



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 1 June 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:30 P.M., 01 June 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.

Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Freedom of Information

Ms Karen Buck:

[6679]

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the Answers of 7 April 2022 to Question 147025 and 26 April 2022 to Question 156349, on Department for Work and Pensions: Freedom of Information, if she will instruct the Government Legal Service to undertake an assessment of the basis for the Department for Work and Pensions' decision to withhold publication of the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit's report on the experiences of vulnerable people who have been claiming Universal Credit.

Alex Chalk:

No investigation will be carried out by the Government Legal Profession.

If a person making a request under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) is not satisfied with a response, they may exercise their statutory rights of challenge under the Act, complaining to the ICO and then appealing to the First-tier Tribunal.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ District Heating: Regulation

Simon Jupp:

[8229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to introduce legislative proposals regulating the heat networks sector.

Greg Hands:

The Queen's Speech on 10th May confirmed that the Government has now committed to legislating to regulate the heat networks market in this parliamentary session as part of the [Energy Security Bill](#). In December 2021, the Government announced that Ofgem will take on the role of heat networks regulator.

■ Energy Company Obligation

Caroline Lucas:

[7959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish details of ECO4; when he plans for that scheme to be operational; and what steps he is taking to ensure there will be continuity with ECO3.

Greg Hands:

The response to the ECO4 consultation was published on 1 April 2022:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/design-of-the-energy-company-obligation-eco4-2022-2026>

A 3-month interim delivery phase has been introduced between 1 April – 30 June 2022, under the previous (ECO3) scheme rules, to enable delivery to continue subject to some fossil fuel heating limitations. Obligated suppliers may also choose to deliver under the new scheme rules during this period.

BEIS and the scheme administrator, Ofgem, meet and communicate regularly with obligated suppliers to provide further clarity on the scheme rules.

The Government is planning to lay regulations as soon as possible, to provide the market with legislative certainty.

■ Energy: Housing

Alexander Stafford:

[\[8235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what further steps he is taking to improve the energy efficiency of domestic buildings.

Greg Hands:

The UK has made good progress in improving energy performance of homes. 46% of homes in England are now EPC Band C or above, up from 12% in 2009.

Furthermore, Government is investing over £6.6 billion over this parliament to continue improving energy efficiency. This funding will help to deliver upgrades through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Energy Company Obligation, Local Authority Delivery and Home Upgrade Grant Schemes. The new £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme will provide upfront grants towards the cost of a heat pump or biomass boiler.

The Government is also Zero-rating VAT for the next five years on the installation of insulation and low-carbon heating.

■ Fracking

Craig Mackinlay:

[\[5672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the British Geological Survey's short report on shale gas fracturing and the modelling of seismic activity in shale rocks in the UK, as commissioned in his letter dated 5 April 2022, if he will publish the criteria for revising the seismicity limits that apply to shale gas extraction.

Greg Hands:

In 2019, the Government confirmed that the pause on the exploration of shale gas reserves in England would remain in place unless and until further evidence was provided that shale gas extraction could be carried out safely. Any exploration or development of shale gas would need to meet rigorous safety and environmental protections both above ground and sub-surface.

The Government has commissioned the British Geological Survey to advise on the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction. Unless the latest scientific evidence demonstrates that shale gas extraction is safe, sustainable and of minimal

disturbance to those living and working nearby, the pause in England will remain in place.

■ **Fuels: Prices**

Jim Shannon:

[\[6765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to mitigate the effects on consumers of rises in fuel costs.

Greg Hands:

On 26 May 2022, the Government announced a £15 billion package of cost-of-living support. This is in addition to the over £22 billion announced previously for the cost of living now totalling over £37 billion this year. This means almost eight million most vulnerable households will get £1,200 of one-off support in total this year, with all domestic electricity customers receiving at least £400.

■ **Green Deal Scheme: Complaints**

Douglas Chapman:

[\[5665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he expects the First-tier Tribunals for Green Deal scheme complaints to be concluded.

Greg Hands:

The Government is unable to anticipate when the appeals currently with the First Tier Tribunal will be completed, as the Tribunal is outside the control of the Secretary of State.

■ **Housing: Repairs and Maintenance**

Mike Amesbury:

[\[8137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the process on retrofitting homes; and if he will take steps to speed up that process.

Greg Hands:

The Government has committed to spend £6.6 billion across this Parliament to decarbonise buildings. This funding supports energy efficiency improvements through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, the Local Authority Delivery Scheme and the Home Upgrade Grant.

Through the Energy Company Obligation, the Government has also set a target for larger energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency savings by 2026. For those not eligible for Government support, the green finance offer will be improved.

The Government is also investing in training. In 2021, the £6 million BEIS Skills Training Competition resulted in 7,000 opportunities to learn retrofit skills and will be developing plans for a 2022/23 competition.

■ Insolvency Service: Cambridge**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[8020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what equality impact assessment the Government has carried out for the closure of the Insolvency Service office in Cambridge; and whether a copy of its findings can be placed in the House of Commons Library.

Paul Scully:

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

Daniel Zeichner: [\[8021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the planned closure of the Insolvency Service office in Cambridge, where interviews previously conducted by that office will be relocated to once that site closes.

Paul Scully:

Following the closure of the Cambridge Office in December 2023, interviews will be held in either a local interview facility or at one of the Insolvency Service 11 Regional Centres.

Alternatively, interviews will be conducted remotely using telephone and online channels, this is already established practice where it works for the individual and the Service.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[8022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the local Chambers of Commerce or Federation of Small Businesses were consulted on the decision to close the Insolvency Service office in Cambridge.

Paul Scully:

The Insolvency Service engaged with a number of personal and business debt advice organisations over proposals to restructure its estate for improved efficiencies. It issued a news story on GOV.UK and a social media post to advise all stakeholders of the proposals.

■ Jewellery: Hallmarking**Sir John Hayes:** [\[7905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the impact of the EU's decision to not recognise British hallmarking on (a) smiths and (b) jewellers.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[7906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues and with his EU counterparts on the EU's decision on British metal hallmarking.

Paul Scully:

The Department continues to work with the British Hallmarking Council, the jewellery trade, and the International Hallmarking Convention to ensure that UK-hallmarked items can be sold internationally without facing technical barriers to trade.

■ **Mineworkers' Pension Scheme**

Martyn Day:

[\[5668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 344, on Mineworkers' Pension Scheme, if he will publish the timeframe for mineworkers receiving full entitlement to their pensions.

Greg Hands:

Members of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme are already receiving their full entitlement plus bonus pensions.

■ **Natural Gas: Housing**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[8023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to cap the cost charged to residents who wish to remove the gas supply from their residential property.

Greg Hands:

The Government regularly engages with energy suppliers and Meter Asset Providers to understand the costs incurred by suppliers associated with meter provision, rental and removal.

Suppliers are responsible for removing a gas meter and capping the incoming gas supply when this is requested by the customer, and may choose to charge for providing this service. The costs suppliers incur from a Meter Asset Provider for removing a gas meter will differ according to their individual contractual arrangements. Customers are normally required to pay a separate charge to their gas distribution company to disconnect their gas supply from the network.

■ **Nuclear Power**

Jim Shannon:

[\[7985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of nuclear power's contribution to energy security in the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Government believes that the UK needs a diverse mix of electricity infrastructure to come forward in order to deliver a secure, reliable, affordable, and net zero consistent system in 2050.

The Energy Security Strategy seeks to ensure that the UK is one of the best places in the world to invest in nuclear and sets an ambition for deployment of civil nuclear of up to 24 GW by 2050, around 25% of our projected electricity demand.

■ Nuclear Reactors**Jim Shannon:**[\[7983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to (a) identify and (b) allocate sites for new small modular reactors.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises that there are areas across the UK with experience hosting nuclear developments and appreciates the potential benefits that these locations could offer to new nuclear projects.

The Government is developing a siting strategy, and a new National Policy Statement for nuclear electricity generation infrastructure deployable after 2025. The Government will consult on the strategy in due course.

The Government remains open to considering development proposals for projects at sites which stakeholders consider suitable, including existing nuclear sites. Any future project would be subject to planning and development consents.

■ Nuclear Reactors: Northern Ireland**Jim Shannon:**[\[7984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of deploying small modular reactors in Northern Ireland.

Greg Hands:

As outlined in the British Energy Security Strategy, the Government's long-term ambition is to increase plans for the deployment of civil nuclear power by 2050. In order to facilitate this, the Government has committed to a number of nuclear ambitions, including developing an overall siting strategy for the long term.

■ Offshore Industry: North Sea**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[6745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the development of the North Sea gas field, Jackdaw, with his Department's Energy Security Strategy.

Greg Hands:

The North Sea Transition Authority plans to launch another licensing round in the autumn, taking into account the forthcoming climate compatibility checkpoint and the need for energy security.

Development proposals for oil fields under existing licences are a matter for the regulators - the North Sea Transition Authority and the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED). OPRED's decision for Jackdaw will be made in due course.

■ Ofgem: Carbon Emissions**Alexander Stafford:**[\[8236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to reform Ofgem's statutory duty to include oversight of meeting net-zero commitments.

Greg Hands:

It is the Government's plan to publish the Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS) later this year. The SPS will detail the Government's strategic priorities and policy outcomes for energy policy, including delivering a net zero energy system while ensuring secure supplies at the lowest cost for consumers. The SPS will impose a legal obligation on Ofgem to have regard to those strategic priorities and policy outcomes when exercising its regulatory functions. Ofgem will be required to report at the outset and annually on its progress and plans for implementation.

■ Shipbuilding Credit Guarantee Scheme**Cherilyn Mackrory:**[\[8165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department has made on the implementation of the Home Shipbuilding Credit Guarantee Scheme.

Lee Rowley:

Following intensive development work and stakeholder engagement over the past few months, the Department is now finalising the scheme design, and subject to final business case approvals we intend to launch the scheme soon.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Solihull**Julian Knight:**[\[8028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will publish the data it holds on the number of households in the Solihull Constituency that received the Warm Homes Discount scheme in 2021.

Greg Hands:

Energy suppliers are responsible for providing rebates to eligible households and are only required to report on the number of rebates provided in England, Scotland and

Wales. The Government does not hold data on the number of rebate recipients by constituency.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Carla Lockhart: [\[8226\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, the total sum accrued by the Exchequer in fuel duty in each of the last 4 years.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 24 May is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_Response_PQ8226.pdf]

■ Offshore Industry: Taxation

Caroline Lucas: [\[7958\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with (a) his Deputy Chief of Staff and (b) Lynton Crosby on the potential merits of a windfall tax on oil and gas company profits; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

The Prime Minister has regular discussions with Downing Street special advisers on a wide range of issues; Sir Lynton Crosby is not a Government adviser.

I would draw the hon. Member's attention to the oral statement made by my Rt Hon Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Thursday 26 May, which announced a £15 billion package of targeted Government support to help households across the UK with the rising cost of living, and includes a temporary Energy Profits Levy on oil and gas firms.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Wigan

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[3457\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to the Transforming Wigan project in the Diocese of Liverpool, what Church Commissioners' funding has been awarded to that project since its inception in 2014.

Andrew Selous:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The Diocese of Liverpool was awarded £900,000 of Strategic Development Funding in 2014 for its Transforming Wigan project.

A full list of projects awarded Strategic Development Funding is available on the Church of England website at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/SDF%20project%20summaries%20July%202021.pdf>

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[3458]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to the Transforming Wigan project in the Diocese of Liverpool, what quantitative outcomes were envisaged as a result of the Church Commissioners' funding of that project.

Andrew Selous:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: At its outset, the project had a wide range of different metrics providing an indication of the scale and direction of change sought. These can be seen on the Project Bid Document available on the Transforming Wigan website: 1602081544.pdf (d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net) (though dioceses are not required to publish these documents). These covered increased engagement with young people, establishing new expressions of church, training for clergy and lay people, and increased financial sustainability.

Some of these goals have been significantly over-achieved, others have proved more challenging. Over time, the programme has evolved based on learning about what is working and where a change in approach has been needed, including reflecting the impact of Covid-19. An independent evaluation will be commissioned when the programme is finished, to capture learning and impact.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[3459]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to the Transforming Wigan project in the Diocese of Liverpool, in the interests of transparency in the use of charitable funding and learning lessons, if the Church Commissioners will publish (a) all requests for Church Commissioners' finance for the project, (b) the responses to each request, (c) progress reports made and (d) comments by the Strategic Investment Board on those reports.

Andrew Selous:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The diocese has asked for funding for the Transforming Wigan project once, in 2014, and was awarded £900,000 of SDF at that time.

Funding has also been awarded to projects to improve the strategic capacity (£168,000), multiply congregations in deprived areas (£1m) and to invest in younger generations (£4.6m) across the whole Diocese of Liverpool, which also have elements which support ministry in Wigan.

All SDF projects are announced when they are funded, are reported to the General Synod in the SIB annual report, and a full list is available on the Church of England's website. All projects go through a robust process of a 2-stage application with full project plan, annual reporting, continuing engagement between the diocese and the

national church, and a final independent evaluation. The diocese has chosen to publish their application on the Transforming Wigan website [1602081544.pdf \(d3hgrrlg6yacptf.cloudfront.net\)](https://1602081544.pdf(d3hgrrlg6yacptf.cloudfront.net)) but in general this robust process is dependent on being able to have open, honest and confidential conversations, both at Board level and with dioceses.

Transparency and learning have been mentioned in the Independent Review of LInC and SDF as areas where the funding programme can do more, and the Strategic Investment Board is working on proposals to improve both learning and transparency without compromising the quality and robustness of its accountability. Overall, the Strategic Investment Board has confidence in the Transforming Wigan programme and its engagement with young people, founding of new church communities, and training of clergy and lay leaders.

■ Churches: Finance

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[582]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to Figure 10 of the report entitled Independent Review of Lowest Income Communities funding and Strategic Development Funding published by Sir Robert Chote and others in February 2022, how many of the national total of 25,923 new disciples the Church of England expects to be in Truro Diocese; and how many of the 5,019 new disciples have been recorded by the Strategic Development Unit.

Andrew Selous:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: The question relates to the ‘Transforming Mission’ project in the Diocese of Truro. Strategic Development Funding was granted initially in 2017 for Transforming Mission in Falmouth and further grants were awarded in 2019 to extend the project to Truro, Camborne, St Austell, and Liskeard.

Transforming Mission represents a significant investment in parish ministry in the county of Cornwall, benefitting many deprived parishes. While the project has been hit hard by Covid, with disruption meaning detailed and up-to-date data is not available, early signs are that there has been a positive recovery and return to church since the pandemic; although more time will be needed to fully realise its planned outcomes compared to if the pandemic had not happened. Transforming Mission in Falmouth has shown encouraging results, with growth in the existing parish congregation and a new congregation, and increased engagement with the community and university in Falmouth. In Camborne, at the time of the funding award in 2019 the parishes were in regular contact with 20 children and young people per month. By May 2022 this had increased to 460 children and young people, and 230 parents and carers in regular contact with the parishes.

DEFENCE**■ Army Reserve****Adam Holloway:**[\[6728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answers of 9 February 2022 to Question 117745 on Army Reserve: Training and of 28 March 2022 to Question 906313 on Army Reserve, what recent estimate he has made of the trained workforce requirement of the Army Reserve, excluding those personnel undergoing phase 1 training, under future plans, broken down by (a) the British Army, (b) Strategic Command, (c) the Royal Navy, (d) the RAF and (e) other; and if he will provide those figures in comparison to those given in Answer to Question 117745.

James Heappey:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 9 February 2022 to Questions 117744 and 117745 to the hon. Member for South Norfolk, as the figures showing future workforce requirement of the Army Reserve have not changed.

Attachments:

1. Army Reserve Training [UIN 117744.docx]
2. Army Reserve Training [UIN117745.docx]

Adam Holloway:[\[6729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) trained workforce requirement and (b) weapon inventory of support weapons for an army reserve infantry battalion was in January 2022; and what it is planned to be in the future, listed by category (i) anti-tank weapons, (ii) mortars, (iii) machine guns, (iv) assault pioneers.

James Heappey:

In January 2022, the workforce requirement varied for each of the Army Reserve infantry battalions. Under Future Soldier, structures will be standardised to mitigate such variations and bring coherence. All Army Reserve infantry battalions will therefore adopt a common structure based on either a three or four sub-unit model in the future.

Whilst there are changes under Future Soldier, the requirement for each Army Reserve infantry battalion to provide a support weapons capability will endure, to deliver reinforcement to the Army's regular battalions for warfighting.

As with Regular Army battalions, I am withholding a breakdown of both the workforce requirement and weapon inventory as disclosure would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the British Army.

■ Army: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[7925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what criteria his Department uses to measure social value in relation to army procurement.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has implemented the Cabinet Office Social Value Model for its competitive procurements in accordance with Public Procurement Notice (PPN) 06/20 'taking account of social value in the award of central government contracts'. The Land Industrial Strategy acknowledges that many of the themes and outcomes identified in the Social Value Model will be highly relevant as we seek to foster an innovative, globally competitive and highly skilled land sector in the UK.

To ensure that the taxpayer receives greater value from procurement decisions, the MOD Delivery Teams must ensure that the Model Award Criterion, identified within the Cabinet Office Social Value Model are relevant and proportionate to the procurement undertaken. Furthermore, MOD Delivery Teams actively conduct market engagement analysis to further ensure greater value for money is achieved.

The MOD Delivery Teams also have the ability to determine the appropriate weightings across the priority Social Value themes for larger procurement programmes and can use a weighting in excess of 10%, if deemed appropriate.

Social Value is measured by use of standard reporting metrics set out in the Cabinet Office Social Value Model and Contractor proposed metrics.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[7928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to make available to Parliament through life capability road maps, referred to on p18 of the Land Industrial Strategy.

Jeremy Quin:

As described in the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS), the government is committed to publishing clear statements of our national security needs, plans, and technology priorities.

The Land Industrial Strategy (LIS) provides the first iteration of our Land investment plan over the next decade and we intend to expand this to offer a longer term view that includes the mission system upgrades required to keep our equipment contemporary. As the Department implements the new LIS, it also intends to develop more detailed through life plans that will indicate the level of upkeep required, the updates necessary to attend to obsolescence, and the upgrades required to address the threats we face.

Publication will be dependent upon the security classification of the final product.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[7929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the levels of funding required for Land Integrated Operating Service arrangements.

Jeremy Quin:

The Land Integrated Operating Service (LIOS) project has been launched to assess the strategic benefits and value for money of adopting a more through life approach. The project is still in its early stages, considering a range of options that will be

presented in the outline business case, including the levels of funding necessary. The publication of the final product will be dependent upon any commercial sensitivities and the security classification.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[7930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to publish the industrial health assessment as set out on page 30 of the Land Industrial Strategy.

Jeremy Quin:

As stated in the Land Industrial Strategy, to understand the current state of Land-facing industry, a periodic Industrial Health Assessment will be developed that will highlight areas of strength and weakness across key skills and capabilities. This will be commissioned jointly with industry via a third party.

■ Asylum: Housing

Alison Thewliss:

[8041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether sites in his Department's estate were considered alongside RAF Linton-on-Ouse for use as an asylum accommodation site.

James Heappey:

In response to a request from the Home Office to examine whether Defence sites could be utilised to provide additional asylum accommodation capacity, the MOD undertook a review of the Defence estate to identify potential options. In order to minimise the operational impact to Defence, this review focused on transit and training sites and those sites due to be disposed of in the coming years, which included RAF Linton-on-Ouse. A number of other sites were considered and discounted.

Alison Thewliss:

[8042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which of his Department's sites are being considered for use as asylum accommodation in the future.

James Heappey:

In 2020 Defence made available Napier Barracks in Kent to the Home Office to provide additional asylum accommodation capacity and this is expected to continue until 2025. In December 2021, in response to a further request for estate to enable processing of cross-channel migrants, Defence made available the former Defence Fire Training and Development Centre at Manston, Kent. Defence is currently in the process of finalising a Memorandum of Transfer of Occupation which will enable the Home Office to occupy RAF Linton-on-Ouse in order to provide additional asylum accommodation capacity.

The Home Office has not made any further requests for MOD sites beyond those mentioned above.

■ Asylum: Linton-on-Ouse**Alison Thewliss:****[8040]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will (a) provide details of and (b) publish any agreement his Department has reached with the Home Office to enable the site at Linton-on-Ouse to be used as asylum accommodation.

James Heappey:

The Home Office will assume occupation of RAF Linton-on-Ouse under a Memorandum of Transfer of Occupation (MOTO) which is a commonly used method of making estate owned by one Department available to another. There are currently no plans to publish this MOTO once finalised.

■ Cybersecurity**Jim Shannon:****[7980]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle cyber attacks against the UK.

James Heappey:

Defence has a leading role in delivering the ambitions of the Government's National Cyber Strategy. An important part of this is our substantial investment in the National Cyber Force, a partnership between Defence and Intelligence, whose role includes supporting the National Cyber Security Centre to counter threats in cyberspace. Through Defence Digital, the MOD works to defend military networks to improve our resilience and protect against cyber-attacks that could put our military and civilian personnel at risk while protecting the UK and its interests.

■ Defence: Innovation**Mr Kevan Jones:****[7926]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which office in his Department will oversee the Defence BattleLab.

James Heappey:

The 1* responsible for Defence BattleLab currently sits within Army HQ. This chair responsibility will rotate between the three services. The team is staffed by Army and Royal Navy personnel with financial investment from the Defence Innovation Unit, the Army, the Royal Navy, Strategic Command, Dorset Council and Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Defence BattleLab Board has a representation from all of these bodies. The board also has a representation from the RAF, Dstl, The Defence and Security Accelerator and jHub Defence Innovation.

■ Multi Role Ocean Surveillance Ship: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones:

[7931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects MROS to reach initial operational capability.

Jeremy Quin:

The new Multi Role Ocean Surveillance programme is in its concept and assessment phase. As options for the procurement strategy and the project schedule are under development, no decisions have yet been made on the initial operating capability date for the vessel.

■ National Shipbuilding Office

Cherilyn Mackrory:

[8166]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that the National Shipbuilding Office will maximise opportunities for work for UK shipyards in future public procurement competitions.

Jeremy Quin:

The refreshed National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSbS) sets out the 30-year cross-Government shipbuilding pipeline. The National Shipbuilding Office (NSO) will seek to maximise the opportunity for UK industry in this pipeline, in accordance with our international obligations, including by championing UK shipbuilding and ensuring that our procurements deliver on the policy objectives set out in the NSbS. The NSbS also recognises that the value of the shipbuilding sector goes well beyond building hulls and is spread throughout the entire supporting supply chain. The NSO will therefore work to encourage UK content for all parts of the shipbuilding enterprise.

Lastly, for all cross-Government shipbuilding competitions, the Government has set out a clear commitments to delivering on social value. This could include the extent to which they support skills development or supply chain resilience.

■ Queen's Guards: Uniforms

John Nicolson:

[8031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish his Department's independent analysis of ECOPEL faux fur that found that it did not meet necessary requirements to replace bear fur for use in Queen's Guards caps.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has not conducted analysis of Ecopel faux fur. A man-made fabric manufactured by Ecopel was passed to an independent testing house by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), and those results were shared with the MOD. The analysis showed that the material does not meet the necessary requirements. For further detail on the test analysis, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 24 May 2022 to Question 4694 to the hon. Member for Newport West (Ruth Jones).

Attachments:

1. Armed Forces Uniforms [4694 - Armed Forces Uniforms.docx]
2. Queen Guards Uniforms [121824 - Queen Guards Uniforms.docx]

■ RAF Lakenheath**Caroline Lucas:****[7960]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 May 2022 to Question 3555 on RAF Lakenheath, what the cost is of the infrastructure programmes and projects his Department has agreed to deliver on behalf of the United States Visiting Forces at RAF Lakenheath.

Jeremy Quin:

The total cost of the infrastructure programmes and projects the Ministry of Defence has agreed to deliver on behalf of the United States Visiting Forces at RAF Lakenheath is forecast at some £600 million over the next eight years. This may vary depending on changing US requirements.

Since Financial Year 2019-2020, £300 million has been spent on infrastructure programmes and projects at RAF Lakenheath. While there are some indirect costs captured by the UK/US Cost Sharing Agreement (for example Defence Infrastructure Organisation staff expenses), construction costs for the building work are met by the US.

■ RAF Linton-on-Ouse**Alison Thewliss:****[8039]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, who the owner or tenant is of the site at RAF Linton-on-Ouse; and whether that site has recently been sold or rented.

James Heappey:

RAF Linton-on-Ouse, established in 1937, is part of the Defence estate. Flying operations ceased there in 2020. Following an assessment that there was no long-term military requirement for RAF Linton-on-Ouse, the MOD commenced drawing down the site as part of already announced plans to release the site by the end of 2023.

As announced by the Government on 14 April 2022, the Home Office are due to assume occupation of RAF Linton-on-Ouse under a Memorandum of Transfer of Occupation to establish a reception centre for asylum seekers.

■ Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations**Adam Holloway:****[6730]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the 2021 report of the RFCA External Scrutiny Team was received by his office; and when he plans to publish it.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence received the Reserves Forces External Scrutiny Team's report last year.

A copy of the report was placed in the Library of the House on 26 May 2022: Reserve Forces and Cadets Association External Scrutiny Team Report 2021 DEP2022-0444.

■ **Russia: Ukraine**

Jim Shannon:

[7994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has made an estimate of the number of false flag operations conducted by Russia with the intention of legitimising military action in Ukraine.

James Heappey:

False flag operations are one tool of many that Russia could use as part of its wider doctrine of information confrontation - seeking to undermine and destabilise its adversaries. Russia seeks to dominate and control the information environment - especially in times of conflict. While this is the case, the UK alongside allies and partners will continue to expose Russia's strategy and tactics, including false flag operations and disinformation.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Channel Four Television: Privatisation**

Mark Tami:

[6698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of privatising Channel 4 on the independent television sector in (a) Alyn and Deeside constituency and (b) the UK.

Julia Lopez:

The Government consulted extensively on the future of Channel 4, and the views and evidence gathered from a wide range of stakeholders across the UK has informed the government's assessment of any potential impact of a change of ownership. The Government published its [sale impact analysis](#) on 28 April.

Channel 4 has done an excellent job in supporting the UK production sector and thereby delivering on one of its founding purposes. Forty years on, independent production in the UK is now booming, with revenues having grown from £500 million in 1995 to £3 billion in 2019. Companies are increasingly less reliant on Channel 4 for commissions - only 7 per cent of the UK's independent production sector revenues come from Channel 4 commissions.

Channel 4 still has an important part to play in supporting the sector and our wider creative economy. Channel 4 will still be required to commission a minimum volume of programming from independent producers, in line with the quotas placed on other PSBs, and Channel 4's existing obligations in terms of regional production outside of London and England will also be maintained.

Channel 4 has excellent relationships with independent producers right across the UK and there is no reason this should change. The Government expects a new owner to want to build on and develop those relationships.

The Government believes that in the long run the UK production ecosystem will benefit from a more sustainable Channel 4. A change of ownership that improves Channel 4's access to capital could increase spending on production. For example, Channel 5's overall content budget increased following its acquisition by Viacom in 2014, with first-run spending up by an average of 7% per year between 2014 and 2018.

■ Internet: Bullying

Jim Shannon:

[\[7993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to address allegations of cyber bullying in the UK.

Chris Philp:

The Government is committed to addressing cyberbullying and online abuse in the UK and the Online Safety Bill will deliver strong protections for UK users online. This Bill was introduced to Parliament on 17 March 2022, and has now passed second reading.

The Bill will require all companies in scope to tackle illegal abuse on their services, by making sure it is taken down quickly and by using tools to minimise the risk of similar material appearing. Services which are likely to be accessed by children will also need to protect them from legal but harmful content and activity, such as cyberbullying. Companies will have to ensure that reporting mechanisms are easily accessible, and parents and children should expect to see platforms responding quickly and effectively to reports of cyberbullying. The Bill will also require the largest and highest risk services to set out in terms and conditions their approach to addressing harmful content for adults, such as online abuse which does not meet a criminal threshold. Ofcom will be able to take enforcement action, including large fines, against companies that fail to comply.

■ Telecommunications Cables: Seas and Oceans

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[7933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment has she made of the UK's current ability to protect undersea cables.

Julia Lopez:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is the lead department for telecommunications policy, including the security and resilience of telecommunications subsea cables. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is the lead department for the energy sector, including subsea energy cables.

Cable operators have arrangements in place to ensure a prompt response to damage or disruption. These arrangements draw upon national and international cable laying and repair companies. The Government works with cable operators, energy infrastructure operators, regulators and others to provide advice and guidance, assess risks and ensure that the appropriate mitigation measures, including the provision of specialist capabilities, are in place to enable an effective response to actual or potentially disruptive incidents.

■ War Memorials

Damien Moore:

[8151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department will take to ensure that national records of war memorials are accurately maintained.

Julia Lopez:

War memorials are an important part of our cultural heritage, and hold a deep emotional resonance with the people of this country. Maintaining an accurate register is integral to making war memorials accessible to all, and ensuring that they benefit future generations as well as our own.

The Imperial War Museum (a DCMS-Sponsored Museum and Arm's Length Body of government) manages the War Memorials Register, a comprehensive national register of over 90,000 UK war memorials and the names of the individuals they commemorate. With the help of volunteers and the general public, this register is continually updated and provides an invaluable resource to anyone wishing to learn more about, and commemorate, lives lost to and affected by conflict.

Alongside the work of organisations such as The War Memorials Trust this work ensures the wider preservation of the UK's war memorials.

EDUCATION

■ Adoption

Rachael Maskell:

[6817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will increase support for families involved in the adoption process to ensure that contact with birth parents is achieved with support rather than independently.

Will Quince:

Local authorities have a legal duty to provide a comprehensive adoption service: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/691/part/2/made?view=plain>.

As set out in the department's Adoption Strategy, we are working with Regional Adoption Agencies to develop and trial what good practice around contact looks like, with a view to setting national standards in this area. This includes investigating what support is needed for children, birth parents and adoptive parents. We are also

currently funding Regional Adoption Agencies to develop a new programme called 'Letterswap', a new digital platform to improve the current 'Letterbox' system. The strategy can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-strategy-achieving-excellence-everywhere>.

Additionally, the recently published Independent Review of Children's Social Care makes recommendations to improve contact between adoptive children and their birth families. We will carefully consider these recommendations. The review can be found here: <https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/final-report/>.

■ Children and Young People: Social Services

Rachael Maskell: [6812]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that children and young people's voices are strengthened in the social care system.

Will Quince:

The department is committed to having the voice of the child at the heart of the care system. We have been working with stakeholders, including care experienced children and young people, to revise both the National Standards for the Provision of Children's Advocacy Services and the statutory guidance on providing effective advocacy services for children and young people.

The department is now considering the impact of the advocacy recommendations from the recently published Independent Review of Children's Social Care on this work.

■ Children in Care: Restraint Techniques

Marsha De Cordova: [6895]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to end the handcuffing and restraint of children in the care system by private secure transportation providers except when there is a considerable risk of the child harming themselves or others.

Will Quince:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and supporting statutory guidance clearly sets out the law regarding the use of restraint where children are placed in children's homes. This guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-homes-regulations-including-quality-standards-guide>.

Homes are required to record any incidents of restraint under Regulation 35. There is also a requirement under Regulation 40 for the Registered Person to inform Ofsted of any incident in relation to a child that they consider to be serious.

The Registered Person and the local authority overall have a responsibility to ensure that children are kept safe, and their welfare is promoted. If transportation is arranged

by the local authority who has responsibility for the child, then the care of the child would fall to them.

In 2019, the government published guidance on reducing the need for restraint for those responsible for providing education, health, and social care to children and young people under 18 years of age with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties in these settings. This can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812435/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention.pdf.

Where local authorities have contract arrangements with transport services, restraint should only be used in very limited circumstances, in accordance with this guidance on the use of restraint and must always be necessary and proportionate.

■ Children: Social Services

Rachael Maskell:

[6811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen the transition points for children between (a) various stages of the child's life including home and social care, (b) different forms of social care provision and (c) social care and independent living to ensure stability and safety for all affected children.

Will Quince:

The department is clear that children are best looked after within their families, which is why we are investing £695 million over three years in our Supporting Families programme. The programme assigns keyworkers to families to help identify unmet need in the family. They co-ordinate access to services and look out for vulnerable children and young people, to avoid increased risk of abuse of exploitation and preventing them from needing to enter the care system.

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring placements are suitable and take account of children's longer-term needs. The department is clear that it is unacceptable for any child or young person to be placed in a setting that does not meet their needs. Sometimes, children in their care transition between different placements to ensure their needs are best met, and local authorities must support children and young people as they move between placements.

As a child gets older and begins the transition to adulthood, the department is committed to ensuring they receive the support and skills they need to succeed and achieve their maximum potential in life. Supported accommodation allows young people to live semi-independently and can be the right choice for some older children who are ready for this transition. To improve the quality of this type of provision, we are investing £142 million across the next three years to introduce mandatory national standards, Ofsted registration, and inspection for providers of supported accommodation.

The department is providing £172 million funding over the next three years to support care leavers, with better move-on accommodation and practical and emotional support from a personal advisor. The funding includes £99.8 million for local

authorities over the next three years to help care leavers stay with their foster families after they turn 18 in a Staying Put arrangement, so they can continue to benefit from a stable and secure family setting as they transition to independence. Additionally, £36 million will extend the Staying Close programme so that more care leavers leaving children's homes will be supported with move-on accommodation and support from a trusted adult. Finally, £36.4 million will be provided for Personal Advisors to support care leavers up to age 25. This will help them navigate services such as housing, health, or benefits and in providing practical or emotional support to help them prepare for living independently.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[6815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to improve leadership in children's social care.

Will Quince:

Through our professional development programmes, the department supports leaders in social work to continue to develop the knowledge and skills needed to provide the best possible services for children and families. We are investing £5 million in our children and family social work leadership programmes in the 2022/23 financial year, supporting more than 1,000 leaders. This includes a new leadership programme which will begin in Autumn 2022 and will support a leadership career journey, improve the quality of leadership and ensure a pipeline of high-quality leaders.

In 2020, we also launched the Upon Inspiring Leaders Programme to give aspiring and new Directors of Children's Services the skills and support they need to thrive in this challenging role. To date, 100 participants have benefited from this support.

The department will also closely consider the recommendations related to leadership from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, published on 23 May. We will do this alongside any recommendations from the National Panel Review into the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson, which was published on 26 May. We will also closely consider recommendations from the Competition and Markets Authority's study into children's social care placements, which published its final report in March.

The department will set out an implementation strategy by the end of the year that takes account of the three reviews.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[6818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of regional care cooperatives as proposed in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[6819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will adopt the proposal for family help to secure early multidisciplinary interventions around the child and their family as part of Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[6820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to take steps relating to the training of the children's social care workforce as a result of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Will Quince:

The introduction of regional care cooperatives, early multi-disciplinary interventions and children's social care workforce training, as recommended in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, will be considered as part of the development of the department's implementation strategy.

■ Children's Social Care Independent Review

Rachael Maskell:

[\[6814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to help ensure that young people and families with experience of care are engaged in the implementation of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Will Quince:

The department commissioned the Independent Review of Children's Social Care to take a fundamental look at what is needed to support the children and families supported by children's social care. On 23 May 2022, the review published its final recommendations, which reflect the review's engagement with 2,000 people with lived experience and 2,800 people working with children and families.

The department will now consider the recommendations carefully with those with care experience and all interested stakeholders. This will include establishing a National Implementation Board that includes people with their own experience of the care system. We will publish an implementation strategy later this year, which will set out how government will improve children's social care.

■ Department of Education: Public Expenditure

Ian Lavery:

[\[6773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to immediately increase the Department for Education's Capital Departmental Expenditure Limits (CDEL) to a level equivalent in real terms to that set in 2010.

Michelle Donelan:

The department engages regularly with HM Treasury about investment in schools, including capital investment. The department's budget was set at the Spending Review and included £19.4 billion in capital funding to support the education sector between the 2022/23 and 2024/25 financial years.

From this, we have announced £1.8 billion to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings and grounds in the 2022/23 financial year. This sustains the increased level of funding announced in the 2021/22 financial year, which was significantly higher than the £1.4 billion per year typically allocated over the 2016-

2021 Spending Review period. It comes on top of the new School Rebuilding Programme which will transform 500 schools over the next decade.

Our investment in this Spending Review period builds on nearly £30 billion of capital investment in education between the 2016/17 and 2021/22 financial years, including over £6 billion for new mainstream school places through basic need capital allocations, £665 million for places for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities or requiring alternative provision and over £13 billion improving or replacing school buildings.

Since 2010, capital funding for schools has undergone a series of reforms. One of the drivers of differences in capital funding is closing the Buildings School for the Future programme in 2010 and reforms to drive down the costs of school building. A review of school capital investment by Sebastian James in 2011 found that the Building Schools for the Future programme was expensive and did not target schools in the greatest need. The design and procurement process was not designed to create high and consistent quality or low cost, nor to reduce costs over time. Our programmes now deliver more efficiently and better target buildings in the worst condition.

■ **Qualifications: Ukraine**

Mark Logan:

[6942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether Ukrainian diplomas and other education credentials are recognised (a) in the UK and (b) by UK employers.

Michelle Donelan:

The UK and Ukraine are both signatories to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The UK is also a signatory to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Global Recognition Convention, which will soon come into force. The terms of these Conventions oblige the UK to recognise higher education qualifications and qualifications giving access to higher education unless they are substantially different from the UK equivalents.

The UK European Network for Information (ENIC) service provides advice on the comparability of international qualifications at all levels of education with those of the UK, on behalf of Government. The service maintains an extensive database of international qualifications and education systems, including for Ukraine, and are fully prepared to deal with Ukrainian and other refugees' qualifications.

Organisations and individuals can apply for Statements of Comparability through the standard UK ENIC portal. Within the portal, there is provision for individuals to be able to identify as refugees, meaning more flexibility is given for document submissions. Many organisations, including education institutions and employers, also subscribe to the UK ENIC service and use its database when assessing applications.

■ Schools: Cleaning Services

Jim Shannon:

[\[6764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the level of shortages of cleaners in schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

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

The department gives school and academy trust leaders the freedom to decide how they recruit and deploy their non-teaching staff in schools, including cleaners. They hold responsibility for monitoring and making decisions about their cleaners to meet their own circumstances, in addition to having autonomy to make contract decisions for externally-supplied cleaning staff.

The department supports schools to get the best value from their resources. Support is provided through the establishment of national deals on common areas of school spending. The use of these deals for school resourcing needs is at the discretion of school and academy trust leaders. While the department encourages the use of its established deals, schools are trusted to get the best value for money when hiring their staff.

■ Social Workers: Career Development

Rachael Maskell:

[\[6816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will bring forward a plan to institute an early careers framework for social workers enabling five years of supervised and supported professional engagement.

Will Quince:

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

We will closely consider the recommendations from the review's final report, published on 23 May. We will do this alongside the recommendations from the National Panel Review into the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson, which was published on 26 May, and the Competition and Markets Authority's study into children's social care placements, which published its final report in March. The department will set out a detailed and ambitious implementation strategy by the end of the year that takes account of the three reviews.

The department supports the principle of the review's proposed Early Career Framework, and we will set out plans to refocus the support social workers already receive early on in their careers as part of the implementation strategy.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Subsidies****Caroline Lucas:****[4535]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing support payments and grants to farmers in England in the context of rates of agricultural inflation.

Victoria Prentis:

In light of recently rising input costs and price volatility around certain agricultural commodities such as nitrogen fertiliser, the Government is planning to change the way we make payments under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in 2022. Eligible farmers will now receive their payment in two instalments - half from the end of July and the rest from December 2022. This will be a permanent change to Direct Payments that will remain for the rest of the agricultural transition. By doing this, the Government intends to inject cash into farm businesses, helping them to make business decisions sooner, with more confidence.

This builds on the increase in revenue payment rates for the Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme to reflect the change in costs since 2013, which Defra announced in January 2022. The majority of payment rates increased, on average by around 30%, although rate changes vary from option to option. These changes affected around 30,000 agreements.

In March 2022, Defra began rolling out the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) to recipients of the BPS. SFI will help with the costs of sowing nitrogen fixing plants and green manures in crops to substitute some fertiliser requirements for the coming season, as well as reducing the dependence on manufactured fertilisers which are impacted by the price of gas. Rising fertiliser prices highlight that we need to find alternatives and move towards more organic-based fertiliser products. SFI is designed to help farmers move to these new sustainable farming methods gradually - which will improve environmental conditions of the land, while building the long-term resilience of our food security and production.

The Secretary of State recently announced a range of measures in support of the current situation, such as delaying changes to the use of urea fertiliser to help farmers manage their costs and improving statutory guidance for use of slurry. Defra has also created the Fertiliser Taskforce - where Government and industry are working together to help improve market confidence and provide farmers with the information they need to make business decisions on fertiliser use.

Towards the end of this year, farmers will be able to apply for slurry storage grants, helping them to meet the Farming Rules for Water and reducing their dependence on artificial fertilisers. This grant will contribute towards the costs of covered slurry store construction projects, helping farmers to get six months storage capacity.

Defra is supporting investment in technology and research to further improve productivity. The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund has offered grants of up

to £48m to over 4,000 applicants - enabling farmers to invest in equipment, technology and infrastructure. We have also announced a new Adding Value theme - a £30 million fund helping farmers and growers to process, diversify and add-value to their products. Furthermore, we have announced new Research Starter Projects - open to individual farming, growing or forestry businesses in England to develop feasibility studies to accelerate research and development.

The Government continues to monitor the wider context of global supplies that can impact farm income and productivity, as well as take-up of our agri-environment and other schemes. Defra will use the findings to inform our plans throughout the agricultural transition.

John Howell:

[\[6738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of uplifting support payments and grants to farmers in England in the context of the rates of agricultural inflation.

John Howell:

[\[6739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of applying inflation indexes to support payments and grants available to farmers in England.

Victoria Prentis:

We are not at this time planning on applying inflation indices but we will review payment rates for our offers so that they remain credible and attractive to farmers.

In light of recently rising input costs and price volatility around certain agricultural commodities such as nitrogen fertiliser, the Government is planning to change the way we make payments under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in 2022. Eligible farmers will now receive their payment in two instalments - half from the end of July and the rest from December 2022. This will be a permanent change to Direct Payments that will remain for the rest of the agricultural transition. By doing this, the Government intends to inject cash into farm businesses, helping them to make business decisions sooner, with more confidence.

This builds on the increase in revenue payment rates for the Countryside Stewardship scheme to reflect the change in costs since 2013, which Defra announced in January 2022. The majority of payment rates increased, on average by around 30%, although rate changes vary from option to option. These changes affected around 30,000 agreements and show we are willing and able to respond as and when there is a clear case.

In March 2022, Defra began rolling out the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) to recipients of the BPS. SFI will help with the costs of sowing nitrogen fixing plants and green manures in crops to substitute some fertiliser requirements for the coming season, as well as reducing the dependence on manufactured fertilisers which are impacted by the price of gas. Rising fertiliser prices highlight that we need to find alternatives and move towards more organic-based fertiliser products. SFI is

designed to help farmers move to these new sustainable farming methods gradually - which will improve environmental conditions of the land, while building the long-term resilience of our food security and production.

The Secretary of State recently announced a range of measures in support of the current situation, such as delaying changes to the use of urea fertiliser to help farmers manage their costs and improving statutory guidance for use of slurry. Defra has also created the Fertiliser Taskforce - where Government and industry are working together to help improve market confidence and provide farmers with the information they need to make business decisions on fertiliser use.

Towards the end of this year, farmers will be able to apply for slurry storage grants, helping them to meet the Farming Rules for Water and reducing their dependence on artificial fertilisers. This grant will contribute towards the costs of covered slurry store construction projects, helping farmers to get six months storage capacity. We will set the rates based on our assessment of the market at the time, as is our usual practice.

Defra is supporting investment in technology and research to further improve productivity. The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund has offered grants of up to £48m to over 4,000 applicants - enabling farmers to invest in equipment, technology and infrastructure. We have also announced a new Adding Value theme - a £30 million fund helping farmers and growers to process, diversify and add-value to their products again using up to date market information.

The Government continues to monitor the wider context of global supplies that can impact farm income and productivity, as well as take-up of our agri-environment and other schemes. Defra will use the findings to inform our plans throughout the agricultural transition.

■ Air Pollution

Ruth Jones:

[\[5681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to mark Clean Air Day 2022.

Jo Churchill:

Clean Air Day is run by Global Action Plan (GAP). Defra has provided financial support for the delivery of this event since its inception in 2017. We are working closely with GAP on their plans for this year's Clean Air Day and how the Department will participate.

■ Bottles: Deposit Return Schemes

Sarah Olney:

[\[6858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of including glass bottles in the Deposit Return Scheme.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has consulted twice on the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and given careful consideration to the inclusion of glass bottles as part of the scheme. Feedback from stakeholders including representatives of the glass industry, raised concerns including glass in a DRS could reduce recycling, reduce the products that can be made from recycled glass and increase overall carbon emissions. A full response to the consultation will be published in due course.

■ Dairy Farming**Jim Shannon:**[\[6771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the total number of dairy farms throughout the country.

Victoria Prentis:

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

The number of dairy farms in England in 2021 is shown below along with the number of cows in the dairy herd on these farms. The source of cattle population data is the administrative Cattle Tracing System (CTS) data.

YEAR	NUMBER OF DAIRY FARMS ^(A)	NUMBER OF COWS IN THE DAIRY HERD
2021	6,500	1,090,856

(a) Sourced from CTS. Defined as the number of holdings with more than 10 female dairy cows over two years old in the milking herd (i.e., with offspring).

■ Dogs: Electronic Training Aids**Andrew Selous:**[\[5611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of dog ownership for the mental health of elderly and disabled people; and what estimate he has made of the number of physically impaired dog owners who use electronic training aids.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government recognises the beneficial effect that pets can have on people's emotional and mental wellbeing, including for elderly and disabled people, and appreciates that pets provided their owners with a valuable level of emotional support during the Covid-19 pandemic. We have not made a specific assessment of the potential merits of dog ownership from a mental health perspective. However, the Government remains committed to our ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan to expand and transform mental health services in England and to invest an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24.

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 e-collars for the control of dogs. The proposed ban on the use of electric shock collars controlled by hand-held devices 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 controlled by hand-held devices present a risk to the welfare of dogs and cats and that their use should not be permitted.

Concerns have been raised about the potential for a ban on the use of e-collars to adversely affect elderly dog owners, or dog owners with disabilities. We consider that e-collar users with protected characteristics, such as the elderly or those with physical impairments, would not be significantly affected by the impact of a ban because alternatives are available to assist in controlling their dogs. Further, we intend to allow time between the completion of the ban's legislative process and its coming into force for owners to retrain their dogs.

■ Dogs: Imports

Andrew Rosindell:

[6719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 28 March 2022 to Question 144849 on Dogs: imports, when his Department will publish its response to the consultation on proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain; what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a ban on the import of pregnant dogs; and if he will take steps prior to the publication of the consultation response to restrict the transport of dogs subjected to low welfare practices.

Victoria Prentis:

We are analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary in due course. This will allow us to fully assess the views of the public and interested groups to shape our future policy including on the import of pregnant dogs.

We take the issue of low-welfare movements of dogs seriously. It is an abhorrent trade which causes suffering to animals. We operate one of the most rigorous and robust pet travel checking regimes in Europe. The Animal and Plant Health Agency already works collaboratively with Border Force and other operational partners at ports, airports and inland to safeguard the welfare of animals and seize non-compliant animals.

Kenny MacAskill:

[6928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many Intra-Trade Animal Health certificates were issued for dogs entering the UK in each month of (a) 2021 and (b) 2022 to date; and from which country did those dogs originate.

Victoria Prentis:

For 2021 and 2022 we no longer receive Intra-Trade Animal Health certificates after leaving the EU which is part of the EU TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System).

Following departure from the EU, all imports from the EU should be notified via IPAFFS, attaching the relevant health documentation to the notification.

Kenny MacAskill:[\[6929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were imported through the Pet Travel Scheme in each month of (a) 2021 and (b) 2022 to date; and from which country did these dogs originate.

Victoria Prentis:

The number of dogs imported through the Pet Travel Scheme in each month for 2021 to 2022 are as follows:

Data for May 2022 not complete as not yet month end.

2021	NUMBER OF DOGS	2022	NUMBER OF DOGS
Jan	6269	Jan	17920
Feb	7908	Feb	11992
Mar	10657	Mar	8272
Apr	10190	Apr	20373
May	10774		
Jun	14971		
Jul	13113		
Aug	21519		
Sep	19984		
Oct	17648		
Nov	14135		
Dec	15755		
Total	162,923	Total	58,557

The data regarding the Pet Travel Scheme covers pets entering Great Britain and is based on information provided by checkers employed by approved carriers of pet animals. This data can be subject to change as often throughput data from carriers can be received late.

Country of origin is not recorded by the carriers so we are unable to provide this information.

Kenny MacAskill:

[6930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were imported under the Balai Directive in each month of (a) 2021 and (b) 2022 to date; and from which country did these dogs originate.

Victoria Prentis:

Since we left the EU, the EU import data was collated from the Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) Post Import Management System and accounts for all Imports that have been entered using IPAFFS (*Import of products, animals, food and feed system*).

The information that we have provided is a true reflection of the information that we have access to. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data, as we can only rely on the information that has been input into IPAFFS by traders.

APHA only holds data on GB imports.

From 14 April 2022 Great Britain temporarily suspended the commercial import of dogs, cats and ferrets if they originated from or have been dispatched from Belarus, Poland, Romania or Ukraine, until 9 July 2022.

Please find data below.

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Country of Origin	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
Austria			14		4	
Belgium	19	7	8	8	8	5
Bulgaria	35	65	113	74	116	131
Croatia		27	125	118	207	196
Cyprus	143	485	323	384	205	415
Czechia		14	14	19	17	20
Denmark			12		1	184
England	1	6	4	6	7	
Estonia				16	5	
Finland		1	2	1		
France	6	58	40	48	17	111

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Germany		2	4	4	11	17
Greece	13	31	24	116	164	79
Hungary	35	234	865	621	582	358
Iceland			1			
Italy	4	29	35	26	9	33
Latvia		36	25	66	61	45
Lithuania	28	35	75	62	32	28
Luxembourg						
Malta						1
Netherlands	9	4	2	5	6	3
Northern Ireland		2				
Norway				1		
Poland	131	318	564	587	688	566
Portugal	1	34	69	59	43	78
Republic of Ireland	96	529	717	560	654	640
Romania	558	3609	4220	4788	3696	3199
Scotland						1
Slovakia	5	32	39	27	17	22
Slovenia			1	3		1
Spain	117	269	637	702	573	590
Sweden		5	2	1	1	1
Switzerland			1	2	1	
Wales			1			
UK						
Isle of Man						

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

(blank)				1		
Grand Total	1201	5832	7937	8305	7125	6724

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Country of Origin	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Austria		2	1		1	
Belgium	7	6	5	3	2	
Bulgaria	96	44	157	110	86	66
Croatia	282	223	132	254	246	193
Cyprus	297	396	345	325	165	275
Czechia	22	18	25	22	20	30
Denmark		58	210	43	94	117
England	20	3	8	7	9	1
Estonia		1	1			
Finland		1		1	1	1
France	38	26	16	12	32	7
Germany	7	9	8	5	5	4
Greece	110	98	124	110	88	60
Hungary	322	223	402	302	277	296
Iceland						
Italy	35	29	35	17	36	8
Latvia	43	28	57	55	69	27
Lithuania	81	71	82	77	55	52
Luxembourg						2
Malta						2
Netherlands	4	34	23	28	16	18

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Northern Ireland						
Norway		1			1	
Poland	480	486	543	492	405	333
Portugal	53	22	42	46	28	25
Republic of Ireland	557	620	651	557	633	444
Romania	3328	2871	3108	3452	2825	2427
Scotland						
Slovakia	23	21	32	22	33	18
Slovenia	1		1			
Spain	729	316	539	490	539	408
Sweden	2	1		33	1	2
Switzerland	1	2	1			
Wales						
UK						
Isle of Man						
(blank)						
Grand Total	6538	5610	6548	6463	5667	4816

2022 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Country of Origin	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	1/5/22 to 23/05/22
Austria	3			2	
Belgium	10		4	5	2
Bulgaria	79	40	95	115	115
Croatia	145	190	358	248	
Cyprus	335	282	275	77	231

2022 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Czechia	14	11	10	18	16
Denmark	1	19	67	97	
England		1	2	7	3
Estonia			4		7
Finland	1	1	1		
France	16	18	16	2	1
Germany	22	21	7	11	3
Greece	54	48	33	29	16
Hungary	164	253	224	226	193
Iceland					
Italy	7	44	32	35	22
Latvia	56	32	54	41	8
Lithuania	36	63	52	31	26
Luxembourg			1		
Malta					
Netherlands	24	17	12	9	
Northern Ireland	1				
Norway		3		2	
Poland	320	339	334	175	42
Portugal	30	36	30	24	39
Republic of Ireland	635	670	632	534	493
Romania	2529	2365	2531	1181	18
Scotland					
Slovakia	17	13	12	17	9
Slovenia					

2022 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Spain	480	529	448	415	344
Sweden	2	3	1		1
Switzerland		1		1	
Wales					
UK			1	2	
Isle of Man	2				
(blank)					
Grand Total	4983	4999	5236	3304	1589

■ **Flood Control: Shrewsbury**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[6732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to mitigate the risk of flooding throughout Shrewsbury in the short and medium term, in the context of recent record levels of flooding.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is investing a record £5.2 billion in a new six-year capital investment programme to deliver around 2,000 flood schemes, benefiting every region of England, better protecting 336,000 properties from flooding.

The Environment Agency routinely inspects and maintains its existing flood risk management assets at the Frankwell and Coleham Head areas in Shrewsbury, ensuring they remain operational and highly effective at alleviating flooding to properties, businesses and infrastructure including through the most recent significant flooding events.

The Environment Agency with the River Severn Partnership is developing a catchment scale approach to sustainable flood risk and water management across the Upper Severn catchment, to help address flooding and the impacts of climate change under the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme. This scheme has been provided with £10 million of Government Economic Recovery Funding to support the development of business cases and the frameworks needed to underpin future delivery. Amongst other outcomes, the scheme seeks to develop catchment-based approaches to reduce flood risk to up to 3,000 properties and 1,000 businesses across the upper and middle Severn. An additional £4.5 million of economic recovery funding has also been allocated to 'demonstrator' projects benefiting the Shrewsbury region: at Attingham Park, on the Rea Brook, in Guilsfield, Afon Camlad and Afon Cain Brooks in the upstream catchment.

The Environment Agency and partners are also developing a long term Climate Resilience & Adaption Strategy to cover the geographical extent of the River Severn area, encompassing the Severn catchment, comprising the Severn, Teme, Avon and Wye.

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[6733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect the areas of Shrewsbury's town centre, Coton Hill, Coleham, and Riverside, from flooding.

Rebecca Pow:

After severe flooding in Shrewsbury in 2000, the Frankwell and Coleham Head Flood Alleviation Schemes were built. These schemes are designed to protect 75 and 80 properties respectively. These schemes proved to be highly effective at alleviating flooding to properties, businesses and infrastructure during further significant flood events, including February 2022.

The Environment Agency has recently conducted an initial assessment for areas of Shrewsbury which remain at risk of flooding. Identified options have been explored and indicative solutions have been shared with communities via Flood Action Groups.

The Environment Agency is working closely with Shropshire Council as it considers options to redevelop the riverside area of the town. This includes exploring options for further reducing flood risk.

■ Food: Supply Chains

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[5626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has plans to provide support to the food and drink supply chain in its servicing of the public sector in the context of that sector facing pressures due to rising energy, food and labour costs.

Victoria Prentis:

The procurement of food for the public sector is the responsibility of lead departments for that sector (Department for Education – schools, Department of Health and Social Care – hospitals and care homes, Ministry of Justice – prisons, Ministry of Defence – armed forces).

Defra is working closely with those lead departments to ensure that they are aware of any issues to the food and drink supply chain. Lead departments are in regular contact with major suppliers to review their public procurement contracts and ensure they can continue the fulfilment of their services, as stated in their contracts and including food standards they are expected to uphold.

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, as demonstrated throughout the Covid-19 response, and Cabinet Office has been running a series of workshops giving relevant businesses advice on handling inflationary pressures.

■ Food: UK Trade with EU

Daniel Zeichner:

[5409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 276, what specific activities have been undertaken in each category within that Answer; and if she will provide a breakdown of how the funds provided to each activity were allocated.

Victoria Prentis:

The import controls introduced in January 2021 and January 2022 were vital first steps in ensuring our biosecurity, which remains our priority objective. The activities previously reported were preparatory for the introduction of further import controls. This expenditure set out below allows us to deliver those import controls that will now be introduced as part of a new target operating model to be published this autumn.

Port Health Authority Fund

This funding was for grants to local authorities in England, to provide the funding they require to deliver new sanitary checks on imports of animal products from territories subject to special transitional import arrangements (EEA states, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Switzerland) that were due to be introduced from July 2022. The funding covers three types of costs that will be incurred by local authorities:

- Salary costs of recruited staff, to enable authorities to retain them in post
- Recruitment and salary costs for new staff where required and agreed
- Certain non-staff costs relating to accommodation, equipment, and systems

The PHA fund received their budgets through the section 31 grant process which is a non-ringfenced grant to local authorities.

Imports policy

This covers Full Time Equivalent Defra staffing costs, which included some contractors.

IPAFFS

This IT development work was conducted by a third-party supplier specialising in software development, to build a replacement Imports system to the European system (TRACES)

Infrastructure

£12.67 million has been spent by Defra on the Sevington BCP includes costs for Construction and Refurbishment.

£15.20 million has been spent by Defra on the Dover SPS BCP, which includes costs for Construction and Refurbishment.

Other Infrastructure costs that were incurred by Defra in FY 21/22 were for Consultancy and Legal Fees (£0.65m*), Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment (£0.3m*)

and Defra Staff (£2.17m*) which included, specialist temporary contractor expertise to deliver this complex project.

* Some rounding errors exist

ACTIVITY	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	TOTAL	DIGITAL
DELIVERY	IPAFFS	£9.61M	£0.00M	£9.61M
OVERHEAD	£1.16M	£0.00M	£1.16M	IMPORTS
POLICY	£11.17M	£0.15M	£11.32M	PHA
FUND	17.56M	£2.50M	£20.06M	39.50M
	£2.65M	£42.15M		

■ Government Departments: JBS

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[6703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the decision by Sainsbury's and other leading supermarkets not to procure meat supplied by JBS SA or its subsidiaries due to allegations of involvement in illegal deforestation of the Amazon and allegations of modern day slavery practices, if he will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to examine Government departments' and agencies' meat supply contracts with that company.

Victoria Prentis:

The public can have confidence that the food provided in the public sector meets the standards expected. The Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services set a range of mandatory and best practice standards, including requiring suppliers to meet UK production standards or equivalent.

We want the public sector to lead by example, championing high production standards and sustainable produce. We will soon consult on public sector food and catering policy to ensure it reflects our high ambition for this area. The consultation will seek views on ways to promote local, sustainable, healthier food in the public sector, open public sector procurement to a wider range of businesses and increase the transparency of food supply chains.

The procurement of food for the public sector remains the responsibility of lead departments for that sector. Lead departments are in regular contact with major suppliers to review their public procurement contracts and ensure they can continue to meet the food standards they are expected to uphold.

■ Livestock: Dogs

Andrew Selous:

[5612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring dogs which have attacked livestock to be (a) destroyed and (b) trained with e-collars.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the issue of livestock worrying very seriously, recognising the distress this can cause farmers and animals, as well as the financial implications. New measures to crack down on livestock worrying in England and Wales are to be brought in through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, which was introduced in Parliament on 8 June 2021.

The reforms being introduced have been designed with proportionality in mind. Destruction orders would only be made post-conviction and similar powers are already available in relation to dogs that are dangerous and not kept under proper control under existing legislation (e.g. the Dogs Act 1871). Ancillary orders can be effective tools against reoffending and incorporating these orders into the general scheme of the specific livestock worrying legislation will provide greater clarity to the general public on the potential consequences of committing the offence of livestock worrying.

The Government's proposed ban on electric shock collars will protect the welfare of dogs as hand-held remote-controlled devices can be all too easily open to abuse and can be harmful for animal welfare. Dog owners can prevent incidents of livestock worrying through keeping their dogs on a lead in the vicinity of livestock and/or undertaking appropriate training. It is important that dogs are trained to behave well, ideally from a young age, and introduced gradually and positively to different environments, people and animals. Reward-based training for dogs is widely regarded as the preferred method of training. Owners who have concerns about controlling their dog's behaviour may take advice from their vet or a suitably qualified dog behaviourist or trainer. The Animal Behaviour and Training Council maintains national registers of appropriately qualified trainers and behaviourists.

The statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs also includes guidance and reminders for owners about their responsibilities to provide for the welfare needs of their animals and to keep their dogs safe and under control, including in the vicinity of livestock. The best proven method of preventing a dog from attacking livestock is to keep the dog on a lead when exercising around other animals, as advised by farmers and other keepers of livestock.

Natural England has also published a refreshed version of the Countryside Code, which makes specific reference to keeping dogs in sight and under control to make sure they stay away from livestock, wildlife, horses and other people unless invited. Moreover, the Countryside Code helpfully sets out certain legal requirements, encouraging visitors to always check local signs as there are locations where you must keep your dog on a lead around livestock for all or part of the year.

■ Poultry: Factory Farming**Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:****[6702]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will make an assessment of the implications for its policies of the Dispatches programme

broadcast on 29 November 2021 entitled, The truth about your chicken; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's view is that farms of all sizes have a role to play in UK agriculture and food production. What is important is not the size of the farm but compliance with our robust domestic standards. Well-established enforcement strategies are in place to ensure compliance with animal health and welfare requirements. Stockmanship is key and farmers of meat chickens are required to be competent and trained in the tasks that they perform.

This Government will continue to take steps to regulate farming practices proportionately and effectively, to safeguard animal welfare, reduce the risk of zoonotic disease and reduce risks to human health. We are making improvements to the existing legal framework and enforcement regime to ensure greater compliance and enhance the health and welfare of farmed animals. We are also working in partnership with the livestock sector and a wide range of academics, non-Governmental organisations and other experts to implement the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, supporting continuous improvement in farm animal health and welfare.

The Government has no role to play in setting standards for any independent farm assurance scheme.

Defra is a co-signatory with the Department of Health and Social Care of the UK's Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) National Action Plan, and the UK is a global leader on AMR. We do not support the unnecessary use of antibiotics in animals, or farming practices which rely on routine or predictable antibiotic use. However, antibiotics play a role in treating certain animal diseases and are therefore essential to ensure the health and welfare of animals.

Data collected by the British Poultry Council (BPC), which represents 90% of the meat poultry sector, show that antibiotic use in broiler chickens has reduced by 67% since 2014. This has been driven by the BPC's Antibiotic Stewardship Scheme, which is based on the principle of reducing, refining and replacing the use of antibiotics and promoting best practice at all steps of production.

The goal of reducing antibiotic consumption and improving stewardship is to reduce antibiotic resistance. The Veterinary Medicines Directorate has been measuring levels of antibiotic resistance in *E. coli* in poultry since 2014, and the results show that resistance in broiler chickens has decreased substantially, including to antibiotics that are critically important to human health.

The Government is aware of the contribution of faecal contamination, primarily from poultry manure, to the health of the river Wye. Over 60% of the phosphate load in the Wye Catchment is from diffuse agricultural pollution from livestock manure and nutrients washing into the river during rainfall.

The Government is working closely with local stakeholders to address the Wye's specific situation, both through supporting the local Nutrient Management Board, as well as working towards strategic solutions for both the short-term unblocking of housing and the long-term improvement of the local environment through a cross-government Taskforce. To support this, there are also a host of national actions coming online to address agricultural pollution, which include:

- further investment in the successful Catchment Sensitive Farming programme;
- an expansion of Environment Agency enforcement capacity and funding;
- several grants and incentives aimed to support better farm practises and local recovery;
- a review of current regulatory measures.

Red Tractor is an industry-led farm assurance scheme. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment on the implementation of its guidelines or individual cases. Meeting regulatory requirements is a vital component to bringing improvements to the local Wye catchment. If there are concerns that farmers are breaching regulations, they should be reported to the Environment Agency, which will work with local farmers to bring them into compliance.

■ **River Wear: Pollution Control**

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[6906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has had recent discussions with Durham County Council on funding to reduce pollution in the river Wear.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[6907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has had recent discussions with the Treasury on funding to reduce pollution in the river Wear.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government funds a wide range of schemes designed to tackle the pressures on the water environment. For example, we have nearly doubled the annual budget for Catchment Sensitive Farming to £30 million to provide free one to one advice to farmers to help them reduce pollution. We have also recently launched a new 'Woodlands for Water' project designed to facilitate the creation of riparian wildlife woodland corridors which can provide a variety of benefits for aquatic habitats.

Pollution from abandoned mines is the key problem on the River Wear which benefits from the government funded Water and Abandoned Metal Mines programme, with an expected £19 million capital budget over the next three years. Government investment has improved 100 km of rivers polluted by abandoned metal mines since 2011, and we have proposed a new statutory target to further drive this work under the Environment Act, which we are consulting on now.

The Environment Agency is working with partner organisations on various projects funded by Defra's Water Environment Improvement Fund. This includes the Return to Eden project to educate local businesses about the effects of industrial drainage and transport of pollutants, and the Wear Estuary project aimed to improve 3 km of habitat conditions along the estuary edge, which will provide subsequent benefits to overall water quality.

In addition to government funding, between 2020 and 2025, water companies will invest £7.1 billion in environmental improvements in England.

■ Rural Areas

Daniel Zeichner: [\[6787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Rural Proofing report 2021 will be published.

Rebecca Pow:

The second report on rural proofing in England will be published in the coming weeks, setting out how Government departments are working to support levelling up in rural areas.

■ UK Trade with EU: Perishable Goods

Gareth Thomas: [\[6675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of facilitating a fast-track route for exports of perishable goods from the UK to the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government works with relevant authorities to mitigate delays for passengers and freight travelling from the UK to the EU. In traffic management plans any prioritisation or fast-track route is extremely difficult and open to legal challenge. Therefore the most effective approach is to keep all traffic moving safely. Previous prioritisation schemes designed to pre-empt readiness issues associated with EU-exit did not need to be deployed and the legal gateway for them has closed.

■ UK Trade with EU: Veterinary Medicine

Gareth Thomas: [\[6676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking towards a veterinary agreement between the UK and the EU to help reduce trade barriers on both imports and exports between the UK and the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) includes a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) chapter which allows the UK and the EU to take a risk-based approach to our

respective SPS border controls and provides a basis for cooperation on avoiding unnecessary barriers to trade.

We are open to discussions with the EU on additional steps to further reduce trade friction, but these cannot be on the basis of future alignment with EU rules. This would compromise UK sovereignty over our own laws. Our focus continues to be on supporting businesses adjust to the new trading arrangements. This includes:

- Increasing vet capacity to certify exports
- Making available millions of pounds through our Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Brexit Fund
- Regularly engaging with industry, including through the Brexit Business Task Force, to understand any challenges they face.

■ UK-EU Partnership Council

Gareth Thomas:

[6677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish (a) the minutes of the last meeting of the Trade Specialist Committee, (b) a full list of Ministers who attended the last meeting of the Trade Specialist Committee, (c) a list of all attendees of the last meeting of the Trade Specialist Committee and (d) the date of the next scheduled meeting of the Trade Specialist Committee; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The minutes and attendees of the first meeting of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) Trade Specialised Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures are published on the GOV.UK website: [Trade Specialised Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/trade-specialised-committee-on-sanitary-and-phytosanitary-measures).

The meeting is co-chaired by senior officials from the UK and EU.

As set out in Article 8 (7) and (8) of the TCA, the Committee shall meet at least once a year, and the meeting schedule is set by mutual consent. No date has yet been agreed for the second meeting.

■ Water: Pyridine

Dr Matthew Offord:

[5650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the levels of pyridine in UK waters.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for improving water quality in England. It monitors rivers and estuaries for a range of substances, including pyridine.

Between 2005 and 2022, the EA has detected the presence of pyridine in coastal and estuarine waters of England on 30 occasions from a total of 5023 routine samples analysed. During this period, the EA has also analysed 21635 routine freshwater

samples in England (this category includes: Rivers, Canals, Lakes/Ponds/Reservoir, and Land Drains) and detected pyridine in 64 of those samples.

This summary of the data suggests that to date there have been relatively few detections of pyridine in the aquatic environment, and we will continue to monitor it closely.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Africa: Conflict Prevention

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[7957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has targets for reducing levels of (a) violence and (b) violent deaths as part of her Department's approach to conflict prevention in the African continent.

Vicky Ford:

The UK's approach to conflict prevention is to address underlying causes and drivers of violence, to support political agreements that end armed conflict and to build the capacity of partners to withstand shocks that could cause conflict. Areas of focus include Ethiopia, Nigeria and the Sahel. We are also establishing a new conflict prevention and atrocity prevention hub that brings together all UK Government capabilities to anticipate and respond to situations of concern. Given the methodological challenges in setting targets and measuring levels of violence, or conflict fatalities, we do not think that a focus on those measures would help us deliver our conflict prevention objectives in specific countries.

■ Africa: Development Aid

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[7955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential impact her Department's International Development Strategy on the lives of disabled people in African countries.

Vicky Ford:

As set out in the Integrated Review, we remain committed to Africa, and to building partnerships with African countries that lead to a freer, safer, more prosperous, healthier, and greener continent. The UK is proud to have a strong track record of galvanising global progress on disability rights and remains committed to further advancing the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities. The FCDO Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy, which we published in February this year, sets out our international approach to 2030. It outlines our vision for a sustainable, inclusive and equitable future where people with disabilities are meaningfully engaged and empowered to be able to enjoy their full rights on an equal basis with others. The vision will be delivered by ensuring people with disabilities achieve their rights by having greater voice through full participation, more choice and control in all aspects

of their lives, and gain greater visibility through comprehensive and responsive data collection.

■ **Alaa Abdel Fattah**

Mr David Lammy: [\[6685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support British citizen Alaa Abd El-Fattah who is imprisoned and on hunger strike in Egypt.

Mr David Lammy: [\[6686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, on how many occasions she has spoken to her Egyptian counterpart this year; and whether she raised the case of Alaa Abd El-Fattah.

Mr David Lammy: [\[6687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what her Department's policy is on the right to consular access for UK citizens imprisoned abroad; and if it will assert that right in the case of Alaa Abd El-Fattah.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government is in contact with the Egyptian authorities and urgently seeking consular access. We continue to support the family of Alaa Abdel Fattah. The UK Government regularly raises human rights concerns with the Egyptian authorities, including with regard to political prisoners in the Egyptian system, both privately and in forums such as the UN Human Rights Council. This includes raising the implementation of the rights guaranteed by Egypt's constitution.

■ **Anguilla: Development Aid**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[6709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding her Department has allocated to the mitigation of acidic water and water-borne diseases in Anguilla; and whether her Department has undertaken a recent assessment of the appropriateness of the current level of funding for that work.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government has supported Anguilla with technical advice on water-borne diseases, including to test water for legionella. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has provided significant support to Anguilla through the COVID-19 pandemic, including support to establish additional testing facilities in the public health laboratory which will enable Anguilla to increase the local capacity to test for viruses and diseases on the island. Over the next three years, the UK Government will support Anguilla with up to £10,000 through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) to provide technical advice and capacity building for food, water and environmental laboratories in order to improve testing capabilities for water-borne diseases.

■ Anguilla: Hurricanes and Tornadoes

Andrew Rosindell:

[6710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 15 March 2022 to Question 136529, on Anguilla: Hurricanes and Tornadoes, how many schools have been affected by Hurricane Irma; and what recent estimate she has made of the number of children that have been unable to receive an education as a result of that hurricane in each of the last two years.

Amanda Milling:

All schools in Anguilla were impacted by Hurricane Irma and suffered damage to varying degrees. These comprised of eight pre-primary schools, eleven primary schools and one secondary school. Some required minor repairs, while others required a complete rebuild. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has supported the Government of Anguilla with almost £100 million in grant funding to rebuild its critical national infrastructure since Hurricane Irma, including major refurbishments for two primary schools and the building of four new schools. In the last two years no students were unable to receive an education as a result of Hurricane Irma.

■ Anguilla: Trade Agreements

Andrew Rosindell:

[6711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential economic implications for Anguilla of that country's trading relationship with the EU; and whether she has had discussions with the Secretary of State for International Trade on plans to promote trade between Anguilla and (a) Britain and (b) the Commonwealth.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is committed to supporting Anguilla in building a vibrant and sustainable economy and we are providing extensive support to facilitate economic growth, notably through a £4 million programme this financial year. This builds on previous support provided which has redeveloped key infrastructure projects on island. The Government of Anguilla are responsible for their own trading relationships and as such, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has not made a quantitative assessment of the economic implications for Anguilla of their trade with the EU, following the UK's exit from the EU. The Department for International Trade is working with the Overseas Territories including Anguilla to take advantage of the opportunities available to the UK as an independent trading nation. The UK will continue to assist Anguilla in strengthening their economy, including through encouraging greater links to the UK and other economies globally.

■ Anooosheh Ashoori and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Rachael Maskell:

[8048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will commission a full independent inquiry into her Department's handling of the cases of Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe and Anooosheh Ashoori.

James Cleverly:

This Government was committed to securing Mrs Zagari-Ratcliffe's and Mr Ashoori's release as soon as possible and that is what we have done. It was always entirely in Iran's gift to release them. The UK does not, and never will, accept our nationals being used as diplomatic leverage.

We stand ready to work with Parliament and have already submitted evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee on its inquiry into HMG's approach to complex detention cases, with a focus on Iran cases, including Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's detention.

■ Aviation: Ukraine

Jim Shannon:

[7991]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any progress has been made on investigations into complaints made by the families and loved ones of people killed aboard Malaysian Airlines flight 17 on 17 July 2014.

Amanda Milling:

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) have not recorded any official complaints concerning our actions while supporting the bereaved families of British nationals killed through the downing of MH17. There is an ongoing criminal trial being taken forward in the Netherlands where four people are facing charges relating to the murder of 298 people who were on the aircraft.

All grieving families, including the families of British nationals killed on the flight, have been given access to the information on the criminal proceedings. All the grieving families were asked if they would like to provide an impact statement to the court in writing, via video link or in person, which allowed those who participated to air their concerns directly to the court. FCDO Consular staff have provided support to the families of British nationals who were killed, if they wished to receive support.

■ British Overseas Territories

Mr Richard Holden:

[8211]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that British Overseas Territories are not being used to circumvent sanctions.

Amanda Milling:

The Government is proud of the principled stand that the Overseas Territories have taken in relation to implementing sanctions. UK sanctions apply in all Overseas

Territories. The elected leaders of the Territories have publicly confirmed their commitment to continuing to uphold the highest international standards of transparency and accountability and to fully implementing the UK sanctions against Russia. The Government will continue to provide guidance and support on implementation of sanctions where appropriate. Additionally, the UK's Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation, which sits within HM Treasury, engages regularly with Overseas Territories on compliance, enforcement and licensing. This engagement has assisted these jurisdictions in improving the implementation of financial sanctions across the wider British Family.

■ British Overseas Territories: Companies

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[8212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to prevent companies from using lower regulatory standards in (a) Bermuda, (b) British Virgin Islands and (c) Cayman Islands to (i) take advantage of loopholes and (ii) avoid scrutiny from shareholders.

Amanda Milling:

The Overseas Territories including Bermuda, British Virgin Islands and Cayman Islands are self-governing jurisdictions with their own democratically elected governments, who are responsible for their own financial services policy. The Overseas Territories cooperate with the UK on taxation, fighting financial crime and sanctions enforcement. They are committed to meeting international standards on illicit finance, tax transparency and anti-money laundering including those set by the OECD, the Financial Action Task Force and regional standards set by the EU. In 2020, the Financial Action Task Force issued an excellent rating following an evaluation of Bermuda's regulatory regime for combatting money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation. The Overseas Territories also continue to share valuable company ownerships and tax information with UK law authorities, under the invaluable Exchange of Notes process. It was information shared by an Overseas Territory which enabled the UK's first Unexplained Wealth Order.

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[8213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential risk that listed companies, including those that are Chinese or Russian controlled, may use incorporation in the British Overseas Territories to pay less than market value to other shareholders when taking the business private.

Amanda Milling:

The Overseas Territories are self-governing jurisdictions with their own democratically elected governments, who are responsible for their own financial services policy. The Overseas Territories cooperate with the UK on taxation, fighting financial crime and are implementing sanctions targeted at Russia. They are committed to meeting international standards on illicit finance, tax transparency and

anti-money laundering; including those set by the OECD, the Financial Action Task Force and regional standards set by the EU. The FCDO has not made an assessment of these risks; the regulation of the financial services industries in the Overseas Territories are a matter for their elected governments.

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[8214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has had discussions with authorities in (a) Bermuda, (b) British Virgin Islands and (c) the Cayman Islands on the potential merits of increasing protections for British minority shareholders in companies incorporated in those jurisdictions.

Amanda Milling:

The Overseas Territories are self-governing jurisdictions with their own democratically elected governments, who are responsible for their own financial services policy. The regulation of the financial services industries in the Overseas Territories are a matter for their elected governments. The FCDO has not discussed the issue of British minority shareholders with Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands or the Cayman Islands. The Overseas Territories cooperate with the UK on taxation, fighting financial crime and countering terrorist finance. They are committed to meeting international standards on illicit finance, tax transparency and anti-money laundering; including those set by the OECD and the Financial Action Task Force.

■ **British Overseas Territories: Nature Conservation**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[6715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of which animals are the most endangered in the Falkland, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; what statistics her Department holds on the net (a) loss or (b) gain of those animals in each of the last three years; and what steps her Department is taking to support conservation efforts on those islands.

Amanda Milling:

Environmental protection is the responsibility of individual UK Overseas Territories. 8% of the annual budget of the Falkland Islands Government is spent on research and environmental protection and in 2021 they launched their flagship environmental strategy. Recent evidence has highlighted the significant role the Islands are playing in the growing populations of Southern Giant Petrel, Fur Seals, Southern Sea Lions and as a breeding ground for some of the rarest cetaceans, such as Sei whales. South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands is a biodiversity hotspot and an ecosystem in recovery that is home to globally significant numbers of penguins, flying seabirds, seals and whales. Recent research has shown that populations of whales including Humpbacks, Blues, Fins and Right whales are increasing in the region. The removal of all invasive rats from South Georgia in 2018 has led to a rapid increase in the number of native birds including endemic pipits and ducks. A large Marine Protected Area (MPA) protects over 1.2 million km² of the region's marine

environment in which species such as the Marbled Rock Cod, are recovering from overfishing last century. The 2021 'Protect, Sustain, Inspire' strategy provides the framework through which the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands will continue to support environmental recovery and resilience through world-leading, evidence-based sustainable management.

■ British Overseas Territories: Ownership

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[8215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, in the context of the conflict in Ukraine, whether the Government plans to encourage British Overseas Territories to speed up the introduction of publicly accessible registers of beneficial ownership.

Amanda Milling:

The UK and the Overseas Territories stand united in condemning the Russian Government's egregious violation of international law and the UN Charter. The Overseas Territories released a joint statement in solidarity with the UK, which reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to uphold the highest international standards of transparency and accountability.

All Overseas Territories have committed to introduce publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership. These commitments exceed the standards set by the Financial Action Task Force on beneficial ownership transparency, and put them ahead of most jurisdictions. The UK Government expects the registers to be in place by the end of 2023.

The six Overseas Territories with global financial centres already share beneficial ownership information with UK law enforcement agencies under the exchange of notes arrangements.

■ Chile: Politics and Government

Jim Shannon:

[\[7988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with her Chilean counterpart on political stability in that country.

Vicky Ford:

We have a close and longstanding bilateral relationship with Chile. This includes cooperation on the pandemic and global health issues, human rights, science, defence and security. The Minister for the Latin America attended the inauguration of President Boric on 11 March and had a number of productive meetings with the new government, including Foreign Minister Andrea Urrejola. The Prime Minister spoke to President Boric on 26 April.

■ China: Human Rights

Rachael Maskell:

[\[8053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she plans to take to examine the report of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet's visit to China.

Amanda Milling:

We have always been clear the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights must be granted full, unfettered access to Xinjiang and allowed to conduct an accurate assessment of the facts on the ground. We continue to urge China to grant the High Commissioner such access on her ongoing visit, which we are following closely. As the Foreign Secretary made clear in her statement of 24 May, if such access is not forthcoming, the visit will only serve to highlight China's attempts to hide the truth of its actions in Xinjiang. We look forward to the High Commissioner's promised report on the situation in Xinjiang, which we will study carefully. We will continue to act with our international partners to increase the pressure on China to change its behaviour.

■ Development Aid

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[7885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support elected women in parliaments overseas.

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[7886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what bilateral programmes her Department has in place to support elected women in parliaments overseas.

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[7887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to work with multilateral institutions to support elected women in parliaments overseas.

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[7888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps Her Majesty's Ambassadors are taking to support elected women parliamentarians in the countries where they are posted.

Vicky Ford:

The Foreign Secretary has put women and girls at the centre of the UK's foreign policy. The FCDO's International Development Strategy commits us to using development and diplomatic levers to unlock the social, economic and political agency of women and girls and work to ensure women's voices are heard at all social, political and economic levels. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy are a key partner to help us deliver our objectives on women's political empowerment, including support for women in parliament, and the Foreign Secretary has agreed to

increase their grant-in-aid from £5.1 million to £6.5 million per year over the next three years. The UK has joined the Global Partnership for Action on Gender Based Online Harassment Abuse, whose work will include addressing violence directed towards women in their public lives as journalists, politicians, or activists.

In 2021-22 there were 24 bilateral development programmes working both to strengthen political institutions and also having a gender focus. The UK also supports women parliamentarians through core funding to multilaterals: in 2021, the UN Development Programme assisted 30 electoral authorities to establish inclusive electoral processes and UN Women contributed to 3 laws on gender balance in elections and decision-making bodies. In addition to our development work, our embassies across the world promote women's and girls' political leadership through schemes such as 'Ambassador for a day' or the #EmbassShe initiative in the Netherlands.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[7952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government's strategy for international development, published on 16 May 2022, whether she plans to change the proportion of UK diplomatic costs for particular countries that are attributed to Official Development Assistance budgets.

Amanda Milling:

The UK will continue to apply consistently the international rules on aid set by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. These allow donors to report as Official Development Assistance (ODA) the proportion of costs for diplomatic staff where they are performing aid-related duties. The duties must be in line with the DAC primary purpose of aid and benefitting countries on the DAC list of ODA eligible countries.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[7956]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department plans to update the International Development Strategy to include specific targets on (a) food security, (b) access to reproductive and sexual healthcare and (c) clean water and sanitation.

Amanda Milling:

The International Development Strategy (IDS) sets out the government's vision for the future of UK international development, with further details set out in associated strategies. Tackling the worsening global food security crisis, exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, is a key priority for the UK. We are working with G7 allies to ensure a coherent international response. In addition to humanitarian assistance, the IDS commits us to develop solutions to challenges in our global food system which include root causes of food insecurity. We will honour our COP26 targets and boost sustainable agriculture productivity in developing countries.

Access to reproductive and sexual healthcare and clean water and sanitation are also priorities. The IDS reiterates our target to support efforts to end preventable deaths of

mothers, babies and children by 2030. Our Approach Paper of December 2021: Ending the Preventable Deaths of Mothers, Babies and Children by 2030; explains how the UK will deliver on this to 2024 and our strategic direction to 2030, including through actions to accelerate progress on sexual and reproductive health and rights, address malnutrition and promote access to climate resilient water supply, hygiene and sanitation services. The FCDO is business planning the delivery and measurement of our commitments, including our commitment to spend £1.5 billion between 2022 and 2030 on nutrition.

■ Development Aid: Trachoma

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[7954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her Department's planned reduction of funding to multilateral organisations on global efforts to (a) reduce the global prevalence of trachoma and (b) the number of cases of blindness caused by trachoma.

Vicky Ford:

Trachoma is the world's leading causes of infectious blindness. Much progress has been made with the number of people at risk of blindness from trachoma having reduced by over 90% since 2002. The UK will continue to fund multilaterals which contribute to global progress on trachoma, such as the World Health Organisation. Our investments will continue to support countries, including those affected by trachoma, to strengthen their health systems to deliver essential health services. We will also continue to invest in research and development to maintain defences against diseases like trachoma and make progress to eliminate them.

■ East Africa: Droughts

Sarah Champion:

[\[6777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the severe drought episode in the East and Horn of Africa.

Sarah Champion:

[\[6778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure the rising global food prices caused by the violence in Ukraine do not exacerbate levels of food insecurity in the East and Horn of Africa.

Vicky Ford:

East Africa is experiencing one of its most severe droughts in history with more than 15 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia assessed to be acutely food insecure, according to the UN. A fourth consecutive - and unprecedented - season of failed rains is contributing to growing water scarcity, alarming rates of malnutrition and huge numbers of livestock deaths. Needs are grave in Somalia where an estimated 81,000 people are experiencing famine-like conditions.

The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region. In 2022 to support communities affected by drought plus flooding and conflict the UK has provided £72 million to Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. Across the region UK funded humanitarian activities are making a difference and saving lives. In Kenya the UK is providing 26,000 children with life-saving nutritional support. In Ethiopia a further 200,000 children and pregnant and lactating women in southern and eastern regions will receive similar aid.

The UK also played a critical role in convening the recent UN Horn of Africa Drought Roundtable which took place in late April in Geneva. This included working with states in the region and the UN to ensure appropriate levels of participation. It helped to bring much needed focus on the drought and it mobilised roughly US\$400 million in new funding.

Countries across the Horn of Africa will also be impacted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine due to the increase in the costs of food commodities and fuel on global markets. We are exploring how we can help lessen the impact of rising food prices caused by the war in Ukraine on vulnerable communities in East Africa. This includes assessing alternate markets for procurement of food supplies and working with UN partners to promote effective prioritisation so assistance reaches the neediest.

Our response to the drought builds on long-established resilience building programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. In Kenya this includes support to the Hunger Safety Programme, which has provided 600,000 people in drought prone areas with regular financial assistance. In Ethiopia, the UK funded Productive Safety Net Programme has benefitted some 8 million people via financial welfare provision and community public works projects. In Somalia the UK has been supporting over 220 rural communities in three large urban cities with durable solutions initiatives for internally displaced persons. These programmes, coupled with additional investments, have enabled the UK to reach nearly 8 million individuals as a part of its emergency humanitarian response.

■ East Africa: Humanitarian Situation

Preet Kaur Gill:

[8099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of food price rises as a result of the conflict in Ukraine on the humanitarian situation in the East and Horn of Africa.

Vicky Ford:

The humanitarian situation across East and the Horn of Africa is extremely concerning. Conflict and drought are the main causes of humanitarian need with tens of millions of people affected.

Countries across the Horn of Africa will also be impacted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine due to the increase in the costs of food commodities and fuel on global markets. We are assessing how we can help lessen the impact of rising food prices caused by the war in Ukraine on vulnerable communities in East Africa. This includes

assessing alternate markets for procurement of food supplies and working with UN partners to promote effective prioritisation so assistance reaches the neediest.

The UK is taking action to respond. At the spring meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in April, the UK and our partners secured the largest ever financial commitment from the World Bank of US\$170 billion until June 2023 to support countries faced with the wide range of current economic challenges including the impact of the Russian invasion. With G7 allies, we agreed to address, including in support of the United Nations Global Crises Response Group, the causes and consequences of the global food crisis through a Global Alliance for Food Security, as a joint initiative to ensure momentum and coordination that will be launched by G7 Development Ministers.

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

Ms Lyn Brown:

[7953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact of her Department's planned reduction of funding to multilateral organisations on global efforts to (a) end the epidemics of (i) AIDS, (ii) malaria and (iii) tuberculosis and (b) reduce the number of deaths caused by those diseases.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is and will continue to be a leading donor on AIDS, malaria and TB, in particular through our continued financial and leadership contributions to multilaterals that work on these diseases such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and UNAIDS. We have not yet finalised allocations to specific multilateral institutions. We will also continue to invest in research to develop new approaches to tackling these diseases to ensure continued progress. Our investments, such as the first child friendly antimalarial treatment and a new PCR based technology to test for TB will continue to make a world leading difference to reduce the number of deaths caused by AIDS, TB and malaria.

■ **Horn of Africa: Droughts**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[8098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the severe drought in the Horn of Africa; and if she will take steps to increase the humanitarian assistance provided to that region.

Vicky Ford:

The Horn of Africa is experiencing one of its most severe droughts in history with more than 15 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia assessed to be acutely food insecure, according to the UN. A fourth consecutive - and unprecedented - season of failed rains is contributing to growing water scarcity, alarming rates of malnutrition and huge numbers of livestock deaths. Needs are grave in Somalia

where an estimated 81,000 people are experiencing famine-like conditions. In Ethiopia 8 million people are affected by drought, with 3.5 million people similarly affected in Kenya.

The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region. In 2022 the UK has provided £72 million to support more than one million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan affected by conflict, drought and flooding. Across the region UK funded humanitarian activities are making a difference and saving lives. In Kenya the UK is providing 26,000 children with life-saving nutritional support. In Ethiopia a further 200,000 children and pregnant and lactating women in southern and eastern regions will receive similar aid. The UK also played a critical role in convening the recent UN Horn of Africa Drought Roundtable which took place in late April in Geneva. This included working with states in the region and the UN to ensure appropriate levels of participation. It helped to bring much needed focus on the drought and it mobilised roughly US\$400 million in new funding.

Our response to the drought builds on long-established resilience building programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. In Kenya this includes support to the Hunger Safety Programme, which has provided 600,000 people in drought prone areas with regular financial assistance. In Ethiopia, the UK funded Productive Safety Net Programme has benefitted some 8 million people via financial welfare provision and community public works projects. In Somalia the UK has been supporting over 220 rural communities in three large urban cities with durable solutions initiatives for internally displaced persons. These programmes, coupled with additional investments, have enabled the UK to reach nearly 8 million individuals as a part of its emergency humanitarian response.

The UK is taking further action to respond. At the spring meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in April, the UK and our partners secured the largest ever financial commitment from the World Bank of US\$170 billion until June 2023 to support countries faced with the wide range of current economic challenges including the impact of the Russian invasion. With G7 allies, we agreed to address, including in support of the United Nations Global Crises Response Group, the causes and consequences of the global food crisis through a Global Alliance for Food Security, as a joint initiative to ensure momentum and coordination that will be launched by G7 Development Ministers.

■ Human Rights

Rachael Maskell:

[8052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking with the UN to strengthen global actions against human rights atrocities.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government is committed to upholding and defending the international rule of law and the rights and freedoms of people around the world, and UK atrocity

prevention efforts align with UN efforts. Multilaterally, the UK supports the UN Secretary-General's Sustaining Peace agenda and has engaged directly with him about wider UN reform, helping to build momentum for change by bringing together different parts of the UN system to work jointly to prevent conflict. The UK also supports and funds a number of investigative bodies established by the UN including the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) in Syria, the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability Against Da'esh/ISIL Crimes (UNITAD) in Iraq and the IIM in Myanmar, all of which are charged with collecting and preserving evidence so that accountability can be pursued when the circumstances permit. In 2021, the UK was again one of the top ten donors to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), providing a voluntary contribution of around \$7.9 million.

We will continue to engage with civil society, and use our position at the UN, including as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to raise atrocity situations of concern and to support the deployment of all appropriate tools available to the UN in dealing with potential mass atrocities and conflict. Our focus is always on securing an end to violence and protecting civilians.

■ India: Visas

Taiwo Owatemi:

[\[8199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she expects eVisas to be restored for UK citizens visiting India.

Vicky Ford:

We regularly raise our concerns regarding our exclusion from the list of countries eligible for e-visas with the Government of India (GoI). Most recently, the Foreign Secretary raised this matter with her Indian counterpart on 31 March during her visit to India. It is for the GoI to determine the types and validity of the visas it offers. British nationals can continue to use the GoI's regular/paper visa application services for all visa categories. However, we will continue to work closely with the GoI on this issue and update the India Travel Advice with the latest information on any changes to India's visa rules.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[6848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her (a) Israeli and (b) Palestinian counterparts on reports of forced evictions in Masafer Yatta.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. Our opposition to the demolition of Palestinian property and the evictions of Palestinians from their homes is long-standing. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is

harmful to efforts to promote peace. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

■ Sahel: Development Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[6867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate she has made of the level of funding allocated to the Sahel region from the Official Development Assistance budget (a) in 2020, (b) in 2021 and (c) for 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The former Department for International Development (DFID's) Annual Report and Accounts (published online https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/902370/annual-accounts19-20.pdf) shows that £69.7 million of Official Development Assistance (ODA) was allocated to the Joint Sahel Department for 2019-2020.

For 2020-2021, the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts (published online <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fcdo-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021>) shows that £69.6 million of ODA was allocated to the Joint Sahel Department.

The FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-2022 will be laid in Parliament before the Summer recess and will include further detail on FCDO's ODA spending.

■ Sahel: Food Supply

Preet Kaur Gill:

[6866]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of levels of food insecurity affecting people in the Sahel region of Africa.

Vicky Ford:

According to UN projections, 12.7 million people are severely food insecure in the Sahel. This figure covers those living in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania, and is the highest in over a decade.

The UK is a significant humanitarian donor in the region and continues to support the humanitarian response in the Sahel. We are working with partners, through our humanitarian programmes, to address urgent food insecurity, respond to severe acute malnutrition, and provide protection and basic life-saving assistance to conflict-affected people. Since 2019, we have supported 10.5 million people with life-saving assistance across the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania).

■ Town Twinning

Karen Bradley:

[\[7975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of pairing British towns and cities with those in Ukraine and surrounding countries, to help support humanitarian efforts and to rebuild destroyed infrastructure.

James Cleverly:

The UK remains committed to supporting Ukraine, and we will continue to explore all available options to support Ukraine's humanitarian and reconstruction needs. Whilst twinning is a matter for councils themselves, the Government has recently used the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities' daily local government bulletin to highlight the Cities4Cities initiative; an on-line platform, sponsored by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, that matches the demands and needs of Ukrainian cities with the capacity and know-how of local authorities across Europe, including those in the United Kingdom.

■ West Bank and Gaza: Schools

Caroline Ansell:

[\[8083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the UN Relief and Works Agency's use of the Palestinian Authority school curriculum in its schools in the West Bank and Gaza; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Ansell:

[\[8084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with representatives of the Palestinian Authority (PA) on the removal of material reportedly inciting violence and antisemitism and the inclusion of material promoting peace in the PA school curriculum; and if she will make a statement.

Amanda Milling:

We strongly condemn all forms of violence and incitement to violence. We accompany our support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) with stringent attention to implementation of their neutrality policy, including how they apply this to textbooks and other learning material to ensure they reflect UN values. In Gaza and the West Bank, UNRWA uses the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) curriculum in their schools after rigorously reviewing that it is in line with UN values. Our partnership with the PA includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle any language and actions that could incite violence or hatred. Officials from the British Consulate General Jerusalem regularly discuss the curriculum with counterparts in UNRWA and the PA.

■ Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

Damien Moore: [\[8152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help resolve the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Amanda Milling:

The UK has played a leading role in responding to the humanitarian crisis, committing over £1 billion in aid since the conflict began. Over the course of our coming financial year, the UK will provide at least £88 million in aid to the people of Yemen. UK funding will be provided through multiple agencies, including the World Food Programme and UNICEF. This will help feed at least 200,000 people every month, provide lifesaving health care for 800,000 women and children, and treat 85,000 severely malnourished children. We will work with our delivery partners to ensure aid is disbursed quickly and effectively to avoid further suffering. An inclusive political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis. The UK fully supports the work of the UN Special Envoy, and welcomes his plans to propose an extension to the current truce in Yemen.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Southport

Damien Moore: [\[8147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of A&E service provision for children in Southport.

Edward Argar:

No recent assessment has been made. However, National Health Service leaders in West Lancashire, Formby, and Southport have recently launched the Shaping Care Together programme. This seeks to improve the configuration of services and ensure that NHS services meet the long term needs of the local population.

■ Brain: Injuries

Jim Shannon: [\[7990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in the UK have been diagnosed with permanent brain damage.

Gillian Keegan:

This information is not collected in the format requested. However, the following table shows a count of finished admission episodes with a primary or secondary diagnosis of brain damage in each of the last four years. The information for 2021/22 is not yet available.

YEAR	ADMISSIONS WITH PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS	ADMISSIONS WITH PRIMARY OR SECONDARY DIAGNOSIS
2017/18	2,973	11,804
2018/19	3,052	12,698
2019/20	3,024	12,906
2020/21	2,529	10,463

Source: NHS Digital

Notes:

1. The data represents activity in English National Health Service hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector.
2. A finished admission episode (FAE) is the first period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. This data shows FAEs which have been counted against the month and year in which the episode was completed. Admissions do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.
3. The data includes the following diagnosis codes:
G93.1 Anoxic brain damage, not elsewhere classified
G93.9 Disorder of brain, unspecified
P11.2 Unspecified brain damage due to birth injury

■ Children: Speech and Language Disorders

Ben Bradley:

[\[4677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children are assessed using his Department's Early Language Intervention Measure as a proportion of children undergoing the Healthy Child Programme 2 / 2½ year Review.

Maggie Throup:

The information requested is not currently held centrally. The guidance supporting the Early Language Intervention Measure (ELIM) and Intervention recommends that local areas record the use of ELIM within a child's electronic health record and this practice is being implemented locally.

■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Research

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[6962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase funding for research into myalgic encephalomyelitis; and what steps he is taking to meet the

additional needs of people living with myalgic encephalomyelitis and other similar chronic conditions.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 26 May 2022]: The Department has asked the UK Clinical Research Collaboration to convene a subgroup on myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) with a range of stakeholders, including research funders, to ensure high quality applications for research into ME/CFS and support the research community to build capacity and capability.

On 12 May 2022, we announced the intention to develop a cross-Government Delivery Plan for ME/CFS in England. The delivery plan will build on the recommendations of the ME/CFS Priority Setting Partnership and the recently updated guideline from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to ensure that people living with ME/CFS have the appropriate support.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are establishing a task and finish group to produce guidance on the provision of high-quality services for people living with long term pain by September 2022. The guidance is aimed at integrated care systems to provide core principles which can be used to inform the development of local models of care to support people living with chronic pain.

■ **Coronavirus: Drugs**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[6918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 20 April 2022 to Question 151279, on Evusheld, how long the Antivirals and Therapeutics Taskforce or its predecessor took to assess and make a recommendation on the available antiviral treatments for covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

Since the formation of the Antivirals Taskforce in April 2021, it has worked with RAPID C-19 to review clinical trials data for the oral antivirals then in development and with the National Health Service on potential patient cohorts and deployment models. This process supported the procurement of two oral antivirals, molnupiravir and Paxlovid, in October 2021. Molnupiravir subsequently received conditional marketing authorisation from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on 4 November 2021 and Paxlovid on 31 December 2021.

■ **Cystic Fibrosis: Mental Health Services**

Julian Sturdy:

[\[7972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of (a) children and (b) adults with cystic fibrosis in England saw a clinical psychologist at their annual review, in each year since 2015.

Gillian Keegan:

This information is not held in the format requested. However, the following table shows quarterly data on the proportion of children with cystic fibrosis in England who

saw a clinical psychologist within the 12 months prior to their latest annual review. Data is not held prior to 2019 and information for Quarter 4 in 2021/22 is not yet available.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Quarter 1	78.6%	48.7%	63.8%
Quarter 2	57.3%	37.3%	44.2%
Quarter 3	66.1%	50.0%	58.2%
Quarter 4	58.6%	55.8%	-

The following table shows quarterly data on the proportion of adults with cystic fibrosis in England who saw a clinical psychologist within the 12 months prior to their latest annual review. Data is not held prior to 2019 and information for Quarter 4 in 2021/22 is not yet available.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Quarter 1	82.2%	20.4%	33.3%
Quarter 2	72.6%	66.8%	25.4%
Quarter 3	80.2%	59.6%	38.5%
Quarter 4	65.3%	54.6%	-

■ Dementia: Diagnosis

Caroline Lucas:

[\[4539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the barriers to timely dementia diagnosis; what estimate he has made of the size of the backlog in dementia diagnosis through Memory Assessment Services; what steps he is taking to reduce that backlog; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

In April 2022, the dementia diagnosis rate was 61.8%. The pandemic has affected the provision of memory assessment services and the number of general practitioner (GP) referrals to those services. No specific estimate of the backlog has been made. However, since March 2020 there has been a 5.6% reduction in the number of people over the age of 65 years old on the dementia register, which records a dementia diagnosis.

In 2021/22, we allocated £17 million to address waiting times and increase the number of diagnoses. In 2022/23, NHS England will provide funding to support GPs in some areas in England to pilot approaches to increase the diagnosis rate and

provide access to post-diagnosis support. We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year, which will include a focus on diagnosis.

Bob Blackman: [6743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support memory assessment services in diagnosing people living with dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

In 2021/22, we allocated £17 million to specifically address dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses. NHS England and NHS Improvement are using this funding to aid the recovery of referrals to and increase workforce capacity within memory assessment services. We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year, which will include a focus on dementia diagnosis.

Bob Blackman: [6744]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help enable primary care services to diagnose people living with dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

In 2021/22, we provided £17 million to clinical commissioning groups to address the needs of those waiting for diagnosis and increase the number of diagnoses. A proportion of this funding was directed towards improving access to personalised pre- and post-diagnostic and carer support, through partnership working between memory assessment services and primary care and Primary Care Network social prescribing and care coordination teams.

In 2022/23, NHS England will provide funding to support general practitioners in specific areas to pilot approaches to address the dementia diagnosis rate and access to post diagnostic support.

Ben Lake: [8105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on increasing diagnosis rates for dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

We have had no specific discussions as this is a devolved matter.

Ben Lake: [8106]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help promote innovation in dementia diagnosis.

Gillian Keegan:

For many, assessments and diagnoses begin in memory clinics which provide access to a multi-disciplinary team. In 2021, NHS England commissioned resources to support memory services to improve and innovate. These resources include an e-learning course developed by University College London to support memory services to manage a change in practice, ensuring the delivery of a personalised assessment and diagnosis via a blended service model. Leeds Beckett University has also developed a guide to supporting continuous development, improvement and

innovation in memory services. These resources were circulated to services and stakeholders in March 2022.

In 2022/23, NHS England will provide funding to support general practitioners in specific areas to pilot approaches to diagnosing dementia for people living with advanced dementia in a care home setting. We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year, which will include a focus on dementia diagnosis.

■ Dental Services

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[6865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of (a) private and (b) NHS dentists across the country broken down by Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested on the number of private dentists is not held. A table showing the number of dentists undertaking National Health Service activity in each clinical commissioning group in England in 2020/21 is attached.

Attachments:

1. TABLE [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE PQ6865-Number of dentists with NHS activity by CCG level.xlsx]

■ Dental Services: Gateshead

Liz Twist:

[\[8103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of dentists in Gateshead who (a) treat NHS patients and (b) have left the NHS to work in private practice since March 2020; and what the average size of dentist patient lists are in Gateshead for (i) NHS and (ii) private patients for which the latest figures are available.

Maria Caulfield:

This information is not held in the format requested as data on the number of dentists treating National Health Service patients is collected at national, regional and clinical commissioning group level. Patients are registered with a dental practice for the duration of their treatment and do not routinely join dental waiting lists.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Recruitment

Wes Streeting:

[\[6832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department spent on recruitment consultants in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 26 May 2022]: The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Dialysis Machines

Feryal Clark: [\[5504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients receiving haemodialysis at home received full reimbursement from the NHS for the resulting energy costs in the financial year (a) 2021-22, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2019-20.

Feryal Clark: [\[5505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients receiving haemodialysis at home received partial reimbursement from the NHS for the resulting energy costs in the financial year (a) 2021-22, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2019-20.

Feryal Clark: [\[5506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients receiving haemodialysis at home received no reimbursement from the NHS for the resulting energy costs in the financial year (a) 2021-22, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2019-20.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally. Reimbursements are made by the patient's host provider hospital, with NHS England meeting additional direct utility costs through the payment of the national tariff to the provider. NHS England is promoting awareness of these arrangements with regional commissioning teams, providers of renal services and renal networks to ensure that eligible patients are alerted.

■ Disability Aids: Children

Ed Davey: [\[3455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 16 March 2022 to Question 137964, if he will publish the joint letter sent on 15 December 2021 to all local safeguarding partners and local authority CEOs from Ministers in the Department for Education, Department for Health and Social Security and the Home Office.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 23 May 2022]: A copy of the letter is attached.

Attachments:

1. Letter [Letter for issue 16.12.21.pdf]

■ Disease Control

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[5322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 1082, on Disease Control, if he will provide details of the formal public hearings which will be held in the UK.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[5323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 1082, on Disease Control, if he will list (a) all those who are deemed to be relevant stakeholders and (b) the methods by which engagement with them (i) has been carried out and (ii) will be carried out in the future.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 24 May 2022]: There are no formal public hearings planned in the United Kingdom. The UK is engaging with a range of stakeholders during the development of the instrument. An effective instrument for pandemic prevention and preparedness will require a whole-of-society approach and non-state actors are vital to ensure countries are protected from health threats. As such, we continue to engage with stakeholders from civil society and others.

■ **Eating Disorders: Health Services**

Jim Shannon:

[7981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) raise awareness of and (b) tackle eating disorders.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department regularly engages with stakeholders and supported Eating Disorder Awareness Week earlier this year. Information on eating disorders is also made available via NHS.UK. We are increasing investment in mental health, including eating disorder services, to an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24. This will allow 370,000 adults with serious mental illnesses, including eating disorders, greater choice and control over their care and support them to live in their communities.

From 2021/22, we are providing an additional £53 million for children and young people's community eating disorder services to increase capacity in the 70 new or improved community eating disorder teams. In 2021/22, we allocated an additional £79 million in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed an additional 2,000 children and young people to access eating disorder services. The Department has launched a call for evidence to inform the development of a 10-year mental health plan and identify potential solutions to improve mental health and wellbeing, including eating disorders.

■ **Endometriosis: Clinics**

Jim Shannon:

[7995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of endometriosis clinics in the UK.

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not held centrally. The provision for endometriosis is commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups, which have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services which meet the needs of the population.

■ **Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust and Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust: Surgery**

Elliot Colburn: [\[8195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the extent of backlogs in elective surgery at (a) the Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust and (b) the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust.

Edward Argar:

As of March 2022, there were 44,286 patients waiting for elective treatment at the Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, of which 193 waited over 52 weeks and two waited more than 104 weeks. In March 2022, there were 1,502 patients waiting for elective treatment at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, of which six waited over 52 weeks. No patients waited more than 104 weeks.

The Department is investing more than £8 billion over the next three years to increase elective activity and reduce waiting lists. This is in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund already made available to systems in 2021/22. This funding could deliver the equivalent of approximately nine million further checks, scans and procedures and aims to deliver 30% more elective activity by 2024/25 compared to pre-pandemic levels.

■ **Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust: Ambulance Services**

Elliot Colburn: [\[8196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the length of time that patients transported to the Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust by ambulance (a) have to wait for an ambulance to arrive and (b) remain waiting in an ambulance before being admitted into A&E.

Edward Argar:

No specific assessment has been made as this information is not collected centrally.

Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust is improving ambulance handover times through monitoring ambulance arrivals and waiting times. Dedicated areas for patients awaiting a trolley have been established to allow ambulance crews to respond to calls. The Trust has monthly meetings with London Ambulance Service and South East Coast Ambulance Service to review handover times and a standard operating procedure to support ambulance handovers to the urgent treatment centre and same day emergency care service for appropriate patients has been established.

■ **Exercise: Ipswich**

Tom Hunt: [\[8175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the average level of physical activity in Ipswich and other local authority areas in England.

Maggie Throup:

To support local monitoring of physical activity in relation to the Chief Medical Officer's (CMOs') guidelines, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities produces estimates of physical activity for each local authority in England from Active Lives Adult Survey data and present estimates from the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey.

In 2020/21, an estimated 54.1% of adults in Ipswich aged 19 years old and over reported achieving recommended physical activity levels, which was lower than the average for the East of England at 65.7% and 65.9% in England. During the academic year 2020/21, an estimated 40.2% of children and young people in Ipswich aged five to 16 years old in Ipswich met the CMOs' guidelines of participating in sport and physical activity for an average of 60 minutes or more every day. This was similar to the average for the East of England at 43.2% and 44.6% in England.

Food: Advertising**Esther McVey:**[\[3578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Food (Promotion and Placement) (England) Regulations 2021, made on 2 December 2021, whether he plans to repeal powers to restrict multibuy promotions such as buy one get one free.

Maggie Throup:

We have no plans to repeal these Regulations. However, we have announced the intention to delay the introduction by 12 months to come into force from 1 October 2023.

Free School Meals and Healthy Start Scheme: Universal Credit**Caroline Lucas:**[\[7964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to extend (a) Healthy Start and (b) free school meals to everyone who receives Universal Credit; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

The eligibility criteria for the Healthy Start scheme is kept under review. There are no current plans to extend the eligibility criteria for the scheme to all those who receives Universal Credit. Decisions on the provision of free school meals are a matter for the Department for Education.

Healthy Start Scheme**Caroline Lucas:**[\[7962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to extend eligibility for Healthy Start Vouchers by extending the age limit by one year to cover children under the age of five to cover the gap between the end of eligibility to Healthy Start and the start of free school meals; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

We have no current plans to do so. The eligibility criteria for the Healthy Start scheme is kept under review.

Caroline Lucas:[\[7963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make Healthy Start vouchers available to families with no recourse to public funds; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

The Department has established an interim scheme to access Healthy Start for British children under the age of four years old, whose parent or guardian meets the financial eligibility criteria and has no recourse to public funds as a consequence of their immigration status.

■ Heart Diseases: Medical Treatments and Screening**Steve McCabe:**[\[590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to British Medical Journal study, entitled Uncovering the treatable burden of severe aortic stenosis in the UK, published January 2022, what assessment he made of the validity of the finding that the burden of severe aortic stenosis in the UK exceeds the capacity of the NHS to screen or treat the disease.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. However, NHS England is finalising a revised commissioning policy to enable hospitals to provide transcatheter aortic valve implantation and surgical aortic valve replacement for symptomatic severe aortic stenosis in adults.

■ Hospitals: Sutton**Elliot Colburn:**[\[8181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his revised timetable is for the delivery of the new specialist emergency care hospital in Sutton.

Edward Argar:

The new hospitals programme is working with Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust on a plan and timetable for a new specialist emergency care hospital in Sutton.

■ Learning Disability**Rachael Maskell:**[\[6823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) commission a comprehensive review of the provision of (i) social care, (ii) support services, (iii) mental health services, (iv) education and voluntary sector interventions and (v) best practice for

people with learning impairments and (b) take steps to ensure that those services are responsive and person-orientated.

Gillian Keegan:

We have no plans to undertake such a review. We are bringing forward measures to provide a greater understanding of adult social care provision, including the independent assessment of local authorities by the Care Quality Commission and the delivery of a data strategy. We have committed £70 million over the next three years to support local authorities to improve experiences of care.

In 2022/23, we are investing more than £90 million in community services and support for discharges from mental health inpatient settings specifically for people with a learning disability and autistic people. Additionally, the proposed reforms to the Mental Health Act 1983 will place duties on commissioners to ensure an adequate supply of community services for people at risk of admission. The green paper on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision which was published on 29 March 2022, proposes to establish a single, national SEND system setting standards across education, health, and care.

■ **Learning Disability: Social Services**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[6825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) make an assessment of the capacity of the social care workforce for people with learning difficulties and (b) set out a workforce plan to tackle any deficits.

Gillian Keegan:

We have no plans to make a formal assessment. However, we continue to monitor workforce capacity in the adult social care sector, bringing together intelligence from the Department's Capacity Tracker and Skills for Care data. This includes annual data on the proportion of the workforce trained to work with people with learning disabilities. 'People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform white paper', published in December 2021, commits to invest at least £500 million to develop and support the workforce over the next three years and increase the sector's ability to recruit and retain staff.

■ **Long Covid: Vaccination**

Peter Gibson:

[\[8164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the offer of a fourth covid-19 booster jab to people diagnosed with long covid.

Maggie Throup:

Following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), a COVID-19 spring booster dose is being offered in England to all residents in care homes for older adults, individuals aged 12 years old and over who are immunosuppressed, and all adults aged 75 years old and over. Those experiencing

the long term effects of COVID-19 infection are not specifically offered a spring booster dose, unless they meet the criteria for these cohorts.

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

NHS England has invested £224 million to provide care and support to individuals with post-COVID-19 syndrome. There are specialised services across England which assess people experiencing longer-term health implications from COVID-19 and directs them into care pathways which provide appropriate support, treatment, and rehabilitation.

■ Mental Health: Children and Young People

Jim Shannon:

[\[6766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will supply a decision on behalf of the Government on each of the 25 recommendations made by the Health and Social Care Committee in its Eighth Report of Session 2021-22 ,Children and Young People's Mental Health, published on 9 December 2021; and if he will make a statement to the House on that matter.

Gillian Keegan:

We continue to consider the Committee's recommendations in full in the development of a new long term, cross-Government plan for mental health. However, we are unable to reject or accept specific recommendations at this time. We will update the response to the Committee's recommendations following the publication of the plan.

■ Monkeypox: Vaccination

Rachael Maskell:

[\[8062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the vaccination options available to prevent the spread of monkeypox.

Maggie Throup:

Although it is not specifically licensed for the prevention of monkeypox in Europe, the smallpox vaccine, Imvanex, has been used in the United Kingdom in response to previous incidents. This vaccine has a good safety record. It is made from a smallpox-related virus which cannot replicate and has been demonstrated to be highly effective at preventing infection when administered within four days of exposure and reducing severe illness between four and 14 days of exposure.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has published recommendations on the use of vaccination for named close contacts of cases, which is now underway and wider vaccine eligibility is being kept under review. The UKHSA is working with suppliers to ensure a consistent supply.

■ **Neurodiversity: Health Services**

Rachael Maskell:

[6824]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure (a) early neurodiversity diagnosis and (b) that pre-diagnosis support is available for children and their families.

Gillian Keegan:

We expect services to adhere to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's recommended maximum waiting time of 13 weeks between referral and first autism assessments. In July 2021, we published a national autism strategy which included a £10.5 million investment in 2021/2022 to tackle long waiting times. We have also invested £600,000 to expand a pilot to improve early identification of autism and other neurodivergent conditions to at least 100 schools. NHS England and NHS Improvement are also working with local authority children's social care, education services and expert charities to develop measures to support autistic and other neurodivergent children and their families.

■ **North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust: Standards**

Damien Moore:

[8148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has had made on the adequacy of North-West Ambulance Service ambulance response times.

Edward Argar:

No recent assessment has been made. In 2022/23, NHS England and NHS Improvement have allocated £150 million to address pressures on the ambulance service, including supporting improvements to response times through additional call handler recruitment and retention. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also tendered a £30 million contract for auxiliary ambulance services to provide national surge capacity as needed and support ambulance response times during periods of increased demand.

NHS England's National Ambulance Coordination Centre provides central monitoring of and support for ambulance trusts to improve patient handovers at hospitals, preventing further delays in response times.

■ **Pain: Health Services**

Kate Hollern:

[6786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure adequate support is provided to people who live with severe chronic pain.

Gillian Keegan:

The majority of routine treatment and support for people with chronic pain is provided by local primary, community and secondary care services and commissioned via clinical commissioning groups. For patients with severe and complex pain, NHS England commissions specialised care. Upon referral to specialist centres, patients can access a range of health professionals, including consultant specialists, clinical nurse specialists, psychologists and physiotherapists and receive specialised treatment.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published its guidance on chronic pain in April 2021, which includes recommendations on how chronic pain can be managed through pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches, such as exercise programmes, acupuncture and psychological therapy. NHS England has established a task and finish group to produce guidance on the provision of high-quality services for people living with long-term pain conditions by September 2022. The guidance is aimed at integrated care systems, to provide core principles which can be used to inform the development of local models of care to support people living with chronic pain.

■ Protective Clothing: Storage**Angela Rayner:****[5662]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the cost of storing PPE in warehouses during the period from April 2021 to May 2022; and whether his Department has made an estimate of the current (a) daily, (b) weekly or (c) monthly costs of storing PPE in warehouses.

Edward Argar:

Based upon the current monthly average warehouse storage costs for personal protective equipment (PPE), the estimated cost for the period April 2021 to May 2022 is approximately £259 million. The current estimated average daily, weekly, and monthly cost of storing PPE in warehouses is £0.7 million, £5 million and £21.4 million respectively.

■ Queen's Hospital Romford: Accident and Emergency Departments**Andrew Rosindell:****[3495]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times at Queen's Hospital Urgent Treatment Centre and Emergency Department in the context of the finding of the Care Quality Commission's recent report that those services are in need of improvement.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that processes have been streamlined in the urgent treatment centre and emergency department at Queen's Hospital to reduce waiting times. The Partnership of East London Co-operatives is

reviewing how patients are received on arrival and how joint working with general practitioners will improve patient safety and assessments.

An area has been created in the emergency department to reduce the number of patients requiring admission, which has allowed an approximate a 13% reduction in the average waiting time. An ambulance receiving centre and a short stay medical ward have also been established to improve patient flow through the hospital and reduce waiting times.

■ Research: Finance

Chris Grayling:

[\[2386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the application process is for research funding from the National institute for Health and Care research and UKRI.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 23 May 2022]: There is no single application route for funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Research and UK Research and Innovation. Application routes are specific to the relevant research funding call and may vary. The most common approach is the submission of an application to an open research call with all remits, funding criteria and application advertised publicly. Once submitted, these applications are subject to independent peer review.

■ Social Services: Fees and Charges

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[6831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Minimum Income Guarantee for use as a baseline by local authorities when calculating charges for social care.

Gillian Keegan:

The baseline level of the Minimum Income Guarantee is reviewed annually. Following the last review, it was assessed that the Minimum Income Guarantee should increase in line with inflation from 6 April 2022. The revised rates are set out in The Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources)(Amendment) Regulations 2022.

■ Social Services: Finance

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[6688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of the rise in the cost of living on the levels of support people who pay for or contribute to their local authority social care support are able to afford.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[6689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to (a) collate, (b) monitor and (c) report data on people withdrawing from care support as a result of no longer being able to afford it.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[6690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to support people who withdraw from local authority care as a result of no longer being able to afford it.

Gillian Keegan:

Local authorities have a duty to meet the eligible needs of individuals in certain situations, including where the individual has assets below the means test threshold and is therefore eligible for funded support.

Whether a local authority can charge an individual for some or all of the cost of their care will depend on their financial situation. Under the Care Act 2014, charging is based on principles including that people should not be charged more they can afford to pay. It would therefore be for the local authority to determine whether a revised financial assessment is required in the event the cost of living is impeding an individual's ability to contribute to meeting their eligible care needs.

We have announced that we will reform our overall data and assurance approach to improve the quality, timeliness and accessibility of adult social care data. From April 2022, we have unfrozen the Minimum Income Guarantee for those receiving care in their own homes and the Personal Expenses Allowance for care home residents. We have implemented this reform ahead of the planned timetable to support people with income levels.

From October 2023, we will implement a more generous means testing regime to ensure that more people will receive support for their care costs at an earlier stage and retain more of their savings when contributing to care costs. We will continue to work with the sector to understand the potential impact of inflationary pressures on adult social care costs by October 2023.

■ Urinary Tract Infections: Females

Kim Leadbeater:

[6967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to review (a) public health policy, (b) funding, (c) testing and (d) treatment options for women diagnosed with Urinary Tract Infections.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department have no plans to do so. Funding for treatment of urinary tract infections (UTIs) is derived from individual clinical commissioning group budgets. However, the forthcoming Women's Health Strategy will address a range of women's health issues, including UTIs.

National Health Service commissioners in England are responsible for urinary continence care based on the available evidence and taking into account guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). In most instances, testing for UTIs is carried out by a general practitioner, with a referral to a specialist for persistent UTIs. NICE has produced a range of guidance for clinicians to support

them in the diagnosis, treatment care and support of people with UTIs. In October 2018, NICE published guidance on antimicrobial resistant prescribing. NHS England and NHS Improvement are also conducting research on UTIs and antimicrobial resistance.

■ Vitamin D: Deficiency Diseases

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[7913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of vitamin D deficiency on people at high risk from covid-19 in the event that they contract that virus.

Maggie Throup:

In 2020, the former Public Health England, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) considered the emerging evidence on vitamin D and the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. This included the publication of a rapid guideline on vitamin D and COVID-19 in December 2020, which concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support taking vitamin D solely to prevent or treat COVID-19.

RAPID C-19, a multi-agency initiative led by NICE, continues to monitor evidence on vitamin D in relation to treatment for COVID-19. NICE is also monitoring evidence on vitamin D in relation to prevention of COVID-19. The SACN continues to monitor emerging evidence on nutrition and COVID-19. To date, no evidence has been identified that meets the threshold to trigger additional review against the existing COVID-19 rapid guideline.

■ Vitamin D: Dietary Supplements

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[7912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to raise awareness of the Government recommendation to take a vitamin D supplement in the autumn and winter months.

Maggie Throup:

The Government's advice on vitamin D is publicised via NHS.UK and social marketing campaigns such as Start4Life, Better Health and Healthier Families.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities opened a call for evidence on vitamin D from 3 April to 15 May 2022, to gather views from the public, public health experts, retailers, food manufacturers and other industry bodies on improving the intake of vitamin D in the population, including through dietary supplements. The responses will inform future action to raise awareness of the benefits of vitamin D, particularly during the autumn and winter months when the public should consider taking a daily supplement. The outcome of the call for evidence will be published in due course.

■ Vitamin D: Food

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[7914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to help ensure that people with lower incomes have access to foods rich in vitamin D.

Maggie Throup:

The Healthy Start scheme provides prepaid cards which can be used to purchase or towards the cost of fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk and infant formula. Children, pregnant women and new mothers can receive a supplement which contains vitamin D through the scheme. Health professionals and others working with pregnant women and families from low-income households can advise on potential eligibility whilst also offering information and advice on issues such as healthy eating, breastfeeding and vitamins. The Government's advice is that everyone, including those on lower incomes, should also consider taking a daily 10-microgram vitamin D supplement during the autumn and winter.

■ World Health Assembly

Sir Christopher Chope:

[5324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, who will be the UK delegates attending the 75th World Health Assembly; what are their qualifications; what were the criteria governing their selection; and to whom they will be reporting their deliberations.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 24 May 2022]: The Department's delegation is led by my Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, supported by the Chief Medical Officer for England.

The delegation also consists of the Department's Director for International, Deputy Director for Multilateral, the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) Director of Global Operations and the UKHSA's Consultant in Global Health and Senior Medical Advisor, as senior officials overseeing the United Kingdom's global and public health policy. All delegates will report to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care as the Head of Delegation.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Deportation

Sir John Hayes:

[7903]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many failed asylum seekers have been deported from the UK since 2020.

Tom Pursglove:

The Home Office publishes statistics on the number of returns from the UK in the ['Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'](#). Data on asylum-related returns are

published in table Ret_05 of the '[Returns Summary Tables](#)' with the latest data up to the end of December 2021.

Asylum-related returns relate to cases where there has been an asylum claim at some stage prior to the return. This will include asylum seekers whose asylum claims have been refused and who have exhausted any rights of appeal, those returned under third-country provisions, as well as those granted asylum/protection but removed for other reasons (such as criminality).

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns, which are enforced either following a criminal conviction, or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. The published statistics refer to enforced returns which include deportations, as well as cases where a person has breached UK immigration laws, and those removed under other administrative and illegal entry powers that have declined to leave voluntarily. Figures on deportations, which are a subset of enforced returns, are not separately available.

■ **Asylum: RAF Linton-on-Ouse**

Alison Thewliss:

[8033]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to include an immigration detention centre at the Linton-on-Ouse asylum accommodation site.

Kevin Foster:

The immigration removal estate is kept under ongoing review to ensure the Home Office has sufficient capacity, in the right places and it provides value for money.

■ **Asylum: Undocumented Migrants**

Sir John Hayes:

[7904]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of failed asylum seekers who have no right to remain in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

Information regarding the number of failed asylum seekers still living in the UK can be found on tables ASY03 and RCM02 of the most recently published immigration and protection transparency data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-protection-data-q4-2021>

■ **British Nationality: Ilois**

Andrew Rosindell:

[6712]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason it is her policy that the new route for Chagossians to acquire British Nationality will be time-limited to five years from the commencement date of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022.

Andrew Rosindell:

[6713]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the new route to British Citizenship for Chagossians to those who are born outside of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: All direct descendants of people who were citizens of the UK and Colonies by virtue of their birth in the British Indian Ocean Territory are already eligible to apply under the measure, and regardless of where those descendants were born.

Our legislative provision is a generous one. We recognise the special circumstances of this group, so will create a registration route which breaks the traditional nationality model whereby citizenship is normally only passed on for one generation overseas. It is therefore not an open-ended offer, but those interested will have plenty of time to apply, and children will have until they are 23 years old to do so. The route is free, and no-one who is eligible and wants to apply should miss out.

We will publish further details of the support we will offer to those applying as soon as it is available.

■ Deportation

Stuart C McDonald:

[6788]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has a record of the number of parents separated from their children as a result of deportations by her Department.

Stuart C McDonald:

[6789]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many appeals against deportation lodged in 2021 were allowed (a) on family life grounds and (b) on the basis that deportation would have an unduly harsh impact on a qualifying child.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: The information requested above is not available in a reportable format and would require a manual check of individual records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office published a one-off release on 22 February 2022, [Statistical note: FNO appeals lodged and allowed on human rights grounds, 2008 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The Ministry of Justice also publish data regarding all appeals lodged with the First-tier Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chamber (FTTIAC) in the following statistical quarterly release:

[Tribunal Statistics Quarterly: October to December 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Section 32 of the UK Borders Act 2007 provides a statutory duty to deport a foreign national if they have been convicted of an offence in the UK and sentenced to a period of imprisonment of at least 12 months. This is subject to several exceptions,

including where to do so would be a breach of a person's ECHR rights or the UK's obligations under the Refugee Convention.

Those deported are provided with the opportunity to raise claims prior to their removal being enforced. Where an Article 8 human rights claim is advanced by a foreign national offender, careful consideration is given to their claimed family and/or private life, in accordance with the Immigration Rules. All claims raised are fully considered on the individual merits of the case and decided before deportation. The UK only ever returns those who the Home Office and, where applicable, the courts are satisfied do not have a legal basis to remain in the UK.

■ Domestic Abuse

Mark Logan:

[6943]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that cases of emotional abuse are afforded the same priority as physical abuse cases.

Rachel Maclean:

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for this Government. The landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced for the first time a legal definition of domestic abuse that is wide-ranging, recognising a range of abuses beyond physical violence; including sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, economic abuse, and controlling or coercive behaviour. Putting the definition on a statutory footing aims to ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood and that all public agencies and relevant parties are applying a common definition in seeking to tackle this abhorrent crime.

Building on this, the Government went further and on 30 March, published the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan which will seek to transform the whole of society's response to domestic abuse in all its forms.

Emotional abuse can form part of a pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour. The Domestic Abuse Act extended the coercive and controlling behaviour offence removing the 'living together' requirement to ensure that the offence applies to partners, ex-partners or family members, regardless of whether the victim and perpetrator live together. We are also in the process of updating the Controlling or Coercive Behaviour Statutory Guidance to further support frontline agencies in identifying, investigating and evidencing domestic abuse offences. We launched a public consultation on the draft guidance on 30 April.

■ High Rise Flats: Fire and Rescue Services

Dr Matthew Offord:

[214]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance the Government has provided to fire authorities on basing operational firefighting decisions on the risks of fire to high rise properties.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 27 May 2022]: Fire and rescue authorities are responsible for judging how to respond to the risks presented by residential high-rise buildings to their local communities.

■ HM Passport Office: Standards**Damien Moore:**[\[8154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the current delays within HM Passport Office.

Kevin Foster:

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

These preparations, which include the recruitment of 650 additional staff since April 2021 and with plans in place to recruit a further 550 by this summer, have ensured passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved a record monthly high by completing the processing of nearly two million applications.

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

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme**Daisy Cooper:**[\[6921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's MP hotline and subsequent selection of option 2 relating to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, what the average call wait time was until calls are answered in the latest period for which data is available.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: We recognise during peak periods waiting times can be considerably longer due to an increase in call demand.

MPs can also raise urgent and compassionate cases with the MP engagement team via the MPs Urgent Enquiries inbox or in person at the Portcullis House walk-in hub.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Children**Catherine West:**[\[5467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether applications under the Homes for Ukraine scheme can be accepted where the applicant is a minor travelling with a family member who is not a parent.

Catherine West:

[5468]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what legal documentation is required under the Homes for Ukraine scheme for a minor travelling without a parent but with an adult family member, such as an aunt or grandparent.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 25 May 2022]: Applicants for the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme must be Ukrainian, or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national, and either:

- 18 or older on the date of application or
- under 18 years old and applying with your parent or legal guardian, or to join them in the UK

Please see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules>

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Lewisham

Janet Daby:

[6898]

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

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: The Home Office is committing to processing applications as quickly possible, both those submitted overseas and in the UK.

To support this, we are working at pace with our UK commercial partner, Sopra Steria, and local partners/devolved regions, to expand capacity to meet the demand for biometric enrolment appointments from those applying under the Ukrainian schemes from within the UK. We have also ensured sufficient casework capacity is deployed, including staff being loaned from other government departments.

■ Hostage Taking: Victim Support Schemes

Tulip Siddiq:

[6854]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what procedures her Department has in place for victims of hostage-taking; and whether she plans to develop safeguarding guidance for public authorities and staff.

Damian Hinds:

The Home Office takes the risk of hostage taking very rather seriously.

Depending on the circumstances, our operational partners have the capability and would respond to the immediate crises. We then have clear policies to support victims of crime and vulnerable people, depending on specific needs.

In response to any terrorist attack, the Victims of Terrorism Unit (VTU) co-ordinates effective and comprehensive support to victims of terrorism. The VTU define a victim

of terrorism as anyone who feels impacted, either physically or mentally, by a terrorist attack, including bereaved family and friends, witnesses and first responders.

Victims of Terrorism are provided with practical and emotional support from specialist service providers, enabling them to cope with the immediate impact of a terrorist attack and to recover from the longer-term consequences.

The VTU has developed a Local Authority (LA) Toolkit, to help LAs to support victims of terrorism. In the aftermath of an attack, the VTU will work with the area affected to ensure that victims receive the support they need.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Kate Green:

[R] [\[4570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to implement the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union C-247/20 VI on 10 March 2022 on comprehensive sickness insurance.

Rachel Maclean:

[Holding answer 27 May 2022]: The judgment of the Court of Justice of the EU in the case C-247/20 raises many questions regarding residence rights and access to benefits under EU law.

The Government is carefully considering the impacts of the judgment and seeking further legal advice on the implications.

■ Members: Correspondence

David Linden:

[\[8114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 4 March and (b) 28 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL8914.

David Linden:

[\[8117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of 14 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11439.

David Linden:

[\[8118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of 21 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11492.

David Linden:

[\[8119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 20 January and (b) 14 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11192.

David Linden: [\[8120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 20 January and (b) 14 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11182.

David Linden: [\[8121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 3 February and (b) 14 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11279.

David Linden: [\[8124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of 25 February 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11307.

David Linden: [\[8125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of 22 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11315.

David Linden: [\[8126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of 5 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11555.

David Linden: [\[8127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 9 March, (b) 7 April and (c) 5 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11374.

David Linden: [\[8128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 10 February, (b) 10 March, (c) 7 April and (d) 23 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL10893.

David Linden: [\[8129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 28 March and (b) 3 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11486.

David Linden: [\[8130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 21 March and (b) 3 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11009.

David Linden:

[8131]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 11 April and (b) 9 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11141.

Kevin Foster:

I apologise for the delay. UK Visas and Immigration, MP Account Management team responded as detailed below:

PQ 8114 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0257227/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8117 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0286571/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8119 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0261710/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8120 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0261732/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8121 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0261690/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8124 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0253927/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8125 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0266624/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8126 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0277018/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8127 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0260043/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8128 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0316608/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8129 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0270390/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8130 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0266259/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

PQ 8131 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0281824/22 – The Home Office responded on 25 May 2022.

Enquiries are still outstanding on the following case:

PQ 8118 – MPAM reference: MPAM/0271929/22 – The Home Office will respond shortly.

■ MI5: Environment Protection

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[5687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how an hon. Member may make a request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 for environmental sustainability reports made by MI5.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 25 May 2022]: Requests under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 to MI5 can be made via its website.

■ Passports: Applications

Janet Daby:

[\[6901\]](#)

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

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks when applying for their British passport as more than 5 million people delayed applying due to the pandemic. The vast majority of all passport applications continue to be dealt with well within this service standard.

HM Passport Office has increased its staffing numbers by 650 since April 2021 and is in the process of recruiting a further 550. This has helped to ensure passport applications continue to be processed in higher numbers than ever before. Across March and April 2022, HM Passport Office completed the processing of two million applications.

Janet Daby:

[\[6902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with HM Passport Office on tackling administrative delays that are lengthening the time taken to process passport applications and passport renewal applications.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: Ahead of unrestricted international travel returning, HM Passport Office prepared extensively to serve an unprecedented number of customers, with 9.5 million British passport applications forecasted throughout 2022.

These preparations, which include the recruitment of 650 additional staff since April 2021 and with plans in place to recruit a further 550 by this summer, have ensured passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved record outputs by completing the processing of two million applications.

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

Sir John Hayes:

[7900]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time taken by her Department to process a passport application is; and what steps her Department is taking to reduce that time.

Kevin Foster:

Ahead of unrestricted international travel returning, Her Majesty's Passport Office prepared extensively to serve an unprecedented number of customers, with 9.5 million British passport applications forecasted throughout 2022.

These preparations, which include the recruitment of 650 additional staff since April 2021 and with plans in place to recruit a further 550 by this summer, have ensured passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved record outputs by completing the processing of two million applications

Since April 2021, HM Passport Office has been advising people to allow up to 10 weeks when applying for their passport from the UK. There are currently no plans to change this published timeframe until the expected demand for passports returns closer to normal levels.

Damien Moore:

[8153]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department is taking to ensure that passport applications are processed accurately and without delay.

Kevin Foster:

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

These preparations, which include the recruitment of 650 additional staff since April 2021 and with plans in place to recruit a further 550 by this summer, have ensured passport applications can be processed in higher numbers than ever before. This was demonstrated in March and April 2022 when HM Passport Office achieved a record monthly high by completing the processing of nearly two million applications.

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

■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings

Jim Shannon:

[7986]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that people who are under investigation for rape are monitored to prevent (a) further attacks and (b) evasion of justice.

Rachel Maclean:

Individuals who are under investigation for rape may be placed on pre-charge bail when the police consider it necessary and proportionate. Conditions may be attached to this bail and are given with specific reference to factors including to ensure the person does not commit further offences or abscond from police custody. These factors are set out in existing primary legislation. Decisions on whether to bail individuals and which conditions to set against them are operational matters for individual police forces and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Where individuals breach their bail conditions, the police have a power to arrest those individuals.

We are delivering actions through the Rape Review to ensure that police investigations are efficient and consider the risks posed by suspects under investigation. This includes supporting delivery of Operation Soteria and funding the policing aspects of the programme which include the dissemination and development of best practice learning to improve the efficiency of investigations.

Furthermore, we are working with partners to improve the capabilities of police officers in relation to issues that are relevant to sexual offences. As part of the Policing Education Qualification Framework, all student police officers will receive training to identify the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of victims and witnesses and respond appropriately.

Through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act we are also strengthening the regime to manage sexual offenders and those that pose a risk of sexual harm but have not been convicted. The police may apply to a court for a Sexual Risk Orders (SRO), which can be applied to any individual who poses a risk of sexual harm in the UK or abroad, even if they have never been convicted.

An SRO can place a range of restrictions on an individual depending on the nature of the case, such as limiting their internet use or preventing travel abroad. Breach of an SRO is a criminal offence punishable by a maximum of 5 years' imprisonment.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 now specifies that the court should apply the lower civil standard of proof ('balance of probabilities'), rather than the criminal standard, when determining whether the individual the application is made in respect of has done the act in question.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan**Stuart C McDonald:****[6790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that resettled Afghans are informed about life in the area of the UK in which they are offered accommodation.

Stuart C McDonald:

[6792]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of housing resettled Afghans in urban areas; and whether priority is given to finding accommodation in urban areas.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: We have been working to support Afghan families into homes of their own, so they can settle into their local communities, feel safe and independent and rebuild their lives in the UK.

We provide 7 days' notice of their move to long-term accommodation. During this time, they can prepare for their move and discuss any concerns with their Home Office Liaison Officer. We will also put them in contact with the relevant Local Authority to discuss the area they are moving to and what the local amenities are including schools, local services and details of the local community to help them integrate as quickly as possible.

We work closely with Local Authorities and we strive to allocate the right families into the right accommodation to ensure integration into their new area is as smooth as possible. To achieve this, we triage and prioritise families to ensure the settled accommodation provides the best possible match, taking into consideration date of arrival into the UK, family size, vulnerability and integration factors.

This also includes finding accommodation within or near to, major conurbations wherever possible so appropriate support and access to services can be more readily provided. Yet this must be balanced with the need to avoid lengthy periods being accommodated in hotels when good offers of accommodation are being made from other areas which are ready to welcome Afghan families.

Janet Daby:

[6900]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the (a) administration of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and (b) routes by which people are able to access the scheme.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) commenced on 6 January 2022, providing up to 20,000 women, children and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK.

Eligible individuals can be referred onto the Scheme in one of three ways, as set out in the policy statement on eligibility for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme of 13 September 2021. We are working at pace to prepare to receive the first referrals under Pathways 2 and 3, so individuals affected by events in Afghanistan can safely arrive in the UK and rebuild their lives.

It is therefore too early to make assessments on the impact of the Scheme.

■ Sanctions: Russia

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:

[\[4451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she intends to use seized Russian assets frozen under sanctions for the benefit of victims in Ukraine.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 23 May 2022]: Law enforcement agencies are currently able to freeze and seize foreign assets with links to criminality or unlawful conduct, by making use of powers granted under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Telephone Services

Janet Daby:

[\[6903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the average waiting time on the MP UK Visas and Immigration helpline.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 31 May 2022]: We have seen a significant increase in call volumes to the MP enquiry line in recent weeks linked to the situation in Ukraine and passport applications.

We have increased staffing across the MP enquiry line, but more specifically on the HMPO and Ukraine options. We expect to have up to 25 dedicated HMPO and up to 20 dedicated Ukraine call handlers available to take urgent and compassionate case referrals in the next week.

MP's also can contact the Home Office via the MP's Urgent Enquiries inbox or in person at the Portcullis House walk-in hub.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Rwanda

Sir John Hayes:

[\[7899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there is a cap on the number of illegal immigrants who can be transferred to Rwanda under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with that country.

Tom Pursglove:

The Migration and Economic Development Partnership between the UK and Rwanda is uncapped and is expected to last for at least five years.

■ Visas: Graduates

Catherine West:

[\[8093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of enabling graduates from high-ranking UK universities to apply for the High Potential Individual visa.

Kevin Foster:

The High Potential Individual route is a highly selective route. It is designed to attract individuals who are at an early stage of their career who have demonstrated their potential through academic achievement at a limited number of universities outside of the UK.

Graduates of all UK universities are already able to remain and work in the UK for the same period through the Graduate route.

■ **Visas: Ukraine**

Stephen Farry: [\[9206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Ukrainian nationals who enter Northern Ireland without a visa having lawfully entered the Republic of Ireland fall within the scope of third country inadmissibility principles, under paragraphs 345A-D of the Immigration Rules.

Kevin Foster:

There are a range of safe and legal routes to the UK and unlimited numbers are being offered safety after fleeing the war in Ukraine through our family and Homes for Ukraine schemes.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION■ **Members: Conduct**

Caroline Lucas: [\[5646\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, if the Commission will make it its policy to establish an inquiry into the potential creation of a mechanism for ordering that a Member should stay away from the Parliamentary Estate and/or constituency offices while under investigation for serious sexual misconduct; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Charles Walker:

The House of Commons Commission takes the safety of the Parliamentary community very seriously. The Commission has heard representations from trade union representatives on this matter and will give it further consideration at its meeting on 13 June.

Caroline Lucas: [\[5647\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the Commission has had discussions with (a) the Chair of the Procedure Committee, (b) trade union representatives and (c) the Director of the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme on the potential merits of a mechanism for ordering that a Member should stay away from the Parliamentary Estate and/or constituency offices while under investigation for serious sexual misconduct; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Charles Walker:

The House of Commons Commission takes the safety of the Parliamentary community very seriously. The Commission has heard representations from trade union representatives on this matter and will give it further consideration at its meeting on 13 June.

Caroline Lucas:[\[5648\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the potential risks to (a) staff and (b) other hon. Members who are under investigation for serious sexual misconduct not being required to stay away from the Parliamentary Estate and/or constituency offices; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Charles Walker:

The House of Commons Commission has not made any such assessment but, when the House authorities are notified of an arrest, a safeguarding concern or certain other investigations relating to serious sexual misconduct, a risk assessment is undertaken. Individual risk assessments are confidential and only shared with those responsible for acting on them.

The House of Commons Commission takes the safety of the Parliamentary community very seriously and will consider this matter at its meeting on 13 June.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: Staff****Gareth Thomas:**[\[5319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many of her Departmental staff are based in each region of (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland and can advise businesses on exporting to new and existing markets; and if she will make a statement.

Mike Freer:

The Department of International Trade (DIT) has teams across the UK supporting businesses to export. In the English Regions, this is primarily delivered through eight contracted regionally located Delivery Partners, comprising c.200 international trade advisors. As of 1st July 2022, this service will be brought into the Department. We are also developing teams of export and investment specialists in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As of April 2022 DIT has 28 staff in Scotland, 23 staff in Wales and 5 staff in Northern Ireland. We aim to deliver c.275 roles into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland under the cross-Government Places for Growth programme by 2030. These figures exclude UK Export Finance staff.

■ Export Credit Guarantees: Iran

Tulip Siddiq: [\[6853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 157459 on Export Credit Guarantees: Iran, whether the £28.4 million debt owed by Iran to UK Export Finance (UKEF) has (a) been closed or (b) is still being pursued by UKEF following the settlement of the IMS dispute in March 2022.

Mike Freer:

The IMS portion of the debt has been closed and will no longer be pursued.

■ Exports: Government Assistance

Gareth Thomas: [\[5318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will provide details of her Department's export support programmes providing financial assistance that are available to British businesses; and what the cost of each of those programmes is in the financial year (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24.

Mike Freer:

Our refreshed Export Strategy includes financial support for exporters. Launched December 2020, the Internationalisation Fund provides co-investment to high internationalisation growth potential small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), using European Regional Development Funding available until March 2023. Financial support is also available to eligible businesses wishing to attend or exhibit at Tradeshows through the UK Tradeshows Programme pilot operating until March 2023. In the music sector, The Music Export Growth Scheme and International Showcase Fund support independent music SMEs to take steps internationally.

Indicative expenditure, subject to internal business planning and HMT approval, in the 22/23 and 23/24 financial years is in the table below:

	INDICATIVE SPEND22/23 (£)	INDICATIVE SPEND23/24 (£)
Internationalisation Fund	30,000,000	TBC
UK Tradeshows Programme	1,250,000	TBC
Music Export Growth Scheme	500,000	500,000
International Showcase Fund	40,000	40,000

■ Tradeshow Access Programme

Gareth Thomas:

[5313]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many businesses were awarded a grant of between £500 and £999 through the Tradeshow Access Programme in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Mike Freer:

The following table disaggregates how many businesses were awarded a grant of between £500-£999 in each of the last five financial years (FY) of the Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP).

FY	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES AWARDED GRANTS BETWEEN £500-£999
2016-17	38
2017-18	0
2018-19	38
2019-20	10
2020-21	21
Total	107

Overall, TAP provided around 12,700 grants between financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21, and the average grant value was £1,720. The programme ceased on 31 March 2021.

■ Visits Abroad: USA

Ruth Cadbury:

[5414]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much her Department has spent on (a) flights and (b) hotel accommodation for visits by (i) officials and (ii) Ministers to the United States in the last 12 months.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 24 May 2022]: The Department for International Trade (DIT) has spent a total of £251,625 on both flights and hotel accommodations from April 2021 to March 2022 for officials and Ministers visiting the United States of America.

The figure above relates to all bookings made through DIT's Travel Management Company.

DIT Ministerial travel is published on [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dit-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dit-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

JUSTICE**■ Criminal Injuries Compensation**

Kate Griffiths: [\[8180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to respond to the Criminal Injury Compensation Scheme Review 2020.

Tom Pursglove:

I am grateful to all who took the time to contribute views to our consultation following a review of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. Our proposals aim to make claiming compensation simpler and more accessible for victims of violent crime.

We are carefully reviewing responses and will aim to publish the Government's response in due course.

■ Defamation

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[7951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps he has taken to prevent UK libel laws from being used to (a) prevent or (b) punish the exposure of wrongdoing in the international development sector by burdening those involved in such exposures with the costs of a legal defence.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government published a consultation paper (and call for evidence) in March 2022 setting out options for reform in defamation law and other areas of litigation subject to Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) which are designed to inhibit public interest activities.

We are determined to address the challenges this aggressive litigation presents. We are currently considering responses and intend to move quickly to pursue reforms, including legislation, to tackle this problem.

■ Family Proceedings

Caroline Lucas: [\[5649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Family Justice Panel report, Assessing risk of harm to children and parents in private law children cases, updated on 5 August 2020, and accompanying Implementation Plan published by his Department, when the more detailed delivery plan planned for the end of 2020 will be published; and if he will make a statement.

James Cartlidge:

This Government is committed to system-wide reform of the family justice system, improving the experience and outcomes for parents, domestic abuse survivors and their children and good progress has been made. To coincide with the two year anniversary of the publication of the expert panel's report 'Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Children Cases', the Government intends to

publish an update detailing progress against commitments made in the Implementation Plan.

■ Prisoners: Repatriation

Dr Rupa Huq:

[8079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his policy is on the circumstances under which voluntary deportation to countries of origin is the appropriate course of action for people serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection in the UK.

Tom Pursglove:

The Tariff-Expired Removal Scheme (TERS) is a mandatory scheme under which all foreign national prisoners serving indeterminate sentences will be considered for removal from the UK once their tariff expires.

This scheme is jointly administered with the Home Office and decisions to approve or refuse a removal under TERS are authorised by the Public Protection Casework Section in HMPPS on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Further information about the scheme can be found on gov.uk: [The Tariff-Expired Removal Scheme \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).

■ Probation Service: Agency Workers

Ellie Reeves:

[4661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) number and (b) cost of agency staff working in the Probation Service was in the most recent period for which data is available.

Victoria Atkins:

The table below shows figures for the number and cost of contingent labour (agency staff) working in the Probation Service between April 2021 and March 2022. The total cost and numbers relate to the National Probation Service from 01 April 2021 to 26 June 2021, and then for the Probation Service thereafter.

It has been broken down by the number of Operational and admin/clerical agency staff workers. It should be noted that the figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Probation England, Wales and Probation Reform Programme

	FY 2021-22	NUMBER OF AGENCY STAFF
Operational Agency Staff	£23,069,614	734
Admin/Clerical Agency Staff	£6,020,447	541

The Probation Service is actively recruiting to all vacancies. The Probation Service has recruited an additional 1,007 against a target of 1,000 trainee Probation Officers

in 2020-21, and an additional 1,518 against a target of 1,500 in 2021/22. A further 1,500 trainees will be recruited in 2022/23 in order to reduce the use of agency staff.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Buildings: Insulation

Shabana Mahmood: [\[5633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure that commercial leaseholders pay their share of the costs of remediation works on buildings for which they hold a commercial lease.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[5634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the proposals on building safety announced on 14 February 2022, what steps he is taking to ensure that those leaseholders who have already paid their allowance towards the non-cladding defects cap are not pursued for further payments.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[5635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he is taking steps to ensure that ongoing cladding remediation works are not delayed in cases where leaseholders cannot afford to pay upfront capital costs.

Stuart Andrew:

The Building Safety Act 2022 protects leaseholders in buildings above 11 metres in height or with at least five storeys from costs associated with historical building safety defects. A leaseholder qualifies for the protections if, on 14 February 2022, the property was their principal home, or if they owned no more than three UK properties in total. The protections automatically transfer to future buyers if a lease is sold.

Those responsible for historical building safety defects must pay to put them right. That is why, where the building is owned by the developer of the building, or the building owner is linked to the developer, the no costs related to historical defects can be passed to any leaseholders; including commercial leaseholders. If the building owner is not linked to the developer, commercial leaseholders can be charged for their full share of remediation works, as per the terms of their lease.

Qualifying leaseholders will be fully protected in law from cladding costs. In addition, the costs for remediation of non-cladding defects and interim measures like waking watches are subject to a firm cap. Once the leaseholder caps have been reached, landlords will be unable to demand further contributions from leaseholders. Landlords will be required to provide detailed evidence to leaseholders that they are entitled to pass on costs. The Government is clear that landlords who attempt to continue charging leaseholders once the caps have been met will be breaking the law and we will not hesitate to use all possible levers to hold rogue actors to account.

The Government has agreed with 45 residential property developers that they will fix life-critical fire safety defects, including cladding, in all buildings above 11 metres that they had a role in developing or refurbishing in the past 30 years. Where a responsible developer cannot be identified, grant funding from either the Building Safety Fund or the new 11-18 metre remediation fund will cover the costs of fixing unsafe cladding.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[5639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether a developer is responsible for paying for cladding remediation of a building in a case where it was not the building's developer at the time of its construction but has since acquired the original developer.

Stuart Andrew:

Yes, we expect developers to take responsibility for any building developed by any company within their corporate group, including cases where they acquired the original developer of the building.

45 of the largest developers have now signed a pledge to:

- take responsibility for all necessary work to address life-critical, fire-safety defects on buildings 11 metres and over that they had a role in developing or refurbishing; and
- withdraw any such buildings from the Building Safety Fund and Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) Fund and reimburse funding received from those funds for such buildings.

■ Buildings: Repairs and Maintenance

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[5636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent estimate he has made of the number of developers who have not signed the Government's building safety repairs pledge.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[5637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions his Department has had with developers who have not yet signed the building safety repairs pledge.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[5638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help ensure developers who have not yet signed the building safety pledge do so.

Stuart Andrew:

45 of the largest developers have now signed the pledge. The Department is in discussions with further developers that we believe should sign the pledge, and this work will continue. The Secretary of State has made clear that he expects all

companies to do the right thing, and that we will pursue those who fail to do so. We intend to establish a Responsible Actors Scheme that will make sure that any companies that fail to do the right thing face significant commercial and reputational consequences. The Department has established a recovery unit that will pursue irresponsible actors through the courts if necessary.

■ **Civil Servants: North West**

Damien Moore: [\[8158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to move civil service jobs to the North West.

Eddie Hughes:

The number of roles within my Department which are based in the North West has grown from 103 in March 2020 to 180 in April 2022, an increase of 75%.

■ **Community Housing Fund**

Caroline Lucas: [\[5643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the decision set out in a departmental communication to stakeholders dated 11 May 2022 not to renew the Community Housing Fund, if he will make it his policy to continue the pre-development funding that the Community Housing Fund provided, via another channel; and if he will make a statement.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government recognises that the community-led housing sector – which includes community land trusts and housing co-operatives – offers significant untapped potential for helping to meet housing need across England. In addition to helping increase the rate of delivery of new housing, it will help deliver a range of benefits including diversifying the housebuilding sector, improving design and construction quality, developing modern methods of construction and helping sustain local communities and local economies. The support and close involvement of the local community enables the community-led approach to secure planning permission and deliver housing that could not be brought forward through mainstream development

We are considering a range of options through which the Department may support the community led housing sector.

■ **Community Housing Fund: Affordable Housing**

Caroline Lucas: [\[5645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to incorporate the Community Housing Fund into the Affordable Homes Programme; and if he will make a statement.

Stuart Andrew:

Support for the community led housing sector is already available through the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP), through which groups - or their partner organisations - registered as providers of social housing may apply for capital grant to support affordable housing. In addition, we are considering a range of options through which the Department may support the community-led housing sector. The Government recognises that the community-led housing sector - which includes community land trusts and housing co-operatives - offers significant untapped potential for helping to meet housing need across England. In addition to helping increase the rate of delivery of new housing, it will help deliver a range of benefits including diversifying the housebuilding sector, improving design and construction quality, developing modern methods of construction and helping sustain local communities and local economies. The support and close involvement of the local community enables the community-led approach to secure planning permission and deliver housing that could not be brought forward through mainstream development.

■ Council Tax Reduction Schemes: Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council**Julian Knight:****[8025]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much funding was provided to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council through his Department's Local Council Tax Support Administration Subsidy Grant.

Kemi Badenoch:

On 18 May 2022, the Government made payments to councils for the Local Council Tax Support Administration Subsidy Grant 2022-23. The allocations for this are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/localised-council-tax-support-administration-subsidy-grant-2022-to-2023> . Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council received £248,864.

■ Flats: Repairs and Maintenance**Shabana Mahmood:****[5632]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent estimate he has made of the number of resident management companies based in blocks requiring (a) cladding remediation works and (b) non-cladding remediation works in (i) England and (ii) Birmingham.

Stuart Andrew:

The information requested is not held.

Information on the number of high-rise (over 18 metres) residential and publicly-owned buildings with ACM cladding systems unlikely to meet Building Regulations is available in the [Building Safety Programme data release](#). Information by local authority is published in Web Table 3 of that release.

For high-rise residential buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding, the Department is continuing to work with building owners to progress applications for the Building

Safety Fund at pace so more remedial works can begin as swiftly as possible. Information on registrations to the Building Safety Fund (including by local authority) can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registrations-private-sector-and-social-sector>.

Information on the prevalence of external wall system life-safety fire risk in 11-18m residential buildings in England is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estimating-the-prevalence-and-costs-of-external-wall-system-life-safety-fire-risk-in-mid-rise-residential-buildings-in-england>.

■ Freehold: Sales

Catherine West: [8094]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to support co-freeholders who are prevented from selling their property and share of freehold as a result of other co-freeholders refusing to sign transfer documents.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government supports a well-functioning housing market where there are clear rules in place to ensure transactions can be carried out fairly. The Levelling Up White Paper sets out plans to work with the industry to improve the home buying and selling process. Where the freehold of a building is owned by joint tenants or tenants-in-common, a legally binding Declaration of Trust can set out the co-owners' rights and obligations toward each other. Depending on the circumstances of a case, there is a current legal route which would allow an application to the County Court for an order requiring a co-owner to sign any relevant documentation.

■ Housing: Construction

Caroline Lucas: [5644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when will he will respond to the Bacon Review into scaling up self-build and custom housebuilding published on 21 August 2021.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government welcomes the independent review into scaling up self-build and custom housebuilding and is grateful to the Honourable Member for South Norfolk, and his wider review team, for the detailed and comprehensive work and for their recommendations. We expect to publish the Government's response to the Review shortly.

■ Leasehold: Reform

Munira Wilson: [6932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he expects the second part of the Government's leasehold reform legislation to be brought forward.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government remains committed to creating a fair and just housing system that works for everyone. We will be taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market. The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022 will come into force on 30 June. The Act will make homeownership fairer and more transparent for thousands of future leaseholders, by preventing landlords under new residential long leases from requiring a leaseholder to pay a financial ground rent

This is the first part of seminal two-part legislation to implement leasehold and commonhold reforms in this Parliament. This is a long-term reform programme; it is complex with many interdependencies and will take time to get the detail right. Once it is enacted the effect will be felt for generations and so we are determined this work considers all the implications and impacts with care.

■ Park Homes: Fees and Charges**Mark Garnier:**[\[7971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his timeframe is for changing the annual index of park home pitch fees from the Retail Price Index to the Consumer Price Index.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government remains committed to improving protections for park home residents and this includes changing the pitch fee review inflationary index from the Retail Prices Index (RPI) to the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). We will introduce the required legislation when the parliamentary timetable allows.

■ Private Rented Housing**Mike Amesbury:**[\[8136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to reform the private rented sector and help strengthening renters' rights; and if he will make it his policy to end Section 21 evictions.

Eddie Hughes:

We are absolutely committed to tackling the worst issues in the private rented sector and delivering a better deal for renters. That is why we announced in the Queen's Speech 2022 that we will be bringing forward a Renters Reform Bill in this session.

In this bill we will abolish section 21 'no fault' evictions under the Housing Act 1988, providing security for tenants in the private rented sector and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of retaliatory eviction.

We will publish a White Paper shortly that will set out more detail on these measures and our wider reform package.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Stuart C McDonald:

[6791]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether resettled Afghans who reject two offers of accommodation will be considered intentionally homeless or will still be able to apply to a local authority for homelessness assistance.

Eddie Hughes:

Homelessness is a devolved matter, but in all parts of the UK Afghan households would be able to apply for homelessness assistance if asked to leave bridging accommodation, following rejection of two appropriate offers of accommodation.

In England, the local authority will have duties to try and help them secure accommodation to 'relieve' their homelessness. These duties apply irrespective of the reason for them becoming homeless. If the local authority has been unable to relieve homelessness within 56 days of accepting the duty, they will have to decide whether a longer term housing duty is owed, including assessing if the household is intentionally homeless.

Housing authorities must not adopt general policies which seek to pre-define circumstances that do or do not amount to intentional homelessness. In each case, housing authorities must form a view in the light of all their inquiries about that particular case. Guidance about the law relating to intentional homelessness in England is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-9-intentional-homelessness>.

■ Regeneration: Loans

Sir Gary Streeter:

[6691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what conditions are typically linked to a loan issued by the Public Works Loan Board to a local authority to carry out regeneration works.

Sir Gary Streeter:

[6692]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether public support for a regeneration project is required in order for a local authority to be eligible for a loan from the Public Works Loan Board to help fund that project.

Kemi Badenoch:

Under the current system, local authorities are responsible for their borrowing and investment decisions as they are best able to understand local needs. Where an authority borrows from the Public Works Loan Board, they must satisfy themselves that all borrowing is affordable and is compliant with HM Treasury's lending terms and conditions, which do not permit borrowing if the authority intends to make investments primarily for yield. The authority remains accountable to their electorate for individual investment decisions, including those for the purposes of regeneration.

Authorities may borrow without prior government consent, except for smaller authorities such as parish and town councils which require the government's approval

to borrow for capital purposes. The government reviews all applications before issuing approval. As part of this process, applicants must satisfy the Department's assessment criteria, which includes providing evidence that the council has considered local support for the capital plans.

■ Regional Planning and Development: Housing

Mike Amesbury:

[\[6894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to ensure that housing development potential is taken into account when allocating levelling up funding.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government is committed to making our housing market work and levelling up our communities by making sure opportunity is spread more widely across the country. This is why the creation of new residential units, or the improvement of existing ones, will continue to be a potential output in round two of the Levelling Up Fund. This builds on the success of other funding programmes, such as the Towns Fund, where investment is also leading towards increased housing and better infrastructure.

■ Regional Planning and Development: Ipswich

Tom Hunt:

[\[8178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of identifying Ipswich as a priority levelling up area.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government recognises that towns such as Ipswich are crucial to the success of the levelling up agenda. That is why we are investing £25 million in Ipswich through the Towns Fund programme, which will support eleven vital projects across the town. This funding, coupled with £1,381,860 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), will make a tangible difference to the lives of people living in Ipswich, helping the town to reach its full potential and unlock local opportunities for all.

■ Rents

Rachael Maskell:

[\[8057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of applying further controls to rents in (a) York and (b) other high cost areas.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government does not support the introduction of rent controls. Historical evidence suggests that rent controls would discourage investment in the sector and would lead to declining property standards as a result, which would not help landlords or tenants. Recent international examples also suggest that rent controls can have an

inadvertent negative impact on the supply of housing and may encourage more illegal subletting. In the Queen's Speech 2022, we committed to introducing a Renters Reform Bill in this parliamentary session. Through this, we will abolish 'no fault' evictions by removing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, providing security for tenants in the private rented sector and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of retaliatory eviction. It is important to note that currently if tenants with periodic tenancies believe the level of rent increase is unfair, they can already refer the matter to the Property Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal for independent adjudication. The Tribunal will consider whether the rent increase is in line with market rent.

■ **UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council**

Julian Knight:

[8027]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much funding his Department awarded to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Neil O'Brien:

In England, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will be delivered over the strategic geographies of Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority, and district councils and unitary authorities elsewhere.

The West Midlands Combined Authority is the lead authority for the strategic geography covering the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and will be responsible for delivering UKSPF. Its UKSPF allocation amounts to £105 million over the three years (including the Multiply programme).

The allocations for the Fund have been published on GOV.UK and include how allocations for strategic geographies have been reached.

While the lead authority will have overall responsibility for the Fund, individual local authorities may take responsibility for a particular UKSPF intervention or policy, where this reflects the right approach to local needs.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill**

Stephen Farry:

[8222]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he had discussions with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission prior to the publication of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill.

Conor Burns:

The Northern Ireland Office held discussions on legacy with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on 14 April 2022. Discussions with the Commission, and other key stakeholders, will continue during passage of the Bill.

Stephen Farry:

[8223]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions his Department had with relevant (a) individuals and (b) organisations on the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill prior to its publication.

Conor Burns:

Since January, the Northern Ireland Office has held legacy discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to; the Irish Government, representatives of victims and survivors (including WAVE, South East Fermanagh Foundation, the Victims Commissioner, the Victims & Survivors Forum, Ulster Human Rights Watch, Ely Centre), representatives of veterans and former service personnel (including the NI Veterans Commissioner, the Independent Veterans Advisor, the NI Retired Police Officers Association, the Police Federation of NI, COBSEO, the NI Veterans Movement), operational partners and other relevant groups (including PPS NI, PSNI, Operation Kenova, OPONI, NI Human Rights Commission), and other civil and community organisations (including Healing Through Remembering, Corrymeela, Malone House Group, JIGSA, church representatives, the Truth Recovery Process Group).

The Government has also offered to engage with other groups, who have preferred not to engage with us on this issue.

Stephen Farry:

[8224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment his Department has made of the compatibility of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill with Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Conor Burns:

This legislation, which had its Second Reading on 24 May, deals with legacy issues in a way that complies with international human rights obligations, supports information recovery and reconciliation, and responds to the needs of individual victims and survivors, as well as society as a whole.

The legislation does not prohibit investigations into those Troubles-related incidents which might engage the UK's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. We will establish the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery to conduct investigations into Troubles-related deaths and cases of very serious injury, for the purposes of information recovery.

We have included various measures to ensure the body is equipped with the necessary powers to secure information and conduct thorough, Article 2 compliant investigations.

We are confident that these measures fulfil our Article 2 obligations.

TRANSPORT■ **Bridges: Barnet****Dr Matthew Offord:****[6746]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the timeframe for works to be completed on the bridge over the M1 and railway line at Apex Corner in Mill Hill.

Trudy Harrison:

Transport in London is devolved and is the responsibility of the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL). TfL estimates these essential works will continue until summer 2022, and provide status updates here: <https://tfl.gov.uk/status-updates/major-works-and-events/a41-edgware-way-bridge?cid=edgware-way>

■ **Bus Services****Jim Shannon:****[7979]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking with local transport authorities to ensure the provision of a sheltered area at each bus stop in the UK.

Trudy Harrison:

Local authorities in England are responsible for the bus stops and shelters in their area.

The Government's National Bus Strategy for England asked Local Transport Authorities to consider the impact of roadside infrastructure on passenger safety, security and accessibility in their Bus Service Improvement Plans.

These plans were subject to a detailed assessment and thirty-one counties, city regions and unitary authorities have subsequently been selected to receive a share of funding to level up their local bus services, drawing on the £1.2 billion announced at last year's Spending Review, as part of the £3 billion we have promised for buses over this Parliament.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland transport policy is the responsibility of the devolved administrations and scrutiny the responsibility of the respective parliaments and assembly.

■ **Cars: Safety****Jim Shannon:****[7987]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he is taking steps with car manufacturers to ensure that crash tests equally assess the impact of crashes on women as well as men.

Trudy Harrison:

The majority of detailed technical requirements for vehicle construction are regulated at an international level through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

(UNECE). The Department for Transport is an active member and vehicle manufacturers also participate.

The expert group with responsibility for crash safety has already agreed changes to the UNECE regulations on frontal impact protection to include the use of crash test dummies representative of a small female occupant. In due course, this should encourage the use of smart restraint systems capable of delivering more consistent injury outcomes, irrespective of gender. The same expert group continues to collate data to establish what more might be needed at a regulatory level.

The Department for Transport also remains a member of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP), which provides objective information to motorists on the crash safety of cars. The rating programme also includes crash tests using dummies representative of female occupants.

■ Driving Licences: Italy

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[5683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with his Italian counterpart on helping to ensure that UK citizens, resident in Italy before the end of 2020, can exchange their UK driving licences for those of Italy without the requirement to take an Italian driving test.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government remains committed to securing an agreement for UK licence holders resident in Italy, to exchange their UK driving licences for those of Italy without the need to take an Italian driving test. The UK already has similar arrangements in place with 24 other EU countries.

Government officials have engaged frequently in discussions with Italy on the terms and nature of arrangements for UK licence holders resident in Italy since the UK's exit from the EU. While those discussions are ongoing, UK licence holders can continue to use their UK licence until 31 December 2022, or for 12 months from becoming a resident in Italy, whichever is later.

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[5684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what further discussions he plans in 2022 with his Italian counterpart to help ensure that UK citizens, resident in Italy before the end of 2020, will be able to exchange their UK driving licences for those of Italy without the need to take an Italian driving test.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government remains committed to securing an agreement for UK licence holders resident in Italy, to exchange their UK driving licences for those of Italy without the need to take an Italian driving test. The UK already has similar arrangements in place with 24 other EU countries.

Department for Transport officials will continue to negotiate exchange arrangements for UK licence holders resident in Italy as a matter of priority. While those discussions

are ongoing, UK licence holders can continue to use their UK licence until 31 December 2022, or for 12 months from becoming a resident in Italy, whichever is later.

■ Driving Tests

Sarah Olney: [\[6860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing two factor authentication for the booking of driving tests.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is committed to ensuring its driving test booking system is the safest and fairest way to book a driving test. A two factor authentication for the booking of driving tests is not currently part of the requirement to access the booking system; however, the DVSA is modernising its systems and exploring options to strengthen its booking process.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Jim Shannon: [\[6772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage major retailers to provide vehicle charging points; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of requiring stores over a certain size to include a number of charging points for electric vehicles.

Trudy Harrison:

Government has committed £2.5 billion since 2020 to support the transition to zero emission vehicles, with funding to offset their higher upfront cost, and to accelerate the rollout of chargepoint infrastructure. Of the £2.5 billion of Government funding committed to the EV transition since 2020, over £1.6 billion will be used to support charging infrastructure.

On 15 December 2021, Government laid regulations for England which require minimum charging infrastructure in new and majorly renovated non-residential buildings with car parks which have more than ten spaces, such as shops and workplaces. These measures will see charging infrastructure being installed in up to 2,600 car parks in England every year.

In addition, the Future of Transport Regulatory Review, which closed on 22nd November, sought views on the government seeking powers to require a minimum level of EV charging infrastructure in existing non-residential car parks and new standalone plot car parks. The consultation is currently being analysed and the government will publish its response in summer 2022.

■ Elizabeth Line: Iron and Steel

Holly Mumby-Croft:

[8246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the provenance was of the steel used by Crossrail Ltd in the construction of the Elizabeth Line.

Trudy Harrison:

The 57km of steel required for the rails of the Elizabeth line central section, between Paddington and Abbey Wood, was sourced entirely from British Steel in Scunthorpe. This equates to 7,000 tonnes of steel.

■ Freeport East

Tom Hunt:

[8177]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of Freeport East on demand for rail freight transport in the East of England.

Trudy Harrison:

As part of Freeport bidding and business case process, consideration has been given to existing transport capabilities and capacity. Freeport East benefits from good existing road and rail freight links. Significant investment has enabled freight trains to operate into the port each day and means it is the UK's busiest and best rail connected port. Freeports are in the initial stages of set-up and exact details of future growth and potential demand are not clear, and so no specific demand assessments have been made.

■ Great British Railways: Location

Rachael Maskell:

[8063]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it is Department's policy that the short list for the Great British Railways competition will be announced and there will be a Ministerial visit and public vote in May 2022; and if he will publish any updates to that timetable.

Wendy Morton:

The Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT) has assessed the 42 expression of interest applications received and a shortlist will be announced shortly. This will be followed by an online consultative vote and Ministerial visits to the shortlisted locations.

More information on the timetable for the competition is available on the GBRTT website at the following link.

gbrtt.co.uk/hq/

Rachael Maskell:

[8064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the matrix used to assess bids when he publishes the shortlist for Great British Railways; and if he will provide feedback to successful applicants on the merits of their application.

Wendy Morton:

Applications for the Great British Railways (GBR) HQ bid were assessed against the six selection criteria that were published on the GBR Transition Team's website. They are:

- Alignment to Levelling Up principles
- Being connected and easy to get to
- Representing good value for money
- Providing opportunities for GBR
- Railway heritage and links to the network
- Public support

Following the end of the competition, all applicants (successful and unsuccessful) will be provided with feedback on their application.

Rachael Maskell:

[8065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Great British Railways headquarters is located, whether he plans to move a proportion of his Department's staff to that location.

Wendy Morton:

The headquarters will be modest with the exact size yet to be determined. The GBR headquarters will provide strategic direction for the rail industry and the regionalised structure, ensuring decision making is brought to the regional and local level.

At this stage it is far too early to say which roles will be based at the GBR HQ, this is all part of the ongoing planning work for the setup of GBR.

■ Hackbridge Station

Elliot Colburn:

[8190]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Govia Thameslink Railway on the (a) safety concerns regarding the gap between the train and the platform and (b) length of the platform at Hackbridge station; and whether his Department plans to offer assistance in tackling those concerns.

Wendy Morton:

The Department is aware that for Southbound services at Hackbridge station, there is a larger than usual gap between the platform and the front of the train resulting from the age of the station. Network Rail has secured funding to deliver a full renewal of the platform which will reduce the gap. This will include a new platform edge, resurfacing and wider works to the track and track drainage. The platform has been

fitted with signage advising customers of the gap and encouraging the use of doors further along the platform.

■ Motorways

James Daly:

[\[6960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to reinstate hard shoulders on SMART motorways.

Trudy Harrison:

In November 2021, the Transport Select Committee published its Third Report of Session 2021-22 following its inquiry into the rollout and safety of smart motorways. The Committee agreed that the Government was right to focus on upgrading the safety of All Lane Running (ALR) smart motorways rather than reinstating the hard shoulder, which the Committee recognised could put more drivers and passengers at risk of death or serious injury on our roads.

Having carefully considered the Committee's report, the Department is taking forward all its recommendations. This includes pausing the roll-out of ALR smart motorway schemes yet to commence construction until five years of safety data is available for ALR smart motorways introduced before 2020. We are continuing to act to make sure all existing ALR smart motorways are as safe as possible with over £900m being invested, including for the construction of additional emergency areas and the roll-out of Stopped Vehicle Detection technology across existing ALR motorways.

■ Parking: Pedestrian Areas

Damien Moore:

[\[8155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made the adequacy of pavement parking legislation.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department consulted on measures to address pavement parking in 2020 and received over 15,000 responses. These responses have been analysed and Ministers are carefully considering the options in the light of the consultation findings. We will publish the formal consultation response and announce next steps as soon as possible.

■ Public Transport: London Cancer Hub

Elliot Colburn:

[\[8194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) Transport for London (TfL) and (b) the London Borough of Sutton on (i) bus, (ii) rail and (iii) other public transport access requirements to the London Cancer Hub site.

Trudy Harrison:

Transport in London is devolved and is the responsibility of the Mayor of London and Transport for London. However, the Department is currently in active discussions with

Govia Thameslink Railway to investigate opportunities to improve rail services which will make the London Cancer Hub more accessible.

■ **Railways: Croydon**

Elliot Colburn:

[\[8184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government supports the delivery of the Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme; what financial settlement the Government plans to award Network Rail to deliver that scheme; and what his timeframe is for delivery of that scheme.

Wendy Morton:

The Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme seeks to address capacity constraints and improve service performance on the Brighton main line. While this scheme would offer valuable improvements to services on the line, it will require a significant amount of public funding.

Although I am unable to discuss the status of individual projects in development at this time, it is becoming clear that the pandemic has brought about large change to commuting behaviours requiring government to make difficult decisions to bring rail spending back to affordable levels. I remain committed to publishing an update to the Rail Network Enhancement Portfolio, thereby confirming the status of individual schemes across England and Wales, including the Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme.

■ **Railways: Sutton**

Elliot Colburn:

[\[8192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Govia Thameslink Railway on restoring rail services to pre-pandemic levels, especially during peak hours, to and from (a) Carshalton, (b) Carshalton Beeches, (c) Hackbridge and (d) Wallington stations.

Wendy Morton:

The level of peak services at these four stations is broadly similar to that offered in the December 2019 timetable (the most recent timetable not affected by the pandemic). Services are operated by Thameslink and Southern, and both are continuing to work collaboratively with Network Rail and across the industry to improve the punctuality and reliability of services.

As COVID-related restrictions have eased, the industry is adjusting service levels across the country. In line with the Department's objectives, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), which operates Thameslink and Southern services, is focusing on providing more capacity for commuters returning to the workplace. Its 15 May 2022 timetable change increases the frequency of weekday services where there was significant unmet demand. GTR aims to use its trains as efficiently as possible and reduce overlap where an alternative service exists. Across the GTR network, passenger numbers are approximately 70% of pre-pandemic levels.

Elliot Colburn:

[8193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) Network Rail, (b) Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), (c) Transport for London (TfL) and (d) the London Borough of Sutton about re-instating a dual track between Sutton and Belmont stations.

Wendy Morton:

Officials in my Department contributed to the assessment of a Levelling Up Fund bid from the London Borough of Sutton in 2021, which sought funding to develop a proposal to re-instate double-tracking between Belmont and Sutton stations. This bid was ultimately unsuccessful, and feedback was provided to the London Borough of Sutton. Officials from my Department have recently agreed to meet with the London Borough of Sutton to discuss these proposals further.

■ **Taxis: Greater London**

Julian Knight:

[6801]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 796, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the licensing authority, Transport for London, is enforcing compliance in the context of unlicensed private hire vehicles continuing to operate in London as a result of regulation 9(14), issued by Transport for London following the Divisional Court's judgment in December 2021, lacking enforcement power.

Trudy Harrison:

Private hire vehicle (PHV) legislation in London requires London PHV operator licence holders to comply with conditions attached to their licence, such as that set by regulation 9(14) of the Private Hire Vehicles (London) (Operators' Licences) Regulations 2000, as amended. If a London PHV operator licence holder fails to comply with a condition of their licence the legislation provides that the licensing authority, Transport for London, can suspend or revoke the licence.

■ **UK Trade with EU: Large Goods Vehicles**

Gareth Thomas:

[7892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of unladen lorries (a) entering the EU from the UK and (b) entering the UK from the EU in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

The requested information is set out in the tables below. This information was sourced from the Port Freight statistics which can be found [here](#) (Annual statistics for UK port freight traffic for 2020) and [here](#) (Downloadable Excel file which summarises UK major port freight traffic statistics from 2000-2020).

NUMBER OF UNLADEN LORRIES ENTERING THE EU FROM THE UK

Year	Amount
2010	669,316
2011	599,257
2012	653,738
2013	720,417
2014	751,798
2015	785,011
2016	802,465
2017	806,399
2018	742,517
2019	727,517
2020	666,304

In total from 2010-2020 this adds up to be 7,924,739 unladen vehicles entering the EU from the UK.

NUMBER OF UNLADEN LORRIES ENTERING THE UK FROM THE EU

2010	87,225
2011	69,076
2012	103,685
2013	99,367
2014	112,053
2015	67,256
2016	61,855
2017	71,008
2018	75,407
2019	80,783
2020	70,636

In total from 2010-2020 this adds up to be 898,351 unladen vehicles entering the UK from the EU.

Following EU Exit, the market access arrangements allow the vast majority of UK haulage journeys to and from the EU to continue as they did before the end of the transition period.

TREASURY

■ Bank Services

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[7974\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2022 to Question 4565, on Bank Services, which banks are participants in the Current Account Switch Guarantee; and which challenger banks are excluded.

John Glen:

Over 40 UK current account providers are signed-up to the Current Account Switch Service, which covers 99% of the market. The list of participants is set out in full on the Service's website. The Switch Guarantee is provided by all the Service's participants. In Q1 2022, 99.8% of switches were completed in the seven working day timescale. Any organisation which meets the eligibility criteria can join the service.

■ Blackmore Bond: Insolvency

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[6850\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to commission an independent inquiry into the regulators' handling of the collapse Blackmore Bond plc.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[6851\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide compensation to victims of the collapse of Blackmore Bond plc.

John Glen:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is responsible for ensuring consumer protection for a broad range of financial services products. However, it does not regulate all financial services firms and products. Blackmore Bond Plc was not authorised by the FCA and the sale of the 'mini-bond' product it offered was not an activity regulated by the FCA. The FCA does not have power to investigate a firm that is unauthorised and not carrying out any regulated activities. The Government therefore has no plans to commission an independent inquiry into the FCA's handling of the collapse of Blackmore Bond plc.

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) is the compensation scheme of last resort for financial services. The FSCS is an independent non-governmental body that carries out its compensation function within rules set by the FCA and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), who are also independent of Government. The FSCS can only pay compensation in respect of certain regulated activities and

the Government is unable to intervene or comment on specific cases and decisions taken by the FSCS.

It is an important point of principle that the Government does not step in to pay compensation in respect of failed financial services firms that fall outside of the FSCS. Doing so would create the wrong set of incentives for individuals and an unnecessary burden on the taxpayer.

In April 2021, the Treasury launched a consultation on proposals for bringing mini-bonds (also known as Non-Transferable Debt Securities) within the scope of regulation. On 1 March 2022 the Treasury published a response setting out its preferred approach and intentions for taking this proposal forward.

■ Carbon Emissions: Taxation

Peter Aldous: [\[7970\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a UK carbon border adjustment mechanism.

Lucy Frazer:

As the UK transitions to Net Zero, the Government recognises the importance of addressing the risk of carbon leakage. The best solution would be for all countries to move together in the pricing and regulation of carbon emissions. However, international solutions will take time to develop, and so the Government is considering options for domestic action in parallel.

As I set out in a Written Ministerial Statement on 16 May 2022, later in the year the Government intends to consult on a range of carbon leakage mitigation options, including on whether measures such as product standards and a carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) could be appropriate tools in the UK's policy mix.

■ Central Bank Digital Currencies

Alexander Stafford: [\[8237\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential economic merits of a UK central bank digital currency.

Alexander Stafford: [\[8238\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has taken recent steps to implement a UK central bank digital currency.

Alexander Stafford: [\[8240\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies of international work to create central bank digital currencies.

Alexander Stafford: [\[8241\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of creating a UK central bank digital currency.

Alexander Stafford: [\[8242\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his timescale is for launching the consultation on a UK central bank digital currency.

Alexander Stafford: [\[8245\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of a central bank digital currency for British (a) investors, (b) companies and (c) individuals.

John Glen:

The government and the Bank of England have not yet made a decision on the issuance of a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) in the UK.

The government is progressing work to explore a UK CBDC with pace and purpose through the HM Treasury and Bank of England CBDC Taskforce. As part of the process of research and exploration, HM Treasury and the Bank of England will publish a consultation in 2022 setting out their assessment of the case for a UK CBDC, including the merits of further work to develop an operational and technology model for a UK CBDC.

We are actively engaging on CBDC internationally including through the G7 Digital Payments Experts Group (DPEG) and under the UK's Presidency of the G7, the UK and G7 members agreed to a set of Public Policy Principles that finance ministries and central banks will have to consider prior to the issuance of any CBDC.

Alexander Stafford: [\[8239\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of whether (a) regulations and (b) primary legislation would be required to create a UK central bank digital currency.

John Glen:

The UK is actively exploring the potential role of central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) to understand the wide-ranging opportunities and challenges they could bring.

On 9 November 2021, the government set out its future timelines for this work, including a joint consultation from HM Treasury and the Bank of England in 2022 setting out their assessment of the case for a UK CBDC.

The government and the Bank of England have not yet made a decision on whether to introduce a CBDC in the UK.

Primary legislation may be needed to issue a CBDC in the UK. The nature of any legislative changes will depend on the design of any CBDC.

■ Child Benefit

Martyn Day:

[\[5669\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2022 to Question 869 on Child Benefit, if his Department will (a) make and (b) publish an assessment of the potential merits of indexing the High Income Child Benefit Charge threshold in line with inflation.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government introduced the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) to ensure that support for families is targeted at those who need it most. It applies to anyone with an individual adjusted net income over £50,000 who gets, or whose partner gets, Child Benefit. The charge increases gradually for those with incomes between £50,000 and £60,000. The HICBC threshold has never been indexed with inflation.

The threshold of £50,000 only affects a minority of those who get Child Benefit with comparatively high incomes. The Government has decided that the current threshold for HICBC remains the best option. As with all elements of tax policy, the threshold is kept under review as part of the Government's annual Budget process. If the Government does determine that it is appropriate to make any change to the HICBC threshold, an assessment will be published on GOV.UK.

Chris Green:

[\[6799\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of calculating child benefit on household rather than individual income.

Lucy Frazer:

Child Benefit remains a universal benefit. The High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) is a tax charge which applies to anyone with an income of over £50,000 who gets Child Benefit, or whose partner gets it. HICBC is calculated on an individual rather than a household basis, in line with other income tax policy.

Basing HICBC on household incomes would mean finding out the incomes of everyone in each of the 7.7 million households currently registered for Child Benefit. This would effectively introduce a new means test, which would be costly to administer and create burdens on the majority of families who receive Child Benefit. The Government decided that charging HICBC to those on higher incomes ensures that everyone makes a fair contribution, while those with the lowest incomes continue to be supported.

■ Coronavirus: Government Assistance

Jim Shannon:

[\[7982\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to address (a) individuals and (b) organisations that made fraudulent claims for covid-19 assistance programmes.

John Glen:

The government has always been clear that any a) individual and b) organisation who knowingly defrauds the covid – 19 schemes are at risk of prosecution and/or enforcement action. Government departments together with those who implement the schemes are working with enforcement bodies to investigate the cases.

As part of the 2022 Spring Statement, the Chancellor announced an additional £48.8m of funding over 3 years to support the creation of a new Public Sector Fraud Authority and enhance counter fraud work.

■ Credit: Interest Rates**Jim Shannon:**[\[7977\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of people who are in debt as a result of pay day loan schemes.

John Glen:

The Government strongly believes that consumers should be protected from unfair costs in the payday lending market to avoid them falling into problem debt. The Government therefore legislated to require the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to introduce a cap on the cost of payday loans, which came into force in 2015. In July 2017, the FCA released a Feedback Statement as part of its review of the high-cost credit market. This showed that the payday cap has been effective, leading to total savings of approximately £150 million for the 760,000 individuals using payday loans each year. Customers pay less, repay on time more often, and are less likely to need help from debt advice charities.

However, the Government recognises that some people will be struggling with their personal finances during these challenging times and may find themselves in problem debt. That is why the Government is maintaining record levels of free-to-client debt advice funding for the Money and Pensions Service in 2022/23. In addition to this, the Government launched the Breathing Space scheme in England and Wales last year. The scheme gives eligible people in problem debt who receive professional debt advice access to a 60-day period in which enforcement action is paused and most fees, charges and interest are frozen.

The Government also continues to develop the Statutory Debt Repayment Plan (SDRP), a statutory agreement that will enable a person in problem debt to combine their debts into a single repayment plan, with payments made over a manageable time period, while receiving legal protections from creditor action for the duration of their plan .

■ Currencies**Alexander Stafford:**[\[8243\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on monetary sovereignty of the widespread use of (a) privately-issued and (b) foreign state-issued stablecoins.

John Glen:

Certain privately-issued stablecoins could be used as widespread means of payment, including by retail customers, driving consumer choice and efficiencies. At the same time, as noted by the G7 Working Group on Stablecoins in 2019, without appropriate safeguards, stablecoins could also have implications for the international monetary system, including currency substitution, and could therefore pose challenges to monetary sovereignty. The government is committed to continued international coordination and cooperation to ensure that innovation in private digital money and payments is responsible, safe and consistent with G7 shared policy objectives.

In the UK, legislation to bring stablecoins, where used as a means of payment, within the regulatory perimeter is expected to be part of the forthcoming Financial Services and Markets Bill announced in the Queen's Speech on 10 May. The Bill will be introduced later in the session when parliamentary time allows.

On 14 October 2021, the G7 under the UK Presidency published a set of Public Policy Principles for retail central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), covering factors such as financial stability, privacy, and inclusion. Principle 7 sets out that CBDCs should be designed to avoid risks of harm to the international monetary and financial system, including the monetary sovereignty and financial stability of other countries. These factors should all be considered by countries when designing and potentially delivering a CBDC.

The government is confident in its continued ability to maintain the stability and the integrity of the UK's monetary system.

Alexander Stafford:[\[8244\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a comparative assessment of the potential (a) merits and (b) disadvantages to the economy of (i) central bank digital currencies and (ii) stablecoins.

John Glen:

The UK is actively exploring the potential role of central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) to understand the wide-ranging opportunities and challenges they could bring.

On 9 November 2021, the government set out its future timelines for this work, including a joint consultation from HM Treasury and the Bank of England in 2022, setting out an assessment of the case for a UK CBDC.

On April 4 the government published its response to its consultation on the UK's regulatory approach to stablecoins. It also included a call for evidence on the use of Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) in financial markets.

The response set out the government's position that certain stablecoins have the capacity to potentially become a widespread means

of payment including by retail customers, driving consumer choice and efficiencies. By regulating stablecoins appropriately the government will create the conditions for stablecoin issuers and service providers to operate and grow in the UK. For

consumers, bringing stablecoins into the regulatory framework means they will be able to use stablecoin services with confidence.

The legislation to bring stablecoins, where used as a means of payment, within the regulatory perimeter is expected to be part of the forthcoming Financial Services and Markets Bill announced in the Queen's Speech on 10 May. The Bill will be introduced later in the session when parliamentary time allows.

■ Elizabeth Line: Scotland

Dave Doogan:

[8163]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much the Scottish Government has received in Barnett consequential as a direct result of the London Crossrail Project; whether that project has been treated as an exceptional; and to what extent the calculation of Crossrail-related Barnett has differed from the calculation of standard transport-related funding as laid out in the Statement of Funding Policy.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Barnett formula has been applied to spending on Crossrail as set out in the Statement of Funding Policy. Crossrail is classified as local transport, which is devolved in Scotland, so spending on Crossrail feeds through into Barnett-based funding for the Scottish Government.

The Barnett formula determines changes in the Scottish Government's funding, not the overall funding, and is applied at departmental level at Spending Reviews. Barnett consequential don't therefore reflect the funding provided to the Scottish Government in relation to specific programmes or projects.

The Block Grant Transparency publication sets out the breakdown of Barnett consequential for the Scottish Government.

■ Families: Taxation

Chris Green:

[6797]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to reduce the tax burden on families.

Lucy Frazer:

The Chancellor's Tax Plan cut the burden on working families by raising the threshold at which people pay National Insurance contributions from July 2022 and by cutting fuel duty by 5 pence for 12 months.

This plan will also spread the benefit of economic growth by cutting the basic rate of Income Tax from April 2024.

The Government has also provided at least £1200 to the most vulnerable households this year to help with the cost of living.

■ Inflation

Beth Winter:

[8208]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish any statistical data his Department holds on the effective rate of inflation for households for different household make-ups, including those with multiple children.

John Glen:

The independent Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for the calculation and publication of inflation statistics. In January 2022, the ONS resumed its publishing of CPI-consistent inflation estimates for UK by household groups, including by income decile and by retired and non-retired household. The ONS does not produce inflation statistics for households by number of children.^[1]

The Government understands that millions of households across the UK are struggling to make their incomes stretch to cover the rising cost of living. The government is providing over £15bn of additional support in the May Cost of Living Support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This support package builds on the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totaling over £37bn this year.

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/cpiconsistentinflationrateestimatesforukhouseholdgroups/2005to2021>

■ Married People: Tax Allowances

Chris Green:

[6798]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the Marriage Allowance.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government introduced the Marriage Allowance (MA) in April 2015 to recognise marriage and civil partnerships in the tax system. It allows a spouse or civil partner to transfer 10 per cent of their Personal Allowance (PA) if their partner is a basic rate taxpayer.

At Spring Budget 2021, the Chancellor announced that the PA would be maintained from the years 2022-23 to 2025-26. The transferable tax allowance of £1,260 provided through the MA will remain at its current level until 2025-26.

As with all elements of Income Tax, the Government keeps this under review as part of the annual Budget process.

■ Pensioners: Energy Bills Rebate

John McNally:

[6802]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people of state pension age who will not be eligible for the £150 council tax rebate

because they live in properties with tax bands E to H; and what assessment the Government made of the potential impact on that group before restricting eligibility to people in properties in Council Tax bands A to D.

Helen Whately:

The Government understands the pressures that people across the UK are facing with the cost of living. This is why the Government is providing over £15 billion in further support targeted towards those with the greatest need. From the Autumn, over eight million pensioner households who receive the winter fuel payment, will receive an extra one-off pensioner cost-of-living payment of £300 this year to help cover the rising cost of energy this winter.

Local authorities in England have received £144 million of discretionary funding to support households that are not eligible for the council tax rebate, including households in bands E-H. Local authorities are best-placed to determine how this support should be targeted, informed by guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are receiving Barnett funding as a result of the council tax rebate and associated discretionary funding in England.

■ **Public Sector: Car Allowances**

Mike Amesbury:

[8134]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) lift the mileage rates limit for public sector workers who are required to use their vehicle to do their jobs and (b) increase the approved mileage rates in line with the current cost of fuel.

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.

The Government keeps this policy under review.

Also, the Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our economy, and in delivering our public services. Spending Review 2021 confirmed that public sector workers will see pay rises across the whole Spending Review period (22/23-24/25).

■ Public Sector: Pay**Alex Norris:****[6888]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a real terms pay increase for public sector workers.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our economy, and in delivering our world class public services.

Spending Review 2021 confirmed that public sector workers will see pay rises across the whole Spending Review period (22/23-24/25).

Pay for most frontline workforces - including nurses, teachers and armed forces - is set through an independent Pay Review Body (PRB) process. They will consider a range of evidence when forming their recommendations, including the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people; the financial circumstances of government; the government's policies for improving public services; and the government's inflation target. They will consider the whole remuneration package of those working in the public sector when forming their recommendations, including substantially more generous pensions.

The Government will carefully consider all recommendations from the Pay Review Bodies once their final reports are submitted.

■ Tax Allowances: Health Professions**Stephen Farry:****[8221]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of inflation on the (a) tapered annual allowance for medical pensions and (b) incentives for medical professionals to work additional hours.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to ensuring that hard-working NHS staff do not find themselves reducing their work commitments due to the interaction between their pay, their pension, and the relevant tax regime.

The NHS pension scheme protects pensions in payment by increasing them by CPI and revalues accrued CARE benefits by CPI+1.5% each year.

In April 2020, the Government raised the thresholds above which the tapered annual allowance applies by £90,000. As a result, no one with a net income before tax below £200,000 is now affected by the tapered annual allowance. In addition, the annual allowance only begins to taper down for individuals who also have total income (including pension accrual) above £240,000. It was estimated at Budget 2020 that these changes have taken up to 96% of GPs and up to 98% of NHS consultants outside the scope of the tapered annual allowance.

These changes allow pension savers to build significant retirement savings tax free, while also ensuring that the highest earning pension savers do not receive a disproportionate benefit from pension tax relief.

■ **Ukraine: Debts**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[8171\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions officials in their Department have had with (a) the International Monetary Fund and (b) G7 member countries on the effect of the upcoming debt repayments due from Ukraine on that country's ability to mitigate the humanitarian impact of Russian aggression.

John Glen:

The UK continues to work with its international partners, including with its G7 partners and International Financial Institutions such as the IMF, to progress current and future support to Ukraine. The Government of Ukraine has been clear that it wishes to remain current on its debt service repayments to all its creditors and has not requested a debt deferral or restructuring from its creditors.

The UK's combined package to Ukraine in response to the crisis totals over \$3 billion. This comprises of around \$500 million in economic and humanitarian support for Ukraine, making the UK a leading bilateral humanitarian donor; almost \$1 billion in guarantees on World Bank lending to Ukraine; \$50 million in potential guarantees on lending to Ukraine by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development; and over \$1.5 billion in military aid. We continue to discuss Ukraine's economic support needs directly with Ukraine's Ministry of Finance.

■ **Workplace Pensions**

Alex Norris:

[\[6887\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reintroducing the cost control mechanism for public service pensions.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The cost control mechanism was introduced following the recommendations of the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission in 2011. Whilst the Commission recommended a mechanism to protect the Exchequer from increased costs, the Government went a step further and introduced a mechanism that is symmetrical and so also maintains the value of pensions to members when costs fall.

The mechanism still operates with respect to the main public service pension schemes and so is not in need of reintroduction. It was tested for the first time at the 2016 valuations, but the process was paused before results were finalised due to uncertainty regarding the value of pension schemes following the McCloud judgment. The Government subsequently published amending Directions in October 2021 which enable schemes to complete the cost control element of the 2016 valuations. Most schemes have now finalised their results and those that haven't will do so shortly.

The mechanism will be tested again at the next scheme valuations (“the 2020 valuations”). The Government previously announced that, following a review by the Government Actuary and a full public consultation, it will implement three reforms to the cost control mechanism for the 2020 valuations onwards to ensure it is operating more in line with its objectives. All three changes are expected to make the mechanism more stable, meaning changes to member benefits or contributions become less likely. The reforms thus help provide greater certainty regarding members’ projected retirement incomes and level of contributions.

WALES

■ Bus Services: Wales

Helen Morgan: [\[8248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps his Department is taking to work with the (a) Welsh Government and (b) Department for Transport to ensure that English bus passes used for travel between two English destinations are valid on bus routes which pass through Wales on their journey.

Simon Hart:

Under Section 93 of the Transport Act 1985 local authorities in England and Wales can agree with neighbouring authorities to offer discretionary travel concessions on local services where the route may cross the border.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equality: Regional Planning and Development

Matt Vickers: [\[6959\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she is taking to help reduce regional inequality.

Kemi Badenoch:

This Government’s central mission is to level up the UK and break the link between geography and destiny so that no matter where you live, you have the same life chances. Our landmark Levelling Up White Paper, published in February, sets out how we will address regional disparities across the UK, put more money in the pockets of those who need it most, and transform the UK economy by generating higher paid jobs and new investment.

To support this, we are delivering the Equality Data Programme, which is the Government’s biggest and broadest review of the equality challenges we face, including geographic and socio-economic barriers to opportunity.

The work of the Social Mobility Commission is also central to the Government’s commitment to levelling up opportunities and ensuring fairness for all. We have bolstered the Commission by recruiting Katharine Birbalsingh as its new Chair and

Alun Francis as Deputy Chair, and giving the Commission more leverage to influence other government departments.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ British Sign Language Act 2022

Matt Vickers:

[\[6954\]](#)

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

Chloe Smith:

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

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

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

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Staff

Dawn Butler:

[\[5617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff have been employed in her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available, broken down by directorate.

Guy Opperman:

Department for Work and Pensions Full Time Equivalent (FTE) as at the end of each financial year by directorate*

DIRECTORATE	MAR-22
Central Analysis and Science Directorate	78
Change Group	1,025

DIRECTORATE	MAR-22
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Digital Group	3,945
Finance Group	2,000
People, Capability and Place Group	1,769
Private Office	93
Strategic Communications	117
Policy Group	1,387
Service Excellence Group	21,901
Work and Health Services Group	49,783
DWP Total	82,099

DIRECTORATE	MAR-21
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Change	718
Digital	2,898
Finance Group	1,955
People, Capability and Place Group	1,508
Private Office	85
Communications	227
Policy Group	1,183
Service Excellence Group	19,700
Work and Health Services Group	53,082
Not Available	59
DWP Total	81,415

DIRECTORATE	MAR-20
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Central Analysis and Science Directorate	97
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DIRECTORATE	MAR-20
Change	813
Digital	2,673
Finance Group	1,888
People and Capability Group	1,201
Private Office	92
Communications	238
Strategy	1,022
Service Excellence Group	21,504
Work and Health Services Group	39,264
Not Available	1
DWP Total	68,794

DIRECTORATE	MAR-19
Change	896
Digital	2,720
Finance Group	3,821
Human Resources	524
Private Office	4
Communications	122
Policy Group	1,103
Operations	63,939
Not Available	214
DWP Total	73,341

DIRECTORATE	MAR-18
Change	1,045
Technology	2,538
Finance Group	3,815
Human Resources	484
Private Office	57
Communications	289
Strategy, Policy and Analysis Group	1,017
Operations	64,834
DWP Total	74,080

* FTE is rounded to nearest whole number

** Includes paid employees only

*** The reporting hierarchy and directorate names within DWP has changed over this period as a result of internal restructuring

■ Household Support Fund

Matt Vickers: **[6953]**

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

David Rutley:

Local Authorities have received their allocations from the £421m Household Support Fund extension for April – September 2022, alongside the grant determination and guidance. The allocations for Local Authorities for this period can be found here [Household Support Fund \(1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022\): final guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how and when this funding is used within the scope set out, based on their assessment of local need. This funding is available now for use by Local Authorities until 30 September 2022.

From October 2022, Government is providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England £421m will be used to further extend the Household Support Fund (October 2022 – March 2023).

Guidance and individual local authority indicative allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

■ Local Authority Welfare Steering Group

Ms Karen Buck:

[6682]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the minutes of the meeting of the Universal Credit Programme Board on 22 October 2019, if she will place the (a) agendas, (b) papers and (c) minutes of the vulnerable claimants steering group in the House of Commons Library.

David Rutley:

I refer the Rt Hon member to the answer I gave to Question Number 147023 on April 04 2022.

■ Pension Credit: Wales

Mark Tami:

[6699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the take up rate of Pension Credit in (a) Flintshire and (b) Wales; and what steps her Department is taking to increase take up of Pension Credit.

Guy Opperman:

There are currently some 3,600 recipients of Pension Credit in Flintshire and 84,630 Pension Credit recipients in Wales.

We have already undertaken a range of actions to raise awareness of Pension Credit and increase take-up. Initial internal management information suggests that new claims for Pension Credit in the 12 months to December 2021 were around 30% higher compared to the 12 months to December 2019.

Earlier this year, we directly targeted over 11 million pensioners with information about Pension Credit and the additional support it can provide in the leaflet accompanying their annual up-rating notification.

However, it is more important now than ever before that we ensure all eligible pensioners claim the vital financial help which Pension Credit provides. That's why on 3 April we launched a new Pension Credit awareness campaign. We are promoting Pension Credit in a variety of ways, including on social media – with advertising targeted both at potential recipients as well as their friends and family and also in key locations for the elderly, such as post offices and GP waiting rooms.

I have written to the editors of regional newspapers across England, Scotland and Wales calling on readers to check if they could be eligible and make a claim. This was done on repeat occasions in 2021. I have also written to all MPs, urging them to lend the campaign their support. MPs are well placed to promote Pension Credit to their older constituents and many already do so.

On 6 June there will be a further roundtable meeting with some stakeholders, who have reach and expertise, to identify other practical initiatives to encourage eligible pensioners to claim.

On 15 June, there will be another Pension Credit awareness media day of action with broadcasters, newspapers and other partners encouraged to reach out to pensioners to promote Pension Credit through their channels. We will also extend the campaign to include advertising in regional and national newspapers. This event was a success in 2021.

We know that one of the best ways to reach eligible customers is through trusted stakeholders working in the community. We will be producing and distributing leaflets and posters which can be used across local communities, and we will also be updating our digital toolkit with information and resources that any stakeholder can use to help promote Pension Credit.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Daisy Cooper:

[8169]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many PIP applications her Department has received from claimants with (a) Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) or (b) Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) as a medical condition in each of the last three years.

Chloe Smith:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

A Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimant's main disabling condition is recorded during their assessment and is not centrally recorded prior to this. Therefore, disability information is not available for analysis for claims registered. To provide the information requested the Department would need to manually examine each individual PIP registration, which would take in excess of 4 working days.

The Department publishes statistics on the number of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) decisions made by main disabling condition. Statistics are available to January 2022 for PIP on [Stat-Xplore](#), in the PIP clearances dataset. Guidance for users is available [here](#).

■ Personal Independence Payment: Standards

Bambos Charalambous:

[6872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what types of information and guidance are being given to support new claimants of Personal Independence Payment who may experience a delay in payment; what format that information and guidance is in; and how often it is communicated to affected people.

Chloe Smith:

During the initial PIP registration call, the claims process is fully explained. Claimants are informed what will happen next and given a realistic indication of timescales.

Service Delivery colleagues have been provided with information and guidance to support claimants who call the Department who might be experiencing a delay receiving their PIP award. Information includes verbally advising the claimant of the

average time it is taking to make a decision. Those who express concerns about wait times, or need further support, are signposted to other benefits or local organisations who may be able to assist.

PIP have introduced automated SMS messages, which are issued at various points in the claim journey based on triggers and events. We are introducing further SMS on 26/05/22 which will provide a more regular update throughout the process, until the decision is made. The SMS will be issued to anyone who hasn't opted out of the SMS communication and has a recorded valid mobile number.

John Lamont:

[8101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has performance standards for clearance times for Personal Independence Payments.

Chloe Smith:

There is no target for the completion of a claim to PIP through to the first payment. However, we are committed to ensuring that people can access financial support through Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in a timely manner. We always aim to make an award decision as quickly as possible, taking into account the need to review all the available evidence, including that from the claimant, any supporting evidence supplied and the advice from an assessment.

■ **Social Security Advisory Committee: Public Appointments**

Kate Osamor:

[8089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applicants were interviewed for the post of Chair of the Social Security Advisory Committee.

Guy Opperman:

Six candidates were interviewed for the post of Chair of Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) in July 2020.

■ **Social security Benefits: Cost of Living**

Marsha De Cordova:

[4687]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to strengthen the social safety net to support households in the context of the rising cost of living.

David Rutley:

This government is committed to supporting those on low incomes. We will spend over £242bn through the welfare system in Great Britain in 2022/23 including £108bn on people of working age and over £134 billion on pensioners. Of the total amount, around £64 billion will be spent on supporting disabled people and people with health conditions.

We understand the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. These are global challenges, but the Government has taken action to support and help families worth over £22 billion in 2022-23. This includes the £9.1 billion energy bill rebate

package, worth up to £350 each for around 28 million households and we are giving 1.7 million families an extra £1,000 a year through our cut to the Universal Credit taper and increase to work allowances. Also, from July 2022, the government are raising the National Insurance threshold to £12,570.

We are also providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing the total funding for this support to £1 billion. In England, £421 million will be provided to extend the existing Household Support Fund, whilst the devolved administrations will receive £79 million through the Barnett formula.

■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud

Matt Vickers:

[6958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the level of fraud and error in the welfare system.

David Rutley:

The Fraud Plan, Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System published 19 May 2022, sets out our plans for reducing the level of fraud and error in the welfare system by:

- Investing in DWP's frontline counter-fraud professionals and data analytics, including recruiting 2,000 trained specialists to review over two million Universal Credit cases.
- Creating new legal powers to investigate potential fraud and punish fraudsters (subject to legislation).
- Bringing together the full force of public and private sectors to keep one step ahead.

The full document can be found on [Welcome to GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/108442/Fighting_Fraud_in_the_Welfare_System.pdf).

It sets out how we will invest £613m over the next three years in our frontline counter-fraud professionals and establish a brand-new team of trained specialists to conduct Targeted Case Reviews of Universal Credit claims, which will see us review 2 million cases over the next 5 years. This money represents a 75% increase in funding to combat fraud and error, taking our resourcing to £1.4bn over the next three years.

We estimate this investment will stop £2.0bn of loss in fraud and error during this time.

■ Universal Credit

Dawn Butler:

[5618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, by what means her Department is contacting claimants on legacy benefits who are due to move to Universal Credit; what support is in place to assist claimants in this process; and if she will make a statement.

David Rutley:

Everyone who is required to move will receive a managed migration notice informing them that they need to make a claim for Universal Credit. Through our testing and learning we will be able to determine the best way to provide this notification to claimants, but all recipients will have a minimum of three months to make their Universal Credit claim.

As part of this learning process, one of the key things we are seeking to better understand, is what additional support is required for people to make their claim to UC. There will be a wide range of support which is available from the outset, consisting of:

- A dedicated DWP phonenumber for those receiving a migration notice
- Comprehensive guidance on Gov.uk
- Specially trained staff in JCP's and service centres who can identify and signpost to local tailored support
- Support through Help to Claim

Dawn Butler:**[5619]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of how many claimants who are expected to move from legacy benefits to Universal Credit will consequentially receive (a) more and (b) less in benefits between May 2022 and May 2024; and if she will make a statement.

David Rutley:

The vast majority of claimants will either be better off, or no worse off. The 'Completing Move to UC' publication [Completing the move to Universal Credit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) sets out the departments analysis of the estimated number of claimants expected to be moved to Universal Credit.

The Department is currently focused on the discovery phase of managed migration starting with 250 claimants in Bolton and Medway respectively. We are committed to ensuring the final phase of Universal Credit is rolled out safely and is responsibly delivered by the end of 2024.

Matt Vickers:**[6957]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent progress her Department has made on the rollout of the Universal Credit programme.

David Rutley:

We recently set out our revised approach to moving the remaining 2.6m households on legacy benefits over to Universal Credit by the end of 2024. This is available here: Completing the move to Universal Credit - [Completing the move to Universal Credit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

From 9th May, we started to issue a small number of migration notices in Bolton and Medway to claimants as part of a managed migration discovery exercise. This

controlled approach will allow us to learn and iterate as we go so that we carefully build a service that both meets user needs and is sustainable in the longer term.

■ Universal Credit Programme Board: Pay

Kate Osamor: [\[8088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 154232, what the level of remuneration was for the post of Chair of the Universal Credit Programme Board in each year since its creation.

David Rutley:

Sir Robert Walmsley's annual remuneration payment between 29 July 2013 to 29 February 2020 was £15,000.

John McGlynn's annual remuneration payment from 05 August 2021 was £7,500, however he has chosen to waive any payments.

In the period between Sir Robert Walmsley leaving the post and John McGlynn taking it up both Neil Couling and Will Quince MP sat as chairs, they received no payment for this.

■ Universal Credit Programme Board: Public Appointments

Kate Osamor: [\[8086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 154232, for what reason the post of Chair of the Universal Credit Programme Board was not advertised for open public recruitment; and if she will make an assessment of the compliance of that advertising process with the Code of Guidance on Public Appointments.

David Rutley:

The Universal Credit Programme Board is not listed in the Public Appointments Order in Council 2019 as a body subject to regulation by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, so the appointment of the Chair did not need to meet the requirements of the Governance Code for Public Appointments. The Department approached IPA (formally MPA) and reviewed CVs from previous recruitments for suitable candidates, from this a couple of candidates had been invited to apply for the post but did not do so.

Kate Osamor: [\[8087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 154232, whether the Commissioner on Public Appointments was notified that the post of Chair of the Universal Credit Programme Board was not going to be advertised for open public recruitment.

David Rutley:

The Universal Credit Programme Board is not listed in the Public Appointments Order in Council 2019 as a body subject to regulation by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, so the appointment of the Chair did not need to meet the requirements

of the Governance Code for Public Appointments. The Cabinet Office was notified and approved the appointment of the Universal Credit Programme Board Chair.

■ **Universal Credit: Eastbourne**

Caroline Ansell:

[6849]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of how many Universal Credit claimants in Eastbourne constituency have been affected by the changes to the Taper Rate announced in the Autumn 2021 Budget; and if she will make a statement.

David Rutley:

Monthly statistics on the number of people who are on Universal Credit and are in employment, by parliamentary constituency, are published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ **Universal Credit: Impact Assessments**

Dawn Butler:

[5620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department undertook an equality impact assessment on the migration of claimants from legacy benefits to Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

Yes, the Department has undertaken an equality assessment to fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As Discovery progresses it is subject to revision as we learn and iterate the processes of managed migration.

■ **Universal Credit: Metro Newspaper**

Kate Osamor:

[8090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 154234 on Universal Credit: Publicity, on what date the Advertising Standards Authority's determination, that the UC uncovered adverts in The Metro were exaggerated and misleading, was presented to the Board.

David Rutley:

The determination was not presented to the Universal Credit Programme Board.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

TRANSPORT

■ Renewable Fuels

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[4481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps is he taking to increase the use of HVO fuels.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 24 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Trudy Harrison:

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is one type of biofuel which can be used as a transport fuel. Biofuels are typically blended with petrol and diesel when sold on UK forecourts, as opposed to being offered for sale separately. HVO has been eligible for support under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) scheme for more than a decade.

The Department does not require data on the number of fuelling stations selling diesel containing HVO, or any other type of biofuel. Given the complexity of fuel supply chains placing such a requirement on fuel retailers would be burdensome. The Department regularly publishes renewable fuel statistics. These include the volumes of biofuel supplied UK-wide by type. In 2020, 38 million litres of biodiesel of HVO was supplied under the RTFO in the UK. The relatively low volumes of HVO supplied is explained in part by there being no HVO production in the UK currently, and HVO being relatively more expensive than other types of biodiesel. It is open to fuel retailers to advertise that the diesel they sell at the pump contains HVO. Whether suppliers and retailers choose to do so is a commercial matter.

As we transition to net zero, renewable fuels such as biodiesel will remain important in our efforts to reduce carbon emissions. To this end the Government increased targets for the supply of renewable fuels under the RTFO in December. It is also understood that HVO has the benefit of potentially being able to be supplied in much higher ~~blends~~ **blends** than the ~~10%~~ **7%** biodiesel threshold currently referenced in the fuel standards for diesel. Using high blends of biofuels, or drop-in fuels, in captive fleets such as in the heavy vehicles sector, is an option to further maximise carbon savings. As part of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, we committed to work with stakeholders to review the role of these fuels in compatible vehicles and potential measures to remove barriers to their deployment.