concept.

James Heappey:

As Europe's leading ally and drawing on our Integrated Review's approach, the UK has helped shape NATO's emerging Strategic Concept.

For example, we wish the Concept to commit NATO to continue to modernise for future challenges. Practically, the UK's leadership of the NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator of the North Atlantic will help Allies adopt advanced technologies faster and preserve NATO's technological edge.

In line with UK defence's Integrating Operating Concept, we wish NATO to compete and integrate across domains, using military and non-military means.

■ Ministry of Defence: Social Clubs

Gareth Bacon: [\[2669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 8 March 2022 to Question 132396 on civil service staff networks, what recognised staff groups have been running in his Department over the last three years.

James Heappey:

The requested information is not held centrally or in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Gareth Bacon: [\[2670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 8 March 2022 to Question 132396 on civil service staff networks, what information he holds on (a) FTE staff time and (b) budgets available to recognised staff groups within his Department in each of the last three years.

Leo Docherty:

The requested information is not held centrally or in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ RAF Lakenheath

Caroline Lucas: [\[3555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether (a) upgrading work and (b) changes to the infrastructure (i) have been agreed and (ii) are taking place at RAF Lakenheath.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence has agreed to deliver a number of infrastructure programmes and projects on behalf of the United States Visiting Forces at RAF Lakenheath.

■ Ranger Regiment: Deployment

John Healey: [\[4462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy to update the House if the Ranger Regiment is deployed.

John Healey: [\[4463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his Department's policy that deployments by the Ranger Regiment be (a) made public and (b) subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

James Heappey:

The Ranger Regiment is part of the newly established Army Special Operations Brigade. Its work will include deploying alongside partner forces around the world to counter Violent Extremist Organisations and hostile state threats.

The MOD is committed to being open and transparent to Parliament. However in certain circumstances operational security will prevent confirmation or otherwise of operational activity.

As with other military deployments, it is not the MOD's intention to update the house each time the Ranger Regiment is deployed, unless there is a specific need and public interest in doing so.

■ Royal Fleet Auxiliary

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[2493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total annual crewing levels were on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in each year since 2010-11 to date.

Jeremy Quin:

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary crewing levels requested are as follows:

YEAR	CREWING LEVELS
1 Apr 2010 – 31 Mar 2011	2,297
1 Apr 2011 - 31 Mar 2012	1,954
1 Apr 2012 - 31 Mar 2013	1,879

YEAR	CREWING LEVELS
1 Apr 2013 - 31 Mar 2014	1,859
1 Apr 2014 - 31 Mar 2015	1,941
1 Apr 2015 - 31 Mar 2016	1,969
1 Apr 2016 - 31 Mar 2017	1,955
1 Apr 2017 - 31 Mar 2018	1,924
1 Apr 2018 - 31 Mar 2019	1,887
1 Apr 2019 - 31 Mar 2020	1,861
1 Apr 2020 - 31 Mar 2021	1,876
1 Apr 2021 - 31 Mar 2022	1,831

Data up to 31 March 2014 was recorded through a legacy Human Resources (HR) system and as such can no longer be validated.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[2494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the total annual funding allocated to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in each year since 2010-11 to date.

Jeremy Quin:

From the information held centrally[RHC(A1)] within the Royal Navy, the annual funding allocated to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) for six years from financial year 2016-17 to date, rounded to the nearest million, are provided below:

FINANCIAL YEAR

Budget (£ million)

2016-17

156

2017-18

225

2018-19

207

2019-20

251

2020-21

230

2021-22

230

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[2496]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's vessels will remain civilian crewed.

James Heappey:

The Royal Navy's Annual Budget Cycle (ABC), which looks ahead over the next ten years, has ensured that Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessels will remain operated by civilian crew.

The Department is currently conducting a procurement process for three Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships, for which the RFA are the planned crewing solution.

We remain confident that the Royal Navy has sufficient civilian seafarers within the RFA, to operate its current fleet of vessels necessary to fulfil operational requirements.

Emma Hardy: [\[2632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's vessels will remain civilian crewed.

Jeremy Quin:

The Royal Navy's Annual Budget Cycle (ABC), which looks ahead over the next ten years, has ensured that Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessels will remain operated by civilian crew.

We remain confident that the Royal Navy has, and will continue to have, sufficient civilian seafarers within the RFA, to operate its current fleet of vessels necessary to fulfil operational requirements.

■ **Ukraine: Refugees**

John Healey: [\[1485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to repurpose the Defence estate for the resettlement and housing of Ukrainian refugees.

Leo Docherty:

The UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme has seen an unprecedented surge of public support, with sponsorship offers from across all four nations of the UK.

Should a formal request be received for Defence to assist with accommodation for Ukrainian refugees, it will be considered in line with Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) principles.

■ **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[2391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the additional £50 million in funding for Operation Isotrope was agreed by his Department.

James Heappey:

HM Treasury agreed that £50 million in additional funding would be made available to the Ministry of Defence to deliver military primacy of small boat operations in the English Channel. This was communicated to Ministry of Defence officials on 24 March 2022.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **BBC: Pay****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[2463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of forthcoming salary rises at the BBC on the wider television industry.

Julia Lopez:

As the BBC is independent from the government it is responsible for deciding the amount it pays staff, and for demonstrating to the public that it is delivering value for money.

The creative industries in the UK are thriving and there remains a highly competitive market for talent.

■ **Broadband****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[4703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's delivery on its targets for high-speed broadband rollout.

Julia Lopez:

The Government has committed to a delivery target of at least 85% gigabit availability by the end of 2025 and we are on track to achieve this. In three years, national coverage has rocketed from 6 per cent to 68 per cent.

We are investing £5 billion through Project Gigabit so hard-to-reach areas can get ultra-reliable gigabit speed and have already upgraded over 600,000 premises.

■ **Broadband: Ceredigion****Ben Lake:**[\[1536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many projects have been submitted for Gigabit Voucher Scheme funding in Ceredigion constituency as part of the Broadband Upgrade Fund.

Julia Lopez:

A total of 11 projects were submitted in the Ceredigion constituency as part of the Broadband Upgrade Fund.

The final stage of the Broadband Upgrade Fund concluded in January 2021.

Since the closure of the Broadband Upgrade Fund, the government has launched a £210m Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) to support rural communities with the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections. The scheme provides a micro-grant of up to £1,500 for residents and up to £3,500 for businesses towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband.

Seven premises in the Ceredigion constituency have claimed and received payment for a voucher through the scheme, with a further 338 premises awaiting completion, for a combined value of over £490,000.

■ **Broadband: Voucher Schemes**

Ben Lake: [\[1535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many projects have been submitted to the Gigabit Voucher Scheme in the Broadband Upgrade Fund pilot areas since that scheme began.

Julia Lopez:

A total of 37 projects were submitted to the Broadband Upgrade Fund across the pilot areas of Cornwall, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Cumbria and Northumberland.

The final stage of the Broadband Upgrade Fund concluded in January 2021.

Since the closure of the Broadband Upgrade Fund, the government has launched a £210m Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) to support rural communities with the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections. The scheme provides a micro-grant of up to £1,500 for residents and up to £3,500 for businesses towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband.

■ **Digital Technology: Proof of Identity**

Alun Cairns: [\[2469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress her Department has made on steps to introduce a digital ID scheme to facilitate electronic transactions.

Alun Cairns: [\[2470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the establishment of a digital ID scheme to facilitate financial transactions requires primary legislation.

Julia Lopez:

The Government is making good progress to create an enabling framework of standards, legislation and governance to support a secure and trusted digital identity marketplace in the UK, working closely with a wide variety of stakeholders so that the framework meets the needs of different users.

Since 2020, we have published a prototype (alpha) UK Digital Identity and Attributes Trust Framework and completed a pre-legislative consultation. We plan to publish a beta version of the Trust Framework in the summer and will introduce primary legislation on digital identity into Parliament during the current session as part of the data reform bill. We have no plans to make digital identities compulsory but, as more transactions take place online, we want to offer people the choice to prove their identity digitally where and when it suits them, securely, easily and with confidence.

■ Football Governance Fan-led Review

Stephen Morgan:

[\[1313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of her Department's response to (a) recommendation H and (b) that recommendation's stipulation of an expectation of further action from the football authorities in the Fan-led review into football governance report, published 24 November 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

We firmly believe that increasing the level of financial redistribution between the leagues will help improve the financial health of football clubs.

The Fan Led Review recommended that football should seek to resolve issues related to financial distribution itself, and the government agrees that the ideal outcome is for football to solve this problem. We are continuing to push for a football led solution, and we remain in close engagement with all relevant parties in seeking this. We remain open to granting backstop powers to the regulator if football cannot come up with a solution to distributions, and we will provide an update on this in the White Paper.

■ Football: Regulation

Stephen Morgan:

[\[1312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will commit to a deadline for introducing legislation for an independent regulator for English football.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Queen's Speech confirmed our commitment to an independent regulator for English football. A White Paper will be published in the summer that will set the details on the implementation of our football governance reforms, and we will legislate when parliamentary time allows.

We are working at pace to deliver these measures that will bring sustainable reform that ensures current and future fans continue to enjoy our national game.

■ Foreign Companies: China

Liam Byrne:

[\[1487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether there are Government restrictions or constraints on the UK business activities of (a) Huawei, (b) ZTE, (c) Hikvision, (d) Hytera, (e) Alibaba, (f) Tencent, (g) Dahua, (h) China Telecom, (i) China Mobile, (j) DJI, (k) Byte Dance, (l) Kingsoft, (m) SenseTime, (n) Megvii, (o) SMIC, (p) China Unicom and (q) Fujian Jinhua.

Chris Philp:

As set out in the Integrated Review, we will continue to pursue a positive trade and investment relationship with China, whilst ensuring our national security and values are protected. We have published guidance which provides UK firms with clear, up-

to-date information and specialist support to help negotiate the ethical, legal and commercial questions they may encounter in China or when working with Chinese businesses.

As an open economy, we welcome foreign trade and investment, including from China, where it supports UK growth and jobs. However, the government will not accept investments that compromise our national security, and all investment must meet stringent legal and regulatory requirements to protect the UK's national interest. Where we identify concerns, the government will not hesitate to use its powers to protect national security on a case-by-case basis. The National Security and Investment (NSI) Act, which fully commenced on 4 January 2022, gives the government powers to scrutinise and potentially intervene in acquisitions of control over entities and assets in or linked to the UK that may pose national security risks.

In addition, on 19 May, legislation came into force extending the scope of export control powers as they apply to exports of otherwise non-controlled goods and technology intended for a "military end-use" in a destination subject to arms embargo. This fulfilled the commitment made by the International Trade Secretary in her Written Ministerial Statement of 8 December 2021. These changes allow us to better address threats to national security, international peace and security, and human rights arising from the use of non-listed items by the military, police or security forces, or entities acting on their behalf, in an embargoed destination. We also added China to the list of "embargoed destinations" to which military end-use controls can be applied.

Last year we introduced the Telecommunications (Security) Act 2021, which gives new national security powers for the government to impose controls on public communications providers' use of designated vendors' goods, services and facilities in UK public telecoms networks. The Government has held a consultation on proposals to use the new national security powers in the case of Huawei.

■ Holiday Accommodation

Rachael Maskell: [\[2549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will hold a consultation on the potential licensing of short-term holiday let properties.

Rachael Maskell: [\[2550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she will take to help ensure local planning authorities can identify when a residential property has undergone a change of use to become a short term holiday let property.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Tourism Recovery Plan, published in June 2021 committed to considering a Tourism Accommodation Registration Scheme in England.

To better understand the issues faced by both communities and businesses, we intend to launch a call for evidence seeking views on the range of issues that arise

from the increase in short term and holiday letting. I want to understand the market today, as well as the benefits and challenges of the increase in short-term and holiday letting we have seen in England in recent years.

The broad C3 'dwellinghouse' use class does not distinguish between the type of occupant or tenure. It is for local planning authorities to consider individual cases, as a matter of fact and degree, as to whether there has been a material change of use requiring planning permission.

■ Hotels: Disability

Ruth Cadbury: [2515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many roundtable meetings her Department has had with stakeholders in the tourism sector to discuss the barriers disabled people experience when booking hotels and other similar venues since 2021.

Ruth Cadbury: [2516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many roundtable meetings her Department has had with disabled people to discuss the barriers they face in booking accommodation.

Ruth Cadbury: [2517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of adequacy of the accessibility of hotels for disabled people in the UK.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government remains committed to the ambition set out in both the Tourism Sector Deal, and more recently in the Tourism Recovery Plan, for the UK to be the most accessible tourism destination in Europe by 2025.

VisitEngland's Inclusive Tourism Action Group comprises a range of leading accessible tourism stakeholders who share the vision for England to provide world-class accessible tourism experiences that every person with accessibility requirements can enjoy. The chair of the group, Ross Calladine, is the government's newly appointed Disability and Access Ambassador for Tourism.

The group undertakes a range of activities to increase engagement of tourism destinations and businesses in the provision of access for all and to raise awareness of accessible tourism experiences amongst disabled people.

VisitEngland is currently undertaking a review of the [National Accessible Scheme \(NAS\)](#) that helps accommodation owners in England develop and promote their level of accessibility and helps people with accessibility requirements identify suitable accommodation more easily. It comprises a comprehensive [set of standards](#) and, for a fee, assessment by a trained independent assessor. The review of the NAS is being carried out within the wider context of VisitEngland's work on accessible tourism, particularly the provision of the [Accessibility Guides initiative](#) and the comprehensive [guidance on the Business Advice Hub](#).

■ Non-fungible Tokens

Andrew Percy: [\[1499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether it is her Department's policy that Non-Fungible Tokens or any aspect of the mechanisms of their transfer are considered to be user-to-user regulated content under the terms set out in the Online Safety Bill.

Chris Philp:

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

The Bill will apply to a range of services that allow users to interact with each other and post content online. Companies will have duties to take action to prevent the proliferation of illegal content and to protect children from harmful content. This will include taking action against harmful content within Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), such as preventing users from encountering them where these are shared on in scope services.

■ Sports: Ipswich

Tom Hunt: [\[1343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of provision of sporting opportunities for young people in Ipswich.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to engage in sport and physical activity. A key driver of the government's School Sport and Activity Action Plan is to ensure that all children and young people have access to at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. This is supported by £320 million per year through the PE and sport premium.

Sport England have, since 2016, invested £1,408,100 in different projects in Ipswich. Of that sum, £511,214 went towards 13 different projects which specifically targeted young people. 19 schools in Ipswich have also benefited £145,778 through other funding streams.

■ Swimming Pools

Stephen Morgan: [\[1311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she will take to help reduce energy price pressures on swimming pool (a) owners and (b) operators.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the importance of ensuring public access to indoor and outdoor pools and that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. The

responsibility of providing this access lies at Local Authority level, and the government continues to encourage Local Authorities to invest in swimming facilities.

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

Sport England has invested £25,027,478 in swimming and diving projects since January 2017, which includes £15,724,500 to Swim England. This is in addition to the £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund which supported the reopening of local authority swimming pools throughout the country after the pandemic.

Stephen Morgan: [\[421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy in provision of public swimming facilities in Portsmouth.

Stephen Morgan: [\[422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact of energy price increases on the provision of public swimming pools.

Stephen Morgan: [\[423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support is available to public swimming pools to help with rising energy prices.

Stephen Morgan: [\[425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policy of Swim England's Decade of Decline report into swimming pool provision.

Stephen Morgan: [\[426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made on the impact of energy price increases on local authorities provision of public swimming facilities.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

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

Sport England has invested £25,027,478 in swimming and diving projects since January 2017, which includes £15,724,500 to Swim England. This is in addition to the

£100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund which supported the reopening of local authority swimming pools throughout the country after the pandemic, with 1,176 separate pools supported across 701 sites. There are an estimated 14 swimming pools in Portsmouth.

■ **Youth Investment Fund**

Stephen Morgan: [\[3707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which organisations were awarded funding from the first phase of the Youth Investment Fund administered by Children in Need; and how much each of those organisations was awarded, and for what purposes.

Nigel Huddleston:

Phase 1 of the Youth Investment Fund, administered by BBC Children in Need, delivered funding for local youth organisations in levelling up priority areas in England. The funding has enabled local youth providers to invest in capital projects that expand the reach, number and range of services they currently offer.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport plans to announce and publish a list of successful recipients of the grant on GOV.UK in due course.

■ **Youth Services**

Rachael Maskell: [\[4612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on establishing a statutory youth service.

Rachael Maskell: [\[4615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of establishing a statutory youth service.

Nigel Huddleston:

As set out in section 507B of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to “secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people”. Local authorities are required by section 507B(12) to have regard to the statutory guidance when exercising the functions in relation to the statutory duty.

DCMS is committed to completing the review of the Local Authority Statutory Duty for Youth Services, previously paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EDUCATION

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Alun Cairns:

[900180]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to promote T-Levels.

Alex Burghart:

We want as many young people as possible to benefit from T Levels, the new gold standard in technical education. In January this year we launched our 'Get the Jump' campaign, which helps 14-19 year olds explore their education and training options, and spotlights T Levels, Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Higher Technical Qualifications in particular. We are working closely with the Careers and Enterprise Company, Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge programme, Academy Trusts and other representative bodies to ensure that teachers and careers leaders have the information and resources they need to communicate the benefits of T Levels to their students. In addition, this August will see the first T Levels results day and there are a number of activities planned to celebrate and promote the achievements of the first cohort of T Level students, both regionally and around social media to signpost students to the dedicated T Levels website.

Our 'Join the Skills Revolution' campaign promotes government's training and employment schemes, including T Levels, to employers. We are also engaging directly with employers to raise awareness of T Levels and promote industry placements, and we have established a T Level employer ambassador network so that employers can promote T Levels within their industry networks.

Both campaigns make use of a wide range of channels, including use of social media to get through to young people, parents and employers.

■ Alternative Education

Helen Hayes:

[2580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's SEND Review, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of proposed reforms to alternative provision on children without SEND needs placed in alternative provision.

Will Quince:

The reforms set out in our recently published SEND and AP green paper will ensure that all children and young people with challenging behaviour, and those with health needs, will receive appropriate targeted support in mainstream settings or access to time-limited or transitional places in alternative provision schools. This means that all children will receive the right support, in the right place and at the right time, regardless of whether they have SEND.

■ **Apprentices: Degrees**

Matt Vickers: [\[2723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of degree apprenticeships.

Alex Burghart:

Degree apprenticeships provide people of all backgrounds with a unique opportunity to combine degree-level study with being in a job and earning from day one.

We are encouraged to see year on year growth in degree-level apprenticeships (levels 6 and 7), with over 138,000 starts since their introduction in the 2014/15 academic year. Employers, working in partnership with providers, have already developed over 150 apprenticeship standards available at levels 6 and 7, of which over 100 include a degree. We want to see that strong growth continue.

We are taking a number of steps to drive further growth, including exploring options with the Office for Students (OfS) to make up to £8 million available to higher education (HE) providers through the Strategic Priorities Grant. This will help providers to expand their current degree apprenticeship offers or develop new ones. Alongside this, the OfS is challenging HE providers to increase the proportion of degree apprentices they recruit, through refreshed access and participation plans.

In addition, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Further Education is reforming how degree apprenticeships are developed, approved and delivered so that they work better for apprentices and employers, and we are continuing to work with UCAS to capitalise on the excellent work it does to connect young people with a range of opportunities available to them when they are considering their next steps after school or college.

Taken together, these measures will ensure that more people benefit from the unique opportunities that degree apprenticeships offer to individuals, employers and the wider economy.

■ **Children: Social Services**

Helen Hayes: [\[2583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the total profits of children's social care provider placements by local authority in 2019-20.

Helen Hayes: [\[2584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the total profits of children's social care provider placements, by local authority in 2020-21.

Helen Hayes: [\[2585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the total profits of children's social care provider placements by local authority in 2021-22.

Will Quince:

The department does not hold data on the total profits made by children's social care providers by local authority in the years specified.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) looked at provider profits as part of their market study of children's social care in England, Scotland and Wales. The final report was published on 10 March 2022. The department welcomes the report and is carefully considering the CMA's recommendations.

■ Primary Education: Physical Education and Sports**Stephen Morgan:**[\[2637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to confirm the PE and Sport Premium funding for primary schools for the next academic year.

Stephen Morgan:[\[2638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to continue PE and Sport Premium funding for primary schools until 2030.

Stephen Morgan:[\[2639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact on children's activity levels in the event that the PE and Sport Premium is not renewed for the 2022-23 academic year.

Will Quince:

The department recognises the important role the PE and sport premium plays in helping schools ensure that children and young people keep fit and active. The government is considering arrangements for the primary PE and sport premium for the 2022/23 academic year and beyond and will confirm the position in due course.

Any decisions beyond the 2024/25 financial year are subject to the outcome of future spending reviews in the usual way.

■ Schools: Admissions**Munira Wilson:**[\[4702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Point 162 in the Schools White Paper, which specific provision in the Schools Bill will ensure that local authorities take responsibility for managing all applications for in-year admissions.

Mr Robin Walker:

The proposal for local authorities to manage in-year admissions does not require primary legislation.

As part of the Schools White Paper, the department has committed to consulting on reforms the schools admissions framework including requiring local authorities to manage in-year applications, as well as applications in the normal round.

The department is working with stakeholders to refine our proposals. We will then carry out a full public consultation as required by statute when making changes to the School Admissions Code before implementing proposed changes to the code.

■ Schools: Broadband

Chris Elmore: [\[2601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential role of Altnets in providing gigabit-capable broadband to all schools by 2025.

Chris Elmore: [\[2602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government plans to engage with Altnets as part of its discussions with commercial providers on delivering gigabit-capable broadband to all schools by 2025.

Chris Elmore: [\[2603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which Department will take the lead on delivering gigabit-capable broadband to all schools by 2025.

Chris Elmore: [\[2604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he is able to provide a timescale for the publication of further detail on the policy announcement to provide gigabit-capable broadband to all schools by 2025.

Mr Robin Walker:

Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

The department will work 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. Commercial providers, including Altnets, will be central to delivering on this important commitment.

Schools who qualify for funding have been identified from national connectivity data as the most difficult to reach schools that would be least likely to be upgraded before 2026 without government action. The department has already started work with the market and will begin contacting qualifying schools in the autumn term.

■ Schools: Expenditure

Stephen Morgan: [\[3708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools in each local authority area were allocated funding to meet the Schools National Funding Formula floor in 2021-22.

Stephen Morgan: [\[3709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding was given to schools in each local authority area to meet the National Funding Formula funding floor in 2021-22.

Mr Robin Walker:

Local authorities set a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) that protects schools from excessive year-on-year losses in per-pupil funding. The floor in the national funding formula (NFF) mirrors the operation of the MFG in the local formulae and is important for ensuring the affordability of the MFG in the local formulae.

Schools do not receive any funding from the NFF floor. Instead, the NFF funding calculated through the floor is given to local authorities as part of their overall Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations. The amounts individual schools receive will instead depend on the local formula MFG.

5,949 schools and academies are in receipt of MFG payments, across 151 local authorities. These figures are available through the published school allocations for the 2020-21 financial year, available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-funding-statistics/2021-22>.

The attached table lists the volumes and amount of funding per local authority.

Attachments:

1. 3708_3709_table [3708_3709_LA_Funding.xlsx]

Schools: Political Impartiality**Matt Vickers:****[2707]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure political impartiality in schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

The law is clear that schools must remain politically impartial. Schools must not promote partisan political views and should ensure the balanced treatment of political issues. Schools are free to teach about political issues and, of course, play an important role in supporting pupils to understand the society in which they grow up and to be prepared for life in modern Britain. However, it is important that schools uphold their duties with regard to political impartiality. To support school staff in understanding their legal duties in this area, the department has worked with the sector to publish clear and comprehensive guidance available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools>.

Secondary Education: Tameside**Andrew Gwynne:****[3510]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the secondary school attainment of children in (a) Tameside and (b) Denton.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department publishes a wide range of GCSE attainment data for pupils at the end of key stage 4 in state-funded secondary schools in England. The latest information can be accessed here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised/2020-21>.

The latest data, for the academic year 2020/21, shows that the average Attainment 8 score for pupils in state-funded schools in Tameside is 48.5 and in Denton is 48.8. These are lower than the national average of 50.9.

■ Special Educational Needs

Henry Smith:

[1500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 27 April 2022 to Question 156423 on special educational needs, if his Department will take steps to (a) intervene when service providers do not meet their legal duties to families with disabled children and (b) provide redress in those cases to affected families.

Will Quince:

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are a priority and where a local area is deemed to be underperforming, either by way of inspection or concerns raised, the department will not hesitate to intervene in cases of systemic and/or persistent failure. For example, we may issue a formal improvement notice or use powers under Section 497A of the Education Act 1996 to issue a statutory direction directing the council to take any further actions we deem necessary, which may include requiring the responsible local authority to work with a SEND commissioner.

Where families wish to seek redress or otherwise resolve disagreements about Education, Health and Care needs assessments or plans, they have the option to do so via disagreement resolution, mediation, or by registering an appeal with the first-tier tribunal (SEND). The department is currently consulting on proposals to strengthen this system in the SEND and AP Green Paper.

■ Special Educational Needs: Appeals

Sally-Ann Hart:

[R] [1562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the policy proposal in the SEND Review to make mediation mandatory before allowing families to go to the SEND Tribunal, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of that proposal on the time it takes families with disabled children to access the support they need.

Will Quince:

Throughout the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Review, parents and carers told the department how lengthy, stressful, and often expensive, the tribunal process can be.

In the current system, in most cases, families must secure a mediation certificate before registering an appeal with the tribunal, but they do not have to participate in the mediation itself. If the parent or young person does decide to proceed with mediation, then the local authority must ensure that a mediation session takes place within 30 days. There were 5,100 mediation cases held during 2021. Of these, 74% were settled without the need to progress to Tribunal.

Waiting for a SEND tribunal hearing can take significantly longer, the tribunal has a performance measure that 75% of appeals should be brought to hearing and the decision issued within 22 weeks.

This government's proposals seek to resolve issues earlier and improve relationships locally by strengthening mediation, including consulting on making it mandatory. Parents will still be able to go to tribunal if necessary.

The green paper is now out for public consultation on its proposals until 22 July.

■ Students: Loans

Dr Rupa Huq:

[2594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing immediate access to full maintenance loans for medical students in line with other healthcare professional courses for the duration of their degree programme.

Will Quince:

The government is committed to supporting medical students. Students attending years one to four of a standard medical degree course qualify for a fee loan to meet the full costs of their tuition, and a partially means-tested loan for living costs from Student Finance England. Students with adult or child dependants can apply for fully means-tested grants, and students who are obliged to incur additional costs while studying as a result of a disability can apply for disabled students' allowances.

Maximum grants and loans for living costs were increased by 3.1% this academic year, and we have announced that they will increase by a further 2.3% next year. In addition, we are freezing maximum tuition fees for the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. By the 2024/25 academic year, maximum fees will have been frozen for seven years, meaning reduced debt for students in real terms.

We are also reforming student loans so that new borrowers starting from the 2023/24 academic year onwards will not, under the new terms, be required to repay more than they have borrowed when adjusted for inflation.

For the fifth year of a standard medical degree course, and years two to four of accelerated medical programmes, the Government pays students' tuition fees via a non-repayable Bursary, funded by Health Education England via the NHS Business Services Authority. Every eligible student receives an NHS Bursary at a minimum of £1,000 plus a means-tested bursary of up to £3,191.

The NHS Bursary provides additional allowances including for childcare, travel and accommodation, and to help students manage shortfalls between their income and expenditure. Students eligible for bursary support for an academic year of their course can also apply for a reduced rate non-means tested loans for living costs from Student Finance England.

Where a student is struggling financially and is eligible for the NHS Bursary, the Exceptional Support Fund is available where they may be able to claim for any sum

between £100 and £3,000, depending on current financial circumstances. Additionally, Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses provides reimbursement towards travel and accommodation costs that may be incurred whilst undertaking a practice placement.

In our guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) on funding for the 2021/22 financial year, we made clear that the OfS should protect the £256 million allocation for the student premiums to support disadvantaged students and those that need additional help. The 2022/23 financial year guidance to the OfS confirms universities will continue to be able to support students in hardship through the student premium. Ministers' Strategic Priorities Grant guidance letter to the OfS asks that the OfS looks to protect the student premium in cash terms for 2022/23.

Alongside this, the government is also making available discretionary funding of £144 million to support vulnerable people and individuals on low incomes, including students, to support those ineligible for council tax. The government recognises many households will need support to deal with rising energy costs, and has therefore announced a package of support to help households with rising energy bills, worth £9.1 billion in the 2022/23 financial year. This includes a £200 discount on energy bills this autumn for domestic electricity customers in Great Britain, which will be paid back automatically over the next five years.

The department has secured up to £75 million to deliver a National Scholarship Scheme that will support high achieving disadvantaged students to reach their full potential whilst studying in higher education. This scholarship aims to address the ongoing financial barriers that can restrict high achieving, disadvantaged students from achieving their full academic potential whilst studying in higher education and is in addition to the significant sector interventions already in place.

Matt Vickers:

[2722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to deliver the Lifelong Loan Entitlement by 2025.

Michelle Donelan:

The Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) will be accessible from 2025, providing individuals with a loan entitlement the equivalent of four years of post-18 education (£37,000 in today's fees), to use over their lifetime. The government has already introduced key legislation as part of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.

As part of the pathway towards the LLE, the department will also stimulate the provision of high-quality higher technical education (at levels 4 and 5). We have introduced pilots to inform future flexible and modular provision.

From the start of the 2022/23 academic year, the department will be trialling loan-funded access to tuition fees for certain short courses at levels 4-6 at a number of providers across England. This will help us build and test towards the LLE and will allow students to study and build up the skills they need more flexibly.

The government published a consultation on the Lifelong Loan Entitlement which concluded on 6 May. We are carefully considering the contributions and will publish our response in due course.

■ Teachers: Recruitment

Stuart Anderson:

[1556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps are being taken to support the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of teachers in (i) early years and (ii) primary education.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department recognises the huge contribution the early years and teaching workforces make to giving every child the best start in life, especially during this period of education recovery.

The department continues to work with the early years sector to build our understanding of our workforce needs, including any issues related to recruitment and retention. The government is committed to ensuring there are routes to graduate level qualifications, alongside wider professional development activity for the workforce.

As part of our work to support recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department announced up to £153 million in programmes to support workforce development. This includes increasing the number of places available for early years initial teacher training (EYITT). We are also developing new early years training routes.

The department recognises more needs to be done to ensure that primary teaching remains an attractive, high-status profession. At the heart of the Schools White Paper's vision to boost literacy and numeracy outcomes is the need for an excellent teacher for every child. We aim to continue attracting and retaining the highly skilled teachers that every child needs. The Schools White Paper can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child>.

To do this, the department is taking action to improve teacher recruitment and retention by transforming the training and support we provide, not only to attract more people into teaching, but to encourage them to stay and thrive in the profession. Every teacher now has access to a golden thread of high-quality, evidence-based training and professional development at every stage of their career.

The department is creating an entitlement to at least three years of structured training, support, and professional development for all new teachers, bringing teaching into line with other prestigious professions such as law, accountancy, and medicine. Underpinning this is the new Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework and the Early Career Framework (ECF). Together, these ensure that new teachers will benefit from at least three years of evidence-based training, across ITT and into their induction. We also remain committed to increasing teacher starting salaries to £30,000 to make teaching an attractive graduate option.

Beyond the first few years of teaching, our priority is to help all teachers and school leaders to continuously develop their expertise throughout their careers so every child in every classroom in every school gets the best start in life. Teachers can now benefit from an updated suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). Aimed at those who want to develop expertise in high-quality teaching practice, to those leading multiple schools across trusts, these professional development programmes are now free to access for those eligible to apply.

Teacher retention is key to ensuring effective teacher supply and quality, and we are taking action to support teachers to stay in the profession and thrive. The department has published a range of resources to help address teacher workload and wellbeing and support schools to introduce flexible working practices.

Matt Vickers:

[2708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to attract and retain high quality teachers.

Mr Robin Walker:

There are now more than 461,000 (FTE) teachers working in state-funded schools across the country to inspire the next generation of young people. Over 37,000 new trainee teachers were recruited to start training in the 2021/22 academic year, showing that teaching continues to be an attractive profession.

At the heart of the Schools White Paper's vision to boost literacy and numeracy outcomes is the need for an excellent teacher for every child. The department aims to continue attracting and retaining the highly skilled teachers that every child needs. To do this, the department is taking action to improve teacher recruitment and retention by transforming the training and support we provide, not only to attract more people into teaching but to encourage them to stay and thrive in the profession.

The department is creating an entitlement to at least three years of structured training, support and professional development for all new teachers, to bring teaching into line with other prestigious professions such as law, accountancy, and medicine. Underpinning this is the new Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework and the Early Career Framework. Together, these ensure that new teachers will benefit from at least three years of evidence-based training, across ITT and into their induction.

Beyond the first few years of teaching, the department's priority is to help all teachers and school leaders to continuously develop their expertise throughout their careers so every child in every classroom in every school gets the best start in life. Teachers and school leaders at all levels can now benefit from an updated suite of National Professional Qualifications. Aimed at those who want to develop expertise in high-quality teaching practice, to those leading multiple schools across trusts, these professional development programmes are now free to access for those eligible to apply.

These measures will create a golden thread running from ITT through to school leadership, rooting teacher and leader development in the best available evidence.

To support the recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in subjects that are harder to recruit for, the government has put in place a range of measures, including bursaries worth £24,000 tax-free and scholarships worth £26,000 tax-free. This will encourage talented trainees for key subjects such as chemistry, computing, mathematics, and physics. Additionally, we have announced a Levelling Up Premium worth up to £3,000 tax-free for maths, physics, chemistry, and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers who choose to work in disadvantaged schools, including in Education Investment Areas (EIAs). This will support the recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in these subjects and in the schools and areas that need them most.

The government also remain committed to increasing teacher starting salaries to £30,000 to make teaching an attractive graduate option.

Teacher retention is key to ensuring effective teacher supply and quality, and we are taking action to support teachers to stay in the profession and thrive. The department has published a range of resources to help address teacher workload and wellbeing and support schools to introduce flexible working practices.

■ **Teachers: Veterans**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[4506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many civil servants are assigned to administer the Troops for Teachers scheme.

Michelle Donelan:

The administration of Troops to Teachers undergraduate bursaries is undertaken by the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) funding team, alongside other ITT funding. In academic year 2021/22 the team is administering funding for approximately 6,000 trainees in total. The ITT Funding team consists of 6 full-time equivalent staff members and the administration of this funding is undertaken collectively. No civil servants are working solely on administration of the Troops to Teachers scheme.

■ **T-levels: Publicity**

Matt Vickers:

[\[2709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to promote T-Levels.

Alex Burghart:

The department wants as many young people as possible to benefit from T Levels, the new gold standard qualifications in technical education. In January this year, we launched our 'Get the Jump' campaign, which helps 14-19-year-olds explore their education and training options, and spotlights T Levels, apprenticeships, traineeships and higher technical qualifications in particular. We are working closely with the Careers and Enterprise Company, Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge

programme, academy trusts and other representative bodies to ensure that teachers and careers leaders have the information and resources they need to communicate the benefits of T Levels to their students. In addition, this August will see the first T Levels results day and there are a number of activities planned to celebrate and promote the achievements of the first cohort of T Level students, both regionally and around social media to signpost students to the dedicated T Levels website.

Our ‘Join the Skills Revolution’ campaign promotes the government’s training and employment schemes, including T Levels, to employers. We are also engaging directly with employers to raise awareness of T Levels and promote industry placements, and we have established a T Level employer ambassador network so that employers can promote T Levels within their industry networks.

Both campaigns make use of a wide range of channels, including the use of social media to get through to young people, parents and employers.

■ **Two Trees School Denton**

Andrew Gwynne: **[3513]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has received an application from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council to release the former Two Trees High School site in Denton from educational use.

Andrew Gwynne: **[3514]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will meet the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish to discuss any disposal application for the Two Trees site in Denton.

Mr Robin Walker:

Local authorities require my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education’s consent to dispose of their school playing field land under section 77 of The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and Schedule 1 to the Academies Act 2010.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council applied for consent to dispose of the Two Trees High School site in 2016. Officials sought clarification on a number of issues, but no formal response was received, and the application was closed down accordingly.

In November 2021, an application to dispose of non-playing field land was received. As the site includes playing field land, officials advised that a new application on the correct form was required. To date, no such application has been received.

There is no current application from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council upon which the department can provide an update on. However, the Secretary of State will keep the hon. Member updated should the council re-apply for consent.

■ Uni Connect Programme: Finance

Emma Hardy:

[2630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of reducing Uni Connect funding by an additional £10 million on reducing the gap in higher education participation between the most and least represented groups in (a) the Humber and (b) nationally.

Michelle Donelan:

The Uni Connect programme was originally set up as a four-year investment programme to support the creation of a strong and versatile network of local partnerships, aimed at providing sustained outreach to young people across England. During this initial start-up phase, funding was set at £60 million to support the establishment of local partnerships and establishing projects to support hard-to-read students.

The programme is now in its third phase. The department has set out in its strategic priorities guidance in 2021 and 2022 that funding should be redirected, with funding to be spent on maintaining core infrastructure and delivering the most effective interventions which meet specific policy aims.

In November 2021, the department issued new guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) on rebooting the access and participation regime in England. As part of this new approach, the Director for Fair Access and Participation has asked providers to play a greater role in improving equality of opportunity in further and higher education within schools.

In April 2022, the OfS issued guidance to providers inviting them to vary their current plans. Providers are being asked to incorporate more attainment raising activities in partnership with schools in their current access and participation plans. Providers are also asked to develop more diverse pathways into their institution, including levels 4 and 5 and apprenticeships. Additionally, providers are being asked to consider the needs that exist both nationally and within their own regional and local context.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Automation

Mark Pritchard:

[1497]

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

Jo Churchill:

Defra has developed an ambitious R&D package for England which will enable more farmers and agri-food businesses to become involved in agricultural R&D.

The Government's £90 million investment in the 'Transforming Food Production' (TFP) challenge, launched by UK Research and Innovation in 2018, is already supporting ground-breaking research and development to boost productivity and encourage technological advances. The Farming Innovation Programme was launched in October 2021 to build on this effort. The programme is made up of three separate but complementary funds, that will pull through innovation in different areas, from small farmer-led innovative research projects to larger industrial R&D projects that can transform the sector.

Harper Adams, in collaboration with Precision Decisions Ltd Agri-Epi Centre, was awarded a £1,577,964 grant through the TFP to support their Hands-Free Farm project. This seeks to operate a farm autonomously, whilst developing robotic skills and technology. Oats, wheat and beans were all successfully harvested autonomously in the last season. Through TFP, Harper Adams is also involved in the Dairyvision project which looks to develop autonomous monitoring and management of dairy cows to optimise their welfare and productivity.

As announced in December 2020, Defra has undertaken a review of automation in horticulture during 2021, covering both the edible and ornamental sectors in England. It is due to be published later in 2022. Defra Ministers engage and visit Harper Adams regularly.

■ Air Pollution

Geraint Davies:

[2346]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Office of National Statistics publication on Air quality statistics in the UK, 1987 to 2021 - Particulate matter (PM10/PM2.5), for what reason levels of urban background PM2.5 pollution stagnated between 2015 and 2019.

Jo Churchill:

PM2.5 concentrations recorded by the national monitoring network have fallen by 57% between 1997 and 2021. This decrease is not uniform and does not always align with emission reductions, since concentrations are impacted by a wide range of meteorological and socio-economic factors. There are natural, domestic and international sources of emissions.

While emissions of PM2.5 are on a long term downward trend, between 2015 and 2019 total emissions remained relatively unchanged, falling by 1%. Throughout this period, emissions from road transport sources were estimated to have dropped by 14%. However, emissions from domestic combustion increased 15%, within which there was a 29% increase in emissions from the use of wood as a fuel. Additionally, emissions from combustion in the manufacturing and combustion sector were estimated to have increased by 7%, which is predominantly from the combustion of biomass.

■ Allotments

Virginia Crosbie:

[4718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of making publicly-owned land available for allotments on (a) food security, (b) ecosystems and (c) the mental health and wellbeing of people.

Victoria Prentis:

Allotments are a hugely important part of many communities, connecting people with the land, food and each other. We are pleased to see that the interest in allotments remains high, alongside other types of community growing and gardening. There are no plans to review existing arrangements or policies.

■ Animal Products: Imports

Martyn Day:

[2327]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the Animals Abroad Bill was not announced in the Queen's Speech; and if he will bring forward legislative proposals on (a) hunting animals for trophies and (b) attractions, activities or experiences that lead to the neglect of elephants and other animals.

Deidre Brock:

[2524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Government plans to introduce a ban on the advertising and offering for sale by overseas venues of attractions, activities or experiences involving poor animal welfare, such as low welfare elephant venues.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 17 May 2022 to the hon. Member for Rotherham, [PQ 1511](#).

■ Flood Control: Shrewsbury

Daniel Kawczynski:

[2433]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment has been conducted on the effectiveness of flood defences during the last flooding experienced by Shrewsbury.

Rebecca Pow:

During the significant flood event in February 2022, Coleham Head and Frankwell flood defences were deployed, together protecting over 150 properties. Once again, these schemes proved to be highly effective at alleviating flooding to properties, businesses and infrastructure. Information to date confirms that approximately 50 to 100 properties were impacted in Shrewsbury and the surrounding area, both residential and non-residential.

After a flood event, the defences are assessed by EA asset inspectors to ensure they continue to perform as intended. Following these inspections in Shrewsbury, some minor ingress was discovered consistent with assets of this age. Action has already been taken with consultants who have carried out investigations and drawn up remediation plans for implementation by EA contractors this year to ensure the defences remain in excellent condition.

■ Food

Catherine McKinnell: [\[1510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 31 March 2022 to Question 146628 on Free School Meals: North East, when he plans to publish the national food strategy white paper.

Victoria Prentis:

The forthcoming Government Food Strategy will set out the Government's ambition and priorities for the food system, considering the evidence set out in Henry Dimbleby's independent review and building on additional topics.

We are actively collaborating across Government to cover the entire food system and consider the unforeseen challenges that the agri-food sector has faced this last year since the independent review was published.

We expect to publish the Government Food Strategy shortly.

■ Water Charges: Arrears

Colleen Fletcher: [\[4591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of the increases in the cost of living on the number of households in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England that have fallen into arrears with their water supplier.

Rebecca Pow:

All water companies offer WaterSure and social tariffs to help reduce bills for households who struggle to pay their bills in full. Water companies also offer a range of financial support measures to assist households to better manage their budgets and provide flexible payments including payment holidays, payment matching, benefit entitlement checks and money/debt advice referral arrangements. The Government expects water companies to continue to actively engage with households and inform them of support measures they offer. The Consumer Council for Water (CCW) works with water companies and Defra to monitor the uptake of affordability measures.

My officials are working with CCW, Ofwat, charities and water companies to explore the recommendations from CCW's Affordability Review, to further support households who are struggling to pay their water bills.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Abdul Kolim****Mark Tami:**[\[626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 7 December 2021 to Question 83249 on Morocco: Detainees, how many times (a) consular officials have met (i) Mr Kolim and (ii) his family and (b) her Department has raised Mr Kolim's case with the Moroccan authorities since 7 December 2021.

Vicky Ford:

We are in regular contact with Mr Kolim and his family and are providing consular support. We continue to raise his case with the Moroccan authorities.

■ Afghanistan: Politics and Government**Catherine West:**[\[4656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with international partners on the (a) long-term stability and (b) international position of Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary has regular contact with foreign counterparts about Afghanistan, including at the recent G7 Foreign Ministers meeting. They addressed the current security, humanitarian, and human rights situation as well as longer term prospects for the country and region. FCDO Ministers and the Foreign Secretary will continue to engage international partners in support of UK objectives and long-term stability for the Afghan people.

■ Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional Or Minority Languages: Public Appointments**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[4645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason a representative of the UK has yet to be appointed to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages' Committee of Experts; and whether she has taken steps to help ensure the position is filled.

Vicky Ford:

The FCDO is currently exploring options on how best to identify suitably qualified, independent candidates for the process of appointing a UK expert to the ECRML Committee of Experts (COMEX). We remain committed to ensuring the position is filled by an appropriate expert in due course.

Ethiopian Airlines: Accidents**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[3525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 160470, on Ethiopian Airlines: Accidents, whether she has had recent discussions with (a) her counterpart in the Ethiopian Government and (b) the Secretary of State for Transport on the release of the final air accident report for Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, which crashed on 10 March 2019.

Vicky Ford:

Our thoughts remain with the victims and their families of this tragic accident, and I [Minister Ford] appreciate the distress caused by the ongoing delays. Officials at the British Embassy in Addis Ababa have been in contact with the Ethiopian Ministry of Transport and Air Accident Investigation Department to discuss the release of the final air accident report and will continue to lobby them for its immediate release. During our last contact we were informed that, whilst no date has yet been set for the report's release, it is currently being finalised and that it will be released as soon as possible. In line with their international obligations, the Ministry of Transport issued an interim statement ahead of the 3rd anniversary.

Food: Shortages**Rachael Maskell:**[\[4610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help prepare for short-term food shortages overseas resulting from decreasing global stocks and the war in Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

The UK has announced emergency humanitarian assistance to address food insecurity in the Horn of Africa, Yemen and Afghanistan. Over the next 3 years, we will direct £3 billion to the most vulnerable countries and people to help them recover from crises. We welcome the World Bank's announcement of \$30 billion to address food insecurity globally over the next 15 months, which responds to the UK's calls for the Bank to mobilise funding to tackle the growing crisis. With G7 allies, we support the launch of the Global Alliance on Food Security, to scale up a rapid, needs-based, coordinated response.

Rachael Maskell:[\[4611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what steps the Government can take to help mitigate the global food shortage.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO continues to work with DEFRA and other departments to respond to the global food security crisis. Domestically, this includes DEFRA's support for British producers facing increased costs for fertiliser, feed and fuel. Internationally, this

includes FCDO's emergency humanitarian assistance and commitment of £3 billion over the next three years to the most vulnerable countries and people to help them survive in crises. We are also supporting the G7 Global Alliance on Food Security to scale up a coordinated response that addresses root causes of food security crises.

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

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:

[\[4453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many Hikvision products are in use in her Department.

Amanda Milling:

As has been the case under successive administrations, it is not Government policy to comment on the security arrangements of Government buildings. Specific details regarding the make and model of security systems are withheld on national security grounds.

■ **GCHQ: Bude**

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[4698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many US personnel are currently stationed at GCHQ Bude.

James Cleverly:

It is the longstanding policy of successive British Governments not to comment on intelligence matters.

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

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[4532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if her Department will pledge £1.8 billion to the Global Fund's upcoming Seventh Replenishment campaign.

Amanda Milling:

The Global Fund remains an essential partner for the UK in the fight against HIV, TB and malaria. The UK pledged £1.4 billion to the Global Fund's 6th replenishment (2020-2022), making us the 2nd largest donor. We are reviewing the Global Fund's investment case for the 7th replenishment and deciding our precise contribution in line with the new International Development Strategy. We will continue to make financial and leadership contributions to the Global Fund's 7th replenishment.

■ **India and Pakistan: Climate Change**

Catherine West:

[\[4647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make it her policy to support (a) India and (b) Pakistan with climate adaption and mitigation measures in those countries.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is fully committed to supporting India and Pakistan on both mitigation and adaptation.

Climate is one of the five pillars of the 2030 Roadmap for India-UK relations, signed in May 2021. During the Prime Minister's recent visit to India in April this year, the two Prime Ministers reaffirmed their personal commitment to accelerate the clean energy transition, including welcoming joint UK-India progress on offshore wind energy, electric mobility, and ongoing cooperation on the development and deployment of affordable green hydrogen. The UK is also supporting domestic adaptation action in India through for example, the Infrastructure for Climate Resilient Growth Programme which is integrating climate risk and adaptation into social protection.

Pakistan is predicted to be the country 8th most-affected by climate change. We are working with Pakistan on high-level climate change policy, and at grass-roots level on adaptation and resilience. The UK played a leading role in tackling climate change through hosting COP 26 in November 2021 and remains COP Chair until COP 27 in November 2022. Our COP26 commitments are at the core of the UK's International Development Strategy, launched on 16 May.

■ **India and Pakistan: Weather**

Catherine West: [\[4646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with her (a) Indian and (b) Pakistani counterparts on the effects of the current heatwave in those countries.

Vicky Ford:

India and Pakistan are facing significant environmental challenges, including heavy rainfall and flooding as well as heatwaves and droughts. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of these shocks. The UK is playing a leading role in tackling climate change, including through our COP Presidency. Ministers and officials regularly raise climate in discussions with their Indian and Pakistani counterparts.

■ **India: Religious Freedom**

Sarah Owen: [\[1354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the issues of (a) violence and (b) persecution of Muslims in India.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all and promoting respect and tolerance between different religious and non-religious communities. We condemn any instances of discrimination because of religion or belief, regardless of the country or faith involved. We engage with India on a range of human rights matters and where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of

India, including at Ministerial level. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, also regularly speaks to the High Commissioner of India, and human rights including freedom of religion or belief forms part of that dialogue.

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions will continue to follow reports of violence and discrimination closely, while recognising that these are matters for India. It is for the Indian Government to address the concerns of all Indian citizens, regardless of faith. Our network of High Commissions across India also regularly meet religious representatives and have run projects supporting minority rights.

Afzal Khan:

[4681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking with international counterparts to help tackle forced conversions in India.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief for all and promoting respect and tolerance between different religious and non-religious communities. We condemn any instances of discrimination because of Freedom of Religion or Belief, regardless of the country or faith involved. Our network in India will continue to monitor developments, including legislation, related to religious conversions.

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions across India regularly meet religious representatives and have run projects supporting minority rights. Over the last three years in India, the FCDO has worked with local Non-Governmental Organisations to bring together young people of diverse faith backgrounds to work together on social action projects in their local communities and build positive relationships between them. We have supported a UK-India Interfaith Leadership Programme, creating an opportunity to exchange UK-India experiences on leading modern, inclusive communities. We engage leaders of all faiths in India to understand their perspectives, using important milestones, alongside the wider international community.

■ International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Afzal Khan:

[4680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what her Department's objectives are for the upcoming Ministerial Conference on International Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Vicky Ford:

The UK-hosted International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in July 2022 will drive forward international efforts to defend FoRB for all. Our objectives are: to raise awareness of FoRB issues; to use UK human rights experience and leadership to improve FoRB for all; to galvanise partner countries and stakeholders to work more closely together; to encourage collective action by partner

countries and FoRB stakeholders; and to strengthen the voices and capacity of defenders of FoRB.

■ International Organisations

Emily Thornberry:

[1127]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which international organisations are in receipt of privileges in the UK within the terms of the International Organisations Act 1968 as of 12 May 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The following International Organisations are in receipt of privileges and immunities in the UK as of 12 May 2022 within the terms of the International Organisations Act and other relevant legislation:

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION	NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO)
African Development Fund	European Medicines Evaluation Agency	International Education Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Naval Communications Agency
Asian Development Bank	European NGSS Agency	International Finance Corporation	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT)	International Fund for Agricultural Development	Organisation Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR)
Bank for International Settlements (BIS)	European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (Eurocontrol)	International Grains Organisation (formerly International Wheat Council)	Organisation Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
Caribbean Development Bank	European Parliament	International Labour Organisation	Oslo and Paris Commissions (OSPAR)
Common Fund for Commodities	European Patent Organisation	International Lead and Zinc Study Group	Preparatory Commission for Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION	NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO)
Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International (CABI)	European Space Agency	International Maritime Organisation	Square Kilometre Array Organisation (SKAO)
Commonwealth Foundation	European Southern Observatory	International Mobile Satellite Organisation (IMSO)	United Nations
Commonwealth Secretariat	European Telecommunications Satellite Organisation	International Monetary Fund (IMF)	United Nations Development Programme
Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation	European Union	International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund	United Nations Environment Programme
Council of Europe	Food and Agricultural Organisation (of the UN)	International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund 1992	United Nations Information Centre
Customs Cooperation Council	Hong Kong Export Trade Office	International Organisation for Migration	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	Independent International Commission on Decommissioning	International Rubber Study Group	United Nations World Food Programme
European Atomic Energy Community	Inter-American Development Bank	International Seabed Authority	Unified Patents Court
European Banking Authority	International Atomic Energy Agency	International Sugar Organisation	Universal Postal Union
European Bioinformatics Institute (also known as European Molecular Biology Laboratory)	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)	International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (ITSO)	World Health Organisation
European Centre for Medium Range	International Civil Aviation Organisation	International Telecommunications	World Intellectual Property Organisation

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION	NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO)
Weather Forecasting		Union	
European Coal and Steel Community	International Cocoa Organisation	International Tribunal Law of the Sea	World Meteorological Organisation
European Commission of Human Rights	International Coffee Organisation	International Whaling Commission (IWC)	World Trade Organisation
European Committee for Prevention of Torture	International Court of Justice (UN)	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)	
European Community	International Criminal Court	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO)	

■ **Safe Abortion Action Fund**

Ian Paisley: **[1173]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much the Government has provided to the Safe Abortion Action Fund in each of the past five years.

Amanda Milling:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has provided the following to the Safe Abortion Action Fund in each of the past five years; £0 in 2017/18, £0 in 2018/19, £1 million 2019/20, £1 million 20/21 and £0.8 million 21/22. Available on the development tracker: <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300875/transactions>

■ **Sequestration of Assets: Russia**

Dame Margaret Hodge: **[2342]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what is the total value is of assets frozen under the Russia sanctions regime by each territory of the (a) British Overseas Territories and (b) Crown Dependencies.

James Cleverly:

British Overseas Territories have frozen Russian assets with a combined estimated value in excess of 11 billion US dollars. Examples include, the Cayman Islands Government who publicly reported Russian assets with an estimated value of US\$7.7 billion have been frozen. The British Virgin Islands government have also publicly

reported assets with an estimated value of more than US\$ 400 million have been frozen to date.

Sanctions enforcement matters in the Crown Dependencies is a matter for their local authorities not the UK government. But the three governments have publicly reported that they have frozen assets worth in total over £1 billion: Isle of Man, £1.9 million; Guernsey, £5 million; Jersey, over £1 billion. These figures are likely to change.

■ Sri Lanka: British Nationals Abroad

Alberto Costa:

[\[831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure the safety of British nationals in Sri Lanka in light of the recent civil unrest in that country.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government takes the safety and security of British nationals overseas seriously, and regularly communicates through travel advice and messaging from the British High Commission in Colombo. Our advice helps British nationals to make informed decisions. Travel advice is advisory only and people must take personal responsibility for any trips they make abroad. Our travel advice remains under constant review to ensure it reflects our latest assessment of risks. Consular staff continue to provide a full range of consular services to British nationals in Sri Lanka. We continue to monitor the situation in Sri Lanka.

We are closely following the situation since attacks against peaceful protesters on 9 May and outbreaks of violence that followed. The Minister for South Asia, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has made clear that violence against peaceful protestors is unacceptable and that those responsible for attacks should be held accountable. Fundamental rights including the right to peaceful protest must be protected. We encourage all sides to find a democratic and inclusive approach to resolving the current political and economic challenges.

■ Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[4529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Government's proposed reduction to the amount of overseas development aid channelled through multilateral organisations on outcomes in the efforts to eradicate global TB.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is and will continue to be a leading donor on TB, in particular through our support to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and our ongoing research partnerships in TB, such as the LIGHT consortium led by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, the TB Alliance and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics. The Global Fund provides 77% of all international financing for TB and the UK is the second largest donor to the Global Fund's 6th replenishment. We will

continue to make financial and leadership contributions to the Global Fund's 7th replenishment in the Autumn.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[4530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department plans to provide additional funding to support UK research and academic institutions to develop new tools to help effectively combat global TB.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has been a leading supporter of TB research and Product Development Partnerships for many years, including the TB Alliance and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics.

Currently, FCDO Official Development Assistance allocations are being finalised to deliver the priorities set out in the International Development Strategy (IDS). In parallel, FCDO teams are developing business plans to deliver the IDS, which will include research and development on health technologies to combat TB.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[4531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the International Development Strategy, if she will make an assessment of the potential effect of increased trade between the UK and non-EU countries on TB outcomes for the world's poorest and most marginalised people.

Amanda Milling:

The UK's independent trade policy supports developing partners to lift themselves out of poverty, to build back better after the global pandemic, and to reduce their dependency on aid. This includes ensuring the free flow of critical goods such as medical supplies.

■ **Ukraine: British Nationals Abroad**

Luke Pollard: [\[1336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans her Department has to debrief British nationals who return to the UK after fighting in Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

Where relevant and practicable, we will debrief any persons who volunteer credible information about the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

■ **USA: Abortion**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[3524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with her US counterpart on the reported

Supreme Court opinion on overturning the Roe v Wade decision made by that court in 1973.

James Cleverly:

This is a matter for the US courts and it would not be appropriate for a foreign government to lobby an independent court process. The UK supports women's reproductive rights globally, including the right to access safe and legal abortion.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion: Analgesics

Sally-Ann Hart:

[2703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidence base is to support the use of fetal analgesia during in-utero surgery for spina bifida from 19 weeks' gestation, but not its use before the termination of a pregnancy at the same gestation.

Maggie Throup:

The Department does not set clinical practice. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has considered the issue of fetal pain and awareness in its guidelines 'The Care of Women Requesting Induced Abortion (Evidence-based Clinical Guideline No. 7)' and 'Fetal Awareness: Review of Research and Recommendations for Practice', which are available at the following links:

https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/abortion-guideline_web_1.pdf

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/rcogfetalawarenesswpr0610.pdf>

The Royal College is currently reviewing these guidelines to consider the latest evidence on fetal pain and fetal awareness. It has advised that that the difference in approach in the use of fetal analgesia for in-utero surgery for spinda bifida is related to the fetal stress response, which is not related to fetal pain and the need for the fetus to be immobilised during spinal surgery. There is also evidence that the stress response could impact ongoing development of the fetus.

■ Acute Beds

Wes Streeting:

[2578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his department has for collecting key metrics for the delivery of acute medical care.

Wes Streeting:

[2579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his department has to expand the use of acute medical units in the care of patients with acute medical problems.

Edward Argar:

We have no plans to do so. NHS England and NHS Improvement advise that most acute hospitals in England have acute medical units. The Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme is designed to improve the treatment and care of patients through an in-depth review of services, benchmarking and presenting evidence to support change. It has produced guidance on acute medical unit delivery, including on capacity, staffing and diagnostic capability. The GIRFT Acute General Medicine workstream is also developing the Summary Acute Medicine Indicator tool, highlighting areas where acute medical care can be optimised.

Ambulance Services: Shropshire**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[3530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in Shropshire waited for longer than an hour for an ambulance to arrive following the initial 999 call being made in the period January to April 2022 with call categorisations of (a) chest pain and (b) stroke.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not collected centrally.

Blood: Donors**Kim Leadbeater:**[\[2727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure free parking is available on NHS properties for people donating blood.

Edward Argar:

NHS Blood and Transplant is responsible for blood donation in England. The majority of blood donation sessions take place in third party venues, which are typically not National Health Service properties. NHS Blood and Transplant aims to secure venues with donor parking and only in very exceptional cases would donor parking not be available. Blood donation venues must fulfil essential criteria to ensure the safety and availability of donors, as well as the smooth running of donor sessions.

Where free parking is not offered, this is usually due to venue constraints in that location. If a donation session is co-located to a paid municipal car park, NHS Blood and Transplant works with the council to secure free parking through a voucher system. Mobile blood donation sessions are held in NHS buildings, which can include hospital premises. In these cases, NHS Blood and Transplant works with trusts to secure free parking although this is a decision made locally by each trust.

Breast Cancer: Medical Treatments**Alex Sobel:**[\[3711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NICE draft guidance issued on 7 April 2022 on sacituzumab govitecan, Trodelvy, what steps his

Department is taking to help ensure that people with triple negative breast cancer can access treatment that could extend their lifespan.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recommended several medicines for the treatment of patients with breast cancer, including triple-negative breast cancer, which are routinely available for National Health Service patients.

NICE is currently developing guidance on the use of Trodelvy (sacituzumab govitecan) for the treatment of unresectable triple-negative locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer in adults after two or more systemic therapies. In June 2022, NICE's Appraisal Committee will consider its recommendations following responses to the recent consultation on its draft guidance. If Trodelvy is recommended in NICE's final draft guidance, it will be eligible for funding through the Cancer Drugs Fund. NICE expects to issue final guidance on Trodelvy in August 2022.

■ **Cancer: Children**

Claire Hanna:

[\[2698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to engage with the UK Clinical Research Collaboration to help assess what percentage of funding is spent on childhood cancer research as part of wider health research spending.

Maria Caulfield:

There are no plans to make a specific assessment. The Department engages with the UK Clinical Research Collaboration as a partner organisation and is represented on its board to provide strategic direction and oversight.

The National Institute for Health and Care Research welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including childhood cancer. As with other Government funders of health research, the NIHR does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area is determined by factors such as scientific potential and the number of successful funding applications.

■ **Cancer: Nurses**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[4517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support cancer nurse specialists with (a) training and (b) education.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[4518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of cancer nurse specialists who specialise in prostate cancer.

Edward Argar:

In 2022/23, Health Education England (HEE) is investing an additional £50 million to expand the cancer and diagnostics workforce, including cancer nurse specialists. HEE is offering training grants to enable existing and aspiring cancer nurse specialists to undertake additional training to develop specialist clinical, leadership, education and research capabilities, including in relation to prostate cancer. The forthcoming 10 Year Cancer Plan will also ensure that the appropriate workforce is in place.

Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients**Fleur Anderson:**[\[3748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for individuals admitted to hospital under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act.

Gillian Keegan:

The information requested is not collected centrally.

Coronavirus: Disease Control**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[2492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish all (a) documents, (b) evidence and (c) research his Department holds on the Government's decision to not allow bereavement support bubbles during the lockdowns in the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

The COVID-19 Taskforce has advised that the Government is unable to provide the information requested as it relates to the formulation of Government policy.

Coronavirus: Quarantine**Dan Jarvis:**[\[3594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of ending self-isolation rules for people with covid-19 on immune-suppressed transplant recipients' (a) mortality and (b) quality of life.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made. However, those who are at higher risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19 may be eligible for antiviral and other therapeutic treatments and a focused vaccination programme. On 1 April 2022, updated guidance for those with immunosuppression was issued and we continue to engage with the relevant patient and stakeholder groups.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Esther McVey:

[1170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the (a) Government, and (b) UK Health Security Agency are taking to ensure the Coronavirus Test Devices Approval process is held to the same operational standards of (i) transparency and (ii) communication with applicant companies as internationally recognised regulatory processes.

Maggie Throup:

Throughout the Coronavirus Test Devices Approval (CTDA) process applicants have access to dedicated communication, review and complaint channels. Following the desktop review, applicants receive a report detailing whether the application guidance has been followed and if the threshold performance for specific technology has been met. Approved tests are also published on a register on GOV.UK and if an application is unsuccessful, the applicant can request that the Department reconsiders its decision.

Officials work with applicants to support them through the process and online guidance is provided on how to apply for the CTDA and the information required at each stage. The guidance is regularly refined, in line with standard regulatory process in the United Kingdom and internationally. We will review the CTDA process at the end of 2022 and consider its efficiency and transparency, including lessons learned from international regulators.

■ Dental Services: Shropshire

Mark Pritchard:

[1498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure an adequate number of NHS dentists in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department is working with the National Health Service and Health Education England (HEE) to improve the provision of NHS dentistry nationally, including in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. HEE's Advancing Dental Care Review aims to tackle recruitment and retention challenges, attracting and retaining more dentists and dental care professionals in the NHS. These recommendations will be implemented through the Dental Education Reform Programme. We are also working with NHS England and other stakeholders to reform the dental contract, to ensure that working in the NHS is more attractive for dentists and other dental professionals.

The Department is working with the General Dental Council on legislative proposals which will allow the regulator greater flexibility to expand the registration options open to international dentists. The consultation on these changes has now closed and subject to its outcome, we hope to bring forward legislative changes later this year.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: World Economic Forum**

Jon Trickett: [\[2365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has participated in any events organised by the World Economic Forum in the last year.

Edward Argar:

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has not participated in any events organised by the World Economic Forum in the last year.

■ **Disability: Children**

Ed Davey: [\[3454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's 2022-23 priorities and operational planning guidance, published in December 2021, how that guidance will operate to reduce the community service waiting lists for disabled children and their families.

Gillian Keegan:

Following publication of updated operational planning guidance in February 2022, NHS England and NHS Improvement requested providers to outline plans to reduce community service waiting lists. This information is being reviewed as part of planning to support providers with service restoration in community health services.

National service development funding, alongside growth in local systems' core funding allocations, will support systems to increase the overall capacity of community services to provide care for more patients, address waiting lists and develop and expand new models of community care.

NHS England and NHS Improvement published the Community Health Services Prioritisation Framework on 11 January 2022. This set an expectation that community health services, including therapy services and the provision of wheelchairs, orthotics, prosthetics and equipment for children and young people which have been delayed or paused as a result of COVID-19, should resume from 1 March 2022.

■ **Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services**

Rachael Maskell: [\[1227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the provision of sufficient comprehensive eating disorders services in (a) York and (b) England.

Gillian Keegan:

We are investing approximately £1 billion in community mental health care for adults with severe mental illness by 2023/24. This will provide 370,000 adults with severe mental illnesses, including eating disorders, greater choice and control over their care and support them to live well in their communities. We have also allocated an additional £53 million a year from 2021/22 for children and young people's community

eating disorder services which is developing more than 70 children and young people (CYP) community eating disorder teams in England.

Some specialised mental health services and learning disability and autism services will be commissioned through a provider collaborative. In York, Humber Coast and Vale Provider Collaborative are working with local partners and commissioners to ensure the integration of services to meet the needs of the population.

■ **Foetuses: Pain**

Scott Benton:

[\[2662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing interim guidelines permitting fetal painkiller in all interventions in utero.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department does not set guidelines for clinical practice. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists considered the issue of fetal pain and awareness in its guidelines 'Fetal Awareness: Review of Research and Recommendations for Practice'. The Royal College is currently reviewing this guidance.

■ **General Practitioners: Wycombe**

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to GP services in Wycombe.

Maria Caulfield:

During the pandemic, we have made £520 million available to improve access and expand general practice capacity. In October 2021, we published measures to allow more patients to see or speak to general practitioners and primary care teams during the winter, supported by the Winter Access Fund. Between November 2021 and March 2022, this supported Wycombe's Primary Care Networks to offer more than 7,900 additional appointments.

We have committed £1.5 billion to create an additional 50 million general practice appointments a year by 2024 by increasing and diversifying the workforce. In the Buckingham Clinical Commissioning Group area, there were on average an estimated 10,900 appointments per working day in March 2022 excluding COVID-19 vaccination appointments, compared to 10,300 in March 2021. NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that six practices will receive funding for new advanced telephony systems, with a further three practices already in receipt of funding for existing advanced systems. This will provide more capacity, flexibility for patients and enable more efficient use of existing practice staff.

■ Health and Care Professions Council: Grants

Fay Jones: [\[2652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish details of the grants provided to Health and Care Professions Council; and whether it is his Department's policy that grants can be made to individuals registering with Health and Care Professions Council.

Edward Argar:

The Department has not awarded grant funding to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). In 2018, the Department for Education agreed grant funding for the HCPC to support the transfer of regulatory functions for social workers in England from the HCPC to Social Work England. A total of £3.3 million was paid in 2018/19 and 2019/20. The Department does not have legal powers to award grant funding to individuals registering with the HCPC.

■ Health Professions: Training

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[2595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reviewing the Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses so that fuel and accommodation reimbursements are reflective of the rising cost of living.

Edward Argar:

The Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses rates of payments are reviewed annually prior to the start of the academic year.

■ Health Promotion Taskforce

Hywel Williams: [\[4491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Health Promotion Taskforce will be given a remit to act outside of the Department of Health and Social Care.

Maggie Throup:

As a Cabinet Committee, the Health Promotion Taskforce can take collective decisions in areas which are determinants of health beyond the remit of Department to reduce health disparities.

Hywel Williams: [\[4492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Health Promotion Taskforce will publish its progress on plans to tackle health inequalities.

Maggie Throup:

The Health Promotion Taskforce is a Cabinet Committee. It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions in Cabinet and its Committees is not shared publicly. Any actions agreed by the Taskforce will be announced in due course.

■ Health: Disadvantaged

Hywel Williams:

[4490]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Health Disparities White Paper will commit to cross-government action on the social determinants on health.

Maggie Throup:

The health disparities white paper will review the factors which affect people's health and how health inequalities can be addressed. The specific policy content of the white paper will be confirmed in due course. In addition, the Health Promotion Taskforce has been established to co-ordinate cross-Government efforts to improve the nation's health.

■ Health: Housing

Cat Smith:

[1515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the role that housing plays in health inequalities; and whether he plans to cover that factor in the forthcoming Health Disparities White Paper.

Maggie Throup:

As set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government is working to address the issue of poor housing through improving standards in private and socially rented accommodation, with a focus on delivering the biggest improvements in the poorest performing areas.

The forthcoming health disparities white paper aims to address preventable diseases and other causes of ill-health and how services can diagnose and treat the symptoms of health inequalities. We will provide further information on the specific topics to be included in the white paper in due course.

■ Healthy Start Scheme: North East

Catherine McKinnell:

[1508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 234 on Healthy Start Scheme: North East, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the fall in the take-up rate of Healthy Start vouchers in each local authority area in the North East from 2016-17 to 2020-21; and if he will make a statement.

Catherine McKinnell:

[1509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of eligible claimants claimed Healthy Start vouchers in (a) the North East and (b) each local authority area in the North East in (i) 2021-22 and (ii) in April 2022.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made. The attached table shows data on the uptake of Healthy Start in each local authority area in the North East in each month in 2021/22. Data for April 2022 is not yet available.

Attachments:

1. Table [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE PQ-1508 1509 NE Data - Table (1).docx]

■ Heart Diseases and Strokes: Health Services**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[2431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Transforming Hospitals Programme will improve care for patients who are currently experiencing long delays between call and treatment for (a) cardiac conditions and (b) strokes.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The Hospital Transformation Programme includes the creation of a dedicated and integrated emergency care service, with co-located medical and surgical specialities. This will support a reduction in overall waiting times for ambulance conveyances and deliver earlier access for patients to specialist consultants and multidisciplinary teams, including for the treatment of cardiac conditions and strokes.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that pre-exposure prophylaxis is available in (a) community pharmacies and (b) other settings outside of sexual health clinics.

Florence Eshalomi:[\[546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on the HIV Action Plan commitment to develop a specific plan to drive innovation in PrEP delivery to improve access for key groups, including provision of PrEP in settings outside of sexual and reproductive health services.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: The development of a plan to provide HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in settings outside of sexual and reproductive health services will commence in the autumn. We are currently gathering evidence to inform the development of the plan, including research being undertaken by the English HIV and Sexual Health Commissioners' Group to understand why some groups who would benefit from PrEP do not access it. It will also be informed by a pilot scheme for accessing PrEP in prisons, data collected by the UK Health Security Agency and the evaluation of community pharmacy provision of PrEP services by the Sexual and Reproductive Health Innovation Fund.

■ Home Care Services: Fuels

Jessica Morden:

[\[2428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of increased fuel costs on (a) domiciliary care workers and (b) filling vacancies in that sector.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific assessment has been made. The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers which set the terms and conditions independently of central Government. Local authorities work with care providers to determine fee rates, which should take account of employment costs based on local market conditions. We continue to work with the local government sector to understand the impact of emerging challenges on local authorities, such as rising fuel costs.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages

Justin Madders:

[\[800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 5 April 2022 to Question 148311 regarding shortages of HRT, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of all HRT medication; and what discussions his Department has had with suppliers that are experiencing shortages.

Maria Caulfield:

There are currently more than 70 hormone replacement therapy (HRT) products available in the United Kingdom. While most remain in good supply, a limited number of products have been affected by a range of factors, including an increase in demand. Alternatives to those products experiencing supply issues remain available.

On 5 May 2022, the Department met with suppliers, wholesalers and representatives from community pharmacy to discuss HRT availability and how supply could be improved. We are regularly engaging with HRT suppliers to expedite resupply dates of the disrupted products and with other suppliers to fill gaps in supply and prevent future shortages. The HRT Supply Taskforce is engaging with the sector on measures to ensure the efficient use of current stock and increase supply.

■ Hospitals: Construction

Sarah Olney:

[\[3701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on meeting the Government's commitment to build 40 new hospitals by 2030; and how many of those hospitals will be completed in the next five years.

Edward Argar:

With eight previously announced schemes, 48 hospitals will be built by 2030. Of the 48 hospitals, six are under construction and one is now completed. The schemes are currently grouped into high-level cohorts for delivery across the decade. The grouping

of schemes is based on a current assessment of readiness to progress and the extent to which schemes can realise the benefits of the national programme. This assessment is subject to ongoing review and timescales for individual schemes may change as the programme progresses.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Paul Maynard: [\[2444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Blackpool North and Cleveleys of 26 January 2022 on behalf of a constituent regarding lateral flow tests.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 18 May 2022.

Paul Maynard: [\[2445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Blackpool North and Cleveleys of 1 February 2022 on behalf of a constituent regarding vaccine mandates in the private sector.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 18 May 2022.

Robert Largan: [\[528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak dated 24 January 2022, reference RL32095.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 19 May.

■ **Mental Health Services**

Rehman Chishti: [\[698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans NHS England has to change the commissioning model for mental health services.

Rehman Chishti: [\[699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the new NHS England commissioning model in the provision of highly specialised mental health care focusing on complex and challenging conditions.

Gillian Keegan:

All appropriate specialised mental health, learning disability and autism services, including those focusing on complex and challenging conditions, will be managed through a National Health Service-led provider collaborative by 2023/24. These collaboratives are focused on improving care pathways for people who use specialised services and provide care closer to home by investing in community alternatives. There are currently 48 active collaboratives.

This model brings together commissioning skills, experts by experience, clinical leaders and provider organisations. NHS England and NHS Improvement remain accountable for commissioning specialised services and delegate specific commissioning responsibilities to the NHS lead provider within each collaborative. Integrated care systems will now develop provider collaboratives for local mental health and learning disability and autism pathways.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

Kim Johnson:

[\[2300\]](#)

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:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Harrow East (Bob Blackman) on 17 May 2022 to Question [199](#).

■ **NHS England: Dementia**

Ms Marie Rimmer:

[\[2315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress NHS England is making on the steps it is taking to engage with representatives of dementia organisations.

Ms Marie Rimmer:

[\[2316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress NHS England is making on the steps it is taking to engage with people living with dementia who draw on healthcare.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England regularly engages with dementia organisations and stakeholders on the delivery of NHS Long Term Plan's commitments. In addition to planned meetings and events, NHS England engages with Alzheimer's Society, Alzheimer's Research UK and others on an ad hoc basis. It has endorsed Alzheimer's Society's revised dementia guide and delivered a joint webinar on the integration of dementia services.

During the pandemic, NHS England worked with Alzheimer's Society to launch the Dementia Change Action Network website for those living with dementia and continues to engage with people with lived experience to design and shape services, guidance and policy. NHS England and NHS Improvement also commissioned resources to support memory services, developed with input from people living with dementia and their carers. This includes an e-learning course to support memory services managing a change in practice, to ensure the delivery of a personalised assessment and diagnosis; and a guide to supporting continuous development, improvement and innovation in memory services.

■ NHS Trusts: Equality

Gareth Bacon: [507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of diversity and equality staff employed in NHS England trusts.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ NHS Trusts: Surgery

Wes Streeting: [2575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide a breakdown of the number of cancelled operations in each NHS Trust in each month in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Wes Streeting: [2576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide a breakdown of the number of cancelled operations in each NHS Trust in each month in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021 for each specialty.

Edward Argar:

The data is not held in the format requested. Data on cancelled elective operations is published quarterly and is not collected by specialty.

Collection of this data was paused in April 2020 in order to release capacity across the NHS to support the response to the pandemic. This resumed from Quarter 3 2021/22 and was published in February 2022 at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancelled-elective-operations/cancelled-ops-data/>

■ NHS: Dental Services

Mike Amesbury: [3713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is providing to patients who cannot access an NHS dentist.

Mike Amesbury: [3714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice his Department provides to NHS dental patients who move to an area where there are no dentists taking on NHS patients; and what steps he is taking in response to that matter.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England's customer service centre can assist patients to access National Health Service dental service. NHS 111 can also support patients who are unable to access an urgent appointment directly through a dental practice. We have written to dental practices and commissioners that online information on NHS.UK is updated to allow patients locate services. Patients are registered with a dental practice during a

specific course of treatment and there are no geographical restrictions on which practice a patient may attend.

■ **Nurses: Recruitment**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[4519]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government is on track to deliver on its proposed target of 50,000 new nurses by 2024; and if he will publish data on the Government's progress towards that target to date.

Edward Argar:

As of February 2022, the number of nurses was 30,000 higher compared to September 2019. On 7 March 2022, we published '50,000 Nurses Programme: delivery update' which sets out the data used to monitor progress against the commitment. This includes additional analysis on trends of nurses joining and leaving the National Health Service. The update is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/50000-nurses-programme-delivery-update/50000-nurses-programme-delivery-update>

■ **Obesity: Children**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[4497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to include under 18s in any future low calorie diet programme in the context of rising prevalence of obesity rates among minors.

Maggie Throup:

The calorie reduction programme challenges all sectors of the food industry to achieve up to a 20% reduction in calories by 2024 in product categories which contribute significantly to the intakes of children up to the age of 18 years old. The programme includes retailers and manufacturers as well as businesses in the eating out, takeaway and delivery sector.

■ **Obesity: Surgery**

Jim Shannon:

[2309]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support the NHS provides to people who require weight loss operations.

Maggie Throup:

Patients requiring weight loss operations, or bariatric surgery, would be referred to Tier 4 weight management services. Specialist obesity medical and surgical multi-disciplinary teams provide patients with access to a range of medical specialists as required.

Patients undergoing bariatric surgery usually receive prior care in a Tier 3 weight management service, which can provide complex behavioural interventions delivered by a multidisciplinary team and other specialist services, such as low-calorie diets.

■ **Prostate Cancer: Screening**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[4520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking with the National Screening Committee to increase the level of prostate cancer screenings.

Maria Caulfield:

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) does not recommend a screening programme for prostate cancer, as the screening test of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) is not sufficiently accurate to detect prostate cancer that needs treatment. However, the National Health Service prostate cancer risk management programme provides general practitioners and primary care professionals with information for asymptomatic men aged 50 years old and over. The UK NSC will review the evidence to screen for prostate cancer in 2023.

■ **Royal Shrewsbury Hospital: Standards**

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[3529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has received the Strategic Outline Case for the Hospitals Transformation Programme in Shropshire; when his Department is expected to make a decision on that plan; whether consideration of the subsequent full business case will be fast-tracked by his Department; and when he expects the building work to commence at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[3531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has received the Strategic Outline Case for the Hospitals Transformation Programme for Shropshire; when a decision about that case is likely to be made; whether his Department plans to fast track the subsequent Full Business Case; and when he expects building work to commence at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital site.

Edward Argar:

The Department has received the Strategic Outline Case for the scheme. The case is currently under review and a decision will be made in due course. Once approved, the scheme will progress to the Outline Business Case stage. The business case process is led by the Trust and we will continue to work with them to agree a suitable timetable. Funding will be made available following approval of the Full Business Case. Funding may be made available prior to this where appropriate, such as to support the development of the business case or for early enabling works.

■ **Social Prescribing: Cycling and Walking**

Rachael Maskell: [\[4628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on including active travel within his proposals for social prescribing.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[4629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage integrated care systems to invest in active travel as a form of therapeutic intervention; and what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on that matter.

Maria Caulfield:

Officials have worked with the Department for Transport to development of active travel social prescribing pilot schemes. Thirty one local authorities were invited to participate in a feasibility study, which has now been submitted. The local authorities selected to receive funding for pilots will be confirmed in summer 2022.

Integrated care systems will be responsible for drawing up an integrated care strategy for its area on how local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) will be met. Commissioners of health and care services must have regard to the strategy in exercising its functions, including decisions on local social prescribing activity. This will also be informed by the outcome of the active travel pilots as it emerges.

■ Streptococcus: Screening

Rachael Maskell:

[\[2544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to introduce blanket screening of pregnant women for Group B Streptococcus in the context of high prevalence in new born babies; and what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of other countries' approaches to screening for Group B Streptococcus.

Maria Caulfield:

We await evidence from the GBS3 trial which is comparing universal screening for Group B Streptococcus (GBS) against usual risk-based care. This clinical trial, funded by the National Institute for Health Research, will examine the effectiveness of two screening tests compared to usual care in 80 hospitals in England, Scotland and Wales. The UK National Screening Committee will review the trial's findings, expected in 2024, before a recommendation is made.

As in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and New Zealand have a risk-based prevention programme for GBS. Comparisons of levels of GBS infection in countries which screen against those using a risk-based approach are difficult, as the circumstances and organisation of antenatal, postnatal care and labour vary between countries.

■ Surgery

Daisy Cooper:

[\[3736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 483 on Surgery, if he will make it his policy to record how many elective surgeries have been cancelled in England as a result of (a) patients and (b) clinicians having covid-19.

Edward Argar:

There are no current plans to do so.

■ **Surgery: Older People**

Tom Hunt:

[\[1351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact on elderly Ipswich residents of moving elective surgeries from Ipswich to Colchester hospital.

Edward Argar:

No formal assessment has been made. The creation of a new surgical centre at Colchester will not remove access to orthopaedic services from Ipswich Hospital. A locally commissioned patient transport service will be available to all residents who cannot access other methods of attending the centre.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Asylum: Consumer Goods**

Helen Hayes:

[\[2589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the quantity and quality of the (a) shoes, (b) underwear, (c) toiletries and (d) other essential basics provided to asylum seekers arriving in the UK in the welcome packs issued by initial accommodation providers; and what steps the Government is taking to ensure that basic standards of dignity are met.

Helen Hayes:

[\[2590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to review the minimum standards of welcome packs provided to asylum seekers.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The Home Office provides initial accommodation to asylum seekers to ensure they are not left unsupported if otherwise destitute. They are given free, furnished accommodation with food, toiletries, and other essentials, and a weekly cash allowance to cover other living needs such as clothing. This support is routinely reviewed.

■ **Buildings: Insulation**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[2609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what documentation must be issued by the Fire Brigade when instituting a waking watch at an impacted cladding building.

Kit Malthouse:

The decision to institute a Waking Watch is made by the Responsible Person for the building. The Fire and Rescue Service enforces as necessary against the requirements of the Fire Safety Order.

Sector-led guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Association, termed the Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance (SEG), is available to assist Responsible Persons, at: [Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance october 2020.pdf \(nationalfirechiefs.org.uk\)](https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Simultaneous-Evacuation-Guidance-october-2020.pdf)

■ **Fraud****Emily Thornberry:****[4523]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 662, if she will make an estimate of the cost of fraud against (a) individuals and (b) businesses in (i) 1984, (ii) 1994, (iii) 2004, and (iv) 2014.

Damian Hinds:

We do not hold figures for the estimated total cost of fraud against individuals and businesses 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>

Colleen Fletcher:**[4589]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of fraud in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last two years.

Damian Hinds:

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates there were 5.2m fraud incidents in England and Wales in the Year Ending December 2021, a 41% increase compared with the year ending December 2019. Due to the move to the Telephone Crime Survey, the 2020 dataset is not considered comparable. Instead, the ONS provide a 2019 adjusted dataset to compare 2021 with.

The published data can be found here:

[Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/crimeandstatistics/crimeinenglandandwales/appendix-tables)

[Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/crimeandstatistics/crimeinenglandandwales/policeforceareadata)

Fraud offences reported to the police are recorded and collected by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from Action Fraud and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance.

The table below provides a breakdown of reports referred to National Fraud Intelligence Bureau by Action Fraud of fraud and computer misuse offences in

England and the West Midlands for the last 2 years. The figures are based on victims' postcodes.

AREA NAME	NUMBER OF OFFENCES REPORTED (YE DEC 20)	NUMBER OF OFFENCES REPORTED (YE DEC 21)	% CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
England	337,527	380,715	13
West Midlands	33,209	34,420	4
Staffordshire	6,317	6,221	-2
Warwickshire	3,667	3,551	-3
West Mercia	7,193	7,263	1
West Midlands	16,032	17,385	8

■ Hate Crime: Middle East

Sarah Owen:

[\[3742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) her international counterparts to help protect religious communities from hate crime during times of violence in the Middle East.

Rachel Maclean:

All forms of hate crime are completely unacceptable, and we have a robust legislative framework to respond to it. We are clear that the cowards who commit these hateful attacks should feel the full force of the law.

This Government is committed to tackling hate crime and to protect religious communities. We have provided security measures for places of worship across to help protect them and the communities that use them from harm, including at times of increased tension. Through the Places of Worship scheme and the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, we have delivered funding to help protect faith communities from targeted hate crime, including through a range of security measures, such as CCTV, intruder alarm systems, and fencing.

The police regularly review events and potential threats to ensure everything is being done to protect all our communities from terrorism, hate crime and the impact of public protest.

■ HM Passport Office: Standards

Nick Smith:

[\[2449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the customer satisfaction rating was at HM Passport Office for the latest period for which that rating was measured.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: Her Majesty's Passport Office's customer satisfaction score is measured as the percentage of all customers who have rated the service as a 9 or 10 for their overall experience. In April 2022, this was 63%.

Adam Afriye:[\[684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the backlog of applications in HM Passport Office.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 20 May 2022]: Ahead of unrestricted international travel returning, HM Passport Office prepared extensively to serve an unprecedented number of customers, with 9.5 million British passport applications forecasted throughout 2022.

These preparations have ensured that passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved record outputs by completing the processing of two million applications.

Ministers continue to meet regularly with officials to monitor performance, and to explore further options which will help to ensure people receive their passports in good time

■ HM Passport Office: Telephone Services**Stephen Morgan:**[\[1310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) performance targets and (b) other expectations her Department has set for Teleperformance in respect of the passport advice line; and within what timeframe those are to be met.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: All of Her Majesty's Passport Office suppliers are required to meet the performance targets as set out within their contract.

Teleperformance are expected to meet the required standard and have been advised their recent performance has been unacceptable. In response their rectification plan sets out by mid-June they will have added a further 500 call agents compared to their position in mid-April in order to reach the required standard.

■ Home Office: Standards**Steve McCabe:**[\[603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment has been made of the adequacy of the length of waiting time for Home Office case decisions.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 18 May 2022]: Performance has been impacted by a significant increase in the volume of correspondence received, including an unprecedented amount of correspondence about the situation in Afghanistan and more recently in

Ukraine. The Home Office continues to prioritise enquiries related to Ukraine and recognises it has not been able to meet service standard in other cases.

The Home Office has implemented an action plan to clear backlogs and drive-up performance. The Department continues to recruit additional resources and has recently been loaned staff from non-operational areas to assist in clearing the backlogs. A detailed recovery plan to support a return to an acceptable service standard is being prepared.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Beth Winter: [2686]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the time limit is on validity for entry into the UK on a visa issued under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The time limit validity for a standard visa is 90 days. However, we are looking at options for those Ukrainian applicants who have been unable to travel during this time period, including the possibility of issuing a replacement visa free of charge.

Furthermore, as part of the UK schemes which were launched in response to Russia invasion of Ukraine, we issue permission to travel letters to Ukrainian nationals with a valid passport. These letters are different from a visa in they do not have a time limit for their use.

Beth Winter: [2687]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has received representations on amending time limits to validity for entry on a visa issued under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The time limit validity for a standard visa is 90 days. However, we are looking at options for those Ukrainian applicants who have been unable to travel during this time period, including the possibility of issuing a replacement visa free of charge.

Furthermore, as part of the UK schemes which were launched in response to Russia invasion of Ukraine, we issue permission to travel letters to Ukrainian nationals with a valid passport. These letters are different from a visa in they do not have a time limit for their use.

Catherine West: [3694]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, what the average waiting time is between an applicant's visa receiving approval and that applicant receiving their permission to travel document.

Catherine West:

[3695]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the target set by Lord Harrington of Watford that all Homes for Ukraine Scheme visas will be processed within 48 hours, how many applications her Department approved within that timeframe during the week commencing 9 to 16 May 2022.

Catherine West:

[3698]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Ukrainian applications to the Homes for Ukraine Schemes received in April 2022 remain outstanding.

Catherine West:

[3699]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what advice is being given to Ukrainian refugees applying for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in circumstances where they cannot travel to a Visa Application Centre.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: Information on the number of visas granted under the Ukrainian Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, divided by each local authority can be found in published data on the GOV.UK webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-for-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-numbers-of-visa-applications>)

The Government does not collect constituency-level data on the Ukraine Family Scheme.

In terms of priority, applications are normally processed in date order from when documents were uploaded, or after an appointment at a Visa Application Centre (VAC).

However, as part of the Home Office's commitment to make it easier for applicants to apply to our schemes, Ukrainians with valid passports no longer need to go to a Visa Application Centre to give their biometrics before they come to the UK. This revision to the process can mean applicants who submitted their applications at the same time, but via different biometric routes, may not receive their visas at the same time.

David Warburton:

[902]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to process outstanding visa applications for those planning to enter the UK on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that their sponsors in the UK are kept regularly informed of the status of their visa applications.

Kevin Foster:

This is one of the fastest and largest visa programmes in UK history and in as little as two months we have issued over 100,000 visas, helping Ukrainians displaced from their home country to come to the UK to live, work, study and find safety here.

Once an application has been processed and approved, an official permission letter confirming the applicant can travel to the UK is sent to the applicant if they possess a valid Ukrainian passport.

The Home Office is processing applications as quickly as possible with extra caseworkers being brought in to meet demand. We continually making efforts to simplify the application process for Ukrainian refugees, and keeps this under regular review.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Families

Jack Lopresti: [194]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has plans to enable potential hosts under the Homes for Ukraine scheme to submit family-wide visa applications to house refugee families rather than multiple individual applications for each member of the family being hosted.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 18 May 2022]: Under the Homes For Ukraine scheme, application forms must be completed for each family member, including one application per child. This is to ensure the appropriate security and safeguarding checks can be undertaken.

The Home Office is continually making efforts to simplify the application process for Ukrainian refugees, and it keeps this under regular review.

■ Immigration: Finance

Stephen Timms: [579]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people held valid leave to remain from which the No Recourse to Public Funds condition had been lifted at the most recent date for which data is available, irrespective of whether the person's first recorded leave was in-country or out-of-country; and of those people how many (i) were main applicants, (ii) were dependants and (iii) held visas in each category.

Stephen Timms: [580]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people held valid leave to remain at the most recent date for which data is available, irrespective of whether the person's first recorded leave was in-country or out-of-country; and of those people how many (i) were main applicants, (ii) were dependants and (iii) held visas in each category.

Kevin Foster:

Due to the cross cutting nature across the department, the cost would be disproportionate due to manual trawl required.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper:

[\[1130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will assist with obtaining a response from the Director General for UKVI to a letter dated 25 March 2022 from the hon Member for West Lancashire reference ZA59295 regarding an asylum claim.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 20 May 2022]: The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 13 May 2022.

■ Nitrous Oxide: Misuse

Janet Daby:

[\[953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help reduce the recreational use of nitrous oxide by young people.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 20 May 2022]: The Government takes the supply of substances for their psychoactive effect seriously. There are legitimate uses for nitrous oxide, such as in medicine, dentistry and as a propellant for whipped cream canisters, but those who supply nitrous oxide who know, or who are reckless as to whether, it will be used for its psychoactive effect may be subject to a maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine, or both under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

The Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced powers, such as Public Space Protection Orders, which the police and local councils can use to prevent people from taking intoxicating substances, including psychoactive substances such as nitrous oxide, in specified areas.

On 3 September, the Government asked the independent statutory advisory body, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, to provide an updated assessment of the harms of nitrous oxide, including whether it should be controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The ACMD is independent of Government and provides a broad range of recommendations, including advice on legislative changes. The Government will consider the ACMD's advice carefully before deciding how to proceed.

■ Passports

Nick Smith:

[\[1153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the estimated timeframe for passport renewals will be reduced to a three week turnaround.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: Over 5 million people delayed their passport applications in 2020 and 2021. With demand for international travel having returned, Her Majesty's Passport Office is currently receiving a higher number of passport applications than ever before. Some 9.5 million applications are expected in 2022,

compared with approximately 7 million in a normal year, hence us advising since April 2021 of a longer turnaround time of 10 weeks.

We will continue to monitor when the demand for passports returns closer to normal levels and act accordingly.

■ Passports: Applications

Gareth Thomas: [\[1078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of appointments available for people applying for a passport using the (a) online premium service and (b) one week fast track service; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 20 May 2022]: HMPO are looking at a range of interventions to increase our capacity for providing urgent service appointments as soon as possible.

Nick Smith: [\[1151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applicants have used the fast-track service for applications in each of the last six months; and if she will make an assessment of the expected number of users in each of the next six months.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The table below shows the volume of applications made using the Fast-Track service between November 2021 and April 2022:

MONTH	TOTAL FAST TRACK INTAKE
Nov-21	34,375
Dec-21	21,124
Jan-22	24,489
Feb-22	30,116
Mar-22	44,024
Apr-22	44,386
Total	198,514

The forecasted number of Fast Track applications by month is not held in a reportable format. However, between May and October 2022, Her Majesty's Passport Office expects to receive over 240,000 Fast Track applications.

Grahame Morris: [\[1164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, at what point of the passport application process does the ten week service standard time begin.

Kevin Foster:

People are advised to allow up to ten weeks to get their passport. This begins from the date the supporting documents, or the application if using a paper form, are physically delivered to Her Majesty's Passport Office.

Any time taken after that point, including updating the application tracking system, is included within the 10 week timeframe.

Thangam Debbonaire:[\[1201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Passport Office is creating additional appointment slots for Fast Track passport applications in response to increased demand.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 20 May 2022]: HMPO are looking at a range of interventions to increase our capacity for providing additional urgent service appointments as soon as possible.

Nick Smith:[\[2450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of passport applications were processed within 29 working days where additional information was requested from applicants in each month in the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

The table below shows the percentage of passport applications where additional information was requested from the customer, and that were completed within 29 working days of processing commencing, between May 2021 and April 2022:

MONTH	% PROCESSED WITHIN 29 DAYS
May-21	91.87%
Jun-21	91.28%
Jul-21	88.96%
Aug-21	86.13%
Sep-21	84.66%
Oct-21	84.61%
Nov-21	86.21%
Dec-21	86.35%
Jan-22	89.08%

MONTH	% PROCESSED WITHIN 29 DAYS
Feb-22	93.87%
Mar-22	93.12%
Apr-22	86.45%

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[2623]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to reduce delays in issuing new or renewed passports.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: Ahead of unrestricted international travel returning, HM Passport Office prepared extensively to serve an unprecedented number of customers, with 9.5 million British passport applications forecasted throughout 2022.

These preparations, which include the recruitment of 500 additional staff since April 2021 and with plans in place to recruit a further 700 by this summer, have ensured that passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved record outputs by completing the processing of two million applications.

Ministers continue to meet regularly with officials to monitor performance, and to explore further options that will help to ensure that people receive their passports in good time.

■ Passports: Standards

Tulip Siddiq:

[898]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce waiting times for passport applications through (a) fast-tracking regular applications, (b) minimising application review times and (c) processing refunds; and what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing passport applications to be cancelled online.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 20 May 2022]: Ahead of unrestricted international travel returning, HM Passport Office prepared extensively to serve an unprecedented number of customers, with 9.5 million British passport applications forecasted throughout 2022.

Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks to get their passport. However, HMPO has introduced a range of contingency measures, including technical improvements, and bolstering its resources. This has helped to deliver record output, with the processing of nearly two million applications being completed between March and April 2022.

Refunds are actioned as quickly as able once we have all necessary documentation.

There are currently no plans for introducing online cancellation of applications. Passport fees are set to cover the cost of administering the application and are therefore not routinely refunded when an application is withdrawn.

■ Police: Standards

Dr Matthew Offord:

[706]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she (a) is taking and (b) is able to take to help ensure equality in the dispensation of justice across different police services in England.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 20 May 2022]: The Code of Ethics requires all police officers to take active steps to oppose discrimination and make their decisions free from prejudice. This principle is at the heart of police practice. The Code of Ethics was published in 2014 by the College of Policing, who are responsible for setting and maintaining training standards within policing.

In January 2022, The College published its scope for reviewing the existing Code of Ethics. This review will help provide guidance to forces, to aid the implementation of ethical decision making at all levels and support the principle of candour by all working for the police. The full scope of the review is available here: [Scope for the Code of Ethics review published | College of Policing](#) ”.

The College of Policing also provides foundation training for those entering the police service, which includes substantial coverage of police ethics and self-understanding. Their initial training covers hate crimes, ethics and equalities, and policing without bias. Police forces also provide local training and development at several different levels ranging from initial entry, leadership and ongoing development to reinforce their organisational values .

■ Protest

Dan Jarvis:

[3596]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 on the right to protest.

Kit Malthouse:

The Impact Assessment for the PCSC Act is available to read on the UK Parliament webpage and can be found here:

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/41508/documents/254>

Furthermore, the Secretary of State will lay before Parliament a report on the operations of changes to Part II of the Public Order Act 1986 made by the PCSC Act two years after their commencement.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Mary Glendon:

[1171]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will provide an estimate of the likely timescales for Afghan people resettled to the UK under the (a) ARAP scheme and (b) ACRS scheme and who are currently living in bridging accommodation to be re-housed.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 17 May 2022]: We do not want to keep people in temporary accommodation for any longer than is absolutely necessary. We have moved – or are in the process of moving - over 6,000 people into homes since June 2021. There is a huge effort underway to support the families into permanent homes as soon as we can so they can settle and rebuild their lives, and to ensure those still temporarily accommodated in hotels are given the best start to their life in the UK.

The length of time a family will remain in bridging hotels is dependent on several factors including sufficient offers of appropriate housing by local authorities. We strive to allocate the right families into the right accommodation to ensure their integration into their new communities in the UK is as smooth as possible. To achieve this, we triage and prioritise families to ensure the settled accommodation provides the best possible match, taking into consideration date of arrival into the UK, family size, vulnerability and integration factors.

Dan Jarvis:

[3597]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how Afghan nationals can gain access to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Tom Pursglove:

The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme commenced on 6 January 2022, providing up to 20,000 women, children and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK.

Eligible individuals can be referred onto the Scheme in one of three ways.

- Under Pathway 1, vulnerable and at-risk individuals who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS. Those eligible who were called forward during the evacuation but were unable to board may also be resettled through this pathway.
- Under Pathway 2, we are working closely with UNHCR and continue to work towards receiving referrals shortly. Those referred by UNHCR will be based on an assessment of protection needs.
- In year one, Pathway 3 will resettle individuals who supported the UK and international community efforts in Afghanistan, including those British Council and GardaWorld contractors, and Chevening alumni who are at risk. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will be in touch with those eligible to support them through the next steps. Beyond the first year of the ACRS, we will

work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement>

Mick Whitley:

[458]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the quality of temporary accommodation provided to refugees from Afghanistan by (a) Serco and (b) other outsourced service providers in the Liverpool City Region.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 18 May 2022]: The Asylum Accommodation service providers identify suitable hotels for people seeking asylum and ensure they conform to the accommodation standards and provision set out in Schedule 2 of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts (AASC). The Home Office will then assess the recommendation, undertaking a site visit if needed, to ensure the suitability of the site, and if needed will work with the service provider and the hotel owner to bring the site up to a suitable standard.

Details of the AASC can be found at: [New asylum accommodation contracts awarded - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-asylum-accommodation-contracts-awarded)

For Afghans relocated to the UK under one of our resettlement schemes who are staying in temporary accommodation, we do not use service providers but procure via Crown Commercial Services.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Adam Afriyie:

[680]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to speed up the process of Ukrainian visa applications in circumstances where visas are issued for all but one member of a family, preventing them all from travelling.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 20 May 2022]: UK Visas and Immigration have received thousands of applications for the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme. UKVI are processing the paperwork as quickly as possible, and additional caseworkers have been brought in to manage this demand. UKVI staff are carrying out vital security checks for each application, and these checks are important to keep people safe in the UK, and protect people making journeys from Ukraine

Applications are normally processed in date order from when documents were uploaded, or after an appointment at a Visa Application Centre (VAC). We are working seven days a week to process applications, and where we have applications from family groups we would look to group these decisions together so families receive decisions wherever possible at the same time.

■ Shipping: France

Paula Barker:

[2699]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of P&O Ferries' mass dismissal of UK resident seafarers employed on cross-channel routes on 17 March 2022 on the operation of the UK-France Maritime Security Treaty.

Damian Hinds:

The UK-France Maritime Security Treaty sets out the UK and France's shared preparedness for and joint response to a high threat security incident on a vessel in the Channel.

We do not expect recent decisions by P&O ferries to affect the operation of the Treaty, and we will continue to work closely with the Department for Transport, industry, and France to ensure the Treaty is implemented smoothly and effectively.

Paula Barker:

[2700]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether ferries operating from UK ports registered on the (a) Bahamas, (b) Bermudan and (c) Cypriot shipping registers are subject to the provisions of the UK-France Maritime Security Treaty.

Damian Hinds:

The UK-France Maritime Security Treaty sets out the UK and France's shared preparedness for and joint response to a high threat security incident on a vessel in the Channel.

There are many provisions within the Treaty, some of which are relevant to all vessels in the Channel, irrespective of their flag state. Other provisions apply only to UK and French-flagged vessels. The details of all the provisions can be found in the Explanatory Memorandum which was published alongside the Treaty. [UK/France: Agreement on Cooperation in Matters relating to Maritime and Port Security, and specifically, in relation to Passenger Vessels in the Channel \[CS France No.3/2022\] - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

■ Stop and Search

Marsha De Cordova:

[4688]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential equality impacts of the introduction of new stop and search powers, including suspicion-less stop and search powers, in the proposed Public Order Bill; and what assessment she had made of the impact of those proposed powers on people with protected characteristics' right to protest.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has conducted an Equalities Impact Assessment on the measures in the Public Order Bill, which can be accessed at: Public Order Bill: Equality Impact Assessment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The section 60 Equalities Impact Assessment will be published in due course.

The new stop and search powers in the Public Order Bill will enable the police to proactively tackle highly disruptive protest offences by searching for and seizing items which are made, adapted or intended to be used in connection with protest-related offences. In their 2021 report on the policing of protests, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services agreed that such powers would have an operational benefit to police.

Marsha De Cordova:

[4689]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the context of the Equality Impact Assessment of the relaxation of section 60 Best Use of Stop and Search Safeguards pilot not having yet been published, for what reason the introduction of new suspicion-less stop and search powers are proposed in the Public Order Bill.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has conducted an Equalities Impact Assessment on the measures in the Public Order Bill, which can be accessed at: Public Order Bill: Equality Impact Assessment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The section 60 Equalities Impact Assessment will be published in due course.

The new stop and search powers in the Public Order Bill will enable the police to proactively tackle highly disruptive protest offences by searching for and seizing items which are made, adapted or intended to be used in connection with protest-related offences. In their 2021 report on the policing of protests, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services agreed that such powers would have an operational benefit to police.

■ UK Border Force: Patrol Craft

Mr Kevan Jones:

[4503]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is responsible for the contract for the procurement of Border Force vessels.

Tom Pursglove:

I can confirm that the procurement of Border Force vessels remains the responsibility of the Home Office.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-pacific Partnership

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[2569]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many Officials in her Department are currently assigned to work on securing a trade deal with the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Penny Mordaunt:

At the beginning of 2022, the Department for International Trade (DIT) had just over 600 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working directly on trade negotiations.

DIT operates a flexible resourcing model to maximise efficiency across our free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. The number of staff working on a FTA at any one time will change depending on the stage and scale of the negotiations. Staff will also often be working across multiple negotiations.

■ **Department for International Trade: Civil Servants**

Nick Thomas-Symonds: [\[2568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many civil servants are employed by her Department in (a) the UK and (b) overseas.

Penny Mordaunt:

As of 31 March 2022 Department for International Trade (DIT) employed 2710 Civil Servants in the UK and 185 Civil Servants overseas.

Please note that in addition to Civil Servants the department employs a further 1448 country-based staff overseas who work on DIT objectives but are not Civil Servants.

These figures do not include UK Export Finance staff, Trade Remedies Authority Staff, those on loan from other government departments who remain on their home departments payroll, contractors, military staff, people on secondment from other organisations, those who are on loan or secondment out of DIT, or on unpaid special leave or career break.

■ **Department for International Trade: Opinion Polls**

Ruth Cadbury: [\[3615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much her Department spent on opinion polling for internal use for ongoing negotiations in each year since 1 January 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

In 2020, no money was spent on polling of this description.

In 2021, the figure was £72,109.

In 2022, the figure to date is £108,625.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Public Opinion**

Ruth Cadbury: [\[788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much her Department has spent on (a) polling services, (b) research surveys, and (c) focus groups in 2022.

Penny Mordaunt:

The information required to answer this question is not held centrally. This kind of research activity is commissioned by multiple teams including overseas posts and recorded on different systems. Projects may include multiple components of a), b) and c) which are not costed separately. This means that any information provided would not be fully accurate and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Trade Agreements: Canada

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[2567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many officials in her Department are working on securing a UK-Canada trade deal.

Penny Mordaunt:

At the beginning of 2022, the Department for International Trade had just over 600 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working directly on trade negotiations.

The Department for International Trade operates a flexible resourcing model to maximise efficiency across our free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. The number of staff working on an FTA at any one time will change depending on the stage and scale of the negotiations. Staff will also often be working across multiple negotiations.

■ Trade Agreements: India

Navendu Mishra:

[\[2688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Answer of 8 March 2022 to Question 131344, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of a free trade agreement with India on (a) jobs and (b) investment in Stockport.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

On 13th January, the United Kingdom launched free trade negotiations with India. A United Kingdom-India trade deal is projected to unlock opportunities in every corner of the United Kingdom, and could boost the economy in the North West of England by up to £304 million.

The North West of England exported over £350 million of goods to India in 2021. There are companies from Stockport, like Edina UK Limited, who specialise in clean and sustainable energy that benefit from trade with India already, and we are seeking a trade deal that will open up further opportunities for a range of businesses in Stockport and beyond.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[2566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many officials in her Department are working on securing a UK-US trade deal.

Penny Mordaunt:

At the beginning of 2022, the Department for International Trade had just over 600 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working directly on trade negotiations.

The Department for International Trade operates a flexible resourcing model to maximise efficiency across our free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. The number of staff working on a FTA at any one time will change depending on the stage and scale of the negotiations. Staff will also often be working across multiple negotiations.

JUSTICE

■ **Arson: Remand in Custody**

Steve Reed: [3600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of defendants in cases of arson held on remand in each police force area in each year since 2017.

Steve Reed: [3602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of defendants in cases of robbery held on remand in each police force area in each year since 2017.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on defendants' remand status in the 'Remands: Magistrates' Court' and 'Remands: Crown Court' data tools, up to December 2021. Available at: [Criminal justice system statistics quarterly: December 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2021).

*To avoid double counting defendants dealt with at Crown Court, in the remands magistrates court tool, deselect outcomes '06: Sent to Crown Court for trial' and '07: Committed to Crown Court for sentencing' in the 'Outcome' filter.

■ **Bail: Reoffenders**

Steve Reed: [4580]

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 in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

The number of subsequent offences committed by defendants on bail in each of the last five years can be viewed in the table below:

Table: The number of offences committed by defendants on bail ¹, England and Wales ², 2017 – 2021

YEAR	NUMBER OF OFFENCES
2017	48,517
2018	37,618
2019	34,599
2020	30,686
2021	21,354

Source: MoJ Extract of the Police National Computer (PNC)

Notes:

1 - The number of offences in this table are those committed on bail. We do not have a definitive indication of offences committed whilst awaiting trial.

2 - England and Wales includes all 43 police force areas plus the British Transport Police.

■ **Burglary: Reoffenders**

Steve Reed: [\[3599\]](#)

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 burglary in each police force area in each year since 2017.

Steve Reed: [\[3601\]](#)

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 arson in each police force area in each year since 2017.

Steve Reed: [\[3603\]](#)

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 robbery 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.

■ **Charles Falk**

Barry Gardiner: [\[4450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, who instigated the complaint against Judge Charles Falk to the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO) in April 2022; whether that complaint fell outside of the JCIO's three month limit for investigation of complaints; whether the investigation was carried out by a panel or a single person; how long that investigation took; and whether that investigation included interviews with (a) Judge Charles Falk and (b) any other relevant people involved in the case.

James Cartlidge:

The independent Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO) considers complaints in accordance with the Judicial Conduct (Judicial and other office holders) Rules 2014.

The rules enable the JCIO, with the agreement of a nominated judge, to consider information received in the absence of a complaint as if it were a complaint. That process was duly followed in the matter regarding Judge Falk. After careful

assessment by the JCIO, there was no evidence of misconduct by the judge and the matter was dismissed.

With the exception of published information about disciplinary sanctions, information about judicial disciplinary matters is confidential, and further details cannot therefore be provided.

■ Coroners: West Sussex

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[3526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will permit the West Sussex Coroner to hold inquests, without the final accident report, of the eight British victims of the Boeing 737 MAX ET302 air crash of 10 March 2019.

Tom Pursglove:

I would like to offer my sincere condolences to all those who lost loved ones in the Ethiopian Airlines air crash on 10 March 2019.

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for coroner law and policy. Coroners are independent judicial office holders and the way in which they conduct their investigations and inquests, including the evidence which is considered, is a matter solely for them to determine in accordance with the principle of judicial independence which applies to all courts and tribunals.

■ Courts: Coronavirus

Alex Cunningham: [\[4573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which Nightingale Courtrooms have been extended to 28 March 2023.

James Cartlidge:

On 3 March 2022, HMCTS confirmed the extension of our tenure of 13 Nightingale court venues. This equates to 30 extra courtrooms to tackle the impact of COVID-19 on the justice system and secure speedier justice for victims.

The table below outlines each of the Nightingale court venues that were extended, all of which were extended to the end of March 2023 with the exception of two venues which are annotated within the table.

NIGHTINGALE COURT	NUMBER OF COURTROOMS
Barbican - London	Two Crown court rooms
Croydon Jurys Inn - London	Two Crown court rooms
Grand Connaught Rooms - London	Two Crown court rooms
Prospero House – London (contracted until 31/12/2022)	Three Crown court rooms

NIGHTINGALE COURT	NUMBER OF COURTROOMS
Cloth Hall Court – North East	Three Crown court rooms
Swansea Civic Centre - Wales	One Crown court room
Former magistrates' court Fleetwood – North West	Two civil court rooms
Chichester - former combined court – South East	Two Crown court rooms
Maidstone Mercure – South East	Two Crown court rooms
Cirencester - former magistrates' court – South West	One Crown court room, one Magistrates rooms
Maple House, Birmingham – Midlands (contracted until 31/12/2022)	Two Crown court rooms and two civil and family court rooms
Telford - former county court – Midlands	Three civil and family court rooms
Wolverhampton Park Hall Hotel - Midlands	Two Crown court rooms

■ Courts: Remote Working

Alex Cunningham:

[4576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance his Department provides to courts on who should determine whether a case should initially be listed and dealt with remotely.

James Cartlidge:

The decision whether a case should be heard remotely is at the discretion of a judge, who will decide if it is appropriate and in the interests of justice to do so, taking into account the needs of the parties involved. The allocation of court facilities will be provided accordingly.

HMCTS provide court staff with guidance to assist in the facilitation of remote hearings where a judge determines this method appropriate for a particular case. Public guidance on the use of remote hearings is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-to-expect-when-joining-a-telephone-or-video-hearing>.

The Lord Chief Justice has recently issued guidance on remote attendance in the Crown Court which is available via the following link: [Message from the Lord Chief Justice – Remote Attendance by Advocates in the Crown Court | Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#).

■ Criminal Proceedings: Females

Kate Osamor: [2322]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allocating further funding to support a whole systems approach to women in contact or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system.

James Cartlidge:

In January 2021, the Government published a Concordat on Women in or at Risk of Contact with the Criminal Justice System which set out the case for and key principles of Whole System Approaches. The MoJ will shortly be publishing a report on progress to date and outlining our priorities for driving forward local partnership working in 2022.

■ Criminal Proceedings: Legal Aid Scheme

Afzal Khan: [4678]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many criminal legal aid firms have offered the Legal Aid Agency back-up advocacy from 11 April 2022.

James Cartlidge:

At the point the Crown Court Representation Helpline was launched on 20 April, there were 19 contacts registered. The helpline does not require higher court advocates to be registered individually. Therefore, some of the registered contacts may have multiple higher court advocates available to provide advocacy services in the Crown Court. The number of registered contacts is subject to fluctuation.

The Crown Court Representation Helpline is in place to make the process of identifying higher court advocates easier for providers who may be impacted by barristers declining to accept returns in defence cases as part of national Criminal Bar Association disruptive action. Providers are not limited to instructing higher court advocates registered with the helpline. The [Public Defender Service](#) may also be able to provide advocacy support where cases have been impacted by the no returns action.

■ Crown Court: Trials

Afzal Khan: [4679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of cases in the Crown Court since 11 April 2022 had no recorded attendance of a defence advocate.

James Cartlidge:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service is monitoring the 'on the day' impact of the operation of the Criminal Bar Association's 'No Returns Protocol' on the Crown Court. The table below is drawn from manual returns for each Crown Court for cases affected on the day of hearing⁵.

HEARING DATE ¹ (WEEK COMMENCING)	WEEKLY TOTAL LISTED HEARINGS ²	TOTAL NUMBER OF HEARINGS DISRUPTED ON THE DAY DUE TO HAVING A 'NO RETURN' ³	'NO RETURNS' AS % OF WEEKLY AVERAGE HEARINGS ^{2,3}	NUMBER OF TRIAL HEARINGS DISRUPTED ON THE DAY DUE TO HAVING A 'NO RETURN' ^{3,4}
11/04/2022	6,936	95	1.4%	9
18/04/2022	8,285	263	3.2%	53
25/04/2022	10,668	227	2.1%	43
02/05/2022	8,822	188	2.1%	35

Footnotes

1 Three of the four weeks included a bank holiday. The number of hearings listed in those weeks is therefore lower.

2 Each day of a trial is counted separately in the listed hearings total; a trial lasting 2 weeks would appear 10 times in the daily lists and would be counted as 10 hearings.

3 Hearings disrupted are those that could not go ahead due to barrister not being present; it excludes hearings that went ahead without the assigned barrister. This data is derived from manual returns from the Crown Courts on the hearings impacted by the No Returns Protocol.

4 Each trial disrupted by the operation of the No Returns protocol is counted on the day it is disrupted.

5 The figures supplied have been extracted from live case management systems/manual returns and have not been verified to the same standards as National Statistics. Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that the data have been extracted from large case management systems/manual returns generated by the courts. Consequently, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when data are used.

■ Domestic Abuse

Jess Phillips:

[\[3607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when Section 70 of the Domestic Abuse Act relating to the specific offence of strangulation and suffocation will be enforced.

Jess Phillips:

[\[3608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to raise public awareness of (a) the dangers of strangulation, (b) that a person can die after seconds of strangulation, (c) that survivors may have no visible marks yet have serious medical

consequences and (d) victims of strangulation are seven times more likely to subsequently be murdered.

Jess Phillips:

[\[3609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the new specific offence of strangulation and suffocation in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, what discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and (b) the Home Secretary on providing (i) forensic and (ii) support services to victims who have been strangled in a domestic abuse setting.

Jess Phillips:

[\[3610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what training his Department provides for staff involved in dealing with strangulation and suffocation crimes.

Victoria Atkins:

The new offence of non-fatal strangulation, in section 70 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, comes into force early next month. There will be media communications to mark the introduction and the Government will continue to highlight the dangers that can result from strangulation and suffocation.

Regarding training, NHS England is also funding a free online training event to occur in late June which is aimed at NHS front line staff including paramedics, GP practices and A&E staff, Domestic Abuse Partnerships, non-Government offices, staff in the statutory domestic abuse and sexual assault sector, the police, prosecutors, social work, judges and magistrates, probation and psychologists. The judiciary, who are independent of Government, will – through the Judicial College – consider whether specific training and/or wider training on domestic abuse is necessary.

Building on the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Government has made substantial commitments in the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, published by the Home Office in March 2022, to better support victims of domestic abuse. Commitments include multi-year funding for victim support services which are crucial for helping victims engage in the criminal justice process. As part of this, the Ministry of Justice is bolstering support for victims by increasing its funding from £150.5m in 2021/22 to £185 million by 2024/25. This will ensure support is available to more victims and includes funding to increase the number of Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisers to over 1,000, and other key services like crisis helplines. The Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan also contains a perpetrator Strategy which sets out clear commitments to prioritise addressing domestic abuse, with the aim of preventing people becoming perpetrators and victims in the first place. Additionally, through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, victims will be given more time to report domestic abuse-related assaults by extending the time limit for prosecutions to six months from a formal report to the police within an overall limit of two years from the offence.

■ Drugs: Prosecutions

Steve Reed: [4581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prosecutions for drug offences there have been in each police force area in England and Wales in each of the last five years.

Steve Reed: [4582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many convictions there have been for drug offences in (a) Crown and (b) Magistrates' Courts in England and Wales, by each (i) court and (ii) region in each of the last five years.

Steve Reed: [4583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prosecutions for arson there have been in each police force area in England and Wales in each of the last five years.

Steve Reed: [4584]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many convictions there have been for arson in (a) Crown and (b) Magistrates' Courts in England and Wales, by each (i) court and (ii) region in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

Court outcomes data is not held at individual magistrates' court level. Identifying individual courts separately would require a manual search of court records, which would be at disproportionate costs.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions and convictions for arson and drug offences by police force area, in England and Wales, up to December 2021, 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/1076459/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2021-v2.xlsx.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions and convictions for drug and arson offences by police force area, at magistrates' courts and Crown Court in England and Wales, up to December 2021 available in the 'Magistrates' Court' and '[Crown Court' data tool](#) s, which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1076465/magistrates-court-tool-2021.xlsx.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1076467/crown-court-tool-2021.xlsx.

■ Magistrates' Courts

Alex Cunningham: [4575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of magistrates now sitting in-person on the bench in courts for trials following the removal of covid-19 restrictions in courts.

James Cartlidge:

Magistrates are legally required to sit in benches of two for trials, but more usually they would sit as benches of three. During the pandemic, trials continued to be dealt with by magistrates sitting in person, but to ensure social distancing, magistrates sat more regularly as benches of two. Even prior to the lifting of restrictions, the installation of plexi-glass in court rooms, enabled most trials courts to return to sitting as benches of three. The lifting of covid-19 restrictions means there should be no barrier to magistrates sitting in person as a bench of three. Since the lifting of covid-19 restrictions, all magistrates are sitting in person excepting for matters dealt with under the single justice procedure.

■ **Young Offenders: Criminal Proceedings****Alex Cunningham:**[\[4577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people who allegedly committed offences as children have been (a) tried and (b) sentenced as adults in each of the last five years.

Victoria Atkins:

We appreciate the impact that turning 18 can have on a defendant's experience of the justice system, and that there will be occasions where a child crosses the age threshold before conviction (or acquittal) due to circumstances outside of their control. There are already safeguards in the system to prevent individuals in this position from being treated unfairly, including sentencing starting points based on age at offence and support for vulnerable defendants at adult court.

Data in the table below shows the number of defendants aged under 18 at the point of allegedly committing an offence and aged 18 or over at the point of completion who were dealt with at the Crown Court in England and Wales from January 2020 to June 2019. Individuals in this position can also be dealt with in the magistrates' court, however quality-assured data for the numbers of such cases, or for previous years in either court, are not currently available.

YEAR	MONTH	DEFENDANTS DEALT WITH
2020	Jan	118
	Feb	102
	Mar	108
	Apr	48
	May	50
	Jun	45
	Jul	101

YEAR	MONTH	DEFENDANTS DEALT WITH
2021	Aug	59
	Sep	91
	Oct	66
	Nov	111
	Dec	76
	Jan	84
	Feb	111
	Mar	165
	Apr	127
	May	113
	Jun	121

Notes

1) Excludes a small number of cases with identified data quality issues (e.g. no date information recorded), breaches and appeals. On average across the series present 8% of defendants do not have a recorded age at offence and as such are excluded from this analysis.

2) Includes all criminal cases which have received a verdict and concluded in the specified time period in the Crown Court.

3) Only one offence is counted for each defendant in the case. If there is more than one offence per defendant that complete on the same day, a set of validation rules applies to select one offence only and these relate to the longest duration, seriousness and the lowest sequence number of the offence.

4) Data link using probabilistic recording linking ('Splink') methodology - further information of the matching methodology is available at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joined-up-data-in-government-the-future-of-data-linking-methods/splink-moj-s-open-source-library-for-probabilistic-record-linkage-at-scale>

5) The number of defendants shows the number whose cases have completed and where it has been possible to match from initial appearance at magistrates' court to completion in the Crown Court. The match rate is typically between 90-95%, as for some cases, it is not possible to match defendants through the system and these cases are excluded.

6) Estimates from Q3 2020 exclude cases which have transitioned to the Common Platform system in the early adopter sites from September 2020, this represents 1.6% of all disposals in the latest reporting period.

Source: Criminal Court Statistics, Data and Evidence as a Service - Courts and People (PQ 58392)

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Buildings: Greater London

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [2606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many trained EW1S building safety certifiers work in London.

Stuart Andrew:

An EWS1 form is not a statutory requirement nor a safety 'test'. It is a form used for valuation and was introduced by The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), together with UK Finance and the Building Societies Association.

The Government has provided RICS with nearly £700,000 to develop and deliver training for assessors to carry out external wall system assessments across England. A full list of course completers can be found on RICS' [website](#). EWS1s may also be conducted by a variety of professionals from across the construction industry. RICS have published a non exhaustive list of [suggested bodies](#) to contact and source fire experts.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [2607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the average waiting time to receive an External Wall Fire Review form (EWS1) for buildings with recently remediated cladding in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Stuart Andrew:

An EWS1 form is not a statutory requirement nor a safety 'test'. It is a form used for valuation and was introduced by The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), together with UK Finance and the Building Societies Association. The Government is therefore not able to estimate the waiting time to receive an EWS1.

■ Buildings: Repairs and Maintenance

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [2608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to increase the supply of (a) scaffolding and (b) scaffolders required to remediate buildings with dangerous cladding in London.

Stuart Andrew:

The Department is supporting industry in responding to the challenge of making sure buildings with unsafe cladding are remediated at pace including consideration of ways to address capacity issues across the sector. We are continually engaging with delivery partners and contractors to monitor constraint issues in the construction market, including scaffolding, and work to mitigate against the impact of market capacity issues on the remediation programmes.

■ **Energy Bills Rebate****Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[3450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many households with pre-payment energy meters have received the £150 Council Tax Rebate as of 17 May 2022.

Kemi Badenoch:

My Department does not hold data on the energy payment methods used by recipients of the council tax rebate.

■ **Homes for Ukraine Scheme****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[2502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many Ukrainians arriving in the UK via the Homes for Ukraine Scheme have moved in with their hosts before their hosts have been sent the links for the DBS check.

Stephen Kinnock:[\[2503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many Ukrainians arriving in the UK via the Homes for Ukraine Scheme have moved in with their hosts before their hosts have completed and submitted their DBS forms.

Stephen Kinnock:[\[2504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many Ukrainians arriving in the UK via the Homes for Ukraine Scheme have moved in with their hosts before their hosts have received full DBS clearance.

Eddie Hughes:

The data will be published in due course.

Caroline Lucas:[\[3559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the number of Homes for Ukraine sponsorships that will run for (a) six, (b) nine and (c) 12 months; what resources will be provided to councils to assist with supporting Ukrainian refugees following (i) the planned end of a sponsorship and (ii) any instances where a sponsorship ends early; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government has set out plans which introduce a mechanism for local authorities to rematch Homes for Ukraine guests with new sponsors in certain circumstances. Councils should use the £10,500 tariff to meet all their associated costs (both for providing council services and for administering payments), including rematching costs.

Mike Kane:[\[3605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, when the final guidance on Thank You payments for sponsors will be issued to local authorities.

Eddie Hughes:

The Homes for Ukraine Scheme and corresponding guidance is kept under review. The most up to date guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils>.

Catherine West:[\[3697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to rehome Ukrainian refugees, who have arrived to the UK via the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in the event that they can no longer stay with their host families.

Eddie Hughes:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question [UIN 940](#) on 16 May 2022.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Council Tax**Navendu Mishra:**[\[2694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether a single person household will retain the single occupancy charge in respect of council tax in the event that they provide accommodation to a Ukrainian family.

Eddie Hughes:

I refer the Honourable Member to my answer to Question UIN [999](#) on 16 May 2022.

Local Government Finance**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[3470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his latest estimate is of the real terms change in the spending powers of local authorities in the current financial year taking into account relevant price and wage increases.

Kemi Badenoch:

In this year's Local Government Finance Settlement, the government has made available £54.1 billion in 2022/23 for local government in England, an increase of up to £3.7 billion from 2021/22. This recognises the resources councils need to meet pressures and maintain service levels.

■ Local Government Finance: Eastleigh

Paul Holmes:

[\[3754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to take steps to tackle the levels of (a) borrowing and (b) capital risk at Eastleigh Borough Council.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government announced that it is legislating to provide appropriate powers to address instances of excessive risk from local authority borrowing and investment. The Department regularly engages with local authorities about their financial management and related policies. As part of engagement with the sector on the new capital measures, we are engaging with a small number of local authorities, including Eastleigh Borough Council, who may be most affected. My department will continue to work with them to understand their plans for reducing their levels of risk ahead of the legislative measures coming into effect, and we expect Eastleigh Borough Council and similar local authorities to engage with us throughout this process.

■ Local Government: Meetings

Grahame Morris:

[\[3564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to prevent Councils using copyright to prohibit the ability of the public to distribute and report on meetings utilising the official council recording where those recordings are already in the public domain.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Local Government Act 1972 section 100 prescribes the right of press and public access. The Openness of Local Government Regulation 2014, give rights to members of the press and public to use modern technology and communication methods such as filming, audio-recording, blogging and tweeting to report the proceedings of the meetings of their councils and other local government bodies.

Local authorities, though independent of central government, must act within their statutory powers and comply with legal obligations. It is the statutory role of the Monitoring Officer to ensure the local authority abides by the law, and its own stated policies, at all times.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[3598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 766, what additional funding will be made available in addition to the initial allocation of £10,500 per person, if required by local authorities to help them with additional emergency accommodation costs.

Eddie Hughes:

I refer the Hon Member to [UIN 766](#) published on 16 May 2022.

■ Regional Planning and Development: Islands**Bob Seely:****[4690]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what progress he has made on establishing an Islands Forum; when that forum will become the responsibility of specific Ministers; which Ministers will be responsible for that forum; and when he expects that forum will start playing a role in levelling up UK islands.

Neil O'Brien:

The Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is responsible for the Islands Forum. Since the Forum was announced in the Levelling Up White Paper, UK Government officials have been working with local councils to identify the appropriate leaders from island communities to be involved in the Forum. The Secretary of State will be setting out further details about the Forum soon.

■ Regional Planning and Development: North of England**Sir Greg Knight:****[3480]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what further plans he has to ensure levelling up of northern rural areas includes improving (a) road transportation links and (b) internet connectivity; and if he will make a statement.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government has made progress towards spreading opportunity around the country since 2019, alongside mitigating the worst effects of the pandemic, with £5 billion for Project Gigabit to bring gigabit-capable broadband to 85% of the UK by 2025, and the £1 billion Shared Rural Network deal with mobile operators delivering 4G coverage to 95% of the UK by the end of 2025. Gigabit coverage has increased from 10% to over 60% in less than two years, and public investment will target premises that are hardest to reach, ensuring no areas are left behind.

In the last twelve months, gigabit-capable network coverage has almost doubled in Yorkshire and quadrupled in the North East. To ensure that rural areas are supported, our procurements for rural areas where commercial roll-out may not occur are already live in several parts of the North, including Cumbria and the North East, offering hundreds of millions of pounds of support to suppliers who are helping us to level up.

The Government is also clear that well maintained local road networks are a key form of local transport. The Government is already investing more than £5 billion from 2020 to 2025 for highways maintenance to local highways authorities across England, enough to fill millions of potholes a year, repair dozens of bridges and resurface hundreds of roads up and down the country. This is in addition to the £2.6 billion to deliver over 50 road upgrades and builds on our commitment to accelerate delivery of the A66, ensuring that it is open for traffic five years sooner than the original plan.

As set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, Government is providing £51 million for smaller local transport improvements across the North West, as well as £280 million for local roads maintenance between 2022-23 and 2024-25 to local authorities not receiving City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements. In Yorkshire and the Humber, £194 million has been committed for local roads maintenance between 2022-23 and 2024-25, and £33 million for transport improvements across the region. The Government has invested over £40 million in highways maintenance schemes through the former York, North Yorkshire, and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership's Growth Deal, including £16.7 million in the East Riding of Yorkshire. In addition, through our Getting Building Fund programme, the Government has invested over £2 million in a Hull and East Yorkshire Highways Resilience Programme, £6m to deliver reconstruction of the A19 at Chapel Haddlesey in the Selby district, and up to £3.6 million to support a North Yorkshire digital infrastructure programme.

■ **UK Shared Prosperity Fund: County Durham**

Grahame Morris:

[\[4542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a conditional grant allocation for County Durham structured to deliver over 60 per cent of the funding in the year 2024-25, with the remaining grant allocation spread over years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Neil O'Brien:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will provide multi-year funding certainty for this Spending Review period. This will allow places to make long-term plans that meet the unique needs of their areas and make investment decisions as close as possible to local people and businesses.

The funding profile of UKSPF ramps up over this Spending Review period, reflecting the lead in time for suitable projects to be developed and delivered by local places and the fact that there remains a long tail of investment from EU funds. This will taper away in 2024-25 when UKSPF funding ramps up to £1.5 billion, upholding the Government's commitment to match EU funding receipts.

■ **Waking Watch Relief Fund: Tooting**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[2605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will fund the waking watch costs incurred since 5 May 2022 of (a) Fitzgerald House despite the closure of the waking watch fund in March 2022.

Stuart Andrew:

The application period for the Waking Watch Replacement Fund closed on 28 March 2022. The fund is designed to cover the costs of installing a common fire alarm system to replace Waking Watch measures where the costs of the Waking Watch are being passed onto leaseholders. We understand that a Waking Watch was installed

at Fitzgerald House on 5 May. My officials have spoken to the managing agents for the building who inform us that they are taking steps to mitigate the risk in the building. The steps being taken will remove the need for a Waking Watch without recourse to a common fire alarm system.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: Social Clubs

Gareth Bacon: [\[2665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the Answer of 7 March 2022 to Question 132399, on civil service staff networks, what recognised staff groups have been running in his Department over the last three years.

Conor Burns:

The Department has taken the definition of professional staff networks to mean voluntary staff networks, including employee networks on Diversity and Inclusion. The Northern Ireland Office currently has the following active networks:

- Staff Engagement Group
- Diversity and Inclusion network
- Culture Club
- Mirror Board

Over the last three years, the Department has also had a Parents' Group, a Women's network and a Menopause support group. These groups are not currently active.

■ Northern Ireland Protocol: Orange Order

Jim Shannon: [\[3589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Orange Order on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Conor Burns:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has discussions with the Orange Order and a range of other stakeholders and groups in Northern Ireland on a number of matters, including the Northern Ireland Protocol, on an ongoing basis.

■ Veterans: Mental Health

Stuart Anderson: [\[3730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what contribution his Department is making in cross-Government efforts to improve the mental wellbeing of veterans.

Conor Burns:

The Government remains fully committed to supporting veterans living in Northern Ireland and continuing to build on the good progress in delivering the Armed Forces

Covenant and Veterans Strategy. We are delivering on the Government's commitments made in the New Decade, New Approach agreement, in particular, to ensure that Northern Ireland veterans are treated similarly to their counterparts across the UK.

My Department established and sponsors the Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner's Office, which advocates for and assists veterans as they navigate services such as health and social care.

Arrangements for service delivery in Northern Ireland are slightly different from those in other parts of the UK. Many of the service delivery aspects, including health provisions, are devolved.

PRIME MINISTER

■ India: Myanmar

Catherine West: [\[4654\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he had discussions with (a) Prime Minister Modi and (b) other Indian Government officials on the sale of arms to the Myanmar military by India during his recent visit to India.

Boris Johnson:

The UK is at the forefront of international efforts to prevent the flow of arms to Myanmar. On 27 March 2022, we coordinated a joint statement, agreed by 47 countries, which urged all countries to stop the flow of arms to Myanmar. We also worked with partners to secure strong language in the April 2022 Human Rights Council Resolution on Myanmar. We continue to raise this issue bilaterally with those who are reported to be providing arms to the Myanmar military.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Social Clubs

Gareth Bacon: [\[2667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, with reference to the Answer of 8 March 2022 to Question 132400 on civil service staff networks, what recognised staff groups have been running in his Department over the last three years.

Gareth Bacon: [\[2668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2022 to Question 132400, on civil service staff networks, what information he holds on (a) FTE staff time and (b) budgets available to recognised staff groups within his Department in each of the last three years.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Scotland Office has a People Group, which supports the delivery of the Departmental People Strategy and the Civil Service People Survey.

- (a) Information on FTE staff time is not collected;
- (b) The People Group is not allocated a budget.

TRANSPORT**■ A1 (M): Repairs and Maintenance****Sir Greg Knight:**[\[3479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the southbound carriageway of the A1 between Newark and Grantham is scheduled to be resurfaced; and if he will make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

The southbound carriageway from Newark to Gonerby Moor is due to be resurfaced in late 2023/24, National Highways are currently developing a programme to resurface the remaining sections once this work has been completed. In recent inspections, National Highways identified a need for a series of patching works between Newark and Grantham and an emergency scheme is due to start in this area in the coming weeks.

■ Electric Scooters: Accidents**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[3540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will take steps to help protect people with sight loss from collisions with e-scooters that are used illegally.

Trudy Harrison:

Safety will always be a top priority as we take forward steps to manage the impacts of e-scooters in the UK. There are existing penalties for illegal use of e-scooters, including using e-scooters on the pavements, and enforcement is a matter for the police. The Department has been in regular contact with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), who are developing a national strategy for enforcing the law around e-scooters to encourage a uniform approach to the issue.

■ Motor Vehicles: Safety**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[2617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the potential number of unroadworthy vehicles in the event that MOT tests were required only every two years.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department has made no proposal or decision to change the requirements for MOT tests. Should any such proposal be made, we would produce an assessment of the effects of the change.

DVSA publish statistics on the number of vehicles that pass and fail MOT tests and the reasons for failed tests:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/mot-testing-data-for-great-britain>

Stephanie Peacock:**[2618]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the data his Department holds on the percentage of vehicles declared unroadworthy following an MOT conducted (a) January to March 2020 and (b) January to March 2022.

Stephanie Peacock:**[2619]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the data his Department holds on the number of MOT testing centres that have closed since March 2020.

Trudy Harrison:

The percentage of vehicles declared unroadworthy following an MOT conducted statistics are published at Vehicle testing and enforcement activity effectiveness reports - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

It is not possible to determine the number of MOT testing centres that have 'closed' since March 2020 as sites might cease testing and then resume testing at a later date either by the site owner or a new owner. Should an MOT testing centre cease to conduct MOT tests, the site may remain open to continue its underlying service and repair work.

■ Network Rail: Staff**Dr Matthew Offord:****[2462]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the salary range is of the head of diversity and inclusion at Network Rail.

Wendy Morton:

Network Rail's role of Head of Diversity and Inclusion is currently being covered by a member of staff on an interim basis who is in pay band 2B - which has a salary range of £65,480-£96,768.

■ P&O Ferries: Dismissal**Emma Hardy:****[2635]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact P&O Ferries' mass dismissal of UK resident seafarers on 17 March 2022 on the maritime apprenticeship policies set out in the Maritime 2050 Strategy.

Robert Courts:

The Department is aware there are seven apprentices who are in training with P&O Ferries, and we understand that their positions are not at risk. The Department continues to work with the Merchant Navy Training Board to keep the situation under review. Our overarching priority is the protection and welfare of all seafarers.

The 9 point plan the Secretary of State announced on 30 March outlines the steps we are taking to protect seafarer protections and welfare.

■ P&O Ferries: Port of Hull**Emma Hardy:**[\[2633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions the Maritime and Coastguard Agency has had since 17 March 2022 with the Bahamas Maritime Authority on the safety of P&O Ferries operating on international routes from the port of Hull.

Robert Courts:

Officials from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) have been in regular contact with their counterparts in the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) since 21 March in relation to P&O Ferries and safety compliance.

Further to the inspections carried out by the MCA and the Dutch authorities on the Pride of Hull, concerns related to safety and seafarers working and living conditions were discussed with the BMA.

■ Railways**Adam Holloway:**[\[2408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether an assessment has been made of the potential merits of extending the Thameslink service from Ebbsfleet to Essex to help reduce pressure from the Dartford crossing.

Wendy Morton:

Ebbsfleet International is served by Southeastern and HS1, and I can confirm the Department has not assessed, nor has it asked Southeastern to investigate, the feasibility of running services from Ebbsfleet International to Essex.

Thameslink services do not serve Ebbsfleet International at present. This would only be possible with significant investment in infrastructure, as there is no railway currently connecting Ebbsfleet International to the Thameslink route.

■ Railways: Tickets**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[2523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department had with disabled people and disability groups prior to his Department's decision to amend its guidance relating to ticket office opening hours.

Wendy Morton:

The Department for Transport consulted with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) during the consultation to amend the Secretary of State's Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA) Ticket Office Guidance.

■ Rotherham Central Station**Sarah Champion:**[\[1512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people used Rotherham Central Station in March 2022 compared to the number of people in March (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

Wendy Morton:

The table below presents estimates of the number of tickets issued for travel to or from Rotherham Central Station in March for each year requested:

TIME PERIOD	NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED
March 2017	28,570
March 2018	24,062
March 2019	24,693
March 2022	16,737

Sarah Champion:[\[1513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many passenger trains serviced Rotherham Central Station in March 2022 compared to March (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

Wendy Morton:

The table below shows the total number of services from Rotherham Central Station in March for each year requested:

TIME PERIOD	NUMBER OF TRAINS
March 2017	2,949
March 2018	2,752
March 2019	3,108
March 2020	2,662
March 2021	2,140
March 2022	1,822

■ Shipping: Apprentices

Emma Hardy: [2636]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Merchant Navy Training Board on P&O Ferries membership of the Maritime Apprenticeship Trailblazer Working Group.

Robert Courts:

The Department is in discussions with the Merchant Navy Training Board regarding the seven P&O Ferries' apprentices that are still in training. The Merchant Navy Training Board are due to hold a meeting with the apprentices next month to understand their position and will keep the Department informed. The Department will intervene if there are any concerns. Our overall priority is the safety, protection and welfare of all seafarers.

Discussions with Cabinet colleagues continue on a range of issues.

■ Shipping: Crew

Emma Hardy: [2634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the proportion of UK resident seafarers employed on ferries operating from (a) Hull, (b) Immingham, (c) Harwich, (d) Felixstowe, (e) Tilbury and (f) Dover; and what steps he is taking to increase that proportion.

Robert Courts:

The Department does not hold data on seafarers by port or region, or seafarers specifically employed on ferries. The Seafarers in the UK shipping industry 2021 statistical release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seafarers-in-the-uk-shipping-industry-2021/seafarers-in-the-uk-shipping-industry-2021>.

The tables associated with the publication are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/seafarer-statistics-sfr>.

Measures such as the amendments to the national minimum wage and the points-based visa system will increase opportunities for UK seafarers in the UK domestic market and set a minimum salary level.

The Department of Transport established the Maritime Skills Commission (MSC) to lead in ensuring the maritime sector has a pipeline of talent to serve its needs now and going forward. We remain committed to the training of seafarers with the MSC cadet review feeding into our forward planning and we have developed a range of apprenticeships for UK ratings.

Over the last five years the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has introduced a more flexible pathway for UK seafarers to qualify as ratings. By allowing the qualifying seagoing service to take place in categorised waters and on smaller vessels of at least 15 metres, the MCA have allowed those working on workboats, domestic ferries, yachts and other smaller vessels to qualify as an STCW rating.

These measures will improve employment opportunities for UK ratings both domestically and internationally.

■ **Train Operating Companies: Pay**

Ian Mearns: [\[4543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what savings he is requiring in (a) 2022 and (b) 2023 from (i) each individual Train Operating Company and (ii) all Train Operating Companies in total; and whether in each case he is requiring a certain proportion of those savings to be found from salary costs.

Ian Mearns: [\[4544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the correspondence between his Department and Train Operating Companies on spending cuts and workforce reforms since the Autumn Statement on 27 October 2021.

Ian Mearns: [\[4545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what pay mandate he has set for the Train Operating Companies in 2022.

Ian Mearns: [\[4546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Train Operating Companies will be permitted to individually negotiate pay settlements in the event of an industrial dispute.

Ian Mearns: [\[4547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has received on the impact of industrial action on the railways from (a) rail industry organisations and (b) devolved authorities.

Wendy Morton:

Our railways are on financial life support. We have lost a quarter of our passengers and the Government has spent £16 billion during the pandemic, equivalent to nearly £600 per household, irrespective of whether they use the railways, to keep subsidising the railway. We need to make our railways fit for the future and want a fair deal for staff, passengers, and taxpayers so the railway does not take money away from other essential public services such as the NHS.

Unions are threatening industrial action before talks have even begun. Strikes should be the last resort, not the first. They will stop customers choosing rail, and those passengers might never return, killing services and jobs. The RMT trade union are balloting 40,000 members from across England, Wales and Scotland for industrial action and we would expect the relevant devolved authorities to be engaging with the employers in affected areas.

Train operating companies are the employers of rail staff, not the Government. They, therefore, individually negotiate with trade unions on matters such as pay.

The Department has a commercial relationship with train operators, and we maintain a public register of rail contracts available on the Government website at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-register-of-rail-passenger-contracts>. This contains guidance on how to request information and what information we are unable to publish.

■ Trains: Hydrogen

Dr Matthew Offord:

[2458]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to support the production of hydrogen-powered trains.

Wendy Morton:

In our Transport Decarbonisation Plan, we have committed to delivering a net zero rail network by 2050. To help deliver the government's net zero commitment, we will electrify most of the network and deploy battery and hydrogen trains on some lines, where it makes economic and operational sense.

The government is 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. Since the start of 2019, the Department has provided just over £4m of funding through Innovate UK-run First of a Kind competitions for new traction technologies that will help decarbonise the railway. This includes £750,000 to facilitate trials of the UK's first hydrogen-powered train, HydroFLEX, which was showcased at COP 26.

We are also engaging with industry to determine what technological solutions are open to us, as well as how technologies such as hydrogen can best be utilised on our network.

TREASURY

■ Arms Trade: Fines

Ruth Cadbury:

[4742]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many fines HMRC has issued in 2022 for breaches of the UK arms export regime; and what was the value of each of those fines.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC has issued 6 compound settlements from January 2022 to date for breaches of the UK arms export regime. The value for each of those settlements are as follows: £1,000, £1,500, £3,200, £4,300, £60,000 and circa £2.7million.

Information on HMRC enforcement outcomes is published in the Strategic Export Controls Annual Reports which are available on the GOV.UK website.

■ Central Bank Digital Currencies

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[3489\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the context of the pace of steps being taken by China, the US and the Eurozone to introduce Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) and the statement from the Bank of England on 9 November 2021 that the earliest date for launch of a UK CBDC would be in the second half of the decade, what assessment he has made of the shortest timeframe in which a retail CBDC could be launched in the UK.

John Glen:

No decision has yet been made on the issuance of a CBDC, but we are progressing our CBDC exploration with pace and purpose through the HM Treasury and Bank of England CBDC Taskforce.

The Government set out the forward plan for this work in a Written Ministerial Statement in November last year. If there is a decision to proceed following the planned HM Treasury and Bank of England joint consultation later this year, the UK would enter a development phase before subsequently moving into a build and testing phase.

For a potential major national infrastructure project such as a UK CBDC, it is critical that we develop it in a considered and robust way. Were the results of each of these phases to conclude that the case for CBDC were made, and that it were operationally and technologically robust, then the earliest date for launch of a UK CBDC would be in the second half of the decade.

■ Cost of Living

Hywel Williams:

[\[3487\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department will introduce further targeted affordability funding to help address the cost of living pressures.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government appreciates the challenges people are facing as a result of 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 this financial year to help families with these pressures.

We stand ready to take further action as the pressures the UK faces become clearer.

Alan Brown:

[\[4609\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a breakdown of how the Government's £22 million support package will be spent in response to the rising cost of living.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government has published a breakdown of what is included in the £22 billion support package for the cost of living crisis, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet>.

■ **Double Glazing: VAT**

Craig Mackinlay: [2598]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost of extending VAT relief on energy efficient materials to secondary glazing.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government has not estimated the cost of including secondary glazing in the VAT relief for energy saving materials.

HMRC does not hold information on VAT revenue from specific products or services, such as secondary glazing, because businesses are not required to provide figures at a product level on their VAT returns, as this would impose an excessive administrative burden.

■ **Energy Supply and Food Supply**

John Redwood: [2336]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on fiscal plans to tackle potential supply shortages of (a) energy and (b) food.

Helen Whately:

Arrangements are in place to ensure security of supply of electricity and gas. We are confident that the UK's energy security will be maintained.

The UK food supply chain is highly resilient and our food import dependency on the Eastern Europe region is very low. We do not expect any significant direct impact on overall UK food supply as a result of the conflict in Ukraine. The Government continues to keep the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade and recent developments. We have also increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real time intelligence.

■ **Government Departments: Fraud**

Abena Oppong-Asare: [1377]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Oral Evidence taken by the Treasury Select Committee on 27 April 2022 on HM Treasury's role in combating fraud, for what reason his Department does not have a global target for reducing public sector fraud across Government.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Fraud against the public sector is combatted by individual public bodies, some of whom have targets, and some who do not. HM Treasury and the soon to be launched Public Sector Fraud Authority will be working with public bodies to increasingly use

data to have a greater impact on public sector fraud. The government will be transparent in the progress it makes.

■ **Health and Social Care Levy: Public Sector**

Rachel Reeves:

[3575]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much of the funding to public sector employers to offset the costs of the introduction of the health and social care levy has been distributed.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Public sector compensation for employer costs of the Health and Social Levy was allocated to departments as part of the 2021 Autumn Budget and Spending Review. This specific compensation forms one part of their total DEL budgets.

■ **Insurance: Disability**

Helen Morgan:

[3803]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure individuals with dyslexia and other disabilities are not disqualified from obtaining insurance.

John Glen:

It is a priority for the Government that everyone has access to suitable and affordable financial products and services.

Insurers must abide by the Equality Act 2010 and are also required by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to treat customers fairly. The FCA is responsible for regulating and supervising the financial services industry, including insurers.

In addition, from April 2021, the FCA requires all firms offering retail travel insurance to signpost consumers to a directory of specialist providers if they are declined cover, offered cover with an exclusion, or charged a significantly higher premium based on their serious pre-existing medical condition.

■ **Medical Equipment: Energy**

Fleur Anderson:

[3749]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support he is providing for individuals who are suffering financially from the cost of electricity to power life-saving medical equipment in their homes.

Helen Whately:

Living with a long-term illness or disability can impact significantly on the cost of living. This is why the Government invests heavily in supporting disabled people both in and out of work through the welfare system.

The Government is committed to help protect customers from price spikes, especially vulnerable customers and is very aware of the difficulties that consumers are experiencing as a result of the rise in energy prices. The Government is providing

significant financial support – up to £350 – to the majority of households, which will cover more than half of the April rise in energy bills for the average household. This support is worth £9.1bn in 2022-23.

The Government is providing further support for vulnerable households, elderly and low-income people through the Warm Home Discount - which is being expanded by a third to 3m people and increased to £150 – in addition to the continuation of Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments.

The Government is also providing an additional £500m for the Household Support Fund from April, on top of the £500m we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £1 billion. In England, Local Authorities are best placed to direct this help to those in their areas who need it most and will receive £421m, whilst the devolved administrations will receive £79m through the Barnett formula.

The Government continues to support vulnerable groups through NHS services. The additional funding announced at the Spending Review, made possible by the new Health and Social Care Levy, means that the NHS resource budget will increase to over £160 billion in 2024-25. These investments will allow the NHS to continue providing the services people need.

■ Mortgages: Arrears

Colleen Fletcher:

[4592]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of the increases in the cost of living on the number of households in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England that have fallen into arrears with their mortgage provider.

John Glen:

Ministers and officials meet regularly with industry, trade bodies, and regulators to understand their policies and the impact of the increased cost of living on mortgage borrowers.

Bank of England data published on 8 March 2022 shows that arrears levels remain low, with the proportion of total mortgage loan balances with arrears at 0.84%, the lowest since recording began in 2007.

The Government understands the pressures households face in the current cost of living context. These are global challenges, but the Government is providing support worth over £22 billion in 2022-23 to help households with these pressures, including providing millions of households with up to £350 to help with rising energy bills.

The Government is also continuing its efforts to support mortgage borrowers. For example, the Government offers Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) loans to homeowners in receipt of an income-related benefit to help prevent repossession. The Government also aims to help people avoid repossession through protection in the courts under the Mortgage Pre-Action Protocol which makes it clear that repossession must always be the last resort for lenders. Any borrowers worried about

their mortgage payments should make early contact with their lender to discuss the forbearance options available to them.

■ Potash: Imports

Dave Doogan:

[3729]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a comparative assessment of how much potash was imported into the UK in the last six months and during the same period in the last three years.

Lucy Frazer:

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>.

Potash falls within commodity code chapter heading 281520: 'Sodium hydroxide "caustic soda", potassium hydroxide "caustic potash"; peroxides of sodium or potassium'. Forms of potash are also used in fertilisers and fall within commodity code chapter heading 3104. The full commodity code would depend on the specific compounds of the potash.

A data table showing the volumes of potash and fertilisers containing potash that were imported into the UK in the last six months compared to the last three years is provided separately.

Attachments:

1. Table referred to in response [PQ UIN 3729 - data table.xlsx]

■ Renewable Energy: Finance

Alexander Stafford:

[3791]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to help increase the development of renewable energy.

Helen Whately:

Renewable energy has a central role in the Government's decarbonisation and levelling-up ambitions. The Government recognises the economic benefits it can derive from renewable energy and is committed to developing these. The Government has taken a number of fiscal steps to support the deployment of renewable energy, including:

We have moved to annual Contract for Difference auctions, bringing forward the next round to March 2023. This will help to encourage low-carbon generation and provide greater confidence to investors and supply chain companies.

We are investing £160 million in offshore wind ports and the supply chain through the Offshore Wind Manufacturing and Investment Scheme (OWMIS) and have

announced up to another £160 million to support development of the floating supply chain. We also recently announced £31 million of UK government funding, to be matched by industry, for research and development in this area.

We have cut VAT rates on solar panels, and solar panel & storage packages, down to 0% (from 5% and 20% respectively) to encourage installation.

■ Social Rented Housing: Credit Rating

Rachael Maskell:

[\[3668\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to help ensure that a person's credit rating is not negatively affected in the event that they are unable to afford to pay for their social housing.

John Glen:

Industry-agreed principles, rather than government policy, determines what and how information is shared between organisations and Credit Reference Agencies (CRAs). CRAs then hold this information on individuals' credit files and use it to create a credit score.

In accordance with these industry-agreed principles, rental payments and arrears are not typically recorded on an individual's credit file. However, a social landlord may take legal action against a tenant who is in persistent arrears. Any county court judgements (CCJs) which arise from legal action will be held on an individual's credit report for six years. A CCJ is likely to have a negative effect on a consumer's credit rating, as it shows lenders and other organisations that use the information on a person's credit report that a consumer may be in debt or financial difficulty.

However, consumers can add a Notice (of up to 200 words) to their credit file explaining any circumstances that led to them missing payments or receiving a CCJ. The content of this notice should be taken into account by lenders when they make decisions about credit applications, alongside the information on a consumer's credit report.

■ Treasury: Hikvision

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:

[\[4454\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many Hikvision products are in use in his Department.

Helen Whately:

As has been the case under successive administrations, it is not government policy to comment on the security arrangements of government buildings. Specific details regarding the make and model of security systems are withheld on national security grounds.

■ Uranium: Imports

Alan Brown:

[4741]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 154146 on Uranium: Imports, and pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 1211, for what reason the table showing volume of Uranium imported into the UK by Country of Origin from 2016-2022 was not published in those Answers; and if she will publish that table.

Lucy Frazer:

HM Revenue & Customs (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 possible to build your own data tables based upon bespoke search criteria, and download bulk datasets.

The table showing the volume of uranium imported into the UK by country of origin from 2016-2022 is attached.

UK imports by country of origin (including for uranium), are already publicly available within the bulk datasets available to download from <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/latest-bulk-datasets/>.

Attachments:

1. Table referred to in answer [Worksheet 4741.xlsx]

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Employment: Sexual Harassment

Justin Madders:

[3636]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent steps she has taken to encourage businesses to take steps to prevent workplace harassment.

Justin Madders:

[3637]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent steps has she taken to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace.

Justin Madders:

[3638]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether he has plans to bring forward measures to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is clear that everyone should be able to live without fear of harassment or violence, in the workplace as much as anywhere else.

In July 2021, as part of our strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls, the Government committed to a new package of measures which will strengthen

protections for those affected by harassment at work. We intend to introduce a new duty on employers to take steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as explicit protections against workplace harassment by third parties. We are also preparing our own practical guidance for employers on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace.

The legislative commitments will be introduced when parliamentary time allows. We continue to seek an appropriate legislative vehicle; however, we are also ensuring that we take sufficient time to engage with a range of stakeholders, to ensure that what we introduce will be effective and make a real impact.

■ Safe to Be Me Conference: Costs

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[4676\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 155906, if she will provide a breakdown of the estimated costs incurred by her Department in preparation for the Safe to Be Me: A Global Equality Conference as of 18 May 2022.

Mike Freer:

We announced our decision to cancel Safe To Be Me: A Global Equality Conference on 6 April 2022. As stated in the answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 155906, expenditure to that point, and due to the cancellation, is estimated to be between £0.41 million and £0.61 million. We are still working with suppliers to reconcile costs for work that had not been undertaken at the time of cancellation. Therefore as of 18 May 2022, we estimate the costs to be as set out in the table below.

CATEGORY OF SPEND	COST (INCLUDING VAT)	DESCRIPTION
Venue	£200,000	The Government is liable to pay a cancellation charge as stated in the contract.
Production	£365,000	Already incurred production costs.

We are currently exploring whether VAT can be recovered on any of these costs. The final position will be reflected in departmental accounts in the usual way.

■ Vacancies: Advertising

Imran Hussain:

[\[3616\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether her Department plans to impose a legal duty on employers to list the minimum salary on job advertisements.

Kemi Badenoch:

On International Women's Day this year, we called on all employers to provide salary information in all of their job adverts, and to stop asking about previous salary during recruitment.

We recognise that some employers may find it challenging to take these steps, due to historic pay decisions and lack of clarity in pay processes. That is why we also announced that we will work with employers to develop and pilot a methodology to support them to adopt these measures.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Discretionary Housing Payments: Wales****Hywel Williams:**[\[3484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of the reduction in Discretionary Housing Payments funding on households in Wales.

Hywel Williams:[\[3485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the impact of changes to Local Housing Allowance on the amount spent in (a) Gwynedd and (b) Wales on Discretionary Housing Payments.

David Rutley:

No such assessment has been made.

In April 2020 investment in LHA rates was boosted by nearly £1 billion, providing 1.5 million claimants who rent privately with an average £600 more housing support in 2020/21 than they would otherwise have received. Rates have been maintained at their increased 2020 levels in 2021/22 and 2022/23 so that claimants continue to benefit from the significant increase.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) continue to be an important element of an extensive cross-Government housing support package with almost £1.5 billion of DHP funding provided to local authorities since 2011.

The UK Government has invested heavily in supporting low-income households with their housing costs with £29 billion spent on housing support alone last year, and our housing support offer remains higher than it was before the pandemic.

We are also investing more than £2 billion of funding to tackle and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years.

■ Food Banks: Coventry

Colleen Fletcher:

[4588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of the increases in the cost of living on levels of foodbank use in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry.

David Rutley:

No assessment has been made.

Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions does not have any role in their operation. There is no consistent and accurate measure of food bank usage at a constituency or national level.

We understand the data limitations in this area, and therefore from April 2021 we introduced a set of questions into the Family Resources Survey (FRS) to measure and track food bank usage. The first results of these questions are due to be published in March 2023 subject to usual quality assurance.

We recognise the pressures on the cost of living and we are doing what we can to help, including spending £22 billion across the next financial year to support people. This includes the recently announced package of support to help households with rising energy bills, worth £9.1 billion.

Also included in this is an additional £500 million to help households (01 April – 30 September 2022) with the cost of essentials, on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing the total funding for this support to £1 billion.

In England, £421 million will be provided to extend the existing Household Support Fund, at least a third of the extension funding (£140m) will be spent on pensioners and at least another third (£140m) will be spent on families with children.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Mr Richard Holden:

[3762]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support young people on the Kickstart scheme to progress to apprenticeships and further education to up-skill them.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Kickstart Scheme was a job creation programme established to ensure that 16-24 year olds in receipt of Universal Credit would have access to fully-funded six-month job opportunities. Our work with employers has seen over 162,600 jobs having been started by young people, who were most at risk of suffering the scarring effects of long-term unemployment as a result of the pandemic.

Employers participating in the Kickstart Scheme are required to provide employability support to young people to allow them to build their skills in the workplace. This support is intended to improve their chances of progressing to find long-term

sustainable work. DWP provided additional grant funding to employers of £1,500 for each young person to support with this.

Young people returning to Universal Credit following the end of a Kickstart job will be given bespoke support appropriate to their circumstances by their Jobcentre Plus Work Coach. This may include coaching or guidance towards other provision or support options if appropriate. Work coaches also promote apprenticeship opportunities to claimants of all ages as a first step in a career as part of their regular interventions. In addition to this, DWP secured an agreement with the Department for Education that Kickstart jobs would not count as previous employment with that employer for the purposes of the apprenticeship incentive. This was intended to encourage employers to actively consider transitioning on a young person into an apprenticeship after their Kickstart job.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Disability

Afzal Khan:

[\[446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of extending the Universal Credit Kickstart Scheme to include individuals with disabilities.

Mims Davies:

Young people with a disability or health condition on Universal Credit who wished to take up the opportunity of a Kickstart job were able to discuss the roles they were interested in and if required, reasonable adjustments could be put into place to enable them to take up a Kickstart job. In October 2021, the decision was taken to extend the delivery of the Kickstart Scheme for an additional three months, to 31 March 2022, so that many more young people at risk of long-term unemployment (including those with disabilities) could benefit from the opportunities of the scheme. The final Kickstart job starts took place on 31 March 2022 and the last jobs will come to an end on 30 September 2022.

The Kickstart Scheme was introduced as part of the Government's Plan for Jobs, a range of other support is available to provide support to job seekers of all ages, regardless of disadvantage or disability.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Finance

Alison McGovern:

[\[4563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data her Department holds on the extent of underspend of the Kickstart Scheme in the financial year 2021-22; and what discussions she has had with Chancellor of the Exchequer on returning that funding to her departmental budgets.

Mims Davies:

As of 8 May 2022, over 162,600 Kickstart jobs had been started by young people. We are delighted that the Kickstart Scheme has provided opportunities for so many

young people to gain experience in the workplace that will improve their chances of progressing to find long-term sustainable work.

In the financial year 2021-22, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was provided with £1,617.5m new funding specifically to deliver Kickstart. As this funding was ringfenced, any underspend had to be returned to HMT, as per the normal budgeting process. At Supplementary Estimates, DWP handed back £664.7m of this funding, with any balance on the residual £952.8m funding also due to be returned to HMT at year end.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Beth Winter: [\[3760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to raise Local Housing Allowance in line with rent rates.

David Rutley:

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates for 2022/23 will be maintained at the elevated cash rates agreed for 2020/21 ensuring that claimants who benefitted from the increased levels of housing support continue to do so.

The Secretary of State will review LHA rates annually in the usual way.

For those who require additional support with housing costs, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available. Since 2011 we have provided nearly £1.5 billion in funding for DHPs.

■ Local Housing Allowance: Homelessness

Beth Winter: [\[3759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information her Department holds on the potential impact of the disparity between (a) Local Housing Allowance and (b) rent requirements on levels of homelessness.

David Rutley:

The causes of homelessness are multi-faceted and often complex, they interact dynamically making it very difficult to isolate the relative importance of individual factors.

In April 2020 investment in LHA rates was boosted by nearly £1 billion, providing 1.5 million claimants who rent privately with an average £600 more housing support in 2020/21 than they would otherwise have received. Rates have been maintained at their increased 2020 levels so that claimants continue to benefit from the significant increase. LHA rates have been maintained at their increased levels in 2021/22 and 2022/23. The UK Government is investing more than £2 billion of funding to tackle and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years.

For those who require additional support with housing costs, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available. Since 2011 we have provided nearly £1.5 billion in funding for DHPs.

■ **Local Housing Allowance: Rhondda Cynon Taf**

Beth Winter:

[\[3757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data her Department holds on the percentage of rental properties in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority which are fully covered by the Local Housing Allowance.

David Rutley:

To produce an estimate of the percentage of all private rental properties in Rhondda Cynon Taf, including those not in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Element, which have rents equal to or lower than the LHA rate would incur a disproportionate cost as this is not readily available. During the pandemic we increased Local Housing Allowance significantly and beyond inflation, benefitting over one million households by an average of over £600 over the year. We're maintaining that boost, keeping support for private renters above pre-pandemic levels.

Beth Winter:

[\[3758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data her Department holds on the proportion of tenants in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority eligible for Shared Accommodation Local Housing Allowance who reside in a one-bedroom home.

David Rutley:

As of November 2021, less than 5% of people in receipt of Housing Benefit and entitled to the Shared Accommodation Local Housing Allowance rate were residing in a one-bedroom home.

For people in receipt of Universal Credit Housing Element the information requested is not readily available.

Beth Winter:

[\[3761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what additional financial support is available to households claiming the housing element of Universal Credit in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority, who experience a disparity between their rent requirement and Local Housing Allowance rate.

David Rutley:

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) determines the maximum financial support available for renters in the private rented sector. LHA rates are not intended to meet all rents in all areas.

Discretionary Housing Payments can be paid to those entitled to Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs. Discretionary Housing Payments are flexible and can be considered where, in the local authority's opinion, further financial assistance towards housing costs is required.

Since 2011, the UK Government had provided almost £1.5 billion in Discretionary Housing Payments to local authorities.

The UK Government is providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1 billion. In England, £421 million will be provided to extend the Household Support Fund from 1 April to 30 September inclusive. The devolved administrations will receive £79 million through the Barnett formula (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the Northern Ireland Executive). This support will continue to help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and other essentials.

■ **Local Housing Allowance: Wales**

Hywel Williams:

[3483]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many local authorities in Wales have requested a review of their Broad Rental Market Area boundaries in each of the last five years; and how many of those were successful.

David Rutley:

We do not hold this information.

Rent Officers Wales has responsibility for setting broad rental market area boundaries in Wales.

Broad rental market areas are determined in accordance with requirements laid down in legislation. Each area must contain a variety of property types and tenures, sufficient privately rented accommodation and access to facilities for health, education, recreation, banking and shopping.

Local authorities may request a review of any broad rental market area that impacts on its administrative area by submitting a written request, including relevant reasons, to Rent Officers Wales.

Where rent officers decide that a boundary should be moved, they must carry out a review, consulting with affected local authorities among others, and submit a recommendation to the Secretary of State for agreement. No broad rental market area reviews have been submitted by Rent Officers Wales in the last five years.

Hywel Williams:

[3486]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of not increasing Local Housing Allowance in line with rents on levels of homelessness in Wales.

David Rutley:

The causes of homelessness are multi-faceted and often complex, they interact dynamically making it very difficult to isolate the relative importance of individual factors. The UK Government has invested heavily in supporting low-income households with their housing costs with £29 billion spent on housing support alone last year, and our housing support offer remains higher than it was before the pandemic.

In April 2020 investment in LHA rates was boosted by nearly £1 billion, providing 1.5 million claimants who rent in the private sector with an average £600 more housing support in 2020/21 than they would otherwise have received. Rates have been maintained at their increased 2020 levels so that claimants continue to benefit from the significant increase. LHA rates are not intended to cover all rents in all areas.

For those who require additional support with housing costs, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available. Since 2011 we have provided nearly £1.5 billion in funding for DHPs.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

David Linden: [\[1537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 15 March, (b) 15 February and (c) 27 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11300.

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.

■ **Pensioners: British Nationals Abroad**

Peter Dowd: [\[4598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps she has taken to support overseas British pensioners.

Peter Dowd: [\[4599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps has her Department has taken to support pensioners living in British Overseas Territories.

Guy Opperman:

The UK State Pension is payable worldwide to those who meet the qualifying conditions. Entitlement is based on an individual's National Insurance record without regard to nationality.

Pensioners in certain EEA countries and Switzerland may receive other payments if they meet the eligibility criteria and are covered by the terms of the EU Withdrawal Agreement, for example, Winter Fuel Payments.

Peter Dowd: [\[4600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of uprating overseas pensions.

Guy Opperman:

The policy on the up-rating of UK State Pensions overseas is longstanding and has been supported by successive Governments for over 70 years. Annual indexed-linked increases are paid to UK State Pension recipients where there is a legal requirement to do so, for example, where recipients are living in countries where

there is a reciprocal agreement in place that provides for up-rating. There are no plans to change this policy.

This Government continues to take the view that priority should be given to those living in the UK when drawing up expenditure plans for pensioner benefits.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Chris Stephens: [\[3654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many appeals against Personal Independence Payment decisions were lapsed by her Department as at the latest date for which data is available.

Chris Stephens: [\[3655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of Personal Independence Payment claimants have had their claim lapsed by her Department in Scotland.

Chloe Smith:

The table below provides information on Personal Independence Payment appeal registrations and lapses for both the whole of Great Britain and for Scotland, between 1st April 2013 and 31st December 2021.

GBAPPEALS REGISTERED	GBAPPEALS LAPSED	SCOTLANDAPPEALS REGISTERED	SCOTLANDAPPEALS LAPSED
604,080	112,100 (19% of GB appeals registered)	72,590	12,270 (17% of Scotland appeals registered)

Notes:

- Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
- These figures include appeal registrations and decisions for PIP New Claims, Reassessments, Award Reviews and Change of Circumstances.
- A lapsed appeal is where DWP changed the decision in the customer's favour after an appeal was lodged but before it was heard at a tribunal hearing.

Chris Stephens: [\[3656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure all Personal Independence Payment claimants are adequately informed of their rights of mandatory reconsideration when offering claimants an increased benefits award over the telephone after their appeal has been lodged.

Chloe Smith:

If an appealed decision is revised, the claimant can immediately appeal that decision without first having to request a Mandatory Reconsideration. This is explained both in

the phone call which is made when this option is discussed, and again in the decision notice should the claimant agree to the decision being revised.

■ Restart Scheme

Alison McGovern:

[4561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the eligibility criteria for the Restart Scheme; and whether the eligibility criteria has been changed since the commencement of that scheme.

Mims Davies:

The eligibility criteria for the Restart Scheme is published in the Restart Scheme Provider Guidance and is available via the following link, in paragraph 1.28.

[Chapter 1: Introduction and overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restart-scheme-provider-guidance)

■ Restart Scheme: Costs

Alison McGovern:

[4559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of the cost of operating the Restart Scheme in each year of its expected operation.

Alison McGovern:

[4560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which organisations have received funding as part of the Restart Scheme; and how much funding each organisation has received since commencement of that scheme to 18 May 2022.

Mims Davies:

The Value of the Contracts for Restart (£2.5billion) is detailed on [Contracts Finder](#). This covers the three-year referral period and service delivery. A review of the Restart Programme is being undertaken following the first full year of delivery. Any changes will be published on Contracts Finder in Autumn 2022.

The following Prime organisations were awarded Contracts to deliver the Restart Scheme.

G4S FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (UK) LTD.

MAXIMUS UK Services Limited

Reed in Partnership

Serco Group

Jobs 22 Ltd

Ingeus UK Ltd

Fedcap Employment Limited

Seetec Pluss Ltd

The Restart contracts are accessible on Contracts Finder using the following link [Restart Scheme - Contracts Finder](#). In relation to funding, under the Governments Transparency agenda, all spend data over £25,000 is published and can be found at [GOV.UK](#). Spend is updated on a quarterly basis with the latest update published in March 2022.

■ Restart Scheme: Standards

Alison McGovern: [4562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish the performance measures that will be used for the Restart Scheme.

Mims Davies:

Details of the required Minimum Performance Expectation and Customer Service Standards are published within Schedule 2 of the contract and are available to view on Contracts Finder [Restart Scheme - Contracts Finder](#).

In addition, details of Performance Management can be found in Chapter 14 of the [Restart Provider Guidance](#).

■ Universal Credit

Charlotte Nichols: [1561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to enable people who receive bonuses from work to not have their Universal Credit deducted as a result.

David Rutley:

A Universal Credit award is calculated on the basis of the set benefit rate against money coming in to ensure fairness of treatment for all claimants. This includes money they have earned and means as earnings increase Universal Credit is gradually reduced. This is a long-standing principle of means-tested benefits.

Bonuses are earnings and are treated in the same way as any other earnings. This is already true for tax and other purposes, regardless of whether or not an individual is claiming a benefit. All earnings, above any applicable work allowance, are subject to the 55% taper and the Universal Credit award is calculated on that basis.

■ Way to Work Scheme

Suzanne Webb: [4709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have entered employment through the Way to Work campaign as of 15 May 2022.

Mims Davies:

As of 15 May, we estimate that at least 317,800 unemployed Universal Credit claimants have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31

January and the end of 15 May 2022. Furthermore, during March 2022 we have seen the highest number of into work movements on record for any March – over 99,800.

This total figure is composed of our into work measure to the end of March (over 192,600) and our internal management information for April (91,800) as well as data up to 15 May (33,400). Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics but is provided in the interests of transparency and timeliness.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Luke Pollard:

[\[1545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average time taken was to resolve a maintenance request in (a) service family accommodation and (b) single living accommodation in each year since 2010.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 23 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Jeremy Quin:

In the last five months (November 21 to March 22) the mean average time to complete maintenance tasks in Service Family Accommodation was 15.9 days. Data prior to this can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Single Living Accommodation information prior to 2018 is not held. Information from 2018 onwards is not held centrally.

Remaining properties are held for upgrade or disposal. **We are reviewing information sources. I will write to the Hon. Gentleman in due course and place a copy of my response in the library of the House**

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agricultural Products: UK Trade with EU

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the public expenditure on border control posts in preparation for implementing proposed sanitary and phytosanitary checks on agri-food and plant imports from the EU as of 10 May 2022.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 16 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Victoria Prentis:

Over the last two years Defra has worked with stakeholders and delivery partners to develop the capability to deliver new SPS border controls on goods arriving in England from the EU. The figures below cover IT delivery, staffing costs and infrastructure.

PQ 275/276

IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS

Activity

21/22

22/23

Total

PQ 275/276	IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS			
Digital Delivery	£10.77m	£0.00m	£10.77m	Includes IPAFFS and proportion of overheads
Imports Policy	£11.17m	£0.15m	£11.32m	Includes Plants and Animals
PHA Fund	£17.56m	£2.50m	£20.06m	
£39.50m	£2.65m	£42.15m		Includes funds for PHA staff to end of April 2022
PQ 277/783	BCP Spend to date			
Activity	21/22	22/23	Total	
Infrastructure	£30.98m	£0.37m	£31.35m	Includes Sevington and Dover construction only, which are DEFRA funded.

PQ 275/276	IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS			
Activity	21/22	22/23	Total	
Digital Delivery	£10.77m	£0.00m	£10.77m	Includes IPAFFS and proportion of overheads
Imports Policy	£11.17m	£0.15m	£11.32m	Includes Plants and Animals
PHA Fund	£17.56m	£2.50m	£20.06m	
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PQ 275/276	IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS			
PQ 277/783	BCP Spend to date			
Activity	21/22	22/23	Total	
Infrastructure	£30.98m	£0.37m	£31.35m	Includes Sevington and Dover construction only, which are DEFRA funded.

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much has been spent on border control points in preparation for sanitary and phytosanitary checks on agri-food and plant imports coming into the UK from the EU.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 16 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Victoria Prentis:

Over the last two years Defra has worked with stakeholders and delivery partners to develop the capability to deliver new SPS border controls on goods arriving in England from the EU. The figures below cover IT delivery, staffing costs and infrastructure.

PQ 275 / 276	IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS			
Activity	21/22	22/23	Total	
Digital Delivery	£10.77m	£0.00m	£10.77m	Includes IPAFFS and proportion of overheads
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PHA Fund	£17.56m	£2.50m	£20.06m	
£39.50m	£2.65m	£42.15m	Includes funds for PHA staff to end of	

PQ 275/276

IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS

April 2022

PQ 277/783

BCP Spend to date

Activity

21/22

22/23

Total

Infrastructure

£30.98m

£0.37m

£31.35m

Includes
Sevington
and Dover
construction
only, which
are DEFRA
funded.

PQ 275/276

IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS

Activity

21/22

22/23

Total

Digital Delivery

£10.77m

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Includes IPAFFS
and proportion
of overheads

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£11.17m

£0.15m

£11.32m

Includes Plants
and Animals

PHA Fund

£17.56m

£2.50m

£20.06m

£39.50m

£2.65m

£42.15m

Includes funds
for PHA staff to
end of April
2022

PQ 277/783

BCP Spend to date

Activity

21/22

22/23

Total

Infrastructure

£30.98m

£0.37m

£31.35m

Includes
Sevington and
Dover
construction
only, which are
DEFRA funded.

■ Food: UK Trade with EU

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of his Department's expenditure on preparations for the implementation of proposed sanitary and phytosanitary checks on food imports from the EU as of 10 May 2022.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 16 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Victoria Prentis:

Over the last two years Defra has worked with stakeholders and delivery partners to develop the capability to deliver new SPS border controls on goods arriving in England from the EU. The figures below cover IT delivery, staffing costs and infrastructure.

PQ 275 / 276	IMPLEMENTATION PREPARATIONS			
Activity	21/22	22/23	Total	
Digital Delivery	£10.77m	£0.00m	£10.77m	Includes IPAFFS and proportion of overheads
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HOME OFFICE

■ Refugees: Resettlement

Emily Thornberry:

[668]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has produced internal evaluations of the (a) ACRS and ARAP schemes and (b) Homes for Ukraine scheme.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office will set out its approach to evaluating the Government's refugee resettlement schemes in due course outlining the scope of the evaluation and the frequency of data collection.

The evaluation approach is expected to draw on the mixed-methods approach used to evaluate the previous Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme. It is expected this will include analysis of data such as numbers of arrivals over time and cohort characteristics, as well as the collection of data on refugees against a range of indicators of integration, such as education, employment, language skills, housing and health, with the aim of better understanding barriers to integration and identifying how best to support resettled refugees' longer term integration into life in the UK.

It is intended that the products of this evaluation will be made publicly available once the evaluation has concluded.

This Government introduced two new schemes: the Ukraine Family Scheme announced on 4 March, and the 'Homes for Ukraine' Scheme announced by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities on 14 March

The Ukrainian Schemes have been designed in light of very different circumstances to those which led to the Government's Syrian and Afghan resettlement schemes.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is responsible for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

All our schemes are continuously monitored to inform delivery and ensure any adjustments to the policy are made in a timely manner.

■ **Visas: British National (Overseas)**

Emily Thornberry:[\[669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has produced internal evaluations of the Hong Kong BN(O) scheme beyond the 2021 Survey of Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa holders.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office will set out its approach to evaluating the Government's refugee resettlement schemes in due course outlining the scope of the evaluation and the frequency of data collection.

The evaluation approach is expected to draw on the mixed-methods approach used to evaluate the previous Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme. It is expected this will include analysis of data such as numbers of arrivals over time and cohort characteristics, as well as the collection of data on refugees against a range of indicators of integration, such as education, employment, language skills, housing and health, with the aim of better

understanding barriers to integration and identifying how best to support resettled refugees' longer term integration into life in the UK.

It is intended that the products of this evaluation will be made publicly available once the evaluation has concluded.

This Government introduced two new schemes: the Ukraine Family Scheme announced on 4 March, and the 'Homes for Ukraine' Scheme announced by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities on 14 March

The Ukrainian Schemes have been designed in light of very different circumstances to those which led to the Government's Syrian and Afghan resettlement schemes.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is responsible for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

On 31 January 2022, the Home Office published data on the characteristics of British National (Overseas) visa holders, which is available at: Survey of Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa holders 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Home Office has not produced any further evaluation of the Hong Kong BN(O) route. We are committed to undertaking appropriate evaluation of government programmes to inform decisions on whether they should be continued, expanded, modified or stopped. Plans for evaluation of the scheme will remain under review.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition

Minister for the Cabinet Office and HM Paymaster General (Michael Ellis):
[\[HCWS43\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that Her Majesty The Queen has commanded that city status has been granted to **Bangor, Colchester, Doncaster, Douglas, Dunfermline, Milton Keynes, Stanley and Wrexham** and a Lord Mayoralty to **Southampton** to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.

Her Majesty's Government has been delighted over the number of places across the United Kingdom, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, which entered the competition. Irrespective of the final outcome, this is a celebration of not only the rich and diverse communities which make up the United Kingdom, but of communities all across the undivided Realm which the UK, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories constitute.

City status, Lord Mayoralties, and Lord Provostships are civic honours granted by Her Majesty acting on the advice of Her Ministers under the Royal Prerogative. The granting of these honours is rare and they continue to be highly sought after.

The competition received an extremely high standard of applications, and those unsuccessful applicants should not be disappointed. All valid entries received individual consideration on their merits and, for the first time, applications were also assessed by an expert panel, before Ministers made final recommendations to Her Majesty The Queen.

I offer my congratulations to **Bangor, Colchester, Doncaster, Douglas, Dunfermline, Milton Keynes, Stanley, Wrexham** and **Southampton** who have been granted these prestigious honours from an exceptional and vast field of applicants.

EDUCATION

■ Families Update

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families (Will Quince):
[\[HCWS44\]](#)

Today, I am providing an update on the first wave of successful local authorities to be awarded funding through the £12m Family Hubs Transformation Fund.

The Government is committed to delivering on the Best Start for Life: A Vision for the First 1001 Critical Days Report, and on our manifesto pledge to champion family hubs. Family hubs are a way of joining up locally to improve access to services, the connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and put

relationships at the heart of family support. They bring together services for children of all ages, with a great Start for Life offer at their core.

Family Hubs Transformation Fund

The Family Hubs Local Transformation Fund is a key part of this commitment and is funded through HM Treasury's Shared Outcomes Fund, which aims to test innovative ways of working across the public sector to address complex policy challenges.

We launched the £12m Family Hubs Transformation Fund last November to support at least 12 local authorities in England to open family hubs. The fund will enable us to learn more about the process of local transformation, to build our evidence base, and to create valuable resources and learning for those local authorities moving to a family hub model in the future.

The Family Hubs Transformation Fund will support LAs with the costs of moving to a family hubs model. It is different and separate to the Start for Life and Family Hubs Programme that was announced at Autumn Budget; the eligibility for which was announced in April as part of a £1bn government commitment to families. The Start for Life and Family Hubs Programme includes additional funding for services, which is not available to LAs as part of the Family Hubs Transformation Fund.

The application window closed in December 2021, and we received 84 bids from upper-tier local authorities. The volume of applications shows a real appetite for change, and the high quality of bids reflects the passion and dedication to delivering for children and families.

The first wave of successful local authorities are:

- Brighton and Hove
- Wirral
- Stockport
- Dorset
- Solihull
- York
- Cheshire East

We expect to announce an additional five local authorities to receive funding through the Family Hubs Transformation Fund in the coming months.

■ **Higher Education Update**

The Minister of State for Higher and Further Education (Michelle Donelan):
[\[HCWS48\]](#)

Today I am providing an update on my commitment in September 2020 to reduce regulatory burden in Higher Education.

Bureaucracy has a direct impact on how well providers can do their jobs: every pound spent on unnecessary bureaucracy is a pound that is not being spent on teaching and research.

I am therefore pleased to confirm that the OfS has already:

- reduced its enhanced monitoring by over 75%, removing 376 individual information or reporting requirements;
- removed its requirement for detailed monitoring returns on Access and Participation Plans in 2022
- streamlined its communications with HE providers and provided a direct contact for every registered provider.

In addition, I recently set up the HE Data Reduction Taskforce, to bring together attendees from providers, arm's length bodies and other data experts across the HE Sector to identify where we are putting overlapping data requirements on providers and where they could be reduced. The taskforce provides a real opportunity for all parties involved in data in the HE Sector to discuss challenges and opportunities and, most importantly, to agree tangible actions.

Institutional bureaucracy

There is, however, more that providers themselves could do to remove internal bureaucracy which is not needed to comply with regulatory requirements.

I therefore want to use this statement to encourage HE providers strongly to look at ways that they could reduce this gold plating. This should include:

- Reviewing their own Schemes of Delegation to ensure that they are fit for purpose, and that regulatory decisions and activity are clearly delegated to the right level in the provider. Not every decision needs to go to the Board of Governors, or through multiple layers of governance.
- Ensuring that they remain focussed on the content of the decisions they are making and the reasons for the decision, rather than ensuring that it goes to multiple committees.
- Carefully considering which processes, committees, activities and external subscriptions genuinely add value for students and which could be dispensed with, to free up academic time for teaching and research.

Unnecessary bureaucracy can take up time that could be spent focusing on the academic experience or quality of teaching which a student receives. This Government and the OfS will continue to focus on this, but providers also need to look internally to do the same.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Introduction of additional blood donor testing

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Patient Safety and Primary

Care) (Maria Caulfield):[\[HCWS45\]](#)

I would like to inform the House that the Government has accepted the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) and will be introducing additional testing to detect hepatitis B in donated blood from 31 May 2022. The Scottish Government, Welsh Government, and the Northern Ireland Executive have also accepted the advice of SaBTO.

The safety of people donating and people receiving blood and blood products is the Government's priority. We have robust safeguards in place that protect both donors and those receiving this potentially lifesaving intervention, which includes testing all donations for possible infections prior to use in transfusion.

In 2019, SaBTO established the Occult Hepatitis B Infection (OBI) working group to consider options for further improving pre-donation testing for hepatitis B. The group considered different testing options to identify those donors that have undetectable levels of the surface antibody to hepatitis B, but do have hepatitis B DNA and a core antibody to hepatitis B. These donors are known as occult donors and have been shown to be able to transmit hepatitis B to blood donor recipients. The OBI working group recommended the introduction of core antibody testing, alongside the current testing, for all current donors once, and then all new and returning donors. SaBTO reviewed the findings of the working group and agreed with the recommendations.

The Government has reviewed the evidence compiled by the OBI working group together with SaBTO's advice and has accepted the recommendation. The introduction of this new form of testing further improves the rigorous processes we have in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of donors and the safe and consistent supply of blood for patients.

The Department of Health and Social Care is working with NHS Blood and Transplant to implement this change and the overall impact of the changes will be reviewed in twelve months by SaBTO and the Government.

■ Monkeypox Update**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid):**[\[HCWS49\]](#)**Cases**

Following announcements made by the UK Health Security Agency on 7, 14, 18 and 20 May, I am writing to inform the House that (as of 12pm on Monday 23 May 2022) a total of 56 Monkeypox cases, in 3 unlinked incidents, have now been confirmed in the UK. Further cases have been identified worldwide, outside the endemic regions of West and Central Africa.

Monkeypox virus in the UK is extremely rare and the detection of Monkeypox in unlinked cases indicates community transmission. Prior to May 2022, there were three previous domestically acquired cases – two household transmissions related to an imported case and one healthcare worker related to a separate imported case.

In the coming days, I expect that further cases will be detected by the UK Health Security Agency's expert diagnostic capabilities, working with NHS services to ensure heightened vigilance among healthcare professionals.

The UK was the first country in the world to identify and report this recent emergence of non-endemic cases to the WHO, who continues to receive reports of further cases in other countries across the globe.

The infection can be passed on through direct contact with Monkeypox skin lesions or scabs; contact with clothing or linens (such as bedding or towels) used by an infected person; and potentially by close respiratory contact via coughing / sneezing by an individual with a Monkeypox rash. Monkeypox has not previously been described as a sexually transmitted infection, though it can be passed on by direct contact during sex. A notable proportion of cases have been among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

The virus does not usually spread easily between people without close contact and the risk to the UK population remains low.

World leading experts at the UK Health Security Agency, working in partnership with health protection agencies in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, are providing the latest scientific, clinical, and public health advice. They are also providing testing capability at the Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory at UKHSA Porton Down and have stood up additional capacity at UKHSA Colindale. They continue to contact trace, rapidly investigate the source of these infections, and raise awareness among healthcare professionals. Any close contacts of the cases are being identified and provided with health information and advice.

UKHSA, and its partner public health agencies in the devolved administrations, will continue to keep the scientific and clinical evidence under review to ensure that decisions are made on the best available evidence despite the fast-moving situation.

Individuals, especially gay, bisexual, or men who have sex with men, who develop an unusual rash or lesions (such as scabs) on any part of their body, but particularly their genitalia, should contact NHS 111 or a sexual health service. Individuals should notify clinics ahead of attendance and avoid close contact with others until they have been seen by a clinician. They can be assured that discussion will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

UKHSA has set up a dedicated helpline to support clinicians dealing with Monkeypox cases.

Vaccination and treatment

The smallpox vaccine, Imvanex (MVA-Bavarian Nordic), although not specifically licensed for the prevention of Monkeypox in Europe, has been used in the UK in response to previous incidents. This vaccine has a good safety record; it is made from a smallpox-related virus that cannot replicate and has been demonstrated to be highly effective at preventing infection (when given within 4 days of exposure) and reducing severe illness (if given between 4 and 14 days of exposure).

The vaccination of named close contacts of cases is underway, with vaccine eligibility being kept under close review. As of 10am on 23 May 2022, over 1,000 doses of Imvanex have been issued or are in the process of being issued, to NHS Trusts. There remain over 3,500 doses of Imvanex in the UK.

We are also exploring procurement options in case any specific antiviral treatment is shown to be effective against this virus; further details will be provided in due course.

I can confirm to the House that it will be kept abreast of updates as the situation evolves.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Mexico Trade Negotiations Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS46\]](#)

On Friday 20 May 2022, the Department for International Trade launched negotiations for an enhanced and upgraded Free Trade Agreement with Mexico, with the first round of negotiations to be held in Mexico City in July.

The Department is publishing a comprehensive set of documents setting out the UK's strategic approach for negotiations between the UK and Mexico. In line with our commitments to scrutiny and transparency, these documents have been published and placed in the House libraries. The UK's negotiating objectives for the upgraded agreement, published today, were informed by our Call for Input, which requested views from consumers, businesses, and other interested stakeholders across the UK on their priorities for enhancing our existing trading relationship with Mexico.

These negotiations follow our signing of the UK-Mexico Trade Continuity Agreement on 15 December 2020, which committed both parties to commence negotiations on a new, comprehensive and bespoke agreement by 1 June 2022.

An enhanced and comprehensive agreement with Mexico is a key part of the UK's strategy to secure advanced modern agreements with new international partners, and upgrade existing continuity agreements in order to better suit the UK economy. Through these enhanced trade partnerships we can deliver economic growth to all the nations and regions of the UK and create new opportunities for UK business.

Mexico is an important trading partner for the UK, with trade worth £4.2 billion in 2021 despite the disruptions of the coronavirus pandemic to global trade. Mexico is one of the world's largest democracies and the 16th biggest global economy. Its population is almost double the size of the UK's and is projected to reach 146 million people by 2035. Its demand for global imports is forecast to grow by 35% in real terms between 2019 and 2035 as its economy expands. *The current agreement ensured reduced duties on UK exports in key industries such as transportation, chemicals, and machinery manufacturing. These already popular products could face further demand in a growing Mexican market.*

Our existing agreement removes tariffs on the majority of goods we trade. However, the agreement is outdated and not designed for a digital age, containing limited provisions on services, which employs 82% of the UK workforce. In these negotiations we will be

advancing an upgraded trade partnership with cutting-edge services and digital provisions tailored to our unique strengths as the world's second-largest services exporter and a leader on digital trade. An upgraded trade agreement with enhanced provisions can support UK trade across sectors of UK strength, including financial, creative, digital and technology services.

Forging stronger trade links with Mexico will also support the UK's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, a free trade area with a collective GDP of £9 trillion in 2021, of which Mexico is an influential member.

The Government is determined that any agreement must work for consumers, producers, investors, and businesses alike. We remain committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, public health, food safety and animal welfare standards, alongside protecting the National Health Service.

The Government will continue to update and engage with key stakeholders, including Parliament and the Devolved Administrations, throughout our negotiations with Mexico.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Review of legislative drafting

Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mark Spencer):

[\[HCWS47\]](#)

During the passage of the Ministerial and Other Maternity Allowances Bill, significant concern was expressed in both Houses about the Bill's use of gender-neutral language in the context of pregnancy and childbirth. The Bill was amended so that gender-neutral nouns (e.g. "person") were replaced with gendered ones (e.g. "mother" and "expectant mother").

Ministers committed to consider and review the Government's approach to drafting legislation on subjects that prompt these questions around language. The most obvious area is legislation relating to pregnancy or childbirth, but there will be other areas where similar issues arise. Ministers emphasised that "we must not countenance the erasure of women from our public discourse or our legislation" (Official Report, House of Lords, 25 February 2021, Col. 961).

Ministers also note that, academics writing in the journal, *Frontiers in Global Women's Health* have warned of potential "adverse health consequences and deeper and more insidious discrimination against women" from de-gendered language such as "pregnant people".

Previous context on stereotyping

In 2007, as recorded in the Official Report, 8 March 2007, Col. 146WS, the then (Labour) Government stated their intention to draft legislation to avoid rigid stereotypes that only men could hold positions of authority. The approach adopted was to avoid the use of male pronouns on their own in contexts where a reference to women and men is intended. This Government agrees with that approach. This statement addresses the

separate issues of when it is appropriate to use gendered nouns like ‘woman’ and ‘mother’.

Each Bill is brought forward on its own merits and is drafted in a way to ensure legal clarity and in order to fulfil the Bill's policy intent. Ministers believe it can be appropriate to use sex-specific language in legislation where such language delivers the desired policy outcome. This may include, for example, legislation which relates to the needs of men and women respectively, or areas of policy where biological sex is a relevant or pertinent concept. For example, the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 explicitly requires separate toilet facilities in schools for boys and for girls. This is different from the desire to avoid stereotypes on positions of authority.

Guidance moving forward

When drafting a bill it is necessary to take into account the fact that a person may change their legal sex by obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate. The effect of section 9 of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 is that a reference to a “woman” in legislation, without more, will include someone who is a woman by virtue of a Certificate and will not include someone who is a man by virtue of a Certificate. In some cases, this might be the desired result but in others it might not.

Ministers are aware that there is, in some quarters, opposition to section 9 of the 2004 Act. However, that provision is the law and so drafting practice must take it into account. This, however, does not mean that sex-specific language cannot be used.

A number of drafting approaches are available to deliver the desired policy outcome whilst still using sex-specific language. One approach is to use sex-specific language to refer to the main case (for example “women”), with the addition of further wording so that the provision also has the desired policy outcome for less common cases.

Other drafting options include using sex-specific language and then disapplying section 9 of the 2004 Act (something that is envisaged in section 9(3) of the Act), or using sex-specific language for both cases (for example “woman or man”). Sometimes an ungendered noun will be appropriate, even in contexts in which sex is relevant. For example, someone undergoing a medical procedure might still be referred to as a “patient”.

The drafting approach in any case also needs to take account of the pre-existing legislative context. An amendment of an existing Act that uses gender-neutral nouns might need to do the same; and an amendment of an older Act that uses gendered nouns in a way that would be interpreted as covering both sexes might adopt the approach of the older Act.

The Office of the Parliamentary Counsel will update its drafting guidance in light of this Ministerial statement and steer.

Dignity, tolerance and respect

This statement should be read alongside the comments of the Prime Minister of 23 March 2022, Official Report, Column 334: ‘We must recognise that when people want to make a transition in their lives, they should be treated with the maximum possible generosity and

respect. We have systems in this country that allow that and have done for a long time, we should be very proud of that, but I want to say in addition that I think, when it comes to distinguishing between a man and a woman, the basic facts of biology remain overwhelmingly important.'

We believe that this statement sets out a common sense and practical approach to ensure dignity, tolerance and respect for everyone. It will help champion the broader cause of equality by continuing to recognise the different needs and experiences of both men and women in our society.