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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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Maternity Action

Wera Hobhouse: [\[6864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with relevant stakeholders on the removal of Maternity Action from the Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board.

Paul Scully:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy engages regularly with the Government Equalities Office on a range of issues. The Government Equalities Office is a member of the Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board.

■ Natural Gas: Storage

Craig Mackinlay: [\[4657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to facilitate an expansion of the UK's gas storage facilities in advance of winter 2022-23.

Greg Hands:

The diversity of Great Britain's sources of gas supply obviates a reliance on natural gas storage. This distinguishes Great Britain from some European countries which have a relative larger storage capacity than Great Britain.

The Government is continuing to explore the future of the gas storage landscape, including in relation to hydrogen. The UK Hydrogen Strategy considers the role of hydrogen storage in greater detail and whether further regulation or support mechanisms are needed to maximise its potential.

■ Offshore Industry: North Sea

Caroline Lucas: [\[4538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of Shell developing the Jackdaw gas field with the (a) decarbonisation targets for industry as described in the North Sea Transition Deal, (b) UK's carbon budgets and net zero target and (c) UK's obligations and commitments towards international climate targets.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton on 18 May 2022 to Questions [417](#) and [418](#).

■ Renewable Fuels

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[4486]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of HVO fuels on the Government's net-zero emissions target.

Greg Hands:

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is one type of biofuel which can be used to replace fossil diesel. HVO has been eligible for support under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) scheme for more than a decade. In 2020, 38 million litres of biodiesel of HVO were supplied under the RTFO in the UK. As part of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, the Department for Transport committed to work with stakeholders to review the role of biofuels in compatible vehicles and any potential measures to remove barriers to their deployment.

BEIS publishes a range of statistics on renewable energy in Energy Trends at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/energy-trends-section-6-renewables> and in DUKES at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/renewable-sources-of-energy-chapter-6-digest-of-united-kingdom-energy-statistics-dukes>.

■ Solar Power: Agriculture

Dr Dan Poulter:

[5385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the amount of agricultural land that has been taken out of food production to facilitate the development of solar farms.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises the need to preserve the UK's farmland. Planning guidance encourages solar projects to use previously developed land, and be designed to avoid, mitigate, and compensate for their impacts.

Information on the location of current solar installations is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renewable-energy-planning-database-monthly-extract>

Dr Dan Poulter:

[5386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact the development of solar farms on agricultural land on food (a) security and (b) production.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises the need to preserve the UK's farmland. Planning guidance encourages solar projects to use previously developed land, and be designed to avoid, mitigate, and compensate for their impacts.

The UK's high degree of food security is based on diversified supply, strong domestic production, and stable imports. The UK produces 60% of all the food it needs, and

74% of food that can be produced in the UK. These figures have changed little over the last 20 years. It is possible to maintain and increase food production sustainably in some areas, while seeing land use change in others.

DEFENCE

■ African Union: Peacekeeping Operations

John Healey:

[\[4472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel are deployed with NATO troops to support the (a) African Union's peacekeeping missions and (b) training of the African Standby Force.

James Heappey:

The UK's liaison to the African Union and the NATO Military Liaison Office have a dialogue. We work with individual NATO Allies in advising the African Union (AU) and its missions such as the African Union Transition Mission (ATMIS) in Somalia. We train individual African countries that are the contributors to deployed forces on AU missions. No UK Armed Forces personnel are deployed on those missions but we do provide a Mission Support Team to ATMIS.

■ Arctic: Russia

John Healey:

[\[4469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the (a) implications for his policies of Russian military activity in the Arctic and (b) potential threat that activity poses to the UK and its NATO allies in that region.

James Heappey:

The UK recognises that, as an Arctic nation, Russia has an important presence in the region; accordingly we expect Russia to comply with international law. Over the last fifteen years, Russia has increasingly militarised its Arctic territory, it has steadily increased military activity in the region and invested in military infrastructure there, establishing a new Northern Joint Strategic Command, reopening Cold War-era bases above the Arctic Circle, and investing further in Arctic-capable equipment. Russian submarine activity in the North Atlantic has reached Cold War levels. While this activity is not, in and of itself, a breach of international law, it presents challenges which impact upon the interests of the UK, our Allies and partners, and the inhabitants of the Arctic, and to which we must be vigilant and prepared to respond.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

John Healey:

[\[5341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department plans to (a) begin and (b) complete work to remove flammable cladding from each high rise building on the defence estate that houses armed forces personnel.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) own 26 high-rise Single Living Accommodation buildings of 6 storeys and above with a type of external wall system requiring additional fire safety assessments.

Work to remediate one fully clad high-rise accommodation block, Vanguard Building at HMS Nelson, started in February 2020 and completed in March 2022.

The remaining high-rise accommodation blocks are partially-clad.

One building is already due to be replaced with a new build. A construction start date will be issued once this is finalised.

Surveys on the remaining 24 high-rise buildings, which are partially clad, are all complete. The survey results are now being assessed and are being used to determine required remedial work, after which, start and completion dates will be set.

All buildings have a current Fire Risk Assessment in place and remain legally compliant for continued occupation.

■ Arms Trade: Exports**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[7927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he is taking steps to increase the volume of land ground combat systems being exported from the UK.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) works with industry to explore export markets, opportunities, and priorities for our range of Land Ground Combat Systems. The recent release of the Land Industrial Strategy highlights the importance of the export of these systems for prosperity and interoperability with our Allies and partners around the world. The MOD is working closely with the Department for International Trade and Industry to maximise the opportunities for the UK.

■ Australia: LE TacCIS Programme**John Healey:**[\[4467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether discussions have taken place between officials in his Department and their Australian counterparts on the Battlefield Management Application.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence often has discussions with allies on capability matters these have included discussions with Australian representatives on tactical communication capabilities.

■ Cyprus: Military Bases

Andrew Rosindell: [\[6716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has undertaken a strategic assessment of the land deal with Cyprus enabling Cypriots to purchase land in the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia.

James Heappey:

Cypriots have always been able to purchase private land in the Sovereign Base Areas pursuant to Sovereign Base Areas legislation. No land deal has been entered into with the Republic of Cyprus that changes that position.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[6717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made on the acacia tree project in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas; what the area of that project is in hectares; and whether his Department has undertaken an assessment of the conservation value of that project.

James Heappey:

All acacia saligna on Ministry of Defence controlled land, estimated at 33 hectares, located within the Cape Pyla Special Area of Conservation (SAC), is subject to a Defence Infrastructure Organisation led management programme. This management programme includes the removal of the acacia saligna trees/shrubs and back-up control measures. As a result of a large forest fire in June 2019, up to a square kilometre of land containing significant mature acacia saligna coverage (circa 17 hectares), was burnt. Adaptations have been made in the management programme to control the acacia saligna regrowth following the fire. A draft environmental management plan for the Cape Pyla SAC aims to align land management activities, including the eradication and enduring management of the acacia saligna seedbed. Additionally, an Overseas Territories Environment and Climate funded project (DARWIN+) is in progress to evaluate options of optimising future management of areas affected by acacia saligna for efficient and effective habitat restoration.

■ HMS Protector

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[7934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days HMS Protector was at sea in each of the last five years, broken down by calendar years.

James Heappey:

The information requested is provided below:

YEAR	NUMBER OF DAYS
2017	236
2018	254

YEAR	NUMBER OF DAYS
2019	162
2020	23
2021	195

The normal operating cycle of every ship involves them entering different readiness levels depending on their programmes, periods of refit and Departmental planning requirements. In addition, these figures represent days at sea, and it should be noted that, while deployed away from the UK, ships will spend both days at sea and alongside in ports around the world.

■ KFOR

John Healey: [\[4473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel are currently deployed as part of NATO's Kosovo Force.

James Heapey:

Under Op ELGIN (Kosovo) the UK currently provides an Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Task-Unit (ISR-TU) comprising 35 personnel in support of NATO's Kosovo Force.

■ LE TacCIS Programme

John Healey: [\[5335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many milestones in production General Dynamics Missions Systems has met in relation to the Morpheus programme as of 19 May 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

The Evolve to Open Transition Partner Contract was based on agile delivery and measured against a defined set of contracted deliverable outputs. However, delivery of the first element of the MORPHEUS capability is late and the Ministry of Defence is considering the optimum route to achieve delivery of the full MORPHEUS capability.

John Healey: [\[5336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his latest assessment is of the probability that the Morpheus programme will meet its initial operating capability date.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 May 2022 to his Question 616.

Attachments:

1. [LE TacCIS Programme \[UIN 616.docx\]](#)

■ Military Bases: Lost Property

John Healey:

[\[4468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish a list of items over the value of £500 lost from Defence sites in (a) the UK and (b) overseas in the last five years.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department does not hold a central record of such items at the level requested.

The Department does routinely capture and disclose those items >£300,000 and a summary of stores losses reported as closed cases in the last the four financial years is shown below:

TITLE	FINANCIAL YEAR	VALUE OF LOSS (000)
Vehicle destroyed by fire during a training session	2016-2017	658
Physical loss of Typhoon/Tornado targeting and navigation pod – forward section	2016-2017	601
Accident involving a Puma helicopter in Afghanistan	2016-2017	543
Repairs to HMS Ambush following a collision	2017-2018	4,678
Landing craft destroyed by fire	2018-2019	580
Damage on landing to a remotely piloted aircraft	2019-2020	6,015
Medical stores damage following a power outage	2019-2020	1,896
Damage to electronic counter measures equipment	2019-2020	448
Tornado jettisoned equipment on operational sortie	2019-2020	321

A summary value and volume of all closed cases of Stores Losses is captured centrally and disclosed as part of the Departments Annual Report and Accounts.

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF CASES	VALUE OF LOSS (£000)
2016-2017	6,771	9,409

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF CASES	VALUE OF LOSS (£000)
2017-2018	6,128	14,299
2018-2019	5,609	7,496
2019-2020	5,699	18,172

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Counter Disinformation Unit

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[6720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the budget is for the Counter Disinformation Unit in 2022-23; and if it is operational as of 23 May 2022.

Chris Philp:

The Counter Disinformation Unit has been operational since March 2020. The Unit works across Government to build a picture of the scope, scale and reach of disinformation and misinformation and works with a range of partners, including social media platforms, civil society, and academia to tackle it.

The Government takes disinformation and misinformation seriously and ensures the CDU has appropriate funding to tackle it. It would not be appropriate to comment on funding levels publicly as doing so would give malign actors insight into the scale of our capabilities.

■ Internet: Self-harm

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[5350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she is taking steps to ensure that the Online Safety Bill includes a new offence of encouraging serious self-harm with malicious intent.

Chris Philp:

Under the Online Safety Bill, all in-scope services will need to remove and limit the spread of illegal content and activity online. Companies that are likely to be accessed by children will also need to protect them from harmful content, such as self-harm content. The largest sites will also be required to set out in terms of service their approach to addressing harmful content to adults and enforce these consistently.

The Government asked the Law Commission to review the criminal law for harmful communications. Following the Law Commission's final report, the government accepted the recommended communications offences and the cyberflashing offence, which are being brought into law through the Online Safety Bill. The Government is considering the remaining recommendations, including a new offence to address the

encouragement and assistance of self-harm. We will issue a full response to the Law Commission in due course.

The Government introduced the Online Safety Bill to Parliament on 17 March 2022.

■ **Media: Self-harm and Suicide**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[5351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to ensure that small and medium media platforms restrict content that promote suicide and self-harm.

Chris Philp:

All companies in scope of the Online Safety Bill will have duties to proactively prevent the spread of content encouraging or assisting suicide. They will also have to protect children from harmful suicide and self-harm content, even if it is not illegal. While duties are proportionate to the risk of harm and a service's capacity, these duties apply regardless of the size of the service.

The largest and highest risk services will also need to set out in terms and conditions their policies for addressing harmful content to adults. This will likely include types of legal content promoting self-harm.

This approach reflects the fact that this type of content is likely to cause the most harm on services with the largest audiences and a range of high-risk features, where it can spread quickly and reach large numbers of people.

■ **Platinum Jubilee 2022: British Overseas Territories**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[6707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 18 March 2022 to Question 137983, on Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: British Overseas Territories, what plans officials in her Department have to work with representatives of British Overseas Territories to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.

Chris Philp:

The UK Government encourages Overseas Territories to join in the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has issued guidance to its teams in the Overseas Territories and there are many ways Overseas Territories can get involved including Big Jubilee Lunches, tree planting, the lighting of Beacons and the competition for Civic Honours.

Overseas Territories will also be represented at key Jubilee events, and their flags are currently being flown on Parliament Square in London.

EDUCATION**■ Children: Social Services****Andrew Gwynne:****[4514]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what powers he has to compel children's services in England to improve when they have been judged by Ofsted to (a) be inadequate and (b) require improvement to be good.

Will Quince:

In line with the department's intervention policy which is set out in its 'Putting Children First' guidance, whenever Ofsted finds children's social care services to be inadequate, an adviser is provided to diagnose problems and support the local authority on its improvement journey. The guidance is available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554573/Putting_children_first_delivering_vision_excellent_childrens_social_care.pdf. The department would expect most of those local authorities to improve with support and challenge from experts.

If there is insufficient improvement in a local authority's performance, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, may issue an improvement notice. The improvement notice requires the local authority to take steps to improve its services for children, such as putting an improvement plan in place to address areas of weakness identified by Ofsted. Improvement notices may be issued as a way of forewarning a local authority of a future statutory direction if there is no improvement in its performance.

Should the local authority be unwilling or unable to comply with an improvement notice, or if ministers are not satisfied with the local authority's progress at any stage, the Secretary of State may choose to invoke his statutory powers of intervention (under Section 497A of the Education Act 1996) by issuing a statutory direction. The Secretary of State can issue directions to ensure that functions are performed to an adequate standard, such as directing the local authority to set up an improvement board or appointing a children's services commissioner to work with the local authority to help secure improvement.

A children's services commissioner is usually appointed when local authority failure is systemic (an inadequate rating across all three of Ofsted's key judgments in one report) or has become persistent (two or more inadequate judgments within five years), to determine whether the local authority has the capacity and capability to retain and improve children's social care services in a reasonable timeframe. If not, the Section 497A power can also be used to direct that children's social care services will be removed from local authority control for a period of time and transferred to a different organisation, usually a trust, in order to secure sustainable improvement.

The department's improvement programme also seeks to identify and work collaboratively with local authorities where children's services have been judged 'Requires Improvement', providing targeted support to help them improve the

services they provide to vulnerable children. The department has increased the amount of funded sector-led improvement activity that can be delivered from 2021 by expanding our cohort of strong performing local authorities to work as sector-led improvement partners.

■ Children's Play

John McDonnell:

[\[4460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to help ensure that opportunities for play will be encouraged, supported and facilitated through Early Years provision as part of covid-19 catch-up strategies; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

To support education recovery, the department is investing up to £180 million of recovery support in the early years (EY) sector. This will be used to build a stronger, more expert workforce, enabling education providers to deliver high quality teaching and help address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the youngest children, particularly those in the most disadvantaged areas. The support includes up to £153 million which will provide the opportunity for evidence-based professional development for EY practitioners.

New programmes will focus on key areas such as speech and language development, and physical and emotional development for the youngest children, for which play is an important part. The department is also investing up to £17 million for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention and up to £10 million for a second phase of the EY professional development programme in the 2021/22 academic year, targeted to support EY staff working with disadvantaged children.

The package will build on EY foundation stage reforms. These will support more effective EY curriculum and assessment, reducing unnecessary assessment paperwork so that practitioners and teachers can spend more time engaging children in enriching activities, including play, to support their learning.

■ Education and Employment

Julian Knight:

[\[5417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to (a) encourage (i) the voluntary sector and (ii) all employers to support his Department's role in the levelling up agenda; and (b) to support schools to enable young people to (i) make greater connections between their academic studies and the labour market and (ii) learn about the skills they need and potential career paths directly from employers.

Alex Burghart:

Levelling up is at the heart of the agenda to build back better after the pandemic and to deliver for every part of the UK. The department's focus is on levelling up differences in the quantity and quality of human capital between different parts of the country. To tackle our levelling up challenge we are looking to support children and

young people at every level, from support for families and childcare, through to university, and to develop skills throughout life.

The reforms set out in the Skills[1], Schools[2] and Levelling Up[3] White Papers will transform lives by giving everyone the chance to fulfil their true potential.

The department has engaged with a range of stakeholders to develop these reforms, which include reconfiguring the skills system to give employers a leading role in delivering the reforms and influencing the system to generate the skills they need to grow.

Careers guidance is an essential underpinning to these reforms, connecting people to opportunity and equipping them with the support they need to succeed. This is critical both for unlocking individual potential and for boosting the long-term economic prosperity of this country.

To support schools and young people, the department is investing £29 million this year for The Careers & Enterprise Company to support schools and colleges to implement the Gatsby Benchmarks, which describe what good practice in careers guidance looks like. This is part of a total of over £92 million investment in careers guidance for the financial year 2022/23.

Careers Hubs are local partnerships between schools, colleges, businesses, providers, and the voluntary sector, which enable the sharing of best practice to enhance careers provision. Over 3,250 (65%) schools, special schools and college institutions are part of a Careers Hub, meaning 2.3 million students are benefitting from the Careers Hub Network which is accelerating the quality of careers provision.. As the department works towards full rollout, this will increase to approximately 4,500 (90%) school and college institutions benefitting from the Careers Hub Network by August 2023.

Through the Enterprise Adviser Network, around 3,750 business professionals are working as Enterprise Advisers with schools and colleges. to strengthen careers strategies and employer engagement plans.

The Careers Leader role becoming recognised and empowered owing to over 2050 Careers Leaders receiving a fully funded training bursary by March 2022.

[1] Department for Education (2021) [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#).

[2] Department for Education (2022) [Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child](#).

[3] Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) [Levelling Up the United Kingdom](#).

■ Educational Institutions: Cybersecurity**Charlotte Nichols:****[4708]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department provides to (a) schools, (b) colleges and (c) universities on defending themselves from cyber fraudsters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department works closely with the National Cyber Crime Security Centre (NCSC) and Joint Information Systems Committee to ensure that up-to-date cyber security guidance is shared with schools, colleges, and universities, including free tools from the NCSC as part of their Active Cyber Defence programme. The department's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) has more than 9,500 member schools (43% of eligible schools in England) and is including cover for cyber incidents as standard from the 2022/23 membership years. To be eligible for RPA cyber cover, there are four key conditions that members must meet. In the event of a cyber incident, RPA members have access to a 24/7 Incident Response Service.

The department's dedicated sector cyber security function provides advice in response to cyber security enquiries and incident reports from the sector, liaising with the affected institution following an incident to advise on steps to mitigate the threat and provide guidance on recovery.

To support schools in understanding their digital environment and what secure technology they should have in place, the department is developing a core set of digital, data and technology standards. The first set of standards has been published and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-data-and-technology-functional-standard-version-1>. All schools and colleges should meet these standards, levelling up access to safe, secure, and user-friendly digital technology for teaching and administration. Standards are being developed by technical and educational experts and will cover all critical technology and infrastructure to meet business and teaching needs, including cyber security.

■ Financial Services: Education**Julian Knight:****[5420]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to increase the provision of financial education to help support the Levelling Up agenda.

Mr Robin Walker:

Levelling up is at the heart of the agenda to build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic and to deliver for every part of the UK. In education, ability is evenly spread but opportunity is not. The department aims to reduce the dependency of people's education and skills outcomes on where they live by ensuring that in every area children are able to access excellent schools, progress to high quality technical and higher education, and go on into good jobs.

Education on financial matters helps to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed. Finance education forms part of the citizenship national curriculum which can be taught at all key stages and is compulsory at key stages 3 and 4. Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>. Financial education ensures that pupils are taught the functions and uses of money, the importance of personal budgeting, money management and managing financial risk. At secondary school, pupils are taught about income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

The department has introduced a rigorous mathematics curriculum, which provides young people with the knowledge and financial skills to make important financial decisions. In the primary mathematics curriculum, there is a strong emphasis on the essential arithmetic knowledge that pupils should be taught. This knowledge is vital, as a strong grasp of numeracy and numbers will underpin pupils' ability to manage budgets and money, including, for example, using percentages. There is also some specific content about financial education, such as calculations with money.

The secondary mathematics curriculum develops pupils' understanding and skills in relation to more complex personal finance issues such as calculating loan repayments, interest rates and compound interest.

As with other aspects of the curriculum, schools have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects, so they can develop an integrated approach that is sensitive to the needs and background of their pupils. The Money and Pensions Service published financial education guidance for primary and secondary schools in England, to support school leaders to enhance the financial education currently delivered in their schools to make it memorable and impactful. This guidance is available here: <https://maps.org.uk/2021/11/11/financial-education-guidance-for-primary-and-secondary-schools-in-england/>.

The department will continue to work closely with the Money and Pensions Service and other stakeholders such as HM Treasury, to consider learning from other sector initiatives and whether there is scope to provide further support for the teaching of financial education in schools.

■ Free School Meals

Catherine West: [\[4649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with schools in England on the impact of inflation on the (a) size and (b) quality of school meals.

Catherine West: [\[4650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the cash for free school meals in primary schools, priced at £2.34 per meal.

Catherine West: [4651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of reducing free school meal portions on the development of school children.

Catherine West: [4652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans to amend the eligibility criteria for free school meals in the context of the increases in the cost of living.

Catherine West: [4653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason funding for free school meals for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 has not increased in line with inflation since that scheme was introduced in 2014.

Will Quince:

Through the benefits-related criteria, the department provides a free healthy meal to around 1.7 million children, ensuring they are well-nourished and can concentrate, learn and achieve in the classroom. Under this government, eligibility for free school meals (FSM) has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century, including the introduction of universal infant FSM, and further education FSM.

In addition, the temporary extension of FSM eligibility to some groups with no recourse to public funds that has been in place since 2020 was extended to all groups and made permanent, subject to income thresholds.

The department thinks it is right that provision is aimed at supporting the most disadvantaged, those out of work or on the lowest income. We will continue to keep all FSM eligibility under review, to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them.

The department encourages all schools to promote healthy eating and provide healthy, tasty and nutritious food and drink. Compliance with the School Food Standards is mandatory for all maintained schools including academies and free schools.

It is for schools and caterers to decide what is an appropriate portion and to balance the food served across the school week. The guidance to accompany the School Food Standards includes guidance on portion sizes and food groups and is available on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>.

Schools are responsible for the provision of school meals and may enter individual contracts with suppliers and caterers to meet this duty. The department is confident that schools will continue providing pupils with nutritious school meals as required by the School Food Standards. In recognition of cost pressures, after the National Funding Formula rates were set, we received additional funding from Her Majesty's Treasury for core schools funding in the 2022/23 financial year, which we distributed through a schools supplementary grant. As a result of this additional funding, core

schools funding for mainstream schools is increasing by 2.5 billion in 2022/23, compared to last year.

The department holds regular meetings with other government departments and with food industry representatives, covering a variety of issues including public sector food supplies. We also spend around £600 million per year ensuring around 1.3 million infants enjoy a free, healthy, and nutritious meal at lunchtime following the introduction of the universal infant free school meal policy in 2014. The per meal rate of £2.34 per child was increased in the 2020/21 financial year. The funding rate for the 2022/23 financial year will be published with the funding allocations in June.

■ Schools: Buildings

Munira Wilson: [5498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of school and college sites which pose a risk to life; and if he will publish a list of those sites.

Mr Robin Walker:

There are no open school or college buildings where the department know of an imminent risk to life. On those rare occasions where we know of buildings that do pose such a risk, immediate action is taken, ranging from partial closure and remedial works, to a complete rebuilding of the school or college.

Munira Wilson: [5499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the (a) total modelled condition need and (b) average condition need per school which was found during the Condition Data Collection programme in 2017 to 2019 in (i) each local authority area and (ii) Westminster constituency.

Mr Robin Walker:

The total modelled condition need, defined as the modelled cost of the remedial work to repair or replace all defective elements in the school estate, is £11.4 billion. Further details can be found in the report published in May 2021, which can be accessed here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/989912/Condition_of_School_Buildings_Survey_CDC1_-_key_findings_report.pdf.

The report includes a regional breakdown of both modelled condition need and average condition need per school. The department expects to publish more detailed data from the Condition Data Collection programme later this year and will set out further details in due course.

Munira Wilson: [5500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many of the schools in each (a) local authority area and (b) Parliamentary constituency that were surveyed during the 2017-19 Condition Data Collection Programme had at least one building element graded D (bad).

Mr Robin Walker:

The number of schools assessed as having at least one construction type graded D in the Condition Data Collection by i) local authority and ii) parliamentary constituency is set out in the attached documents.

The department expects to publish more detailed data from the Condition Data Collection programme later this year and will set out further details in due course.

Attachments:

1. [5500 table 1 \[5500 table CDC Local Authority.pdf\]](#)
2. [5500 table 2 \[5500 table CDC Parliamentary Constituency.pdf\]](#)

■ Schools: Finance**Mr Steve Baker:****[6747]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to increase funding for schools where English is a second language for a significant proportion of pupils; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

Overall, core schools funding is increasing by £4 billion in the 2022/23 financial year, a 7% increase in cash terms per pupil from the 2021/22 financial year. This includes an increase in mainstream school funding for 5 to 16 year olds of £2.5 billion, which is equivalent to an average 5.8% cash increase, or an average of £300 per pupil.

Through the English as an additional language (EAL) factor in the national funding formula (NFF), schools attract funding for pupils who are classed as having EAL and who have started in the state-funded education system in England within the last three years. This equates to an additional £565 per primary school pupil and £1,530 per secondary school pupil in the 2022/23 financial year, meaning the NFF will distribute a total of £410 million through the EAL factor.

At present, the NFF is used to determine how much funding is provided to each local authority in England, and it is for each local authority, to set a local formula to distribute it between schools. Individual authorities can decide whether to include an EAL factor in their local formulae, and where they do, how much that factor should distribute. The government has made clear its intention to move to a 'direct NFF', which will determine schools' budgets directly rather than through local formulae. This includes requiring all local authorities to use the NFF methodology of EAL3, meaning that all pupils with EAL that have entered the school system during the last three years will attract this funding. This will ensure that all schools in England will be guaranteed to receive funding in respect of their pupils with EAL.

■ Schools: Platinum Jubilee 2022**Stephen Morgan:****[5679]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the book being sent to schools about Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee, if he will

place a copy in the Library; and whether he made arrangements to send a copy to each of the legal deposit libraries in the UK.

Mr Robin Walker:

A copy of the commemorative book, 'Queen Elizabeth: A Platinum Jubilee Celebration', will be placed in the libraries of both Houses. I can also confirm that the publisher, DK Books, will deposit a copy with each of the legal deposit libraries in the UK.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Standards**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[4722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the SEND review, published March 2022, what plans he has to establish new national standards to meet the needs of (a) children with complex disabilities and (b) every child.

Will Quince:

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper sets out the department's proposals to improve the outcomes and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families. The proposals aim to drive national consistency in how needs are assessed, identified and met across education, health and care through the introduction of national standards. These standards are intended to set out the full range of support and provision for meeting all needs, including those of children and young people with more complex needs.

All of the proposals within the green paper are currently open to a full public consultation and the department will be listening carefully to all views expressed to ensure the policies secure department ambitions to improve outcomes and parental confidence in the system. The department is committed to ensuring everyone has the opportunity to take part in the consultation and encourages everyone to do so.

■ **Teachers: Qualifications**

Emma Hardy:

[\[4673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to ensure that the proposed new Leadership SENCo National Professional Qualification will include modules on (a) deaf awareness and (b) support for deaf children.

Will Quince:

The introduction of a leadership level National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) remains subject to consultation through the ongoing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review consultation.

For this reason, we have not yet determined the content of the potential SENCO NPQ. However, as is standard in the development of NPQs, the department will be led by the latest and best available evidence and will draw on the knowledge of sector experts to shape the qualification. This will ensure the qualification provides

SENCOs with the knowledge and skills needed to fulfil their statutory duties and ensure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

■ Vocational Guidance: Disability

Emma Hardy:

[4674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to amend careers guidance to require schools, colleges and local authorities to work together on specialist careers advice for disabled young people.

Alex Burghart:

The department has published statutory guidance for schools and colleges on providing careers guidance and statutory guidance for local authorities on their duties relating to the participation of young people in education, employment or training. Both statutory guidance documents are clear about the important role that, to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, schools, colleges and local authorities must work together to ensure that young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can access the careers advice that they need. By identifying those in need of targeted support, schools, colleges, local authorities and other agencies, can support disabled young people to make positive and well-informed choices and to participate in education or training.

Statutory guidance states that schools and colleges must co-operate with local authorities, who also have statutory functions in relation to supporting young people's participation in education and training and an important role to play through their responsibilities for SEND support services.

The participation of young people in education, employment and training statutory guidance also states that local authorities should work with schools, colleges and other post-16 providers, as well as other agencies, to support young people to participate in education or training and to identify those in need of targeted support to help them make positive and well-informed choices.

The careers statutory guidance includes an expectation that schools and colleges will use the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance to develop and improve their careers programmes. The third benchmark focusses on addressing the individual needs of each student. We expect schools and colleges to tailor careers activities and educational goals to the needs of each student, taking account of their prior knowledge and skills, the choices and transitions they face and any additional support that may be needed to overcome barriers.

The department funds The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) to increase young people's exposure to the world of work and support schools and colleges to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks. The CEC runs a Community of Practice focused on inclusion. Schools, colleges and training providers work together to support each other in their local community to work with students from disadvantaged groups, including young people with SEND, through the sharing of good practice and the development of resources.

To help more young people with SEND get into great careers we are also taking action to improve careers guidance - providing support, resources and SEND specific training for Careers Leaders and Special Educational Needs Coordinators who design and deliver inspirational careers education programmes, tailored to the needs of young people with SEND.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agricultural Products: UK Trade with EU

Michael Fabricant: [\[4461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) inspections and (b) other steps his Department is taking to ensure that (i) pests and (ii) diseases are not imported into the UK from (A) agricultural, (B) horticultural, (C) meat products and (D) other goods originating from the EU.

Victoria Prentis:

Biosecurity is a top priority for the Government, not only to protect consumers, but also to ensure that trading partners and industry have strong assurance of the UK's standards of food safety, animal and plant health.

Since 1 January 2021, the UK has put in place strict biosecurity controls on the highest risk imports of animals, animal products, plants and plant products from the EU. These controls on the highest risk goods will remain in place. We constantly review whether further safeguards are needed and have a scientific process to assess and respond to changing biosecurity threats.

Existing pre-notification requirements and the four-hour derogation for pre-notification will continue for all products of animal origin. Traders must continue to pre-notify to maintain traceability of imports and to allow UK authorities to collect essential data to inform design decisions. Traceability is vital for identifying consignments posing potential risk and allows us to properly manage any biosecurity incidents.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Legislation

Caroline Lucas: [\[4537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of post-implementation reviews of legislation his Department has undertaken on time for legislation enacted over the last 10 years.

Victoria Prentis:

Information on the number of pieces of primary and secondary legislation that have gone through post-legislative scrutiny by the department in the last ten years is not held by a central team in Defra. It would therefore incur disproportionate costs to obtain this information in full. We do have some information that we are able to provide between 2016 and 2022 which I have detailed here. We are unable to

provide information older than 2016 without incurring disproportionate costs as this information is not held in the department.

The information provided here is only held for internal administrative reasons and therefore may not be exhaustive, for example, due to machinery of government changes to departmental structure in the past decade.

Defra has 91 statutory Post Implementation Reviews (PIRs) which we were obliged to publish between 2016 and 2022. Of these,

- 29 have been completed,
 - o 9 were completed by the statutory deadline,
 - o the remaining 20 were completed late.
- 62 PIRs are currently outstanding.

A key factor in delays for those outstanding has been the need to prioritise work related to our exit from the EU and the response to the coronavirus pandemic. We are conscious the proportion of reviews completed on time is low and Defra is taking steps to address this backlog and strengthen our approach in this area and to complete future reviews on time.

■ Dogs: Electronic Training Aids

Greg Smith:

[\[3746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of a ban on electronic training collars on the number of dog attacks each year on (a) deer and (b) birds.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has considered evidence from Defra-funded research, the results of a public consultation, and information from other relevant sources to inform its policy on the use of electric shock collars for the control of dogs.

The proposed ban on the use of electric shock collars was developed after considering a broad range of factors, including the effects of such a ban. When considered alongside the academic research, the public consultation responses, and direct engagement with the sector, the Government concluded that electric shock collars present a risk to the welfare of dogs and cats and that their use should not be permitted.

Defra's statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs and Natural England's refreshed version of the Countryside Code apply to handling dogs in the vicinity of livestock and outline the actions that can be taken by dog owners to reduce the occurrence of attacks or chasing.

The livestock worrying measures in the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, which is currently before Parliament, introduce further protections including in relation to enclosed deer and enclosed birds, including poultry and game birds.

■ Fisheries

Anna Firth: [\[4740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans to consult Parliament on the future direction of UK fisheries management before publishing the final Joint Fisheries Statement in November 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

The Fisheries Act 2020 requires each fisheries policy authority to lay a copy of the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) consultation draft before the appropriate legislature. This requirement was met on 17 January 2022. In parallel, the JFS was published for public consultation on 18 January.

Both parliamentary scrutiny and the consultation process concluded on 12 April. However, owing to the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly, scrutiny in Northern Ireland concluded on 25 March. Between now and November, we will be amending the JFS draft. During this time, Ministers remain open to engaging with Parliamentarians in the process to finalise the JFS.

■ Renewable Fuels: Air Pollution

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[4487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of HVO fuel on levels of air pollution.

Jo Churchill:

Defra's independent Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) published a report entitled: "Road Transport Biofuels: Impact on UK Air Quality" in 2011. AQEG recently reviewed this report and were confident its conclusions were still valid.

■ Rights of Way

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[5327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timeframe is for implementing secondary legislation to reform rights of way.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has decided to take forward a streamlined package of measures to implement rights of way reform including repealing the 2026 cut-off date to record historic rights of way, as well as giving landowners the right to apply to divert or remove rights of ways in specific circumstances. These measures, along with accompanying guidance, will be implemented as soon as reasonably practicable.

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive

Caroline Lucas: [\[4536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department plans to (a) publish (i) the remaining standards for the Sustainable Farming

Incentive and (ii) the advanced level for the existing standards under the scheme and (b) open those schemes for applications from farmers.

Victoria Prentis:

In March 2021, we revealed the eight standards that were going to be piloted in the Sustainable Farming Incentive pilot agreements. These are now live and the learning from the pilot is being fed into the design of the live scheme.

In December 2021, we published an indicative timetable for when we expect future elements of the scheme to roll out. The scheme will launch later this year with core elements of the Sustainable Farming Incentive, expanding those elements until we have the full offer available in 2025. As part of the early roll out in 2022 we will release the introductory and intermediate levels of the Arable and Horticultural Soils Standard and Improved Grassland Soils Standard, and the introductory level of the Moorland Standard, and, slightly later on, the annual health and welfare review. As indicated in the March publication of 2022, we intend to roll out the advanced levels of both soil standards in 2023 and the full moorland standard is set to be rolled out in 2024.

When the scheme launches later this year, farmers who are eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) will be eligible to apply for the Sustainable Farming Incentive. This covers most farmland in England. In later years, when we are ready to take on new customers not already registered for BPS, we will remove the BPS eligibility requirement, so a wider range of farmers will become eligible for the scheme. We do not expect to do this before 2024.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Humanitarian Aid: G7 Foreign Ministers

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[5630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to Strengthening anticipatory action in humanitarian assistance: G7 foreign ministers' statement, May 2022, published on 14 May 2022, what plans she has to increase the scale of UK resourcing for anticipatory action in humanitarian assistance.

James Cleverly:

The UK is a global leader in driving more effective approaches to crises and preventing and anticipating future shocks. The G7 foreign ministers' statement builds on commitments agreed during the UK Presidency in 2021, including the first ever G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crisis Compact. We are one of the largest donors to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which is pioneering initiatives on anticipatory action. Last year, we also provided funding to the Red Cross and civil society to strengthen anticipatory approaches to humanitarian assistance.

Scaling up this kind of activity is not just about support to the humanitarian system, and that is why we have also committed £120 million for regional disaster protection

schemes across Africa, the Caribbean, South-East Asia, and the Pacific. As set out in the Government's International Development Strategy, we will continue to step up our life-saving humanitarian work going forward, including by drawing on innovative finance and insurance mechanisms to better manage and anticipate humanitarian emergencies.

■ India: Religious Freedom

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[5394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had any recent discussions with Narendra Modi on the Bharatiya Janata Party's persecution of Muslims in India.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all and promoting respect and tolerance between different religious and non-religious communities. We condemn any instances of discrimination because of religion or belief, regardless of the country or faith involved. We engage with India on a range of human rights matters and where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at Ministerial level. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, also regularly speaks to the High Commissioner of India, and human rights including freedom of religion or belief forms part of that dialogue.

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions will continue to follow reports of violence and discrimination closely, while recognising that these are matters for India. It is for the Indian Government to address the concerns of all Indian citizens, regardless of faith. Our network of High Commissions across India also regularly meet religious representatives and have run projects supporting minority rights. For example, we have hosted Iftars to celebrate the important contribution Indian Muslims and other communities have made to Indian society. Moreover, we have supported a UK-India Interfaith Leadership Programme for a cohort of emerging Indian leaders of diverse faith backgrounds, creating an opportunity to exchange UK-India experiences on leading modern, inclusive communities.

■ Members: Correspondence

Anne McLaughlin:

[\[5426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when her Department plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Glasgow North East to the Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean of 11 May 2022 on the safety of a human rights activist in the Gambia.

Vicky Ford:

The letter has been responded to.

■ Press Freedom

Stuart Anderson: [\[4695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help promote media freedom globally.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to defending media freedom and continues to raise it on the global stage. Working with the Media Freedom Coalition we have issued statements condemning attacks on media freedom in Myanmar, Hong Kong and most recently in Ukraine by Russia as well as the situation of journalists in Russia itself. We are continuing to support the work of the Coalition by funding a Secretariat for two years. We are providing support to journalists in Ukraine by extending our existing three-year, £9 million project to support media freedom in Ukraine with £1 million of urgent support. We have also provided an additional £250,000 to the UNESCO Global Media Defence Fund to support journalists in Ukraine.

More widely our £3 million commitment over 5 years to support the Global Media Defence Fund has supported over 3000 journalists, 170 lawyers and 65 civil society organisations worldwide through legal assistance and other support. The UK has also provided over £500 million in ODA to support the media and the free flow of information in the past 5 years. We used our G7 Presidency to secure strong commitments, including support to the Global Media Defence Fund, improve the effectiveness of our diplomatic networks in protecting journalists, and to address the financial crisis facing media across the world.

■ Somaliland: Anniversaries

Alexander Stafford: [\[5517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department took steps to commemorate Somaliland's Independence Day on the 18 May 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The UK, in line with the rest of the international community, does not recognise Somaliland as an independent state. The UK is, nevertheless, a leading partner of Somaliland, supporting its development, security, enhancing stability and promoting economic, human and social development.

■ Sri Lanka: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund

Layla Moran: [\[6892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of whether funding from Sri Lanka's Conflict and Stabilisation and Security Fund programme has been spent on training the Sri Lankan police and security forces involved in the response to the May 2022 protests.

Vicky Ford:

The UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) has funded police training in Sri Lanka.

The British High Commission recently commissioned a review to look at the impact of UK support to the Sri Lankan police to date, identify lessons learned and make recommendations with regards to future programmes. The current project contract and CSSF programme cycle concluded on 31 March 2022. The British High Commission is considering its approach to any future CSSF programme and the review will be taken into account alongside a number of factors.

The UK Government is closely monitoring the political, economic and security situation in Sri Lanka. The Minister for South Asia, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has emphasised that violence against peaceful protestors is unacceptable. Those responsible for attacks should be held to account and fundamental rights must be protected.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Care Homes: Health Visitors****Kate Griffiths:****[4699]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to review the proposals by Rights for Residents to introduce Gloria's Law on guaranteeing a legal right to a care supporter across health and care settings.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department is considering options to legislate for visiting in adult social care settings. The guidance states that visiting in care homes should not normally be restricted and during outbreaks all care home residents should be permitted one visitor inside the care home. Where residents and relatives have concerns that this guidance is not being followed, this should be raised with the care home in the first instance. The Care Quality Commission can also investigate such complaints. Any such legislation would have the same effect as these arrangements.

The Department does not currently intend to legislate on hospital visiting. Unlike in the care sector, NHS England's national guidance sets expectations for hospital visiting. Where any issues relating to visiting arise, the Department can resolve with National Health Service colleagues to safely facilitate visiting.

■ Care Homes: Visits**Steve McCabe:****[1476]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the cost of covid-19 testing on people visiting their loved ones in care homes.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: No specific assessment has been made. Visitors to care homes are asked to take precautions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe, in line with guidance for the rest of the population. 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.

Doctors: Training**Sarah Olney:**[\[6861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) improve retention of student doctors and (b) ensure that they receive adequate funding throughout their studies.

Edward Argar:

Health Education England is working with medical schools and university infrastructure to provide academic support and pastoral care to ensure students can successfully complete their course. In years one to four of an undergraduate course, domestic students can access student loans from Student Finance England. From year five of an undergraduate course and year two of a graduate-entry course, the non-repayable NHS Bursary can be accessed. This comprises payment for tuition fees, a non-means-tested grant and a further means-tested award. These funding arrangements are reviewed annually.

Genito-urinary Medicine**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[6910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish a new sexual and reproductive health strategy; and whether he plans to include in that strategy an assessment of the potential merits of including a requirement to return levels of face-to-face testing at sexual health clinics to pre-covid-19 outbreak levels.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 26 May 2022]: We are developing a new sexual and reproductive health strategy for England, which we plan to publish this year. The strategy will set out plans to work with system partners to ensure the availability of a blended service delivery model, including face-to-face as well as digital services. The strategy will not include a formal assessment of or a requirement to return to pre-COVID-19 levels of in-person testing at sexual health clinics. It is the responsibility of local authorities to determine and commission the blend of service access to suit the population.

■ Gynaecological Cancer: Preventive Medicine

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[4516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the UK's record of preventing gynaecological cancers in comparison to other European countries, including (a) North Macedonia, (b) France and (c) Germany.

Maria Caulfield:

No such assessment has been made by the Department.

■ Gynaecology: Waiting Lists

Colleen Fletcher: [\[270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of gynaecology waiting lists in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last three years; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce the size of waiting lists for gynaecology services in those areas.

Colleen Fletcher: [\[271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many gynaecology patients in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England have been waiting for more than a (i) one and (ii) two years for hospital treatment.

Colleen Fletcher: [\[272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of endometriosis patients in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England waiting for elective treatment; what assessment he has made of average waiting times for such patients in those areas; and what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for endometriosis patients waiting for elective treatment.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: Information on the number of endometriosis patients and waiting times is not collected in the format requested. While the National Health Service collects data on patients awaiting treatment for gynaecological conditions, it does not separately record the specific condition such as endometriosis. There are currently 481,083 patients on gynaecology waiting lists in England, including for endometriosis. The average median waiting time for gynaecological treatment was 14 weeks.

In 2019/20 gynaecology waiting lists remained stable in England with an average of approximately 284,000 patients waiting for treatment each month. In 2020/21, the waiting list increased by more than 40% due to the impact of the pandemic, with a reduction in this growth of 25% in 2021/22. As of March 2022, 26,223 patients had waited one year or more for gynaecology treatment in England, with 797 patients waiting two years or more.

We have invested £520 million to improve access to general practitioners (GP) during the pandemic. This is in addition to £1.5 billion in 2020 to create an

additional 50 million GP appointments by 2024, which will improve access for patients with endometriosis.

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' outlines how the NHS will reduce waiting times across all elective services. The plan commits to eradicate all waiting times of longer than a year for elective care by March 2025, except in the case of patient choice.

We are providing more than £8 billion over the next three years, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund already available, to increase elective activity. We are also increasing capacity for gynaecological surgery through the Getting It Right First Time 'High Volume Low Complexity' programme. In the West Midlands, recovery plans are in place which include demand and capacity modelling. Patients with symptoms of endometriosis will be prioritised based on clinical need. In Coventry and Warwickshire, the local NHS has committed to ensure that no patients will wait more than 104 weeks by the end of June 2022. The NHS-led Provider Collaborative has identified endometriosis as a priority area and recently established a group to develop further initiatives to reduce waiting times for endometriosis patients.

■ Health and Care Act 2022

Sir Mike Penning:

[5370]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the power that he gained under the Health and Care Act 2022 will come into force; when secondary legislation will be laid in the event that regulations are needed to implement that power; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The Health and Care Act 2022 gained Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 and the Department is now commencing specific provisions to establish statutory arrangements for integrated care systems from 1 July 2022. A commencement Statutory Instrument was published on 6 May 2022 to enable NHS England and Improvement to undertake preparatory steps to achieve this aim.

The Department intends to commence other sections of the Act relating to the establishment of integrated care systems on 1 July 2022 and lay associated regulations to come into force on the same day. Further key provisions of the Health and Care Act 2022, including but not limited to the Secretary of State's Power of Direction over NHS England and NHS Improvement are also intended to come into force on 1 July. The Department intends to commence other provisions later in 2022/23 .

■ Health Professions: Migrant Workers

Philip Davies: [\[5374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of medical professionals from overseas seeking employment in the UK have taken the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test in each of the last three years.

Philip Davies: [\[5376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many medical professionals from overseas have failed (a) part one and (a) part two of the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test in each of the last five years, by country of origin.

Philip Davies: [\[5378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many medical professionals from overseas are waiting to take the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test as of 19 May 2022.

Philip Davies: [\[5379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many complaints against medical professionals from overseas were not resolved within six months in each of the last three years.

Edward Argar:

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of all medical doctors practising in the United Kingdom which sets and enforces the standards all doctors must adhere to. The GMC is responsible for operational matters, including investigating complaints received about medical professionals and the administration of the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) tests.

The GMC has advised that the percentage of non-UK qualified doctors obtaining registration using the PLAB pathway was 42% in 2019; 40% in 2020; and 40% in 2021. The information on the number of overseas medical professionals is not held in the format requested. However, the attached table shows the number of failed sittings of part one and part two of the PLAB test by medical professionals from overseas in each of the last five years, by country of where the primary medical qualification was obtained.

As of 20 May 2022, there are 10,741 doctors with a current booking to sit the PLAB1 and 7,831 doctors with a PLAB2 exam place.

The GMC has advised that the information on the number of complaints resolved within six months is not available in the format requested. The GMC's internal target is for complaints to be resolved within 12 months. Of the complaints the GMC received in 2018 which did not meet the GMC's internal 12-month closure target, 370 or 4.3% related to doctors with a non-UK primary medical qualification. Of complaints received in 2019, this was 460 or 5.2% and 354 or 4.2% in 2020. This includes all potential outcomes of a complaint – from closure at triage if the complaint did not

meet the threshold for investigation, to full investigation with an outcome at a Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service hearing.

Attachments:

1. TABLE [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE [Table for PQ 5376 - PLAB fail numbers - formatted \(1\).xlsx](#)]

■ **Health: Homelessness**

Caroline Lucas: **[5384]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he will include the health of homeless people and inclusion health in the forthcoming Health Disparities White Paper; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

The forthcoming health disparities white paper will set out measures to address preventable illness, the causes of ill-health and access to diagnostic and treatment services. The specific policy content will be confirmed in due course.

■ **Hospitals: Car Parks**

Mike Amesbury: **[8135]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the reintroduction of hospital car parking charges on NHS staff who have no other means of getting to work; and if he will take steps to permanently exempt hospital car parking charges for NHS staff.

Edward Argar:

No assessment has been made. Free parking in hospital car parks for National Health Service staff was temporarily introduced for the duration the pandemic. This measure ended from 1 April 2022. However, 97% of NHS trusts which charge for car parking have implemented free parking for those in greatest need, including NHS staff working overnight.

■ **Kidney Diseases: Medical Treatments**

Chris Green: **[6795]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to recommendation 1g of the 2021 Renal Medicine GIRFT Programme National Specialty Report, what steps his Department is taking to minimise (a) regional and (b) local variation in uptake of treatments for renal disease, particularly among ethnic minorities.

Edward Argar:

We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement to implement the recommendations in the report through the Renal Services Transformation Programme. The programme aims to ensure equity of access to services, by understanding and addressing health inequalities.

NHS Blood and Transplant is currently developing a strategy for the next decade and has committed to improving equity of access across barriers of social deprivation and ethnicity for treatments involving transplants. NHS England and NHS Improvement and the renal professional societies have established the Kidney Quality Improvement Partnership to identify and reduce unwarranted variation in care at a local, regional and national level.

■ Learning Disability: Social Services

Rachael Maskell: [\[6822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the provision of social care for people with learning difficulties.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific assessment has been made. However, under the Care Act 2014 local authorities have a duty to shape local care markets to ensure a diverse range of high quality, sustainable, person-centred care and support services are provided. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitor, inspect and regulate services to ensure that fundamental standards of quality and safety are met. As of May 2022, 84% of all social care settings were rated good or outstanding by the CQC. From April 2023, the CQC will review the performance of local authorities' delivery of the duties under the Care Act. We will publish a Building the Right Support Action Plan to bring together actions across the Government and systems to strengthen community support, including social care, for people with a learning disability. This will be published in due course.

■ Medical Equipment: Children and Young People

Ed Davey: [\[3453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to implement care pathways for the provision of equipment for children and young people with complex needs, similar to those provided for under the Joint Protocol for the Provision of Children's Equipment in Scotland.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 23 May 2022]: There are currently no plans to do so. The provision of services to meet the medical and healthcare needs of children and young people with complex needs is the responsibility of the local National Health Service. This includes the provision of any medical equipment, such as special beds, bed equipment, hoists and aids to help with incontinence, mobility or hearing. NHS Supply Chain are the main provider of equipment and consumables, although providers are free to source from other suppliers.

Under the Care Act 2014, the local authority is responsible for providing any non-medical care services a child or young person is assessed as needing. This could include equipment for daily living. The provision of such equipment is subject to a

Care Act Assessment of needs by the relevant local authority, which is strength-based and seeks to optimise independence and safety.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Robert Largan: [\[5512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak dated 28 March 2022, reference RL36693.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 26 May 2022.

■ **Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[5352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of psychological services within a reasonable time frame.

Gillian Keegan:

No formal assessment has been made. However, we have introduced waiting time standards for children and young people's eating disorder services, early intervention in psychosis services and the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme.

In February, NHS England and NHS Improvement published the outcomes of the consultation on five new access and waiting time standards for mental health services. We are now working with NHS England and NHS Improvement on further actions. In addition, we are investing £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24 to enable an extra two million people in England to access National Health Service-funded mental health support.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[5353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the impact the waiting period to see a therapist in the NHS has on the likelihood of patients seriously harming (a) themselves and (b) others.

Gillian Keegan:

No recent assessment has been made. However, all National Health Service mental health providers have established 24 hours a day, seven days a week urgent mental health helplines. We will also publish a new long-term plan for suicide prevention later this year. We are investing at least £2.3 a year by 2023/24 to supporting an additional two million people in England to access NHS-funded mental health services.

■ Mental Illness: Coronavirus

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[5355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle higher levels of mental ill health following the covid-19 outbreaks.

Gillian Keegan:

We have committed to invest at least £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24 to allow an additional two million people to access National Health Service mental health services, supported by an additional 27,000 mental health professionals. In 2021/22, we provided an additional £500 million to target groups whose mental health have been most affected by the pandemic including those with severe mental illness, young people and frontline staff. The Government has also launched a public call for evidence to support the development of a new cross-Government 10 year plan for mental health, which is open until 7 July 2022.

■ Mother and Baby Units

Rachael Maskell:

[\[2559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that babies remain with their birth mothers in supported environments when those mothers require additional support to care for their babies after a period in an assessment unit.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[2560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that sufficient places are available in mother and baby units in (a) York, (b) Yorkshire and (c) England.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[2561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason mothers in a mother and baby assessment unit are not (a) pre-warned of the (i) removal of their baby and (ii) reasons for that removal and (b) given the means by which the issues of concern can be addressed.

Gillian Keegan:

Wherever possible, social workers will ensure that babies remain with their birth parents in residential family centres and supported environments, unless there is a safeguarding risk to either mother or child. Local service commissioners in England are expected to ensure that there are sufficient places available in residential family centres to meet the needs of the local population, including in Yorkshire. The Care Act 2014 stipulates that local authorities should ensure adequate provision for the population, to support health and wellbeing.

Where a safeguarding concern exists and a local authority determines that a child is at risk of harm from its parent, it may take the action to remove the child. Further analysis is required to understand the impact of removal on both parent and child,

including pre- and post-support, to improve the experience of parents whose child is removed.

■ NHS Trusts: Surgery

Wes Streeting:

[2573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many surgical hubs there are in each NHS Trust in England; and if he will publish their location.

Edward Argar:

There are currently 91 elective surgical hubs operational in England. The locations of future hubs are not yet confirmed. However, systems and regions will submit bids to NHS England and NHS Improvement to determine where these will be based.

The existing hubs are located at the following National Health Service trusts and foundation trusts, which states where a trust has more than one hub.

- Ashford and St Peter's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Barts Health NHS Trust (2 hubs);
- Blackpool Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust;
- Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
- Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
- Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
- Croydon Health Services NHS Trust;
- Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust;
- East Lancashire Hospital NHS Trust (2 hubs);
- Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust;
- George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust;
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (3 hubs);
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust;
- Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust;
- King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Lancaster Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;

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- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (2 hubs);
 - London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust;
 - Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust;
 - Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
 - Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust;
 - Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
 - North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust;
 - Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
 - Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (4 hubs);
 - Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
 - Pennine Acute Hospital NHS Trust (2 hubs);
 - Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust;
 - Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
 - Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust;
 - Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust;
 - Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
 - Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust;
 - Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust;
 - Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust;
 - Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (3 hubs);
 - Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
 - South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (2 hubs);
 - St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
 - The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
 - The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
 - The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust;
 - The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust;
 - United Lincolnshire Hospital NHS Trust;
 - University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
 - University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust;
 - University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust;
 - University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (2 hubs);

- University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust;
- University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust (4 hubs);
- University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (2 hubs);
- University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust;
- University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust;
- Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust;
- West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Whittington Health NHS Trust;
- Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Wroughton, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust; and
- York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;

■ NHS: Dental Services

Mike Amesbury:

[\[3716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of reports that 90 per cent of dental practices in England are closed to new NHS routine patients; and what steps are being taken to tackle that matter.

Maria Caulfield:

These reports are based upon self-reporting by dental practices on appointment availability via NHS.UK. NHS Digital has written to practices to ensure that online information is updated to allow patients to access National Health Service dental care. Dental patients are not required to be registered with a practice other than during a course of treatment and there are no geographical restrictions on where a patient can access NHS dentistry.

■ NHS: Disclosure of Information

Wes Streeting:

[\[8074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost to the NHS has been of non-disclosure agreements signed within the NHS since 2014.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Pathology

Feryal Clark: [\[5507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the capacity of pathologists to tackle the backlog in elective care related to the covid-19 outbreak.

Feryal Clark: [\[5508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support pathologists in their work to clear the backlog in elective care.

Edward Argar:

As of January 2022, there are 2,854 full time equivalent consultants working in the specialty group of pathology in National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups in England. This is an increase of 1.6% since January 2021 and 21.7% since January 2010.

At the Spending Review, the Department announced £2.3 billion to increase the volume of diagnostic activity and to establish up to 160 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) by March 2025. The NHS and Health Education England (HEE) are developing a plan to ensure sufficient workforce capacity for CDCs and the appropriate roles. NHS England and NHS Improvement aim to increase capacity by improving workforce productivity through digital diagnostic investment. This is projected to deliver an approximate 10% increase in productivity and accelerate testing and the sharing of results via digital patient health records. All reporting clinicians in pathology and imaging services will have access to the latest technology for primary diagnosis. This will reduce delays in diagnostic pathways and enable rapid access to a specialist opinion.

All NHS staff, including pathologists, have access to mental health hubs, access to free self-help apps, as well as training, coaching and guidance for teams and leaders.

■ Protective Clothing: Storage

Angela Rayner: [\[5663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average cost to the public purse of warehouse storage of personal protective equipment by his Department is per month.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 May 2022]: The average cost is £16.4 million per month.

■ Surgery: Training

Wes Streeting: [\[2577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure surgical trainees can access training opportunities in order to progress their training.

Edward Argar:

In 2021/22, Health Education England invested more than £25 million to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on speciality medical training, including surgical training. This focused on ensuring sufficient educator time and working with surgeons to identify and place trainees in areas with biggest surgical backlog to maximise training opportunities. The continued development of surgical trainees is also supported by an e-learning programme, which increases access to learning and improves knowledge retention. Specific courses have been designed to aid the rapid acquisition of skills, with surgical trainees having access to cadaveric courses and surgical simulation training programmes to supplement the delivery of the practical curriculum.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Trade Barriers**

Gareth Thomas: [\[4458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many trade barriers to UK exporters were (a) identified on the Digital Market Access Service database and (b) resolved in each year since 2010; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[4459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many trade barriers to UK importers were (a) identified on the Digital Market Access Service database and (b) resolved in each year since 2010; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[5311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many trade barriers to UK exporters have been recorded on the Digital Market Access Service (DMAS) database (a) in total and (b) by each region of the UK in each year since its launch; and if she will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[5312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many trade barriers, to UK importers, by region of the UK were (a) identified on the Digital Market Access Service database and (b) resolved in each year since 2019; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Digital Market Access Service (DMAS) is used to record the barriers that British businesses face when exporting to and investing in overseas markets.

Since the launch of DMAS in early 2019, a total of 1099 and 787 pre-existing trade barriers were registered in 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively.

In those same years, 181 barriers across 61 countries and 217 barriers across 74 countries were resolved respectively.

Our statistics and analysis are at a national level.

JUSTICE**■ Alcoholic Drinks: Young Offenders**

Rachael Maskell: [\[4621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for children and young people who end up in the criminal justice system, what steps is he taking to divert them away from alcohol use, rather than taking a punitive approach.

Victoria Atkins:

On 20 May, the Government announced £300 million of funding over the next three years to support every council in England and Wales in preventing youth offending. The funding will help children and young people to address the root cause of their offending, and divert them away from courts and custody wherever possible. This includes where their offending is due to alcohol or other substance misuse.

There are several other options available to Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to address problematic substance misuse where this is a driver of offending. Many YOTs offer short programmes giving advice and education about alcohol or cannabis use, as well as one-to-one sessions to address more habitual drug use. Interventions to address substance misuse are available both on a voluntary basis and when applied as a condition to a caution or an order to address specific offences.

■ Criminal Liability

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[5348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has plans to reform the use of automatism as a legal defence.

James Cartlidge:

The Government has no current plans to bring forward legislative proposals in relation to this defence but it will be kept under review.

■ Family Proceedings: Expert Evidence

Ellie Reeves: [\[5483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what (a) qualifications and (b) verification a witness must demonstrate to present as an expert witness in the family court.

Tom Pursglove:

Section 13 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes provision in relation to the control of expert evidence in children proceedings. An expert may only be instructed to provide evidence in proceedings relating to children with the permission of the court. This legislation is underpinned by detailed rules of court practice and procedure set out in the Family Procedure Rules 2010 and supporting Practice Directions. Practice Direction 25B includes a duty on experts to comply with specified standards, including evidencing their relevant experience and a requirement to be up-to-date with continuing professional development appropriate to their discipline and

expertise. If the expert's area is regulated by a UK statutory body, they must confirm possession of a current licence to practice or equivalent. If the area is not so regulated, then they must demonstrate appropriate qualifications and/or registration with a relevant professional body.

The President of the Family Division has published a memorandum on experts in the family court. The memorandum restates the principles applied by the Family Court when it considers whether to authorise or admit expert evidence as well as noting that experts should only be instructed when to do so is 'necessary' to assist the court in resolving issues justly. The Family Justice Council has also produced guidelines on the instruction of medical experts from overseas in family cases. This sets out a series of recommendations for the process of instructing an expert and ensuring they have the appropriate experience.

■ Roads: Accidents

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[5347]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to improve access to justice for road crash victims and their families.

James Cartlidge:

In relation to a civil claim for personal injury, Official Injury Claim (OIC), an accessible self-service, online service, was launched in May 2021 in partnership with the Motor Insurers Bureau. This service enables those who suffer injury as a result of a road traffic accident to claim up to £5000 in damages, with or without the need for legal representation.

The service and its accompanying guidance have been carefully designed with the claimant firmly at their heart. A dedicated telephone customer support centre is also available, with trained assistants to guide users through any questions or issues they may have about the process of completing a claim. Since May 2021, around 240,000 claims have been made on the OIC service.

For claims above £5000 the existing Claims Portal should be used. Information about these reforms and the OIC service can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whiplash-reform-programme-information-and-faq>.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Coalfields Regeneration Trust

Stephanie Peacock:

[5478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his oral contribution of 2 February 2022, Official Report, column 328, in respect of meeting the hon. Member for Barnsley East and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, when that meeting is planned to take place.

Neil O'Brien:

My office have contacted the Hon Member to arrange a meeting.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[6938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether the thank you payment from the Homes for Ukraine Scheme will be made available to British residents who are providing accommodation to their own relatives fleeing Ukraine.

Eddie Hughes:

The £350 "thank you" payment is only available to sponsors on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. This includes guests sponsored by a relative through that scheme.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Vetting**Caroline Lucas:**[\[4533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, if he will make an estimate of the average length of time taken for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for hosts after the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in their homes in the most recent period for which data is available; whether he has set a target for the timescale for processing DBS checks; what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the provision of support to local authorities to (a) fulfil safeguarding duties relating to the scheme and (b) respond to cases of homelessness where placements breakdown; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

The government will expand the data publication on the Homes for Ukraine scheme in due course.

Refugees: Ukraine**Rachael Maskell:**[\[6821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to ensure that refugees from Ukraine are adequately housed after six months of residing with a host family.

Eddie Hughes:

We are exploring options to find suitable long-term accommodation for Ukrainians. We will provide an update in due course.

TRANSPORT**Aviation: Northern Ireland****Jim Shannon:**[\[7978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps with airline companies to help reduce the cost of flights from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises how vital aviation is to maintaining connectivity between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We are supporting connectivity across the union, through a 50% cut in Air Passenger Duty on domestic flights from April 2023, as well as our support for the PSO connecting Londonderry to London.

Air travel between Northern Ireland and Great Britain is provided by a competitive market and fares are a commercial decision for airlines, based on several factors.

Rapid Transit Systems and Trams: York**Rachael Maskell:**[\[5438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he taking to increase the use of light rail and trams; and what plans he has to enable cities, such as York, to establish that infrastructure.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government has provided more than £260 million in funding to support light rail systems in England outside London over the pandemic. And the Department continues to work with those Local Authorities to increase patronage as people return to public transport.

It is for local authorities to determine the right transport solution for their area. And Government continues to enable significant investment in local transport through devolved funding packages to cities, such as the £2.5 billion Transforming Cities Fund and the £5.7bn City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement.

Tolls: Roads**John Nicolson:**[\[5421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many fines were issued on toll roads that (a) operate toll plazas and (b) require the driver to pay (i) in advance and (ii) after travelling in 2021-22.

Trudy Harrison:

All current tolled roads, bridges and tunnels in England are locally or privately operated, and the Department does not hold data on fines issued by those undertakings. The only road operated by National Highways where a road user charge is applied is the A282 Dartford Crossing; drivers must pay this charge beforehand or by midnight the day after crossing. In 2021-22, 2,154,092 penalty charge notices were issued for non-payment of the Dart Charge.

TREASURY**■ Car Allowances****Ronnie Cowan:**[\[5429\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has plans to increase the business mileage rate for motorists.

Helen Whately:

The Government sets Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs) to minimise administrative burdens. AMAPs aim to reflect running costs including fuel, servicing and depreciation. Depreciation is estimated to constitute the most significant proportion of the AMAPs.

Employers are not required to use the AMAPs. Instead, they can agree to reimburse the actual cost incurred, where individuals can provide evidence of the expenditure, without an Income Tax or National Insurance charge arising.

Alternatively, they can choose to pay a different mileage rate that better reflects their employees' circumstances. However, if the payment exceeds the amount due under AMAPs, and this results in a profit for the individual, they will be liable to pay Income Tax and National Insurance contributions on the difference.

The Government keeps this policy under review.

■ Cost of Living: Disability**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[4686\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support disabled people who are disproportionately affected by the rising cost of living.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government understands that the rising cost of living has presented additional financial challenges to many people, and especially to the most vulnerable members of society, such as disabled people. That is why this government announced on 26th May a new Cost of Living package, providing over £15bn of support targeted particularly at those with the greatest need. This package builds on the over £22bn already announced, bringing total government support for the Cost of Living to over £37bn this year. The latest package includes additional UK-wide support to help disabled people with the particular extra costs they are facing, with 6 million people who receive non-means-tested extra-costs disability benefits due to receive a one-off Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150. This payment can be received in addition to the other Cost of Living Payments for households on means-tested benefits or in receipt of Winter Fuel Payments. Disabled people will also benefit from the £400 of support for energy bills that the government is providing through an expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme, doubling the £200 of support announced earlier this year and making the whole £400 a grant that will not be recovered through higher bills in future years.

■ Renewable Fuels: Excise Duties

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[4484\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a rebate on HVO fuels for the affordability of that fuel compared to diesel.

Helen Whately:

Hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) continues to be taxed at the same rate as diesel. As with all taxes, the Government keeps the tax treatment of HVO under review.

There are no plans at present to change treatment as the Government uses the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) to incentivise the use of low carbon fuels and reduce emissions from fuel supplied for use in transport and non-road mobile machinery. HVO is eligible for Renewable Transport Fuel Certificates under the RTFO, and is eligible to receive twice the reward in certificates under this scheme where it is produced from waste.

WALES

■ Veterans: Mental Health

Stuart Anderson:

[\[5682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps his Department is taking in cross-government policy to improve the mental wellbeing of veterans.

Simon Hart:

On 1 March 2022, the Minister for Defence People and Veterans and I jointly announced that we would be appointing Colonel James Phillips as the Veterans' Commissioner for Wales, thereby ensuring that all parts of the UK have an independent voice representing the interests of veterans. In this role, Colonel Phillips will engage with veterans and their families, listen to their needs and aspirations and identify areas for positive change. The appointment of Colonel Phillips is an important step forward in supporting ex-service personnel in Wales – including with mental wellbeing - and an integral part of meeting our ambition of making the United Kingdom the best place in the world to be a veteran.

The provision of mental health services is devolved to the Welsh Government. The Office of Veterans Affairs are supporting veterans' mental health in England through Op COURAGE. It has engaged extensively with the Welsh Government throughout the development of the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan. The Plan brings forward commitments in a variety of areas, including mental wellbeing.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Personal Pensions

Matt Vickers:

[\[6951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to help people understand their personal 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 into force on 01 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.

DWP regulates for trust-based workplace pensions. Individual and other personal pensions within the contract-based market are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

■ Social Security Benefits

Sarah Olney:

[\[6859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the closure of 41 of her Department's facilities on the ability of people to access benefit support.

Mims Davies:

The changes the Department is making to estates will both improve the working environment for staff, become greener by becoming smaller, helping meet the Government's carbon reduction target, and provide value for money for the taxpayer.

The announcement made by the Department on 17 March does not impact Jobcentres and customer facing services – or the ability of customers to access benefit support. Rather, it is about consolidating back-office DWP functions into fewer sites.

Where possible, staff will be moved to alternative locations. Each colleague will have a discussion with their line manager to assess the impact of the move on them and if they are able to relocate. The Department's priority will be to retain, retrain and redeploy colleagues either within DWP, or within other Government Departments in the area and with no reduction in the overall services people receive.