



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 26 May 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:54 P.M., 26 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: Remote Working

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[6968\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if she will continue and expand the use of remote working for the Crown Prosecution Service to help tackle the caseload backlog.

**Alex Chalk:**

During the pandemic, the criminal justice system developed digitally enabled remote hearing capability, at pace, so that court-related activity could continue to the greatest degree possible.

The CPS has a fully digital casework process, and previously invested in a robust technology infrastructure which has enabled CPS staff to work remotely and engage virtually in court proceedings during this challenging period.

Recognising that listing is a judicial function, the continued development of technology, and its use to facilitate remote attendance in appropriate circumstances, presents an opportunity for gains in efficiency and flexibility in the deployment of work and people.

#### ■ Crown Prosecution Service: Standards

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[900268\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the CPS in ensuring access to justice for the victims of crime.

**Alex Chalk:**

In 2021, the CPS prosecuted: 69 alleged terrorists of which 63 were convicted. Over 19,000 alleged violent crimes, with a conviction rate of over 75%. Over 10,000 hate crimes, nearly 11,000 domestic abuse crimes and in that same year the Government introduced a Victims Code to ensure that victims are placed at the heart of the criminal justice system and that their voices are heard.

#### ■ Economic Crime: Prosecutions

**Mrs Sheryll Murray:**

[\[900269\]](#)

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

**Alex Chalk:**

In the year ending September 2021, the CPS prosecuted 7,609 defendants where Fraud and Forgery were the principal offence. 84.9% of those defendants were convicted. In the last five years, the SFO secured reparations for criminal behaviour for organisations it investigated totalling over £1.3bn.

The CPS deploy a network of prosecutors around the world to help extradite suspects and secure the evidence needed to bring criminals to justice in this jurisdiction.

The Government has introduced the Online Safety Bill, requiring all companies to take robust action against illegal content. Companies will need to remove material that amounts to an offence in the UK regardless of where in the world it originated.

## ■ Sexual Offences: Prosecutions

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[900270\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking to increase prosecution rates for (a) sexual assault and (b) rape offences.

**Alex Chalk:**

This Government is determined to increase the number of rape and sexual assault cases going to court.

The CPS is undertaking extensive work to drive up and improve prosecutions through its Joint National RASSO Action Plan with the police, the Rape Strategy, and the Operation Soteria Path Finders, which are testing methods for best practice in six CPS Areas.

Since publication of its strategy, the CPS has continued to see increases in the number of rape charges, prosecutions and convictions.

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

### ■ Companies House

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[\[6755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many staff members in his Department are deployed on a full-time basis to monitor Companies House filings.

**Paul Scully:**

Companies House is a delivery body of the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy. There are 121.8 full-time equivalent staff engaged on monitoring Companies House filings in the Integrity, Compliance and Enforcement teams.

### ■ Diesel Fuel: Supply Chains

**Virginia Crosbie:**

[\[6966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that supply chains for the (a) production and (b) distribution of diesel are not disrupted.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK remains well-supplied for diesel from a diverse range of sources. UK demand for diesel is met by a combination of domestic production and imports. In 2021 UK

production could have met over half of our demand for diesel. Imports in the same year came from a diverse range of reliable suppliers beyond Russia including the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden.

BEIS monitors the fuel supply market to remain aware of current supply levels, and publishes weekly national average forecourt stock levels. There is no shortage of diesel in the UK.

### ■ Energy: Housing

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[6665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of energy used by hot water in a three bedroom semi-detached home with cavity wall insulation in the UK.

**Greg Hands:**

Around 20% of annual heating energy is used by hot water in an average three-bedroom semi-detached home with cavity wall insulation. This estimate is based on model outputs for Great Britain from the National Household Model.

### ■ Help to Grow Scheme

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[5404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 29 March 2022 to Question 145878 on Help to Grow Scheme: Digital Technology, when his Department plans to publish data on the take-up and completion of the Help to Grow programmes; and where that data will be published.

**Paul Scully:**

We intend to publish data on take up and completion of the Help to Grow Programmes later this year on the GOV.UK website, and thereafter on a regular basis.

### ■ Hinkley Point C Power Station

**Alan Brown:** [\[6805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the revised estimated dates are for the commissioning of Hinkley Point C (a) reactor one and (b) reactor two; and whether there is any estimated additional programme risk on these dates.

**Greg Hands:**

EDF updated the forecast cost and schedule for Hinkley Point C on 19 May 2022. The forecast shows a Unit 1 Commercial Operation Date (COD) of June 2027 (12 months later than the current baseline schedule). Unit 2 is forecast to start 12 months after Unit 1. EDF estimate the risk of COD delay to both Units 1 and 2 is 15 months.



## ■ Housing: Heating

**Virginia Crosbie:**

[\[6965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the (a) generation and (b) adoption of cleaner methods of home heating.

**Greg Hands:**

In the Heat and Buildings Strategy, published in October 2021, the Government sets out actions for the reduction of emissions from buildings in the near and longer term. This includes a package of measures to reduce the costs of buying and running a heat pump and how the Government plans to scale up the deployment of heat pumps to 600,000 installations per annum by 2028. The new Boiler upgrade scheme, opened for grant applications 23 May, gives £5000 discounts towards installing a heat pump. The Government is also taking action to grow the market for heat networks and continues to invest in research for hydrogen heating.

## ■ Housing: Insulation

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[4663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to make funding available to local councils to (a) insulate council housing stock and (b) invest in developing local supply chains able to retrofit home insulation.

**Greg Hands:**

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8billion Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) over a 10-year period to improve the energy performance of social homes. Around £240million has been awarded to social landlords through the SHDF Demonstrator and Wave 1 schemes. A further £800million was secured for SHDF in the 2021 Spending Review.

BEIS has spent nearly £6million on skills training, delivering around 7000 training opportunities for the energy-efficiency and low-carbon-heating supply chains. BEIS will continue to monitor the market and is considering options on how to work with industry to support training to increase capacity and reduce shortages.

## ■ Nuclear Power: Finance

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[4704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 14 March 2022 to Question 133181 on Private sector: nuclear energy, what the (a) purpose, (b) application process, (c) application criteria, (d) timescale and (e) launch date is for the Nuclear Fuel Fund.

**Lee Rowley:**

In the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review, the Government confirmed a £75 million Nuclear Fuel Fund, to be used alongside private sector co-investment, to preserve and develop the UK's nuclear fuel production capability. The Fund's scope

and approach is in development, including the eligibility criteria, application process and evaluation criteria. A market engagement exercise will inform the Nuclear Fuel Fund design ahead of its launch later this year.

### ■ **Scottish Limited Partnerships**

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [\[6754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of Scottish limited partnerships have disclosed genuine individuals as persons of significant control.

**Paul Scully:**

There are 35,693 Scottish Limited Partnerships currently on the Companies House register. Of these, 7,589 (21%) have at least one individual or legal person identified as a Person with Significant Control as of 24 May 2022.

### ■ **Scottish Limited Partnerships: Fines**

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [\[6756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much has been issued in fines to Scottish limited partnerships for failure to comply with the requirements of the register of persons of significant control since its establishment.

**Paul Scully:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 19 May 2022 to Question [752](#).

### ■ **Water: Conservation**

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[6664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his policy is on whether water efficiency devices should be used alongside mandatory water labelling and other mechanisms in order to reduce carbon emissions associated with water consumption.

**Greg Hands:**

Water companies are already funding water efficiency devices to help households reduce water consumption. The Government believes that mandatory water labelling is the best way to help consumers make informed decisions regarding the purchase of water efficient taps and non-electric showers, as well as other water-using products. This will empower consumers to reduce their hot water consumption, which in turn will reduce their carbon emissions and energy bills. A labelling scheme will also encourage manufacturers to innovate and bring more water efficient products to the market.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Cabinet Office: Correspondence****Jessica Morden:**[\[6731\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if his Department will publish the average time it took each Department to respond to correspondence from Members of the House of (a) Commons and (b) Lords in (i) 2021 and (ii) during the period from January to May 2022.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Government attaches great importance to the effective and timely handling of correspondence from MPs and Peers.

The Cabinet Office does not collect data from government departments on the average time taken to respond to correspondence from Members of the House of Commons and Lords.

The Cabinet Office will be publishing data on volumes and timeliness of responses to correspondence from Members of the House of Commons and Lords for 2021 in the near future. This publication will include data for all government departments.

**■ Civil Servants: Redundancy****Angela Rayner:**[\[8013\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he had with trade unions representing civil servants prior to the announcement by his Department of the reduction in the number of civil servants by 91,000.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

I did not discuss the matter with Civil Service trade unions prior to the announcement, however officials engaged with unions promptly after the announcement was made and this dialogue will continue. Trade unions have written to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on this matter and will receive a response in due course.

The size of the civil service has swelled by almost 25% since 2016 – the highest numbers for over a decade. This was partly driven by the once in a generation challenge of dealing with a global pandemic, as well as extra staff required to deliver the UK's departure from the EU.

We are incredibly grateful to the civil service for the outstanding job they do in delivering for the public but when people across the country are facing pressures on living costs, the public rightly expect their government to lead by example and to run as efficiently as possible.

**■ Civil Servants: Remote Working****Ian Lavery:**[\[7997\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants were working from home by constituency on average during 2020.

**Ian Lavery:** [\[7998\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants have been working from home more than 50 per cent of their working hours by constituency as of 24 May 2022.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

This is not information that is centrally held.

Civil servants played a vital role in supporting the Government's response to the pandemic, alongside delivering essential public services.

Following the removal of all pandemic restrictions, I have written to departments to underline the importance of workplace attendance. Civil servants, who had necessarily been working from home during the pandemic, are increasingly returning to regular working in the office

#### ■ **Infected Blood Compensation Framework Study**

**Douglas Chapman:** [\[5666\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to send the report by Sir Robert Francis on compensation for those affected by contaminated blood products to his counterparts in the devolved Administrations.

**Michael Ellis:**

Yes. I intend to share a copy of Sir Robert's study with the health Ministers in the devolved administrations prior to publication of the study.

#### ■ **Investigation into Alleged Gatherings on Government Premises during Covid Restrictions**

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[6845\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent discussions the Prime Minister has had with the Second Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet Office.

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[6846\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what meetings the Prime minister has had with the Second Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet Office on the Investigation into Alleged Gatherings on Government Premises during Covid Restrictions; and when those meetings took place.

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[6847\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister's office organised a meeting with the Second Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet Office to discuss the Investigation into Alleged Gatherings on Government Premises during covid-19 restrictions.

**Michael Ellis:**

I have been asked to reply. The Prime Minister discussed the process and procedure on timings and publication arrangements. The findings and contents of the Second

Permanent Secretary's independent report was a matter for her, as the Prime Minister made clear in his oral statement yesterday.

### ■ Supply Chain Advisory Group

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[6776\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress the Supply Chain Advisory Group and Industry Taskforce has made on its work.

**Michael Ellis:**

The resilience of UK supply chains remains a key priority for the Government. Following Sir Dave Lewis' final recommendations at the end of last year, work has focused on ensuring that Government:

- continues to build and embed departmental capability and collaboration on supply chains policy,
- builds stronger capability to horizon scan, spot risks early, and collate and utilise data to understand supply chains issues, and works with industry to resolve them, and
- considers how best to optimise existing infrastructure capacity and improve cross-modal connectivity.

### ■ Universal Credit: Vulnerable Adults

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[6678\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 27 April 2022 to Question 156354 on Universal Credit: Vulnerable Adults, for what reason he has provided a link to the membership of the Universal Credit Programme Board; and if he will publish the full circulation list.

**Michael Ellis:**

We would not centrally hold a list of all the civil servants who would have been in receipt of the report, three years ago. We have already deposited the Universal Credit Programme Board documentation which lists the senior officials in attendance at such meetings.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Afghanistan: Military Aid

**John Healey:** [\[4477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much UK-supplied military equipment to the previous Government of Afghanistan has been recovered from that country since the new Government of that country took power.

**James Heappey:**

During Operation PITTING and the withdrawal of the UK military from Afghanistan spare capacity was used on flights to return as much equipment to the UK as possible. All sensitive equipment and anything considered attractive to criminal and terrorist organisations was recovered.

However, people were prioritised over equipment at all times to evacuate UK nationals and eligible persons under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP). Consequently, a small amount of equipment was left behind or gifted to partner nations.

**■ Afghanistan: Politics and Government****John Healey:**[\[4478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with counterparts in Central Asia since 1 January 2022 on the security implications of the fall of the Afghan government last summer.

**James Heappey:**

The Secretary of State has not discussed the security implications of the fall of the Afghan government with counterparts in Central Asia. I have visited Qatar, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan and have raised the matter with my counterparts. The UK continues to coordinate our response with partners in the region.

**■ Arctic: Shipping****John Healey:**[\[4470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate has he made of the number of UK Icebreaker ships available to help tackle Russian threats in the Arctic.

**James Heappey:**

The Royal Navy has the capability to project force using a variety of assets in the High North and Arctic, dependent on the location, season and threat, including Littoral capabilities. It has one purpose-built Ice Patrol Ship (HMS Protector) and two ice strengthened survey vessels (HMS Echo and HMS Enterprise).

**■ Armed Forces: Housing****Jamie Stone:**[\[6874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many occasions a call out relating to a fault in armed forces accommodation resulted in a wait of more than one month for the repair to be completed in each of the last three years.

**Jeremy Quin:**

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

## ■ Falkland Islands: Sovereignty

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[6714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 10 March 2022 to Question 137988, on Falkland Islands: Sovereignty, whether his Department has undertaken a recent assessment of the adequacy of the level of UK forces in the South Atlantic in the context of recent statements from Alberto Fernández asserting Argentinian sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.

**James Heappey:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave previously to Question 137988. The Ministry of Defence undertakes regular assessments of possible threats to the Falkland Islands to ensure that an appropriate defensive capability is maintained. Our forces in the South Atlantic are at the appropriate level to ensure the defence of the Islands. As part of these assessments, we closely monitor statements from the Government of Argentina, amongst other factors.

**Attachments:**

1. [Falkland Islands: Sovereignty \[UIN 137988.docx\]](#)

## ■ Iraq: Armed Forces

**John Healey:** [\[4474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel are currently deployed as part of the NATO Mission in Iraq.

**James Heappey:**

At present, the UK has 22 Armed Forces personnel and two civilians deployed to the NATO Mission in Iraq.

## ■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

**John Healey:** [\[5337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his French counterpart on the impact on the UK's MINUSMA deployment in Mali following the French withdrawal from that country in summer 2022.

**James Heappey:**

The UK has regular dialogue with the French on Mali as the French Counter Terrorism Operation BARKHANE draws to a close, and as we continue to support their withdrawal through the provision of a CH47 Support Helicopter detachment. The UK's continued support to the United Nations MINUSMA mission is still under constant review.

**John Healey:** [\[5339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he made of the impact on the UK's MINUSMA deployment in Mali following the decision of the Malian Government to withdraw from the G5 Sahel Force.

**James Heappey:**

We dynamically review the political and security situation in Mali, and we are aware of the recent decision of the Malian Government to withdraw from the G5 Sahel Force. The UK's continued support to the United Nations MINUSMA mission is still under review. Some enablers for the UK's continuation sit with the departing French force. We are in discussions with the UN and key allies to determine how these can be replaced.

■ **NATO: Madrid**

**John Healey:** [\[5342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many MOD personnel will be attending the NATO Summit in Madrid.

**James Heappey:**

The Defence Secretary is due to join the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary at the 28-30 June NATO Leaders' Summit in Madrid. Discussions are ongoing on the exact makeup of the delegation.

■ **Russia: Military Aircraft**

**John Healey:** [\[5334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Russian military aircraft have NATO air policing missions intercepted (a) since 25 February 2022 and (b) in the last 12 months.

**James Heappey:**

The right hon. Member's question has been passed to NATO and is now subject to their internal process regarding the release of such information into the public domain. I will write to him shortly.

■ **Trident Submarines: Procurement**

**John Healey:** [\[5343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of the £10 billion contingency provided by the Treasury for the Dreadnought programme has been spent as of 19 May 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The contingency draw-down figure for Financial Year 2021-22 will be included in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Annual Report and Accounts after the conclusion of the annual audit.

Up to March 2021, the MOD has drawn-down £865 million, just under nine per cent, of the HMT-held Dreadnought contingency.



**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Arts: Community Development**

**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[900249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to support community arts projects.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

DCMS provides funding to community arts projects in England through our arm's-length body, Arts Council England.

They are committed to supporting community arts projects, and have identified "Cultural Communities" as a key focus of its 10 year strategy "Let's Create".

One recently funded project is in Bath constituency; Bath Carnival CIC were recently awarded £79,000 from National Lottery Project Grants to support their 2022 community carnival inspired by the theme 'Natural Habitats'.

**■ Arts: North of England**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[900251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to promote and strengthen creative industries in the north of England.

**Julia Lopez:**

We strongly believe that our booming creative industries can drive growth in towns and cities across our country, including in the north of England.

We have a number of initiatives underway to strengthen those industries, including £17.5m to expand the Creative Scale Up programme, supporting access to finance for high growth creative firms outside London. This builds on the successful pilot that has supported over 200 businesses in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West of England. I was in Manchester this month to meet some of the alumni from that.

Seven places in the North have received funding from the Cultural Development Fund to support creative initiatives, including Wakefield, Grimsby, Barnsley, Berwick-on-Tweed, Middlesbrough, Rochdale and Stockport.

**■ Broadband**

**Jamie Stone:** [\[5480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which projects have received funds from Project Gigabit.

**Julia Lopez:**

To date, Project Gigabit funding has been contracted for the following projects:

- Superfast Extension Programme: Scottish Government R100, Northern Ireland Project Stratum, and Connecting Cheshire Superfast Broadband Phase 3.

- Gigahubs Programme: Department for Education, National Health Service (Scotland), Highlands Council, Welsh Government, Oxfordshire County Council, Dorset Council, Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Full Fibre Northern Ireland.

In addition, almost 1,500 projects have received funding through the Project Gigabit voucher scheme.

**Jamie Stone:** [\[5481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of the £5 billion Project Gigabit funds have been spent as of 19 May 2022.

**Julia Lopez:**

UK coverage of gigabit broadband has boomed from 6 per cent to more than 68 per cent in the last three years. The Department has upgraded 600,000 hard-to-reach premises to gigabit and we remain on track to hit our target of 85 per cent gigabit coverage by 2025.

To date, we have spent over £61 million to provide reliable, lightning-fast connections to hard-to-reach premises across the UK via Project Gigabit. A further £35 million is already contracted to be spent and over £500 million of funding is now out to procurement.

## ■ Cricket: Coronavirus

**Catherine West:** [\[6857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much of the £300 million summer sports recovery package, announced in 2021, has been delivered to cricket organisations; and which organisations have received that funding.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Sport Survival Package launched in November 2020 to ensure sport organisations survive the period of coronavirus restrictions which prevented spectators from attending spectator sport events. Whilst coronavirus restrictions were in place, we engaged with the whole sport sector, including the England and Wales Cricket Board as cricket's national governing body, to understand the evolving challenges and support recovery. No cricket organisations applied for funding through the package and therefore did not receive Survival Package support. Every eligible organisation who could demonstrate an urgent financial need in alignment with the fund criteria received support from the package.

## ■ Football Governance Fan-led Review

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[6667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department plans to implement the Fan Led Review of Football Governance in full.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government has published its response to the recommendations made by the Independent Fan Led Review of Football Governance. The Government accepts or supports all of the ten strategic recommendations which set out the government's planned reform of football.

The Queen's Speech confirmed our commitment to an independent regulator for English football and we will bring forward proposals in this Parliamentary session. A White Paper will be published in the summer that will set out the details on the implementation of our football governance reforms. We are working at pace to deliver these measures that will bring sustainable reform that ensures current and future fans continue to enjoy our national game.

**Internet: Fraud****Dan Carden:**[\[900250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of provisions in the Online Safety Bill on efforts to tackle online fraud.

**Chris Philp:**

The Online Safety Bill will deliver vital protections for users from online fraud, including romance scams and scams ads.

Through the Bill, all companies in scope of the framework will need to take action to tackle fraud where it takes place through user-generated content or via search results. This will increase people's protection from the devastating impact of scams posted on social media.

Additionally, the largest social media platforms and search engines will have to prevent fraudulent adverts appearing on their services. This will make it harder for fraudsters to advertise scams online, and protect people from this crime.

**Internet: Safety****Fleur Anderson:**[\[6934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason Section 103, Chapter 8 of the Draft Online Safety Bill, relating to Media Literacy did not appear in the Online Safety Bill introduced on 11 May 2022; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

Ofcom has an existing statutory duty to promote media literacy under section 11 of the Communications Act (2003). Clause 103 of the draft Online Safety Bill clarified Ofcom's responsibilities under this duty but did not grant Ofcom any new powers or duties. On 6 December 2021, 'Ofcom's Approach to Online Media Literacy' was published. This strategy document published by Ofcom outlined its plans to expand its media literacy programme in a manner which substantially met the responsibilities

set out in the draft Bill. As such, it is no longer necessary to include these clarifications in primary legislation.

The Online Safety Bill increases Ofcom's powers relating to media literacy. Ofcom's transparency reporting and information gathering powers cover media literacy and give Ofcom enhanced oversight on industry spend and activity. DCMS's Secretary of State has powers to direct Ofcom's media literacy activity in special circumstances, for example where there is a significant threat to public health as a result of health misinformation. The Bill also directs in-scope companies to consider measures to promote users' media literacy as part of the risk assessment process.

Media literacy remains a vital part of the government's agenda to support online safety. In April 2022 the government published its second Media Literacy Action Plan which sets out an ambitious expansion of its media literacy programme, supported by over £2m of funding.

### ■ Leisure: Public Participation

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[6694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many £10 shopping vouchers have been issued to people responding to the Participation Survey being conducted by Kantar Public on behalf of her Department; and what redress is available to those whose voucher claims may not have been honoured.

**Julia Lopez:**

Kantar Public issued 33,841 vouchers (22,202 e-vouchers and 5,639 by post) as an incentive for completion of the 2021/22 Participation Survey. The other 1,791 respondents to the survey refused the offer of a voucher.

All respondents are entitled to a £10 shopping voucher, in line with best practice for this type of survey. Kantar Public has a help desk available to assist respondents with any queries, including incentive queries. The help desk details (phone number and email address), as well as how to contact DCMS, are included in the invitation letter received by the respondent.

### ■ Swimming: Teachers

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[5411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of the availability of swimming teachers; and what steps she is taking to help increase national swimming teacher provision.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring public access to swimming pools and swimming lessons. Swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy as well as being a crucial life skill in terms of water safety. Swimming and water safety are important parts of the primary PE curriculum. The Government has published national guidance encouraging primary schools to use their share of

the £320 million PE and Sport Premium to fund additional swimming lessons and train teachers.

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

### ■ World Heritage Sites

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[900247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to support bids for the Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

My officials, supported by advisers from Historic England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, have been running open information sessions and workshops for applicants to provide advice and support, ahead of the 15th July deadline.

There has been interest from a fascinating range of prospective sites from across the UK and Overseas Territories and I look forward to their applications.

We encourage heritage related projects to apply to grant schemes available through the Government's Arm's Length Bodies and partners where eligible, such as Historic England or through the National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Heritage Memorial Fund.

### ■ Youth Services: Standards

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[6875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will publish minimum standards for youth provision and services.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23/05/22 to Question [4615](#).

## EDUCATION

### ■ Children: Mental Health Services

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[6810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the (a) implementation of family help and (b) steps being taken to help ensure that children get timely health interventions to

tackle mental health issues; and if he will make it a priority of his Department to grow the mental health workforce to respond to that need.

**Will Quince:**

The department is working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS partners to improve support for families and to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

In April, DHSC and the department jointly announced 75 local authorities eligible for a share of around £300 million to create new Family Hubs in their areas, which will offer specialised help for families.

To support schools and colleges to introduce effective approaches to mental health and wellbeing, the department has committed to offer all state schools and colleges a grant to train a senior mental health lead by 2025, with a further £7 million announced for schools and colleges to train a senior mental health lead, bringing the total amount of funding for the 2022/23 financial year to £10 million.

The department is also jointly rolling out mental health support teams (MHST) in schools and colleges with DHSC and NHS England / Improvement, with £79 million announced in March 2021 to accelerate the rollout.

■ **Children: Social Services**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[6808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to establish a national pay framework for the children's social care workforce; and if he will use the NHS Agenda for Change framework as an example of potential job evaluated scheme for that workforce.

**Will Quince:**

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommended the introduction of national pay scales for the social worker workforce. The department will closely consider this recommendation, as well as the other recommendations from the Review's final report, and will respond with an implementation strategy by the end of the year.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[6809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Final Report of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, published on 23 May 2022, whether his Department plans to undertake work on the intersection between (a) poverty and deprivation and (b) children's social care; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle the factors that cause children to require engagement with children's social care.

**Will Quince:**

The government will closely consider the recommendations from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care's final report, alongside those from the National Panel Review into the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson and the Competition and Markets Authority's study into children's social care placements.

The department will consider all available evidence. This will include our 'Drivers of activity in children's social care' research report, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drivers-of-activity-in-childrens-social-care>, which examines factors associated with children's engagement with children's social care, including family income.

## ■ Children's Social Care Independent Review

**Rachael Maskell:** [6806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the Final Report of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

**Rachael Maskell:** [6807]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that the implementation of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care is fully funded.

**Rachael Maskell:** [6813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that the Government's formal response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care sets out a clear programme of change, including (a) a timetable for delivery, (b) ambitions and (c) obligations.

**Will Quince:**

The government commissioned the Independent Review of Children's Social Care to take a fundamental look at what is needed to support the children and families supported by children's social care.

The department will closely consider the recommendations from the Review's final report and will set out an implementation strategy by the end of the year, which also takes into account the National Panel Review into the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson, and the Competition and Markets Authority's study into children's social care placements.

As part of this strategy, the department will consider the Review's recommendations and any cost implications.

## ■ Department for Education: Staff

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [6876]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the ratio is of desks to staff in his Department.

**Michelle Donelan:**

I refer the hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown to the answer I gave on 17 May 2022 to Question [434](#).

The department's staff are spending plenty of time in the office working together, building professional connections and promoting innovation, but we are also giving flexibility where that helps people work more effectively.

That's why on 27 April 2022, the department asked its staff to start by looking at spending 80% of their working time in the office – including visits to schools, colleges or other sites – alongside the flexibility for managers to adjust that to between 60% and 80%, if that works better for them and the work the department does. These arrangements can include even more flexibility to support caring responsibilities or health concerns. This approach also recognises that there are a wide range of reasons, beyond flexible working, why not all our staff need desks at any given time, this includes annual leave and reasonable adjustments that allow people to work remotely where necessary

This is an approach that fits with the amount of desk space that the department has, gives the department full and vibrant offices, but also retains flexibility to work in different ways when needed. This is positive for our business and staff, and positive for the children and learners we serve every day.

#### ■ Education: Youth Services

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[4613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport about integrating a youth service with the education system.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[4614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of using school buildings for delivering youth services where youth clubs do not exist.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department recognises the significant benefits that youth services can have for children and young people. The department knows that many providers do an excellent job in providing enriching activities for children in a safe and supportive environment, and we are committed to working with providers to explore how we can continue to support them to do so. The department is already making a significant investment through the £200 million per year holiday activities and food programme, funding local authorities across England to supporting disadvantaged pupils and their families with enriching activities and healthy food.

As part of the Levelling Up white paper, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), recently announced the National Youth Guarantee, ensuring that every young person in the country (11- to 18-year-olds, and up to 25 years old for those with special educational needs and disabilities) will have access to a) regular clubs and activities, b) adventures away from home and c) volunteering opportunities by the end of 2025.



The department is working with the DCMS and the National Citizen Service on how to make links between schools, youth services and other providers to deliver the National Youth Guarantee. This will include looking at how to promote volunteering and expanding access to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and cadet schemes. Through this work, the department will look at how to make the best use of premises and how links to youth services can help provide access to targeted support for every child that needs it.

### ■ **Hearing Impairment: Teachers**

**Emma Hardy:** [\[4671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf in England.

**Emma Hardy:** [\[4672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to increase the number of qualified teachers of the deaf.

**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. Information on the number of qualified teachers of the deaf are not collected centrally.

In addition to holding Qualified Teacher Status (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 Qualification in Sensory Impairment from the start of the 2023/24 academic year. 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.

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.

Our reformed Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework (ITT CCF) and the new Early Career Framework (ECF), both developed with sector experts, equip teachers with a clear understanding of the needs of all children, including those with SEND.

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, including those who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

Consideration of SEND underpins both the ITT CCF and ECF which were both produced with the support of sector experts. The ECF is designed to support all pupils to succeed and seeks to widen access for all.

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.

## ■ Pupils: Absenteeism

**Julian Knight:** [5418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of (a) the extent to which pupil disengagement with school after lockdowns has contributed to higher than usual pupil absence levels and (b) the role that extra-curricular activities within a school can play in driving up pupil attendance.

**Julian Knight:** [5419]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the impact that providing young people with the opportunities to apply their learning in relevant context has on (a) pupil engagement, (b) levels of persistent absence and (c) pupil attainment; and if his Department will take steps to support more secondary schools to provide such opportunities to apply learning across their curriculum.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Regular school attendance is vital for children's education, wellbeing and long-term development. Given the disruption already caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the department's focus is on maximising the number of children who regularly attend school.

The department publishes detailed pupil absence data as part of the school census and includes the most recent periods of national lockdown. The latest publication can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-2020-and-spring-2021>.

The department also recently published new guidance for schools, trusts and local authorities setting out how we expect them to work together to ensure as many young people are regularly attending school as possible.

The department recognises that enrichment activities play an important role in an engaging school experience and supporting more children to attend. Research shows that engaging in enrichment activities can benefit children's mental health, social skills, confidence, and general wellbeing. That is why the department is committed to ensuring young people have access to high-quality extra-curricular activities and are supporting a range of initiatives to expand access to these through schools, including Duke of Edinburgh and Cadets.

The government is investing over £200 million a year in the Holiday Activities and Food programme for the next three years. This programme provides healthy meals

and enriching activities to children from low-income families, benefiting their health, wellbeing, and learning, and supporting their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

To build on this foundation, the department is also supporting schools to navigate the resources available to develop a high-quality extracurricular offer, by providing guidance on how to make these activities a success and working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to help schools ensure their pupils are getting the most out of the National Youth Guarantee.

The department's recent Schools White Paper also outlined our ambitions for the curriculum as a whole. The department is clear that all children should be entitled to take part in sport, music and cultural opportunities. These are an essential part of a broad and ambitious curriculum, and they support children's attendance and engagement in education.

It is crucial that every school has a well-designed and well-sequenced curriculum which includes the teaching of skills, to ensure children build knowledge in a broad range of subjects before going on to specialise after the age of 16 and develop skills needed for further education and training.

The programmes of study for each national curriculum subject set out the 'matters, skills, and processes' to be taught at each key stage. The programmes of study are subject-specific. This ensures that pupils can secure key knowledge in specific subjects, before transferring and applying their understanding to new contexts and real-world problems. Without this secured understanding, pupils are likely to find it difficult to apply their knowledge to new situations and are at risk of developing misconceptions in the process.

## ■ Schools: Platinum Jubilee 2022

**Helen Hayes:**

[6839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Platinum Jubilee book to arrive in primary schools from mid-May, published on 1 May 2022, what steps he is taking to ensure that the book is provided in an (a) easy read and (b) braille format.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The commemorative book 'Queen Elizabeth: A Platinum Jubilee Celebration' has been written for a reading age of upper key stage 2 but is designed to be as accessible as possible for all primary school age-children, whether reading this themselves or having it read to them by a teacher, parent or carer. The book is written in a story-book style, supported by many informative and engaging illustrations throughout.

A braille edition of the book is not available, though audio versions are available via a QR code on the book or from the publisher's website at: <https://jubilee.dk.com>.

## ■ Secondary Education: Tameside

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[3515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will meet the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish to discuss (a) secondary education attainment levels in Tameside, (b) parental choice of secondary schools in Denton and (c) the possible disposal of the Two Trees site in Denton.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

In the Schools White Paper, the department has set out a list of the 24 areas where more intensive investment will take place. Tameside is one of these priority areas.

Officials will be meeting with local stakeholders to discuss the local needs for the young people of Tameside.

## ■ Special Educational Needs

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[4675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the proposed new local SEND partnerships will be required to include representation from services for children with low incidence needs, such as sensory impairment.

**Will Quince:**

The department is consulting on new local partnerships that will bring together representatives across early years, schools, further education, alternative and specialist provision, in addition to health and care partners and other partners, including youth justice.

The government will publish a national special educational needs and disabilities and alternative provision delivery plan setting out the government's response to the consultation and how change will be implemented in detail.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: Appeals

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[6842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the SEND review, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of proposals for mandatory mediation on parent's access to the SEND tribunal process.

**Will Quince:**

As the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper set out, the new national system will be designed to minimise uncertainty and disagreements throughout the system and improve parental confidence. The department recognises, however, that disputes around decision-making may still occur.

This government's proposals seek to resolve issues earlier and improve relationships locally by strengthening mediation, including consulting on making it mandatory.

Appeals to the tribunal should only need to be made in cases where parents feel that

their child's needs or proposed provision arrangements are not in line with the new national special educational needs and disabilities standards, and mediation has not resolved the dispute. Mediation helps to maintain and improve relationships between providers, local authorities and families which is important for long-term collaborative working and supports better outcomes for children and young people.

This will reduce the need for cases to escalate to tribunal. The department will make sure there is appropriate support available to parents to help them understand the mediation process and how best to engage with it. However, parents will still be able to go to tribunal if necessary.

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

### ■ **Special Educational Needs: School Choice**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[6840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the SEND review, what steps he is taking to ensure that the tailored list of school placements does not limit choice for families.

**Will Quince:**

One of the key aims of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Green Paper 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 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 and carers 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 tailored 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. The department's intention is that this will lead to greater transparency about what is available for children and young people, including offering to parents and carers options they may not have otherwise considered.

### ■ **Teachers: Training**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[6841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the SEND review, what steps he is taking to ensure that all teachers have training to support children with SEND.

**Will Quince:**

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper recognises that excellent mainstream provision and teaching serves as the foundation for a strong SEND system.

The department's revised Initial Teacher Training and Core Content Framework, which all new entrants to the profession benefit from, has been designed to support all children and young people to succeed. All trainees who achieve Qualified Teacher Status must demonstrate that they can adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.

The Early Career Framework, introduced in September 2021, entitles early career teachers to a further two years of development. This framework was designed in consultation with SEND specialists and includes training on identifying pupils who need teaching content further broken down.

In February 2022, the department announced more than £45 million of funding for continued targeted support for families and parents of children with SEND and SEND services. This includes funding that will directly support schools and colleges to work with pupils with SEND, for example through training on specific needs like autism, as well as best practice for developing whole school SEND support and initiatives.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Business: Waste****Dr Rupa Huq:****[4637]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what additional cross-Departmental steps he is taking to incentivise businesses to reduce waste.

**Jo Churchill:**

This Government has a bold and wide-ranging programme to help businesses cut the waste they produce, to recycle more and to ensure the environmental consequences of waste are minimised.

We recently published our plans for Extended Producer Responsibility on packaging, which will be introduced from 2024. We have consulted on a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers with the response due shortly. We have introduced a plastic packaging tax of £200/tonne on plastic packaging that doesn't contain at least 30% recycled content and are consulting on a target under the Environment Act to cut residual waste by 50% by 2042. This follows on from restrictions on single use plastics, including carrier bags, where we have also proposed going further still. We also work to help reduce food waste, supporting the Courtauld Commitment which works for a more sustainable supply chain tackling food waste, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and water use and aims to halve food waste by 2030.

## ■ Clean Air Zones: Greater Manchester

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[6724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 2 March 2022, Official Report, column 1037, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the request from the Greater Manchester Mayor and Combined Authority for a non-charging clean air zone for Greater Manchester.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[6725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with (a) the Mayor of Greater Manchester, (b) the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and (c) Transport for Greater Manchester on their request for a non-charging Clean Air Zone.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[6726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have had discussions with (i) the Prime Minister and (ii) Number 10 officials on the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 2 March 2022, Official Report, column 1037, regarding the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone plan is currently under review by their authorities as announced on 4 February. Prior to this, Ministers held discussions with the Mayor in agreeing to the review. Since then, there have been no further discussions between the Secretary of State and the Mayor on the proposals, but our officials continue to engage with Greater Manchester's.

We have not yet received any detailed proposals and evidence from Greater Manchester authorities regarding their proposal, or setting out how it fulfils their legal obligations and can be implemented and delivered.

## ■ Fish Farming: Animal Welfare

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[6723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Animal Welfare Committee is expected to update its previous Fish Welfare at Slaughter opinion; and what assessment he has made of potential differences in regulation regarding the slaughter of fish and other aquatic animals compared to that of terrestrial farm animals.

**Jo Churchill:**

As part of the Government's Action Plan for Animal Welfare, we are currently considering a number of improvements that could be made to the welfare of farmed fish at the time of killing and have asked the Animal Welfare Committee to update its 2014 Opinion on the welfare of farmed fish at the time of killing this year. Their advice is expected this autumn.

No assessment has been made of the differences in regulation regarding the slaughter of fish and other aquatic animals and terrestrial farmed animals.

Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing requires that farmed fish are spared avoidable pain, distress or suffering during their killing and related operations but does not include any further requirements. The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 makes it an offence for any person engaged in the restraint, stunning or killing of an invertebrate to cause avoidable pain, distress or suffering.

The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 received Royal Assent on 28 April and provides legal recognition that animals with a backbone (vertebrates), decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs are sentient beings. This means the Animal Sentience Committee will be able to consider how individual central government policy decision making takes account of the welfare of these creatures and can publish reports on this.

#### ■ **Flood and Water Management Act 2010**

**Emma Hardy:** [\[4669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there has been a meeting of the Flood & Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 Review Steering Group since 14 December 2021.

**Rebecca Pow:**

During the 14 December 2021 meeting the Review Steering Group was re-named the Advisory Group. The group met on 11 May 2022.

#### ■ **Seaweed: British Virgin Islands**

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[3574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with UK's Overseas Territories on the effects of sargassum seaweed on the ecological system in the British Virgin Islands.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is the statutory adviser to the Government on UK and international nature conservation. The JNCC has been discussing this issue with the Overseas Territories for some time and has delivered training expertise to enable the mapping of sargassum and support work on predicting impacts of sargassum washing up along the shoreline in the British Virgin Islands.



## ■ Water: Conservation

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[6663]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effectiveness of mandatory water labelling on taps and non-electric showers on persuading consumers to be mindful of their water consumption.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra, Waterwise and the water companies commissioned The Energy Saving Trust to conduct a review on water labelling comparing the impacts on taps and showers only [Water Labelling: Taps and Showers Only Comparison – EST \(2020\) – Waterwise](#). This builds on a previous *Independent review of the costs and benefits of water labelling options in the UK* [Microsoft Word - 190626\\_WESTrategy001-EXT\\_SummaryReport\\_2.3 \(waterwise.org.uk\)](#).

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[6666]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on increasing the use of water efficiency devices in UK households to reduce carbon emissions.

**Jo Churchill:**

In our 2021 Written Ministerial Statement on reducing demand for water, we committed to delivering a mandatory water efficiency label. We are working with BEIS to develop a label which could include energy saving information.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Afghanistan: Chevening Scholarships Programme

**Anne McLaughlin:**

[6803]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 7 March 2022 to Question 132296 on Afghanistan: Chevening Scholarships Programme, how her Department plans to contact Chevening Alumni currently at risk in Afghanistan.

**Anne McLaughlin:**

[6804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 7 March 2022 to Question 132296, on Afghanistan: Chevening Scholarships Programme, which stated that it is not known how many Chevening Alumni are currently in Afghanistan, what steps her Department plans to take to contact eligible Chevening Alumni to support them through next steps in applying to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

**James Cleverly:**

As stated previously, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will be in touch with eligible Chevening Alumni to support them through the next steps on the

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. We are not able to share further details at this stage.

### ■ **British Overseas Territories: Environment Protection**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[6708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps officials in her Department are taking to work with representatives of the British Overseas Territory on establishing environmental strategies to protect biodiversity.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government continues to support the Overseas Territories on establishing environmental strategies to protect their unique biodiversity, including through various funds, such as the Darwin Plus, which provides funding for environmental projects, and the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, which has supported pollution prevention, essential seabed mapping and navigational tools. Additionally, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has committed to fund the Blue Belt Programme for the next three years, which will continue to enhance marine protection of over four million square kilometres of ocean around the Overseas Territories and the sustainable management of marine economies.

### ■ **Disease Control: Treaties**

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[5502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has plans to sign a global pandemic treaty.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government 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). This is made up of representatives of World Health Organization Member States, including the UK. 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.

**Jonathan Edwards:** [\[6741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the World Health Organisation's proposal for a new international agreement on pandemic preparedness and response; and if she will make a statement.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government supports WHO's proposal to negotiate a new global instrument on pandemic preparedness and response. The Government is actively shaping its design to ensure it improves how the world prevents, prepares for, and responds to

future disease outbreaks of pandemic potential. This will protect lives, the economy and future generations from the threat of pandemics. The key will be to ensure the final text is clearly in the UK national interest.

The UK's assessment of the impact of the potential new agreement, including on our wider policy objectives, is ongoing. The Government will update Parliament when appropriate.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[6855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she will take to help ensure that (a) relevant stakeholders and (b) members of the public are able to feed into the UK's position on the World Health Organisation's new international agreement on pandemic preparedness and response.

**Amanda Milling:**

FCDO and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) are engaging with a range of stakeholders during the development of the proposed new pandemic instrument. Consultations with civil society organisations have already taken place and we are committed to further consultations in the future. An effective instrument for pandemic prevention and preparedness will require a whole-of-society approach and non-state actors are vital to ensure countries are protected from health threats. We welcome public interest, and will continue to respond to the queries and ideas raised by the public.

## ■ Ethiopia: Press Freedom

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[5631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with the government of Ethiopia on press freedom in Ethiopia in the context of the (a) arrest of Muhaydin Abdullahi on 10 May 2022 and (b) cancellation of the press accreditation of Tom Gardner of the Economist magazine on 13 May 2022.

**Vicky Ford:**

Restrictions to media freedom in Ethiopia are concerning, including the arrest of journalist Muhaydin Abdullahi on 10 May and the expulsion of the Economist correspondent Tom Gardner on 13 May. The UK has consistently called for an end to infringements on media freedom - journalists must have the right to report freely. The British Embassy in Addis Ababa has raised the case of Tom Gardner, a British national, with the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I [Minister Ford] will raise this issue directly with the Ethiopian Government.

The British Embassy in Addis Ababa supports programmes in Ethiopia to strengthen the media environment including PRIMED, which works through BBC Media Action to build the capacity of independent media to produce public interest media, and the Chevening Media Freedom Fellowship programme. The Embassy Addis Ababa also chaired the Media Freedom Coalition of diplomatic partners last year and will to continue to engage as part of the Executive Group this year.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Private Education****Emily Thornberry:**[\[5628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2022 to Question 123, for what reason a breakdown of spending on school places at the named institutions has not been provided as it was by her Department in the previous Answers of (a) 6 July 2021 to Question 23129 and (b) 3 December 2018 to Question 196152.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are not at liberty to release a more detailed breakdown of financial data for external institutions.

**Malawi: Financial Services****Chris Law:**[\[6800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any of British International Investment's \$100 million commitment to Afreximbank through a risk sharing guarantee programme made in 2018 has been used to support Afreximbank loans to the Reserve Bank of Malawi, the government of Malawi or any other Malawi state-owned bodies.

**Amanda Milling:**

In 2018, British International Investment (BII) made a commitment of \$100 million to Afreximbank in the form of a risk sharing guarantee programme to promote trade across Africa. The facility aims to provide working capital to medium and large businesses in sub-Saharan Africa countries by enabling banks to increase their risk appetite.

BII's support of Afreximbank has not involved any loans or credit facilities to the Reserve Bank of Malawi or Government of Malawi or Malawi state-owned bodies.

Trade finance - typically provided by banks and other financial institutions - is crucial to the success of a developing economy. Through services such as letters of credit for importers and guarantees for exporters, trade finance facilitates transactions, allowing businesses in developing countries to buy and sell goods more easily. BII's partnerships with confirming banks such as Afreximbank mean more trade finance products can be offered to businesses in Africa and South Asia.

**Turkey: Terrorism****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[6912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with her Turkish counterpart on Operation Claw Lock.

**James Cleverly:**

We are following closely the situation in northern Iraq, including monitoring of Turkey's Operation Claw Lock. FCDO Ministers and senior officials regularly reiterate

to all parties the need for dialogue and cooperation between Turkey and Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to combat terrorism, ensure regional security, and protect civilians. Our diplomatic missions are in regular contact with Turkish and Iraqi authorities.

#### ■ Turkish-British Tatlidil Forum

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[6926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding her Department has contributed to the Turkish-British Tatlidil annual meeting since it was created in 2011, by year.

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[6927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff in her Department have worked on the Tatlidil annual meeting in each year since 2011.

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[6931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the annual British Turkish Tatlidil meeting still takes place.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) did not grant any funding for the Tatlidil Forum in FY 2019/2020. The FCDO awarded £2,250 in FY 2020/2021, and £11,700 in FY 2021/2022, towards delivery of the 2022 Forum. In the time available we are unable to provide funding information going back to 2011.

#### ■ UK Mission to the EU

**Layla Moran:** [\[6891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the entertainment budget has been of (a) the UK representative to the European Union and subsequently (b) the UK Mission to the EU in each year since 2015.

**James Cleverly:**

The relevant budget allocations, which funded the mission's engagement and influencing to promote UK interests, are as follows:

- 2015/2016 - £68,728.44
- 2016/2017 - £69,510.55
- 2017/2018 - £49,609.55
- 2018/2019 - £150,300.41
- 2019/2020 - £142,132.41
- 2020/2021 - £54,905.00
- 2021/2022 - £106,219.00

## ■ Ukraine: Charities and Civil Society

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[6768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with representatives of charities and third sector organisations supporting Ukraine during the Russian invasion.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is committed to working with partners, including humanitarian agencies, to ensure a well-coordinated and well-funded response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and the region. The Foreign Secretary visited Poland on 5 April and met UN and international NGOs. Senior officials have also had regular exchanges with NGOs on the Ukraine crisis, focusing on the humanitarian response, sanctions and visa schemes, including a recent meeting with around 30 representatives from civil society organisations. In Ukraine and the wider region FCDO-deployed humanitarian experts are also engaging with NGO partners. The FCDO is committed to continuing exchanges with these organisations to discuss the evolving crisis and the challenges they face.

## ■ Ukraine: Humanitarian Aid

**Alyn Smith:**

[\[6904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much of the £220 million allocated by the Government for humanitarian assistance and support in Ukraine has been disbursed to date.

**James Cleverly:**

To date we have disbursed approximately £85 million of the £220 million, in line with agreements reached with partners. Disbursements include £20 million to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), £25 million to the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR, £10 million to International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and £10 million of our £25 million in matched funding to the Disasters Emergency Committee Appeal, which is being delivered by UK NGOs. It is standard practice for payments to partners to be spread over time to ensure a sustained response.

## ■ Ukraine: Refugees

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[6769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the Government is providing to the Polish Government in its humanitarian response to Ukrainian refugees arriving.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is providing £20 million to support Poland's humanitarian response to the conflict in Ukraine. This funding will provide humanitarian support including temporary shelter, education, healthcare and food in Poland, as well as support to joint UK-Poland food and shelter projects in Ukraine. Additionally, the UK is providing funding

to UNHCR, the Red Cross and the Disasters Emergency Committee for activity in Poland. The UK has also deployed humanitarian experts to Poland to provide advice that helps ensure support reaches the refugees, including the most vulnerable.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Alcoholic Drinks: Children and Young People

**Rachael Maskell:**

[4617]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how his Department collects data on alcohol use by children and young people; and if he will publish that data.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Smoking Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England survey, commissioned by NHS Digital, is a biennial survey which collects information on drinking behaviours and attitudes among secondary school pupils. Due to the pandemic, fieldwork for the next survey recommenced in the 2021 autumn term and the findings will be published in summer 2022. The findings from the 2018 survey are available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/smoking-drinking-and-drug-use-among-young-people-in-england/2018>

NHS Digital's Health Survey for England is an annual survey collecting information on the experience of alcohol among children aged eight to 15 years old and on drinking behaviours among individuals aged 16 years old and over. Fieldwork has since restarted in January 2022. The findings from the 2019 survey are available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2019>

**Rachael Maskell:**

[4620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of how alcohol is being used by children and young people in the context of mental health challenges; and what assessment he has made of the potential causal relationship between alcohol use and mental health challenges.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Chief Medical Officer's 2019 guidance on the consumption of alcohol by children and young people stated a causal link between adolescent alcohol consumption and mental health issues. Studies have found links between exposure to trauma and an increased risk of binge drinking and problematic alcohol use. Co-existing mental health and alcohol problems are common in young people presenting to both young people's psychiatric services and substance misuse services.

'Young people commissioning support: principles and indicators' published in 2018 stated that for those with multiple and complex needs, including concerns about

mental health, a comprehensive assessment should be offered and undertaken jointly with specialist substance misuse teams and children and young people's mental health services or other relevant agencies. This should inform a care and intervention plan which not only addresses substance misuse but all factors impacting the young person's wellbeing.

In addition, the forthcoming guidelines for the clinical management of harmful drinking and alcohol dependence will include a chapter on young people.

### ■ Alcoholic Drinks: Labelling

**Darren Jones:** [\[6883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing legislative proposals to require the labelling of alcoholic drinks to include sugar content for the benefit of consumers with diabetes.

**Maggie Throup:**

The consultation to seek views on whether to introduce mandatory calorie labelling on prepacked alcohol and alcohol sold in on-trade businesses such as pubs and restaurants will be launched in due course. Respondents to the consultation will be able to provide suggestions for additional labelling requirements for consideration, such as sugar content.

### ■ Antimicrobials: Diagnosis

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[4630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing adoption of rapid point of care diagnostics to support antimicrobial stewardship objectives within (a) primary and (b) community care settings across the NHS.

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[4631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made on the effectiveness of rapid point of care diagnostics across the NHS in helping the UK to be a world-leader in the delivery of antimicrobial stewardship programmes.

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[4632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the 2016 Review on Antimicrobial Resistance: Lord O'Neill's independent review of antimicrobial resistance in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust, which recommended that all antibiotic prescribing should be informed by rapid diagnostics, what steps he is taking to ensure that primary care settings are equipped with point of care multiplex testing technology.



**Maggie Throup:**

As part of the United Kingdom's national action plan for antimicrobial (AMR) resistance, NHS England and NHS Improvement's AMR programme is examining the adoption of innovations in diagnostics, improving clinical best practice and applying point-of-care testing for urinary tract infections, respiratory tract infections, surgical site infections and acute deterioration, including sepsis.

This aims to identify any gaps in diagnostic pathways and practices with a focus on improving patient outcomes and antimicrobial stewardship in National Health Service and community care settings. Optimising the potential use of point-of-care multiplex testing in primary care is also being considered. NHS England and NHS Improvement supports the appointment of diagnostics and antimicrobial stewardship leads in each regional team in England. Additionally, national guidelines and national toolkits such as TARGET in primary care and 'Start SMART then focus' in secondary care, support antimicrobial stewardship, including the appropriate use of diagnostic tests and tools.

**■ Antimicrobials: Drug Resistance****Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[4633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report published by his Department entitled Tackling antimicrobial resistance 2019–2024: the UK's 5-year national action plan, published on 24 January 2019, whether his Department is taking steps to (a) tackle the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance and (b) embed support for antimicrobial stewardship in his Department's work.

**Maggie Throup:**

The United Kingdom's antimicrobial national action plan aims to reduce the need for and unintentional exposure to antimicrobials by lowering the burden of infection; optimise the use of antimicrobials; and invest in innovation, supply and access of new diagnostics, therapies and vaccines.

Diagnostics and antimicrobial stewardship leads have been appointed in NHS England regional teams and national toolkits, decision aids and guidelines to support the appropriate use of antimicrobials have been developed and published.

Commissioning for Quality and Innovation schemes for management of urinary tract infection and reducing antimicrobial use in secondary care have also been implemented.

**■ Coronavirus Certificates: Children****Sarah Olney:**[\[6862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason children aged five to 11 are not able to obtain a Digital Covid Pass; and whether his Department has plans to extend eligibility to that cohort.

**Maggie Throup:**

Since 28 April 2022, the NHS COVID Pass travel letter has been available for five to 11 year olds who have received a full primary course of vaccination. A parent or guardian can request the letter via NHS.UK or 119. The feasibility of a digital travel pass for this cohort is currently under review.

**■ Coronavirus: Care Homes****Zarah Sultana:**[\[977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of his policy to end free access to lateral flow tests for visiting people in care homes on (a) the distributional impact of the costs of such tests for those visiting loved ones and (b) the rates of covid-19 (i) infection, (ii) illness and (iii) death among care home residents; and whether the Government will consider revising this policy.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 17 May 2022]:* We keep the testing policies under review. Current data shows that rates of infection, illness and death among care home residents continue to decline. However, symptomatic testing continues to be available for those in social care settings. While the guidance no longer requires most visitors to test before entering care settings in England, for those who wish to do so a range of tests are available from providers such as high street pharmacies at various price points. For those residents who require support with personal care, these visitors should test in line with the Government's guidance for care staff using free lateral flow device tests provided by the care setting.

**■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing****Mr Steve Baker:**[\[R\] \[5393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the purpose is of the UK Health Security Agency's contact tracing contract with SERCO, entitled Provision of Contact Centre Services for The Single Service Centre SERCO Contract, beginning 16 February 2022 for £211,876,932.

**Maggie Throup:**

The purpose of the contract is to provide positive case tracing, contact tracing, isolation follow-up, international translation services, surge capacity for test enquiries and bookings and Tier 1 119 services. The supplier may be requested to undertake additional services if required.

**■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Daisy Cooper:**[\[6916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the equality impact assessment relating to the guidance published on 21 February 2022, entitled COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Cabinet Office has advised that the Government is unable to provide the information requested as it relates to the formulation of Government policy. Release of this material would undermine the principle of collective agreement and the ability of Ministers to debate policy in a confidential manner.

**■ Coronavirus: Immunosuppression****Chris Green:**[\[4603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of how many immunocompromised individuals of (a) working age and (b) all ages are continuing to shield against covid-19; and whether he has made a recent assessment of the impact of shielding on (i) economic activity and (ii) social interactions.

**Maggie Throup:**

No specific estimate has been made. However, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently published 'Coronavirus and clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people in England: 4 April to 23 April 2022. Analysis of people previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) in England during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, including their behaviours and mental and physical well-being'.

This surveyed people previously considered to be CEV which includes but is not limited to those who are immunocompromised. This found that the proportion who were continuing to shield during April 2022 was 13%; 29% were in paid employment; 7% reported lost income due to shielding or isolating; and 20% reported continuing to work at home. While 5% said they were not receiving visitors, 37% said they were avoiding social gatherings as an additional measure.

**Chris Green:**[\[4605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many immunocompromised patients of (a) working age and (b) all ages did not receive their ordered antiviral courses within five days of first experiencing symptoms from covid-19, as recommended by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

**Maggie Throup:**

To date, 21,405 individuals in England have been prescribed an antiviral-based COVID-19 treatment under the clinical access policy for non-hospitalised patients at highest risk from infection due to a compromised immune response. Of these, 1,079 people of all ages and 800 aged 17 to 69 years old received an antiviral treatment more than five days from the date of recorded symptom onset. Under the policy, patients can be treated with the antiviral remdesivir within seven days of symptom onset.

## ■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

**Chris Green:** [\[4604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 antiviral courses have been administered to patients in a hospital setting since those courses became available.

**Maggie Throup:**

Between 5 July 2020 and 15 May 2022, 635 courses of Paxlovid and 55,523 courses of remdesivir were administered to hospitalised patients and those with hospital-onset COVID-19 in England.

**Anne Marie Morris:** [\[6774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of decision not to offer antiviral medication to patients with severe learning disabilities or brain damage and currently excluded from the list of those at highest risk from covid-19.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The current clinical access policy for COVID-19 antiviral treatments provides direct access to patients at high risk due to a weakened immune system. Patients with learning difficulties or brain damage were not identified as eligible on these grounds and it is currently unclear what the benefits would be for this group of patients.

The PANORAMIC study is currently recruiting patients for antiviral therapy in the community with a wider eligibility criteria. This study will inform future policy determining which patients would be most suitable for antiviral therapy in the community, including possible expansion of the existing eligible groups.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Anne Marie Morris:** [\[6775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings by the JCVI that people on the Learning Disabilities Register are at increased risk of mortality from covid-19, if he will request a reassessment of this group's eligibility for a fourth vaccine dose.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 21 February 2022, the Government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to offer an additional spring booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine to those most vulnerable in the population as a precautionary measure. At that time, the JCVI did not recommend a further dose for those with learning disabilities, unless they were included in an existing eligible cohort.

On 19 May 2022, the 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, including people with learning disabilities before autumn 2022. The Government will consider the JCVI's final recommendations later this year.

## ■ Dementia: Diagnosis

**Virginia Crosbie:**

[\[6963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve levels of dementia diagnoses in rural areas.

**Gillian Keegan:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' Dementia Intelligence Network to investigate the underlying variation in dementia diagnosis rates in specific areas in England. This will include a focus on social and economic deprivation; rurality; demographic characteristics including age, ethnicity and educational attainment; and general health and life expectancy.

In 2021, factsheets were published to encourage local conversations to understand patterns and potential reasons for any trends in dementia diagnosis rates and identifying specific areas for support. In 2021/22, we also provided £17 million to clinical commissioning groups to address the needs of those waiting for diagnosis and those who have a diagnosis but are unable to access support services due to the pandemic. We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year, which will include a focus on dementia diagnosis.

## ■ Dialysis Machines

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[2656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve awareness among patients receiving haemodialysis treatment at home of their right to receive a reimbursement for the energy costs induced by their treatment.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 19 May 2022]:* The Department expects providers of home haemodialysis services to inform patients of the National Health Service-funded financial support available to help with increased direct energy costs. For adult home haemodialysis, patients' additional utility costs are met through the payment of the national tariff to the provider, which reimburses the patient.

NHS England is communicating with all commissioned providers of home dialysis and renal clinical networks to reiterate the existing reimbursement arrangements and ensure that providers alert eligible patients. NHS England will also work with Kidney Care UK and other national charities to promote awareness of reimbursement arrangements.

**■ Food: Labelling****Anthony Browne:** [\[6939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to extend the obligation to provide calorie labelling on menus to catering venues with fewer than 250 employees.

**Maggie Throup:**

Regulations on out-of-home calorie labelling for out of home food sold in large businesses of 250 or more employees, including restaurants, cafes and takeaways, came into force on 6 April 2022. We committed to review the policy within five years and will consider whether to extend the requirement to smaller businesses. We encourage smaller businesses to voluntarily comply with the calorie labelling requirements.

**■ Genito-urinary Medicine****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[6911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of sexual health clinics in England (a) continued and (b) ceased offering face-to-face testing during the covid-19 outbreak; and of those that ceased offering face-to-face testing, how many and what proportion have restored that service as of 23 May 2022.

**Maggie Throup:**

The information is not held in the format requested. However, of the 3,482,700 consultations at sexual health services in England in 2020, 62% were delivered face-to-face, 30% online and 8% via the telephone.

**■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Waiting Lists****Catherine West:** [\[6856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for sexual health clinics in London.

**Maggie Throup:**

Local authorities in London are responsible for monitoring and taking action, if required, to reduce waiting times for sexual health services. The Government has mandated local authorities to commission comprehensive open access sexual health and reproductive health services through the Public Health Grant to meet the needs of the local population.

**■ Health: Disadvantaged****Dan Carden:** [\[6889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit to taking cross-Government action on the social determinants of health in the Health Disparities White Paper.

**Maggie Throup:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Arfon (Hywel Williams) on 23 May 2022 to Question [PQ4490](#).

**■ Healthy Start Scheme****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[5368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many households previously in receipt of Healthy Start vouchers had not migrated to cards by the end of March 2022 and are therefore no longer in receipt of their entitlement despite still being eligible for the Healthy Start scheme.

**Maggie Throup:**

As of 31 March 2022, when the Healthy Start voucher scheme ended, the number of households who had previously received paper vouchers and had not successfully applied for the prepaid card scheme was estimated to be approximately 67,000.

People who have previously received paper vouchers have since continued to apply for the prepaid card scheme.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[5369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the total sum owed to Healthy Start recipients in backdated payments as a result of complications in their migration from vouchers to cards.

**Maggie Throup:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

**■ Human Papillomavirus: Males****Justin Madders:**[\[1196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 27 April 2022 to Question 155796 on Human Papillomavirus: Males, what the HPV rates are for men aged 16 to 45 years old according to information obtained by the UK Health Security Agency's surveillance of the prevalence of human papillomavirus infections.

**Maggie Throup:**

Surveillance in this cohort, which does not include heterosexual males, is ongoing, therefore the information requested is not yet held centrally. The UK Health Security Agency anticipates that this data will be available in 2023.

**■ Leukaemia: Health Services****Catherine West:**[\[3688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that strategic documents related to cancer are suitable for chronic lymphocytic leukaemia patients on active monitoring, whose needs are different from those undergoing treatment.

**Catherine West:** [\[3689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to help ensure that leukaemia patients have equal access to a clinical nurse specialist from the point of diagnosis to enable chronic lymphocytic leukaemia patients on active monitoring to receive tailored support.

**Catherine West:** [\[3690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to help improve the mental wellbeing of people with chronic lymphocytic leukaemia who are being actively monitored and are not receiving treatment.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Officials are analysing the responses received to the call for evidence to develop the 10 Year Cancer Plan. The Plan will set out how we will improve cancer services and further details will be available in due course.

The NHS Long Term Plan stated that by 2021, where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer will have access to personalised care, including needs assessment, a care plan and health and wellbeing information and support. NHS England and NHS Improvement are ensuring every patient has access to a clinical nurse specialist (CNS). In 2021/22, Health Education England invested an additional £52 million to develop the cancer and diagnostics workforce, including providing training opportunities to 754 existing and aspiring CNS. The 2019 Cancer Patient Experience Survey found that 89% of approximately 10,000 respondents with haematological cancers reported that they received a named CNS to support them through their treatment.

Data from Cancer Alliances in March 2021 showed that approximately 83% of all cancer multi-disciplinary teams had implemented personalised care and support planning based on holistic needs assessments. In addition, Cancer Alliances have been asked to review mental health provision as part of the 2022/23 planning guidance. NHS England and NHS Improvement are also supporting adults experiencing cancer through Improving Access to Psychological Therapies mental health services.

**■ Long Covid: South East****Rosie Duffield:** [\[6879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support and resources are being made available to NHS Trusts in the South East for patients diagnosed with long covid.

**Rosie Duffield:** [\[6880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for a patient to be diagnosed with long covid within NHS Trusts in the South East.



**Maria Caulfield:**

Since November 2020, NHS England has invested £224 million for the treatment of people experiencing the long term effects of COVID-19. The South East has received approximately £25 million and 13 adult Post-COVID-19 clinics and two specialist paediatric hubs for children and young people have been established. NHS England's South East regional team, also provides dedicated regional clinical leadership and resources to improve the quality and sustainability of these services.

Information on average waiting times is not held in the format requested. While information on activity and demographics of patients who have been referred to a post-COVID-19 assessment service in England has been collected since September 2021, the average waiting time for treatment following an initial specialist assessment is not held centrally.

**■ Mental Health: Young People****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[6740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to fund research into the impact of social media on young people's mental health.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) supports a portfolio of mental health research through various funding streams. In 2020/21, the NIHR's expenditure on mental health research was £109.5 million. The NIHR has funded a systematic review to explore the relationship between social media and other online content, body image and disordered eating in children and young people. While it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions, the NIHR's funding is available through open competition and we encourage researchers to submit applications in this area.

**■ Monkeypox: Scotland****John Lamont:**[\[6870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assistance his Department is providing to Public Health Scotland on the outbreak of monkeypox.

**Maggie Throup:**

Experts from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) are working with Public Health Scotland to provide support in managing the case recently identified. The UKHSA is working with public health agencies in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland to provide the latest scientific, clinical and public health advice on the management of cases and coordinate the response across the United Kingdom.

## ■ NHS: Medical Records

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[2512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made to (a) harness the potential of NHS health data for research purposes and (b) improve the interoperability of existing data sets.

**Gillian Keegan:**

On 2 March 2022, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced a joint investment of £200 million in data infrastructure for research and development. Over the next three years, this will create a National Health Service-wide health data research and innovation infrastructure which enhances care and sustains the health and care system. This includes making data available to approved researchers in a streamlined and secure way which protects privacy through an interoperable system of Trusted Research Environments. NHS Digital is working with suppliers to ensure that systems across health and care are interoperable.

Through the NHS Standard Contract, NHS Digital is ensuring a common 'language' to identify citizens, care settings and the treatments provided. All data collected nationally and made available to research receives rigorous design to ensure it aligns to the standards in the Contract. The information standard for each dataset is incorporated into the requirements definition mandated on health and care providers.

## ■ NHS: Midwives

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[6935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the recruitment and retention of midwives in the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

We have invested £127 million to increase staffing in maternity and neonatal services. Of this, £34 million will be allocated to strengthen leadership and implement Independent Senior Advocates and £51 million allocated to the maternity and neonatal workforce over two years to reduce vacancies. This is in addition to £95 million to support the recruitment of 1,200 more midwives and 100 more consultant obstetricians. Approximately £8 million has been provided to enable supernumerary capacity across 157 units, with a focus on support to newly qualified, student and late career midwives.

The NHS People Plan includes a programme for organisations to retain staff through prioritising staff health and wellbeing, building an inclusive and compassionate culture in the National Health Service and strengthening support for flexible working. The People Plan is supported by the NHS Retention Programme, which seeks to understand why staff leave, resulting in targeted interventions to support staff to stay whilst keeping them well.

## ■ Pharmacy

**Taiwo Owatemi:**

[\[6933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, published in April 2022, on pressures on the operation of community pharmacies.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No assessment has been made. The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 sets out the ambition for community pharmacy to be further integrated into the National Health Service, making better use of the clinical skills of pharmacists, provide more clinical services and provide treatment for minor illnesses. Negotiations with the Pharmaceutical Service Negotiating Committee on what community pharmacy will deliver in 2022/23 are ongoing and includes discussion on pressures on community pharmacies.

## ■ Podiatry: Training

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[6936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to introduce a bursary for podiatry students of £9,000 a year.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We have no plans to do so. Since September 2020, all eligible allied health profession students can apply for a non-repayable training grant of a minimum of £5,000 per academic year, with further financial support of £2,000 per academic year available for childcare, accommodation and travel costs. Podiatry students are also eligible for the Specialist Subject Payment of £1,000 per academic year.

## ■ Walking

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[6770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to introduce a campaign to help encourage people to walk 10,000 steps per day.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Government will set out future ambitions to promote physical activity and sport in the Sport Strategy, which will be published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in summer 2022. This may include opportunities such as promoting walking 10,000 steps per day and other initiatives. The Strategy will enable improvements in equity of access to and participation in physical activity and sport to improve health and reduce disparities. This will include workplace and active travel initiatives.

The Department of Health and Social Care's Better Health social marketing campaign will continue to provide digital resources, including those linked to walking/running

particular distances such as 'Couch to 5K' and 'Active 10' and signpost adults to local opportunities.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Asylum: Rwanda

**Janet Daby:** [4691]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has conducted an environmental impact assessment of her proposed Rwanda immigration plan.

**Janet Daby:** [4692]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the financial effect on the public purse of her proposed Rwanda immigration plan.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The UK remains committed to honouring its obligations on climate change, including those contained in the Glasgow Climate Pact. This is unaffected by bilateral agreements signed by the UK, such as the one recently agreed with the Government of Rwanda. We continue to work closely with the Government of Rwanda on climate issues, including ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in June.

The UK is funding the processing costs for each individual who is relocated to Rwanda. Every person's needs are different, but we anticipate the amount would be comparable to processing costs incurred in the UK.

As this is a long-term partnership over five years, payments will depend on the outcomes delivered including the number of people relocated. Funding is only provided while a person remains in Rwanda.

**Angela Crawley:** [5437]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of public opinion towards the Rwanda Asylum Agreement.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Last year the Government launched an extensive and wide-reaching public consultation with stakeholders, relevant sectors and members of the public, including those with lived experiences, to inform the New Plan for Immigration. The findings from the [consultation](#) were carefully considered and the Government response was published on 22 July 2021.

A [YouGov poll](#) carried out last year found the majority of people (64%) thought the Government's 'New Plan for Immigration' policies are fair and many agree that how someone enters the country should be taken into account in their asylum application.

Our Nationality and Borders Act has received Royal Assent last month and at the heart of this approach is fairness. The Act allows us to put in provisions to deter illegal entry to the UK, remove those with no right to be in the UK, and make the system more effective so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.

YouGov conducted an independent poll on 14 April, the day that the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda was announced. The question posed was as follows:

*The Government has proposed a deal where some people who have entered Britain and applied for asylum will be flown to Rwanda, in Africa, for their asylum applications to be processed. Do you support or oppose this proposal?*

This snap poll indicated that 35% of the public supported the partnership, 42% opposed it, and a further 23% were unsure.

Source: YouGov poll of 2943 GB adults on 14 April 2022.

**Michael Fabricant:**

**[7893]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Rwanda policy for asylum seekers, whether the Government provides funding to Care4Calais; what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the recent comments made by Care4Calais on her Rwanda policy for asylum seekers; and if she will make a statement.

**Tom Pursglove:**

There is no record of Care4Calais as a grant recipient for the Home Office.

There is a global migration crisis, and we must look to new world leading solutions to tackle this issue. We are fully committed to the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda. It fully complies with international and national law and we will defend it robustly.

## ■ Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

**[6908]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many women detained in Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre have been deported as of 23 May 2022.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Home Office publishes statistics on immigration detention in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release \(opens in a new tab\)](#)'. This includes data on people:

- Entering detention by initial place of detention in table Det\_02a of the '[Detention summary tables \(opens in a new tab\)](#)'.
- Leaving detention by last place of detention published in table Det\_04c of the '[Detention summary tables \(opens in a new tab\)](#)' and by reason for leaving detention in table Det\_D03 of the '[detention detailed datasets \(opens in a new tab\)](#)'.

- In detention by current place of detention in table Det\_03a of the ‘ [Detention summary tables \(opens in a new tab\)](#) ’.

Data on those entering detention, by place of detention, relate to the place of initial detention. An individual who moves from one part of the detention estate to another will not be counted as entering any subsequent place of detention. Last place of detention does not show where an individual spent their time in detention. In some cases, an individual may have spent a period of time detained elsewhere before being moved to their last place of detention.

## ■ Hillsborough Families' Experiences Review

**Steve Reed:** [\[6779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has provided a full response to Bishop's review of Hillsborough families' experiences.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office is coordinating the Government's overarching response to the Bishop's report and has been working closely with its partners in the relevant government departments and organisations to carefully consider all of the points of learning in it.

It is important that the Hillsborough families are given the opportunity to share their views on the Government's proposed response and we hope to be in a position to conduct that engagement and publish a full response soon.

## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

**Greg Clark:** [\[3532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to sponsor Ukrainian refugees have been made under the Homes for Ukraine scheme to date in each parliamentary constituency.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 25 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> )

**Greg Clark:** [\[3533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visas have been issued under the Homes for Ukraine scheme to date in each parliamentary constituency.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 25 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> )

**Catherine West:**

**[3696]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of Ukrainians who have received their Homes for Ukraine Scheme visas since the launch of the scheme have arrived in the UK.

**Kevin Foster:**

Information on the number of visas granted under the Ukrainian Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, divided by each local authority can be found in published data on the GOV.UK webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-for-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-numbers-of-visa-applications>)

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

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

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

**Catherine West:**

**[3700]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department uses prioritisation criteria to determine urgency within the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

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>)

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to the process can mean applicants who submitted their applications at the same time, but via different biometric routes, may not receive their visas at the same time.

### ■ Migrant Workers: Schools

**Catherine West:** [\[3692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will remove visa costs for EU citizens who are planning to work as language assistants in UK schools.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 25 May 2022]:* We do not have any plans to waive visa application fees for language assistants who are looking to use the Points Based System to work in UK schools.

Fees provide a vital contribution towards the provision of the resources necessary to operate and sustain our borders and immigration system. This reduces reliance on taxpayer funding, while ensuring the costs of the system are met. It would be unfair to the taxpayer and other users of the immigration system if we were to exempt EU citizens seeking work as language assistants given our migration system is now a global one, not one determined by whether you hold an EEA or non-EEA passport

### ■ Offenders: Deportation

**Mr Peter Bone:** [\[6734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral statement of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department on 18 May 2022, on Foreign National Offender Removal Flights, Official Report, column 687, in respect of each of the 112 individuals originally included on the flight manifest, whether each of those individuals were on the flight when it departed; what criminal convictions each of those individuals had; and for what reasons certain individuals did not depart on that flight.

**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 national offenders (FNOs) who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them.

We do not comment on individual cases. However, convicted criminals guilty of heinous crimes, including manslaughter, rape, robbery, child sex offences, drug offences and violent crime, and persistent offenders, were not deported on 18 May 2022. These are extremely serious offences which have a real and lasting impact on victims and communities.

All those returned are provided with the opportunity to raise claims prior to their removal. But where representations are made at the last minute, despite the offender having ample opportunity to raise these at an earlier stage, and the claim cannot be resolved in time for the flight's departure, it can act as a barrier to removal.



We are doing everything possible to reduce legal challenges and to increase the numbers of FNOs being removed. Our New Plan for Immigration, underpinned by the Nationality and Borders Act, is the first major reform of the system in decades and will end the merry-go-round of last-minute legal challenges that stop us removing those with no right to be in the country.

The Government is committed to removing FNOs with no legal basis to be here and since January 2019 we have returned over 10,000 people from the UK.

## ■ Passports

**Fay Jones:** [\[2651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve accessibility of the Passport Office for people seeking to renew passports.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 24 May 2022]:* Ahead of unrestricted international travel returning, HM Passport Office prepared extensively to serve an unprecedented number of customers, with 9.5 million British passport applications forecasted throughout 2022.

These preparations, which include the recruitment of 500 additional staff since April 2021 and with plans in place to recruit a further 700 by this summer, have ensured that passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved a record monthly high by completing 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.

## ■ Passports: Applications

**Chris Bryant:** [\[4512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to improve the time taken to process passport applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 24 May 2022]:* Ahead of unrestricted international travel returning, HM Passport Office prepared extensively to serve an unprecedented number of customers, with 9.5 million British passport applications forecasted throughout 2022.

These preparations have ensured that passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved a record monthly high by completing 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.

**Amy Callaghan:**[\[4697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress her Department has made on clearing the backlog of passport applications; and whether she plans to make additional staff available to HM Passport Office to speed up processing times.

**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 that passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved a record monthly high by completing 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.

■ **Police: Havering****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[3503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Havering-funded police officers under Section 92 are ever asked to perform policing activities in other parts of London, or whether they are exclusively stationed in Havering.

**Kit Malthouse:**

*[Holding answer 25 May 2022]:* The Home Office does not make routine operational decisions about the deployment of police officers.

It is for Chief Constables and directly elected PCCs, and Mayors with PCC functions to make operational decisions including how to allocate resource based on their local knowledge and experience.

■ **Rape: Prosecutions****Ellie Reeves:**[\[4662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the findings of Operation Soteria will be published.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Operation Soteria is a joint police-Crown Prosecution Service programme designed to drive improvements in the handling of rape cases. The policing elements are being funded by the Home Office to build a new national operating model for the investigation of rape.

The findings from the research in pathfinder police forces are shared with police and prosecutors nationally as soon as they are available, including through a National Rape and Sexual Offences Learning Network. The most recent national learning event took place on the 29 March and was attended by over approximately 180 individuals from across 39 police forces.

Findings from the research will be published in the Autumn, when the first phase of the programme is complete. In the interim, an update on progress will be provided in the next Rape Review Progress Update which will be published shortly and be available on GOV.uk.

### ■ Seasonal Workers: Ukraine

**Stephen Farry:**

[3778]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that Ukrainian seasonal workers are (a) aware of and (b) able to apply to the Visa Extension Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 25 May 2022]:* The Government works closely with the four scheme operators who have disseminated this information to the organisations and migrants who they work with.

Information concerning visa extensions for Ukrainian nationals is available on the government website and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukrainian-nationals-in-the-uk-visa-support>

### ■ Sexual Harassment: Public Places

**Munira Wilson:**

[4701]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy paper published on 21 July 2021, what progress her Department has made on assessing the merits of introducing a new specific offence for public sexual harassment.

**Rachel Maclean:**

This Government is committed to taking action to address this issue, and as a result of the work we have been doing, in March we announced that we will launch a public consultation by the summer recess on whether there should be a new offence of public sexual harassment.

We are also taking several non-legislative actions. In September 2021 we launched the pilot of the new StreetSafe tool, which allows people to show on a map places where they have felt unsafe, enabling the police to take action to improve safety. More than 15,000 reports have been submitted to date.

Last December, the College of Policing published new guidance for police showing what they can do when they receive a report of public sexual harassment, including the criminal offences available and other protective tools which can be used.

Furthermore, the Home Office launched the 'Enough' communications campaign in March, which challenges public attitudes and tolerance towards crimes such as public sexual harassment and aims to ensure victims know how and where to report it.

## ■ Visas: Colombia

**Christian Matheson:** [\[3629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has plans to introduce visa-free travel to the UK for Colombian passport holders.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 25 May 2022]:* The UK keeps its visa system under regular review. Decisions on changes reflect a range of factors. These will vary globally, but often include security, compliance, returns and prosperity.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### ■ House of Commons Library

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[4720\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the potential merits of taking steps to decolonise the Library of the House of Commons.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[4721\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the Commission plans to take steps in response to discussions on the potential merits of decolonising the House of Commons Library.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

The Commission has not made any assessment of the work the House of Commons Library has been undertaking to review and increase the diversity of its collection.

The Library reports that this work has been underway since August 2020 and involves activities intended to ensure the collection contains a wide range of perspectives which are representative of Britain past and present. These include updating acquisition and deselection policies to include equality, diversity and inclusion considerations; changing practice to widen the range of publishers and institutions from which material is selected; acquiring material to increase coverage of issues relating to racism; modernising the language and concepts used in the Library's classification scheme; and providing training for Library and committee staff on increasing the diversity of the sources used in research.

The process has involved exchanging experience with universities engaged in decolonising their curricula and collections. However, this is not an approach which the House of Commons Library has adopted: the Library is actively increasing the diversity of its collection rather than decolonising it.

The focus of the Library's collection policy remains to build and maintain a specialist collection on Parliament and devolved legislatures, the history of UK and Ireland, and politics and government to support the work of Members, Library research teams and the House Service. It has developed a clear statement on its commitment to impartiality and the provision of a wide range of perspectives as part of this.

The Commission has no plans to take steps in response to the Library's work in this area.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[5518\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the potential disadvantages of taking steps to decolonise the Library of the House of Commons.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[5519\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the potential impact of the decolonisation of the House of Commons Library on the representation of Parliament's history.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

The Commission has not carried out an assessment of potential disadvantages of taking steps to decolonise the Library of the House of Commons. It notes that the Library has been undertaking work to review and increase the diversity of its collection since August 2020 and that while it has engaged in knowledge exchange with institutions in the academic sector that are seeking to decolonise their curricula and library collections, it has not adopted this as an approach to its own work.

The Commission has not carried out an assessment of the potential impact of decolonisation of the Library on the representation of Parliament's history. However, it understands that the Library's work on the diversity of its collection is guided by the framework set out in its Collection Development Policy which identifies the criteria used for acquisition, retention and deselection of material. The purpose of the work is to ensure the collection contains a wide range of perspectives which are representative of Britain past and present. It has not changed the core focus of the collection on Parliament and devolved legislatures, the history of UK and Ireland, politics and government or its commitment to curate this as an enduring collection of national importance. It also has a clear commitment to impartiality in its work.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Overseas Trade: Minerals

**Cherilyn Mackrory:** [\[6909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which nations her Department has held discussions with on critical minerals.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

A secure supply of critical minerals is vital to achieving our net zero ambitions. We work with our international partners to strengthen all critical supply chains as we seek to improve our national security and economic resilience. We have committed to publishing a Critical Minerals Strategy in 2022, which will set out how we can work internationally to secure the sustainability of Britain's supply. In advance of that strategy, we are engaging with our international partners, and in multilateral fora, to build resilient and sustainable critical mineral supply chains.

**Trade Agreements****Gareth Thomas:**[\[5315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of trade agreements signed since January 2019 on (a) the economy, (b) each employment sector and (c) each of the UK regions in the next five years; and if she will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:**[\[5316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of trade agreements (a) signed since January 2019 and (b) targeted for agreement in the next five years on (i) the economy, (ii) each employment sector and (iii) each of the UK regions in the next five years; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Our published economic assessments set out the potential long-run impacts of new free trade agreements (FTAs) on the United Kingdom's GDP, sectors, and employment, as well as the potential implications for all corners of the country.

Since January 2019, the department has published scoping assessments for potential new agreements with the US, Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and India and impact assessments at signature for FTAs with Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

**Trade Agreements: USA****Ruth Cadbury:**[\[5412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with which individual states of the United States her Department is negotiating memoranda of understanding as of 19 May 2022.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

*[Holding answer 24 May 2022]:* The UK Government engages regularly with states across the US, to identify the best approach to strengthening our economic relationships.

MoUs are one of a range of mechanisms to achieve this. We are therefore hoping to sign a number of MOUs by the end of the year. Our first will be with Indiana.

We will be making announcements in due course according to the pipeline of MOUs underway.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Atheism: Human Rights

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[4638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the proposed reforms to sections (a) 3 and (b) 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 on the human rights of people who are non-religious.

**James Cartlidge:**

With our proposed changes to section 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), we aim to make sure the balance between our domestic institutions is right, by ensuring that UK courts can no longer interpret legislation contrary to Parliament's intent.

Our proposed changes to section 6 of the HRA will ensure that those delivering vital public services can do so without the constant threat of having to defend against trivial human rights claims.

Humanist marriage is very much on my department's radar. In 2014, the Government published a consultation paper and response assessing the potential merits of provision for non-religious belief marriages. This concluded that the matter was complex, and that by allowing Humanists to solemnise marriages in unrestricted locations, the Government would create a provision for Humanists that would not be available to all groups.

To ensure we are considering the implications of changing the law on marriage fairly for all groups, we invited the Law Commission to undertake a review which is currently underway and is expected to report in July of this year. By looking at the law comprehensively, the Law Commission will seek to put forward proposals that would ensure that, insofar as possible, groups and couples are all subject to the same rules and the same level of regulation.

Following the Law Commission report, we will take the time to consider any proposed changes to marriage laws thoroughly, including how non-religious belief organisations (such as Humanists) and/or independent celebrants could conduct legally binding weddings. Any change to legislation would then take place when parliamentary time allows.

### ■ Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre

**Steve Reed:**

[\[6780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department will reopen Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The department is still considering the future of the site of Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre.

■ **Reoffenders**

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[5484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the re-offending rates were in those (a) that have re-offended after 2 years of release, (b) that have re-offended after 5 years of release, and (c) who have re-offended after 9 years of release the most recent period after January 2010.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The answer can only be provided at disproportionate cost as it would require data matching across separate systems.

■ **Roads: Accidents**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[5346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to ensure that road crash victims and their families receive adequate compensation and support following a successful defence of automatism.

**James Cartlidge:**

Automatism is a lawful defence in both civil and criminal cases and, where no agreement on liability and compensation for those injured in a road crash can be reached between a claimant and defendant, the courts will decide each case on its merits. Therefore, the Government currently has no plans to make changes in this area.

■ **Southern Water: Fines**

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[6890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much Southern Water has paid of the £90 million fine issued in July 2021; and how his Department is using the funds received.

**James Cartlidge:**

HMCTS does not comment on the payment status of individual cases. Under s5.8 of the Criminal Procedures Rules 2015 we are only permitted to provide the outcome of the case. Receipts from fines are, by statute, due to HM Treasury. However, under the current spending review the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is permitted to retain all such receipts subject to an income cap to fund the running of the department. Receipts received in excess of the cap are paid to HM Treasury.



## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### ■ Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

**Andrea Leadsom:**

[\[6753\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the House will be able to review the proposed changes to Parliament's restoration and renewal programme.

**Mark Spencer:**

Work is continuing, at the direction of the House Commissions, on preparing for changes to the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) Programme. An independent assurance panel has provided advice which will inform the Commissions' deliberations and recommendations. The two Houses will then be asked to consider a revised mandate for the works and changes to the sponsorship function. The debates are currently planned to take place before the summer recess.

R&R is a Parliamentary programme and the responsibility of Parliament. As any change will ultimately be a matter for the two Houses, I am committed to ensuring that Members are able to make informed decisions and review the proposed changes before making a decision.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Affordable Housing: Construction

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[6748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2022 to Question 2468 on Social Rented Housing: Construction, what the economic conditions are that will need to be met for the Affordable Homes Programme to meet its target of 180,000 new homes; and whether the Government is on track to meet those economic conditions in the next two years.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government is committed to working with our delivery partners, Homes England and the Greater London Authority, to deliver as many affordable homes as possible through our Affordable Homes Programme (AHP). We work with those partners to keep economic and other factors that could affect home building capacity under close review.

In August 2021 we announced that we would commit £8.6 billion of the £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme for 2021-2026 to strategic partners who had bid into the programme to deliver 119,000 affordable homes. Bids are still in progress for the remainder of the Affordable Homes Programme funding.

**■ Building Safety Fund: Tooting****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[4659]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the reasons for which Fitzgerald House is yet to receive funding from the Building Safety Fund, despite the original registration having been submitted in July 2020.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Fitzgerald House has applied to the Building Safety Fund and has been awarded pre tender support funding to support the applicant to undertake the design, specification and tendering required to start the remediation of the unsafe cladding on the building. Fitzgerald House has applied to the Building Safety Fund and has been awarded pre tender support funding to support the applicant to undertake the design, specification and tendering required to start the remediation of the unsafe cladding on the building. The Department expects to award further funding for the project once the applicant submits a full application which meets fund requirements.

**■ Faith New Deal Pilot Fund****Anthony Mangnall:****[5491]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to allocate funding from the Faith New Deal Pilot Fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The £1 million Faith New Deal Pilot Fund focuses on strengthening engagement between national government, local government and faith groups. The fund was formally launched on 9 September 2021 and bids closed on 14 October 2021.

We received a large number of applications for the fund and officials are in the final stages of the assessment and moderation process. The results and subsequent funding allocations will be announced in due course. I encourage applicants to monitor the Government's web pages for further updates:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities>.

**■ Flats: Repairs and Maintenance****Dr Julian Lewis:****[R] [6662]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Answer of 6 December 2021 to Question 85168 on Flats: Construction, what safeguards have been put in place to ensure that leaseholders do not have to pay for remedial works to apartment blocks caused by (a) faulty design and workmanship by contractors and (b) inadequate supervision by freeholders; whether he plans to introduce additional safeguards for leaseholders; if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies on liability for remedial works of the use of ad hoc limited companies by contractors and freeholders to (i) carry out works and (ii) nominally take over ownership of such blocks after the completion of remedial work; and if he will make it his policy to

require planning authorities that permit the construction of additional storeys to existing apartment blocks to conduct annual surveys on the (A) frequency of defective outcomes and (B) implications for existing leaseholders for their (1) costs, (2) property values and (3) quality of life.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The landmark Building Safety Act 2022 delivers robust and far-reaching protections for leaseholders in buildings above 11 metres in height or with at least five storeys from the costs associated with historical building safety defects. A leaseholder qualifies for the protections if, on 14 February 2022, the property was their principal home, or if they owned up to three UK properties in total.

The Act protects qualifying leaseholders from all costs related to the remediation of unsafe cladding and the costs for remediation of non-cladding defects and interim measures like waking watches are subject to a firm cap. Once the leaseholder caps have been reached, landlords will be unable to demand further non-cladding costs from leaseholders. Qualifying leaseholders will be protected from costs associated with both shoddy workmanship and faulty design: the protections safeguard against costs associated with any defect that has arisen in the past 30 years because of anything done or not done, or anything used or not used in connection with works to the building that also causes a building safety risk. This includes defects associated with the provision of professional services, for example those of an architect.

The Act ensures that corporate structures cannot be used to evade liability for building safety defects. Freeholders with links to the building's original developer, such as where the freeholder is a subsidiary of the developer, will need to meet remediation costs for their buildings in full. As the Act looks at the situation on 14 February 2022, any future buyer of the freehold will assume the same liabilities of the previous freeholder; as such, freeholders will not be able to simply sell off their buildings to evade liability. The Act also grants a power to the High Court allowing them to extend specific liabilities for one company to associated companies, removing the protection afforded to developers and contractors by special purpose vehicles.

All development, whether allowed through a permitted development right or an application for planning permission, must meet building regulations including fire and other building safety requirements. The Government has no plans at present to review the permitted development rights for building upwards.

■ **Homes for Ukraine Scheme**

**Kate Green:**

[R] [\[6757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when additional guidance on rematching when hosting arrangements break down under the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be issued to local authorities.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Guidance has been published at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils).

■ **Members: Correspondence****Robert Largan:****[5510]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he will respond to the correspondence of 7 March 2022 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL35178.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

A response to my Hon Friend's correspondence will be issued shortly.

■ **Resettlement: Hong Kong****Charlotte Nichols:****[4706]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to renew funding to support the integration of Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa holders after the 31 April 2022; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government remains committed to providing support to Hong Kong British National (Overseas) [BN(O)] status holders arriving from Hong Kong to settle successfully in the UK.

DLUHC continues to support the implementation of the UK-wide Hong Kong Welcome Programme to help BN(O) status holders and their families settle in the UK.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Active Travel England****Rachael Maskell:****[4623]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when Active Travel England will present its strategy to the Government.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department for Transport is in the process of drawing up a Framework Document regarding the nature of its relationship with Active Travel England. This will require Active Travel England each year to seek the Department's approval for a business plan and strategy for achieving its key objectives. The first such business plan is likely to be shared with the Department later this financial year.

### ■ Battersea Park Station

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[6896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the planned upgrades to deliver accessible access at Battersea Park Station will begin.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Access for All project to provide a new step-free accessible route at Battersea Park station is currently undergoing detailed design. Onsite works are anticipated to commence in early 2024 and further updates will be provided in due course.

### ■ Carshalton Beeches Station

**Elliot Colburn:** [\[8191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had discussions with Govia Thameslink Railway on step free access for the southbound platform at Carshalton Beeches station.

**Wendy Morton:**

Carshalton Beeches station was nominated for Access for All funding in 2019 but was not selected as other stations in the region better met the selection criteria. The Department looks forward to receiving a further bid for Carshalton Beeches once the nomination process for the next round of the Access for All programme commences shortly.

### ■ Clean Air Zones

**Judith Cummins:** [\[4597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the fairness of Clean Air Zones which do not alert drivers when they have entered the zone prompting them to pay.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Steps are taken to notify non-compliant vehicle keepers about an upcoming CAZ, through sending out Early Notice letters. These letters are sent, before the CAZ is launched, to keepers of non-compliant vehicles to alert them that they will be subject to a charge. Local authorities can also offer a period of 'soft enforcement' after the CAZ is launched, in which motorists receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) but have a period in which they are only required to pay the CAZ charge.

### ■ Clean Air Zones: Infrastructure

**Judith Cummins:** [\[4596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government plans to establish a national clean air zone infrastructure scheme rather than various local ones.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We have developed a national Clean Air Zone (CAZ) infrastructure scheme through the 'Drive in a Clean Air Zone' service. This centralised service and IT infrastructure

ensures a consistent approach for users across Clean Air Zones. Certain matters, such as charges and local exemptions, are for LAs to determine and agree with Government. This is due to the highly localised nature of the pollution, where local knowledge is crucial in solving the problem.

## ■ Cycle to Work Scheme

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[6941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding his Department provides for small businesses on employer-led schemes that encourage staff to cycle or walk to work.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Last year the Department commissioned Business in the Community to produce best practice guidance for employers on how to enable more of their staff to cycle or walk to work. This is available at <https://www.bitc.org.uk/toolkit/active-travel-getting-people-back-to-work-safely/>.

In 2019 the Department also revised the guidance on the Cycle to Work scheme to make it simpler for employers to offer a salary sacrifice arrangement to their employees to hire cycles and cycle safety equipment or to hire a cycle to them under an employer loan scheme.

## ■ Cycling and Walking

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[4624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, following the institution of Active Travel England, what discussions he has had with representatives of local authorities on the expertise required to implement Gear Change and the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department agrees that local authorities need the capacity and capability to deliver the objectives set out in these ambitious strategies. Active Travel England will have a key role to play in supporting and upskilling local authority officers, and it has already started this process. It has, for example, held meetings with, and provided detailed feedback on scheme designs, to individual local authorities. It has also run events such as a major online workshop in April for local authority planners and transport officers, which was attended by over 400 officers from 120 local authorities. The Department has also been running a series of local authority training sessions, which will see over 1,000 officers receiving training on cycle infrastructure design.

## ■ Cycling and Walking: Rural Areas

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[4627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he will take to ensure that isolated communities can access to active travel initiatives.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department will continue to make active travel funding available to local transport authorities as part of its unprecedented £2 billion of investment in cycling and walking over the course of this Parliament. On 14 May, the Department announced £200 million of funding for new walking and cycling schemes across England in 46 local authorities as well as improvements to the National Cycle Network, many of which are in rural areas.

Decisions on which schemes to prioritise within their areas are matters for local authorities, and Active Travel England will work with them to help them make the case for investment. Active Travel England is also planning to produce guidance for local authorities shortly on how to support active travel in rural communities.

**■ Driving: Diabetes****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[4608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward proposals to ensure that the use of closed-loop insulin monitoring systems is taken into account when assessing whether a person with diabetes is fit to drive.

**Trudy Harrison:**

In January 2018, the law was changed to allow alternative methods of glucose monitoring to be accommodated for drivers of cars and motorcycles. This includes the use of closed-loop insulin monitoring systems, where a continuous glucose monitoring system (CGMS) monitors glucose levels. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is gathering evidence to consider if the use of CGMS systems can be extended to drivers of HGVs and buses.

**■ Freight: Fuels****Helen Morgan:**[\[1387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of rising fuel prices on the haulage industry.

**Trudy Harrison:**

I am working closely with Cabinet colleagues to consider support we can provide in these challenging times. My Rt Hon Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has recently announced a 12 month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre, representing a saving worth around £200 for the average van driver, and £1,500 for the average haulier. This is on top of fuel duty rates having been frozen for twelve consecutive years.

**■ High Speed 2 Line: Construction****Andrew Bridgen:**[\[5657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department is providing support to canal restoration projects that have been affected by the construction of HS2.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd works closely with the Canal and River Trust, and local canal groups, to mitigate impacts on the canal network and identify opportunities for improvements. Various canal projects have been supported by HS2 project funds and grants, as well as from donations provided by the HS2 supply chain. Projects have ranged from the supply of wood chippings to improve towpath surfacing, to larger schemes, such as the Trent Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase project which is supporting canal restoration works and improvements to the towpath network. HS2 Ltd is always keen to hear from those involved in local projects, including those aimed at improving community opportunities associated with the canal network.

**■ High Speed 2 Line: East Midlands****Andrew Bridgen:**[\[5656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects track designers to start developing the route for the new HS2 line between Birmingham and East Midlands Parkway.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Following a pause to design work on the HS2 Eastern Leg as a result of the Oakervee Review and during the development of the Integrated Rail Plan, the Department and HS2 Ltd are now considering how best to take HS2 East forward, working closely with Network Rail.

**■ P&O Ferries: Crew****Grahame Morris:**[\[6742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with representatives of P&O Ferries on securing the return of the personal belongings of the 800 seafarers who were dismissed in March 2022.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government is aware of reports that some seafarers formerly employed by P&O Ferries have not had their personal belongings returned. I am contacting the company to investigate. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) are willing to investigate any cases, and affected seafarers are encouraged to email the MCA at [exams@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:exams@mcga.gov.uk).

**■ Railways: Standards****Mr Gagan Mohindra:**[\[6940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure frequent and reliable transport is available and accessible to all rail commuters.

**Wendy Morton:**

As the pandemic is changing travel habits, operators are reassessing their services to ensure they provide rail timetables that meet new passenger travel patterns and carefully balance cost, capacity and performance. New timetables will be flexible



enough to deliver the right services where they are needed most, and operators will work with their local markets wherever possible to achieve this.

Our aim is to make all journeys accessible for all passengers. The Department has, extended the Access for All programme until 2024 at a cost of almost £400 million. So far, over 200 stations have benefitted from step-free accessible routes and over 1500 from smaller scale access improvements.

In addition, the Department continues to support initiatives, such as the Passenger Assist app, and is using the rail contracting process to make the network more accessible by introducing new requirements on train and station operators, such as the introduction of an enhanced disability awareness training for all customer-facing staff, and those with management responsibilities.

A new National Rail Accessibility Strategy is currently being developed by the Great British Railways Transition Team which will set out how we and the rail industry can work towards accessibility for all passengers.

## ■ River Thames

**Sarah Olney:** [\[6863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of London Port Authorities proposal to expand control over the Thames riverbank eastwards of Teddington Lock.

**Robert Courts:**

The proposed HRO for PLA does not seek to change PLAs limits beyond the existing boundary in that part of the river, and the limits will remain approximately 100 metres east of Teddington Lock at the boundary stone. The HRO includes proposed changes to PLA's jurisdiction including the removal areas of docks and clarifying the landward and seaward limits of their jurisdiction by reference to coordinates. Some areas of land are proposed to be included, however this is not an extensive area. This HRO has been subject to wide consultation that ended on 12 October 2021. The MMO and PLA are considering the responses to that consultation. The Department is engaged with both parties on the content of the final HRO.

## ■ Roads: Bitumens

**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[6693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the proportion of road surfacing carried out on (a) national roads in England and (b) local roads in England which incorporates warm mix asphalt; and whether steps are being taken to increase the use of warm mix asphalt.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Warm mix asphalt is National Highways preferred choice of asphalt for all its road schemes and it is accelerating its use as standard across its supply chain as part of a drive toward net zero carbon emissions. More information can be found on National

Highways' website on Net zero highways:

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/netzerohighways/>.

For local roads, it is for each individual local highway authority to assess which parts of its network need repair and what standards and materials, including warm-mix asphalts, should be applied, based upon their local knowledge and circumstances.

## ■ Roads: Standards

**Rachael Maskell:**

[5441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department expects unadopted roads to be maintained to a certain standard; and whether local authorities can be required to adopt those roads in the event that they fail to reach that standard.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The responsibility for the management of unadopted roads rests with the owner, or more usually the frontagers, those who own property that fronts, or abuts, the road concerned. Neither the Government nor the local highway authority has any obligation over works on unadopted roads.

Statutory provision does exist for unadopted roads to be adopted and thus become highways maintainable at public expense. This requires a formal adoption by a resolution of the local authority. It is typically the case that any local highway authority considering adopting a road will require that it is elevated to an acceptable standard before doing so.

## ■ Shipping: Conditions of Employment

**Louise Haigh:**

[5458]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to paragraph 2.4 of the Impact Assessment of the Harbours (Seafarers' Remuneration) Bill, if he will publish the past data used to estimate the number of journeys made by vessels assumed to be in scope.

**Robert Courts:**

The Impact Assessment published alongside the public consultation ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1074053/impact-assessment-harbours-seafarers-remuneration-bill.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1074053/impact-assessment-harbours-seafarers-remuneration-bill.pdf)) uses data from DfT port freight statistics Dataset port0601, which is published and available online at (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/port-and-domestic-waterborne-freight-statistics-port>). This contains data on the frequency of port calls per year, and vessel type, meaning that the scope of preferred option in the consultation Impact Assessment, covering ropax and roro vessels calling in UK ports at least weekly, covers 64,000 vessel-journeys (based on the 2019 data). The Impact Assessment also utilises vessel-level data on port calls frequency, however, as this vessel-data is commercially sensitive, the Department does not publish it.

**■ Tourism: Kent****Sir Roger Gale:** [\[6668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the economic impact of the planned closures of the M2 motorway between junctions 5 and 6 at weekends in (a) spring and (b) summer 2022 on tourist industries in the seaside towns of (i) Whitstable, (ii) Herne Bay, (iii) Birchington-on-Sea, (iv) Westgate-on-Sea, (v) Margate, (vi) Broadstairs and (vii) Ramsgate.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The closures are required to carry out essential replacement of life-expired bridge components. The Department does not, as standard practice, carry out economic impact assessments for road closures. However, National Highways has agreed the planned closures in consultation with Kent County Council and timed them to avoid school holidays and major events in the local area.

**■ Transport: Disability****Rachael Maskell:** [\[5440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what provisions will be included in the Transport Bill on (a) accessible forms of transport for disabled people, including Motability, and (b) developing infrastructure to support its use by disabled people.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Transport Bill will include measures to support transport accessibility. Full details on the scope of the Bill will be announced in due course.

**■ Walking****Rachael Maskell:** [\[4625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to encourage the general public to increase walking; and whether he has any targets for walking.

**Trudy Harrison:**

On 28 July 2020 the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost walking and cycling in England, with a vision for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030. This is supported by a £2 billion package of funding for active travel over 5 years. Much of this will go to local authorities, allowing them to invest in schemes to enable more walking in these areas. These could include measures such as better pavements, more crossings, more benches and other improvements to the public realm.

The first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS1) included targets to increase general walking and walking to school, and progress was outlined in the first CWIS Report to Parliament in 2020.

The Government will outline its future plans for walking targets in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) which will be published shortly.

**■ Walking: Finance****Rachael Maskell:**[\[4626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has committed a specific amount of funding for campaigns aimed at encouraging walking as a mode of transport.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department does not directly fund publicity campaigns to encourage walking, but it is providing unprecedented amounts of funding to enable more walking as part of the Prime Minister's ambitious plans to significantly boost the amount of walking and cycling in England. This includes £2m for the Walk to School Outreach programme delivered by the charity Living Streets, which allows Living Streets to deliver initiatives such as Walk to School Week, which took place earlier this month.

Further details regarding future investment plans for walking and cycling will be outlined in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) which will be published shortly.

**TREASURY****■ Banks****James Daly:**[\[6961\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to help ensure that high street bank branches remain open.

**John Glen:**

The Government recognises the importance of appropriate access to banking. However, decisions on opening and closing branches are a commercial decision for banks and building societies.

The largest banks and building societies have been signed up to the Access to Banking Standard since 2017, which commits them to ensure that customers are well informed about branch closures, the bank's reasons for closure and options for continued access to banking services.

Guidance from the Financial Conduct Authority also sets out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to reduce their physical branches or the number of free-to-use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of planned branch closures on their customers' everyday banking and cash access needs and consider possible alternative access arrangements. This ensures that the implementation of closure decisions is undertaken in a way that treats customers fairly.

Alternative options for access 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.

### ■ Children: Day Care

**Abena Oppong-Asare:** [\[6944\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of eligible parents take up tax free childcare.

**Abena Oppong-Asare:** [\[6945\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide a breakdown of the proportion of eligible households that take up tax free childcare in each (a) region and (b) nation of the UK.

#### Mr Simon Clarke:

As a proportion of all families who were eligible for tax-free childcare (TFC) and had qualifying childcare, the estimated take-up rate in the UK in March 2022 was 30%, corresponding to 384,280 families. Across the 2021-22 year, 40% of eligible families (512,415) used TFC.

Take-up of TFC varies by region, as shown below. Use of TFC tends to be greater in regions with higher populations, such as London and South East England. However, over 2021-22 the estimated take-up rate is highest in the South West of England at 49% and lowest in Scotland at 26%.

REGION/COUNTRY	ESTIMATED NO. FAMILIES ELIGIBLE FOR TFC IN 2021-22	NO USERS (AND ESTIMATED % TAKE UP) IN MARCH 2022	NO USERS (AND ESTIMATED % TAKE UP) IN 2021-22
United Kingdom	1,270,000	384,280 (30%)	512,415 (40%)
England	1,070,000	336,150 (31%)	450,395 (42%)
North East	40,000	13,040 (33%)	17,425 (44%)
North West	140,000	50,095 (36%)	65,620 (47%)
Yorkshire and The Humber	100,000	33,605 (34%)	44,010 (44%)
East Midlands	90,000	30,915 (34%)	40,530 (45%)
West Midlands	100,000	33,695 (34%)	44,575 (45%)
East of England	140,000	37,755 (27%)	51,460 (37%)
London	170,000	39,220 (23%)	54,285 (32%)
South East	200,000	61,265 (31%)	83,305 (42%)
South West	100,000	36,555 (37%)	49,185 (49%)

REGION/COUNTRY	ESTIMATED NO. FAMILIES ELIGIBLE FOR TFC IN 2021-22	NO USERS (AND ESTIMATED % TAKE UP) IN MARCH 2022	NO USERS (AND ESTIMATED % TAKE UP) IN 2021-22
Wales	60,000	13,575 (23%)	17,825 (30%)
Scotland	110,000	22,710 (21%)	29,110 (26%)
Northern Ireland	30,000	9,070 (30%)	11,050 (37%)

## ■ Consumers: Protection

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[6751\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the impact on UK competitiveness of the Financial Conduct Authority's recently consulted proposals entitled A New Consumer Duty; and what cost benefit analysis he has done of those proposals.

**John Glen:**

The Government is committed to ensuring that all consumers of financial services are appropriately protected.

That is why the Government legislated in the Financial Services Act 2021 to require the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to consult on whether it should make rules, giving regulated financial service providers a duty of care over their customers. This was in response to concerns from Parliamentarians, who wanted to reduce levels of consumer harm in financial services.

In response, the FCA has proposed a new Consumer Duty, which seeks to clarify and raise expectations for the standard of care that should be provided by financial services firms to consumers, and ensure consumers benefit from a higher level of care from financial services firms.

The FCA has published a cost benefit analysis covering its proposed Consumer Duty which is available on its website.

The FCA, as an operationally independent regulator, is responsible for carrying out its Consumer Duty consultation including assessing the potential costs and benefits of the proposals and for making any new rules which it considers appropriate following that consultation.

## ■ Cryptocurrencies

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[6852\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2022 to Question 1257 on Cryptocurrencies, if he will provide the 2022 estimate for the proportion of UK adults holding money on crypto exchanges who give their reason for buying cryptocurrencies as a gamble to make or lose money.

**John Glen:**

The Financial Conduct Authority plan to re-run the UK cryptoassets consumer research later this year.

There is currently no 2022 estimate for the proportion of UK adults holding money on crypto exchanges who give their reason for buying cryptocurrencies as a gamble to make or lose money.

**Financial Services Compensation Scheme: Cost of Living****Harriett Baldwin:**[\[6752\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the impact on the cost of living of the twentyfold increase since 2017 in the levy paid by investment managers for the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

**John Glen:**

Under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA), the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is responsible for setting the rules of the compensation framework of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) in relation to the levy paid by investment managers.

The FCA recently published a discussion paper [DP21/5](#) in December 2021 which explored ways in which aspects of the compensation framework which the FCA is responsible for could be improved. This paper invited responses from stakeholders and those responses are now being considered by the FCA.

The FSCS provides important protection for consumers by allowing them access compensation where a firm has failed. This is important to maintaining overall confidence in the financial system.

**Monetary Policy****Nick Gibb:**[\[6669\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness of money supply figures (i) six-month real, (ii) M1, (iii) M3, (iv) M4 in determining the state of the economy and (b) potential merits of more or less monetary tightening.

**John Glen:**

The Government continually monitors a range of economic indicators and developments to consider the impact of these on businesses and households.

Monetary policy is the responsibility of the independent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England and this includes decisions on Bank Rate and the assets held in the Asset Purchase Facility (APF). The separation of fiscal and monetary policy is a key feature of the UK's economic framework, and essential for the effective delivery of monetary policy, so the Government does not comment on the conduct or effectiveness of monetary policy.

## ■ Safe Hands Plans: Insolvency

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[3473\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of setting up an emergency fund to support the customers of the failed Safe Hands Funeral Plans who may fall into funeral poverty as a result of that company's collapse.

**John Glen:**

In January 2021, the government legislated to bring all pre-paid funeral plan providers and intermediaries within the regulatory remit of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) from 29 July 2022. When FCA regulation takes effect, funeral plan providers will need to be authorised by the FCA in order to enter into or carry out funeral plan contracts.

Safe Hands Plans has recently gone into administration. The government understands that this development will be concerning for customers of Safe Hands and continues to monitor the implementation of regulation in this sector closely.

Dignity's recent commitment to provide ongoing support to Safe Hands' customers for the next six months is welcome. This will ensure that any planholders who pass away during this time will receive a funeral without any additional charge.

It is unfortunate but unavoidable that bringing a previously unregulated sector into regulation – whatever form that may take – creates a possibility that some providers are not able to meet the threshold for authorisation. However, a well-regulated market should promote effective competition and drive better outcomes for consumers in the long-term.

Where a provider is unable to obtain FCA authorisation because of underlying issues, it is important to understand that this is not an issue created by bringing the sector into regulation. Rather, bringing the sector into regulation exposes these unsustainable business models and prevents these problems from getting worse.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Employment Tribunals Service: Pregnancy

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[5482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the equity of the three months' time limit in accessing justice where a claimant is pregnant and filing a case in an employment tribunal.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Individuals who experience pregnancy and maternity discrimination in the workplace can access justice through an employment tribunal, under the Equality Act 2010. While the time limit for bringing a claim is three months, tribunals have the discretion to provide extensions where they consider it 'just and equitable' to do so.



The Government continues to look closely at extending the time limit for bringing Equality Act 2010 based cases to an employment tribunal. This decision, however, must take account of wider impacts across the justice system. We recognise that the pandemic has put additional pressure on the entire courts and tribunals service, particularly the employment tribunal, and that restoring its existing levels of service needs to be the priority before additional loading is added.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ **British Sign Language Act 2022**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[4548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department plans to take to implement the British Sign Language Act 2022.

**Chloe Smith:**

The British Sign Language Act 2022 gained Royal Assent in April 2022 and does three things:

- It recognises British Sign Language as a language of Great Britain in its own right;
- It places a duty on the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to report on the promotion and facilitation of British Sign Language by ministerial departments;
- It places a duty on the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to issue guidance to ministerial departments on the general promotion and facilitation of British Sign Language across their public communications - such as public announcements, consultations, plans, strategy, social media and press conferences.

A BSL Advisory Board will be established to advise the government on the implementation of the BSL Act from the perspective of those who use BSL. The board will also advise on related matters such as how to increase the number of BSL interpreters. This Board is a key first step in implementation of the Act, and it is anticipated that recruitment for the board will begin soon, with the first board meeting to be held in the Autumn.

### ■ **Children: Maintenance**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[6884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps she has taken to help ensure efficient and clear communication between her Department and the Child Maintenance Service on benefit fraud claims and investigations.

**Guy Opperman:**

As an integral part of DWP, Child Maintenance Service (CMS) caseworkers are all required to complete annual training to identify and tackle fraud. This includes a requirement for CMS caseworkers to report allegations of benefit fraud to their Counter Fraud and Compliance Directorate (CFCD) colleagues via a desktop application. In addition to the compulsory CMS training, the Financial Investigation

Unit have included the requirement to report benefit fraud via the IT interface as part of the annual training to caseworkers. This is to be delivered to all Child Maintenance caseworkers as part of the CMG's Fraud and Financial Correctness Strategy for 2022-2023.

## ■ Employment: Disability

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[6827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that stakeholders are consulted as part of her Department's work to reduce the disability employment gap; and how frequently that consultation is taking place.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Department regularly engages with a wide range of stakeholders to inform disability employment policy and programme development. This is to support disabled people to start, stay in and succeed in work, and our ambition to reduce the disability employment gap.

This includes the Disability Confident (DC) scheme, where we regularly engage with stakeholders, including the DC Business Leaders Group (which meets quarterly), comprising board level Directors, the DC Professional Advisers Group, disabled people, disability charities and representative groups, to gather their views about the scheme and help shape future DC Policy. As part of our current review of the scheme, we are working with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the content of the scheme remains up to date, credible and sufficiently challenging, in support of disability employment. We also engage with employers through events and DC webinars, that focus on topics to support disabled people, such as: Autism and Neurodiversity, Mental Health in the Workplace, and New Ways of Working.

The Access to Work programme also engages with a wide range of disability groups with a mix of disabled people's organisations, charities, and disabled people. These user-led stakeholder forums take place regularly throughout the year across England, Scotland, and Wales.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[6828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's press release of 17 May 2022, Government hits goal to see a million more disabled people in work, whether her Department plans to set a new goal to further build on that increase.

**Chloe Smith:**

Now the one million goal has been met, we will be considering what a new stretching ambition should be, to continue to galvanise action across and outside of Government. This will ensure that increasing disabled people's participation in the labour market is a shared ambition across society. The Government's commitment to reducing the disability employment gap remains.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [6829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how her Department defines in employment in the context of the Disability Employment Goal.

**Chloe Smith:**

The goal to see a million more disabled people in employment is measured using Labour Force Survey (LFS) data released on a quarterly basis by the independent Office for National Statistics (ONS). The LFS is the key source for trend data on different measures of disability employment.

The number of disabled people in employment in the UK counts all people aged 16 to 64 who did one hour or more of paid work per week and those who had a job that they were temporarily away from (for example, because they were on holiday or off sick). This definition aligns with the international standard as set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [6830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many disabled people have been in employment in each year since 2017, by sector.

**Chloe Smith:**

Summary estimates on disability employment are published quarterly by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and can be found at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusofdisabledpeoplea08>.

These statistics are used to monitor the number of disabled people in work and the disability employment rate and gap.

The Department also publishes annual disability employment statistics which provide more detailed analysis and breakdowns – including by industry and sector - of the ONS summary estimates and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-employment-of-disabled-people>.

**Matt Vickers:** [6952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress has been made on increasing the number of disabled people in work by one million between 2017 and 2027.

**Chloe Smith:**

In 2017 the Government set a goal to see a million more disabled people in employment between 2017 and 2027. The latest figures released for Q1 (January to March) 2022 show that between Q1 2017 and Q1 2022 the number of disabled people in employment increased by 1.3m – meaning the goal has been met after five years.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [8068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of disabled adults have been in employment in each year since 2017, by sector.

**Chloe Smith:**

Summary estimates on disability employment are published quarterly by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and can be found at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusofdisabledpeoplea08>.

These statistics are used to monitor the number of disabled people in work and the disability employment rate and gap.

The Department also publishes annual disability employment statistics which provide more detailed analysis and breakdowns – including by industry and sector - of the ONS summary estimates and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-employment-of-disabled-people>.

**■ Employment: Females****Matt Vickers:****[6956]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support more women over the age of 50 to return to the workplace.

**Mims Davies:**

The Government recognises the challenges faced by women aged 50 and over. Too many women feel forced either to leave work, reduce their hours, or take a step back in their careers because of the menopause. The Government will be responding shortly to the independent report on Menopause and the Workplace, commissioned from employer organisations who take part in the 50PLUS Roundtables, and which set out a series of recommendations for Government and employers. This will also examine the issues of Returners. The group will work collaboratively on a number of key issues outlining the evidence, barriers and recommendations.

The Restart Scheme is being delivered across England and Wales using 12 Contract Package Areas with providers working with employers, local government, and other partners to deliver tailored support for individuals, breaking down employment barriers that could be holding claimants back from finding work.

Alongside this, as part of the £500m Plan for Jobs expansion, we are funding a new enhanced support package for workers over the age of 50 to help them to stay in and return to work. This offer will ensure that older job seekers receive more intensive, tailored support as part of their Universal Credit claim and will give Work Coaches more time to spend with older job seekers who have recently become unemployed.

The 50PLUS Champions network also provides dedicated support to work coaches to enable them to effectively direct suitable support to claimants who are aged 50 and over.

## ■ Household Support Fund

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[4549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps her Department has taken to progress the allocation of the Household Support Fund to local authorities.

**David Rutley:**

Local Authorities have already received their allocations, alongside the grant determination and guidance, for the £421m Household Support Fund extension. The new allocations for Local Authorities are the same as for the previous 6 months of the scheme and can be found [here](#). Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how and when this funding is used within the scope set out, based on their assessment of local need.

This funding is available now for use by Local Authorities until 30 September 2022.

## ■ Local Housing Allowance

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[\[6683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to paragraph 35 of the equalities impact assessment for the Government's decision to freeze Local Housing Allowance rates in 2021-22, if she will place the data her Department collected in respect of the second bullet point, which states that we will monitor the proportion of LHA claimants with shortfalls and the amounts of those shortfalls, in the House of Commons Library.

**David Rutley:**

As stated in the Equality Analysis, the department collects data which enables the calculation of the proportion of LHA claimants with shortfalls and the amounts of these shortfalls. Shortfalls relate to the value of a household's rent which exceeds the Local Housing Allowance.

Since the production of the Equality Analysis, we have monitored these two metrics as provided below for each quarter of data since. Shortfall Prevalence relates to the proportion of LHA households which have a shortfall. Average Monthly Shortfalls relate to the mean average amount of monthly shortfalls for LHA households. Both are at the Great Britain level for households in receipt of Housing Benefit and the Universal Credit Housing Element.

SHORTFALL PREVALENCE	FEB-21	MAY-21	AUG-21	NOV-21	FEB-22
Great Britain	52%	52%	53%	54%	54%
Average Monthly Shortfalls	Feb-21	May-21	Aug-21	Nov-21	Feb-22

SHORTFALL PREVALENCE	FEB-21	MAY-21	AUG-21	NOV-21	FEB-22
Great Britain	£146	£145	£145	£145	£147

### ■ Local Housing Allowance: Impact Assessments

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[\[6684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department undertook an equalities impact assessment of the Government's decision to freeze Local Housing Allowance rates in 2022-23.

**David Rutley:**

The equality analysis for the Local Housing Allowance rates for the year 2022-23 was sent to the House of Commons Library on 26 April 2022.

The library has confirmed that it has now been uploaded alongside the equality analysis for 2021-22.

### ■ Pension Protection Fund: Inflation

**Catherine West:**

[\[4655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of rising UK inflation on members of the Pensions Protections Fund who accrued pension benefits before 1997.

**Guy Opperman:**

No assessment has been made. The information required to carry out such an assessment is not readily available and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

The Government understands that people are concerned about pressure on household budgets as a result of the global inflation crisis and has committed £22 billion in direct support to help people across the country.

### ■ Pensions

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[4550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department is taking steps to bring forward initiatives to assist people in understanding their pensions.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is currently introducing several initiatives to assist people in understanding their pensions.

The Stronger Nudge to pensions guidance regulations, coming in to force on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022, ensure no-one will be able to access their savings through pension freedoms without having received Pension Wise guidance or opted out. As part of this,

schemes will offer to book of a Pension Wise appointment for the member as part of the application process, removing the inertia introduced by members having to book their own appointment.

From October this year, new regulations come into force that require defined contribution schemes used for automatic enrolment to send simpler, 2-page maximum, statements to members. These short, simpler statements will give savers the key information they need to be able to better engage with and understand their pensions. They will help people plan for the retirement they want.

DWP published a consultation on the draft regulations for Pensions Dashboards, which closed on 13 March 2022. Following publication of its response, expected this summer, the department will lay regulations for dashboards when parliamentary time allows. Pensions dashboards can help make accessing pensions information easier by empowering people to see what they have in their various pensions, including their State Pension, at the touch of a button on their smartphone, laptop or computer at home. This will put the saver in control and help reconnect people with their lost pension pots, transforming how people think and plan for their retirement.

#### ■ **Personal Independence Payment**

**Bambos Charalambous:** [\[6873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her Department advises to existing claimants of Personal Independence Payments in the event that their condition has worsened but an assessment review for a higher rate has not been carried out as a result of an award being close to ending.

**Chloe Smith:**

We advise claimants to report any relevant change of circumstances which may affect their award. When a claimant reports a change in their needs, they will be sent a form which asks for details of how their condition or conditions has changed and how it affects them. Claimants are also asked to provide any additional evidence they may have.

The case will then be reviewed and if it is decided that an increase in PIP is applicable, the increased award will be made from the date the change in condition occurred, regardless of when the previous award was due to end.

Change of Circumstances cases are monitored to prevent payment ending before a review has taken place.

#### ■ **Personal Independence Payment: Standards**

**Bambos Charalambous:** [\[6871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of the introduction of phone and video face-to-face assessments for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) on the time taken for new claimants of PIP to receive their benefits.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is committed to assessing people as quickly as possible, in order that they receive the benefit(s) and support they are entitled to in a timely manner.

The assessment method has no bearing on the time taken for new claimants of PIP to receive their benefits.

DWP worked at pace with its providers to deliver telephone and video assessments, changing from face-to-face assessments with minimum delay to the service for claimants. Without this pivot to virtual assessments, it would not have been possible to assess Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claims at all, during periods of strict Covid-19 restrictions.

Any future decisions about delivery channels will be evidence-based and to ensure this, DWP will draw on existing evidence, as well as continuing to build understanding via research and analysis.

**■ Sign Language: Interpreters****Emma Hardy:****[4670]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to increase the number of British Sign Language trained interpreters; and what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reducing the costs of training courses for those interpreters.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 23 May 2022]:* There are a range of British Sign Language qualifications currently approved for government funding. This include qualifications linked to interpreting which are approved for delivery in Advanced Learner Loans (ALLs) – such as The IBSL Level 6 Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting Studies, IBSL Level 6 Diploma in British Sign Language Studies, Signature Level 6 Diploma in Sign Language Translation and Signature Level 6 NVQ Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting. These qualifications also are approved by NRCPD for interpreters.

Students are encouraged to seek an institution that may offer loans-funded study for one of the qualifications listed above. Students in receipt of an ALL for one of these courses may also seek support from the ALLs Bursary Fund from their institution to help with course related costs.

Advanced Learner Loans provide extensive coverage of a range of regulated qualifications at Level 3 to Level 6, helping to pay the up-front tuition fees and removing one of the main barriers to adult learning.

Work is also underway with subject experts and exam boards to develop a BSL GCSE.

British Sign Language courses delivered by private organisations are widely available but funding, delivery and regulation of these is not a DfE matter.



The British Sign Language Act 2022 was brought forward to help promote and facilitate the use of British Sign Language by providing legal recognition of BSL. It gained Royal Assent in April 2022. Alongside the Act, the government committed to a package of policy measures, including how the government might help to increase the numbers of properly accredited BSL interpreters and how this might be increased. This could include an assessment of costs to individuals in attaining BSL interpretation accreditation.

## ■ Social Security Benefits

**Damien Moore:**

[\[8157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to increase (a) carers allowance and (b) attendance allowance in line with inflation.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Secretary of State undertakes an annual review of benefits and pensions, and CPI in the year to September is the latest figure that the Secretary of State can use to allow sufficient time for the required operational changes before new rates can be introduced at the start of the new financial year in April. Both Carer's Allowance and Attendance Allowance were uprated in April 2022 by 3.1%

As per convention, the Secretary of State will undertake a review of benefit rates for the 2023/24 tax year this autumn.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[6763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking in response to the All Party Parliamentary Group on state pension inequality for women's submission to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's investigation into the communication of changes to women's state pension age.

**Guy Opperman:**

The position has not changed. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has not completed his investigation. This a multi staged process and the report published on 20 July 2021 concluded stage-one of the investigation.

It would not be appropriate to comment on the issue whilst the investigation is ongoing; and section 7(2) of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 states that Ombudsman investigations "shall be conducted in private".

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: North East

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[6762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many state pension claimants face delays to the first payments of their pension in (a) Newcastle and (b) the North East of England.

**Guy Opperman:**

The DWP has a process which is the same now as under successive labour and the coalition government. There are claims where we are waiting for additional information which upon receipt of the further information are actioned.

There are no constituency or regional stats on State Pension payments.

**Unemployed People: Long Covid****Rosie Duffield:**[\[6878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what financial support her Department is providing to people diagnosed with long covid who are out of work.

**Chloe Smith:**

The DWP offers financial support through Universal Credit and New Style Employment and Support Allowance for people who are sick and unable to work due to long-Covid, subject to them satisfying the eligibility criteria and contribution conditions. In addition, people with long-COVID may be eligible to Personal Independence Payment.

Furthermore, the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC), who advise the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions regarding Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB), are investigating whether long-COVID can be prescribed as an occupational disease for the purposes of IIDB.

**Universal Credit****Stephen Timms:**[\[6670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether tax credit recipients who have more than £16,000 in savings will lose all their support on being migrated to Universal Credit after the one year grace period, or whether they will be entitled to further transitional protection.

**David Rutley:**

Tax Credit claimants will have any capital they hold above £16,000 disregarded for up to 12 months once moved to Universal Credit as part of the managed migration process. This means that the normal rules for the treatment of capital, that would usually prevent them claiming UC, will not be applied during this period.

Normal UC rules for capital will still be applied to the capital they hold between £6,001 and £16,000. If their capital falls to £16,000 or below during the 12 months, then the disregard is not re-applied, should their capital rise above £16,000 again.

After 12 months, the disregard on tax credit claimants' income that permits them to claim UC if their capital exceeds £16,000 will cease to apply and, like all claimants with capital over £16,000, they will not be entitled to Universal Credit.

**■ Universal Credit: Disability**

**Stephen Timms:** [\[6671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what protections her Department has put in place for people with complex disabilities undergoing managed migration to Universal Credit.

**Stephen Timms:** [\[6672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the (a) help and (b) guidance available to people with complex disabilities undergoing managed migration to Universal Credit.

**Stephen Timms:** [\[6673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that people with complex disabilities who are undergoing managed migration to Universal Credit will not have their benefits claims unfairly stopped.

**David Rutley:**

We are committed to fully complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

A variety of support is in place for those issued with migration notices including for individuals with a health condition and disabilities. As we progress through 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 the Gov.uk website
- Specially trained staff in the JCP's and Service Centres who can identify local tailored support
- Support through help to claim

**Stephen Timms:** [\[6674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance she has given to support services assisting people with complex disabilities undergoing managed migration to Universal Credit.

**David Rutley:**

We recently restarted work to design and deliver a service for people to move to Universal Credit. The first phase is Discovery with controlled small volumes; during this phase we will work with small numbers of claimants to learn how best to ensure a smooth transition to Universal Credit and identify what support claimants need to make their claim to UC.

A variety of support is in place for those issued with migration notices, including for individuals with health conditions and disabilities. Our current support consists of:

- A dedicated phoneline

- Further guidance on Gov.uk website
- Specially trained staff in JCP's and service centres who can identify local tailored support
- Support through Help to Claim

The Department holds regular engagement sessions with a broad range of external stakeholders, including in the health and disability sector. 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.

## ■ Universal Credit: Employment Schemes

**Matt Vickers:**

**[6950]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of people who have moved off Universal Credit and into work as a result of the Way to Work campaign.

**Mims Davies:**

As of 22 May, we estimate that at least 347,300 unemployed Universal Credit claimants have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31 January and the end of 22 May 2022.

This total figure is composed of our into work measure to the end of April (over 297,500) and our internal management information for up to 22 May (49,800). Figures are rounded to the nearest 100. These numbers will be higher than previously reported as it can take a number of weeks before all movements into work show in the data.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics but is provided in the interests of transparency and timeliness.

## ■ Universal Credit: Impact Assessments

**Ms Karen Buck:**

**[6680]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 156348, on Universal Credit, if she will place a copy of those equality assessments in the House of Commons Library.

**David Rutley:**

We are committed to fully complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty as we proceed with managed migration. We do not plan to publish our Equality Analysis documents as these will be subject to revision as the Discovery phase progresses and we learn and iterate the process.

**■ Universal Credit: Telephone Services****Dr Rupa Huq:****[4639]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of pre-arranged calls with Universal Credit advisors are made within (a) an hour of the arranged time, (b) made on the day of the arranged time and c) not made at all.

**David Rutley:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**■ Workplace Pensions: Stockton South****Matt Vickers:****[6955]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have been auto-enrolled in workplace pensions in Stockton South constituency since 2012.

**Guy Opperman:**

In the Stockton South constituency, since 2012, 8,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled into a workplace pension and 1,470 employers have declared compliance with their automatic enrolment duties.

This data – which is based on the end of April 2022 – is updated by The Pensions Regulator each month and published on its website. This can be accessed via the following weblink: <https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/research-and-analysis/data-requests>

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ Avian Influenza: Disease Control

**Shabana Mahmood:**

**[3547]**

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra's approach to avian influenza disease control is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#). All avian influenza disease control and prevention measures are kept under regular review as part of the government's work to monitor and manage the risks of avian influenza, and all decisions regarding these measures are based on [risk assessments](#) containing the latest scientific and ornithological evidence and veterinary advice.

Under the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone that has been in force across Great Britain since 3 November 2021<sup>1</sup><sup>2</sup>, access to areas where poultry and other captive birds are kept must be restricted to only essential personnel. In addition, access to premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed is restricted. Access to infected premises would only be permitted following a veterinary risk assessment and under licence from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Outside of these restrictions, there is no legal requirement for local authorities to limit access to public areas or close rights of way, and the countryside remains open for business.

However, where findings of avian influenza in wild birds have occurred in public areas, local authorities may take a precautionary approach to protect the health and welfare of birds and to limit the risk of infection being transferred on footwear etc to other bird keeping areas by restricting access to areas where wild birds frequently congregate. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has said that avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health is very low. Local authorities will work closely with public health protection teams to take appropriate precautions to protect human health where required. Any decisions taken to restrict access to areas to protect public health are made on the basis of risk assessments undertaken by the UKHSA supported by evidence of the local and national animal health situation.

No premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed during the 2021-2022 outbreak have been located on local authority owned land. Defra does not collect data on the number of other areas where access has been restricted by local authorities.

Avian influenza is a notifiable animal disease. Failure to report suspicion of avian influenza in poultry or other captive birds is an offence. Avian influenza controls are enforced by local authorities, normally within the Trading Standards or Environmental Health Service teams. Defra, the devolved administrations and APHA work closely and meet regularly with local authority representatives and the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers both at a national level and through the cross-agency local resilience forums to help ensure effective implementation of the avian influenza outbreak prevention and control measures.

**Shabana Mahmood:**

**[3548]**

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra's approach to avian influenza disease control is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#). All avian influenza disease control and prevention measures are kept under regular review as part of the government's work to monitor and manage the risks of avian influenza, and all decisions regarding these measures are based on [risk assessments](#) containing the latest scientific and ornithological evidence and veterinary advice.

Under the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone that has been in force across Great Britain since 3 November 2021, access to areas where poultry and other captive birds are kept must be restricted to only essential personnel. In addition, access to premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed is restricted. Access to infected premises would only be permitted following a veterinary risk assessment and under licence from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Outside of these restrictions, there is no legal requirement for local authorities to limit access to public areas or close rights of way, and the countryside remains open for business.

However, where findings of avian influenza in wild birds have occurred in public areas, local authorities may take a precautionary approach to protect the health and welfare of birds and to limit the risk of infection being transferred on footwear etc to other bird keeping areas by restricting access to areas where wild birds frequently congregate. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has said that avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health is very low. Local authorities will work closely with public health protection teams to take appropriate precautions to protect human health where required. Any decisions taken to restrict access to areas to protect public health are made on the basis of risk assessments undertaken by the UKHSA supported by evidence of the local and national animal health situation.

No premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed during the 2021-2022 outbreak have been located on local authority owned land. Defra does not

collect data on the number of other areas where access has been restricted by local authorities.

Avian influenza is a notifiable animal disease. Failure to report suspicion of avian influenza in poultry or other captive birds is an offence. Avian influenza controls are enforced by local authorities, normally within the Trading Standards or Environmental Health Service teams. Defra, the devolved administrations and APHA work closely and meet regularly with local authority representatives and the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers both at a national level and through the cross-agency local resilience forums to help ensure effective implementation of the avian influenza outbreak prevention and control measures.

**Shabana Mahmood:**

**[3549]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether decisions on closing council-owned land following an outbreak of avian flu are the responsibility of local authorities and his Department.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra's approach to avian influenza disease control is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#). All avian influenza disease control and prevention measures are kept under regular review as part of the government's work to monitor and manage the risks of avian influenza, and all decisions regarding these measures are based on [risk assessments](#) containing the latest scientific and ornithological evidence and veterinary advice.

Under the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone that has been in force across Great Britain since 3 November 2021, access to areas where poultry and other captive birds are kept must be restricted to only essential personnel. In addition, access to premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed is restricted. Access to infected premises would only be permitted following a veterinary risk assessment and under licence from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Outside of these restrictions, there is no legal requirement for local authorities to limit access to public areas or close rights of way, and the countryside remains open for business.

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No premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed during the 2021-2022 outbreak have been located on local authority owned land. Defra does not collect data on the number of other areas where access has been restricted by local authorities.

Avian influenza is a notifiable animal disease. Failure to report suspicion of avian influenza in poultry or other captive birds is an offence. Avian influenza controls are enforced by local authorities, normally within the Trading Standards or Environmental Health Service teams. Defra, the devolved administrations and APHA work closely and meet regularly with local authority representatives and the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers both at a national level and through the cross-agency local resilience forums to help ensure effective implementation of the avian influenza outbreak prevention and control measures.

**Shabana Mahmood:**

**[3550]**

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra's approach to avian influenza disease control is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#). All avian influenza disease control and prevention measures are kept under regular review as part of the government's work to monitor and manage the risks of avian influenza, and all decisions regarding these measures are based on [risk assessments](#) containing the latest scientific and ornithological evidence and veterinary advice.

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assessments undertaken by the UKHSA supported by evidence of the local and national animal health situation.

No premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed during the 2021-2022 outbreak have been located on local authority owned land. Defra does not collect data on the number of other areas where access has been restricted by local authorities.

Avian influenza is a notifiable animal disease. Failure to report suspicion of avian influenza in poultry or other captive birds is an offence. Avian influenza controls are enforced by local authorities, normally within the Trading Standards or Environmental Health Service teams. Defra, the devolved administrations and APHA work closely and meet regularly with local authority representatives and the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers both at a national level and through the cross-agency local resilience forums to help ensure effective implementation of the avian influenza outbreak prevention and control measures.

## ■ Disease Control

**Shabana Mahmood:**

**[3546]**

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra's approach to avian influenza disease control is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#). All avian influenza disease control and prevention measures are kept under regular review as part of the government's work to monitor and manage the risks of avian influenza, and all decisions regarding these measures are based on [risk assessments](#) containing the latest scientific and ornithological evidence and veterinary advice.

Under the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone that has been in force across Great Britain since 3 November 2021, access to areas where poultry and other captive birds are kept must be restricted to only essential personnel. In addition, access to premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed is restricted. Access to infected premises would only be permitted following a veterinary risk assessment and under licence from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Outside of these restrictions, there is no legal requirement for local authorities to limit access to public areas or close rights of way, and the countryside remains open for business.

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is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health is very low. Local authorities will work closely with public health protection teams to take appropriate precautions to protect human health where required. Any decisions taken to restrict access to areas to protect public health are made on the basis of risk assessments undertaken by the UKHSA supported by evidence of the local and national animal health situation.

No premises where notifiable avian influenza has been confirmed during the 2021-2022 outbreak have been located on local authority owned land. Defra does not collect data on the number of other areas where access has been restricted by local authorities.

Avian influenza is a notifiable animal disease. Failure to report suspicion of avian influenza in poultry or other captive birds is an offence. Avian influenza controls are enforced by local authorities, normally within the Trading Standards or Environmental Health Service teams. Defra, the devolved administrations and APHA work closely and meet regularly with local authority representatives and the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers both at a national level and through the cross-agency local resilience forums to help ensure effective implementation of the avian influenza outbreak prevention and control measures.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Disclosure Review & Alterations to the Disclosure Guidelines

**The Attorney General (Suella Braverman):**

[\[HCWS58\]](#)

I should like to provide details of the Annual Disclosure Review 2021/22 and the corresponding amendments to the Attorney General's Disclosure Guidelines.

Following the significant changes to the Disclosure Guidelines, which came into effect January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, I committed to undertake an annual review of the Guidelines, which has now concluded, and alterations to the Guidelines premised upon the review's findings have been made.

The vast majority of the Disclosure Guidelines remain as they were when they came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021. The changes have focused on four primary areas:

- 1) Third Party Material Access – The provisions for accessing third party material are now expressed in a staged manner to aid with their application by busy investigators, disclosure officers and prosecutors. The principles are also strengthened in-line with the dicta of the Court of Appeal in *R v Bater-James & Anors* [2020] EWCA Crim 780. Investigators and prosecutors are also now explicitly required to keep written records of the reasons for making third party material requests, and to balance such requests with the privacy rights of those affected.
- 2) Material Presumed to Meet the Test for Disclosure – This section of the guidelines has been subject to limited restructuring in order to clarify that material contained in a crime report need only be provided once, via the provision of the crime report, and need not be duplicated where it appears elsewhere. Important clarifications to the practicality of providing large video files, especially body worn videos, have also been made to aid investigators.
- 3) Defence Engagement – Throughout the Guidelines, guidance as to how and when the defence should provide information to the prosecution has been clarified and where appropriate made more definitive.
- 4) Redaction Annex – A new annex has been added clarifying how investigators should meet their data protection obligations when providing material to the CPS for the purposes of a charging decision.

The Government is keen to ensure that victims get efficient and effective justice, and that investigations and prosecutions are not impacted by undue or needless burdens being placed on the police. These changes will assist to enhance the efficiency of disclosure and offer clear, rigorous and practical guidance to support this end.

I will place a copy of the updated Disclosure Guidelines in the Libraries of both Houses so that they are accessible to members.

**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY****■ Business Update****Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully):** [\[HCWS66\]](#)

As part of the second statutory review of the Pubs Code and the Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA), the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will today publish a 12-week long invitation to stakeholders with an interest or experience of the operation of the Pubs Code and the performance of the PCA to provide their views and evidence on these matters.

The great British pub lies at the heart of our communities and, as well as providing accessible jobs and prosperity, acts as a hub within local communities and provides space for people to connect and socialise.

There are a range of different types of operating models for pubs and in 2016 legislation came into force in England and Wales to tackle concerns specific to one type of the operating model: the tied pub model in which the tenant agrees to buy beer and other products from their landlord in return for lower rent and other benefits. The Pubs Code etc. Regulations 2016, applying to England and Wales, ensure the fair and lawful treatment of tied pub tenants of large pub-owning businesses. The Pubs Code also provides the tied pub tenant with certain rights, including the right, in certain circumstances, to require the landlord to offer a change to their commercial contract from a tied tenancy, to a free-of-tie tenancy.

The role of the PCA is to investigate and enforce compliance with the Code, provide advice, consult on and issue guidance, and arbitrate disputes in respect of compliance with the Pubs Code. The PCA is appointed by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Secretary of State is required by the legislation to review periodically the operation of the Pubs Code and the performance of the PCA. The first such review, covering the period from when the Pubs Code and the Pubs Code Adjudicator first began to operate in 2016 until 31 March 2019, was completed with the publication of the Secretary of State's report in November 2020, a copy of which was laid before Parliament. This second review covers the 3-year period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022.

The invitation to submit comments and evidence can be accessed through the Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/pubs-code-and-pubs-code-adjudicator-invitation-for-views-on-the-second-statutory-review-2019-to-2022> and stakeholders have until 17 August 2022 to respond. A report on the findings of the review will be published as soon as practicable and laid before Parliament by the Secretary of State.

The Terms of Reference for the second statutory review of the Pubs Code and the PCA have today been placed in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Data on responses to correspondence from MPs and Peers in 2021**

**Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg):** [\[HCWS59\]](#)

The Government attaches great importance to the effective and timely handling of correspondence, and recognises that the right of parliamentarians to take up issues with those in government underlines our accountability as ministers.

I am today publishing a report on the performance of departments and agencies based on substantive replies to correspondence received from Members of Parliament and Peers in 2021. While individual departments and agencies are accountable for their own performance, the Cabinet Office is publishing this data to improve transparency and highlight where the government has effectively handled correspondence.

The footnotes to the table provide general background information on how the figures have been compiled or affected by departmental restructuring. We have also now added in a mandatory 20 working day response percentage to enable a more accurate comparison across government.

A copy of this report will be deposited in the libraries of both Houses in Parliament.

**DEFENCE****■ Reserve Forces and Cadets Association External Scrutiny Team Report 2021**

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):** [\[HCWS60\]](#)

I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of a report into the condition of the Reserves and delivery of the Future Reserves 2020 programme compiled by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations External Scrutiny Team and a copy of my response to the report. I am most grateful to the Team for their work and I look forward to receiving their future reports. Defence is considering a number of ideas about the possible further development of the Reserve Forces and the EST's reports can provide useful information as this consideration continues.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Publication of BBC Mid-Term Review Terms of Reference and updates to the Framework Agreement**

**Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):** [\[HCWS67\]](#)

The Government has today published the Terms of Reference for the BBC Mid-Term Review, setting out our plans to review the governance and regulation of the BBC at the midway point of the Royal Charter. This will build on changes to the Framework

Agreement with the BBC which the Government has also published today, which add new BBC reform commitments to the agreement across a range of areas.

This is the first time a Government review of the BBC has happened mid-way through the BBC Charter, the 10-year agreement which forms the constitutional basis of the BBC.

The review will, in line with the parameters set out in the Charter, examine the effectiveness of the BBC's governance and the framework by which Ofcom holds the BBC to account in a range of areas. This includes impartiality, accountability and transparency, handling of complaints, and how the BBC represents the breadth of the audience it was established to serve. It will also look at how the BBC and Ofcom assess the market impact and public value of the BBC and how that relates to its role in the UK media landscape.

The review will be undertaken at pace by officials from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on the basis of targeted engagement with a number of relevant stakeholders. We will seek to complete the review at pace, within 12 months. The Government looks forward to working collaboratively with the BBC, Ofcom and the Devolved Administrations throughout the course of the review.

Alongside the commencement of the Mid-Term Review, the Government is also publishing a set of changes to the Framework Agreement with the BBC. The BBC has agreed a binding legal commitment to a number of ambitious reform proposals. The changes update the existing agreement to ensure it accurately reflects the BBC's plans to deliver the Corporation's Mission and Public Purposes for the remainder of the Charter period. Changes include BBC workforce accessibility targets, increasing the proportion of BBC spend outside of London, and delivering impartiality and editorial standards reform as recommended by the Serota Review. The amendments also require the BBC to report on its progress in its Annual Report and Accounts, supporting Parliament and the public to hold the BBC to account on delivery.

Alongside this, I have also issued a direction to the BBC requiring them to promote equality of opportunity for people from low socio-economic backgrounds. This aims to ensure the BBC becomes more accessible, and supports the career development and progression of people from low socio-economic backgrounds. Progress against these commitments will be considered as part of the Mid-Term Review where possible.

■ **Reporting a contingent liability in relation to the 2021 Rugby League World Cup**

**Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society (Nigel Huddleston):**

[\[HCWS70\]](#)

I wish to inform the House that, on 26 May 2022, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport laid a departmental Minute recording the government's commitment to underwrite the Rugby League World Cup (rescheduled from 2021 to 15 October - 19 November 2022).

As set out in the Minute, this underwrite would cover up to £10 million, with £4 million ringfenced for increased costs due to Covid-19, and £6 million ringfenced for lost ticketing income due to Covid-19. The Minute also sets out a number of scenarios in which the

underwrite can be called upon. The national governing body, the Rugby Football League will be responsible for any other additional costs that exceed the event budget.

When bidding to secure this event in 2016, DCMS agreed to fund £15 million towards the tournament and a further £10 million towards legacy projects to help grow the game at grassroots level. A further £5.6 million was granted from the Sport Survival Package when the tournament had to be postponed due to the pandemic. This underwrite will ensure that we can look forward to hosting a World Cup as planned. It will also support delivery of an event that will drive economic growth in the region and deliver significant benefits against the government's sporting and wider ambitions, including the Levelling Up agenda.

The government underwrite, therefore, creates a contingent liability for the department in relation to this event of up to £10 million.

A copy of the departmental minute will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

### ■ Sale of Chelsea FC

**Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):**  
[\[HCWS71\]](#)

I wish to inform the House that on 24 May the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) issued a licence to Chelsea Football Club to allow the sale of Chelsea FC PLC. This will allow ownership to be transferred away from Roman Abramovich, a Designated Person under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The Club will be free from previous operating restrictions imposed by sanctions from the point the new ownership takes effect, and we expect this to take place in a matter of days.

Roman Abramovich was added to the list of individuals sanctioned by the UK Government on 10 March. This listing was made as part of wider government policy to encourage Russia to cease actions destabilising Ukraine or undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty or independence of Ukraine.

The UK asset freeze prohibits anyone subject to UK jurisdiction from dealing with assets which are owned or controlled by Roman Abramovich and forbids persons from making funds or other assets available (directly or indirectly) to him. In time, this would have paralysed Chelsea FC. Without further action from the Government, the Club could not have finished the season and would likely have gone into administration.

The Government recognises the importance of the Club to the Premier League, the football pyramid and the fans. That is why we issued a licence to allow football-related activities to continue on the same day Roman Abramovich was sanctioned. Our actions have deprived Mr Abramovich of any benefit from owning the club while allowing the Men's and Women's team to complete their remaining fixtures for the season.

However, this was not a long-term solution and the Government has always been clear that the Club should be sold before the end of the football season to secure its long term



future. Of course, this was conditional on our assurance that there could be no benefit to any sanctioned individual.

Chelsea FC identified their preferred owner, and after agreeing the conditions of the sale, they applied for a licence to transfer ownership. The Government has assessed the evidence the Club has provided to support their application and we are satisfied that our conditions have been met and the integrity of the sanctions regime is maintained. OFSI has now issued a licence to enable a sale on that basis. We have worked in coordination with international partners to ensure that relevant licences from other jurisdictions have also been issued.

Now that the Government has issued the licence, we expect the ownership transfer to take place in the coming days subject to Roman Abramovich agreeing to the sale himself. The net proceeds from the sale will be transferred from the buyers to a frozen UK bank account belonging to Fordstam, the holding company owned by Mr Abramovich, which sold the Club. Any onward transfer of money will require further approval from the Government.

Roman Abramovich has made a number of public statements regarding his intention to transfer the proceeds to the victims of the war in Ukraine. We have agreed a Deed of Undertaking in which he commits the proceeds to a charity in a jurisdiction agreed by the Government for the purposes of helping victims of the war in Ukraine. Any future movement of the sale revenue will be assessed in line with sanctions obligations and the position outlined in the Deed. It will be up to the Government to decide whether to license any movement of funds from the frozen account.

A quick sale which respects the integrity of the sanctions regime has always been in the best interests of the Government, the club and the wider football community. This licence will secure the future of this important cultural asset and deliver for the fans while ensuring Roman Abramovich will not benefit.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Child Protection

**The Secretary of State for Education (Nadhim Zahawi):** [\[HCWS64\]](#)

Today, the independent National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) published its National Review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson

The murders of Arthur and Star shocked the nation. It is incomprehensible that anyone could harm a child in this way

I want to thank Annie Hudson, the chair of the Panel, and her team for their hard work and commitment in setting out the learning from these horrific incidents. Arthur and Star's extended families did as much as they could to protect them. Being involved in this process and reflecting on what happened must have been incredibly difficult. I want to thank the children's families for their contributions to today's Review and the insights they

have provided whilst grieving for their huge loss. I am also grateful to professionals across Bradford and Solihull for their engagement with the Review. It is only through these open and honest conversations that we can truly learn from what has happened. No Government can legislate for evil, but the Panel's recommendations look to address the problems that they have seen across child protection services, and to make such terrible incidents as rare as possible

The National Review pays tribute to the many professionals across our country who carry out effective child protection every day, whilst recognising that the child protection system needs to be strengthened. To this end, the Panel has made local recommendations for safeguarding partners in Solihull and Bradford as well as eight national recommendations to strengthen delivery of child protection services. I am committed, with colleagues across this House, to acting on these recommendations. No time can be wasted in learning from these tragedies, and I assure the House that we will do all we can to deliver significant improvements to child protection services

We have already taken strong action in both Solihull and Bradford to drive up the quality of services. In Solihull, I commissioned a Joint Targeted Area Inspection, served an Improvement Notice, provided additional funding, and deployed an expert Improvement Adviser. Alongside this, the Local Authority has established an Improvement Board to drive progress and ensure multi-agency working between the police, health and the local authority to keep local children as safe as possible

In Bradford, we are establishing a new Children's Services Trust. Evidence shows trusts can turn around failing services, delivering the care that every child deserves. This approach has worked well elsewhere, notably in Sunderland which improved from Inadequate to Outstanding in three years. Today I am delighted to announce the appointment of Eileen Milner as the Chair of the new Trust. Eileen is an experienced leader with a strong track record and will be working alongside our Commissioner in Bradford, Steve Walker, and the council, to improve these critical services for children and families in Bradford as quickly as possible

My department's broader investment in local authority intervention and improvement is already paying off: 53% of authorities are now rated good or outstanding, up from 36% five years ago. 42% more children in need are now living in local authorities which are rated Good or Outstanding than in 2017

Yet system change on a national scale is needed. On Monday, we announced the publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, led by Josh MacAlister. The recommendations align with those outlined in the Independent Review into Children's Social Care and look to address the problems that they have seen across Child Protection services and make such terrible incidents as rare as possible. As the Panel's National Review states, data and information sharing are essential to keeping children safe, and sadly weaknesses in information sharing hindered professionals' understanding of what was happening to Arthur and Star. This is why we will take action to drive forward the Independent Review of Children's Social Care three data and digital priority areas, ensuring local government and partners are in the driving seat of reform. Following the review's recommendation for a data and technology taskforce, we will introduce a new

Digital and Data Solutions Fund to help local authorities improve delivery for children and families through technology. More detail will follow later this year on joining up data from across the public sector so that we can increase transparency – both between safeguarding partners and the wider public

My Ministerial colleagues and I are fully committed to improving the national coordination of child protection. Today we have written to all safeguarding partners to emphasise the important messages contained in the National Review and put out a call to action to take forward these important recommendations. Together with my colleagues across Whitehall, we will also form a new Child Protection Ministerial group, to ensure that safeguarding is championed at the very highest levels. We are also developing further our offer of support to safeguarding partners and will clarify roles and responsibilities through guidance

This is challenging and complex work and I am sure colleagues across the House will agree with me that the vast majority of those working in child protection go to work each day to try to make things better. No one deserves to be the subject of abuse and harassment, let alone such conscientious, committed and capable professionals doing all they can to protect children from harm

I will consider the recommendations from the Panel's National Review and those from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and respond in full before the end of this year when we will publish a bold implementation strategy incorporating the recommendations. I am committed to driving forward progress with those across all safeguarding agencies to protect children, and with colleagues across Parliament as well as those with lived experience of the care system, to deliver reform

I know that people in Solihull, Bradford and far beyond are deeply troubled by the findings of these Reviews. I want to assure people across the country that this Government will not shirk our duty of keeping children safe, that the lines written in these Reviews will be poured over, and steps will be taken to make sure lessons are learned so that we do not find ourselves here again.

## ■ Education Update

**The Minister of State for School Standards (Mr Robin Walker):** [\[HCWS69\]](#)

This update presents the latest performance data for the [National Tutoring Programme](#) the Government has published today.

On 31 March, I announced almost 1.2 million courses had been started by pupils through the Programme since its inception in November 2020. I am now pleased to advise the House our [latest estimates](#) show that, up to 8 May, 1.5 million courses have now started. This represents solid progress towards the Government's ambitious target of delivering up to 6 million courses by the end of the academic year 2023/24. 900,000 of the 1.2 million courses started this year are being delivered through the "School-Led" option by schools using grant funding directly allocated to them.

On 31 March, we also announced from the next academic year we would allocate all funding for tutoring directly to schools. Procurement is currently underway for three new

contracts to support schools to engage well-trained, high-quality tutors. The delivery partner(s) who will be selected through three open, competitive exercises will be responsible for quality assurance, offering training and recruiting, and deploying Academic Mentors. The procurement closed on 23 May. We will communicate full details of next year's programme to schools in June and we will announce the successful applicant(s) in mid-July, so that delivery can commence at speed from the start of September. I will update the House on the successful applications in a future Written Ministerial Statement

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Changes in respect of child citizenship registration fees

**The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safe and Legal Migration (Kevin Foster):** [\[HCWS65\]](#)

Today I am laying before the House an amendment to the Immigration and Nationality (Fees) Regulations 2018, which includes changes in respect of applications made by children seeking to register as British Citizens.

Since 2018, the Home Office has charged a fee of £1,012 to those under the age of 18 who are seeking to register as British citizens under the provisions of the British Nationality Act 1981 (BNA). This fee has been set in line with Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, which details the factors the Home Secretary may take into account when setting fees. These include the costs of processing an application, the benefits that are likely to accrue to any person in connection with the application, and the costs of exercising wider immigration and nationality functions.

In keeping with the requirements of this legislative framework, the department has pursued an approach over the last decade of progressively increasing the role fees play in funding the borders and migration system. This self-funding model serves to ensure those who benefit from the system contribute to its effective operation and maintenance, while reducing reliance on taxpayer funding. This in turn helps to ensure the system is able to support the Home Office's priority outcomes, including enabling the legitimate movement of people and goods to support economic prosperity, and tackling illegal migration, removing those with no right to be here and protecting the vulnerable.

However, as Section 71 of the Immigration Act 2014 makes clear, this does not limit the Secretary of State's duty under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act (BCIA) 2009 to make arrangements to ensure immigration and nationality functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. On 18 February 2021, the Court of Appeal, following a case brought by the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens (PRCBC), found that the Secretary of State had breached that duty in setting the fee in Regulations in 2017 and 2018. The Home Secretary accepted the Court's findings and committed to reviewing the fee in line with her duties under Section 55 of the BCIA 2009.

On 2 February 22 the Supreme Court handed down its judgment on an appeal made by PRCBC in relation to the status of the 2017 and 2018 Regulations that set the fee charged to children to register as British citizens, which held that the regulations were not “ultra vires” and the principles that underpin our fees system had been lawfully applied. Following the Supreme Court’s judgment, the Home Secretary was able to conclude her review of the fee and has decided, as a result, to introduce changes in relation to child citizenship fees in order to better facilitate access to citizenship for children who may face difficulties in paying the fee. The changes are the introduction of a fee waiver for child citizenship applications on the basis of affordability, and a fee exception for children who are looked after by a Local Authority. In parallel, the Home Secretary has also decided to maintain the £1,012 fee at its current level, reflecting the substantial number of applications that the department does receive under the current fees regime and the critical role income from these applications plays in supporting the sustainable funding of a borders and migration system that is critical to delivery of the Home Office’s key objectives.

By introducing the affordability based waiver, our aim is to ensure the fee does not serve as a significant practical barrier to the acquisition of British citizenship for children who are eligible to apply, where the unaffordability of that fee can be demonstrated. This recognises the particular value British citizenship can have for children who have been born in or spent a substantial part of their lives in the UK, particularly those intangible benefits in terms of the sense of identity and belonging which develop during an individual’s formative years, and the impact this can have on their wider wellbeing. At the same time, it reflects our belief that a waiver offers the most effective means of facilitating applications from children for whom affordability of the fee does represent a practical barrier, while balancing against the wider financial impact on the department, relative to other options. In addition, the specific fee exception that is being introduced will serve to relieve an administrative and financial burden from Local Authorities, while enabling the department to work more proactively with them to register children who are eligible and where it is in their best interests.

Further details on how to apply for the waiver and exception will be set out in published guidance, with applications open from 16 June. I hope colleagues will join me in welcoming these changes, which I believe represent a positive step in responding to the concerns raised by members of this House as well as other stakeholders in relation to children’s access to British citizenship.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Programme

**Minister for Exports (Mike Freer):**

[\[HCWS57\]](#)

The Prime Minister has today made three new appointments to his Trade Envoy programme. The appointments are:

The Rt. Hon. Member for Basingstoke (Maria Miller MP) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Canada

The Rt. Hon. Member for Maldon (John Whittingdale MP) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the Republic of Korea

The Rt. Hon. Lord Hutton of Furness (John Hutton) has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Turkey

The new appointments will extend the total number of Trade Envoys to 40 parliamentarians, covering 80 markets. The role as a Prime Minister's Trade Envoy is unpaid and voluntary with cross-party membership from both Houses. The broad role supports the UK's ambitious trade and investment agenda by championing Global Britain and promoting the UK as a destination of choice for inward investment. They also support the UK's economic recovery through the levelling up agenda, by helping business take advantage of the opportunities arising in export markets.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Intergovernmental Relations Quarterly report

**Secretary of State for Levelling UP, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove):** [\[HCWS68\]](#)

Today, the UK Government published the report of our engagement with the devolved administrations in quarter one of 2022 on GOV.UK.

The report covers a period where we have seen unprecedented events, and gives an insight into the extensive engagement between the UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive between 1 January and 31 March 2022. During this reporting period the administrations collaborated on a number of areas, not least the domestic response to the Russia and Ukraine crisis, including the 'Homes for Ukraine' resettlement scheme, and continuing work on COVID-19 recovery.

The report is part of the UK Government's ongoing commitment to transparency of intergovernmental relations to Parliament and the public. The UK Government will continue with publications to demonstrate transparency in intergovernmental relations throughout 2022 and beyond.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ A Strategic Framework for Aviation

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts):** [\[HCWS63\]](#)

The Government has today published 'Flightpath to the Future' – a strategic framework for the future of aviation, focusing on the next ten years.

This strategic framework highlights Government's continued commitment to the sustainable growth of the aviation sector, recognising the vital importance of aviation to the UK. From supporting economic growth, to creating jobs across the UK, aviation adds huge value to our nation. It also has an essential role to play in the personal value it provides to individuals and businesses, providing connections all around the world.

The aviation sector has faced unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and recovery is an essential part of our plan for the future. In March the UK became the first major economy in the world to remove all COVID-19 related travel measures and restrictions for all passengers entering the UK. This is a really important milestone and marks a turning point for aviation in our journey back to pre-pandemic normality.

The publication of Flightpath to the Future recognises the importance of looking ahead for aviation. It takes into account the importance of supporting sector recovery, whilst also recognising the range of opportunities and challenges facing aviation over the medium term. From making the most of Brexit and trade opportunities, to embracing new technologies, and decarbonising the sector, the next ten years will play a defining role in the future of UK aviation.

Flightpath to the Future sets out the Government's key priorities, including a ten point plan for delivery. The ten point plan focuses on how we can achieve our ambition of creating a modern, innovative and efficient sector that is fit for the future. The Government is committed to working closely with the aviation sector to build back better and greener than ever before, with an ambition of retaining our position as one of the strongest aviation sectors in the world.

An essential aspect of this will be close engagement between the Government and the sector, building on positive engagement that has been fundamental during the pandemic. Alongside publishing the Flightpath to the Future, the Government is therefore also launching an **Aviation Council**, focused on supporting the implementation of the commitments established through this strategic framework. The Council will be jointly chaired by the Minister for Aviation and an industry representative, and will include representatives from across the whole sector, a range of Government departments and the Devolved Administrations.

Our ten point plan for the future of UK aviation covers the following areas:

#### **Enhancing global impact for sustainable recovery**

1. Recover, learn lessons from the pandemic and sustainably grow the sector
2. Enhance the UK's global aviation impact and leadership
3. Support growth in airport capacity where it is justified, ensuring that capacity is used in a way that delivers for the UK

#### **Embracing innovation for a sustainable future**

4. Put the sector on course to achieve Jet Zero by 2050
5. Capture the potential of new technology and its uses

#### **Realising benefits for the UK**

6. Unlock local benefits and level up
7. Unleash the potential of the next generation of aviation professionals
8. Make the UK the best place in the world for General Aviation

### **Delivering for users**

9. Improve the consumer experience
10. Retain our world leading record on security and safety with a world leading regulator

Implementing the ten point plan will play an important role in meeting Government and sector ambitions for the future of aviation. The Government recognises that the sector is currently in the early stages of recovery, and there are a number of challenges ahead. We will work hand in hand with the whole aviation sector to implement the commitments set out in the Flightpath and ensure a bright future for UK aviation.

We have a real opportunity to not only see passenger demand return, and the sector to flourish again, but also to modernise and create a greener, more sustainable sector for the future. A sector that leads the way internationally on key issues be that learning lessons from the pandemic, delivering Jet Zero, or embracing the opportunities presented by aviation innovation. The UK will continue to have one of the strongest aviation sectors internationally, including always putting consumers first, and having the safest and most secure sector in the world.

I have deposited copies of Flightpath to the Future in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

### ■ **MCA Business Plans**

#### **Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts):**

[\[HCWS61\]](#)

I am proud to announce the publication of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's (MCA) business plan for 2022-23. The MCA does vital work to save lives at sea, regulate ship standards and protect the marine environment. The Agency will be playing its part in encouraging and enabling the industry to move towards zero carbon emissions from shipping and to prepare the way to regulate the safety of autonomous shipping.

The business plan sets out how the Agency will:

1. build on its success as one of the world's best performing flag and coastal states, with a modern and progressive approach to how it regulates;
2. promote the unlocking of sustainable growth in the maritime economy through support for the new Shipping Concierge Service; and
3. continue the provision of its high-quality search and rescue capability, as well as the survey and inspection of ships

At the international level, the MCA will work alongside other Government departments to represent the UK's interests at the International Maritime Organization.



The work of the MCA will contribute to the success of the Department for Transport's Maritime 2050 strategy and its Transport Decarbonisation Plan

The business plan will be available on GOV.UK and copies will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

## ■ Transport Update

**Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):**

[\[HCWS62\]](#)

The UK Government is grateful to Sir Peter Hendy for his Union Connectivity Review. We are considering his recommendations carefully, and have been working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Executive and key stakeholders, to identify the solutions that work best for the people of the UK. We expect to publish the UK Government's response later this year.

Several of the Union Connectivity Review recommendations concern ongoing projects, which may be impacted by the Union Connectivity Review response. The A1 Morpeth to Ellingham scheme is one such case, as it relates to Sir Peter's recommendation for a multimodal study of the East Coast Corridor to identify the best opportunities for improvement. We therefore propose to consider how best to align the future progression of the scheme with our consideration of this recommendation and the outcome of any study that may be proposed.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Fraud and Error National Statistics

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery (David Rutley):**

[\[HCWS72\]](#)

The statistics for Fraud and Error in the Benefit System for the financial year ending 2022, were published Thursday 26 May 2022, at 9.30am.

The figures published today confirm the overall rate of fraud and error in 2021/22 was 4.0%, or £8.6bn. This includes a rate of fraudulent overpayments at 3.0% (£6.5bn) and a rate of claimant error at 0.7% (£1.5bn), both of which represent a small but not statistically significant increase. We successfully reduced official error, which has dropped to 0.3% (£0.7bn). This outcome largely reflects the ongoing situation of Covid where some unscrupulous people, including sophisticated organised crime groups, exploited easements we had made to prioritise payments to those who needed help.

We have always been clear that it would take time to root out this fraud. As we said last summer, our expectation for these fraud and error results was that they would be broadly similar to last year as the caseload still contained many cases from the early days of the pandemic. This is still the case. Overall though, we have successfully contained fraud in UC at a time when fraud in society has been increasing, but there is more to do.

That is why we are taking action. Last week, we published our ambitious plan – ‘Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System’ – to prevent, deter and detect fraudsters and protect taxpayers’ money.

The plan sets out how we will deploy 1,400 more staff in our counter-fraud teams, establish a new 2,000-strong team dedicated to reviewing existing Universal Credit claims and develop an enhanced data analytics package to prevent and detect fraud. These initiatives are possible thanks to a 3-year additional investment of £613m, which we estimate will stop £2.1bn of loss in fraud and error over the next three years. The plan also sets out our intention to bring forward new powers, when Parliamentary time allows, to investigate potential fraud and punish fraudsters.

Today’s release also includes data on the State Pension. The overpayment rate for State Pension was 0.1%, the total underpayment rate was 0.5%. This includes very small value uprating errors, the vast majority being 1 or 2 pence a week. These small errors are the result of an historical issue first identified several decades ago and which has now been recorded in these statistics for the first time. Additionally, a small number of State Pension errors have also been identified relating to incorrect National Insurance records which are administered by HMRC. DWP is supporting HMRC’s investigations into whether these are isolated cases. We will provide a further update when we have more information.