



## Daily Report

Tuesday, 24 May 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 May 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 24 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

#### ■ Crown Prosecution Service and Police: Bureaucracy

**Mark Eastwood:**

[\[900193\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of disclosure requirements on (a) police and (b) Crown Prosecution Service workloads.

**Alex Chalk:**

Disclosure remains one of the most important and complex issues in the criminal justice system, and it is a priority for this Government to encourage improvements in disclosure practice in order to ensure the disclosure regime operates effectively, fairly, and justly. The first annual review of the operation of the Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure has just been completed and will be published imminently. That review involved close collaboration with policing, the CPS and others in the criminal justice system and has led to some important amendments to the guidelines which should aid front line policing, particularly in relation to the development of an annex on redaction.

The new approach of the Guidelines gives clear guidance on only providing relevant information to the CPS, for example by cutting footage from body worn video or only including relevant message chains not an entire phone image. In this way there is less to redact, thereby helping the burden felt by front line policing and the CPS.

#### ■ War Crimes: Ukraine

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[2721\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment has she made of international support for Ukraine's domestic war crimes investigations and prosecutions.

**Suella Braverman:**

The Government stands side-by-side with Ukraine in its domestic war crimes investigations and prosecutions. I have a close relationship with Ukrainian Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova, and met her and her team in person in Ukraine on 9 May 2022, to better understand how the UK and the international community can support Ukraine in its search for justice and accountability for Russia's actions in its illegal invasion.

The Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office has opened over 12,000 case files and has hundreds of suspects. The UK and its allies are determined to provide practical and technical expertise to support their investigations. I have appointed Sir Howard Morrison QC, one of the UK's leading war crimes lawyers and a former judge at the International Criminal Court, as an Independent Adviser to Prosecutor General Venediktova. My visit to Ukraine was also to lead a delegation of war crimes experts, who remained in Poland to meet international partners, NGOs, and other



stakeholders to scope out the assistance the UK can provide. The Government and the UK's wider operational bodies are carefully considering what support we can provide.

I know that our allies are equally supportive. Earlier this month I convened a meeting of the Quintet of Attorneys General from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, with Prosecutor General Venediktova. Following this meeting, we have published a joint statement which makes clear our countries' support for Ukraine's domestics war crimes investigations and prosecutions, and our commitment to work together with the Prosecutor General and her Office to ensure every perpetrator faces justice.

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

### ■ Animal Experiments: Innovation

**Henry Smith:**

[\[3562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to develop innovative and effective alternatives to animal experiments as part of its efforts to make the UK a science superpower.

**George Freeman:**

UK Research and Innovation encourages the development of new methodologies in all areas of health research and funds the development of non-animal technologies both directly through research council funding rounds and by its core funding commitment to the National Centre for 3Rs of £49.1 million over 5 years.

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council has just launched £4 million of funding targeted at developing the next generation of non-animal technology and driving the uptake of existing non-animal technology.

### ■ Business: Subsidies

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[5407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that subsidies are not awarded to firms who do not comply with UK law.

**Paul Scully:**

The Subsidy Control Act 2022, once commenced, will require that a subsidy not be mis-used and provides mechanisms for recovery were this to occur. Until the Act is commenced, the provisions of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, which contains similar provisions, have binding effect.

The purpose of a subsidy is to achieve a specific change in behaviour to facilitate a specific policy objective, not to give the Government ongoing leverage over how a company conducts its affairs. It is for other areas of law to set out the limits of acceptable corporate behaviour.

## ■ Carbon Capture and Storage

**Sally-Ann Hart:** [2702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the briefing paper by the Climate Change Committee published on 23 March 2022 entitled Blue Carbon, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including blue carbon habitats in the UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

**Greg Hands:**

BEIS has commissioned scientific research to better understand the feasibility of including Blue Carbon in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory, and what change in UK Greenhouse Gas emissions would result from inclusion. A technical report on this subject is due for publication this summer.

## ■ Energy: Newport West

**Ruth Jones:** [2645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of energy costs for people in Newport West constituency.

**Greg Hands:**

Quarterly statistics on energy prices by region may be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/quarterly-energy-prices>. The Government do not have data at the constituency level.

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 rising energy bills.

## ■ Energy: Standing Charges

**Nick Smith:** [2452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to review the system of standing charges for (a) electricity and (b) gas customers.

**Greg Hands:**

The standing charge includes the costs energy suppliers incur to provide a live supply of gas and electricity to individual properties, regardless of how much energy their customers use. If it was removed, these costs would be added to the unit price of energy. Otherwise, suppliers would not be able to recover the legitimate costs of serving customers.

## ■ Energy: Storage

**Alan Brown:**

[\[2543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to introduce a legal definition of energy storage in the context of battery storage technology.

**Greg Hands:**

In the 2021 Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, the Government committed to defining electricity storage as a distinct subset of generation in primary legislation when parliamentary time allows.

## ■ Horizon Europe

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[3772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress he has made on the UK's application to associate to Horizon Europe.

**George Freeman:**

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central on 27 April 2022 to Question [156445](#).

## ■ Hospitality Industry: Inflation and Taxation

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[5406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Hospitality Sector Council is taking steps to help hospitality businesses with the increases in (a) VAT rate, (b) National Income Contributions and (c) the rate of inflation.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government published its first-ever Hospitality Strategy in July 2021. The Strategy set out twenty-two commitments to support the sector across a range of policy areas, grouped into three themes: Reopening, Recovery, and Resilience.

This Department launched the Hospitality Sector Council to oversee the delivery of the strategy, and BEIS officials and I continue to work with the Council and the sector to deliver the strategy commitments.

The Government engages regularly with hospitality businesses and organisations to understand the pressing issues that they face, including cost pressures and supply chain disruptions.

## ■ Insolvency Service: Closures

**Mick Whitley:**

[\[5490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 960, if he will place in the Library a copy of the equality impact assessment carried out by the Insolvency Service on its plan to close offices including in Birkenhead.

**Paul Scully:**

An overarching Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for all offices, including Birkenhead, affected by the plan to restructure the Insolvency Service's estate to eleven regional offices. A copy of this document will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

**■ Nuclear Reactors****Jim Shannon:**[\[3583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will direct the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) to commence discussions with Small Modular Reactor (SMR) vendors on using NDA sites for SMR developments.

**Greg Hands:**

The NDA has a clear mission to decommission their sites safely, freeing up land for future uses. The NDA welcomes engagement from all stakeholders with a potential future use of their land and has a history of engagement and land transfer across their portfolio including with SMR vendors. The NDA requires permission from Government prior to any actual disposal/sale of land, but this does not prevent the NDA from discussing the future use of their land with interested parties, including SMR developers.

**■ Offshore Industry: North Sea****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[3682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of halting the development of the North Sea gas field, Jackdaw, which is currently being assessed by the oil and gas regulator.

**Greg Hands:**

Development proposals for oil fields under existing licences are a matter for the regulators - the North Sea Transition Authority and the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED). As part of that regulatory process, OPRED completes an Environmental Impact Assessment and a public consultation on any proposal, ensuring the impact on the environment is taken into account. OPRED's decision on the Environmental Impact Assessment for Jackdaw will be made in due course.

**■ Renewable Energy: Finance****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[2457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the upcoming Contract for Difference Auction Round 4 on energy bills.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is committed to minimising energy costs for businesses and consumers. Contracts for Difference offer value-for-money to consumers and

continue to deliver low prices. For example, between the first allocation round in 2015 and the last round in 2019, the price per unit (MWh) of offshore wind fell by around 65%.

Competitive auctions are proven to be effective in helping to keep costs down and this year's auction has been designed to keep the allocation process highly competitive. The impact will be dependent on the outcome of the competitive auction process; it is expected that this year's round will have a small impact on household bills.

## ■ Research: Finance

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[3771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to increase research and development spending.

**George Freeman:**

The Government is providing the fastest ever sustained uplift in R&D funding, reaching £20 billion per annum by the end of the SR period – £5 billion more than 2021/22. We remain committed to the target of UK economy-wide R&D investment reaching 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

As the custodian of the R&D system, BEIS received its largest ever R&D budget at SR21 with £39.8bn over the SR period. We have now set out how funding will be allocated across our partner organisations over the next three years. Details of funding for specific programmes will be agreed by BEIS and partner organisations and set out in due course.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ 10 Downing Street: Taxis

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[2427\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 114, if he will publish the total cost to the public purse of vehicles ordered on Downing Street's travel account for mini-cabs from January 2020 to December 2021 in whatever form, and over whatever accounting periods, the records of those costs are monitored and maintained.

**Michael Ellis:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my previous answer of 16 May 2022 to PQ 114.

### ■ Government Departments: Consultants

**Ian Lavery:**

[\[2479\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many external consultants have been hired by each Government department since 2020; and what the cost to the public purse has been of those consultants in each of those years.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

Government Departments draw on the advice of external specialists for a range of services. Consultancy includes staff who provide objective advice relating to strategy, structure, management or operations of an organisation and may include the identification of options with recommendations.

The Consultancy Playbook was published in May 2021 alongside the Sourcing Playbook, to provide additional guidance when sourcing consultancy services. This supports our agenda to commission and engage with consultants more effectively, achieving better outcomes, better value for money, and improved civil service capability through the transferral of knowledge and skills.

Consultancy is bought as a service, not by the number of individuals required, therefore the number of consultants hired is not held centrally. Consultancy spend, including ALB spend, is published in departmental annual reports and accounts and is reproduced below.

| DEPARTMENT | 2019/20     | 2020/21     |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| BEIS       | 55,700,000  | 137,300,000 |
| CO         | 38,841,000  | 79,779,000  |
| DCMS       | 32,900,000  | 46,100,000  |
| DFE        | 12,700,000  | 8,700,000   |
| DEFRA      | 33,299,000  | 36,337,000  |
| DFT        | 168,390,654 | 175,720,840 |
| DHSC       | 290,206,000 | 485,997,000 |
| DIT        | 897,000     | 5,782,000   |
| DWP        | 28,500,000  | 29,000,000  |
| FCDO       | 2,936,902   | 2,742,044   |
| HMRC       | 1,700,000   | 8,600,000   |
| HMT        | 18,000,000  | 17,000,000  |
| HO         | 33,700,000  | 32,402,000  |
| MHCLG      | 5,229,000   | 20,148,000  |
| MOD        | 134,627,000 | 109,668,000 |
| MOJ        | 14,962,000  | 15,742,000  |

## ■ House of Lords: York

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[2555\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to publish proposals on moving the House of Lords to York.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[2562\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of moving the House of Lords to York.

**Michael Ellis:**

Decisions on the location of Parliament, and how to proceed with the Parliamentary Restoration and Renewal Programme, are for Parliament.

The Government has an aspiration that all parts of the United Kingdom should feel connected to politics and indeed to politicians. Levelling up is a moral, social and economic programme for the whole of government. As part of the Place for Growth programme, the Government has previously engaged with the York Central Partnership and explored whether the space would allow for Parliamentary activity, should it be required.

## ■ Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[4541\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 163 on the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests and with reference to the letter from Rt Hon Lord Geidt, Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests, Cabinet Office to the Chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, of 6 January 2022, whether a decision was taken to publish his report after the elections on 5 May 2022; and if he will make a statement.

**Michael Ellis:**

I refer the hon. Member back to my answer to PQ 163 of 16 May. The timing of publication of the Annual Report is a matter for the Independent Adviser.

## ■ Ministers: Disclosure of Information

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[3554\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Prime Minister will make it his policy to publish transparency data from the Cabinet Office on ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings on a monthly basis; if he will undertake an assessment of the impact on the ability of interested parties to scrutinise Ministers of providing updates three months in arrears on a quarterly basis; and if he will make a statement.

**Michael Ellis:**

Departments publish details of ministers' gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings on a quarterly basis. The government will continue to look at how the range of information

published by Government can be improved and made as useful as possible to the public, press and Parliament.

## ■ Russia: Subversion

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[5383\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2022 to Question 162, on Russia: Subversion, whether he has seen evidence of unsuccessful interference in the EU Referendum by (a) internet trolls linked to the Kremlin or (b) other actors.

**Michael Ellis:**

As the Government has said previously, we did not see evidence of successful foreign interference in the EU referendum. That remains the case.

The Intelligence and Security Agencies produce and contribute to regular assessments of State Threats, including around potential interference in UK democratic processes. We keep such assessments under review and, where necessary, update them in response to new intelligence.

The Government has robust structures in place to identify threats to democracy and, where necessary, takes proportionate action to mitigate them. Furthermore, we have brought forward new legislation to provide the security services and law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to disrupt state threats, including foreign interference.

## DEFENCE

## ■ Afghanistan and Ukraine: Refugees

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[5401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel assigned to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy team have been diverted to work on Ukrainian casework as of 19 May 2022.

**James Heappey:**

Relocating eligible Afghans remains a UK Government priority. As of 19 May 2022, no Ministry of Defence personnel have been diverted from the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) team to work on Ukrainian casework.

Our commitment to Afghan nationals who are eligible under the ARAP scheme, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure.

## ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**John Healey:** [\[4476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any further data breaches of personal data relating to Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applicants has occurred since September 2021.



**James Heappey:**

Further to the data breaches confirmed in the Written Ministerial Statement (HCWS389) released by the Defence Secretary on 15 November 2021, one data breach has occurred, involving the email addresses of ten individuals.

**Attachments:**

1. Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy Data Breach I [Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy Data Breach Investigation - Update.docx]

**John Healey:**[\[4480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average length of time is for processing an application to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

**James Heappey:**

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme was launched on 1 April 2021 and is one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world. It is not time-limited and will endure, facilitating the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families.

Information on the average time taken to process an application is not currently available. We are working at pace to consider each application on a case-by-case basis and timelines for processing applications vary significantly from case to case, due to the complexity and personal circumstances of each applicant.

**David Linden:**[\[4668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme received a decision in each month since August 2020; and what proportion of those decisions were approvals.

**James Heappey:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him to Question 415 on 18 May 2022.

**Attachments:**

1. Afghanistan: Refugees [UIN 415.docx]

**Dan Jarvis:**[\[5400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel were assigned to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy team as of 19 May 2022.

**James Heappey:**

As of 19 May 2022, there were 79 personnel assigned to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) team.

**Dan Jarvis:**[\[5402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to support eligible Afghan nationals under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy who cannot get (a) passports and (b) Pakistan visas for (i) financial and (ii) security reasons.

**James Heappey:**

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme was launched on 1 April 2021 and has been one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world. It is not time-limited and will endure, facilitating the relocation of eligible Afghans and their families.

Relocating eligible Afghans without passports or other documents continues to be challenging, but we are working with third countries to negotiate routes that can be used for their relocation to the United Kingdom. The security situation in Afghanistan remains dynamic and therefore I am afraid we are not able to share any additional details of our plans for supporting those ARAP personnel in their bid to leave Afghanistan.

To date, 9,200 eligible individuals have already been safely relocated to the UK under the ARAP scheme and we continue to work at pace to support and facilitate the safe evacuation of eligible ARAP personnel and their families through a range of third countries.

**Dan Jarvis:**[\[5403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department is providing to Afghan nationals in category 3 of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

**James Heappey:**

Any individual found eligible under Category 3 of the ARAP scheme may be offered support other than relocation to the UK, which could include, but is not limited to, security advice, financial support for relocation within Afghanistan or other bespoke support.

**■ Army: Recruitment****John Healey:**[\[5328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many army recruits had their data compromised as a result of the data breach of the defence recruitment system in March 2022.

**Leo Docherty:**

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 number of Army recruits, who had their personal data revealed on the dark web, is fewer than five.

**John Healey:**[\[5329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what personal information of army recruits was compromised as a result of the data breach of the defence recruitment system reported in March 2022.

**Leo Docherty:**

The information, that was compromised, was personally identifiable information pertaining to Army recruitment candidates. For reasons of security, I cannot disclose any further information, however it has been confirmed that no special categories of information was compromised.

**John Healey:**[\[5330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he is able to exclude the possibility of hostile state involvement in the data breach of the defence recruitment system reported in March 2022.

**Leo Docherty:**

Attribution in these types of events is inherently complex and Defence works collaboratively with the National Cyber Security Centre to support attribution development, where viable.

**John Healey:**[\[5331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether data compromised as a result of the data breach of the defence recruitment system reported in March 2022 was found for sale on the dark web.

**Leo Docherty:**

The compromised data set was published on the dark web, but the data was not for sale. No further information has been identified for sale on the dark web, as a result of the data breach on 14 March 2022.

**John Healey:**[\[5332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the data breach relating to the defence recruitment system reported in March 2022 allowed potential hackers to access other systems in his Department.

**Leo Docherty:**

The independent NCSC Assured Cyber Incident Response (CIR) company concluded that "There was also no indication of application layer compromise that would have provided a foothold or opportunity for a threat actor to exfiltrate data from within the application or surrounding storage."

**■ AWACS: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[4507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 631 on AWACS: Procurement, when he anticipates that contract amendment will be enacted.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence and Boeing Defence UK have reached a negotiated agreement on the revised E-7 Wedgetail acquisition programme. The work necessary

to finalise the documentation for the associated contract amendment is well-advanced and it is anticipated that this process will be completed soon.

## ■ Challenger Tanks

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [2387]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether all Challenger 2 MBTs would be available for operational use if required.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [2388]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of the UK's Challenger 2 MBTs are in (a) active service and (b) a state of extended readiness.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Of the British Army's operational fleet of 227 Challenger 2 tanks, an appropriate proportion are held in storage at readiness. I am withholding further information as its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

Details of the number of vehicles in the UK Armed Forces are published on an annual basis on the government's website. The most recent publication can be found here: [UK armed forces equipment and formations 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2021)

## ■ Defence Equipment & Support: Clothing and Food

**John Healey:** [2352]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much Defence Equipment and Support has spent on food and clothing for civilian staff in each month since January 2021.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The records of direct expenditure on food and clothing do not differentiate between civilian and military personnel. On this basis, between January 2021 and March 2022, Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) recorded direct expenditure of £25,596 on food and on other official hospitality in support of activities such as business meetings and training. This figure also may include costs for the hire of conference centres and other external venues, which are recorded together with food costs. It is not possible to provide a monthly breakdown as the data includes accountancy adjustments and therefore does not present a valid picture of actual expenditure.

The regulations for the provision of Food/Official Hospitality at public expense are set out in the MOD Financial Management and Charging Policy (Joint Service Publication (JSP) 462).

Recorded expenditure on the direct purchase and repair of clothing for DE&S staff is set out in the following table. This expenditure includes specialised clothing, such as for use in salvage and marine operations, stores depots, the British Forces Post Office, and by apprentices in certain fields that require, for example, safety clothing.

| JAN-21   | FEB-21  | MAR-21  | APR-21  | MAY-21   | JUN-21 | JUL-21  |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|--------|---------|
| £10,016  | £30,921 | £23,905 | £95     | £60,362  | £6,705 | £12,819 |
| AUG-21   | SEP-21  | OCT-21  | NOV-21  | DEC-21   | JAN-22 | FEB-22  |
| £3,746   | £7,298  | £52,024 | £12,330 | £6,868   | £7,114 | £21,071 |
| MAR-22   |         |         |         | TOTAL    |        |         |
| £153,594 |         |         |         | £408,869 |        |         |

In addition, the following table shows recorded payments to re-imburse civilian staff for expenditure on meals and refreshments incurred during detached duty both in the UK and overseas. The policy, rules and guidance on the reimbursement of meals and/or refreshments when conducting business visits are contained within the MOD Business Travel Guide.

| JAN-21  | FEB-21  | MAR-21  | APR-21  | MAY-21   | JUN-21  | JUL-21  |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| £13,042 | £19,436 | £21,045 | £23,655 | £43,910  | £33,243 | £44,949 |
| AUG-21  | SEP-21  | OCT-21  | NOV-21  | DEC-21   | JAN-22  | FEB-22  |
| £41,055 | £59,694 | £69,770 | £86,862 | £69,619  | £19,795 | £62,280 |
| MAR-22  |         |         |         | TOTAL    |         |         |
| £87,012 |         |         |         | £695,369 |         |         |

## ■ Eastern Europe: Armed Forces

**John Healey:**

[\[4471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK has offered to NATO allies to deploy further troops in eastern Europe as part of the Enhanced Vigilance Activity force.

**James Heappey:**

As one of NATO's leading European Allies, the UK makes substantial contributions to NATO's enhanced Vigilance Activity. This includes Typhoon Fast Jets policing routes in Poland and Romania and several ships supporting NATO Maritime Groups in the High North and Mediterranean. The UK is also the framework nation for the

enhanced Forward Presence, recently doubling our numbers there and also training alongside the US in Bulgaria.

NATO is actively considering its future force posture in the run up to the leaders' summit in Madrid in July.

#### ■ **European Fighter Aircraft: Radar**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[5364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his most recent estimate is of the date by which the AESA radar on Typhoon aircraft will achieve initial operating capability.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA), the European Common Radar System Mark 2 (ECRS Mk2), is planned to be integrated onto the frontline RAF Typhoon Force by 2030 through a wider four-nation Eurofighter programme called Phase 4 Enhancement (P4E). As well as requiring the ECRS Mk2 hardware and software development and embodiment, the programme remains subject to further funding and programmatic agreements between the four partner nations. The next phase of the programme completes development of the prototype of the new radar and integrates it onto a UK Typhoon trials and development aircraft operated by BAE Systems.

For the RAF Typhoon Force to declare initial operating capability as a capability milestone, it will also require commensurate investment in people, information, training and infrastructure which continues to be refined. This will ensure the UK receives maximum capability benefit from the new equipment.

#### ■ **Mali: Radicalism**

**John Healey:**

[\[5340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the level of Islamic extremist groups in Mali.

**James Heappey:**

The UK is concerned about the deteriorating security situation in Mali, with violent attacks being perpetrated by Islamic extremists. We are committed to building peace and stability in the Sahel through our deployment to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) which is a clear illustration of how our defence and security capabilities can contribute to regional stability.

#### ■ **Mali: Wagner Group**

**John Healey:**

[\[5338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the presence of the Wagner Group in Mali.

**James Heappey:**

The Wagner Group is directly connected to the Russian state and is sanctioned under the UK's Russia sanctions regime. The UK is deeply concerned by its presence in Mali. The private Russian military company is a driver of conflict; it has committed human rights abuses elsewhere and been linked by nongovernmental organisations to abuses in Mali. Together with other partners active in the region, we continue to take a strong line against Wagner activities, and we remain committed to the UN peacekeeping mission there.

**■ Nuclear Submarines and Nuclear Weapons****Dave Doogan:**[\[3726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of defence spending has gone towards the (a) procurement, (b) maintenance, (c) infrastructure, including (i) maintenance of factories and (ii) storage of nuclear waste and decommissioned submarines and (d) other costs associated with nuclear weapons and submarines.

**Jeremy Quin:**

During Financial Year 2020-21, the Nuclear Enterprise's spend was around 13% of the £42 billion total defence spend.

**■ Queen's Guards: Uniforms****Ruth Jones:**[\[4693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the research by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and ECOPEL on faux bear fur and the Answer of 21 February 2022 to Question 121826 on Queen's guards: uniforms, if he will make a comparative assessment of the performance of (a) bear fur and (b) the faux bear fur created by PETA and ECOPEL in meeting his Department's five requirements for use in Queen's Guards ceremonial caps; and if he will take steps to make ceremonial caps from faux fur.

**Ruth Jones:**[\[4694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to use faux bear fur in the production of uniforms used by the armed forces.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 21 February 2022 to Question 121824 to the hon. Member for York Central (Rachael Maskell).

**Attachments:**

1. Queen Guards Uniforms [121824 - Queen Guards Uniforms.docx]

**■ Royal Fleet Auxiliary: Tankers****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[5365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for the cost of remedial work paid by his Department in connection with the UK's Tide-Class Tankers.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The information requested will take more time to collate. I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

■ **Russia: Military Aircraft****John Healey:**[\[5333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Russian military aircraft the UK has intercepted close to UK air space (a) since 25 February 2022 and (b) in the last 12 months.

**James Heappey:**

The number of days on which Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Typhoon aircraft launched against Russian military aviation approaching the UK for 2021 and 2022 is given below. Not all launches resulted in interception as some incidents were resolved prior to interception.

| YEAR     | NO OF DAYS QRA WAS LAUNCHED |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| 2021     | 4                           |
| 2022 (1) | 2                           |

Note (1) 1 Jan to 19 May 2022

I am withholding further details as deterrence is a principal function of QRA and QRA is in turn an integral part of the air defence of the UK. The disclosure of information that might compromise the QRA deterrent capability would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

■ **Ukraine: Military Aid****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[5366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the assistance provided to Ukraine has been paid out through the Treasury Reserve.

**James Heappey:**

Yes. The military assistance provided by the Ministry of Defence is being funded out of the Treasury Reserve.

■ **Veterans: Migraines****Owen Thompson:**[\[5466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) guidance and (b) policy Veterans UK staff follow on veterans suffering from migraines.

**Leo Docherty:**

I can confirm that there is no specific guidance or policy which Veterans UK staff follow regarding veterans suffering from migraines as a result of Service.



Claims made in respect of migraines would be considered in the same way as any other claim under either the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) or the War Pension Scheme (WPS). AFCS and WPS decisions are evidence-based and, taking account of the risk factors or causes of an injury or illness, decisions on entitlement are made based on whether the injury or illness was caused, or made worse by an individual's service.

Information regarding both schemes and how to contact the veterans' welfare service is also available on gov.uk at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk/about>

MOD Veterans UK encourages anyone who wishes to discuss making a claim for a service-related condition under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or War Pensions Scheme to contact the Veterans UK Helpline on 0808 1914 218.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Channel Four Television: Privatisation

**Paul Girvan:**

**[4664]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent progress her Department has made on the future of Channel 4.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government set out its plans to deliver a new golden age of British TV and to help the nation's public service broadcasters (PSBs) thrive in a White Paper, published on 28 April 2022.

Channel 4 is a major pillar of these plans to safeguard the future of public service broadcasting. Following an extensive consultation, the Secretary of State has come to the conclusion that, in today's intensely competitive broadcast economy, public ownership is holding Channel 4 back.

Channel 4 is and will remain a free-to-air PSB, just like ITV, Channel 5 and STV which are privately-owned and hugely successful. But the government will remove the restriction which effectively prohibits Channel 4 from producing and selling its own content so it can diversify its revenue streams and improve its long-term sustainability.

Whoever buys the broadcaster will inherit equivalent obligations to what it is subject to now as a Public Service Broadcaster - a requirement to support regional production outside London and England, commission a minimum volume of shows from independent producers, and to provide news as well as the original, innovative and risk-taking content it is known and loved for.

The Government will look to use some of the proceeds from the sale of Channel 4 to deliver a new creative dividend for the sector.

The Government will bring forward legislation to enable a change of ownership of Channel 4 through the Media Bill announced in the Queen's Speech.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[5371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the oral evidence to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on 19 May, if she will provide the source of the opinion poll that stated 53 per cent of the UK public were unaware that Channel 4 is currently in public ownership.

**Julia Lopez:**

The polling cited by the Secretary of State was conducted by the consultants Redfield and Wilton who found that 53% of people thought Channel 4 was privately owned.

#### ■ Data Protection: Standards

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[4554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to (a) reform the Information Commissioner's Office and (b) create new data protection standards.

**Julia Lopez:**

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales announced in the Queen's Speech that a data reform bill will be introduced in this parliamentary session.

DCMS consulted on a range of proposals on how to improve the UK's data protection framework including reforms to the Information Commissioner's Office. The consultation response will set out further details and will be published shortly.

#### ■ Peat Bogs: Highlands of Scotland

**Jamie Stone:**

[3705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of adding the Flow Country to prospective list held by the Government for consideration for inscription onto the UNESCO World Heritage Site List.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

I am pleased to confirm the Flow Country was added to the UK's Tentative List in 2012. This is the list of prospective sites to go forward for the World Heritage Committee's consideration for inscribing new sites on the World Heritage List.

We expect the Committee to make a decision on whether to add the Flow Country to the World Heritage List at their meeting in 2024. In the meantime, the Flow Country will remain on the UK's Tentative List through the current review exercise to select new prospective sites.

## ■ Public Service Broadcasting

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[4555]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans his Department has to take steps to reform public service broadcasting.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government is determined to ensure that our public service broadcasters (PSBs) can maintain their position as the beating heart of the UK's hugely successful creative economy.

On 28 April 2022 the government published its broadcasting White Paper – Up Next – which sets out our vision for the sector. Rapid changes in technology, viewing habits and the entrance of global players have introduced new challenges for British broadcasters. Against that backdrop of rapid change, we need to take action to support British broadcasters in meeting the most pressing of those challenges, to protect our mixed ecology, and ensure our PSBs remain at the heart of our plans.

The White Paper details how we will reform decades-old broadcasting laws to boost our PSBs, including by delivering a new public service remit for television and making sure public service content is always carried and easy to find for UK audiences on connected devices and major online platforms. This will support the sustainability of the PSB system, and ensure PSBs continue to provide audiences across the UK with universally available, high quality programming.

We will take forward these measures via a Media Bill when parliamentary time allows.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Apprentices: STEM Subjects

**Henry Smith:**

**[3560]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of 19,000 apprentices contributions in the aerospace, defence, security and space sectors on the promotion of STEM throughout the UK.

**Alex Burghart:**

The department recognises the critical value of science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) in driving the economy and productivity. Ensuring that anyone, regardless of their background, can pursue a career in a STEM occupation is a key priority for this government.

Apprenticeships are a great way for people to receive high-quality training and begin, or progress in, a successful STEM career. The department has put employers at the heart of our apprenticeship system, empowering them to design the standards they need with the help of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

There are over 340 employer-designed apprenticeship standards in STEM, including

Cyber Security Technician at level 3, Space Engineer Technician at level 4 and Aero Space Engineer (degree) at level 6.

It is encouraging to see that in the 2021/22 academic year, there were 66,000 apprenticeship starts in STEM, making up 32.3% of all apprenticeship starts that year.

The department continues to promote apprenticeships in schools through the Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge programme and is working with our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network of influential employers such as Siemens, Bombardier, and Rolls-Royce to promote best practices in recruiting and retaining people from all backgrounds in STEM apprenticeships.

### ■ Children: Social Services

**Helen Hayes:** [2586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of local authority children's social care budgets spent on private providers, by region in 2019-20.

**Helen Hayes:** [2587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of local authority children's social care budgets spent on private providers by region in 2020-21.

**Helen Hayes:** [2588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of local authority children's social care budgets being spent on private providers by region in 2021-22.

**Will Quince:**

The underlying data is published as part of the department's statistical release 'LA and school expenditure', available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/la-and-school-expenditure/2020-21>.

The proportion of local authority children's services spending, which was spent on private provision by region for 2019/20 is listed below:

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| EAST MIDLANDS   | 29% |
| East of England | 28% |
| Inner London    | 30% |
| North East      | 18% |
| North West      | 30% |
| Outer London    | 23% |

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|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| EAST MIDLANDS            | 29% |
| South East               | 29% |
| South West               | 29% |
| West Midlands            | 31% |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 22% |

The proportion of local authority children's services spending, which was spent on private provision by region for 2020/21 is listed below:

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|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| EAST MIDLANDS            | 30% |
| East of England          | 27% |
| Inner London             | 30% |
| North East               | 21% |
| North West               | 32% |
| Outer London             | 25% |
| South East               | 33% |
| South West               | 31% |
| West Midlands            | 32% |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 22% |

Local authorities' spend on private provision is collected as part of the Section 251 outturn data collection. Data for the 2021/22 financial year will be published in December 2022.

**Ed Davey:**

[\[3456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department plans to take to enforce the duties for assessment of children in need that local authorities must meet, as outlined in the Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance.

**Will Quince:**

Ofsted produces guidance, 'inspecting local authority children's services' (last updated April 2022), which sets out a framework for inspecting local authority children's services to assist inspectors to be consistent in their inspections while having regard to local circumstances. Among other things, the inspections cover the effectiveness of local authority children's services to help and protect children including those at risk of harm, with the focus on the experiences of children and

young people; the effectiveness of leaders and managers; and the quality of professional practice.

The guidance is clear on what steps will be taken if services are found to be inadequate, including the intervention powers of my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education.

The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services>.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[900179]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that children at risk of harm have adequate access to safe placements.

**Will Quince:**

Local authorities have a statutory duty to make sure that there is sufficient provision in their area to meet the needs of children in their care.

The government is supporting local authorities to meet their statutory duty through capital investment. The 2021 Spending Review announced £259 million capital funding to maintain capacity and expand provision in both secure and open children's homes. This will provide high quality, safe homes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.

Increasing the capacity of open and secure children's homes will enable more vulnerable children to get the right care and support at the right time, positively impacting upon their outcomes. It will reduce the number of children placed far from home, improving their life chances and reducing costs to local authorities. It will also support local authorities to develop the provision they need locally that may not be met in the private market. In particular, children with complex needs are often placed in so-called unregulated provision

The first phase of the programme will create new places and support provision in secure children's homes in all nine regions of England. It will be the first in several phases of capital investment up to 2025, and will also create new 'step-down' places to support children to move safely out of secure accommodation and back into the community when they are ready. Further details of the funding can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/transformational-investment-in-childrens-social-care-placements>.

## ■ Education: Disadvantaged

**Matt Vickers:**

**[2705]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to invest in education in low performing areas.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Overall, core schools funding is increasing by £4 billion in the 2022/23 academic year, a 7% increase in cash terms per pupil from 2021/22. This includes an increase

in mainstream school funding for 5-16 year olds of £2.5 billion, which is equivalent to an average 5.8% cash increase, or an average of £300 per pupil.

The low prior attainment factor in the national funding formula (NFF) supports low attainment areas by providing more funding for schools whose pupils are likely to need more help to catch up with their peers. We have allocated 6.7% of the total NFF to low prior attainment in 2022/23.

As the government's Levelling Up White Paper and recent Schools White Paper outline, the government is committed to levelling up education standards and increasing capacity in the parts of the country that need this most. The first part of this journey will see investment in 55 Education Investment Areas. These are in the places where outcomes in literacy and numeracy are the poorest and there is the most urgent need for improvement. In these areas we will focus our support for schools not making necessary improvement and trust growth, as well as offering the Levelling Up premium, worth up to £3,000, to eligible teachers in disadvantaged schools and supporting improved digital connectivity through the Connect the Classroom programme.

The department will also be making additional intensive investment in a subset of 24 Priority Education Investment Areas, to address entrenched underperformance, including in literacy and numeracy, in areas with some of the highest rates of disadvantage in the country. This includes around £40 million of additional funding, which will be provided for bespoke interventions to address local needs, such as addressing high absence rates.

## ■ English Language and Mathematics: Education

**Matt Vickers:**

**[2706]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support pupils who fall behind in maths and English.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The recent Schools White Paper (SWP) set out a vision for a system that helps every child to fulfil their potential by ensuring they receive the right support, founded on world class literacy and numeracy.

The department's ambition, by 2030, is that 90% of primary school children will achieve expected standards in reading, writing and maths. The SWP also sets an ambition that the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths increases from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030.

Key to achieving these is providing targeted support for every child that needs it and we have made a pledge to parents that all schools will regularly assess their children to identify if they have fallen behind in English or maths, provide them with timely and evidence-based support if necessary, and keep parents informed on their progress.

To help schools in providing timely and evidence-based support to pupils who have fallen behind in English and maths, the SWP makes the following commitments:

- National Tutoring Programme (NTP): evidence shows effective tutoring can make a big difference to those that have fallen behind. The department has invested £1 billion to establish the NTP, which will deliver up to 6 million tutoring packages by 2024
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF): the department will re-endow the EEF with at least £100 million, lasting for at least the next decade. This will ensure that schools will continue to have access to the most recent, very best evidence on 'what works'
- Accelerator Fund: the department will also provide over £55 million to develop and scale-up the best-evidenced literacy and numeracy interventions
- Guidance on 'what works': the department has made it easier for schools to access the best evidence of 'what works' by introducing a menu of recommended evidence-based approaches. Further guidance on targeted support will be set out in due course

The department recognises that great teaching, high standards of behaviour and attendance, a strong curriculum, and a stronger school system will also have a key part to play in helping children to reach their potential in English and maths.

## ■ Environment Protection: Apprentices

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

**[3482]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Net Zero strategy, what steps the Government is taking to help promote apprenticeships in the environmental sector.

**Alex Burghart:**

Apprenticeships will play a key part in supporting the creation of two million skilled jobs to build back greener and support the UK to transition to net-zero by 2050.

The department has put employers at the heart of our apprenticeship system, empowering them to design a range of high-quality apprenticeship standards that are directly aligned to the green economy. This includes Dual Smart Meter Installer level 2, Countryside Ranger level 4 to level 7 Sustainability Business Specialist.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) has identified over 50 apprenticeship standards that are supportive of the green economy. This includes some in the Digital, Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and Project Management spheres. This will support employers to develop the right skills and build the workforce for tomorrow.

The department is encouraging employers to make full use of apprenticeships in the environmental sector, including those in construction and manufacturing who want to develop green skills. We are also improving training options and supporting modern methods of construction that support greener approaches and deliver our commitment to a net-zero economy.



The department will continue to ensure apprenticeships support new and emerging occupations with the help of the Institute, which is prioritising the development of green apprenticeship standards. This will ensure that employers in the green economy can benefit from apprenticeships and support our transition to net-zero.

## ■ Free School Meals: Finance

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[4534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to increase free school meal budgets in line with inflation; and if he will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

The provision of free school meals (FSM) to children from out-of-work families or those on low incomes is of the utmost importance to this government. Under the benefits-related criteria, the department provides a free healthy meal to around 1.7 million children, ensuring they are well-nourished and can concentrate, learn, and achieve in the classroom.

Under this government, eligibility for FSM has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century, including the introduction of universal infant FSM, and further education FSM.

Schools fund benefit-related FSM from their core funding which they receive through the schools' block of the dedicated schools grant and is derived from the national funding formula (NFF). For the 2022/23 financial year, the funding schools attract through the 'FSM factor' in the NFF is increasing to £470 per eligible pupil.

In recognition of cost pressures, after the NFF rates were set, the department received additional funding from HM Treasury for core schools funding in the 2022/23 financial year, which was distributed through a schools supplementary grant. As a result of this additional funding, core schools funding for mainstream schools has increased by 5.8% per pupil in 2022/23.

## ■ Higher Education: Standards

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[2713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve the quality of higher education courses.

**Michelle Donelan:**

We want all students, regardless of their background, to benefit from high quality world-leading higher education. The government is committed to tackling low-quality courses and ensuring that students and the taxpayer see returns on their investment and receive value-for-money.

We are taking forward significant regulatory reform with the Office for Students (OfS) to introduce a more rigorous and effective quality regime. This includes, for the first time, setting stringent minimum numerical thresholds for student outcomes, and the introduction in May 2022 of revised conditions of registration.

In March 2022, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and I made clear to the OfS that the government expects the OfS to step up its investigation activities through the implementation of a visible and effective on-site 'boots on the ground' inspections regime to be followed by robust regulatory action wherever that is appropriate. In cases where low and unacceptable quality is confirmed, regulatory action could include the imposition of formal sanctions including financial penalties and, ultimately, the suspension or removal from the OfS register, and with it access to student finance.

In addition, we have consulted on the introduction of targeted student number controls to prevent the growth of low-quality courses with poor outcomes. The consultation has now closed and we are considering the views submitted, which we will respond to in due course.

We have made clear our firm view that students must be able to expect high-quality teaching that includes face-to-face education. I wrote to Vice-Chancellors on 4 May 2022 setting out my expectation that, now the government has removed all restrictions on in-person teaching, all students should be receiving a comparable amount of in-person teaching to before the pandemic and that providers should be transparent about the sort of teaching students can expect.

## ■ Languages: Classroom Assistants

**Catherine West:**

**[3693]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase the number of language assistants from the EU in UK schools.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department continues to welcome talented individuals to teach, or train to teach, in the UK, including through the Language Assistants Programme. UK schools can continue to benefit from the presence of a language assistant by applying through the official programme, managed by the British Council on behalf of the Department for Education and devolved administrations.

This year, requests to host modern language assistants (MLAs) in the UK have increased by 29%, from 506 to 653. These assistants will be supporting the teaching of languages across the UK during the 2022/23 academic year. The MLAs will come from 14 partner destinations worldwide, six of which are EU member states.

The language assistants programme is offering schools in the UK the option to apply for shorter posts of under six months. This is encouraging for both assistants and hosts, since MLAs applying to stay in the UK for less than six months do not have to pay for the health surcharge as part of the visa application, reducing the overall cost of hosting an MLA. This makes the programme more affordable and appealing for UK schools.

The British Council also runs targeted marketing campaigns, including case studies and information sessions, across educational institutions of all levels to show the wide-ranging benefits of hosting language assistants.

## ■ Nurseries: Staff

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[3802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to publish the evidential basis used to inform any potential future decisions to amend the staff to child ratio in nursery settings.

**Will Quince:**

The government will consult in the summer on moving to the Scottish ratios for two-year-olds, from a ratio of 1:4 (one adult to four children) to 1:5 (one adult to five children). Throughout this consultation process, the department will engage fully with the sector and parents/carers on this proposed change, and this will inform any potential future decisions which will be published via a government response to the consultation.

The department's priority continues to be to provide safe, high quality early years provision for our youngest children.

## ■ School Choice: Tameside

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[3511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help extend parental choice for parents in respect of the education of children nearing secondary school age in (a) Tameside and (b) Denton.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[3512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a new secondary Free School to serve Denton to increase parental choice in the area.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places the duty on local authorities to ensure that there are sufficient primary and secondary school places in their area. This is with a view to providing diversity in the provision of schools and increasing opportunities for parental choice. Where a school is an academy and wishes to make changes, including increasing the number of pupils, the academy will follow the department's published guidance for making significant changes.

Where there is forecast growth in demand and a shortfall of places in an area, the Local Authority will meet this future demand, such as by expanding existing schools.

The Schools White Paper also confirmed our intention to seek proposals for new mainstream free schools in areas with the greatest need for more additional places, prioritising proposals in Priority Education Investment Areas such as Tameside. The department will set out further detail on the application process in due course.

Separately, where a local authority thinks there is a demographic need for a new school in its area, it must seek proposals to establish a new free school.

In 2021, 85.1% of pupils were offered their first-choice secondary school in Tameside and 94.5% received offers from one of their top three choices. This compares to the national average where 81.1% of pupils were offered their first choice secondary school and 93.4% received offers from one of their top three choices.

### ■ Schools: Antisemitism

**Sarah Owen:**

**[3740]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to protect Jewish (a) pupils and (b) teachers from anti-Semitic abuse in schools.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The government is clear that antisemitism, as with all forms of bullying and hatred, is abhorrent and has no place in our schools. All educational institutions should be inclusive and welcoming for students and staff from all backgrounds.

The department is aware of reported increases in such incidents, during an escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in May 2021, which is why the former Secretary of State for Education wrote to schools to remind them of their responsibilities to deal with antisemitic incidents with due seriousness as well as their legal duties regarding political impartiality. The department has also published further guidance on political impartiality in schools to help them to ensure educational initiatives in schools are not politically biased or one-sided.

The government continues to take action to support schools to tackle all forms of bullying, including antisemitism. Our Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance sets out that schools should develop a consistent approach to monitoring bullying incidents and evaluating the effectiveness of their approaches. It also directs schools to organisations who can provide support with tackling bullying related to race, religion and nationality, as well as sexual harassment and sexual bullying.

The department is also providing over £2 million of funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2023, to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. This includes projects targeting bullying of groups who share protected characteristics, including race and faith and belief, such as those who are victims of hate related bullying.

The government has also supported Holocaust education for many years and is fully committed to continuing this support. In recognition of its importance, the Holocaust is the only historic event which is compulsory within the national curriculum for history at key stage 3. Effective teaching about the Holocaust can support pupils to learn about the possible consequences of antisemitism and extremism, to understand how society can prevent the repeat of such a catastrophe. The department provides funding for several programmes to support school pupils' and teachers' understanding of the Holocaust.

The department has published guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010, which sets out the general provisions that apply to schools in their role as employers. The guidance is clear that all of the protected characteristics are covered by these

provisions and that harassment or victimisation against potential or existing employees in relation to any of the protected characteristics is unlawful. We encourage schools to consult the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance and Codes of Practice for Employers for more detailed information on their obligations to their teachers and other staff.

## ■ Schools: Buildings

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[5501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have been visited as part of his Department's Condition Data Collection 2 programme to date; and if he will publish a summary of that programme's findings to date.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

As of 20 May 2022, 4,705 schools have been visited as part of the Condition Data Collection (CDC) 2 programme. The department has validated and quality assured school condition datasets for 2,621 of those schools, which represents less than 12% of schools included in the CDC2 programme.

The number of schools that we have validated CDC2 data for represents too small a sample to draw conclusions on the condition of school buildings across the school estate in England. The department plans to publish summary findings of the CDC2 programme in due course.

## ■ Schools: Protection

**David Simmonds:**

[\[900178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure schools co-operate with local safeguarding arrangements.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Safeguarding partners are under a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all children in a local area. All three safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements and must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies. Relevant agencies must act in accordance with those arrangements.

Schools, colleges and other educational providers have a pivotal role to play in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The safeguarding partners should make arrangements to allow all schools (including multi academy trusts), colleges and other educational providers in the local area to be fully engaged, involved, and included in the new safeguarding arrangements. It is expected that local safeguarding partners will name schools, colleges and other educational providers as relevant agencies and will reach their own conclusions on how best locally to achieve the active engagement of individual institutions in a meaningful way. Once designated as a relevant agency, schools and colleges, and other educational providers, in the same way as other relevant agencies, are under a statutory duty to co-operate with the published arrangements.

Following the Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges in June 2021, Ministers from the Department for Education, Home Office, and Department of Health and Social Care wrote to all 135 all safeguarding partners to request that they review their arrangements with schools, colleges, and education providers and set out their local offer to education.

We have also held a series of national events with safeguarding partners, education providers, and other government departments to understand emerging practice and barriers to effective working. These will form part of a wider programme of work to ensure that the arrangements that have been put in place are being utilised to their fullest by both safeguarding partners, and schools and colleges.

### ■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[5497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions his Department has had with HM Treasury on expanding the School Rebuilding Programme.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department engages regularly with HM Treasury about investment in schools, including capital investment.

Well-maintained, safe school buildings are a priority for the department. In recent years the department has announced significant increases in capital funding to improve the condition of schools. We have also allocated over £13 billion to schools and those responsible for school buildings since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed this financial year. In addition, our School Rebuilding Programme will transform 500 schools over the next decade, prioritising schools in poor condition or with potential safety issues.

### ■ Schools: Safety

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[2704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that schools are a safe environment for pupils.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Well-maintained, safe buildings are essential to support high-quality education, which is why investing in the estate is a priority for the department. We have significantly improved our understanding of the condition of the school estate through the Condition Data Collection programme, which allows effective targeting of funding where it is needed most.

Local authorities, academy trusts and school governing bodies are responsible for ensuring buildings are well-maintained, safe, and compliant with relevant regulations. The department supports the sector through capital funding, delivering major rebuilding programmes, and providing extensive guidance and support.

The department provides annual capital funding to schools, and those responsible for school buildings, to improve and maintain the condition of the estate, based on local knowledge of building issues and priorities. Since 2015, over £13 billion of condition funding has been allocated, including £1.8 billion committed in the 2022/23 financial year.

In addition to annual capital allocations, the School Rebuilding Programme will deliver rebuilding and refurbishment projects at 500 schools over the next decade, transforming education for hundreds of thousands of pupils. The first 100 schools to benefit from the programme were announced in 2021, and the department expects to announce up to 300 more schools this year. The latest round of nominations closed in March, and responsible bodies were able to submit evidence of severe need or potential safety issues, which will be prioritised by the programme.

The department is also helping to improve practice and safe management of buildings by providing extensive guidance, advice, and tools on effective estate management, including specific safety issues, such as asbestos.

The department has also recently revised its statutory guidance, 'keeping children safe in education', which provides a strong safeguarding framework for schools. This guidance along with revision of the 'searching, screening and confiscation' guidance, and the forthcoming updated 'behaviour in school' guidance, will support schools to create a safe environment for pupils.

**Kate Griffiths:**

**[900177]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that schools are a safe environment for pupils.

**Will Quince:**

Education is a powerful protective factor for young people. It plays a vital role in early intervention and prevention of the worst possible outcomes for young people, including involvement in county lines and serious violence.

The department's statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) contains extensive safeguarding advice, which all schools and colleges must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It contains advice about all forms of abuse and neglect including the indicators of these harms. KCSIE is clear that all staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm.

The new statutory relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum was introduced in September 2020 with a focus on building respectful, healthy relationships, including ways of resolving conflict. Schools have the freedom to ensure the curriculum meets the need of their pupils which allows them to respond to local issues such as violence and exploitation, with high quality materials available to support teaching.

In addition to this wider work, we are investing £45 million in two new programmes, which are funding specialist support in both mainstream and alternative provision



(AP) schools in the areas where serious violence is most damaging to local communities. The first of these are the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforces, launched in November 2021, which involves specialists being drawn from across health, education, social care, youth services and youth justice to work directly with young people in AP settings.

The second programme is the SAFE ('Support, Attend, Fulfil, Exceed') Taskforces programme, launched earlier this year. SAFE Taskforces are being led by partnerships of local secondary schools in 10 serious violence hotspots with the aim of re-engaging young people in their education through intensive support, informed by the research on what works to prevent serious violence.

### ■ Special Educational Needs: Appeals

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

**[3735]**

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 policy on the mental health of parent carers through placing additional requirements to engage and negotiate with service providers on top of their caring responsibilities.

**Will Quince:**

This government's proposals set out in the Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Alternative Provision Green Paper, which is subject to consultation, seek to enable issues to be resolved earlier and improve relationships locally by strengthening mediation, including consulting on making it mandatory.

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 it arranges for mediation between it and the child's parent or young person, within 30 days. Mediation is effective in the majority of cases. In 2021, 74% of mediation cases were settled without the need to progress to tribunal. Mediation is free of charge for families.

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.

Streamlining complaints processes and strengthening earlier dispute resolution will help to maintain and improve relationships between parents/carers and the local authority to enable them to continue working together. However, parents would still be able to go to tribunal if necessary. Coproduction remains a fundamental principle of the SEND system and the department wants to continue to work with parents and carers at every level of reform.

The Green Paper is now out for public consultation on its proposals until 22 July.



## ■ Special Educational Needs: Finance

**Helen Hayes:**

**[2582]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's SEND Review, if he will set out the planned funding per local authority provided through the (a) Safety Valve Programme and (b) Delivering Better Value programme; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of that planned funding provision on local authority SEND budgets.

**Will Quince:**

The SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) green paper is looking to make a more financially sustainable high needs system in the long term. For some local authorities, however, there is a more urgent need to resolve issues with the sustainability of their high needs systems. The department will therefore, from this year, run three programmes offering direct support in respect of the sustainability of high needs systems, which together will work with all local authorities: the safety valve, delivering better value and ESFA support programmes. The aim of all three programmes is to secure sustainable management of local authorities' high needs systems and associated spending, with support and intervention tailored to the severity of the problems local authorities are facing.

The safety valve programme is continuing to work with the local authorities with the highest dedicated schools grant (DSG) deficits, as it has done since it began in the 2020-21 financial year. In this programme, it is for local authorities to make proposals to the department regarding: how they will reach an in-year balance on their DSG and thus manage themselves sustainably; how they will subsequently contribute themselves to their DSG deficit through reaching an in-year surplus; and the ask they make of the department to support the elimination of their historic deficit, following the local authorities best efforts to reduce the deficit themselves. Safety valve agreements hold local authorities to account for the delivery of their proposals for generally five financial years, and funding is spread out across the lifetime of the agreements. The government cannot, therefore, determine in advance how local authorities will be funded through the safety valve programme. Exact funding amounts to be awarded to any local authority will be detailed in their individual published safety valve agreements, found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-very-high-deficit-intervention>.

The new Delivering Better Value programme (DBV) will work with the local authorities with less severe deficits than those in the safety valve programme. For local authorities in the programme, the department will provide project and change management capacity, alongside SEND financial and practice advisers, to support local authorities in engaging with their key stakeholders and undertaking a comprehensive diagnostic process to identify and address the drivers of their deficits. The expectation is that local authorities in the programme will be able to reach an in-year balance and subsequently pay off their own deficits with surpluses in future financial years. There is £85 million funding available for the DBV programme.

Funding has not yet been allocated per local authority, and the department will allocate funding to each local authority based on their action plans. The programme will not include funding to eliminate historic deficits directly.

### ■ Special Educational Needs: School Choice

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[3796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure parent carers of disabled children can choose the school that meets their child's needs.

**Will Quince:**

It is the department's aim, through the proposals set out in the SEND and AP green paper, to provide parents and carers with a clearer understanding of the support that should be available to meet their child's needs and support them to make an informed choice about which school they would like their child to attend.

Where specialist provision is required, the department is consulting on proposals for a simplified process where parents will be supported to express an informed preference for a suitable placement from a tailored list of schools that are appropriate to meet their child's needs. The expectation is that all schools on the list will be settings that can meet the child's special educational needs as identified in their education, health, and care needs assessments. This aims to give parents and carers clarity on what is available locally which may still include mainstream, special, independent, or out of borough provision where appropriate in order to meet the child's needs. The department's intention is that this will lead to greater transparency about what is available for children and young people in their local school and greater clarity about how it can be provided. We also aim for this to improve the choice offered to parents and carers by suggesting options they may not have otherwise considered.

### ■ Special Educational Needs: Standards

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[2581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's SEND Review consultation published on 29 March 2022, what plans he has for (a) the frequency and method of publication of and (b) benchmarks for intervention in the event of poor performance arising from inclusion dashboards.

**Will Quince:**

The proposed new inclusion dashboards aim to deliver strengthened accountability and improve transparency for parents. The local dashboards would form the basis of monitoring, planning, and improving delivery of services by the proposed local SEND partnerships and the national dashboards would give a timely, transparent national picture of how the system is performing. The government will publish a national SEND and alternative provision delivery plan setting out the government's response to the consultation and how change will be implemented in detail.

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[3590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the proposal in the SEND Review to provide a tailored list of settings for parents of children with disabilities, what steps the Government plans to take to help ensure that that proposal does not affect choice of support for children, particularly those with complex disabilities.

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[3592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the commitment in the SEND Review to introduce national standards for the SEND system, what steps the Government plans to take to ensure that those standards meet the needs of all children, including those with complex disabilities.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[3795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that the proposals in the SEND Green Paper do not restrict support for disabled children and families.

**Will Quince:**

The SEND and AP green paper sets out the government's proposals to improve the outcomes and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families. The proposals aim to drive national consistency in how needs are assessed, identified, and met across education, health and care through the introduction of national standards. These standards are intended to set out the full range of support for meeting all needs, including those of children and young people with more complex needs. The standards will also include guidance and best practice on reasonable adjustments for disabled children.

As part of our proposals, our aim is to provide parents and carers with a clearer understanding of the support that should be available to meet their child's needs and support them to make an informed choice about which education provider they would like their child to attend. Where specialist provision is required, the department is consulting on proposals for a simplified process where parents and carers will be supported to express an informed preference for a suitable placement from a tailored list of providers that are appropriate to meet their child's needs. The expectation is that all schools on the list will be able to meet the child's special educational needs as identified in their education health and care needs assessments. This aims to give parents and carers clarity on what is available locally which may still include mainstream, special, independent or out of borough provision where appropriate in order to meet the child's needs. Our intention is that this will lead to greater transparency about what is available for children and young people in their local school and greater clarity about how it can be provided. The department also aims for this to improve the choice offered to parents and carers by suggesting options they may not have otherwise considered.

All of the proposals within the green paper are currently open to a full public consultation and the department will be listening carefully to all views expressed to

ensure policies secure the departments ambitions to improve outcomes and parental confidence in the system. The department is committed to ensuring everyone has the opportunity to take part in the consultation and encourages everyone to do so.

### ■ Special Educational Needs: Stockport

**Navendu Mishra:**

**[2691]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what resources his Department is providing Stockport Council to support their delivery of SEND provision in local authority-maintained schools.

**Will Quince:**

The department is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in all areas receive the support they need to realise their potential.

Following an area SEND inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in 2018, Stockport was required to produce a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to address five areas of significant weakness. Since then, the department has provided regular support and challenge to bring about improvements including through its expert SEND and NHS England advisors. Stockport is also one of the 55 local areas which have been invited to join the government's £85 million Delivering Better Value programme to support local areas to achieve maximum value for money in delivering SEND provision, whilst maintaining and improving the outcomes they achieve.

Further information on this programme can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-outcomes-for-citizens-practical-steps-for-unlocking-public-value>.

High needs funding, specifically for supporting children with more complex SEND, will increase by £1 billion in the 2022/23 financial year, bringing the overall total funding to £9.1 billion. SEND provision is funded through a combination of mainstream schools' core funding and the high needs funding, both allocated to local authorities through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Authorities have discretion in how this funding is allocated, subject to regulations and conditions of the grant. In the 2022/23 financial year, mainstream schools in Stockport are attracting £210.5 million and the local authority is receiving £42.8 million for high needs, with the latter representing a 12.7% per head increase compared to the authority's 2021/22 financial year high needs funding allocation.

The department is also investing £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025 to deliver new places and improve existing provision for pupils with SEND or who require alternative provision. This funding represents a significant, transformational investment in new high needs provision and will help deliver tens of thousands of new places.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: Yorkshire and the Humber

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[3595]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase SEND provision in (a) Barnsley (b) Yorkshire.

**Will Quince:**

In March 2022, the department announced the High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA), amounting to over £1.4 billion of new investment. This funding is to support local authorities to deliver new places for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. It is also to improve existing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who require alternative provision (AP).

This funding forms part of the £2.6 billion the department is investing between 2022 and 2025 and represents a significant, transformational investment in new high needs provision. It will support local authorities to deliver new places in mainstream and special schools, as well as other specialist settings, and will also be used to improve the suitability and accessibility of existing buildings.

Barnsley received a total of just over £7.1 million through these allocations announced in March 2022 and just under £1.5 million through previous HNPCA allocations announced in April 2021 to deliver new places for the 2022/23 academic year. It is ultimately up to each local authority to determine how to best utilise their HNPCA funding to address local priorities.

Local authorities within the broader Yorkshire and the Humber region collectively received a total of just over £132 million through the HNPCA announced in April 2022. Prior to that, the region received a total of just over £21 million through the HNPCA funding announced in April 2021.

Alongside HNPCA grants, the department is also supporting local authorities to achieve our shared endeavour to secure a financially sustainable high needs system. This is through our investment of £9.1 billion high needs revenue funding in the 2022/23 financial year (a £1 billion increase from the 2021/22 financial year), our continuing work with local authorities as part of the safety valve programme, the introduction of the Delivering Better Value programme, our ongoing delivery of new special and AP free schools, and the recommendations outlined in the SEND and AP Green Paper.

## ■ Students: Cost of Living

**Chris Stephens:**

**[900176]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with devolved Administrations on providing additional support for (a) school and (b) higher education students to help meet increases in the cost of living.

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[\[900184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with devolved Administrations on providing additional support for (a) school and (b) higher education students in the context of the increases in the cost of living.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Education policy is devolved, and so cost of living issues for institutions is the responsibility of the devolved administrations. Ministers in the department meet regularly with their devolved counterparts and my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, is looking forward to attending the next meeting of education ministers from across the UK in Edinburgh next week.

The department secured an excellent settlement for England in the Spending Review, and so this will be reflected in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland through the Barnett Formula.

It is for devolved administrations to determine how to spend this generous settlement, but in England we have carefully budgeted for a range of policies that will help universities, schools, their staff, and families which will help to meet the challenges in the cost of living right now. This includes our very successful Holiday Activities and Food scheme, National Tutoring Programme, and of course a huge increase in core school funding that means schools are better placed to cover cost increases.

■ **Students: Finance**

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[5424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of students on long residence receiving support in each of the nations of the UK in each of the last five years.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ **Students: Loans**

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[2714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to limit student loan interest payments.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The government has not yet decided on what interest rates will be applied to student loans from September 2022. The department will be considering all options over the coming months and will confirm in due course the rates to apply from 1 September.

Changes to student loan interest rates will not increase monthly student loan repayments. Monthly repayments are calculated as a fixed percentage of earnings above the relevant repayment threshold and do not change based on interest rates or the amount borrowed. If income is below the relevant repayment threshold, or a borrower is not earning, then they do not have to make repayments at all. Any

outstanding debt, including interest accrued, is written off after the loan term ends (or in case of death or disability) at no detriment to the borrower. There are no commercial loans that offer this level of protection.

The government, by law, must cap maximum student loan rates to ensure the interest rate charged on the loan is in line with market rates for comparable unsecured personal loans. The government monitors student loan rates against the Bank of England's data series for the effective interest rates on new and existing unsecured personal loans.

We announced in February that we will be reducing interest rates for new borrowers and so, from academic year 2023/24, new graduates will not, in real terms, repay more than they borrow. Alongside our wider reforms, this will help to make sure that students from all walks of life can continue to receive the highest-quality education from our world-leading HE sector.

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

**[4607]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what provision has been made for participants of the (a) Homes for Ukraine Scheme and (b) Ukraine Family Visa scheme to access the student loan scheme with home fee status so that they can attend higher education.

**Michelle Donelan:**

I refer the hon. Member for Bristol West, to the answer I gave on 19 May 2022 to Question [304](#).

## ■ Teachers: Training

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[3683]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) updating Initial Teacher Training to strengthen training on SEND for all teachers and (b) including deaf awareness in all Initial Teacher Training.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department is determined that all children and young people, including those who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, receive the support they need to succeed in their education.

Since September 2020, all new teachers entering the profession benefit from at least three years of evidence based professional development and support, starting with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) based on the new ITT Core Content Framework (CCF). This is followed by a new two-year induction underpinned by the Early Career Framework (ECF). Both frameworks, developed with educational experts, will equip teachers with a clear understanding of the needs of all children, including those pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the SEND code of practice.

ITT courses must be designed so that trainee teachers can demonstrate that they meet the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level which includes the requirement that all teachers must have a clear understanding of the needs of all



pupils. This includes those who are deaf or have a hearing impairment. All teachers in local authority-maintained schools or non-maintained special schools in England are required to hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), which is awarded upon successful completion of an ITT course.

In specialist settings, in addition to holding QTS, it is a legal requirement for teachers of classes of pupils who have sensory impairments to hold the relevant mandatory qualification. Providers must be approved by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education to offer these qualifications. Teachers working in an advisory role to support such pupils should also hold the appropriate qualification.

The department intends to develop a new approval process to determine providers of mandatory qualifications in sensory impairment from the start of academic year 2023/2024. Our aim is to ensure a steady supply of teachers of children with visual, hearing, and multi-sensory impairment, in both specialist and mainstream settings.

Wider decisions relating to teachers' professional development rest with schools, headteachers, and teachers themselves, as they are in the best position to judge their own requirements, which may include further training and development.

#### ■ Universities: Advertising

**Matt Vickers:** [\[2712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve the transparency and consistency in university advertising.

**Michelle Donelan:**

This government believes in greater transparency from higher education (HE) providers so that prospective students can inform their decision making with meaningful comparisons between different providers and courses.

I have announced that all universities and other registered HE providers should prominently display their completion rates and progression to graduate jobs on every advert, whether that is online, on a billboard or in their prospectus – just as every advertisement for a loan must clearly state the annual percentage rate. I am working with the sector on this matter and expect to publish guidance next month.

#### ■ Universities: Antisemitism

**Sarah Owen:** [\[3741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of anti-Semitic hate crime directed towards (a) university students and (b) academics in the past 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

**Michelle Donelan:**

As part of our work to tackle the scourge of antisemitism, the government works closely with the Community Security Trust, a charity whose purpose is to provide safety, security, and advice to the Jewish community – and who publish annual data



about the number of antisemitic incidents in the UK. Their figures for 2021 show a record number of antisemitic incidents within higher education (HE).

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and I hosted an antisemitism summit in January this year, with vice chancellors and leading Jewish groups to discuss measures seeking to put an end to antisemitic incidents in HE. At the summit, we set out clear actions, including spotting patterns of incidents, spreading good practice, and adopting training from the Union of Jewish Students, so the sector has the right tools to tackle this issue more effectively. The HE sector is taking forward these commitments as a matter of urgency.

To further this work, an antisemitism taskforce led by Lord Mann, the government's independent advisor on antisemitism, has been set up. The taskforce will look at all aspects of antisemitism on campus and will address the safety of everyone on campus, including students, staff, members, and visitors. Members of the taskforce will also speak directly with providers where antisemitism has been a recognised problem.

The findings and recommendations of the antisemitism taskforce will be made public once the work reaches its conclusion.

## ■ Universities: Freedom of Expression

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[2710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to protect freedom of speech in universities.

**Michelle Donelan:**

This government believes that freedom of speech and academic freedom are fundamental pillars of our higher education (HE) system and that protecting these principles should be a priority for universities.

That is why the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill was introduced on 12 May 2021. The Bill will strengthen existing freedom of speech duties and directly address gaps within the existing law. This includes the fact there is no clear way of enforcing the current law when a HE provider breaches it as well as applying the duties directly to students' unions and constituent colleges including those at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The Bill introduces a role on the Office for Students board, with responsibility for overseeing its strengthened duties to promote freedom of speech and investigate where potential breaches of the duties occur.

The changes will introduce clear consequences for breaches of the new duties and ensure that these principles are upheld.

The Bill will reach the Report Stage in the House of Commons shortly.

## ■ Vocational Education: Qualifications

**Mrs Sheryll Murray:**

**[900181]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve the recognition of vocational qualifications.

**Alex Burghart:**

Vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) provide an important and valued route for many young people and adults. We are streamlining and improving the quality of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below. Our reforms will put employers at the heart of the system, ensuring that all qualifications are fit for purpose, high quality and lead to good outcomes. We are creating clearly defined academic and technical routes at level 3, leading to future study and or skilled employment.

As set out in our level 3 consultation response published in July 2021, students will continue to be able to study qualifications similar to current Applied General qualifications where there is no overlap with T Levels. On 11 May we published a provisional list of 160 qualifications that overlap with the first two waves of T Levels. These qualifications will have funding approval withdrawn for anyone eligible to access the qualification through the 16-19 funding offer on 1 August 2024, unless awarding organisations successfully appeal their qualifications' inclusion. The final list will be published in September 2022.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

## ■ Agriculture and Food: Supply Chains

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

**[2373]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the war in Ukraine on international food and agriculture supply chains.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Agricultural commodity prices are closely correlated to energy costs since gas is used to manufacture fertiliser and fuel energy is needed throughout the food chain. Energy prices were rising following the pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine, a key global exporter of agricultural products, has caused additional turbulence in international commodity markets, for example the global prices of wheat, maize and vegetable oil have all increased since the start of the war.

The UK is working with G7 and other partners in multilateral fora, such as the World Trade Organisation, to monitor and address global food security issues, focusing on the ongoing benefits of open markets, and working together to ensure that sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious food continues to be available and accessible to all.

## ■ Avian Influenza

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[2460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many outbreaks of Avian flu have been identified in each of the last five years in England.

**Jo Churchill:**

During the 2016/2017 avian influenza outbreak, there were 12 confirmed cases of notifiable Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N8 in England.

In 2018, there were no outbreaks of avian influenza in England.

In 2019, 1 case of notifiable avian influenza was confirmed in England, a case of Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) H5N3.

During the 2020/2021 avian influenza outbreak, between November 2020 and March 2021 there were 21 cases of notifiable avian influenza confirmed in England: 1 case of LPAI H5N2, 1 case of LPAI H5N3, 1 case of HPAI H5N1 and 18 cases of HPAI H5N8.

To date, in the 2021/2022 avian influenza outbreak, between 26 October 2021 and 17 May 2022, 97 cases of notifiable avian influenza have been confirmed in England, all HPAI H5N1.

## ■ Birds: Pest Control

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with members of the (a) Welsh Assembly and (b) Welsh Government on the change to general licences for the control of wild birds.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is the licensing authority responsible for granting general licences for the control of wild birds in Wales. Defra officials discuss general licensing issues with NRW staff as appropriate. This includes the recent changes to the 2022 Welsh general licences for the control of wild birds.

## ■ Cats: Animal Breeding

**Stephen McPartland:**

[\[2475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will regulate cat breeding as part of the Post Implementation Review of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 which is due by October 2023.

**Jo Churchill:**

The 2018 Regulations are due to be reviewed five years after they came into force (2023) and so this will be an appropriate time to re-examine the scope of the Regulations and consider any changes.

During the review we will consider all aspects of the Regulations, including whether there is a need to explore introducing licencing arrangements for cat breeders.

As part of planning for this review, we are proactively working with partners, including local authorities, to collate data that can provide a picture of licensed and unlicensed activities involving animals in England. A wide range of stakeholders, key trade associations, and the Canine and Feline Sector Group will be integral to coordinating input from this diverse sector to inform Defra's review.

## ■ Dog Licences

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to introduce dog licences in the UK on a similar basis to those available in Northern Ireland.

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra's "Action Plan for Animal Welfare" demonstrates our commitment to a brighter future for animals both at home and abroad. We are aware that some people are supportive of an annual registration scheme or dog licence. The old dog licence scheme was repealed by the Local Government Act 1988 and was in effect an ownership registration scheme. Now that dog microchipping and registration on an associated database is mandatory, this is no longer necessary and we have no plans at this time to reintroduce such a scheme.

## ■ Environment Protection: British Overseas Territories

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[3573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding his Department will allocate to the Overseas Territories to replace the EU's LIFE funding programme.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The UK Government continues to support conservation and biodiversity projects in the Overseas Territories, through initiatives such as the Darwin Plus Programme. Over the last decade, the Darwin Plus programme has contributed over £38 million towards 180 projects in the UK Overseas Territories.

The Government has committed to making available £30 million over the next three years, continuing to support environmental projects in the UK Overseas Territories.

## ■ Fisheries: Barents Sea

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[2510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to ensure an increased quota for the UK from the Barents Sea to improve the security of domestic supplies of fish.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK pursues a wide range of priorities when securing quota transfers in its annual fisheries negotiations with Norway, including reducing choke risk within the North Sea mixed fishery, as well as securing fishing opportunities in the Barents Sea.

In 2022, the UK's total opportunities for Arctic whitefish stocks were estimated to be worth around £16 million. Inward transfers of such quotas are paid for by transferring to Norway quotas held by the UK, with the result that securing additional Arctic quotas from Norway automatically leads to a reduction in quotas available to UK fishers.

The UK imports significant quantities of whitefish, reflecting UK consumers' tastes. Whilst the volume of the quota available to the UK in the Barents Sea is not close to covering the volume of fish that we import, the Government is working with the fishing industry to identify opportunities in the UK market for UK caught fish.

**■ Fisheries: Greenland****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[2511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the (a) Trade Agreement and (b) parallel Fisheries Framework Agreement being drafted in respect Greenland include specific reference to the UK's access to that country's fisheries.

**Victoria Prentis:**

My officials are engaged in discussions with the Government of Greenland to deliver a Free Trade Agreement and a Fisheries Framework Agreement which meet the UK's needs and aspirations. We are unable to comment further on the contents of live negotiations.

**■ Foie Gras****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[2616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the next steps are of the Government's commitment to exploring a ban on foie gras, as announced in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare published 12 May 2021.

**Sir Mike Penning:**[\[3523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on banning the import of foie gras as set out in his Department's Action Plan for Animal Welfare.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government has made clear that the production of force-fed foie gras raises serious welfare concerns. Building on the opportunities presented by our departure from the EU, we are now able to actively consider any further steps that could be taken in relation to foie gras that is produced overseas using force feeding practices. We continue to gather information and speak to a range of interested parties about

the issues involved, in line with the Government's commitment to improving animal welfare standards as set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare. This will be used to inform our approach to the issue of force-fed foie gras.

## ■ Food

**Christian Matheson:** [\[2518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the Government's food strategy.

**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.

## ■ Food Supply

**Jessica Morden:** [\[1496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to prevent potential food shortages.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As demonstrated throughout the Covid-19 response, the UK has a highly resilient food supply chain. Our high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production, as well as imports through stable trade routes.

The Government will shortly be publishing a food strategy. This will address food security, and the importance of international resilience and open markets, but also the importance of domestic production and how that contributes to our resilience. It will also address the role of the food industry in our levelling up agenda.

In England, our new farming schemes are supporting farmers to improve profitability and productivity.

We have increased the Farming Investment Fund for small technology grants from £17 million to more than £48 million, supporting thousands of farmers with their investment plans this year.

Food production and environmental protection must go hand in hand. For the first time we will be safeguarding the assets that support domestic food production, by taking the health of our soils as seriously as the size of our yields.

Food security rests not just on maximising domestic production (which is market driven), but on making best use of land types and good farming practices. Our

schemes will ensure our long-term food security by investing in the foundations of food production: healthy soil, water, and biodiverse ecosystems.

Finally, the Government has also set out a legal obligation to produce an assessment of our food security at least once every three years. The first UK Food Security Report was published in December 2021. It recognised the contribution made by British farmers to our resilience, and the importance of strong domestic production to our food security. This report serves as an evidence base for policy work, safeguarding food security in the UK for years to come.

## ■ Food: Prices

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's Outcome Delivery Plan published on 15 July 2021, what recent steps he has taken to deliver affordable food to consumers in the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra's Outcome Delivery Plan commits us to improve the productivity and economic performance of food and farming industries, ensuring the UK is a great place to start, innovate and thrive as a farming, food or drink business, delivering healthy, affordable and sustainable food and drink to consumers at home and abroad. The forthcoming Government Food Strategy will build on existing work across Government and set out the vision to create a healthier, more sustainable, more resilient, and more accessible food system for people across the UK.

We will continue to engage with supermarkets to explore the range of measures they can take to ensure the availability of affordable food, for example by price matching and price freezing measures.

## ■ Meat: Romania

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[5410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of Romanian meat being imported into the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

According to the latest HMRC overseas trade data, in 2021 the UK imported 9,520 tonnes of meat from Romania. This was worth £28.8 million, the majority of which was poultrymeat worth £18.8 million.

## ■ Pigeon Racing: English Channel

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[2614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to support pigeon racing across the English Channel.



**Jo Churchill:**

Following successful discussions between Defra and the European Union (EU) Commission, supported by sector campaigning here and on the continent, the EU has recently introduced amendments to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/692 ('entry to the Union') together with an associated Export Health Certificate (EHC) to enable cross-channel pigeon racing to restart. Prior to these changes racing pigeons were within the scope of the EU's definition of 'captive birds' following the introduction of the Animal Health Regulation (AHR) in the EU on 21 April 2021. The requirements of this, including quarantine on arrival in the EU, had made racing non-viable for the sector and were disproportionate to the animal health risk posed to the EU by this activity.

To enable pigeon fanciers to utilise the derogation provided by the EU a registration system for establishments (pigeon lofts) will be made available from 24 May 2022. In addition, the new EHC for racing pigeons from Great Britain (GB) sent to the EU or Northern Ireland (NI) for the purpose of immediate release for racing back to GB, will be available on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) on the 24 May 2022.

Establishments must be registered with the competent authority if keepers want to use the new EHC and move racing pigeons from that premises in GB to the EU or NI for the purpose of immediate release for racing back to GB. Pigeon lofts that do not wish to engage in racing from the EU or Northern Ireland are unaffected by these changes.

**■ Sandeels: Conservation****Sir Robert Goodwill:****[2429]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to not support industrial fishing for sandeel in English waters, on a similar basis to the policy of the Scottish Government, as part of the upcoming publication of the Joint Fisheries Statement.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We are concerned about the impacts on the marine ecosystem by the removal of forage fish by industrial fishing. Following a recent call for evidence, Defra is presently working with others, including the Devolved Administrations, to develop a management strategy for industrial fishing in UK waters. We will consult on the introduction of any new measures in English waters.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ Amazonia: Indigenous Peoples****Wayne David:****[4494]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help support and protect the endangered (a) Awa and



(b) Surui tribes in the Amazon; and what assessment she has made of the effect of that support on the survival of those tribes.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK regularly engages with indigenous leaders and civil society organisations regarding the Amazon. Senior UK Government officials discussed the indigenous lands situation with Brazilian authorities most recently in December 2021. In April 2022 senior representatives from the British Embassy discussed human rights with indigenous leaders from across Brazil as part of the Brazilian National Articulation of Indigenous People.

Our Embassy in Brasilia has hosted conversations with indigenous leaders from Amazonas and Pará, and is in regular contact with the Brazilian National Foundation for Indigenous People (FUNAI), which is responsible for promoting indigenous people's rights and territorial protection in Brazil, including for uncontacted indigenous people to ensure that our own and others' engagement is coordinated. The UK is committed to defending and promoting the human rights of all, and we will continue to monitor developments around indigenous land rights in Brazil.

■ **Arms Trade: Israel**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[2453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make it her policy to impose an embargo on the export and import of all arms and military equipment to and from Israel; and if she will make a statement.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. We consider all export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework. Her Majesty's Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

■ **Bahrain: Political Prisoners**

**Martyn Day:**

[\[4634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her counterpart in Bahrain on securing the immediate release of (a) Hasan Mushaima and (b) Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace.

**Martyn Day:**

[\[4635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the human rights standards that are in place for people imprisoned in Jau Prison in Bahrain.

**Amanda Milling:**

We continue to monitor and regularly raise the cases of Hasan Mushaima, Dr Abduljalil al-Singace and others with the Bahraini Government as well as with the independent oversight bodies.

The British Ambassador and other international representatives visited Jau prison on 3 May 2021. Officials and ministers regularly discuss human rights issues and individual cases with senior members of the Government of Bahrain, as well as with the independent human rights oversight bodies. The visit by Minister of State for South and Central Asia, UN and the Commonwealth, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad to Bahrain from 13-14 February was such an opportunity. We continue to encourage those with concerns to raise them directly with the relevant oversight bodies.

**■ Belarus: Russia****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[2375\]](#)

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

**James Cleverly:**

The UK condemns the role the Belarusian regime is playing in the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and we have made this clear repeatedly in both bilateral and multilateral settings, including when I [Minister Cleverly] summoned the Belarusian Ambassador to the FCDO after the invasion began. We also continue to make clear our condemnation of Lukashenko's actions through statements at the OSCE in Vienna and in partnership with the G7. The Belarusian regime must cease their support for Russia's illegal invasion immediately and respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, in line with their international obligations.

**■ Brazil and Uruguay: Disaster Relief****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[5358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to take steps to assist the (a) Uruguayan and (b) Brazilian Government following the damage caused to those countries by Cyclone Yakecan.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK is monitoring the impact of Cyclone Yakecan, which caused damage, power cuts and loss of life in Uruguay and southern Brazil on 17-18 May. Local authorities are currently assessing the damage.

The UK will continue to monitor the situation in Uruguay and Brazil to understand if support is needed.

## ■ British International Investment

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[3783]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of British International Investment's use of environmental, social, and governance criteria when evaluating investment opportunities.

**Amanda Milling:**

British International Investment's (BII) Policy on Responsible Investing sets out the environmental, social and business integrity requirements for its investees. The Policy is aligned with international best practice including the International Finance Corporation Performance Standards and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Due diligence is undertaken prior to investing in a company or fund.

In 2021, the Policy on Responsible Investing was updated to reflect the evolution of standards and policies within BII and internationally. It is available at:

<https://assets.cdcgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/14074359/Policy-on-Responsible-Investing.pdf> To further support investees, BII has published bespoke Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) toolkits for fund managers (link here: <https://toolkit.bii.co.uk/esg-topics/>) and financial institutions (link here: <https://fintoolkit.bii.co.uk/working-with-cdc/>) and hosts regular training sessions.

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[3784]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what powers her Department has to enforce UK environmental, social, and governance standards on the beneficiaries of British International Investment (BII) investments.

**Amanda Milling:**

British International Investment's (BII) Policy on Responsible Investing sets out the environmental, social and business integrity requirements for investees. The Policy is aligned with international best practice including the International Finance Corporate Performance Standards and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It is available at: <https://assets.cdcgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/14074359/Policy-on-Responsible-Investing.pdf> Investees are expected to comply with the Policy.

BII is wholly owned by the UK Government. As sole shareholder of BII, the FCDO's shareholder interest is represented via the BII Board, which is accountable for all business and operational decisions. FCDO has oversight of BII's operations, through Quarterly and Annual Shareholder Meetings, as well as dedicated meetings on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards. The FCDO regularly raises ESG issues with BII.

## ■ China: Air Routes

**Allan Dorans:**

**[2648]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent progress she has made in discussions with the Chinese Government on the

resumption of direct scheduled flights from the UK to China following the unilateral ban imposed by China in 2021.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government understands the impact that the ongoing suspension of direct flights has had on the business, academia and tourism sectors, as well as those separated from family and friends. The Department for Transport and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office have been working together to seek agreement from the Chinese Government for the necessary conditions to be met to provide for the resumption of direct scheduled passenger services. We continue to raise this in Beijing and London at the highest levels.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[3753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to agree to an international treaty on pandemic prevention.

**Amanda Milling:**

COVID-19 has demonstrated that no-one is safe until we are all safe, and that effective global cooperation is needed to better protect the UK and other countries around the world from the detrimental health, social and economic impacts of pandemics and other health threats. The UK supports a new international legally-binding instrument as part of a comprehensive approach to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. The Prime Minister joined other world leaders calling for a pandemic treaty in March 2021.

The current target date for agreeing the text of the new instrument is May 2024 at the World Health Assembly (WHA). Over the next two years the UK will work towards building a consensus on how the global community can better prevent, prepare for, and respond to future pandemics and will actively shape, develop and negotiate the text.

■ **Cuba: Sanctions**

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[5356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the decision of the United States Government to ease some of the sanctions placed on Cuba.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK considers the continued US embargo against Cuba to be counterproductive and we consistently vote in support of the annual United Nations General Assembly Resolution calling for it to be lifted. In light of this, the UK welcomes the announcement by the United States Government of plans to ease some of the restrictions they have imposed on Cuba via a set of measures which are a first step towards encouraging economic growth, especially in support of the private sector, and enabling the reunification of many Cuban families. Nevertheless, the UK

continues to consider the activation of Titles III and IV of the Helms Burton Act, which strengthen and continue the embargo against Cuba, to be contrary to international law. We have made our position on this clear, and continue to regularly engage US officials on this issue through our Embassy in Washington, as well as with the US Embassies in Havana and London.

## ■ **Deposit Insurance Agency of Russia**

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[2437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the role of the Deposit Insurance Agency in the Russian state's ability to secure and repatriate assets from abroad.

**James Cleverly:**

The Deposit Insurance Agency was established on the basis of Russian federal law #177-FZ, to manage the operation of the deposit insurance system in Russia, and provide compensation to depositors in Russian banks if a bank should fail. It acts as a liquidator and bankruptcy administrator, and is responsible for bank resolution.

## ■ **Deposit Insurance Agency of Russia: Sanctions**

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[2438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason the Deposit Insurance Agency of Russia has not been sanctioned by the Government.

**James Cleverly:**

We do not speculate on future designations. We have already imposed severe restrictions on the Russian state's access to finance. We have blocked the Russian Government, and over 3 million Russian companies, from raising funds in the UK. We have blocked the Central Bank of Russia, Ministry of Finance and National Wealth Fund from accessing their overseas assets and foreign currency reserves. We have imposed asset freezes on 18 major banks with global assets worth £940 billion.

## ■ **Equal Rights Coalition**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[2420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, on what dates the (a) UK's term as co-chair of the Equal Rights Coalition will come to an end and (b) new co-chairs of the Coalition are due to be announced.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK and Argentina's term as Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) co-chairs ends in September 2022. Mexico will then take as over as one co-chair and we are supporting their efforts to secure their co-chair partner.

**■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: World Economic Forum****Jon Trickett:** [\[2364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has participated in any events organised by the World Economic Forum in the last year.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Foreign Secretary has not participated in any World Economic Forum events in the past year.

**■ Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria****David Mundell:** [\[2403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of (a) the potential merits of the investment case for the Global Fund's seventh replenishment and (b) how additional financing through that fund will advance the Government's commitment to supporting women and girls.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK is a strong supporter of the Global Fund, investing in £4.1 billion to date. We are currently reviewing the Global Fund's investment case for the 7th replenishment in line with our new International Development Strategy and recent global health position papers on Health Systems Strengthening and Ending Preventable Deaths. The Global Fund is a key player in the fight against the three diseases and a major contributor to the health and wellbeing of girls and women globally. In particular, the investment case places a strong focus on adolescent girls and young women who continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV, including addressing the structural barriers such as stigma and violence against women that underpin the epidemic. We will continue to make financial and leadership contributions to the Global Fund which will continue our commitment to supporting women and girls.

**■ Human Rights and War Crimes****Deidre Brock:** [\[2525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking in its role as penholder on Yemen at the UN Security Council to support the creation of an international mechanism to ensure accountability for human rights violations and war crimes.

**Amanda Milling:**

We are concerned about reports of serious and wide-ranging human rights violations and abuses by parties to the Yemen conflict. In March we co-sponsored a joint statement at the Human Rights Council recognizing the collective effort needed to respond to these allegations. The statement called for all parties to comply with their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

We regret that the mandate of the UN Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen was not renewed last October. The UK voted in favour of renewing the mandate.

We are discussing with international partners the potential for a follow-up mechanism to support human rights accountability in Yemen. Justice and accountability are key for inclusive and durable peace.

## ■ Israel: Education

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[2485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Israeli counterpart on its responsibility for protecting the right of all children to access education safely.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK remains firmly committed to ensuring access to education for all Palestinians. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv raises the importance of access to education with the Israeli authorities. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

## ■ Israel: Occupied Territories

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[3684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help support Palestinian (a) human rights defenders and (b) journalists in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK is committed to the protection of media freedom around the world. We continue to reiterate the importance of a free and open press, and freedom of expression to the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority. We have called upon the Government of Israel and Palestinian Authority to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations and to allow them to freely operate in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories.

## ■ Israel: Riot Control Weapons

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[2486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Israeli counterpart on the use by that country's military of tear gas and other chemical materials in and around school premises.

**Amanda Milling:**

While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage them to deploy these in a way that minimises tension and uses appropriate force. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to



the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. It is essential to have a strong and thriving Palestinian education system in order to provide opportunities, economic development and hope for the next generation.

### ■ Mexico: Missing Persons

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[5357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Mexican counterpart on reports that the number of people that have disappeared in the country has reached 100,000.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are deeply concerned that official statistics have recorded 100,000 disappeared people in Mexico. On 2 March I [Minister Ford] discussed human rights with the Mexican Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights. We are working with the Federal, State and municipal governments in Mexico on the development of a new investigation protocol to support law enforcement agencies in the investigation of crimes. We welcome the initiative from the Mexican Government to develop a new national search plan and the creation of the National Centre for Human Identification. We also welcome the Mexican Interior and Foreign Ministries' commitment to address areas highlighted by the report of the UN Committee for Enforced Disappearances following the Committee's visit to Mexico in November 2021.

### ■ Middle East: Press Freedom

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[2661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure press freedoms are being upheld in the Middle East and across the world in the context of the recent killing of Al Jazeera journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh; and whether the Government plans to call for an independent inquiry into Shireen Abu Akleh's death.

**Amanda Milling:**

On 11 May, I publicly expressed my sadness upon hearing news of the tragic death of veteran Palestinian Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh, and called for a thorough investigation. The Foreign Secretary also made this clear in a statement on 12 May. On 19 May, I also spoke to the Israeli Ambassador to the UK and reiterated the importance of a thorough, transparent and impartial investigation. The UK is committed to the protection of media freedom around the world. The safety of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work. We continue to reiterate the importance of a free and open press, and freedom of expression to the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority.



## ■ **Mongolia: Indigenous Peoples**

**Wayne David:**

[\[4496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help support and protect the endangered Tsaatan tribe in Mongolia; and what assessment she has made of the effect of that support on the survival of those peoples.

**Amanda Milling:**

We are aware of the issues impacting the livelihood of the Tsaatan people and their reindeer herds. The Mongolian government has been providing social protection measures in recent years to help mitigate these as well as promoting tourism in the Khuvsgul region to provide alternative sources of income for the Tsaatan people. The UK government does not have a bilateral assistance programme in Mongolia.

## ■ **Nigeria: Blasphemy**

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[2644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to protect freedom of religion or belief in the world following the murder of a student who was beaten and burnt to death for alleged blasphemy in Nigeria.

**Vicky Ford:**

The murder of Deborah Samuel in Sokoto State, Nigeria, on 13 May was a barbaric and heinous act. I [Minister Ford] have expressed my public condemnation, and have urged the relevant authorities to ensure the perpetrators face justice in line with the law.

The severity and scale of violations and abuses of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) in many parts of the world remain deeply troubling. Defending FoRB for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities, is a longstanding human rights priority for the UK Government. Bilaterally, Ministers and officials regularly raise specific cases of concern with different countries; we do not shy away from challenging those we believe are not meeting their obligations. Multilaterally, we work with the UN, G7, and other multilateral fora to promote FoRB. The UK Government regularly discusses human rights in Nigeria with the Nigerian authorities, stressing the importance of protecting and promoting human rights for all. During my visit to Nigeria in February, I met with community and religious leaders, with whom I discussed, among other things, the impact of the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria on local people, and their rights. I also discussed growing insecurity and violence with Nigeria's Vice President and Foreign Minister during my visit.

## ■ Nigeria: Violence

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[2456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of sectarian violence in Nigeria's north western city of Sokoto.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK Government is concerned about rising insecurity in Nigeria, including in the North West of the country. The causes of violence in Nigeria are varied, and include criminality and intercommunal violence; this is having a devastating impact on affected communities, including in Sokoto. Whilst religious identity is a factor in many incidents of intercommunal violence, our assessment remains that the root causes of intercommunal violence are complex and frequently relate to competition over resources and criminality. During my [Minister Ford] visit to Nigeria in February, I met with community and religious leaders, with whom I discussed, among other things, the impact of the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria on local people, and their rights. I also discussed growing insecurity and violence with Nigeria's Vice President and Foreign Minister during my visit. At the first dialogue in support of our Security and Defence dialogue in Nigeria in February 2022, the British and Nigerian Governments committed to work together to respond to shared threats and security challenges in Nigeria.

## ■ Non-governmental Organisations

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[3538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to page 28 of The UK Government's Strategy for International Development, published on 16 May 2022, which 12 NGO partners her Department will work with to agree a single due diligence assessment.

**Amanda Milling:**

The FCDO is selecting suitable Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on the basis of those who would benefit most from conducting central assessments, considering their prior and future bilateral funding, the contexts in which they operate and the risks they face. The objective is to reduce the effort required in completing individual programme assessments, providing the FCDO and partners with a more efficient process without increasing the level of risk. We will initially pilot central assessments to refine the process, and central assessments will then be conducted on a wider range of NGOs.

## ■ Pakistan: Indigenous Peoples

**Wayne David:**

[\[4495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help support and protect the endangered Kalash people

in Pakistan; and what assessment she has made of the effect of that support on the survival of those people.

**James Cleverly:**

We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the rights of all people in Pakistan, particularly the most vulnerable, including women, minorities and children, as laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan. The Kalash people live in the Chitral district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KP). In KP the UK has contributed to education, social protection, and social inclusion programmes, which have benefitted marginalised groups, including the Kalash. For example, teachers working in the Kalash area received training under the UK-supported Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Programme. Through the Aawaz II programme, the UK has worked with partners to improve KP's childbirth registration system. Such reforms will ensure that more marginalised groups, including the Kalash, are registered and visible to the Government, and able to access essential services like healthcare and education.

■ **Russia: Sanctions**

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

[\[2343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many applications for delisting she has received under the Russia sanctions regime; and how many legal challenges have been instigated.

**James Cleverly:**

As of 17 May 2022 the FCDO has not received any requests pursuant to s23 of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 in relation to designations made under The Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

■ **Russia: Ukraine**

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[5359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Venezuelan counterpart on the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

**James Cleverly:**

In line with many other countries, the UK Government does not recognise the Maduro regime.

■ **Shireen Abu Akleh**

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[2643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Israeli counterpart on the killing of the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in the West Bank; and what steps she is taking to ensure that there is an independent international investigation into her death.

**Amanda Milling:**

On 11 May, I publicly expressed my sadness upon hearing news of the tragic death of veteran Palestinian Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh, and called for a thorough investigation. The Foreign Secretary also made this clear in a statement on 12 May. On 19 May, I also spoke to the Israeli Ambassador to the UK and reiterated the importance of a thorough, transparent and impartial investigation. The safety of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work.

■ **Sudan: Food Aid****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[2374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UN's prediction of extreme hunger in Sudan in the remaining months of 2022, what assessment she has made of the need to provide aid to that country.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are concerned at the food insecurity situation in Sudan as highlighted by the 21 March Food and Agriculture Organization report. The World Food Programme (WFP) has subsequently estimated that up to 20 million people will face "emergency" or "crisis" levels of acute food insecurity in 2022. The UK continues to provide humanitarian support to those most in need in Sudan. In 2021, we contributed £27 million to humanitarian assistance, via partners including the WFP, the UN-led Sudan Humanitarian Fund, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other non-governmental organisations. This 2021 funding provided approximately 1.2 million people with lifesaving assistance (such as food, cash and voucher support, safe drinking water, shelter and sanitation), including providing over 500,000 vulnerable children with free school meals.

The overwhelming driver of current food insecurity in Sudan is the political and economic crisis. Since the military coup in October 2021, we have encouraged all Sudanese political actors to engage in the talks facilitated by the UN, African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to resolve the political crisis. Most recently, our Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea delivered this message directly to Sudan's military leadership on 28 April in Khartoum.

■ **Ukraine: Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria****David Mundell:**[\[2404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) impact of the work of the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Ukraine and (b) Global Fund's ability to have a positive impact in complex operating environments.

**James Cleverly:**

The Global Fund responded quickly to ensure continuity of HIV and TB services for affected populations following Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. This included

reprogramming existing grants and rapidly allocating US \$15 million in additional emergency funding. The Global Fund has demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness in a range of challenging operating environments, including Afghanistan as well as Ukraine, and engages efficiently with humanitarian partners and coordination mechanisms to deliver HIV, TB and malaria prevention and treatment services in complex emergencies and in refugee settings.

## ■ **Venezuela: Sanctions**

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[5360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the decision of the United States Government to ease some of the sanctions placed on Venezuela.

**Vicky Ford:**

The FCDO works very closely with US, Canadian and European allies on Venezuela and we will continue to coordinate our efforts to help encourage an end to the political crisis in that country and a return to democracy. The US and UK sanctions regimes are entirely distinct. Unlike the US, the UK has never imposed sectoral sanctions on Venezuela. The UK only has individual sanctions in Venezuela, targeted against individuals who have undermined democracy, engaged in grand corruption, or been involved in human rights abuses.

## ■ **Yemen: Peace Negotiations**

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[5471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the peace talks in Yemen; and what steps she is taking to help secure lasting peace in that country.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK welcomes the two-month truce in Yemen, brokered by the UN on 1 April, and the creation of a Presidential Leadership Council on 6 April. After over seven long years of conflict, a negotiated political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and end the humanitarian suffering. The UK will continue to use its diplomatic relations and role as penholder on Yemen in the UN Security Council to support efforts towards political dialogue and peace. The UK continues to encourage the conflict parties to engage constructively with UN-led peace efforts.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

## ■ **Arikayce Liposomal**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 22 March 2022 to Question 139362 on Arikayce liposomal, whether a date for

consideration of the treatment at NHS England's Clinical Priorities Advisory Group has been determined.

**Edward Argar:**

It is expected that Arikayce liposomal will be considered by the Clinical Priorities Advisory Group in July 2022.

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Arikayce Liposomal will be available to patients with non-tuberculosis mycobacteria.

**Edward Argar:**

It is expected that Arikayce liposomal will be considered by the Clinical Priorities Advisory Group (CPAG) in July 2022. Following receipt of the CPAG's advice, decisions on funding will be made, with the commissioning of those treatments prioritised for investment beginning within the current financial year.

■ **Bone Diseases: Diagnosis**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[5325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to help improve the timely diagnosis of osteogenesis imperfecta; what the average time taken is for such diagnoses in the latest period for which data is available; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

We have committed £2.3 billion to increase the volume of diagnostic activity and reduce patient waiting times, including X-rays which can diagnose osteogenesis imperfecta (OI). The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' sets out the ambition for 95% of patients to receive a diagnostic test within six weeks by March 2025. To implement the UK Rare Diseases Framework, we published England's Rare Diseases Action Plan in February 2022. The Plan includes actions to improve the timely diagnosis of rare conditions such as OI. Data on the average time taken for the diagnosis of OI is not held in the format requested.

■ **Botulinum Toxin**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[4504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is monitoring the use of illegal botox substitutes by practitioners in relation to non-surgical aesthetic procedures.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department has no current plans to monitor the use of illegal botox substitutes. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the United Kingdom and ensures that all such products licensed for use meet all applicable standards of safety, quality and efficacy. The MHRA monitors the safety of all medicines and remains vigilant for

any emerging new evidence from Yellow Card Reports, scientific publications or information from patients and stakeholders in relation to any illegal use of medicines and takes regulatory action where necessary.

### ■ **Coeliac Disease: Endoscopy**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[3587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of levels of demand on endoscopy services to diagnose coeliac disease.

**Edward Argar:**

No recent estimate has been made.

### ■ **Community Health Services: Children and Young People**

**Ed Davey:**

[\[3452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to tackle delays in the provision of community health services, including therapy services and the provision of wheelchairs, orthotics, prosthetics and equipment for children and young people, as a result of covid-19.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The provision of community health services, including for children and young people, is the responsibility of local systems, such as clinical commissioning groups and local authorities.

On 11 January 2022, NHS England and NHS Improvement published 'Community services prioritisation framework' to support local systems in managing COVID-19 pressures. It contains guidance to support local decision-making on the relative priority of services, including the provision of wheelchairs, orthotics, prosthetics and equipment for children and young people. Since 1 March 2022, it is expected that all community services are operational and local systems are responsible for continued service recovery and reductions in waiting times.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have requested that providers outline plans to reduce community service waiting lists. This information is being reviewed to support providers with service restoration in community health services. National service development funding and growth in local systems' core funding allocations will support systems to increase overall capacity, address waiting lists and develop and expand new models of community care.

### ■ **Community Nurses and General Practitioners**

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[3467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to improve the joined-up care liaison between GPs' and district nurses.



**Gillian Keegan:**

The 'Joining up care for people, places and populations' white paper published in February 2022 set out the intention to develop shared outcomes at a local and national level to achieve better integration of services and patient experience. This includes between primary and community care such as enhanced health in care homes. We are also increasing and diversifying the general practice workforce to ensure practices can meet the needs of the local population and NHS England and NHS Improvement are developing a National Community Nursing Plan.

**■ Coronavirus: Care Homes****Rachael Maskell:**[\[860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether compensation will be available for the families of people who died from covid-19 as a result of people having been moved from hospitals to care homes.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 16 May 2022]:* In the recent Gardner and Harris judicial review, the court did not find that any of the people who sadly died in care homes from COVID-19 are entitled to compensation. Therefore, we do not expect to receive compensation claims following this judgement and there are no plans to establish a compensation scheme. The forthcoming public inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic will ensure that lessons are learned to inform the response to future public health emergencies.

**■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[3521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 10 May 2022 to Questions 94 and 98 on Coronavirus: Disease Control, for what reason the Government is unable to provide information relating to the formulation of Government policy.

**Maggie Throup:**

Release of this material would undermine the principle of collective agreement and the ability of Ministers to debate policy in a confidential manner.

**■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments****Chris Green:**[\[3628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many doses of covid-19 antivirals have been administered to (a) immunocompromised individuals and (b) people of working age after contracting covid-19 during the period of 17 March 2022 to 17 May 2022.

**Maggie Throup:**

Between 17 March and 17 May 2022, 15,793 courses of antiviral treatments were provided to eligible individuals in England, who had tested positive for COVID-19. Of



these patients, 10,256 individuals were aged 17 to 69 years old. However, the information requested on those who are immunocompromised is not held centrally.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[2693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether an assessment has been made of the adequacy of the availability of personal protective equipment for BAME healthcare workers during the (a) first and (b) second wave of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

Since October 2020, the Department has received feedback on personal protective equipment (PPE) from users through regular customer engagement panels. Staff groups with protected characteristics, including those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, have reported their experiences of the use and availability of PPE. Earlier in the pandemic, some BAME staff reported difficulty with the fit of some items of PPE. The Department has addressed these concerns through appropriate fit testing and by supplying a range of sizes to cater to a diverse range of users.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Nick Gibb:**

[\[3451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to roll out a fourth covid-19 vaccination to all adults.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 19 May 2022, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on an autumn COVID-19 booster programme. The JCVI's current advice suggests that a COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to residents in a care home for older adults and staff; frontline health and social care workers; all those 65 years old and over; and adults aged 16 to 64 years old in a clinical risk group. The JCVI will continue to review the vaccination programme and the epidemiological situation, particularly in relation to the timing and value of doses for less vulnerable older adults and those in clinical risk groups before autumn 2022. The Government will consider the JCVI's final recommendations later this year.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[3685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to address the shortage of Novavax vaccinations to ensure those who require this vaccine due to health conditions have access to coronavirus immunisation.

**Maggie Throup:**

There are several COVID-19 vaccines available which are safe and highly effective. The Government will be guided by the advice of the independent Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation on which vaccines should be deployed in the United Kingdom's vaccination programmes, including the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine.

**Catherine West:**

[\[3687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the second covid-19 booster jab will be offered to people aged 70 to 75.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 19 May 2022, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on an autumn COVID-19 booster programme. The JCVI's current advice suggests that a COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to residents in a care home for older adults and staff; frontline health and social care workers; all those 65 years old and over; and adults aged 16 to 64 years old in a clinical risk group. The JCVI will continue to review the vaccination programme and the epidemiological situation, particularly in relation to the timing and value of doses for less vulnerable older adults and those in clinical risk groups before autumn 2022. The Government will consider the JCVI's final recommendations later this year.

■ **Dementia: Diagnosis**

**Cat Smith:**

[\[3650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people living with a dementia diagnosis have a sub-type specified.

**Gillian Keegan:**

This information is not held in the format requested. While NHS Digital collects data on the numbers of patients with a recorded dementia diagnosis, it does not record a sub-type of dementia.

■ **Dental Services: Contracts**

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[3718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NHS England regarding reform of the dental contract.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with the Department and the British Dental Association on the reform of the National Health Service dental contract, which aims to improve patient access to NHS care. We are currently negotiating proposed changes to the NHS contract for dentistry services with the British Dental Association.

■ **Dental Services: Internet**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answers of 28 April 2022 to Question 116907 and of 26 October 2021 to Question 56597, what progress he is making on ensuring that all NHS dental practices comply with the request to review and update their profile information on the nhs.uk website to help patients find information about available care; what estimate he has made of the number of NHS

dentist profiles on the NHS website that are up to date; and for what reasons there was a delay in answering to Question 116907 tabled on 2 February 2022; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS Digital is encouraging dental practices to ensure their NHS.UK profiles are updated and is improving the process for updating information for practices. In the previous 90 days, 47% of high street dental practices had updated information on whether new NHS patients were being accepted. This is an increase of 3% from December 2021. The response to Question 116907 was delayed due to additional information being collated.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Social Clubs**

**Gareth Bacon:**

[\[2663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 7 March 2022 to Question 132393 on civil service staff networks, what recognised staff groups have been running in his Department over the last three years.

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

**Gareth Bacon:**

[\[2664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 7 March 2022 to Question 132393 on civil service staff networks, what information he holds on (a) FTE staff time and (b) budgets available to recognised staff groups within each of the last three years.

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ **Dialysis Machines**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[3680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has conducted an equality impact assessment on the impact of the rise in the cost of living on kidney dialysis patients undertaking dialysis in their own home.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific equality impact assessment has been conducted. Provisions are in place for patients receiving haemodialysis treatment at home to be reimbursed for additional direct energy costs as a result of their treatment. NHS England meets these additional direct utility costs through the payment of the national tariff to the patient's usual dialysis provider. The amount reimbursed by the patient's provider is expected to match increases in energy unit prices.

We are working with NHS England to implement the Renal Services Transformation Programme, which aims to reduce unwarranted variation in both the quality and accessibility of renal care, including home dialysis treatment. One of the strategic

priorities of the Transformation Programme is ensuring equity of access, by understanding and addressing long-known health inequalities.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[3764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the reimbursement of costs incurred from dialysis of patients with chronic kidney disease who are treated at home, what steps his Department is taking with NHS England to ensure the 2022/23 National Tariff Payment System will reflect changes to energy prices.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[3765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking with NHS trusts to ensure patients with chronic kidney disease receiving haemodialysis treatment at home are reimbursed for the energy costs incurred from operating the dialysis equipment.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Provisions are in place for patients receiving haemodialysis treatment at home to be reimbursed for additional direct energy costs as a result of their treatment. NHS England meets these additional direct utility costs through the payment of the national tariff to the patient's usual dialysis provider. The amount reimbursed by the patient's provider is expected to match increases in energy unit prices.

There is no nationally set price for home haemodialysis and providers and commissioners should agree the appropriate level of funding locally. However, the tariff contains Best Practice Tariff prices for adult renal dialysis, which includes prices for home haemodialysis. In the 2022/23 tariff, the Best Practice price is expected to cover the direct additional utility costs incurred by the patient. NHS England is promoting awareness of these arrangements directly to all commissioned providers and renal clinical networks to alert eligible patients that reimbursements are available.

## ■ Evusheld

**Amy Callaghan:** [\[2654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to procure the Evusheld drug for treatment of covid-19 for clinically extremely vulnerable people.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 17 March 2022, Evusheld was granted conditional marketing approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). However, the MHRA highlighted uncertainty over the appropriate dose needed for protection against the Omicron variant. Understanding its efficacy is necessary prior to any procurement or deployment decisions. The UK Health Security Agency is currently undertaking further testing on the treatment's effectiveness against the Omicron variant to inform any such decisions.

**Chris Green:**

[\[3627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 March to Question 141960, whether he can provide an estimated date for the availability of Evusheld on the NHS.

**Maggie Throup:**

Evusheld was granted a conditional marketing authorisation by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on 17 March 2022. However, the initial positive trial data on Evusheld was published prior to the emergence of the Omicron variant.

The UK Health Security Agency is currently testing the efficacy of Evusheld against the Omicron variant and the Department and National Health Service are identifying appropriate patient cohorts and approaches to the potential deployment of pre-exposure prophylaxis. There is no current estimated date for the availability of Evusheld in the NHS.

#### ■ Health Services: Energy

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[1226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to assist (a) primary and (b) secondary care facilities with rising energy costs.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Local Government Finance Settlement makes an additional £3.7 billion available to councils. As part of the Settlement, local authorities can access an additional £1 billion specifically for social care in 2022/23. Councils also have access to funding from unring-fenced grants, such as the 2022/23 Services Grant and from council tax. The Settlement includes £162 million in 2022/23 for the reform of adult social care to support local authorities move towards paying a fair cost of care.

#### ■ Health Services: Havering

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[3494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for a medical procedure in the London Borough of Havering.

**Edward Argar:**

This information is not held in the format requested.

#### ■ Health Services: Sikhs

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[3743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help tackle anti-Sikh discrimination in healthcare settings.

**Edward Argar:**

All National Health Service providers must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires an organisation to have due regard to eliminating discrimination

when carrying out its activities. The NHS Standard Contract also contains requirements on equity of access, equality and non-discrimination.

### ■ **Healthy Start Scheme**

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[5367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many households migrating from Healthy Start vouchers to cards were initially informed that they were ineligible for a card but were subsequently found to be eligible and are therefore owed backdated payments.

**Maggie Throup:**

The information requested is not collected centrally.

### ■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages**

**Sir Alan Campbell:**

[\[3476\]](#)

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

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are more than 70 hormone replacement therapy (HRT) products currently available in the United Kingdom. While most remain in good supply, a range of factors such as an increase in demand has led to supply issues with a limited number of products. However, alternatives to those experiencing supply issues remain available.

### ■ **Immunosuppression: Coronavirus**

**Henry Smith:**

[\[695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the percentage of immunocompromised people receiving antiviral treatments for covid-19 within five days of first symptoms.

**Maggie Throup:**

In England, 95% of eligible non-hospitalised patients who received an antiviral treatment were treated within five days from the start of COVID-19 symptoms. One such treatment, remdesivir, can be provided within seven days of symptom onset.

### ■ **Liver Diseases: Diagnosis**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[2692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to improve pathways for the early detection of liver disease in (a) Stockport, (b) Greater Manchester and (c) England.

**Maria Caulfield:**

In Stockport, the local National Health Service has an established non-alcoholic fatty liver disease programme, with a detection and investigation programme including

lifestyle intervention to support behaviour change of those patients who are identified as high risk or harmful drinking patterns. At Salford Royal Hospital, there is a seven-day service to provide interventions for those patients attending from the North West of England, including Stockport and Greater Manchester. These patients are referred to the hospital's Well Liver Clinic and undergo clinical assessment and liver elastography.

In the Spending Review 2021, £2.3 billion of capital funding has been allocated for investment in diagnostic services, to increase capacity for the diagnosis of liver disease. NHS regions will work with integrated care systems, diagnostic networks and primary care services on the location and configuration of community diagnostic centres, based on the needs of the local population.

### ■ **Lung Cancer: Screening**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[3586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to extend the Targeted Lung Health Check programme beyond the pilot areas in the UK.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Targeted Lung Health Checks (TLHCs) are available in 27 areas and will expand to a further 16 in 2022/23, with at least one programme in every Cancer Alliance in England. We expect this expansion to continue in England in 2023.

The UK National Screening Committee is currently consulting on whether to recommend targeted lung screening, which closes on 8 June 2022. The establishment of TLHCs in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is a devolved matter.

### ■ **Medical Treatments**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[2304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 22 March 2022 to Question 139363 on medical treatments, whether a date has been determined for NHS England's next Clinical Priorities Advisory Group meeting.

**Edward Argar:**

The Clinical Priorities Advisory Group meets on a monthly basis to consider treatments and service specifications which do not have significant cost impact or are cost-saving. The prioritisation of treatments which require additional investment is due to be discussed in July 2022.

### ■ **Medicine: Students**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[5381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that medical students are financially supported throughout their studies.



**Edward Argar:**

In years one to four of an undergraduate course, domestic students can access student loans from Student Finance England. From year five of an undergraduate course and year two of a graduate-entry course, NHS Bursary support can be accessed from the NHS Business Services Authority. This comprises payment for tuition fees, a non-means-tested grant and a further means-tested award. These funding arrangements are reviewed annually.

**Menopause: Diagnosis****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[3686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional steps he will take to ensure that medical professionals are able to recognise when women are menopausal so that hormone replacement therapy can be prescribed to eradicate lengthy waits.

**Maria Caulfield:**

In January 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement established the Menopause Pathway Improvement Programme. The Programme is reviewing and updating information on NHS.UK; designing and introducing evidence-based guides for professionals; reviewing the use of apps to support education and symptom tracking; and supporting local systems to implement change. It will also produce training resources to educate clinicians.

Each medical school in England sets its own undergraduate curriculum which must meet the standards set by the General Medical Council (GMC) in its Outcomes for Graduates. In meeting these standards, the GMC expects that newly qualified doctors are able to identify, treat and manage patients' care needs, including the menopause and perimenopause.

The Royal College of General Practitioners has also developed a women's health toolkit, which addresses the symptoms of the menopause and treatment pathways.

**Miscarriage****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[3681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) recording and (b) publishing data on the number of miscarriages in England and (c) including a focus on miscarriage in the forthcoming Women's Health Strategy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Lancet Series, published in April 2021, made recommendations to the Government, which included recording every miscarriage in England. We are considering the Lancet Series' recommendation in the development of the Women's Health Strategy, which will be published later in 2022. There are no official statistics reported for miscarriages, due to a significant number of miscarriages not being



reported to a healthcare provider, particularly those which take place at an early gestation.

## ■ **Mobile Phones: Health Hazards**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[3585]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of mobile phone usage from a young age on children's development.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department of Health and Social Care has funded research into the impact of mobile phone use on young people's neurocognitive and mental health outcomes. In 2019, the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) produced advice for parents and carers on screen and social media use, informed by research on child and adolescent development. However, it is insufficiently conclusive to support evidence-based guidelines by the UK CMOs on optimal amounts of screen use or online activities.

The UK Health Security Agency provides advice on appropriate public health standards for protection from electromagnetic field exposures. The independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation concluded in its 2012 evidence review that there is no convincing evidence that radiofrequency field exposures below guideline levels cause health effects in either adults or children.

## ■ **NHS: Dental Services**

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[3712]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number and proportion of NHS dentists that are not accepting new patients; and what steps he is taking in response to that matter.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No recent estimate has been made. Between April and June 2022, NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked practices to deliver at least 95% of contracted units of dental activity and 100% of units of orthodontic activity to safely improve access for patients.

An additional £50 million was made available for National Health Service dentistry was made available for the final quarter of 2021/22 to provide greater access to dental care and tackle the backlog. The available appointments were targeted at those most in need of urgent dental treatment, vulnerable groups and children. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with the Department and the British Dental Association on the reform of the NHS dental contract, which aims to improve patient access to NHS care.

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[3715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will reform the dentists' contact to ensure every community has dental practices that will treat patients under the NHS.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with the Department and the British Dental Association on the reform of the National Health Service dental contract, which aims to improve patient access to NHS care. Health Education England's (HEE) 'Advancing Dental Care Review' made recommendations to tackle recruitment, retention and attracting dentists to areas which are currently less well served. HEE is now implementing its recommendations with stakeholders over the next four years through the Dental Education Reform Programme.

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[3717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the contract between dentists and the NHS to remove the limits on the number of treatments NHS dentists can offer each year.

**Maria Caulfield:**

National Health Service regional commissioners are required to make decisions based upon need in their areas, whilst balancing budgets across services. As such, it is not possible to remove limits on the number of treatments NHS dentists can offer each year. While, NHS dentists can over-deliver on contracts in some cases, due to the need to balance budgets, this must be agreed with regional commissioners where it is likely to exceed 2%.

■ **NHS: Staff**

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[2514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS staff have more opportunities to engage in research delivery.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Vision for the Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery published in March 2021 committed to create a research positive culture in the National Health Service and develop a sustainable and supported research workforce, offering rewarding opportunities and careers for healthcare and research staff. In 2021, the Phase 1 Implementation Plan set out plans for new professional roles, expansion of flexible workforce and delivery models and increased capacity for research in primary and community care. The Phase 2 Implementation Plan is currently being developed and is planned for publication in summer 2022.

## ■ Nurses: Pay

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[3464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of inflation on nurses' pay; and whether the Government plans to take steps in response to that matter.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government is looking to the independent National Health Service Pay Review Bodies for a recommendation for NHS staff not in multi-year pay deals. The Bodies are comprised of industry experts which make recommendations based on an assessment of evidence from stakeholders, trade unions and the Government. This considers factors such as inflation and the economic context, recruitment and retention and the morale and motivation of NHS staff. As such, we expect the Pay Review Bodies to make an assessment of inflationary impacts.

## ■ Nurses: Recruitment

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[3466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of changes to nursing bursaries on UK nursing recruitment.

**Edward Argar:**

As of February 2022, there were 314,861 full time equivalent nurses employed in National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups in England. This is an increase of 23,053 since February 2020 and an increase of 38,252 since February 2017.

We have committed to delivering 50,000 more nurses in England by the end of this Parliament through improving domestic training pipelines, international recruitment and the retention of existing staff. This is supported by non-repayable training grants of at least £5,000 per year to eligible nurses. In the 2022 recruitment cycle, there were approximately 43,000 applicants to nursing and midwifery courses - a 25% increase compared to January 2020. There are currently more than 72,000 students training to be nurses in England.

## ■ Nurses: Vacancies

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[3465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the level of nursing shortages; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle that shortage.

**Edward Argar:**

As of December 2021, there were 39,652 full-time equivalent registered nursing vacancies. Many of the vacancies will be covered by bank and agency staff.

We have committed to delivering 50,000 more nurses by 2024 and ensure a sustainable long-term supply in future. We have established a programme to improve

retention and support return to practice, invest in and diversify the training pipeline and ethically recruit internationally. As of February 2022, the number of nurses had increased by more than 30,000 in comparison with September 2019.

## ■ Nutrition: Costs

**Ian Byrne:** [\[4716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Written Question 518 on Nutrition, if his Department will make an estimate of the cost for (a) an adult and (b) a child to eat in line with the dietary advice contained in the Community Eatwell Guide.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Eatwell Guide shows the proportions of the different types of foods which contribute to a healthy, balanced diet. It allows for flexibility and is not prescriptive, as it is possible to eat a diet in line with the guide by choosing from a range of foods and drinks. In 2016, 'Eatwell Guide: modelling the dietary and cost implications of incorporating new sugar and fibre guidelines' by Scarborough et al analysed the cost of a modelled diet reflective of the Eatwell Guide recommendations. This had a guide cost £5.99 per adult per day, which was similar to the cost of the average diet in the United Kingdom at that time at £6.02 per adult per day. The Office of Health Improvement and Disparities will explore options to assess the cost of a healthy diet with a focus on families.

## ■ Organs: Donors

**Jim Shannon:** [\[3584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness on the merits of organ donation.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS Blood and Transplant runs awareness campaigns throughout the year, such as the Valentine's Day campaign to encourage the public to have a 'heart to heart' and share their organ donation decision.

NHS Blood and Transplant's Community Investment Scheme (CIS) funds community and faith-based organisations to drive awareness, understanding and behaviour change amongst black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The CIS has funded 34 initiatives to promote deceased and living donation this year. In 2021, NHS Blood and Transplant published 'Organ donation and Transplantation 2030: Meeting the Need' which sets out the economic benefits for donation.

## ■ Pancreatic Cancer: Mortality Rates

**Holly Mumby-Croft:** [\[3800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to improve the survival rates of people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer; and whether those steps will be included in the upcoming 10-Year Cancer Plan.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned an audit into pancreatic cancer and continue to work with Pancreatic Cancer UK to raise awareness of Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy and share guidance with Cancer Alliances.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are deploying non-symptom specific pathways and the new faster diagnosis standard and investing £325 million in new diagnostic equipment, which will improve early diagnosis and detection of pancreatic cancer. Officials are currently analysing the responses received in the call for evidence to develop the 10 Year Cancer Plan. The Plan will address all cancer types, including rarer and less survivable cancers such as pancreatic cancer.

**■ Pregnancy: Alcoholic Drinks****Lee Anderson:**[\[3731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase research into the effect of alcohol on (a) pregnant women and (b) their unborn babies.

**Lee Anderson:**[\[3732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to inform women about the dangers of drinking alcohol whilst pregnant.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department is considering future research in this area and how improvements to the data collected can be made. The Department funds and commissions research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including the effect of alcohol on pregnant women and unborn babies. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. The NIHR is currently funding research to improve support for midwives to discuss harms of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs) low risk drinking guidelines provide advice to women not to drink alcohol if they are planning for a pregnancy or are pregnant. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, NHS England and local commissioners continue to raise awareness and education on the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant and through midwives and health visitors. The Maternity Transformation Programme works with the Royal Colleges and regulatory bodies to raise the profile of the CMOs' guidelines and recommend it is included in training. The alcohol calorie consultation will seek views on whether the provision of the UK CMOs' low risk drinking guidelines, including a pregnancy warning, should be mandatory or continue on a voluntary basis.

## ■ Prescriptions: Delivery Services

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[4705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide funding for prescription deliveries for people who are unable to attend their local pharmacy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

A medicine delivery service was funded during the pandemic for clinically extremely vulnerable patients and for people who were self-isolating. This service has now been decommissioned. A medicine delivery service can be commissioned as an enhanced service if deemed appropriate by local commissioners to fit the need of the population. In addition, distance selling pharmacies are required to deliver dispensed medicines as part of their terms of service and some pharmacies offer delivery of medicines as part of their business model.

## ■ Protective Clothing: Contracts

**Angela Rayner:** [\[3606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 122676, on Protective Clothing: Contracts, what systems were used to record the results of the due diligence checks on suppliers of PPE during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* The results of due diligence were recorded by several Government departments, including the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence. In the absence of a single, integrated system, financial due diligence on suppliers was recorded locally using bespoke systems and processes, such as Microsoft Office applications, Atamis, Mendix and Defence Share.

## ■ Use of Health Data for Research and Analysis Review

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he taking to promote and resource reproducible analytical pipelines as the minimum standard for academic and NHS data analysis, as recommended in the Goldacre review.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are currently considering the recommendations of the Goldacre review. However, many of the review's recommendations are aligned with existing programmes, such as facilitating Reproducible Analytical Pipelines (RAP) within the National Health Service and promoting RAP through NHS analyst communities.

## ■ Wound Dressings: Technology

**Andrew Selous:**

[\[2394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Medical Technology Group's Manifesto report entitled Improving patient access to medical technology, published November 2021, if his Department will take steps in line with the recommendations of that report to (a) ensure that wound care technologies recommended by NICE guidance are taken up at pace and (b) introduce measures to hold Integrated Care Systems accountable for the implementation and uptake of that technology.

**Edward Argar:**

Medical supplies and equipment are procured via NHS Supply Chain, which ensures value for money. The National Wound Care Strategy Programme recognises that in certain instances, specific wound care materials are required which are not available via NHS Supply Chain. In these instances, alternative supply routes are being sourced.

There are no current plans for integrated care systems (ICSs) to be accountable for the implementation and uptake of this technology. However, it is expected that ICSs will make the appropriate procurement decisions to support the local population.

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Asylum

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[3780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department will publish the guidance on differentiated treatment of asylum seekers due to come into force on 28 June 2022.

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[3781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on people who contacted her Department before 28 June 2022 to claim asylum, but have been unable to complete the application process due to delays in the provision of screening interviews.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* The guidance on the differentiation policy will be published on 28 June 2022.

Those who have contacted the Home Office to claim asylum before 28 June 2022 and are currently awaiting an appointment for screening will be treated as having claimed asylum before the implementation of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. These transitional arrangements will be outlined in the aforementioned guidance.



### ■ Asylum: Linton-on-Ouse

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [2564]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the proposed asylum processing site at Linton-on-Ouse on (a) public services and (b) local residents in the context of that village's population size relative to the number of asylum seekers proposed to be accommodated at that site.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 19 May 2022]:* The Home Office is conducting an Equality Impact Assessment on the use of Linton-On-Ouse as an accommodation centre.

Key local partners and stakeholders have been notified of the plans for Linton-on-Ouse. We are bringing together statutory and other agencies on a regular basis both in the implementation stage and when the site is operational.

We are also engaging with the local community and discussing the site with them through scheduled meetings and forums.

### ■ Asylum: Napier Barracks

**Anne McLaughlin:** [309]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what changes have been made to the criteria and process for determining whether a person is suitable to be accommodated at Napier Barracks since the High Court's ruling in June 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

The suitability criteria was published in May 2021, and there have been no changes since publication.

The Home's Office's "Allocation of Accommodation" guidance ( [Allocation of accommodation policy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101444/Allocation_of_Accommodation_guidance.pdf) ) sets out a range of factors to be considered when assessing the suitability of individual asylum seekers to particular types of accommodation and includes specific guidance for the Napier site. A number of changes were introduced to the accommodation arrangements and other facilities at the site following the High Court judgment, generally aimed at more effectively managing Covid risks, better safeguarding arrangements, improvements in the living conditions and other facilities and clearer information to the residents on a range of matters, including that they are free to leave the site if they wish.

### ■ Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

**Helen Hayes:** [2591]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the average length of stay of asylum seekers in initial accommodation; and what steps she is taking to ensure that initial accommodation is being used for short term stays only.



**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office monitors the length of stay in Initial Accommodation and Contingency Accommodation on a regular basis.

The asylum accommodation system is under enormous pressure because of the significant and sustained increase in asylum intake over the last 12 months and the build-up of the population as a result of Covid-19 related measures. This has resulted in over 25,000 asylum seekers being accommodated in temporary contingency accommodation, such as hotels. This is not acceptable; it is not fair on the taxpayers, and it does not offer the right solution for communities or those seeking asylum; it must change.

That is why I wrote to all Local Authorities on 13 April 2022 to set out plans for Full Dispersal. This will reduce and then eliminate the use of hotels for asylum seekers by moving to a full dispersal model for asylum accommodation. This will mean expanding our existing approach of using private rental sector housing to all local authority areas across England, Scotland and Wales.

**■ Deportation: Jamaica****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[5382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the value for money of the Jamaica deportation charter flight on 8 May 2022.

**Tom Pursglove:**

This Government's priority is keeping the people of this country safe, and we make no apology for seeking to remove dangerous foreign criminals. Foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them.

Charter flight operations there are an important means to return disruptive individuals or where they are limited scheduled routes, particularly during the global Coronavirus pandemic. We manage the charter programme flexibly, balancing it with the use of scheduled flights to best respond to operational needs.

The endless merry go round of late legal claims – which are often unfounded or without merit – can result in people being removed from flights at the last minute.

Our New Plan for Immigration will stop the abuse of the system and expedite the removal of those who have no right to be here.

**■ Dungavel House Immigration Removal Centre****Anne McLaughlin:**[\[5427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 54123, how many times Dungavel IRC has been used to process clandestine arrivals by boat since 14 April 2022.

**Anne McLaughlin:**

[\[5428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if capacity has been exceeded in Immigration Removal Centres other than Dungavel IRC since 14 April 2022.

**Tom Pursglove:**

We operate the immigration removal estate in a flexible manner and in line with the Short Term Holding Facility (STHF) Rules 2018 and the Detention Centre Rules 2001, as appropriate.

In order to support the management of the arrival of migrants by boat, we have temporarily accommodated people under the provisions of the STHF Rules 2018, in a small number of immigration removal centres (IRCs) including Dungavel House. Dungavel IRC is only considered when capacity is exceeded at other facilities, or contingencies are exhausted. Since 14 April 2022 Dungavel IRC has not operated as a STHF to accommodate clandestine migrant arrivals.

There have been no occasions since 14 April 2022 when capacity has been exceeded in any IRC.

#### ■ **HM Passport Office: Remote Working**

**Sir Roger Gale:**

[\[4448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of staff in the Passport Office working from home as of 18 May 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* For staff where their role can only be performed from an office, they will continue to work from a Home Office building at all times.

Her Majesty's Passport Office operational teams securely process passport applications both working from an office and through the use of homeworking solutions. Passport Applications are being processed in higher numbers than ever before. Across March and April 2022, HM Passport Office completed the processing of approximately two million applications.

#### ■ **HM Passport Office: Standards**

**Nick Smith:**

[\[3553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what metrics are currently being used by HM Passport Office as key performance indicators; and how did that Office perform against those metrics in the most recent reporting period for which data is available.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* Since April 2021, HM Passport Office has been advising people to allow up to 10 weeks when applying for their passport from the UK. Overseas application processing times will vary.

Less than 1.4% of the passports for UK applications printed during the week ending 8 May had been in the system for longer than 10 weeks.

■ **Home Office: Social Clubs**

**Gareth Bacon:**

[\[2671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132395 on civil service staff networks, what recognised staff groups have been running in her Department over the last three years.

**Rachel Maclean:**

There are 19 recognised staff groups that have been running in the department over the last three years. The groups are listed below:

A:gender Support Network

ABLE - the Home Office's disability network

Break the stigma - support group for staff affected by mental health issues

EU Nationals Network (EUNN)

Ethos - Home Office sports and social association

Home Office Christian Network

Home Office Hindu Connection

Home Office Islamic Network

Home Office Jewish Network (J-Net)

Home Office Sikh Association

Gender Equality Network

Giving Back (GB) Network

Home Office Retired and Reunited Staff Association (HORSA)

Spectrum: Home Office lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) staff support network

Stand 2 Support (veterans group)

The Network

Trade unions

Working Through Cancer Network

Carers' Group (Her Majesty's Passport Office)

UKVI Parental Network

**■ Home Office: World Economic Forum**

**Jon Trickett:** [2367]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has participated in any events or meetings organised by the World Economic Forum in the last year.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Home Secretary has not participated in any World Economic Forum events in the past year.

**■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Sheffield**

**Olivia Blake:** [3782]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have arrived (a) in Sheffield Hallam constituency and (b) within the Sheffield City Council area through the Ukraine Family Scheme since that scheme began.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 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.*

**■ Immigration Bail**

**Paul Blomfield:** [3576]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the guidance on Reporting and Offender Management Version 4.0, published on 6 May 2022, was amended to include the current guidance on Accompanied Reporting.

**Paul Blomfield:** [3577]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of not permitting volunteers to accompany refugees and asylum seekers when attending reporting centres except in exceptional cases on (a) immigration compliance and (b) wellbeing of those reporting.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* The purpose of reporting is to ensure those without leave to remain in the UK and illegal entrants remain in close contact with the Home Office. A reporting requirement of bail is used to enable case progression, interviews, offers of voluntary departure and travel document applications to be conducted to support removal actions. A person on a reporting regime will be considered for a variety of methods to report including in person within a Centre or a combination of telephone reporting, digital bail or electronic monitoring.

There has been no change to the current guidance on accompanied reporting. It remains at the discretion of the ROM manager and all representations will be considered. This was present in v1 issued 2017 and has not been amended since:

***Accompanied reporting***

*The reporting centre manager has discretion as to whether a person reporting may have someone accompany them, such as a legal representative, a support or charity organisation worker, or volunteer. Where the person reporting is vulnerable, or where they are reporting for the first time, are typical examples of when assistance is requested.*

*You should not consider accompanied reporting to be routine, but it can be permitted in exceptional cases where specific requests are made to the reporting centre manager. A person accompanying the reporting person must only be allowed into the waiting area, you must not permit them to intervene on the person's behalf at the counter.*

A change in the new guidance is new asylum applicants will not be required to report until a negative decision is made on their application, unless exceptional circumstances apply, for example the applicant is also a foreign national offender (FNO), a restricted access case or a TCU case, these will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

■ **Immigration Controls**

**Jess Phillips:**

**[4587]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing those on the 10-year route to settlement to switch to the five-year route.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* Those who meet all eligibility and specified evidential requirements of the Family Immigration Rules, will be granted on a five-year route to settlement (granted in two periods of 30 months, with a third application for indefinite leave to remain). Those who cannot or do not meet these requirements, or seek to rely on their private life, will instead have a longer route to settlement: 10 years (granted in four periods of 30 months, with a fifth application for indefinite leave to remain). This reflects our obligations under Article 8 of the ECHR.

A person who is on a 5-year route must meet all of the suitability, eligibility and evidential requirements at every application stage, to stay on this route. If they do not, they may be granted on a different basis, including on a longer 10-year route. Where this is the case, they may shorten the time in the UK before they are eligible to apply for indefinite leave to remain, by starting the 5-year route again when the requirements of those Rules are met.

## ■ Immigration: Africa

**Patrick Grady:**

**[5425]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of exempting people from African commonwealth countries, who are (a) taught in English throughout their education or (b) have English as an official language of their country from English language testing requirements for Home Office applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office publishes a list of Majority English Speaking Countries (MESC) for immigration purposes. Immigration applicants who are nationals of those countries meet the English language requirement without having to provide further proof. For a country be included on the MESC list, the Home Office must have evidence over half the population in that country speak English as a first language.

If a country meets this criterion, it means it is more likely than not any individual applicant from that country can speak English with the level of fluency required to integrate in the UK, complete the course they are coming to study, or undertake the job they are coming to do.

The fact a country's official language is English is not sufficient justification to include it on the MESC list, as this does not necessarily correlate with more than half of the population of the country speaking English as a first language. We do not currently have evidence any African commonwealth country meets the requirement to be included on the MESC list.

We do not have any plans to recognise secondary school-age qualifications taught outside of the UK as proof of English language ability, but there are a variety of methods applicants can use to meet the English language requirement instead. These include:

- having shown they meet the requirement in a previous immigration application
- passing a Secure English Language Test at an approved test centre
- holding a degree-level qualification which was taught in English
- having their chosen university or other Higher Educational Institution self-certify their level of English ability, or

having a GCSE, A-level, Scottish National Qualification at level 4 or 5 or, Scottish Higher or Advanced Higher, in English following education at a UK school begun when they were under-18.

## ■ Immigration: Veterans

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[3593]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 11 March 2022 to Question 134358 on Immigration: Veterans, whether non-UK veterans living outside the UK who were discharged more than two years ago will qualify under the

policy; and what support her Department plans to provide to help them regularise their immigration status.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* The fee waiver policy applies to non-UK veterans living outside the UK who apply for settlement in the UK more than two years after discharge where the requirements of Part 3, paragraph 11 of Appendix Armed Forces are met.

Non-UK veterans outside of the UK do not have an immigration status to regularise but, if they meet the requirements of Appendix Armed Forces, they should apply online at <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/apply-visa-type/armed-forces-group> if they want to settle in the UK.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Louise Haigh:**

**[2563]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 30 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Sheffield Heeley, reference H18249.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office responded to the Hon. Member's correspondence on 17 May 2022.

■ **National Crime Agency**

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

**[2338]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) operating budget and (b) number of full time equivalent staff is for the Combating Kleptocracy Cell in the National Crime Agency.

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

**[2339]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding the Government has allocated to the Combating Kleptocracy Cell in the National Crime Agency.

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

**[2340]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many new officers the National Crime Agency has recruited to investigate sanctions evasion and oligarch assets.

**Damian Hinds:**

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

The Home Office are supporting the NCA by providing additional funding for the Combating Kleptocracy Cell in FY22/23.

**■ P&O Ferries: Migrant Workers**

**Paula Barker:** [2701]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many transit visas have been issued by UK Visas and Immigration to non-UK resident seafarers employed by (a) Clyde Marine Recruitment and (b) International Fleet Management to work on P&O Ferries vessels on regularly scheduled services from UK ports between 1 February and 16 May 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* Home Office Migration Statistics do not publish the number of seafarers who have been granted visas to enter the UK to join Clyde Marine Recruitment and International Fleet Management to work on P&O Ferries vessels. To capture numbers would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

**■ Passports: Applications**

**Yvette Cooper:** [1107]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many UK passport applications her Department processed in each quarter since 2015.

**Kevin Foster:**

I would refer the Rt Hon Member to the published transparency data which she can find via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-passport-office-data-q4-2021>

**Owen Thompson:** [1237]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of call-backs take place within the specified 48 hour period for those who apply to upgrade their passport applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 20 May 2022]:* Teleperformance currently capture a wide range of data, however they do not currently capture a break down on calls made specifically regarding upgrade requests.

**Owen Thompson:** [1238]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what percentage of passport applications have been processed within HM Passport Office's own service standard times in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 20 May 2022]:* The data is not held in a reportable format and could therefore only be obtained at a disproportionate cost



**Nick Smith:**

**[2451]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average unit cost of processing a passport was in (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021 and (d) 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* All information covering HM Passport Office costs up to financial year 2020/21 are included within the Home Office published Annual Report and Accounts which are available via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021>

Data for financial year 2021/22 is due to be published ahead of summer recess.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[323]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the average time taken to process a passport application in the latest period for which data is available; and if she will make a comparative assessment of the average processing time compares to pre-covid-19 pandemic levels.

**Kevin Foster:**

Historic processing times for both 2018 and 2019 are calculated using working days only and are counted as date the application became live in the system (traditionally called cashiered intake but the point the application has all its initial docs in the Digital Application Process) to the printed date. This data excludes time an application spent awaiting interview.

Processing times for applications in 2022 are now calculated using calendar days from point of all initial documentation being received by HMPO (during the week ending 8 May 2022 this process could take up to 8 working days) to a printed terminal state. Processing times do not include any time spent awaiting delivery (for UK applications during the week ending 8 May 2022 this could take up to 4 days)

Median averages days

| WEEK ENDING | UK | INTERNATIONAL |
|-------------|----|---------------|
| 06/05/2018  | 5  | 5             |
| 05/05/2019  | 3  | 4             |
| 08/05/2022  | 5  | 18            |

Mean averages days

| WEEK ENDING | UK | INTERNATIONAL |
|-------------|----|---------------|
| 06/05/2018  | 6  | 9             |
| 05/05/2019  | 3  | 7             |

| WEEK ENDING | UK | INTERNATIONAL |
|-------------|----|---------------|
| 08/05/2022  | 11 | 25            |

**Sir Charles Walker:**

**[3509]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to prioritise passport renewals for aeroplane cabin crew currently grounded by delays at Her Majesty's Passport Office; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 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 passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. Across March and April 2022, HM Passport Office completed the processing of approximately 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.

Any customer who has submitted a passport application using Her Majesty's Passport Office's standard service and now needs their passport sooner, is advised to contact the Passport Adviceline.

**Sir Roger Gale:**

**[4447]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the backlog of outstanding passport applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 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. Across March and April 2022, HM Passport Office completed the processing of approximately 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.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[4540]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what HM Passport Office's policy is on when to automatically close passport applications if requested documents are not

received; if she will make an estimate of the average time it took to process post at the Passport Office in the latest period for which data is available; if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending current Passport Office policy on the automatic cancellation of passport applications to prevent premature cancellations arising from delayed post; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* Customers are advised at the point of application they will not get a refund if their old passport or documents are not received within 90 days of submitting their application.

During the week ending 8 May 2022, associating supporting documents with the application could take up to 8 working days after they were physically received.

Work is in progress to extend the period when an application is automatically withdrawn to account for the time taken to associate documents to the application. In the interim, any customer who believes their application may have been withdrawn prematurely should contact HM Passport Office.

**David Warburton:**

[\[5469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that passport applications for those who need to travel urgently for compassionate reasons are prioritised.

**Kevin Foster:**

Her Majesty's Passport Office has always prioritised the cases of those who need a passport urgently on compassionate grounds, such as in the event of a death or serious illness of a friend or relative overseas. Anyone who believes they meet this criteria should contact the Passport Adviceline.

■ **Police: Pensions**

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[2466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of provisions in the new Police Pensions Scheme on protected pension rights and potential sex discrimination claims.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government is taking steps to remove discrimination on the grounds of age, associated with the transitional protection arrangements linked to the 2015 pension reforms, which was identified by the courts.

The Home Office undertook an equality analysis of its amendments to the Police Pension Scheme (England and Wales) Regulations 2015, and this included careful consideration of the impact on women, including part-time workers. Since 1 April, all active members are in the career average reformed scheme and accrue future pension benefits on the same basis irrespective of sex.

## ■ Police: Rural Areas

**Helen Morgan:** [\[2730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help increase the number of police officers in rural parts of England.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We are recruiting an additional 20,000 officers by March 2023. This is unprecedented and reflects the biggest recruitment drive in decades, and will help ensure the public is better protected, including in rural communities.

The latest data publication published on 27 April shows that as at 31 March 2022 over 13,500 additional officers have been recruited as part of the police uplift Programme in England and Wales, 68% of the 20,000 officer target.

The deployment of these officers is an operational decision for Chief Constables.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[2480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been resettled in the UK under the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme; and what proportion (a) were already in the UK, (b) arrived from Afghanistan and (c) arrived from third countries.

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[2484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been (a) referred to the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme and (b) granted indefinite leave to remain since the launch of that scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 19 May 2022]:* We will publish ACRS resettlement figures in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, allowing transparent progress-monitoring.

## ■ Refugees: Ukraine

**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[4586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there is a mechanism in place for Ukrainians to switch from the Ukrainian Family Scheme to the Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme if they are no longer able to reside in the accommodation offered to them by a relative.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* To qualify for the Homes for Ukraine scheme the customer must be outside of the United Kingdom, therefore a customer cannot switch from Ukrainian Family scheme to the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Information on an applicants' eligibility for the sponsorship route can be found here:

[Apply for a visa under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

**Peter Aldous:**

[727]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to remove the barriers that prevent Ukrainian refugees from working in the hospitality and care sectors if they wish to do so.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 20 May 2022]:* The Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Extension Scheme grant leave with no restriction on work rights and access to public funds. There are therefore no immigration barriers to Ukrainians under these schemes working in any sector of the economy, including hospitality and care.

The Department for Work and Pensions is best placed to work with people who are looking to find work in these sectors.

## ■ Seasonal Workers: Pay

**Dave Doogan:**

[2333]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason a rate of pay in excess of the national living wage has been mandated for seasonal workers by her Department.

**Dave Doogan:**

[2647]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential economic impact of mandating increased wages for seasonal workers on (a) fruit farmers and (b) consumer fruit costs.

**Kevin Foster:**

As part of extending the Seasonal Worker visa route until the end of 2024, we have followed through on the recommendation made by the Migration Advisory Committee in their report of September 2018, which stated:

*'If a seasonal agriculture worker scheme was introduced we recommend that employers pay a higher minimum wage in return for the privileged access to labour this scheme would give the sector in order to encourage increases in productivity.'*

The Government has introduced a minimum hourly rate of pay for the Seasonal Worker route as part of a wider package of work being jointly delivered with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, seeking to ensure the welfare of participating migrant workers, and in particular to reduce the risks of debt bondage.

The Government published a review of the seasonal worker route on 24 December 2021, that clearly set out the types of migrant welfare issues we have identified within this route. The Director of Labour Market Enforcement has also flagged the

agriculture sector, and specifically seasonal workers, as presenting a high risk for labour market exploitation.

It is not the purpose of the UK immigration system to provide UK growers with a guaranteed source of cheap labour, or to perpetuate conditions which would not be acceptable to resident workers. The increase in the wage required from National Minimum Wage to £10.10 per hour is reasonable and necessary in order to ensure these vulnerable workers are receiving fair remuneration for their work.

## ■ Violent and Sex Offender Register

**Steve Reed:**

[\[3604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost has been to the public purse of maintaining the Sex Offenders' Register in every year since its inception.

**Rachel Maclean:**

A system which maintains a database which holds records of those required to register with the police under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (the 2003 Act), those jailed for more than 12 months for violent offences, and those thought to be at risk of offending was rolled out to police forces in England & Wales during 2004 and 2005. The costs of running & maintaining the system for the period 2017 to 2022 are shown below. To retrieve the data from 2003 to 2017, this could only be obtained at disproportionate cost and hence is not available here.

From Financial year 2017/2018 to Financial Year 2021/22 the overall cost has been £9,601,852.

The costs below for the system include the budgeted OH charge in the Run cost and the split of staff costs.

| VISOR        |                   | FY 21/22          | FY20/21           | *FY 19/20         | *FY 18/19         | *FY 17/18         |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Staff Costs  | <b>667619.58</b>  | <b>933389.93</b>  | <b>600730.94</b>  | <b>541014.32</b>  | <b>678995.96</b>  |                   |
| Run Cost     | <b>1580310.66</b> | <b>2059242.78</b> | <b>916544.85</b>  | <b>737044.98</b>  | <b>886958.23</b>  |                   |
| <b>Total</b> |                   | <b>2247930.24</b> | <b>2992632.71</b> | <b>1517275.79</b> | <b>1278059.30</b> | <b>1565954.19</b> |

\*Due to the limited data available in regard to pay cost in these FYs, budgets pay costs have been used.

## ■ Visas: Applications

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[1538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that visa applicants from all countries are given adequate resources to help minimise delays in deciding their applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* The Home Office continually reviews its global visa operation to improve performance and ensure value for money while maintaining good customer service.

The Home Office is currently prioritising Ukraine Visa Schemes applications in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We are communicating directly with customers that applications for study, work and family visas are taking longer to process at this time. Staff are being redeployed to these visa routes and we continue to onboard and train more staff, as we approach the expected summer surge in visa applications to study in the UK.

Where there are compassionate or compelling circumstances (for example, a medical emergency), the Home Office will consider expediting specific cases. However, the bar for this is high and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness to all applicants.

**■ Visas: Ukraine****James Wild:****[1560]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will make available data on individuals arriving in the UK under the Ukraine Family Visa sponsorship route to local authorities to enable them to provide advice on accessing public services.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 18 May 2022]:* The Ukraine Family Scheme is for those Ukraine nationals who have family members in the UK and wish to join them here.

Whilst there is an expectation they will be looked after by their family sponsor, there is no requirement in the scheme for the sponsor to accommodate and support their family member once in the UK. Those who are issued visas under the Ukraine Family Scheme are issued with access to public funds and services.

The Home Office does not collect specific data on where Ukraine nationals arriving under this scheme will be living, as this is not part of the requirements for the visa to be issued. Yet we continue to liaise with our colleagues in the Department for Levelling Up Homes and Communities about what information we can supply to local authorities to assist them in their work supporting those who arrive under the Ukraine Family Scheme.

**■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review****Stephen Timms:****[4455]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish a response to the recommendations made in the report by Wendy Williams entitled Windrush Lessons Learned Review: progress update, published on 31 March 2022.



**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* In response to Recommendation 2 of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, Wendy Williams returned to the Department in September 2021 to review our progress in implementing the recommendations of that Review and the commitments we made in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan. Her Progress Update was published in March this year.

Wendy concludes there is no doubt the Department has risen to the challenge she set for us, and she acknowledges there are several areas where very good progress has been made. Wendy also rightly holds us to account where we have not made sufficient progress. We know there is more to do.

The progress update does not include new recommendations and we will continue to drive forward progress on Wendy's original 30 recommendations. Having laid the foundations for radical change in the department and a total transformation of culture, we are committed to delivering long-lasting and meaningful improvements.

**HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION****■ Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance****Andrea Leadsom:****[3579]**

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, if the Commission will make an assessment of the number of surveys planned during the (a) Summer and (b) Conference recesses in connection with maintenance work on the Palace of Westminster.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

There is planned activity for over 23 projects in the Palace of Westminster during the Summer recess, and there will also be planned maintenance and reactive maintenance work. Many activities will continue in the Conference recess.

Teams will carry out surveys prior to and during the Summer and Conference recesses; surveys are required before any work can commence.

Surveys will range from visual checking of spaces (for example, identifying cable routes, or taking audits of equipment/assets) to more intrusive work, such as digging as part of ground investigations, or putting up scaffold to conduct a stonework survey.

Survey work for the recesses is still being finalised, and individual projects might identify the need for more surveys after work commences. For this reason, it would be difficult to put a figure on the number of surveys in the Palace over the Summer and Conference recesses, but it is likely to be over a hundred.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

## ■ Department for International Trade: Staff

**Gareth Thomas:**[\[2348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many employees of her Department have been based in each African nation, in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Department for International Trade (DIT) had 86 staff based in Africa in 2018, 84 staff in 2019, 102 staff in 2020, 123 staff in 2021 and 122 staff in 2022. The breakdown by each African nation is presented in the table below.

**DIT OVERSEAS STAFF**

| <b>African Country</b> | <b>31 March 2018</b> | <b>31 March 2019</b> | <b>31 March 2020</b> | <b>31 March 2021</b> | <b>31 March 2022</b> |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Algeria                | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            |
| Angola                 | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            |
| Cameroon               | 0                    | 0                    | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            |
| Cote d'Ivoire          | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            |
| Egypt                  | 10                   | 13                   | 13                   | 13                   | 14                   |
| Ethiopia               | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 6                    | 6                    |
| Ghana                  | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 6                    | 7                    |
| Guinea                 | 0                    | 0                    | 0                    | 5 or less            | 0                    |
| Kenya                  | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 7                    | 13                   | 11                   |
| Libya                  | 0                    | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            |
| Mauritania             | 0                    | 0                    | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 0                    |
| Mauritius              | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            |
| Morocco                | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 9                    |
| Mozambique             | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            |
| Nigeria                | 16                   | 11                   | 8                    | 12                   | 12                   |
| Rwanda                 | 0                    | 0                    | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 0                    |
| Senegal                | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            | 5 or less            |

**DIT OVERSEAS STAFF**

|                    |           |           |            |            |            |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| South Africa       | 19        | 22        | 27         | 32         | 31         |
| Sudan              | 0         | 0         | 5 or less  | 0          | 5 or less  |
| Tanzania           | 5 or less | 5 or less | 5 or less  | 5 or less  | 5 or less  |
| Tunisia            | 6         | 8         | 7          | 5 or less  | 5 or less  |
| Uganda             | 5 or less | 5 or less | 5 or less  | 5 or less  | 5 or less  |
| Zambia             | 5 or less | 5 or less | 5 or less  | 5 or less  | 5 or less  |
| Zimbabwe           | 0         | 5 or less | 5 or less  | 5 or less  | 5 or less  |
| <b>Grand total</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>84</b> | <b>102</b> | <b>123</b> | <b>122</b> |

These figures are as of 31 March each year and include both UK based overseas staff (Civil Servants) and country based overseas staff who work on Department for International Trade 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.

### ■ Export Controls: Annual Reports

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[5416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department plans to publish the United Kingdom strategic export controls annual report for 2021.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

We plan to publish this report in July, but no date has been agreed.

### ■ Iron and Steel: Safeguard Measures

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[4723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she expects the Trade Remedies Authority to report their recommendations following the calling in of the UK's steel safeguard measure, reference TF0006, on 22 March 2022.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[4724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions officials in her Department have had with representatives of downstream users of steel products covered by the steel safeguard measure, reference TF0006.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[4725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the steel safeguard on British manufacturers and businesses.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[4727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has held discussions with (a) Liberty Steel UK and (b) GFG Alliance on the steel safeguard measures in (i) 2022 and (ii) 2021.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The reconsideration of the steel safeguard is continuing and the Trade Remedies Authority's (TRA) report of findings, to be published in due course, will provide analysis, including an assessment of whether the measure is in the economic interests of the UK. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade will make a decision, having regard to this analysis.

The Department for International Trade regularly engages with companies on a wide range of issues, including the steel safeguard. In the last month, Ministers have met with steel producers and downstream users. Additionally, all interested parties in the steel safeguard reconsideration have been invited to register to meet with the department.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Gulf States

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[5415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 158971 on Trade Agreements: Gulf States, what questions were asked by Ipsos Mori on member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the polling research carried out for her Department between February and May 2022.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The Department carries out such research for internal use relevant to ongoing negotiations, and details are not released due to negotiation sensitivities.

## ■ Visits Abroad: USA

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[5413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, to which individual states of the United States have (a) Ministers and (b) officials in her Department travelled in the last 12 months.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Between 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the Department of International Trade's Ministers have visited the following US States: *Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Washington DC.*

These visits were accompanied by officials. However, we don't track centrally, all visits made by officials when not accompanying Ministers. Some officials will have travelled in that time for a variety of reasons including to begin new roles in posts, to visit their counterparts in US government, to support the Department's objectives to promote exports and investment in the US. Departmental travel guidance will have been followed to ensure value for money.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Aiding and Abetting

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[2368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Joint Enterprise as a doctrine of criminal law.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[2369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have had their convictions under Joint Enterprise overturned since 2010.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[2370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to reform the criminal law doctrine of Joint Enterprise.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[2371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans does he have to ensure the protection of autistic and other neuro-diverse people in the justice system as it relates to Joint Enterprise convictions.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has not undertaken any recent assessment, nor does it have any forthcoming plans, to reform the law on joint enterprise. The Government continues to be of the view that it is for our independent courts to interpret the change to the law on joint enterprise which resulted from the Supreme Court's decision in *R v Jogee*, a change that affected a narrow element of the law in this area, specifically that on parasitic accessory liability. The Government will, however, keep the law in this area under review.

The Ministry of Justice only collects information on how many defendants are prosecuted and convicted of specific criminal offences in any given year. Information is not collated on whether a prosecution or conviction relied on the doctrine of joint enterprise, nor is information collated in relation to appeals involving a case of joint enterprise. Such information may be held on court records but there is no means for this information to be collated centrally.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the Criminal Justice System (CJS) treats all those who encounter it fairly – including neurodivergent individuals. That is why the Ministry of Justice commissioned HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HM

Inspectorate of Probation, with support from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), to undertake an independent review of neurodiversity in the criminal justice system in December 2020. The main recommendation resulting from that review was to develop an overarching strategy together with people with personal experience of neurodivergence. Additionally, the Ministry of Justice also contributed to the Department of Health and Social Care's refreshed cross-Government Autism Strategy to ensure that it included work to improve data capture on autism, and to increase – through training and awareness – the ability of prison and probation staff to better understand and support these individuals.

In sentencing an individual convicted of a crime, who may also have a mental health disorder, the courts must consider the circumstances of the offender's case, including their culpability, the harm they caused or intended to cause, and any aggravating and mitigating factors. The courts have a statutory duty to follow any relevant sentencing guidelines and in 2020, the Sentencing Council for England and Wales published a new definitive [guideline](#) for sentencing offenders with mental health and developmental disorders and neurological impairments following public consultation. This guideline stipulates that, when assessing whether an offender's impairment or disorder will have any impact on sentencing, the court should take an individualistic approach and focus on the issues in the case, recognising that levels of impairment caused by any condition will vary significantly between individuals.

## ■ Crown Court: Trials

**Steve Reed:**

**[5408]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of crown court cases that have been adjourned in 2022 as a result of a lack of a defence advocate due to no returns protest action by criminal barristers.

**James Cartlidge:**

HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is monitoring the 'on the day' impact of the operation of the Criminal Bar Association's 'No Returns Protocol' on the Crown Court. Cases are taken out of the list in advance of the date of hearing for many reasons, including the operation of the No Returns Protocol. The HMCTS 'on the day' monitoring does not capture such cases. The table below is drawn from manual returns for each Crown Court for cases affected on the day of hearing itself<sup>5</sup>.

| HEARING DATE<br><sup>1</sup> (WEEK<br>COMMENCING) | WEEKLY TOTAL<br>LISTED HEARINGS <sup>2</sup> | TOTAL NUMBER OF<br>HEARINGS<br>DISRUPTED ON THE 'NO RETURNS' AS<br>DAY DUE TO<br>HAVING A 'No<br>RETURN' <sup>3</sup> |      | NUMBER OF TRIAL<br>HEARINGS<br>DISRUPTED ON THE<br>DAY DUE TO<br>HAVING A 'No<br>RETURN' <sup>3,4</sup> |
|---|--|---|------|---|
|   |  | % OF WEEKLY<br>AVERAGE<br>HEARINGS <sup>2,3</sup>   |      |   |
| 11/04/2022  | 6,936  | 95  | 1.4% | 9   |

| HEARING DATE<br><sup>1</sup> (WEEK COMMENCING) | WEEKLY TOTAL LISTED HEARINGS <sup>2</sup> | TOTAL NUMBER OF HEARINGS DISRUPTED ON THE DAY DUE TO HAVING A 'NO RETURN' <sup>3</sup> | 'NO RETURNS' AS % OF WEEKLY AVERAGE HEARINGS <sup>2,3</sup> | NUMBER OF TRIAL HEARINGS DISRUPTED ON THE DAY DUE TO HAVING A 'NO RETURN' <sup>3,4</sup> |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| 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.

### ■ Legal Profession: Russia

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[2440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that law firms based in the UK do not undertake work that contravenes Government policies on support for the Russian state.

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[2441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to ensure law firms in the UK do not undertake work that supports the Russian state.



**Daniel Kawczynski:**

**[2443]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information the Government holds on law firms working on behalf of the Russian state since the imposition of sanctions on Russia in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

**James Cartlidge:**

Legal services are distinct from other services in the role they play in supporting a flourishing democracy and upholding the rule of law. Access to legal professionals is considered a fundamental right in democratic societies. It enables businesses and individuals to exercise their rights and comply with their duties. We only have to look at Russia – where corruption is rife and Government critics are silenced - to see why the rule of law is so important. Here in the UK, rule of law means that everyone has a right to access legal representation. The Government needs to defend these rights – in contrast to authoritarian jurisdictions.

The legal sector is critical to the operation of an effective sanctions regime and law firms have a responsibility to protect the reputation of their profession and the integrity of our legal system. The Ministry of Justice is confident that the overwhelming majority of law firms operate to the highest ethical standard. Lawyers already face significant anti-money laundering responsibilities and duties, as well as strict procedures when transacting with sanctioned individuals (including within the Russian state). Licenses from the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) are required for payments to be made to law firms for legal services. And lawyers must abide by their professional codes of conduct, enforced by independent regulators such as the Solicitors Regulatory Authority (SRA) and the Bar Standards Board (BSB). In response to the crisis, the SRA has stepped up spot checks and investigations to monitor and enforce compliance with the sanctions regime.

The Government does not routinely hold information on law firms working on behalf of the Russian state.

## ■ **Television Licences: Non-payment**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[2303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were prosecuted for non-payment of the TV licence, by gender, in each of the last five years.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions for TV licence evasion, by gender, in England and Wales, up to December 2021, available in the [‘Outcomes by Offence’ data tool](#), which can be found here: [Criminal justice system statistics quarterly: December 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

To view the number of prosecutions by gender for the non-payment of TV licences:

- Select the ‘prosecutions and convictions’ sheet in the excel document.
- Filter for ‘191A Television licence evasion’ in the offence filter.

- To view male and female prosecutions, click anywhere in the table to bring up the pivot table field list and drag 'sex' into the rows field.

The number of females prosecuted will be found on row 25 and the number of males prosecuted will be found on row 26.

## ■ War Crimes: Russia

**Matt Vickers:** [\[2720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to support the International Criminal Court with its investigation into possible Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

**James Cartlidge:**

The UK is providing the International Criminal Court (ICC) with a comprehensive package of assistance which includes a financial contribution of £1 million from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, and technical expertise from UK military, police and legal experts.

The Metropolitan Police has launched a public appeal to identify those who may have evidence or be witnesses to war crimes, and it has been collecting and preserving evidence relating to war crimes in Ukraine in support of international investigations.

We are also working with our international partners to ensure that any war crimes committed in Ukraine are investigated rapidly, and that those responsible are prosecuted and held accountable.

## ■ Youth Custody

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[4574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children currently remanded in custody are awaiting trial in the (a) Youth Court and (b) Crown Court.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The number of children and young people on remand is available and published monthly but not split into youth and crown courts.

The Youth Custody Service are unable to centrally report the number of children and young people that are on remand on the basis of their legal status. Legal basis reporting is driven by the most serious legal basis. Children and young people in custody for multiple matters, including remand may not be picked up through central reporting. A manual review of records is required to identify all children and young people who are remanded at any one time.

The PQ can only be answered through disproportionate costs due to how details on children and young peoples legal basis and court proceedings is recorded on case management systems used across the Youth Secure Estate. Answering the question in full requires manually searching individual case records.

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES****■ Asylum: Housing****Tim Farron:****[146]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has had discussions with the Association of British Insurers on reducing insurance premiums for households hosting asylum seekers.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Insurers have agreed that homeowners accommodating Ukrainian Nationals in their home under the Homes for Ukraine scheme do not need to contact their insurer on the basis that they are accommodated as non-paying guests. Please refer to the [Association of British Insurers' statement](#) for more details.

**■ Council Housing and Planning Authorities: Standards****Rachael Maskell:****[5455]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of (a) local authority planning and (b) housing departments at providing adequate services.

**Stuart Andrew:**

We currently monitor the effectiveness of local authority planning departments in the speed and quality of decision-making. As part of our proposals to change the planning system through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, we intend to consult on proposals to introduce a new planning performance framework that monitors the effectiveness of local authority planning across a broader set of metrics.

Additionally, in the Levelling Up White Paper, we announced that we will strengthen transparency for local people and publish rigorous, comparable data on performance of local authorities on the services they deliver. A new body will be set up to drive this, empowering citizens with information about their local area, strengthening local leaders' knowledge of their services, and increasing central government's understanding of the sector.

**■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Social Clubs****Gareth Bacon:****[2681]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132391, what recognised staff groups have been running in his Department over the last three years.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Department currently recognises 15 staff network groups and unless stated otherwise all have been running over the last three years. They include the following: BAMENet, Carers, Disability, EU Nationals, Fair Treatment Ambassadors (from 2021), Gender Equality, Health and Wellbeing, Jobshare, LGBT+, LGBT+ Allies,

Neurodiversity, Social Mobility, Working Parents, 50+, Inclusion Allies (from 2022). The Department also recognises the following three faith network groups: Group Christian Fellowship, Jewish Network, Network for Muslims.

**Gareth Bacon:**

**[2682]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132391 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.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Across the Civil Service, employee networks provide a valuable support structure for staff. (a) All staff networks are entirely voluntary. A Network Business Deal introduced in February 2021 provides all network chairs/deputy chairs of networks up to 25% of their contracted hours to conduct activities aimed at running the network and delivery of their business plans. This is subject to the business need and agreement with line management. It also allows that Employee network executive team members who volunteer alongside the Chairs, Co-Chairs, and Deputy Chairs can be allocated up to 10%

(b) In each of the last three financial years a staff network budget of £20,000 per annum has been controlled by Human Resources. This covers all the networks listed below: The Department currently recognises 15 staff network groups and unless stated otherwise all have been running over the last three years. They include the following: BAMENet, Carers, Disability, EU Nationals, Fair Treatment Ambassadors (from 2021), Gender Equality, Health and Wellbeing, Jobshare, LGBT+, LGBT+ Allies, Neurodiversity, Social Mobility, Working Parents, 50+, Inclusion Allies (from 2022). The Department also recognises the following three faith network groups: Group Christian Fellowship, Jewish Network, Network for Muslims.

## ■ Flats: Freehold

**Andrew Selous:**

**[2396]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the change to freeholder control of large residential blocks on fire and security risks.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government's priority is to ensure that the fire and structural safety risks for all higher-risk buildings are managed effectively by those responsible for building safety. The Building Safety Act 2022 identifies and places legal obligations with regard to building safety on Accountable Persons, irrespective of tenure and ownership. This is to ensure that building safety will be managed on an on-going basis for all higher-risk buildings. Where Accountable Persons do change, provisions in the Act ensure that key information and duties pass to any new Accountable Person.

## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

**Ian Murray:**

[3563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how the £350 monthly thank you payment to those who accommodate Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme is being paid.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Guidance on how the £350 payment is made can be found via:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils>.

**Mike Amesbury:**

[3721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many refugees (a) have been rematched with a second sponsor or (b) are in the process of being rematched with a second sponsor as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

**Eddie Hughes:**

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question [UIN 779](#) published on 16 May 2022.

## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Children

**Mike Amesbury:**

[3723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether there are any plans to (a) change current policy on allowing under 18s to travel alone to be hosted as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or (b) arrange a new policy specifically for placements for Ukrainian nationals under the age of 18 who are not able to be accompanied by their parents.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Homes for Ukraine scheme is not currently available for unaccompanied minors.

## ■ Housing: Construction

**Rachael Maskell:**

[2556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to ensure that houses built to fulfil number commitments included in Local Plans are used for residential accommodation and not for investments, holiday lets or other uses.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill recognises the impact that high levels of second home ownership can have in some areas and will introduce a new discretionary council tax premium on second homes of up to 100%. It will also allow councils to apply a council tax premium of up to 100% on homes which have been empty for longer than one year (rather than two years as currently). This will encourage more empty homes into productive use, while enabling councils to raise

and retain additional revenue to support local services and keep council tax down for local residents.

## ■ Housing: York

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[2557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to ensure that all residential units constructed on the York Central development site will be used to meet local housing need.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The City of York's draft Local Plan has identified sufficient land and resources to meet local housing need. York Central is the largest and most significant strategic project within the draft Local Plan. It is expected to deliver a minimum of 1,700 homes during the plan period, all of which are on land owned by Network Rail and Homes England.

## ■ Leasehold

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[3750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps the Government is taking to deliver on its commitment to abolish marriage value.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[3751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has had discussions with officials in his Department on the legislative processes that will be required to be brought forward in the event that it proceeds to end marriage value.

**Eddie Hughes:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* The Government is committed to creating a fairer and more transparent housing system that works for everyone and to delivering the second phase of our major two-part leasehold reform within this Parliament.

In January 2021, the Government announced a package of reforms on enfranchisement valuation, including the removal of marriage value.

Under the current system, too many leaseholders find the process for extending their lease or buying their freehold prohibitively expensive, too complex and lacking transparency. The Government is addressing this historic imbalance to ensure fairness for leaseholders, whilst taking account of the legitimate rights of freeholders.

Ministers regularly meet with officials to discuss leasehold reform. This is a long-term reform programme; it is complex with many interdependencies and will take time to get the detail right. Once it is enacted the effect will be felt for generations and so we are determined this work considers all the implications with care.

## ■ Leasehold: Reform

**Andrew Selous:** [2397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of leasehold reform on Britain's high streets.

**Andrew Selous:** [2398]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of leasehold reform on investment in the UK economy.

**Andrew Selous:** [2399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of leasehold reform on the UK insurance industry.

**Andrew Selous:** [2400]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of leasehold reform on (a) levelling up and (b) the deliverability of Kings Cross-style regeneration projects.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government is committed to creating a fairer and more transparent housing system that works for everyone and to delivering the second phase of our major two-part leasehold reform within this Parliament. Leasehold and commonhold reform supports our mission to level up homeownership and promote true homeownership for all by addressing the power imbalance at the heart of the leasehold system and putting the power into the rightful hands of homeowners.

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022 (which comes into force on 30 June 2022) is the first part of leasehold and commonhold reforms in this Parliament. The Act will make homeownership fairer and more transparent for thousands of future leaseholders, by preventing landlords under new residential long leases from requiring a leaseholder to pay a financial ground rent. The impact assessment for the Act was published on 12 May 2021 and can be accessed via the Parliamentary Bills website ( <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2864> ).

On 11 January 2022, the Government launched a consultation on a number of recommendations made by the Law Commission aimed at broadening the rights of leaseholders, and reinvigorating commonhold. We are currently analysing the feedback and we will provide a response in due course.

This is a long-term reform programme; it is complex with many interdependencies and will take time to get the detail right. Once it is enacted the effect will be felt for generations and so we are determined this work considers all the implications and impacts with care.



**Local Government: Pensions**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[2545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what proportion of council tax revenue contributes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (a) nationally and (b) in York each year.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Local Government Pension Scheme is funded by employee and employer contributions as well from the return on investments. Whilst employer contributions come from the general fund held by local authorities, these are not directly linked to council tax revenue, which is just one element of overall council income. We therefore do not hold data on what proportion of council tax revenue goes to the scheme on a national or local level.

**Local Plans: York**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[2553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Local Plan process in York will include preparation of an up-to-date local transport plan.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Local Plan remains at examination with hearings taking place over the rest of May, with phases three and four set to take place in June and July 2022. The independent Inspectors play an important role in examining plans impartially to ensure that they are legally compliant and sound. The Local Plan will set out strategic policies for transport and the infrastructure for transport

City of York Council decided in January 2021 to update its Local Transport Plan to reflect changes in transport over the last decade and the Council are currently preparing their Local Transport Strategy which will form the basis of the Local Transport Plan.

**Members: Correspondence**

**Robert Largan:** [\[2725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he intends to respond to the correspondence of 16 March 2022 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL36238.

**Eddie Hughes:**

A response to my Hon Friend's letter has been issued.

**Planning Permission: Appeals**

**Julian Knight:** [\[2519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many appeals were upheld by HM Planning Inspectorate in 2021.

**Stuart Andrew:**

In 2021, 4,692 appeals were upheld by the Planning Inspectorate. A further 209 had a split decision.

**■ Private Rented Housing: Costs****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[2406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the finding in the English Housing Survey 2020 to 2021 that private renters spend a higher proportion of their household income on rent than owner-occupiers spend on mortgages.

**Eddie Hughes:**

In 2020-21, on average, those buying their home with a mortgage spent 18% of their household income on mortgage payments, whereas rent payments were 31% of household income for private renters. Since 2010-11, the percentage of household income spent by private renters has reduced from 35%, compared with owner occupiers who spend a similar percentage of their household income on mortgage payments.

Whilst three quarters of private renters find no difficulties in keeping up with their rent, we understand that affordability may be an issue for some. The Government has taken action to reduce the financial barriers that prevent tenants from accessing and moving within the PRS.

**■ Refugees: Ukraine****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[2326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in the UK on a route other than the Homes for Ukraine scheme can access the support services and the hosts can access funding for supporting families associated with that scheme.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Only Ukrainians arriving under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have access to that scheme's funding.

**Lisa Nandy:**[\[4557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 778 on Refugees: Ukraine, when he expects the data related to Ukrainian refugee homelessness will be published; and in what form will it be published.

**Eddie Hughes:**

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

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[4585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he will publish figures for how many people who have arrived in the UK under (a) the Ukraine Family Scheme and (b) Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and have since declared themselves to be homeless.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The data will be published on the government website in due course.

## ■ Rented Housing

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[2405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure an equal balance of power between rent charge payers and rent charge holders.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[2407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to reform rent charges and prevent the exploitation of rent charge payers by rent charge holders.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Rentcharges Act 1977 already prevents new income supporting rentcharges being created after 22 August 1977 and provides a route for freehold homeowners to redeem income supporting rentcharges where the current rentowner is known. Any new Rentcharges created after August 1977 are classified as Estate Rentcharges and are not redeemable under the 1977 Act.

The Government previously committed to ensure that where a freeholder pays the rentcharge owner is not able to take possession or grant a lease on the property where the rentcharge remains unpaid for a short period of time. This will be pursued when Parliamentary time allows.

The Government also intends to legislate to ensure that freehold homeowners who pay estate rentcharges have the right to challenge their reasonableness and to go to the tribunal to appoint a new management company if necessary.

## ■ Right to Buy Scheme

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[2683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to bring the right to acquire scheme in line with the right to buy scheme.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government is committed to the Right to Buy, which has helped nearly two million council tenants realise their dream of home ownership. We also believe the housing market should work for everyone including those who rent their homes and those who wish to buy them.

The Government is keeping its homeownership options under review and will announce more details in due course.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Aviation: Fuels

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[3565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to accelerate the development of a (a) commercial and (b) sustainable aviation fuel industry.

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[3566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will take steps to help investors overcome the initial risks of investing in sustainable aviation fuel initiatives.

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[3568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the viability of the UK sustainable aviation fuel deadline of 2025.

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[3569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the viability of sustainable aviation fuel to stabilise the cost of aviation travel.

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[3570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to introduce a contract for difference price stability for the sustainable aviation fuel industry.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We want the UK to be a global leader in sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and we see the potential to create over 5,000 jobs from a domestic SAF industry. Our SAF programme is one of the most comprehensive in the world. We continue to look at options to help build a UK SAF industry, in addition to the government's proposed SAF mandate and £180m grant funding mechanisms.

As part of our work we are engaging industry, including through the Jet Zero Council SAF Delivery Group, to get a better understanding of how private investment in the UK SAF industry can be leveraged, and the potential need for and impacts of a price stability mechanism such as a contracts for difference scheme.

We are working at pace on a number of levers to support the UK SAF industry, accelerating its commercialisation and ensuring existing and prospective SAF plants developing in the UK can progress to construction as quickly as possible.

Our support includes a £168m capital grant funding competition to support the development of advanced fuels plants and £12m for the operation of a SAF clearing house to help certify new fuels and support early stage aviation fuel testing for years 2022-25; a consultation on the introduction of a SAF blending mandate to drive the uptake of SAF in the UK; a £400m partnership with Breakthrough Energy which aims

to drive investment into the next generation of clean energy technologies, including SAF; and funding to help deliver the world's first net zero transatlantic flight fuelled by 100% sustainable aviation fuel by the end of 2023. We are also exploring what additional policy interventions may be needed to accelerate the commercialisation and scale up of SAF plants developed in the UK such as those that address price stability and risk.

Unique circumstances globally, including the war in Ukraine, have pushed up transport fuel prices. How current fuel and future SAF costs are passed through to passengers is a commercial decision for airlines. Future SAF cost uncertainties make it difficult to predict exactly how much ticket prices could increase, but our analysis suggests this impact will be relatively small.

Industry has welcomed the potential introduction of a mandate and we continue to work with all stakeholders on this matter, aiming to reduce any adverse effects on air travel.

#### ■ **Chesterfield Canal: Tunnels**

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[3786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will review National Highways' decision not to replace the section of the Chesterfield Canal which runs under the M1.

**Trudy Harrison:**

National Highways continues to work closely with the Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust to improve biodiversity and aquatic life in the canal and would welcome a visit from the MP to discuss this work.

#### ■ **Department for Transport: Social Clubs**

**Gareth Bacon:** [\[2673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132392 on civil service staff networks, what recognised staff groups have been running in his Department over the last three years.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Department captures lists of DfT Staff Networks, clubs and groups on its internal website (MyDfT). From these lists, and only including organisations with more than one member, there are currently 33 staff networks and these are listed as in the attached document.

**Attachments:**

1. DfT Staff Network Groups [DfT Staff Network Groups.docx]

**Gareth Bacon:** [\[2674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132392 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.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Membership of DfT Networks is open to all staff who choose to be part of the network in question and most networks will have a lead or coordination group with individuals volunteering their time rather than FTE time being allocated. This time commitment will vary between the individuals and the networks depending on level of activity in the group. However, for Diversity and Inclusion related Networks, a budget is allocated which is held and monitored by the DfTc Diversity and Inclusion Team. There are 15 Diversity and Inclusion related Networks (though one of these, Young People's Network, currently has no members and so is not included in the attached document) and in 2021/22 the budget allocated to them for the year amounted to £15,000 in total (based on £1,000 each). However, spend against budget is typically less than 50%. In 2019/20 & 2020/21, for accounting convenience, this budget was included in the 'Room Hire' account field and therefore it is not possible to ascertain exactly how much was allocated (though it was less than in 2021/22).

**Attachments:**

1. DfT Staff Groups [DfT Staff Groups.docx]

**■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency****Fay Jones:**[\[2650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve accessibility of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to people seeking to use its services.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) places a strong focus on accessibility when developing its services, ensuring that they work for those who have specific needs or use assistive technology. The DVLA's user research team conducts usability testing of new services and ensures that 20 per cent of participants with an accessibility need or a medical condition take part in the usability testing to ensure the service meets the needs of all users.

The DVLA also uses a third-party supplier to provide independent usability/user testing and technology audits of live and prototype DVLA web services against the relevant accessibility guidelines. The DVLA aims for each service to be tested at least once during the development cycle to ensure recommendations can be assessed and implemented.

**■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points****Seema Malhotra:**[\[5405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the level of (a) ownership of electric vehicles and (b) availability of charging points in each nation and region of the UK.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Since 2020, Government has committed £2.5 billion to continue to support the transition to zero emission vehicles, with funding to offset their higher upfront cost, and to accelerate the rollout of chargepoint infrastructure.

The Department's most recently published data concerning the level of (a) ownership of electric vehicles and (b) availability of charging points in each nation and region of the UK is available at each of the links given below:

(a) Licensed ultra low emission vehicles by local authority: United Kingdom:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1046001/veh0132.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1046001/veh0132.ods)

(See VEH0132b\_BEV for Battery Electric Vehicles and VEH0132c\_PHEV for Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles)

(b) Electric vehicle charging device statistics: April 2022:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/electric-vehicle-charging-device-statistics-april-2022/electric-vehicle-charging-device-statistics-april-2022>

**■ Ferries: Minimum Wage****Daniel Kawczynski:****[3528]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of requiring (a) P&O Ferries and (b) other UK ferry operators to pay the national minimum wage to their UK employees.

**Robert Courts:**

Legislation will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time allows that intends to ensure that seafarers working on vessels that regularly use UK ports are paid at least at least an equivalent rate to the National Minimum Wage, irrespective of the nationality of the seafarer or flag of the vessel.

We have published a public consultation on this which sets out full details of the proposals, seeking views on the scope of services this should apply to, the compliance process and have published this alongside a supporting impact assessment. We want to sure that potential impacts of the proposed Bill have been considered prior to introduction and have therefore published the impact assessment on which we welcome input from stakeholders.

**Imran Hussain:****[3622]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of enabling ports to refuse access to ferries that do not pay their crew the National Minimum Wage.

**Imran Hussain:****[3623]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of allowing ports to refuse access to vessels that do not pay its crew the national minimum wage.



**Imran Hussain:**

[\[3624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will impose a statutory requirement for ports to refuse access to ferries that do not pay its crew the national minimum wage.

**Imran Hussain:**

[\[3625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will impose a statutory requirement on ports to refuse access to vessels that do not pay their crew the National Minimum Wage.

**Robert Courts:**

Legislation will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time allows that intends to ensure that seafarers working on vessels that regularly use UK ports are paid at least an equivalent rate to National Minimum Wage, irrespective of the nationality of the seafarer or flag of the vessel.

We intend to do this by creating a condition of access to UK ports for such to demonstrate that they are paying their seafarers an equivalent rate to the National Minimum Wage.

We have published a public consultation on this which sets out full details of the proposals, seeking views on the scope of services this should apply to, the compliance process and have published this alongside a supporting impact assessment. We want to sure that potential impacts of the proposed Bill have been considered prior to introduction and have therefore published the impact assessment on which we welcome input from the public.

## ■ Great British Railways: York

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[5451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his oral answer of 19 May 2022, what funding his Department plans to allocate to research and development in advanced and digital rail as part of a rail cluster for York.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[5452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding his Department plans to allocate to research and development into advanced and digital rail.

**Wendy Morton:**

I thank the hon Member for York Central for her questions on research and development in advanced and digital rail and I will answer them together.

The Government is committed to the future of advanced and digital rail and the many benefits it can bring. This is evidenced by our recent commitments to the future of rail, including the Integrated Rail Plan, a £96 billion programme to transform rail services in the North and Midlands.

Network Rail has a significant programme of Research & Development and this is funded as part of their Control Period determination, as set by the Office for Rail & Road (ORR). Funding for the next Control Period (CP7, 2024-2029) will be dependent on the outcome of Period Review 23 (PR23), for which work is ongoing and is due to be concluded by the ORR in late 2023.

## ■ Jet Skis: Licensing

**Hywel Williams:** [\[5361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a system of licensing for drivers of jet skis.

**Robert Courts:**

The riding of personal watercraft for pleasure is, in the majority of cases, conducted both sensibly and safely. Serious incidents involving these craft are rare. However, the Department recognises that, through their actions, a minority of users can endanger other water users and wildlife.

Local and harbour authorities already have significant powers to respond to instances of dangerous or anti-social behaviour in the waters they manage. To provide additional support, the Department has recently consulted on draft legislation to implement additional enforcement measures to enable those who do misuse personal watercraft to be prosecuted. The Department believes this is a proportionate and effective response to the issue.

## ■ Large Goods Vehicles

**Sarah Olney:** [\[2610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will set out the changes to maximum weight of lorries allowed on UK roads since 1992; and the years in which such changes were made.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The maximum vehicle weight for HGV's was increased in 1993 to 35 tonnes (from 32.5); in 1994 to 38 tonnes; in 1999 to 41 tonnes and in 2001 to 44 tonnes, excluding variations for exemptional circumstances.

**Sarah Olney:** [\[2611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many HGVs have registered to use UK roads in each year from 1992 to date.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The table below provides the number of vehicles registered at DVLA. Data are unavailable before 1994, and only available for Great Britain prior to 2014.

|                     | ALL LICENSED HEAVY GOOD VEHICLES |                |                              |                |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                     | <sup>1</sup>                     |                | GOODS TAX CLASS <sup>2</sup> |                |
| As at 31st December | Great Britain                    | United Kingdom | Great Britain                | United Kingdom |
| 1994                | 420,906                          | n/a            | 387,998                      | n/a            |
| 1995                | 422,869                          | n/a            | 403,660                      | n/a            |
| 1996                | 429,902                          | n/a            | 412,823                      | n/a            |
| 1997                | 435,999                          | n/a            | 414,025                      | n/a            |
| 1998                | 440,824                          | n/a            | 412,432                      | n/a            |
| 1999                | 459,184                          | n/a            | 414,553                      | n/a            |
| 2000                | 471,481                          | n/a            | 417,520                      | n/a            |
| 2001                | 477,485                          | n/a            | 422,043                      | n/a            |
| 2002                | 485,443                          | n/a            | 425,203                      | n/a            |
| 2003                | 491,120                          | n/a            | 425,928                      | n/a            |
| 2004                | 505,777                          | n/a            | 434,101                      | n/a            |
| 2005                | 508,183                          | n/a            | 432,929                      | n/a            |
| 2006                | 508,269                          | n/a            | 431,137                      | n/a            |
| 2007                | 510,838                          | n/a            | 431,829                      | n/a            |
| 2008                | 495,912                          | n/a            | 416,328                      | n/a            |
| 2009                | 477,783                          | n/a            | 397,160                      | n/a            |
| 2010                | 470,128                          | n/a            | 389,761                      | n/a            |
| 2011                | 465,473                          | n/a            | 383,941                      | n/a            |
| 2012                | 460,616                          | n/a            | 378,775                      | n/a            |
| 2013                | 468,876                          | n/a            | 385,795                      | n/a            |
| 2014                | 473,932                          | 496,773        | 389,787                      | 409,951        |
| 2015                | 483,361                          | 506,211        | 396,870                      | 416,935        |
| 2016                | 493,638                          | 517,144        | 404,804                      | 425,305        |
| 2017                | 499,353                          | 523,336        | 408,169                      | 429,056        |

|      | ALL LICENSED HEAVY GOOD VEHICLES |         |                              |         |
|------|----------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|---------|
|      | <sup>1</sup>                     |         | GOODS TAX CLASS <sup>2</sup> |         |
| 2018 | 500,287                          | 524,566 | 406,477                      | 427,502 |
| 2019 | 501,477                          | 525,753 | 405,386                      | 426,233 |
| 2020 | 485,902                          | 510,076 | 395,357                      | 416,071 |

Vehicles with Body Type 'Goods - Heavy' as recorded by DVLA. This will include vehicles which do not carry goods, for instance large motorhomes and construction vehicles. Vehicles in the 'Goods' taxation class

Source: DfT / DVLA

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[2612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy not to increase the maximum weight of lorries allowed on UK roads beyond 44 tonnes.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Policy relating to the weight of vehicles is always kept under review. Any proposed changes to maximum vehicle weights would always take into account impacts on transport infrastructure, road safety and the environment. For example:

- Following a feasibility study and public consultation, the Department is currently running an Expression of Interest process, for freight operators wishing to participate in a trial of 48 tonne HGVs, for use during the road leg of intermodal transport. This trial would determine whether the use of these vehicles would help to increase the share of freight moved intermodally, which has benefits via reductions in emissions and congestion.
- In addition, the Department has also procured a technical feasibility study to consider the safe operation of longer/heavier vehicles (LHVs) - 25.25m in total length and 60 tonnes total weight - and whether to do an on-road trial of LHVs on British roads.

## ■ Manchester Airport: Air Routes

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[2689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of opening a direct flight between Manchester Airport and (a) Mumbai and (b) New Delhi on (i) jobs, (ii) investment, (iii) tourism and (iv) higher education.

**Robert Courts:**

DfT officials hold regular discussions with airlines, airports and international partners, including India, to facilitate global connectivity. Routes operated, and the flights on those routes, between the UK and India are a commercial decision made freely by

airlines not by the Government. As this is a commercial decision, the DfT has not undertaken any assessment on the impact of a direct service.

Services between the UK and India currently operate under the terms of the UK-India Air Services Agreement (ASA) that has no restrictions on routes between New Delhi and Mumbai and Manchester airport.

## ■ P&O Ferries: Inspections

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[5387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 697 on P&O Ferries: Inspections, how many visits Maritime and Coastguard Agency inspectors carried out; and on what dates those visits took place as part of each Port State Control inspection of each vessel.

**Robert Courts:**

The table below shows the dates the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) conducted inspections of the vessels and the number of days each inspection took. Where a vessel has been detained and subsequently released the number of visits from the initial to the final are recorded as one inspection.

| VESSEL              | DATE OF INITIAL INSPECTION | LENGTH OF INSPECTION IN DAYS | REMARKS   |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| Pride of Canterbury | 3 December 2019            | 1                            |           |
|                     | Pride of Kent              | 4 February 1 2020            |           |
| 28 March 2022       | 2                          |                              | Detention |
| 13 April 2022       | 1                          |                              |           |
| 9 May 2022          | 1                          |                              |           |
|                     | Pride of Hull              | 25 November 2021             | 1         |
| 23 March 2022       | 1                          |                              |           |
|                     | Spirit of Britain          | 22 January 1 2020            |           |
| 11 April 2022       | 2                          |                              | Detention |
| 22 April 2022       | 1                          |                              |           |

| VESSEL           | DATE OF INITIAL INSPECTION | LENGTH OF INSPECTION IN DAYS | REMARKS   |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| Spirit of France | 5 February 2020            | 1                            |           |
|                  | European Causeway          | 30 May 2019                  | 1         |
| 25 August 2019   | 1                          |                              |           |
| 19 December 2019 | 1                          |                              |           |
| 27 February 2020 | 1                          |                              |           |
| 11 October 2020  | 1                          |                              |           |
| 7 September 2021 | 1                          |                              |           |
| 25 March 2022    | 1                          |                              | Detention |
| 7 April 2022     | 2                          |                              |           |
| 27 April 2022    | 1                          |                              |           |
|                  | European Highlander        | 27 June 2019                 | 1         |
| 9 January 2020   | 1                          |                              |           |
| 5 September 2020 | 1                          |                              |           |
| 1 July 2021      | 1                          |                              |           |
| 21 April 2022    | 2                          |                              |           |

**Grahame Morris:**[\[5388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 697 on P&O Ferries: Inspections, how many working hours MCA inspectors have spent completing Port State Control inspections of the P&O Ferries fleet (a) in each year since 2019 and (b) from 17 March 2022 to date.

**Robert Courts:**

Port State Control (PSC) inspections are not initially chargeable and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) records hours spent on PSC activity are general and not specific to a particular vessel. If a vessel is detained, the MCA records the number of hours spent performing PSC activity on that particular vessel in order to be able to charge for that activity. No P&O Ferries have been detained prior to 17 March 2022.

Since 17 March 2022, the hours being charged for Pride of Kent and Spirit of Britain are 150 and 101 hours, respectively. The hours for European Causeway are still being finalised but expected to be approximately 122 hours.

The information to determine the hours spent when a vessel is not detained is not in a readily available format.

## ■ **Parking: Pedestrian Areas**

**Emma Hardy:**

**[2631]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the results of his Department's consultation on Managing pavement parking, which closed on 22 November 2020.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We will publish the formal consultation response and announce next steps as soon as possible. The formal consultation response will be available to view on the Gov.uk website at [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking).

## ■ **Railways: Electrification**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[2558]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure that a safe level of clearance above overhead line equipment can be combined with maximum flexibility to enable infrastructure development near to electrified railway lines, such as on the York Central site.

**Wendy Morton:**

The department prioritises passenger and public safety, and also welcomes and supports development alongside the rail network.

Network Rail works closely with third parties across the country to support the delivery of their plans for growth alongside the railway. There are processes in place so developers can share their plans early, allowing solutions to be agreed that maximise local community benefit without compromising railway safety.

Network Rail and Homes England are working in partnership on development of the York Central site, North West of York station.

A proposed new bridge over the East Coast Main Line linking the site with an existing road at Water End is a key enabler for the development. Network Rail is supporting York Central appointed designers to find the optimal viable engineering solution for the new bridge. The aim is to deliver a bridge that provides safe clearance from railway overhead line equipment, while also meeting York Central project commitments on time, cost and planning consent.

## ■ Railways: Freight

**Sarah Olney:** [\[2613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of whether there is a correlation between the maximum weight of HGVs allowed on UK roads and the use of rail freight.

**Trudy Harrison:**

My Department has ongoing work looking into the maximum weight of HGVs, such as on the 48/48 and Longer/Heavier Vehicles projects. Any consideration to increase the maximum weight of HGVs will include an assessment of the overall impacts on road safety, the economy, and the environment. This includes factoring in potential intermodal shifts, such as with rail freight.

## ■ Railways: Research and Technology

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[5454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of which areas of research and development in rail operations, planning and technologies would be of most benefit to British railways.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Department supports and works with the rail industry in identifying the key research, development and innovation that is required to address the current and future challenges for the railway. The Rail Technical Strategy, which has been produced by the rail industry with the support of the Department, sets out five overall priorities:

- Making rail easy to use (including better passenger information, payment methods and accessibility);
- Lowering emissions (including making electrification cheaper and easier, replacing diesel and making the railway more efficient);
- Optimising train operations (including making services more reliable, responsive train planning, and increasing network capacity);
- Making assets more reliable and easier to maintain (so they require less time out of service and cost less over their lifetimes); and
- Making better use of data to underpin all of these.

## ■ Railways: Staff

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[2461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people are employed by Network Rail whose primary role is to engage in issues of diversity and inclusion.



**Wendy Morton:**

There are currently eight members of staff employed by Network Rail whose primary roles focus on issues of diversity and inclusion. Network Rail has around 42,000 employees in total.

**Railways: Technology****Rachael Maskell:**[\[5453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take to increase the uptake of rail technologies across the rail industry.

**Wendy Morton:**

Research, development and innovation in rail is led by the rail industry itself, including steps to increase the uptake of rail technologies across the sector. However, the Government continues to play an active role to support this.

Along with Network Rail's research and development portfolio, the Department also funds First of a Kind innovation competitions, including the announcement of a further round of funding of £7.6m on 12 April 2022. This aims to overcome barriers to new technologies coming to the rail market, by supporting innovators to demonstrate their products on the railway for potential industry buyers. We have also recently offered tailored support to help innovators effectively pitch to investors. The Department further funds the industry-wide research and development programme delivered by the Rail Safety and Standards Board.

**Renewable Fuels****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[4481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps is he taking to increase the use of HVO fuels.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[4482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps is he taking to help ensure that HVO is adopted more by consumers.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[4483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to make HVO fuels more available for consumers.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[4485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to promote the adoption of transitional fuels by (a) merchants and (b) consumers.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[4488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number fuelling stations in the UK that sell HVO fuel alongside diesel.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is one type of biofuel which can be used as a transport fuel. Biofuels are typically blended with petrol and diesel when sold on UK forecourts, as opposed to being offered for sale separately. HVO has been eligible for support under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) scheme for more than a decade.

The Department does not require data on the number of fuelling stations selling diesel containing HVO, or any other type of biofuel. Given the complexity of fuel supply chains placing such a requirement on fuel retailers would be burdensome. The Department regularly publishes renewable fuel statistics. These include the volumes of biofuel supplied UK-wide by type. In 2020, 38 million litres of biodiesel of HVO was supplied under the RTFO in the UK. The relatively low volumes of HVO supplied is explained in part by there being no HVO production in the UK currently, and HVO being relatively more expensive than other types of biodiesel. It is open to fuel retailers to advertise that the diesel they sell at the pump contains HVO. Whether suppliers and retailers choose to do so is a commercial matter.

As we transition to net zero, renewable fuels such as biodiesel will remain important in our efforts to reduce carbon emissions. To this end the Government increased targets for the supply of renewable fuels under the RTFO in December. It is also understood that HVO has the benefit of potentially being able to be supplied in much higher blends than the 10% biodiesel threshold currently referenced in the fuel standards for diesel. Using high blends of biofuels, or drop-in fuels, in captive fleets such as in the heavy vehicles sector, is an option to further maximise carbon savings. As part of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, we committed to work with stakeholders to review the role of these fuels in compatible vehicles and potential measures to remove barriers to their deployment.

**TREASURY****■ Aviation: Fuels****Dr Matthew Offord:****[3567]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the sustainability of finance from the UK-ETS to be used to support the development of the UK Sustainable aviation fuel industry.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Carbon pricing will play a key role in helping the UK achieve Net Zero. The UK launched our own Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) at the beginning of 2021, covering the power, industrial and aviation sectors. It raises funds to be invested across the Government's spending priorities, including our public services as well as our Net Zero ambitions. The UK ETS Authority is currently consulting on developing the UK ETS, including aligning the total cap on emissions with net zero.

The Government is also supporting Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), although these are not ringfenced funds from the ETS. At the Spending Review, the Government committed £180m to accelerate the commercialisation of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) plants and to set up a UK clearing house for SAF. The Government also extended its long-term commitment to the aerospace sector, guaranteeing funding for the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) to 2031, co-investing with industry in world-class research and development. The ATI will receive a record £685m of funding over the next 3 years, an increase of more than 50%. This activity will help drive the development of zero-emission flight technology, which is an important part of our Jet Zero ambitions to decarbonise aviation.

## ■ Bank Services

**Harriett Baldwin:**

**[4565]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness and (b) impact on customers of the current account switch guarantee.

**John Glen:**

Competition and innovation is at the heart of the Government's vision for UK financial services. We want our financial services industry to be the most competitive and innovative in the world, delivering greater choice and value for customers.

That's why the Government established the 7-day Current Account Switch Service (CASS), to make it easier, quicker and more reliable for customers to switch current accounts. The service is free to use, comes with a guarantee to protect customers from financial loss if something goes wrong, and redirects any payments mistakenly sent to the old account, providing further assurance for customers. This means that customers are more able than ever to hold their banks to account by voting with their feet, and that banks are incentivised to work hard to retain their existing customers and attract new ones.

The Current Account Switch Service has completed over eight million switches since launch and has processed over 120 million payment redirections. The Service also continues to meet its targets: in Q1 2022 it exceeded its awareness and satisfaction targets at 76% and 90% respectively.

## ■ Banks: Closures

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[4593]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of closures of (a) bank branches and (b) free-to-use ATMs in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England in each of the last three years.

**John Glen:**

The Government does not make direct assessments of bank branch networks.

With regards to ATMs, LINK (the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network) publishes the total of free-to-use ATMs across the UK online. As of April 2022, LINK

reported that there were around 41,000 free-to-use ATMs in the UK. LINK's Monthly ATM Footprint Report also publishes information monthly on the break down by constituency.

More broadly, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) publishes data on access to cash coverage across the UK. As of the third quarter of 2021, the FCA reported that nearly 96% of the UK population are within 2km of a free-to-use cash access point.

The Government intends to introduce legislation on cash access as part of the Financial Services and Markets Bill when Parliamentary time allows. The Government recently published a summary of response to the Access to Cash consultation, setting out the government's planned approach to legislating for access to cash.

Alternative options for access to banking services can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking, and the Post Office. The Post Office Banking Framework allows 99% of personal banking and 95% of business banking customers to deposit cheques, check their balance and withdraw and deposit cash at 11,500 Post Office branches in the UK.

## ■ Car Allowances

**David Warburton:**

[\[5470\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the business mileage allowance in the context of rising fuel and living costs.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government sets Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs) to minimise administrative burdens. AMAPs aim to reflect running costs including fuel, servicing and depreciation. Depreciation is estimated to constitute the most significant proportion of the AMAPs.

Employers are not required to use the AMAPs. Instead, they can agree to reimburse the actual cost incurred, where individuals can provide evidence of the expenditure, without an Income Tax or National Insurance charge arising.

Alternatively, they can choose to pay a different mileage rate that better reflects their employees' circumstances. However, if the payment exceeds the amount due under AMAPs, and this results in a profit for the individual, they will be liable to pay Income Tax and National Insurance contributions on the difference.

The Government keeps this policy under review .

## ■ Central Bank Digital Currencies

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[3488\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to UK retail CBDC research, if he will hold discussions with the Governor of the Bank of England on consulting (a) the

Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) Taskforce and (b) private sector bodies when considering the case for a UK CBDC.

**John Glen:**

The Government is progressing work to explore a UK Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) with pace and purpose through the HM Treasury and Bank of England CBDC Taskforce. This Taskforce convenes officials at senior levels, and ensures a strategic approach to CBDC work underpinned by effective coordination between UK authorities – including Government departments, financial regulators, HM Treasury and the Bank of England.

Extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation is a crucial part of considering the case for a UK CBDC. That is why, in April 2021, the Treasury announced the CBDC Engagement Forum and Technology Forum. These groups are engaging a broad range of stakeholders and technology experts on issues relating to the exploration of a possible UK CBDC, including risks, benefits, and technical design. The Bank of England received diverse applications from across industry for membership of both of these groups, and final membership is available at Gov.uk.

■ **Consumer Credit Act 1974**

**Alun Cairns:**

[\[2472\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to review the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

**John Glen:**

The Government is committed to ensuring consumer credit regulation provides high-standards of consumer protection but also fit-for-purpose and proportionate. We recognise that the current regulatory framework for consumer credit is built around a dated model of regulation, established by the Consumer Credit Act 1974 (CCA). The government therefore continues to keep the case for changes to improve the effectiveness of consumer credit regulation under close review.

■ **Cost of Living: Brexit**

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[4685\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the UK's departure from the EU on the cost of living; and if he will publish the (a) economic and (b) equality impact assessments conducted by the Government on the UK leaving the EU.

**John Glen:**

The government understands how the rising cost of living is making life harder for people. These are global challenges however, as set out in the Spring Statement, and the government is providing support worth over £22 billion in 2022-23 to help families across the UK with these pressures.

It remains challenging to separate out the effects of Brexit and COVID on the UK economy, with recent events and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine adding

further pressures to trade, prices and the wider economy. The Bank of England has noted that the majority of the increase in inflation since the pandemic is likely due to global factors.

## ■ Cryptocurrencies

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[3490\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in addition to introducing stablecoin regulation, what other steps he plans to take to encourage cryptocurrency firms to (a) remain in and (b) return to the UK.

**John Glen:**

At Fintech Week, the government set out the firm ambition to make Britain a global hub for cryptoasset technology and investment. We want to ensure firms can invest, innovate and scale up in this country. And we have announced a number of reforms which will see the regulation and aspects of tax treatment of cryptoassets evolve – our clear message to cryptoasset firms is that the UK is open for business.

In addition to legislating to bring stablecoins into payments regulation, these include committing to consult on future regulation of a broader set of cryptoasset activities later this year; setting up a ministerial-chaired Cryptoasset Engagement Group, bringing together key figures in industry; working with the Royal Mint to create a Non-Fungible Token; and exploring ways of enhancing the competitiveness of the UK tax system to encourage further development of the cryptoasset market in the UK.

These commitments are in line with our objectives to create a regulatory environment in which firms can innovate, while crucially maintaining financial stability and regulatory standards so that people can use new technologies both reliably and safely.

## ■ Cryptocurrencies: Regulation

**Alun Cairns:**

[\[2471\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress he has made on developing regulations for cryptocurrency.

**John Glen:**

The government has taken forward a series of regulatory measures to protect consumers, manage market integrity risks and support innovation. Since 2020 the FCA has been the anti-money laundering supervisor for cryptoasset firms. In January 2022 the government confirmed the intention to bring certain cryptoassets into the scope of the Financial Promotion Order to ensure that cryptoasset promotions are fair, clear, and not misleading.

Further, the government considers that some cryptoassets may already fall within the relevant UK legal frameworks. However, this also depends on the structure of the token and nature of the activities concerned.

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These include committing to consult on future regulation of a broader set of cryptoasset activities later this year; legislating to bring stablecoins into payments regulation; setting up a ministerial-chaired Cryptoasset Engagement Group, bringing together key figures in industry; working with the Royal Mint to create a Non-Fungible Token; and exploring ways of enhancing the competitiveness of the UK tax system to encourage further development of the cryptoasset market in the UK.

These commitments are in line with our objectives to create a regulatory environment in which firms can innovate, while crucially maintaining financial stability and regulatory standards so that people can use new technologies both reliably and safely.

## ■ Education: Capital Investment

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[2660\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on how HM Treasury estimates the long-term returns on investment when evaluating proposed new capital expenditure on school and college buildings; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

HM Treasury Ministers regularly discuss public spending matters with other government departments, including on school and college buildings. HM Treasury considers a range of evidence when taking decisions, including considerations on the long-term returns in line with principles published in the Green Book. Investment in the school estate is a priority for the government. The 2021 Spending Review confirmed £19.5 billion of capital funding to support the education sector between the financial years 2022-23 and 2024-25. This includes funding to deliver new school places, rebuild or refurbish school buildings in the worst condition, and provides £1.5bn for the FE college transformation fund to upgrade the college estate across England.

## ■ Events Industry: VAT

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[4489\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment in this financial year of what impact the current level of VAT being levied on ticket sales for cultural events is having on that industry; if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reducing the VAT level thereon; and if he will make a statement.

**Lucy Frazer:**

VAT has been designed as a broad-based tax on consumption and the twenty per cent standard rate applies to the vast majority of goods and services, including tickets



for cultural events. While there are exceptions to the standard rate, these have always been strictly limited by both legal and fiscal considerations. The Government keeps all taxes under review, but there are no plans to change the current VAT treatment on ticket sales.

Tickets were within the scope of the temporary reduced rate of VAT for hospitality and tourism, which was introduced on 15 July 2020 to support the cash flow and viability of around 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs during the Coronavirus pandemic. This relief ended on 31 March 2022. It is right that as Coronavirus restrictions were lifted and demand for goods and services in these sectors increased, the temporary tax reliefs were first reduced and then removed in order to rebuild and strengthen the public finances.

## ■ Financial Services: Technology

**Alun Cairns:**

[2473]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress he has made on implementing the recommendations in The Kalifa Review of UK FinTech.

**John Glen:**

The Government responded to the Kalifa Review of UK Fintech on 26 April 2021, setting out actions alongside regulators to ensure the UK remains at the global cutting edge of technology and innovation in financial services.

These actions include improved regulatory support for new and growing fintechs; initiatives to supercharge commercial support for UK fintechs seeking to expand internationally; and a new visa 'scale up' stream to attract global talent and boost the fintech workforce.

The Government's full response is available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-04-26/hcws938>.

On 29 October the Government announced £5 million of seed funding for a new Centre for Finance, Innovation and Technology (CFIT) as part of Spending Review 2021. CFIT was a central recommendation of the Kalifa Review, and it will focus on creating the right conditions for firms to scale, encouraging the mainstream adoption of fintech solutions, and fostering collaboration between growing regional fintech hubs. In March 2022 the CFIT Steering Committee, chaired by Ron Kalifa began an intensive programme of work on proposals for CFIT's priorities, objectives, and operational requirements.

## ■ Fossil Fuels

**Caroline Lucas:**

[2454]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has taken any steps since the publication in 2020 of the Doubling Back and Doubling Down G20 scorecard on fossil fuel funding to improve the UK's (a) very poor rating for progress in ending support for fossil fuels, (b) opaque rating for transparency and (c) overall ranking as joint last of OECD nations; and if he will make a statement.



**Lucy Frazer:**

The UK does not give any subsidies to fossil fuels, and follows the approach of the International Energy Agency, which defines fossil fuel subsidies as measures that reduce the effective price of fossil fuels below world market prices.

The International Energy Agency has a long-standing track record in systematically measuring fossil-fuel subsidies using a commonly applied methodology. This definition was originally developed with the European Commission and G20 EU Member States to respond to the G20 commitment to phase out such subsidies.

The government takes its environmental responsibilities seriously, and recently published the Net Zero Strategy on how the UK will deliver on its commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050. Pricing carbon (including through tax) is one of the most efficient tools for promoting decarbonisation and already plays a key role in helping the UK achieve net zero emissions. There are also a number of taxes, including the Climate Change Levy and Vehicle Excise Duty, that are designed to encourage businesses and consumers to make greener choices.

The government keeps all taxes under review, and any changes are made in the round at fiscal events.

**Fuel Oil****Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[5373\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to take steps to support people with off-grid energy, such as oil or propane central heating, in the context of the support provided by the Government to other energy consumers over the last six months.

**Helen Whately:**

Off-grid households that are dependent on non-regulated fuels such as heating oil will be eligible for the £200 Energy Bills Support Scheme from Autumn, as long as they are also domestic electricity customers. Since April, households in council bands A-D have also already begun receiving a £150 rebate.

Financial support remains available for heating customers with energy bills, if eligible, through the Warm Home Discount, Winter Fuel Payment and Cold Weather Payment Schemes.

The recently launched Boiler Upgrade Scheme will provide grants of £5,000 for air source heat pumps and biomass boilers, and £6,000 for ground source heat pumps to support households and small businesses wishing to transition to low carbon heating, including buildings in off gas grid areas.

**Iron and Steel: Safeguard Measures****Alexander Stafford:**[\[4726\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many days of (a) this quarter and (b) the previous quarter had elapsed when (i) Category 12a and (ii) Category 12b of the steel safeguards were exhausted.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Neither category were exhausted completely.

For the current quarter: within Category 12a two out of the four quotas exhausted – the first after 24 days, and the second after 3 days, and within Category 12b one out of the three quotas exhausted after 34 days. The remaining balances from the quotas that did not exhaust have been transferred to the next quarter.

For the previous quarter: within Category 12a two out of the four quotas were exhausted – the first after 25 days, and the second after 40 days. Within Category 12b one out of the three quotas were exhausted after 3 days.

**■ Multinational Companies: Tax Avoidance****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[5380\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to increase the number of staff in his Department assigned to work on tackling tax avoidance by multinational companies.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government has taken significant steps, domestically and internationally, to ensure companies pay the right amount of tax on their UK activities. That includes measures aimed at countering aggressive tax planning techniques like the introduction of the Diverted Profits Tax. It also includes taking a leading role in OECD discussions to reform the international tax framework and the agreement to a global minimum Corporation Tax as part of a two-pillar solution which helps ensure that the right companies pay the right amount of tax in the right place.

Further, the Government has ensured that HMRC has the resources it needs through investing over £2 billion in HMRC since 2010 and allocating almost £300 million additional funding in the 2021 spending review to tackle avoidance, evasion and other forms of non-compliance

**■ National Insurance Contributions: Self-employed****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[3491\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to help support freelancers and umbrella workers with the cost of the increase in national insurance contributions.

**Lucy Frazer:**

It is right that health and social care has a new, completely dedicated and sustainable source of revenue not just today but into the future as well. Every penny collected from the Health and Social Care Levy goes direct to the NHS, health and social care. However, the Government has also been clear that the cost should be borne by those with the broadest shoulders. Over half of the Levy revenue comes from the highest 17% of earners.

The Government is committed to helping hard-working families with cost of living. To help individuals and families keep more of what they earn, the Government is aligning the annual Primary Threshold and Lower Profits Limit - the point at which employees and the self-employed respectively start paying National Insurance contributions (NICs) - with the income tax personal allowance at £12,570 from July 2022.

Around 2.2m working age people will be taken out of paying Class 1 and Class 4 NICs altogether, on top of the 6.1m who already do not pay NICs.

This is a tax cut worth over £330 for a typical employee in the first year. From July, around 70% of workers who pay NICs are estimated to be better off, even accounting for the introduction of the Levy.

From April 2022 self-employed individuals with profits between the Small Profits Threshold and Lower Profits Limit will continue to build up National Insurance credits but will not pay any Class 2 NICs.

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Information Officers

**Alison Thewliss:**

[\[2531\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much HM Revenue and Customs spent on the employment of communications staff in 2021-22.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Expenditure on communications staffing was £17.25m in 2021/22.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Inflation

**Michael Fabricant:**

[\[2350\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on immediately uprating benefits in line with the rate of inflation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

September CPI has been the default inflation measure for the government's statutory annual review of benefits since 2011 because it allows sufficient time for the legislative and complex delivery process to take place for new rates to come into force in April.

In addition to uprating social security benefits, the government is also providing support to families worth over £22 billion in 2022-23 to help families with cost of living pressures. This includes cutting the Universal Credit taper rate and increasing work allowances to make sure work pays, freezing alcohol duties to keep costs down, and providing millions of households with up to £350 to help with rising energy bills.

At the Spring Statement, the Chancellor went further, announcing an increase to the annual National Insurance Primary Threshold and Lower Profits Limit to £12,570, and an additional £500m to help the most vulnerable with the cost of essentials through the Household Support Fund. Families and businesses across the UK will also benefit from a 12-month cut in fuel duty of 5 pence per litre, the largest cash terms

cut, that has ever been applied to all fuel duty rates at once. This cut represents savings for consumers worth almost £2.4 billion over the next year.

And, from 1st April 2022, the National Living Wage (NLW) increased by 6.6% to £9.50 an hour for workers aged 23, which will benefit more than 2 million workers.

This means an increase of over £1,000 to the annual earnings of a full-time worker on the NLW.

## ■ Treasury: Procurement

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[2416\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department has paid to (a) Methods Business and Digital Technology Ltd and (b) Veracity OSI UK Ltd for consultancy support in relation to the delivery of the OSCAR II system as of 13 May 2022; and whether that expenditure was planned at the time the HMT OSCAR II Procurement contract was agreed with Deloitte MCS in November 2018.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[2417\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason the consultancy services provided by (a) Methods Business and Digital Technology Ltd and (b) Veracity OSI UK Ltd since 2020 in relation to the delivery of the OSCAR II system were not covered within the statement of requirements set out in the contract HMT OSCAR II Procurement, agreed with Deloitte MCS in November 2018.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[2418\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what total costs to the public purse were estimated by his Department in 2018 for the procurement of external support with the delivery of the OSCAR II system up to the end of 2023; and how much has been spent on the procurement of that external support as of 13 May 2022.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[2419\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 155644 on Treasury: Deloitte, whether all the cost figures cited in that answer are inclusive of VAT.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

As of 13 May 2022, HM Treasury has paid (a) £1.1 million to Methods Business and Digital Technology Ltd and (b) £3.5 million to Veracity OSI UK Ltd for consultancy support in relation to the delivery of the OSCAR II system. Supporting consultancy expenditure was planned at the time the HMT OSCAR II Procurement contract was agreed with Deloitte MCS in November 2018.

The contract agreed with Deloitte MSC in November 2018 was for discovery, build, implementation, and ongoing technical support services for the OSCAR II system. The services procured from Methods Business and Digital Technology Ltd and Veracity OSI UK Ltd were for project management, change management and commercial advice to assist HM Treasury in managing Deloitte and the overall

project. It would have been inappropriate for these services to be included in the OSCAR II contract with Deloitte MSC.

In 2018, the total cost estimated in the Full Business Case (FBC) for the procurement of external support with the delivery of the OSCAR II system up to the end of 2023, was £3.3 million. As of 13 May 2022, £5.2 million has been spent on that external support. Approval to increase the scope of the project (including adding three new datasets), was obtained in 2020 and 2021, along with a corresponding increase to the consultancy budget. OSCAR II was never intended to be a static system, one of the critical success factors of the FBC was the scalability of the system.

With reference to the answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 155644 on Treasury: Deloitte, the figures cited in the answer are inclusive of VAT.

All figures provided in this answer are inclusive of VAT.

## ■ Treasury: Social Clubs

**Gareth Bacon:**

[\[2679\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132402 on civil service staff networks, what recognised staff groups have been running in his Department over the last three years.

**Gareth Bacon:**

[\[2680\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132402 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.

**Helen Whately:**

With reference to the answer of 9 March 2022, HM Treasury has several staff networks.

Network activities are voluntary and are carried out in addition to the individuals' normal role.

There is no allocated budget available for networks within the Department.

Staff networks and societies provide valuable support to staff, they promote activities and opportunities for talented civil servants encouraging an inclusive work culture.

## ■ World Economic Forum

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[2366\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the details of any events any events organised by the World Economic Forum that he has participated in during the last year.

**John Glen:**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has not participated in any event organised by the World Economic Forum over the last year.

**WALES****■ Wales Office: Social Clubs**

**Gareth Bacon:** [\[2677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with reference to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132401 on civil service staff networks, if he will list his Department's recognised staff groups that have been in place over the last three years.

**Gareth Bacon:** [\[2678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with reference to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132401 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.

**David T C Davies:**

The Wales Office has had no 'recognised staff groups' in place during the last three years. However, our staff can access the following Ministry of Justice staff networks:

ABLE network (disability)

Carers Network

Christians in MoJ

Frontline Staff Network

Gender Equality Network

Humanists in MoJ (HiMoJ)

Job Share Network

MoJ EU Nationals Network

MoJ Muslim Network

Parents' Network

PROUD

Safe Space Forum

Spirit

Supporting the Workplace in Menopause (SWIM)

The Civil Service Jewish Network (JNet)

The Wales office has allocated no staff time to staff groups in the last three years and has not provided any funding to staff groups in this period.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Access to Work Programme

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[2521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce delays in processing Access to Work claims.

**Chloe Smith:**

DWP are in the process of recruiting and training extra staff for Access to Work, and using overtime working to process outstanding claim volumes.

Applications with a job start within the next four weeks are being prioritised. In addition, we are now treating applications that are classified as renewal applications for on-going support as a priority group and contact will be made as soon as possible.

### ■ Access to Work Programme: Self-employed

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[2522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support the Access to Work scheme offers those working as freelancers.

**Chloe Smith:**

To enable greater flexibility for disabled freelancers and contractors Access to Work has introduced a flexible application, providing greater flexibility for disabled people taking up time limited contracts and freelance opportunities. The flexible application will reduce the bureaucracy of re-applying for Access to Work when starting a new period of employment and the need for repeated Holistic Assessments where the needs remain the same.

To complement the flexible application, an Adjustments Passport is being piloted with contractors and freelancers to empower the passport holder to have confident conversations with future employers about their workplace adjustments.

### ■ Bereavement Support Payment

**Alex Cunningham:**

[5399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the remedial order to extend eligibility for bereavement support payments will come into force.

**Guy Opperman:**

Due to the nature of the Parliamentary processes, we cannot say at this stage when the Order will come into force. We will be updating the GOV.UK website at key points during the process: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bereavement-benefits-proposal-for-implementation-of-the-mclaughlin-2018-and-jackson-2020-judgments>



**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Contracts****Kate Osamor:** [\[2320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether private companies are contracted to do work for her Department's integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS) or Analysis and Intelligence Hub.

**David Rutley:**

DWP has partnered with private companies to help with the implementation of its new technology solutions.

Once completed, these systems will be completely managed by DWP staff.

**■ Employment Schemes: Basic Skills****Alison McGovern:** [\[5397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claimants were referred by Jobcentre Plus to providers for training in literacy, numeracy or digital skills in each of the last five years, broken down by UK regions, London and mayoral combined authorities and age, ethnicity, gender, disability and region.

**Mims Davies:**

The information requested is not readily available. Jobcentre Plus works in partnership with local training providers to ensure/facilitate delivery of essential communication skills, numeracy skills, digital literacy skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training to unemployed benefit claimants in England, Scotland and Wales. Wider adult education and skills policy is the responsibility of the Department for Education in England and devolved to the Scottish and Welsh Governments in Scotland and Wales.

**■ Employment: Greater London****Sir David Evennett:** [\[3478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to protect and increase employment levels in (a) Greater London and (b) the London Borough of Bexley.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is committed to supporting everyone who has been affected by the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the labour market. Throughout the pandemic the UK Government has provided historic levels of support to the economy – a total of over £370 billion. This includes key DWP programmes as part of the Plan for Jobs, such as Restart and Kickstart alongside other measures to boost work searches, skills, and apprenticeships. Our support was in addition to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Furlough) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. We have also launched Way to Work - a concerted drive across the UK to help half a million currently out of work people into jobs by the end of June 2022.



DWP offers significant support to unemployed people across London to access employment opportunities through our network of jobcentres. Our Work Coaches provide support on finding a job, help with retraining or skills advice, CV, job applications and access to the new vacancies, as well as signposting to our Jobhelp website.

We are working closely with GLA and London Councils on their No Wrong Door and Good Work for Londoners ambitions – to provide a joined-up approach to work and skills including Skills Bootcamps and Youth Hubs to connect with young people within the community.

The jobcentre team within the Bexley constituency are responding to the needs of the local labour market and work with employers such as Premier Inn, Morrisons, Tesco, Wetherspoons and many more to help them fulfil their recruitment needs. Local employers are attending jobcentres on a regular basis to conduct recruitment activities and interviews.

Sector based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) enable the team to support local employers and provide jobseekers with the skills and experience needed to get a start in a particular employment sector. Recent examples of SWAPs delivered in the area include, 'Preparing to Work in the Food Industry' in collaboration with London South East Colleges and Ferndale Foods, and the 'Preparing to Work in Construction' SWAP with O'Halloran and O'Brien Ltd.

## ■ Habitual Residence Test

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[1249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of cases reviewed by her Department's Risk Review Team have been issued with a negative habitual residence test decision in each of the last two years.

**David Rutley:**

The Department's Risk Review Team (RRT) was established in May 2020, as part of the Department's response to direct fraud threats that emerged in the early days of the pandemic.

Since the team was established, processes have evolved; as a result detailed records on Habitual Residence Test (HRT) outcomes in cases reviewed by RRT are only available from 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

I can confirm that, since that date, 608 of the 9676 claims reviewed by RRT in that period failed the HRT; this represents just over 6%.

## ■ Household Support Fund

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[2695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the three-week period, including over the Easter period, to claim the Household Support Grant.

**David Rutley:**

The Household Support Fund, which has been extended from 1 April to 30 September, provides funding for Upper Tier Local Authorities in England to deliver support for people who are struggling to afford household essentials such as energy and water bills, food, and other necessities.

It is for Local Authorities to determine how to use this funding, within the parameters of the scheme, based on their assessment of local need. Local Authorities have been working quickly to get their schemes up and running.

The Household Support Fund extension is just one part of a wider package worth £22 billion that we are providing in 2022-23 to help ease cost of living pressures.

**Jobcentres: Recruitment****Alison McGovern:**[\[4558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the process of re-interviewing Work Coaches employed by her Department on fixed-term contracts for permanent positions, whether her Department has undertaken an equality impact assessment that assessed whether any protected groups were being disadvantaged by this process.

**Mims Davies:**

DWP EO fixed-term colleagues across all Service Delivery areas were invited to apply for permanence at their current grade via ring-fenced internal district campaigns which did not include a requirement for interviews.

A full equality impact assessment of the approach was completed in advance of the campaigns commencing. It was concluded that, with mitigations in place, to reduce any negative impact, colleagues would not be disproportionately impacted because of their protected characteristics.

**Kickstart Scheme: Costs****Alison McGovern:**[\[5395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the overall cost of the Kickstart scheme has been since its inception.

**Mims Davies:**

The National Audit Office (NAO) report on the Kickstart Scheme was published in November 2021. This report contains details on spend as of the end of September 2021. You can access the NAO report [here](#).

Information relating to Kickstart grants will be published by the Cabinet Office on the Government website in due course, as is standard practice for all Government general grants. This can be viewed [here](#). To note, this information is normally published approximately a year after the financial year end and includes grant value and recipients.

## ■ Local Housing Allowance

**Beth Winter:**

[\[4712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent evaluation her Department has made of the accuracy of the mechanism used to calculate the Local Housing Allowance.

**David Rutley:**

The Secretary of State reviews Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates annually. LHA rates are not intended to meet all rents in all areas.

In April 2020 investment in LHA rates was boosted by nearly £1 billion when rates were set at the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of market rents, providing 1.5 million claimants 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.

## ■ Pension Credit: Refugees

**Julie Marson:**

[\[4696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who have arrived in the UK from Ukraine under relocation schemes have been awarded Pension Credit.

**Guy Opperman:**

As of the 18 May 2022, we had received 1,374 claims to Pension Credit from people who have arrived in Great Britain from Ukraine under the relocation schemes. Of these, 1,012 have been awarded Pension Credit and the other 362 claims are being processed.

## ■ Personal Independence Payment: Foetal Anticonvulsant Syndrome

**Cat Smith:**

[\[2532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what impact the Condition Insight Report for Valproate has had on personal independence payment decisions for people with fetal valproate spectrum disorder since its introduction in August 2020.

**Chloe Smith:**

Both Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment providers have a Condition Insight Report (CIR) on Foetal Valproate Spectrum Disorder, which all their Health Professionals (HPs) have access to during the course of the PIP assessment process. CIRs are often developed with input from stakeholder groups that advocate for those with the relevant condition.

While it is not possible to objectively assess the specific impact of a CIR on HPs' knowledge, the CIR on Foetal Valproate Spectrum Disorder is a welcome addition to the information available to HPs. DWP Case Managers are responsible for making decisions on PIP entitlement, based on all the evidence submitted, including the advice given by HPs.

## ■ Private Rented Housing

**Beth Winter:** [\[4713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her department has made of the impact of Taff Rhondda broad market rental area boundaries on different market areas.

**David Rutley:**

No assessment has been made.

Local Housing Allowance rates vary by geographical regions called broad rental market areas. The boundaries of the broad rental market areas in Wales are determined and kept under review by Rent Officers Wales. If they decide that a boundary should change, they can submit a review to the Secretary of State for consideration.

## ■ Private Rented Housing: Reviews

**Beth Winter:** [\[4714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many local authorities have requested a review of their broad market rental area boundaries in the last five years; and how many of those reviews have been conducted.

**David Rutley:**

We do not hold this information.

Rent officers at the Valuation Office Agency, Rent Service Scotland and Rent Officers Wales have responsibility for setting broad rental market area boundaries in England, Scotland, and Wales respectively.

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 the rent officers.

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. One broad rental market area review, which was carried out by the Valuation Office Agency, has been submitted in the last five years.

## ■ Restart Scheme: Surveys

**Alison McGovern:**

**[5398]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, where the first quarterly Customer Satisfaction Measure survey of the Restart Scheme is published; and how that result of that survey are being used to improve the future delivery of the Restart Scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

The Customer Satisfaction Measure (CSM) results are not published. Although DWP has not undertaken to publish the CSM results, it retains the right to do so in the future.

The purpose of the CSM is to give DWP independent evidence, at national and contract level, regarding customer satisfaction, which can be used to inform:

- current Restart Scheme provider performance improvement,
- any changes that could be made to any potential successor programme, and
- the DWP's long term evidence base for how to best run similar programmes in the future.

The results of the first quarterly survey, and future surveys, will form a key part of Restart Scheme providers' monthly discussions with their DWP performance managers.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Cynon Valley

**Beth Winter:**

**[1361]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many recipients of social security payments in Cynon Valley constituency are subject to deductions to payments; and for what reasons those people are subject to deductions.

**David Rutley:**

We reduced the normal maximum rate of deductions in Universal Credit from 40% to 30% to 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance enabling them to retain more of the award. These changes were implemented from October 2019 to April 2021. These positive measures were put in place to support claimants to manage financial difficulties.

Protocols are in place to ensure deductions are manageable and customers can contact DWP Debt Management if they are experiencing financial hardship to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, or a temporary suspension, depending on financial circumstances. We encourage anyone unable to afford the proposed rate of repayment to contact Debt Management - all notifications advise how to get in touch. We seek to do as much as we are able to support claimants through the recovery of their overpayments.

If a claimant is struggling financially, they can ask for the amount of certain deductions to be reconsidered. Financial hardship decisions are made for any of the following:

- benefit debts,
- Social Fund loan
- rent arrears

Benefit debts and Social Fund loans can see deductions reduced and/or deferred. As the creditor, DWP will always try to ensure that Government debt is recovered effectively without causing undue hardship.

For rent arrears, claimants can ask UC staff to exercise their discretion to fix rent arrears deductions at the lowest rate in legislation – 10% of Standard Allowance. This can be done using the Journal or by phone. However, UC staff would not agree to remove a rent arrears deduction entirely to ensure a claimant is protected from eviction.

For Universal Credit (UC), in November 2021, there were 3,100 UC households in Cynon Valley with a deduction, this accounts for 50% of UC households in Cynon Valley.

The attached spreadsheet shows the number of UC households with deductions by deduction type.

For benefits other than UC, deductions information at constituency level is not held.

**Attachments:**

1. Table 1 [Table 1.xlsx]

■ **Social Security Benefits: Foetal Anticonvulsant Syndrome**

**Cat Smith:** [\[2533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with fetal valproate spectrum disorder have been refused the award of (a) personal independence payment and (b) disability living allowance in the last 12 months.

**Chloe Smith:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Uprating**

**Michael Fabricant:** [\[2349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will immediately uprate benefits in line with the current high rate of inflation; and if she will make a statement.

**David Rutley:**

The Secretary of State for Work is required by law to undertake an annual review of benefits and pensions, and Consumer Price Index in the year to September is the latest figure that she can use to allow sufficient time for the required legislative and operational changes before new rates can be introduced at the start of the new financial year.

All benefit up-rating since April 1987 has been based on the increase in the relevant price inflation index in the 12 months to the previous September.

The Secretary of State's decisions regarding benefits and pensions uprating for this financial year were announced to Parliament on 25 November 2021. And the increase of 3.1% from April 2022 was debated and approved by both Houses of Parliament earlier this year.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Beth Winter:**

[\[988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of recipients of universal credit nationally have had money deducted from their payments in order to repay debts in each month in the last 12 months.

**David Rutley:**

Deductions from benefit can be taken for a number of reasons; such as repayment of benefit overpayments or to cover the cost of an advance; deductions are also made to ensure claimants avoid the consequences of not paying priority debts, for example: eviction; and ensuring social obligations are met, such as child maintenance payments or court fines.

We reduced the normal maximum rate of deductions in Universal Credit from 40% to 30% to 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance enabling them to retain more of the award. These changes were implemented from October 2019 to April 2021. These positive measures were put in place to support claimants to manage financial difficulties.

For benefit overpayments, protocols are in place to ensure deductions are manageable and customers can contact DWP Debt Management if they are experiencing financial hardship to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, or a temporary suspension, depending on financial circumstances. We encourage anyone unable to afford the proposed rate of overpayment recovery to contact Debt Management - all notifications advise how to get in touch. We seek to do as much as we are able to support claimants through the recovery of their overpayments.

## ■ Universal Credit: Employment

**Alison McGovern:**

[\[5396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of people claiming Universal Credit and in the Searching for Work conditionality group as at January 2021 found a job within (a) three months, (b) six months, (c) nine months and (d) 12 months of being placed in the searching for work group, broken down by UK regions, London and mayoral combined authorities; and for how long those people held that job.

**David Rutley:**

The Information requested can only be provided at disproportionate cost because the required information is not all readily available to analysts in a format that would

enable them to undertake the analysis and quality assure the figures, to answer this PQ in the timescales.

### ■ Universal Credit: Fraud

**Kate Osamor:** [\[2319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether private sector data sets are used in the Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS) or Analysis and Intelligence Hub for detecting Universal Credit fraud and error.

**David Rutley:**

DWP does make use of commercially available data sets on specific initiatives to prevent and detect fraud and error.

**Kate Osamor:** [\[2321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether algorithms are used in her Department's integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS) or Analysis and Intelligence Hub to model or predict Universal Credit claimant's risk of fraud and error; and whether those algorithms are used to decide which claimants are investigated further.

**David Rutley:**

DWP's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS) is developing the use of algorithms to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud in Universal Credit.

Any risk of fraud or error identified is reviewed by a trained member of staff and this is only one of a number of verification steps which will have to be cleared before an investigation is begun or before a claim is paid.

A decision to investigate a claimant is always made by a case handler who would take into account all relevant facts and circumstances.

### ■ Universal Credit: Mental Health

**Owen Thompson:** [\[5464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment has she made of the mental health impact on individuals of managed migration from legacy benefits to Universal Credit.

**David Rutley:**

The Government is committed to ensuring the final phase of Universal Credit is rolled out safely and is responsibly delivered by the end of 2024. We have considered additional needs for those with health conditions including those with mental health conditions the current support consists of:

- A dedicated DWP phonenumber for those receiving a migration notice
- Comprehensive guidance on Gov.uk
- Specially trained staff in JCP's and service centres who can identify and signpost to local tailored support



- Support through Help to Claim
- And reminding claimants that 1.4m households will gain financially from move to Universal Credit.

During our Discovery phase, we will continue to learn how best to support claimants successfully move to Universal Credit and adapt our approach as we learn.

## ■ Universal Credit: Standards

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[2547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to reduce the five-week wait time for new Universal Credit claimants in the context of rising pressures on household budgets.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[2548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason there is a five-week wait for new applicants to receive Universal Credit; and if she will make it her policy to reduce this waiting time.

**David Rutley:**

The Universal Credit assessment period and payment structure are fundamental parts of its design. Universal Credit reflects payment patterns in the world of work, where the majority of people are paid monthly. Ensuring similarities between paid employment and being on benefits eliminates an important barrier which could prevent claimants from adjusting to paid employment.

When claimants are paid Universal Credit is determined by the date of entitlement. The first payment is usually made around five weeks after the claim is made. The first calendar month is the initial assessment period. At the end of that period, entitlement for that month is calculated and paid 7 days later. Payments thereafter are made monthly in arrears.

It is not possible to award a Universal Credit payment as soon as a claim is made as the assessment period must run its course before the award of Universal Credit can be calculated. It is not possible to accurately determine what a claimant's entitlement will be in the month ahead. This process ensures claimants are paid their correct entitlement and prevents significant overpayments from occurring.

New Claims Advances of up to 100% of potential Universal Credit entitlement are available if a claimant needs support during their first assessment period and budgeting support is available for anyone who needs extra help. With an advance, claimants receive an additional UC payment, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period.

There are no plans to change the assessment period and payment structure of Universal Credit.

## ■ Universal Credit: Vulnerable Adults

**Owen Thompson:**

[5465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to support vulnerable people to make claims for Universal Credit as part of the process of managed migration from legacy benefits.

**David Rutley:**

We are committed to fully complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty as we proceed with managed migration and will be regularly reviewing and updating our equality analysis as we progress through the discovery phase and iterate our approach.

We are currently reviewing our explicit consent process to make it easier for those who need the support but do not have or need an appointee to have someone to act on their behalf.

A variety of support is in place for those issued with migration notices, including for individuals with health conditions and disabilities. As we progress through the discovery phase, we are keen to understand what additional support is required for people to make their claim to UC.

Our current support consists of:

- A dedicated phoneline
- Further guidance on Gov.uk
- Specially trained staff in JCP's and service centres who can identify local tailored support
- Support through Help to Claim

Our aim throughout remains to bring each legacy claimant across to Universal Credit.

## ■ Universal Credit: Wales

**Beth Winter:**

[4710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department spends on the housing element of Universal Credit in Wales each year.

**David Rutley:**

The information requested on Universal Credit Housing Element (UCHE) expenditure in Wales is not readily available and to provide it would incur a disproportionate cost.

UCHE expenditure is available at the GB level only, on Rows 8 and 60 of the housing benefits sheet of the benefit expenditure and caseload tables for Autumn Budget 2021:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-expenditure-and-caseload-tables-2021>

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

#### ■ 'Minded To' Decision for the Wider Implementation of Licensed Standing Areas in Football Stadia

**Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society (Nigel Huddleston):**  
[\[HCWS52\]](#)

On 1 January 2022, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) successfully launched the 'Early Adopter Programme' for [Licensed Standing in Seated Areas](#) at football stadia, with the full backing of Parliament and key footballing stakeholders. This represented a significant step towards fulfilling the Government's manifesto commitment 'to work with fans and clubs towards introducing licensed standing in seated areas at football grounds'.

In a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament, made on 8 November 2021, I confirmed that the 'Early Adopter Programme' was intended to enable the Government to evaluate how successful licensed standing areas could be as a strategy to manage persistent standing. The Early Adopter Programme was implemented during the second half of the 2021/22 football season and has been subject to a formal independent evaluation. The evaluation has included a series of match-day visits to observe supporter behaviour and the implementation of safety management practices as well as interviews with a range of staff involved in managing safety at each club such as SGSA inspectors, section supervisors responsible for the licensed standing areas, supporter liaison officers and representatives from both the local police and Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

On 23 April 2022, the SGSA published the 'Interim Report' by CFE Research, which we are delighted has confirmed that researchers have 'not witnessed anything during match observations in 2022 or gathered any evidence to date that contradicts [the previous research finding that] installing barriers or rails in areas of persistent standing in seated accommodation **continues to have a positive impact on spectator safety**, particularly in mitigating the risk of a progressive crowd collapse by limiting forwards and backwards movement'.

I am pleased to note that the Interim Report has identified a number of further positive impacts of installing barriers or rails, which are also consistent with the findings of the 2019-20 study, [The Safe Management of Persistent Standing in Seated Areas at Football Stadia](#) published by the SGSA in June 2021. These include: celebrations are more orderly with no opportunity for forwards and backwards movement; egress is more uniform because barriers limit spectators' ability to climb over seats to exit more quickly; it is easier to identify pockets of overcrowding in these areas; and barriers offer stability for people moving up and down aisles and gangways.

The Interim Report also noted that operating licensed standing areas has the additional benefit of removing 'the need for safety teams to make spectators sit down, reducing potential conflict between staff and spectators' while also enhancing the match-day

experience of spectators and customer service by enabling clubs to respond to spectators' seating preferences. In addition, it has concluded that there is no evidence to date that the introduction of licensed standing areas has led to an increase in persistent standing elsewhere in the stadia.

Alongside the SGSA, we have carefully considered the findings of the Interim Report, and with this robust evidence in hand, I am 'minded to' change the existing all-seater policy to allow all clubs currently subject to this requirement to introduce licensed standing areas for the start of the 2022/23 season, provided they have met certain strict criteria, which are available [online](#). The SGSA has also produced Supplementary Guidance (SG01) providing further information about the standards/requirements that must be met. This guidance is available [online](#). Other areas of the grounds will continue to remain 'all-seated'.

It is important to note that I have not taken the final decision at this stage, and any change to the existing all-seater policy will remain contingent upon the CFE Research Final Evaluation Report confirming the findings of the Interim Report, which note that licensed standing areas provide for an equivalent (if not improved) level of spectator safety. We will also ensure that key stakeholders continue to have sufficient opportunity to provide any additional observations/feedback not already captured.

The Government's approach has been driven by safety considerations throughout and this will continue to be our priority. We are not complacent about spectator safety, nor are we complacent about the safety policies that have served spectators well for many years. We will continue to work closely with the SGSA, football clubs, the football governing bodies and local authorities to ensure that spectator safety remains paramount.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Angiolini Inquiry: Contingent Liability for Indemnification

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):** [\[HCWS51\]](#)

I today lay before the House of Commons a Departmental Minute giving notice of a contingent liability for the issuing of an indemnity with respect to the work of the Angiolini Inquiry.

The proposed indemnity will cover Dame Elish Angiolini as Chair of the Angiolini Inquiry, current and former members of the Angiolini Inquiry and any individual engaged at any time to aid the Inquiry, against any legal costs, personal civil liability, actions, or damages related to the execution of their duties, or for any act done or omission made in good faith in the execution of their duties, including in relation to any Inquiry report/s or other published document/s.

This indemnity applies only to acts done or omissions made honestly and in good faith during the course of the Inquiry, from its establishment on 31 January 2022 until the final reports are published by the Home Secretary and all of the closure work of the Inquiry is concluded. The indemnity excludes personal criminal liability, negligence or reckless acts.

The indemnity is subject to the proviso that any liability which is to any extent met by insurers on the beneficiary of this indemnity, or for which reimbursement is made to any extent by such insurers, shall in that event and to that extent no longer be the subject of the indemnity and (if previously met or reimbursed by the Government) shall to that extent be refunded by the beneficiary to the Government.

Her Majesty's Treasury has approved the contingent liability in principle. The National Audit Office has been consulted on the proposal.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts):**

[\[HCWS50\]](#)

Decarbonising maritime is essential to achieve net zero emissions across the UK economy by 2050, as domestic shipping alone produces more greenhouse gases than buses, coaches and rail combined. Urgent action is needed today – the average lifespan of vessels means that greener ships must start being deployed by 2025 to achieve a zero-emission fleet by 2050. It's vital that every sector plays its part to remain in line with the Paris Agreement. This transition of the shipping industry to zero emissions, as well as fulfilling our objectives to combat climate change, will also improve air quality in and around our ports and coastal communities.

Earlier this year the National Shipbuilding Strategy announced £206 million to establish in my Department a UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions, or UK SHORE. This is a world-leading initiative showcasing our climate leadership and commitment to decarbonising maritime.

Today, I am kick-starting this ambitious programme, launching a package of initiatives including:

- The first round of the multi-year Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition, which opens today for applications. Building on the success of the first CMDC, to fund feasibility studies and pre-deployment trials in innovative clean maritime solutions, enabling full-scale technology demonstrations.
- Feasibility studies exploring green shipping corridors, as part of the multi-year CMDC, placing the UK at the centre of emerging clean maritime routes. These will align with our ambition to drive the transition to zero-emission shipping at the IMO, implementing the commitments in the Clydebank Declaration for Green Shipping Corridors, announced at COP26.
- Exploring initiatives on green shipbuilding skills this year in partnership with the Department for Education and their UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce, working closely with the National Shipbuilding Office. Future programmes will be targeted at upskilling our workforce, making sure we are ready as a shipbuilding and maritime nation for net zero shipping.

- Working with the Devolved Administrations to support the greening of intra-UK ferry routes via a Zero Emission Ferries programme. This will build domestic green corridors, tackling climate change and levelling up of the UK's island communities.
- Confirmation that this year we will set out plans for a Centre for Smart Shipping (CSmart), a commitment in the Maritime 2050 Strategy. Providing a coordinating function in new and emerging technologies, CSmart will build on the UK's strength in smart shipping systems and enable Innovation Hubs to support regional clusters of expertise across the UK.
- Grant schemes for early research projects delivered by our world leading universities, in partnership with the UKRI Supergen programme and marine industrial stakeholders. This initiative will build on the excellence of UK academia, exploring new ideas to create a pipeline of future technology solutions to decarbonise the maritime sector.

This is the first of a series of packages launched as part of the implementation of UK SHORE. Initiatives will be delivered in parallel with the maritime commitments in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the 2019 Clean Maritime Plan. We will continue to build momentum towards the publication in 2023 of a refreshed Clean Maritime Plan. This will bring together our commitments, setting out a plan of action towards Net Zero for the UK domestic maritime sector.

The transition to zero emission shipping is a unique opportunity to radically reboot our marine manufacturing and gear up productivity, building on our competitive edge in clean maritime solutions. Delivered in partnership with the National Shipbuilding Office and the Department for International Trade, UK SHORE initiatives will energise UK shipyards and their supply chains as we recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It will drive innovation investment and revitalise maritime infrastructure. The implementation of UK SHORE is expected to support thousands of jobs across our communities, as programme implementation gathers pace.