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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Energy Bills Rebate: Park Homes

**Patricia Gibson:**

[11730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on ensuring that people living in park homes, including those who are elderly and vulnerable, can access recently announced Government support for energy bills.

**Patricia Gibson:**

[11731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who purchase off-grid gas supplies, including those who are live in park homes and are elderly and vulnerable, are able to access Government support for energy bills.

**Patricia Gibson:**

[11732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with off-grid energy supplies will receive the energy bills grant announced on 26 May 2022.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is aware that not all households have electricity provided through a domestic electricity supply contract, such as park home residents. The Government raised this in its technical consultation on the Energy Bills Support Scheme. The responses to this consultation are being analysed and a response will be published later in the summer.

Vulnerable consumers, including park home residents will be eligible for £140 contribution towards their energy bills each winter through the Government's Warm Home Discount Scheme. It is anticipated that the Park Homes Warm Home Discount scheme will re-open again in September 2022. Other support available includes the Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments.

#### ■ Fuel Poverty

**Alan Brown:**

[9918]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the number of households which (a) are in fuel poverty at present and (b) his Department expects to be in fuel poverty if the energy price cap rises to the anticipated level in October.

**Greg Hands:**

The latest fuel poverty statistics and estimated projections for fuel poverty in England in 2022 can be found through [GOV.UK](#).

The Government's published projection for the number of households in England that are in fuel poverty for the year 2022 is 3.03 million households (12.5%).

Fuel Poverty is a devolved issue in Scotland.

## ■ **Housing: Insulation**

**Sarah Jones:**

[11830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will establish an insulation programme that offers grant funding for people who are not able to afford the up-front costs of home insulation.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is investing over £6.6 billion over this parliament to improve energy efficiency, supporting schemes such as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Home Upgrade Grant, and Local Authority Delivery scheme.

The Government also published the consultation response for the next Energy Company Obligation, helping low-income households across Great Britain benefit from insulation and heating measures.

For those not eligible for funding, the Government recognises long-term finance will be essential. The Government is working with mortgage lenders to support homeowners improve the energy performance of their properties, and with the UK Infrastructure Bank as it considers investment opportunities including those to improve energy efficiency.

## ■ **Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board**

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[11713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 298 on the Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Board, what plans he has to publish the (a) agendas, (b) minutes and (c) papers for the meetings of that Board.

**Paul Scully:**

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Oxford East on 6th June 2022 to Question [9997](#).

## ■ **Social Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance**

**Sarah Jones:**

[11828]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding his Department plans to allocate to local authorities to enable (a) the development of local retrofit supply chains and (b) insulation of local authority housing stock.

**Greg Hands:**

In 2020 and 2021, the Government spent almost £6 million on the BEIS Skills Training Competition scheme which delivered around 7000 training opportunities for energy efficiency and low carbon heating supply chains. The Government is exploring

options for further funding but at present has no plans to directly fund local authorities for supply chain development.

The Government has allocated £800m to Wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, which is planned to be open to all registered providers of social housing, including private and local authority providers.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Airports: Vetting

**Louise Haigh:**

[11759]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average time taken is to process the Government security checks required for a single employee of airport staff to begin employment.

**Michael Ellis:**

I am unable to reveal the average processing time of National Security Vetting (NSV) checks as this is likely to prejudice national security. It would also impact the protective measures employed in safeguarding Her Majesty's Government (HMG). However, I am able to report that national security checks for the aviation sector are being processed in a timely manner and that there are no delays.

In line with the practice followed by successive administrations, the Government does not otherwise comment on security matters.

### ■ Employment: Tribunals

**Daisy Cooper:**

[9173]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many employment tribunals have been brought against the Cabinet Office in the last decade; and how many of the tribunal cases considered discrimination or harassment related to a protected characteristic.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[9174]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many official grievances have been lodged by Cabinet Office staff each year over the last ten years; and how many of those complaints were (a) entirely or (b) partially upheld.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

Employment tribunal decisions are published on [GOV.UK](#). To ascertain which protected characteristic an employment tribunal was related to would lead to disproportionate costs.

The number of official grievances lodged by Cabinet Office staff and how many of those complaints were entirely or partially upheld is not centrally held. The Cabinet Office is therefore not able to respond due to the disproportionate cost of gathering this data.

**■ Energy Bills Rebate****Grahame Morris:** [11645]

To ask the Minister of the Cabinet Office, for what reason the Government is limiting the number of energy rebate applications that councils can submit to the verification tool per day.

**Grahame Morris:** [11646]

To ask the Minister of the Cabinet Office, how many energy rebate applications a local authority is able to submit to the Government's verification tool each day.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

The Government has not placed any restrictions or limits to the number of energy rebate applications that may be submitted for bank verification.

The Government's due diligence risking tool has no limit to the number of applications councils are able to check per day.

**■ Food: Supply Chains****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [11590]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 31 May to Question 5626, what the (a) content and (b) design of his Department's workshops on businesses handling inflationary pressures were; which public food sectors were involved; and what advice was given on mitigating any potential global food price shocks.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

The Government Commercial Function has provided general guidance on handling inflationary pressures to Contracting Authorities. It would not be appropriate to comment on the content or guidance specifically as this is commercially sensitive. The interpretation and application of the guidance is wholly within the remit of a Contracting Authority. The food sector was not uniquely identified within the guidance.

**■ Imports: China****Daniel Kawczynski:** [9856]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the UK's largest imports are from China.

**Daniel Kawczynski:** [9857]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the UK's largest exports are to China.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

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

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Questions of 26 May is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. [UKSA response \[UKSA\\_Response\\_PQ9856\\_PQ9857 \(1\) \(1\).pdf\]](#)

**■ National Cyber Security Centre: Staff****Angela Rayner:**[\[11692\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many officials are employed by the National Cybersecurity Centre as of 1 June 2022.

**Michael Ellis:**

We do not provide exact figures on the number of personnel working at NCSC for reasons of national security.

**■ Parliament: Publicity****Stuart Anderson:**[\[9157\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to promote UK Parliament Week 2022.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The Cabinet Office has been an official partner of UK Parliament Week since 2018. Each year, a programme of information and events is run by the Cabinet Office for officials across the Civil Service. Last year over 1500 civil servants took part in these, with many more events arranged by individual departments, agencies and public bodies.

Plans for a similar programme for UK Parliament Week 2022 are supported by ministers in the Cabinet Office. Promotion will begin in August and we look forward to taking part in UK Parliament Week from 14-20 November.

**DEFENCE****■ Army: Per Capita Costs****John Healey:**[\[11552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average cost to the public purse was for an infantry soldier in 2021.

**James Heappey:**

The Financial Year for statistical purposes runs from 1 April to 31 March. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 25 April 2022 to Question 155583.

**Attachments:**

1. [Army Costs \[UIN 155583.docx\]](#)

**■ LGBT+ People: Armed Forces****Anneliese Dodds:**[\[11848\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Defence, if he will make an estimate of the number of armed forces personnel who lost their (a) pensions, (b) medals and (c) status as a result of being dishonourably discharged due to their sexual orientation.

**Leo Docherty:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 25 May 2022 to Question 3460 to the hon. Member for North Wiltshire (James Gray).

**Attachments:**

1. [Armed Forces Discharges \[UIN 3460.docx\]](#)

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Household Surveys: Voucher Schemes****Sir Christopher Chope:****[11546]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason HM Government's household participation survey offers £10 shopping vouchers to those who complete the survey; and what is the estimated annual cost to the taxpayer of such incentives.

**Julia Lopez:**

The use of incentives is in line with best practice for public surveys and is common practice across Government. Incentives improve survey response rates, which is important for ensuring we have enough representative data. Low response rates carry a number of risks including insufficient data to analyse, bias in survey results and reduced stakeholder confidence.

We keep abreast of relevant research (such as a [2020 ONS study](#)) and review our incentive strategy regularly to ensure it continues to represent good value for money for the taxpayer.

In 2021/22, Kantar Public issued, on behalf of DCMS, 33,841 vouchers (22,202 e-vouchers and 5,639 by post) as an incentive for completion of the 2021/22 Participation Survey. This equates to £338,410.

**■ Sports: Gender Recognition****Tonia Antoniazzi:****[11819]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many Sports' National Governing Bodies have attended the Sport Council's Equality Group training on the trans guidance since September 2021.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Sports Councils Equality Group approached the training requirements around the Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport Guidance via three different approaches: briefings, workshops, and pilot sports.

Soon after the Guidance was launched in September 2021 the Sports Councils Equality Group delivered two high-level 60 minute briefings attended by 22 National Governing Bodies (NGBs). These were a precursor to more in-depth, 3 hour, training sessions which have been running, and continue to do so, at regular intervals. These,

to date, have been attended by 24 NGBs and are continuing to attract new NGBs to each online delivered session.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[11820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which national sporting bodies are working on the pilot of the Sports Council Equality Group's guidance on transgender inclusion in domestic sport.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

There are currently eight England/UK sports governing bodies that are part of the pilot sports programme. Because sports are incredibly diverse, there can be no 'one-size fits all' approach and the Sports Councils Equality Group are focusing on providing space, time and support to help sports define the best options and determine whether it may be possible to offer more than one version of their sport to achieve their particular aims.

Due to the fluid nature of the process as the organisations go through their thinking and the potential for this work to come to fruition at different stages, the Sports Councils Equality Group are respecting and protecting this space and not disclosing the detail of these sports at this time.

**EDUCATION****Educational Exchanges: Taiwan****Catherine West:**[\[11774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to improve and expand education partnerships between the UK and Taiwan.

**Alex Burghart:**

The UK's longstanding policy on Taiwan has not changed. We have no diplomatic relations with Taiwan but a strong, unofficial relationship, based on dynamic commercial, educational and cultural ties, which we will continue to grow. Taiwan is the world's 21st largest economy and the UK's 28th largest trading partner.

Taiwan has set out plans to become a bilingual society in Mandarin and English by 2030. We are supporting this ambition by helping their efforts to ensure higher education can be taught in English, improve standards in teaching, learning and assessment of English, and build greater education links in both directions.

**History: Curriculum****Fleur Anderson:**[\[11887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of including the Ukraine Holomodor in the National Curriculum.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The national curriculum is a framework which sets out the content the department expects schools to cover in each subject. The department believes teachers should use their expertise to determine how they teach their pupils, and to make choices about what they teach.

Pupils can be taught about the Holodomor in the 1930s as part of the history curriculum, which gives teachers the freedom to use specific examples when teaching about the history of Britain and the wider world. For example, the Holodomor could be taught as part of the statutory key stage 3 theme, 'challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day'.

**Schools: Buildings****Munira Wilson:****[11875]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2022 to Question 5498, what school sites were officials in his Department referring to when they stated in emails to officials at 10 Downing Street dated 30 March 2022 and 4 April 2022 that some school sites are a risk to life.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

I refer the hon. Member for Twickenham to the answer I gave on 27 May 2022 to Question [5498](#). There are no open school or college buildings where the department is aware of an imminent risk to life. Very occasionally, we will need to support a responsible body, such as an academy trust, which takes a decision to close part, or all, of a school for safety reasons, while the necessary remedial works are carried out.

Given the age and design life of some schools, the department expects that some school buildings will need to be replaced in future. For this reason, we have launched a 10-year School Rebuilding Programme which will deliver 500 rebuilding and refurbishment projects at schools across England, transforming education for hundreds of thousands of pupils. We also provide annual condition funding to schools and those responsible for school buildings, to ensure schools remain safe and in good working order. Since 2015, £13.1 billion in condition funding has been allocated, including £1.8 billion committed for the 2022/23 financial year. Allocations are informed by consistent data on the condition of schools, and we also provide extensive guidance on safe and effective management of the school estate.

**Munira Wilson:****[11878]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2022 to Question 5499, for what reason his Department is unable to provide the total modelled condition need and average condition need per school for each local authority area or Parliamentary constituency.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department plans to publish school level building condition data collected in the Condition Data Collection (CDC) programme later this year. We are considering

publication of the modelled average condition need per school at local authority and parliamentary constituency level and will set out plans when we publish the building condition data.

The department have published the total modelled condition need for the CDC programme, in the report published in May 2021, which is £11.4 billion. Further details can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/989912/Condition\\_of\\_School\\_Buildings\\_Survey\\_CDC1\\_-\\_key\\_findings\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/989912/Condition_of_School_Buildings_Survey_CDC1_-_key_findings_report.pdf).

The report also includes a regional breakdown of both modelled condition need and average condition need per school.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Animal Products: Imports

**Mrs Pauline Latham:**

[8990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of hunting trophies from endangered species that have been imported into the UK since December 2019.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The UK recorded 63 imports of hunting trophies under CITES in 2019 and 26 imports in 2020.

Data for 2021 is currently being finalised and will be made available through the CITES trade database at <https://trade.cites.org/>.

### ■ Clothing and Textiles

**Zarah Sultana:**

[11882]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government plans to take to (a) reduce textiles waste in the UK, (b) improve the environmental sustainability of materials and production processes used in the production of textiles sold in the UK, (c) tackle exploitative labour practices used in the supply chains of textiles sold in the UK, (d) tackle lack of access to clothing in the context of the rise in the cost of living and (e) support consumers to make sustainable clothing choices.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government's Resources & Waste Strategy for England identified textiles as a priority sector for action. We fund Textiles 2030, a voluntary partnership with industry to reduce the environmental impact of textiles, with signatories covering over 62% of all clothing put on the UK market. This programme is underpinned by ambitious science-based targets, including halving the carbon footprint of new products and reducing the water footprint by 30%, both by 2030.

Our landmark Environment Act 2021 provides general powers to introduce Extended Producer Responsibility schemes, design standards and require information on the resource efficiency of products, which will enable us to act more effectively.

With those powers in mind, we are considering what wider framework of policy measures could best help reduce the environmental footprint of fashion and building our evidence base. This could include options to reduce waste through increased producer responsibility for goods at end of life, measures to drive increased reuse and longevity of garments as well as better product design and information standards to support consumers to make the most environmentally friendly choice.

## ■ Flood Control: Housing

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[8091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 894 on flood insurance, whether the eligibility of the Build Back Better scheme will expand on the FloodRe scheme to include properties with more than three flats.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Flood Re is designed to ensure domestic flood insurance is available and affordable. Landlord insurance is classified by the insurance industry as commercial business insurance. Such insurance, including that for the larger leasehold premises, is often bespoke and not covered by Flood Re. Nonetheless, tenants and leaseholders are able to obtain contents insurance supported by Flood Re.

There are a number of insurers who offer solutions to those struggling to access flood insurance, including parametric insurance and a scheme which amends a lease for the remaining lifetime of Flood Re to allow the individual leaseholders in a block to insure their individual flats. The Government has worked with industry to set up a new flood insurance directory which insurers and brokers can signpost customers to when they cannot offer flood cover. The directory can be found on the British Insurance Brokers' Association website.

The Government will consider the impact and effectiveness of Build Back Better and any changes required in the future to drive the growth of the property flood resilience market.

## ■ Peat Bogs: Controlled Burning

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[11755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will implement an immediate ban on the burning of upland peatland habitats in England, to prevent further losses of carbon and increase their resilience to climate change.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[11756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to bring forward a significant long-term programme of investment in upland and

lowland peatland restoration, to absorb carbon, filter water, reduce the risk of wildfire and create vital habitats for wildlife.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In the Net Zero Strategy, we committed to aim to restore approximately 280,000 ha of peatland in England by 2050, with the Nature for Climate Fund providing funding for the restoration of approximately 35,000ha of peatland by 2025. In the England Peat Action Plan, published last year, we set out the steps we will take to protect and restore our peatland.

The England Peat Action Plan can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-peat-action-plan>

The Net Zero Strategy can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ Abduljalil Al-singace****Layla Moran:****[9133]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 22 February 2022 to Question 122816 on Abduljalil al-Singace, when her Department will issue a reply to the joint-letter of 14 February 2022.

**Amanda Milling:**

With reference to the joint letter to Lord Ahmad of 14 February from 5 parliamentarians, a reply will issue shortly.

**■ Afghanistan: Humanitarian Aid****Preet Kaur Gill:****[11801]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government's announcement on 30 March 2022 of £286 million of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, how her Department (a) plans to and (b) has disbursed that funding, by budget heading.

**James Cleverly:**

The majority of the £286 million pledged in aid will go towards humanitarian assistance. Our aid is vital and will provide life-saving support to the most vulnerable, especially women and girls, minority groups, and people with disabilities. We are also funding child protection support and supporting access to gender-based violence services. Discussions with our partners to determine contributions in 2022/23 are ongoing, but we will continue to provide significant support to partners, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in addition to a variety of other UN agencies, NGOs and international organisations. Full details on financial allocations for this year

will be communicated in due course. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance, in the medium term we are also working on the provision of basic services, such as health, education and livelihoods, which remain critical to prevent a worsening of the humanitarian crisis. We continue to explore solutions for their delivery including support for the payment of front-line delivery workers.

Following the full dispersal of our £286 million commitment in 2021/22 to humanitarian partners, we have additionally dispersed £4.2 million to the end of May in 2022/23.

## ■ **Afghanistan: Refugees**

**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[9896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many (a) British Council and Gardaworld contractors and (b) Chevening alumni her Department plans to resettle in the UK in 2022.

**James Cleverly:**

Under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the Government will resettle more than 5,000 people in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years. Under pathway 3, eligible at-risk British Council and Gardaworld contractors and Chevening alumni will be considered for resettlement. The Government will provide further details when this part of the scheme is launched in the coming weeks.

**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[9897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what her Department's criteria are to determine the most at risk (a) British Council and Gardaworld contractors and (b) Chevening alumni for resettlement under the first pathway of the Afghan Citizens resettlement Scheme.

**James Cleverly:**

Under the third pathway of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), eligible at-risk British Council and Gardaworld contractors and Chevening alumni will be considered for resettlement. The Government will provide further details when this part of the scheme is launched in the coming weeks.

## ■ **British International Investment: Development Aid**

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[9963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding her Department has allocated to British International Investment for 2022; and what the total budget of that development finance mechanism is for 2022-23.

**Amanda Milling:**

The FCDO is currently undertaking a business planning process, following the Spending Review settlement. No decision has been taken yet by Ministers on funding to British International Investment (BII) for 2022-23. As the sole shareholder, we will continue to support BII including through the delivery of BII's new strategy for 2022-

26, which will require further capital. Any future funding to BII will be provided through the established approval process and meet FCDO transparency requirements.

## ■ Colombia: Ethnic Groups

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[11565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Colombian counterpart on the recent attacks against Wayúu Indigenous leaders in La Guajira.

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[11566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Colombian counterpart on the recent (a) attacks against and (b) surveillance of members of the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers Collective.

**Vicky Ford:**

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government and in multilateral fora. Most recently, Lord Ahmed discussed human rights and the security situation in Colombia in his meeting with President Duque on 12 April. I also discussed human rights concerns with Vice-President and Foreign Minister Ramírez on 10 February.

Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we also consistently raise our concerns regarding violence against human rights defenders, including social leaders and indigenous leaders at the UN Security Council, as we did on 12 April. We look to the Colombian Government to further integrate its presence in conflict-affected areas, and strengthen the institutions that can investigate and prosecute the criminal actors responsible.

Last April, officials from our Embassy in Bogotá met with Wayúu Indigenous leaders to discuss concerns and FCDO officials in London met with a member of the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers Collective on 25 May. Through our Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which has provided £69 million in support of peace agreement implementation, security, and stability in Colombia since 2015, we will continue to prioritise funding interventions to protect human rights defenders, social leaders and indigenous communities

## ■ Development Aid

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[9964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many and what proportion of (a) former Department for International Development, (b) former Foreign and Commonwealth Office and (c) Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) staff overall working on Official Development Assistance delivery have (i) accessed and (ii) completed training on transparency commitments and the IATI standard since the establishment of the FCDO.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Programme Operating Framework (PrOF) was launched by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in April 2021, and sets out the mandatory rules for programme management alongside the set of principles and roles/responsibilities in programme delivery. The PrOF contains a rule dedicated to aid transparency, which is supported by guidance that explains our transparency commitments and the IATI standard. We do not keep a record of how many staff have read the rules and guidance, but all programme staff are expected to read and follow the PrOF. We are devising a transparency training module, which will be launched once the department has brought together its legacy financial and programme management systems in the coming year, to ensure all staff involved in programmes can develop their capability and understanding of transparency responsibilities and the FCDO's aid transparency commitments.

**Hong Kong: Arrests****Afzal Khan:**[\[11855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of reports that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government breached its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as a result of arresting participants in vigils in memory of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

**Amanda Milling:**

The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to Hong Kong's way of life, and guaranteed in both the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. As a co-signatory to the Joint Declaration, we will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to urge China to uphold the rights set out in the Joint Declaration and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including freedoms of speech, the press and assembly.

**Hong Kong: Political Prisoners****Afzal Khan:**[\[11856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of whether the treatment of (a) Jimmy Lai, (b) Hang Tung Chow and (c) other people arrested for taking part in June Fourth anniversary commemorations in Hong Kong meets international standards on the treatment of prisoners, including The Nelson Mandela Rules.

**Amanda Milling:**

Whilst I cannot comment on individual cases, I can confirm that we continue to make clear to mainland Chinese and Hong Kong authorities our strong opposition to the National Security Law. It is clear that this legislation is being used to curtail freedoms, punish dissent and shrink the space for opposition, free press and civil society. We remain concerned about the targeting of pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong, and are following the situation carefully.

**■ Israel: Palestinians****Mr David Jones:**[\[11576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made representations to the Israeli authorities on the impending eviction of Palestinians from the community of Masafer Yatta.

**Mr David Jones:**[\[11577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to take steps at the United Nations in relation to the proposed eviction by Israel of Palestinians from the settlement of 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.

**■ UN Population Fund****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[9954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential impact of UK budget reductions to the UN sexual and reproductive health agency on (a) maternal deaths, (b) child deaths, (c) unintended pregnancies and (d) unsafe abortions.

**Amanda Milling:**

The impact of the pandemic on the UK economy forced us to take tough decisions. Global health remains a priority and we continue to be a major investor. The Foreign Secretary has committed to prioritising ODA funding levels for women and girls, and the UK remains strongly committed to championing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) globally. This is demonstrated through the UK's recent payment of £60 million to the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) Supplies Partnership Programme for financial year April 2022 - April 2023.

Comprehensive SRHR (including safe abortion) is a central pillar to achieving the UK Government's manifesto commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children by 2030. On 14 December 2021, we published the Ending Preventable Deaths of Mothers, Babies and Children Approach Paper: our strategy to strengthen countries' own ability to deliver life-saving maternal, and child health services.

**■ USA: Foreign Relations****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[11872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funds her Department has contributed to the British-American Project in the last 20 years; and when those funds have been contributed.

**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[11873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether personnel employed by her Department have (a) been British-American Fellows and (c) associated with the British-American Project in another way over the last five years.

**James Cleverly:**

This information is not held centrally.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Ambulance Services: Shrewsbury****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[11616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Hospitals Transformation Programme aims to improve ambulance delays as a result of improving hospital emergency facilities in Shrewsbury.

**Edward Argar:**

The acute sustainability and reconfiguration plans delivered through Hospital Transformation Programme include the creation of a new, dedicated, and integrated emergency care service. This is alongside on-site, co-located medical and surgical specialities, which will support a reduction in overall waiting times for ambulance conveyances and deliver earlier access for patients to specialist consultants and multidisciplinary teams.

**■ Ambulance Services: South Yorkshire****Stephanie Peacock:**[\[1534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will estimate the number of deaths that occurred in (a) Barnsley and (b) South Yorkshire which were due to slow ambulance response times in each year since 2010.

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is not collected centrally.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Daisy Cooper:**[\[10023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will include unpaid carers in the final JCVI guidance on the autumn covid-19 booster vaccination programme.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation (JCVI) provides the Government with independent advice on COVID-19 vaccinations, based on its risk assessment.

The JCVI's interim advice on autumn booster vaccinations allows the National Health Service, care homes and other health services to undertake operational planning.

The JCVI will provide its final advice on the appropriate patient cohorts for the autumn programme in due course.

**■ Coronavirus: Screening****Zarah Sultana:**[\[11884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the decision to end free access to lateral flow tests on the rates of covid-19 (a) infection, (b) severe illness and (c) death for people who are (i) at highest risk of developing severe covid-19 and (ii) clinically vulnerable to covid-19; and if the Government will reinstate the provision of free lateral flow covid-19 tests.

**Maggie Throup:**

The most recent data indicates that rates of infection, hospitalisation and deaths in England have declined in the last month. We will continue to monitor prevalence and other factors to determine whether additional testing may be required.

For those who are immunosuppressed, testing to support effective COVID-19 treatments remains available. We will keep data on rates of infection, severe illness and death among all groups under review, including those whose immune systems mean they are at higher risk from COVID-19.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Dan Carden:**[\[11835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will expand access to the spring booster vaccination programme to people with motor neurone disease.

**Maggie Throup:**

During the spring booster vaccination programme, an additional dose is being offered to residents in care homes for older adults, individuals aged 12 years old and over who are immunosuppressed and adults aged 75 years old and over. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) do not currently recommend a further dose for those with motor neurone disease, unless the existing criteria applies.

The JCVI continues to consider the latest available data, particularly in relation to the timing and value of any further doses. On 19 May 2022, the JCVI published interim

advice on an autumn COVID-19 booster programme. The JCVI advises that a booster dose should be offered to residents in care homes for older adults and staff; frontline health and social care workers; all those aged 65 years old and over; and adults aged 16 to 64 years old who are in a clinical risk group, such as motor neurone disease.

The JCVI will continue to review the vaccination programme, the definitions of clinical risk groups and the epidemiological situation to inform its final advice. The Government will consider the JCVI's final advice before determining which groups should be included in the autumn COVID-19 booster programme.

**Ed Davey:**

[\[9835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department made of the impact of not including unpaid carers in the autumn covid-19 booster programme on (a) those carers and (b) the people they care for.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation (JCVI) provides the Government with independent advice on COVID-19 vaccinations, based on its risk assessment.

The JCVI's interim advice on autumn booster vaccinations allows the National Health Service, care homes and other health services to undertake operational planning.

The JCVI will provide its final advice on the appropriate patient cohorts for the autumn programme in due course.

## ■ Dementia: Diagnosis

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[11578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in what ways and to what extent the update to the NHS Long Term Plan will support the diagnosis of people with dementia.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[11579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the update to the NHS Long Term Plan will strengthen the NHS's focus on the (a) diagnosis, (b) treatment and (c) care for people with dementia.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Discussions on the detail of the updated NHS Long Term Plan are continuing.

We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year, including the specific health and care needs of people living with dementia and their carers, such as diagnosis, risk reduction and prevention and research.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[11580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the covid-19 outbreak on rates of dementia diagnosis; what steps he plans to take through the upcoming Dementia Strategy to tackle any backlog in dementia diagnosis; and if he will make a statement.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The pandemic had a significant impact on access to memory assessment services and general practitioner referrals due to re-prioritisation of services and the guidance for older people to shield at home. As of April 2022, the dementia diagnosis rate had recovered to 61.8%.

We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year, including a focus on dementia diagnosis.

**Dementia: Medical Treatments****Dan Carden:**[\[11834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will convene a dementia medicines taskforce to accelerate the development of new medicines.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Officials have met Alzheimer's Research UK to discuss the proposal for a Dementia Medicines Taskforce. We are currently considering the merits of the proposal to accelerate patient access to medicines with NHS England and NHS Improvement. We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year, including on diagnosis, risk reduction and prevention and research. The strategy will include ambitions for research to develop new disease-modifying treatments.

**Dental Services: Waiting Lists****Dan Carden:**[\[11841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to reduce waiting lists for new patients at dentist surgeries.

**Dan Carden:**[\[11842\]](#)

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

**Maria Caulfield:**

In 'Advancing Dental Care Review: Final Report', Health Education England (HEE) made recommendations to address recruitment, retention and attracting dentists and other dental professionals into the National Health Service. These recommendations are being implemented through HEE's Dental Education Reform Programme.

We are also working with stakeholders including the British Dental Association to make the NHS dental contract more attractive to the profession, which aims to improve patient access and reduce health inequalities. Between April and June 2022, NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked practices to deliver at least 95% of contracted units of dental activity to safely improve access, including for new patients.

**■ Domestic Abuse: Sexual Assault Referral Centres****Jess Phillips:**[\[11698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the new specific offence of strangulation and suffocation in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, whether victims of those crimes in a domestic abuse setting will be able to access sexual assault referral centres.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to all victims and survivors of sexual violence and abuse irrespective of age, gender or when the assault or abuse occurred. NHS England and NHS Improvement will review service provision to determine whether forensic and medical interventions for non-fatal strangulation should form part of the core offer for SARCs.

**■ Evusheld****Sir Alan Campbell:**[\[1109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to order Evusheld for use in the NHS.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department continues to examine the potential introduction of prophylaxis, which includes deployment and administration processes. On 17 March 2022, Evusheld was granted conditional marketing approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. However, the approval highlighted uncertainty over the dose required for protection against the Omicron variants.

We have asked clinicians to advise on the most appropriate option for the National Health Service in line with all available data, the public health situation and other treatments available.

**■ Healthy Start Scheme****Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[11684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many households previously in receipt of Healthy Start vouchers who were eligible to migrate to Healthy Start cards had not done so by 1 April and are therefore no longer in receipt of their entitlement.

**Maggie Throup:**

As of 31 March 2022, approximately 67,000 households which had previously received paper vouchers had not successfully applied for the prepaid card scheme. Those previously in receipt of vouchers are continuing to apply for the prepaid card scheme.

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[11685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the amount owed to Healthy Start recipients in backdated payments arising from complications in their migration from vouchers to cards as of 1 June 2022.

**Maggie Throup:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

**IVF: Health Services****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[11636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to undertake a review of inequality in access to NHS-funded fertility services in England.

**Maria Caulfield:**

In 2021, the Department conducted an internal policy review on the variation in access to National Health Service fertility services. This review will inform future policy and the initial ambitions in the Women's Health Strategy, due to be published later this year.

We expect local NHS commissioning bodies to commission fertility services in line with guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to ensure equitable access in England.

**Medical Treatments: Public Consultation****Anne Marie Morris:**[\[11677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to hold a public consultation on the next VPAS agreement.

**Edward Argar:**

The 2019 Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access is a voluntary agreement between the Department, NHS England and the Association of the British Pharmaceutical industry. There is no statutory requirement for consultation. However, the Department will engage with both industry and patient groups in advance of negotiations. The Department is likely to hold a public consultation in 2023 on proposed updates to the statutory scheme for branded medicines pricing.

**Members: Correspondence****John Penrose:**[\[6735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letters of 17 March and 19 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare on behalf of his constituent, Kevin Day-McDonnell, regarding agency workers.

**Edward Argar:**

We replied to the hon. Member on 7 June 2022.

**■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People****Tony Lloyd:**[\[3475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his policy to pursue a non-statutory strategy in matters concerning early intervention and school and community-based measures for the mental health support of children and young people; what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a non-statutory basis for that strategy; and what consideration he gave to providing a statutory basis for these services.

**Kate Osamor:**[\[4642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to correspondence from the Minister of State for Care and Mental Health to the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee dated 20 April 2022, what the policy justification is for pursuing a non-statutory approach to early intervention and school and community-based measures for the mental health support of children and young people.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 25 May 2022]: 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper' and the NHS Long Term Plan set out the policy concerning early intervention and school and community-based measures for the mental health support of children and young people. These do not require a statutory basis to implement. No assessment of the merits of a non-statutory or statutory approach for these services has been made since the publication of the green paper and the Long Term Plan.*

We continue to consider the Committee's recommendations in the context of the development of a new long term, cross-Government plan for mental health. We will update our response to the Committee's recommendations once the final plan is published. A call for evidence to inform the development of the plan is open until 7 July 2022.

**■ Miscarriage: Health Services****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[11634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to prioritise miscarriage care and support in the forthcoming Women's Health Strategy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Fertility, pregnancy, pregnancy loss and post-natal care will be priority areas in the forthcoming Women's Health Strategy, which will be published later this year.

**■ Social Services: Conditions of Employment****Munira Wilson:**[\[11876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of the survey by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care, published on 13 January

2022, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing targeted long-term funding to enable local authorities to improve working conditions in adult social care services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are providing approximately £1.6 billion in additional grant funding in each of the next three years to allow councils to increase spending on services such as adult social care. The Local Government Finance settlement also made an additional £3.7 billion available to councils in 2022/23. Of this, local authorities will have access to more than £1 billion specifically for social care. We are also providing at least £500 million to develop and support the adult social care workforce and fund initiatives on wellbeing and additional training.

**Sodium Valproate: Wales****Virginia Crosbie:**[\[10045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Government on the number of women in Wales of childbearing age who are prescribed sodium valproate.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 6 June 2022]:* We have had no specific discussions with the Welsh Government on this issue, as this is a devolved matter.

**HOME OFFICE****Asylum****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her oral contribution of 19 April 2022, Official Report, column 41, what the evidential basis is for the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 putting safe and legal routes into statute; and to which clauses of that Bill she was referring.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 is part of our New Plan for Immigration, delivering the most comprehensive reform of the asylum system in decades. This Act strengthens the Government-backed routes available to those in need, so they do not have to put their lives in the hands of people smugglers.

As part of the New Plan for Immigration, we are continuing to provide safe and legal routes through the UK Resettlement Scheme, the Community Sponsorship Scheme, the Mandate Resettlement Scheme, the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and an Immigration Route for British National (Overseas) status holders from Hong Kong.

This Government is committed to continue welcoming refugees and others in need of protection from around the globe through resettlement as capacity allows in the years to come.

It is through the New Plan for Immigration we have been able to support the brave people of Ukraine, with over 100,000 visas being issued allowing them to come to the UK.

## ■ Asylum: Applications

**Tim Farron:**

[\[4527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the impact of the increase of (a) Ukrainian family visas and (b) Homes for Ukraine visas on the processing of non-Ukrainian asylum and refugee family reunion applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2022]:* It has been necessary for the department to flex its resources to allow it to deliver the urgent commitments made to support the people of Ukraine.

This has had an impact on other routes, although we are implementing plans to mitigate this and return to normal timeframes.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[6782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many decision makers in her Department are working on processing the backlog of asylum applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]:* Asylum Operations currently have c.820 asylum decision working on processing asylum applications, with some completing their foundation training programme and completing their mentoring period. We anticipate a further increase in the number of decisions per week once their training is complete. We are also continuing to recruit additional decision makers.

The department is also investing in a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives that will speed up and simplify decision making, reduce the time people spend in the asylum system and decrease the number of people who are awaiting an interview or decision.

The department also have extensive recruitment and training plans in place, including career progression options to aid the retention of staff.

## ■ Asylum: Hotels

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[11671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's proposal to use a hotel in E10 to house asylum seekers, when her Department plans to put in place (a) details of additional support provided by her

Department to the local authority, (b) proposals to support local services experiencing additional demand and (c) proposals to ensure that hotel residents are able to move from that premises into longer term accommodation.

**Kevin Foster:**

On 13th April 2022, The Minister for Safe and Legal Migration announced with immediate effect we would move to a full model for dispersal, to end our reliance on the use of contingency accommodation.

We have committed to working with local authorities to move to a fairer distribution of asylum seekers. All local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales will be expected to participate in the new system process to allow us to move from hotels to less expensive and more suitable dispersed accommodation.

The full dispersal procurement process will run in two parts

- a. Continued Procurement is effective from the 13th of April and will run until Regional Allocation plans are agreed. This is in place to ensure we are progressing with procurement in the absence of Regional Allocation plans.
- b. Procurement against Regional Allocation Plans which will commence from the 15th of July or in advance pertaining to agreement on regional allocation plans and once the allocations are confirmed and shared.

We are committed to working with local authorities to move to a fairer distribution of asylum seekers and so during the week of 9 May, we launched an informal consultation. This will help to design how the full dispersal system will operate in each region. Participants will include Devolved Governments, Local Authorities and Non-Government Organisations who have an interest in asylum dispersal and resettlement. This consultation will run for 8 weeks.

To recognise the existing contribution and longstanding support from local authorities, each local authority in England, Scotland and Wales which was accommodating asylum seekers on 27 March 2022 will receive a £250 one off payment per asylum seeker.

In addition, further funding has been made available for 2022/2023 to provide £3,500 for each new dispersal bed space occupied, in both new and existing dispersal areas, between 28 March 2022 and 31 March 2023. This funding can be used to implement and/or bolster services in both new and existing areas. This will alleviate some pressures on local authorities and will ensure every local authority plays its part in this important work. Funding is also available for primary care through clinical commissioning groups.

The Government is fixing the broken asylum system through the work of the Nationality and Borders Bill. The asylum accommodation system is under enormous pressure because of the significant and sustained increase in asylum intake over the last 12 months and the build-up of the population as a result of Covid-19 related measures, which is placing unsustainable pressure on a limited number of local authorities.

This has resulted in the Home Office having to source temporary contingency accommodation, such as the hotels in E10. The use of hotel contingency is only ever a short term solution and we are working with our accommodation providers to find appropriate dispersed accommodation across the United Kingdom.

**Stephen Kinnock:****[11696]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much of the £20 per asylum seeker per day budget given by the Government to contractors for providing food for asylum seekers in hotels is spent on the purchase of food; and what guidelines are issued to contractors to ensure they provide nutritious food to asylum seekers in hotels.

**Kevin Foster:**

Costs are subject to change depending on numbers being accommodated within the asylum system. Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential, therefore the Home Office does not publish this information. However, total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ho-annual-reports-and-accounts>

The recent inspection by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration found accommodation providers were providing services broadly in line with their requirements. When visiting accommodation sites, ICIBI inspectors noted menus on display at the sites appeared to be well balanced and showed that food options were rotated to create variety. They also found that all the properties were required to supply meals provided the required number.

All providers work to ensure all meals meet the NHS Eat-Well standards of nutrition ([The Eatwell Guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#))

**Sir John Hayes:****[7902]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has spent on housing asylum seekers in hotels in each of the last five years.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 1 June 2022]:* The financial year 2020-21 was the first year of hotel occupancy and we were not able to totally disaggregate hotel spend from wider asylum accommodation costs.

The financial year 2021-22 financial reporting shows we spent £922m on hotel accommodation.

As part of the New Plan for Immigration, we are reducing the current almost £5million daily cost of using hotels to accommodate migrants through the new asylum reception centre at Linton-on-Ouse and by creating a fairer asylum dispersal system.

**■ Asylum: Iraq****Patrick Grady:****[11719]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people from Iraq have (a) applied for and (b) been granted asylum in the UK in each of the last five years.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on asylum applications and outcomes at initial decision by nationality are published in tables Asy\_D01 and Asy\_D02 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the end of March 2022.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

**■ Asylum: RAF Linton-on-Ouse****Rachael Maskell:****[9055]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to plans announced in April 2022 to create suitable accommodation for asylum seekers at the site of RAF Linton-on-Ouse, if she will take steps to help enable residents in that accommodation to integrate with the community in York should they wish.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Asylum seekers accommodated at Linton-on-Ouse are not detained and are therefore able to travel on and off site. As part of the service provision asylum seekers will be able to get to and from York. The Home Office, and our provider, are working with the Voluntary Community Sector and exploring what is available for those being accommodated to join and participate in, as part of community integration.

**■ Asylum: Young People****Anne McLaughlin:****[11734]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the (a) oral evidence from the Home Secretary to the Justice and Home Affairs Select Committee of 27 October 2021 on the proportion of people arriving illegally in the UK via small boats in the previous 12 months who were economic migrants and (b) immigration statistics published on 26 May 2022 relating to the proportion of positive asylum claims among young men aged 18 to 29, if she will clarify the proportion of single men aged 18 to 29 who arrived illegally in the UK via small boats in the 12 months to 31 March 2022 who were (i) granted (A) refugee status and (B) humanitarian protection and (ii) identified as economic migrants.

**Kevin Foster:**

People should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach rather than making dangerous and illegal crossings. For those with specific protection needs which mean

they can no longer stay in a host country, the UK works with the UNHCR to offer a safe and legal route to resettlement in the UK.

Our New Plan for Immigration will break the business model of international criminal gangs by making the UK a less attractive destination for illegal migrants. It will furthermore differentiate between those who arrive here through safe and legal routes and those who seek to circumvent this system. It will also speed up the asylum claims system so that we can separate the genuine asylum seekers from economic migrants quickly.

The overall grant rate can vary for several reasons, including the protection needs of those who claim asylum in the UK, along with operational resourcing and policy decisions. Grant rates vary considerably by nationality as the protection needs of specific groups or individuals differ, usually depending on the situation in their home country.

The Home Office are unable to state the proportion of single men aged 18 to 29 who arrived illegally in the UK by small boats in the 12 months to 31 March 2022 who were granted refugee status and humanitarian protection and identified as economic migrants as this information is not published or held in a reportable format.

The latest data on illegal migration can be found at: [Irregular migration to the UK, year ending March 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The latest data on asylum applications, initial decisions and resettlement can be found at: [List of tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## ■ Body Searches: Children

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[8160]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children were stripped searched by age and ethnicity in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The information requested is not held.

The Home Office collects and publishes data on stop and search on an annual basis as part of the 'Police Powers and Procedures' statistical publication. The most recent data are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-other-pace-powers-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2021>

The Home Office have recently introduced a data collection on strip searches to the Annual Data Requirement. Police forces will be providing this data for 2021/22 on a voluntary basis, and it is due for publication towards the end of 2022. The data collection will include details on the age, sex and ethnicity of persons strip searched by the police in England and Wales; however, information on whether an appropriate adult was present during a strip search will not be collected.

**■ British Nationality: Children****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[11708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to amend the British Nationality (General) Regulations 2003, SI 2003/548 to give effect to the intention in the Affordability fee waiver: Citizenship registration for individuals under the age of 18, guidance published on 26 May 2022, that a child's application for registration as a British citizen is to be treated as made on the date the child request a waiver of the fee for making that application.

**Kevin Foster:**

The British Nationality Regulations 2003 state a nationality application must contain the person's name, date and place of birth, and a declaration that the contents are true. This information is contained in a fee waiver request and can be treated as an application for citizenship on the date it is made. No change to the 2003 Regulations is therefore required.

**■ Criminal Investigation: International Cooperation****Emily Thornberry:**[\[11591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for UK authorities to fulfil international mutual legal assistance requests for the direct transmission of procedural documents in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for UK authorities to fulfil international mutual legal assistance requests for the service of procedural documents, in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for UK authorities to fulfil international mutual legal assistance requests for the transfer of proceedings in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for UK authorities to fulfil international mutual legal assistance requests for the transfer of criminal records, in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for UK authorities to fulfil international mutual legal assistance requests for civil asset recovery, in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for international partners to fulfil mutual legal assistance requests from the UK authorities for the direct transmission of procedural documents in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for international partners to fulfil mutual legal assistance requests from the UK authorities for the service of procedural documents, in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for international partners to fulfil mutual legal assistance requests from the UK authorities for the transfer of proceedings, in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for international partners to fulfil mutual legal assistance requests from the UK authorities for the transfer of criminal records, in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[11600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) mean and (b) median length of time was for international partners to fulfil mutual legal assistance requests from the UK authorities for civil asset recovery, in each of the last five years.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Home Office is the central authority for Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland except for tax and fiscal customs criminal matters, which are coordinated by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). Requests seeking assistance solely from Scotland are sent directly to the Crown Office in Edinburgh.

Information on time to fulfil specific MLA requests is not currently recorded by the Home Office. When the Home Office is involved in progressing an MLA request, we aim to progress requests promptly, with the requests concerning the most serious offences treated as a high-priority to ensure justice is done and that the UK maintains its reputation as a high quality criminal justice partner.

For MLA requests sent to or received from EU countries, the TCA sets out that the UK or requested EU country has 45 days from receipt to decide whether or not to accept an MLA request and a further 90 days to execute the request from the date of the decision to accept.

For non-EU countries there are no timescales set out in treaties or multilateral agreements, but the Home Office works hard to complete these requests promptly, as the service the UK receives for the assistance that we request can depend on the service the UK provides to that country on the assistance they are requesting – i.e. these are reciprocal relationships.

## ■ **Deportation: Iraq**

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[11717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of her Department's advice on avoiding all but essential travel to Iraq, including the Kurdistan region, on her policies on the deportation of asylum seekers to that country.

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[11718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of suspending all deportation flights to Iraq until it reviews its advice on avoiding all but essential travel to Iraq, including the Kurdistan region.

**Tom Pursglove:**

All asylum and human rights claims are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. Each individual assessment is made against the background of any relevant caselaw and the latest available country information. Our position on Iraq is set out in the relevant country policy and information note on the gov.uk website.

Where someone establishes a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm in their country, they are normally granted protection and are not expected to return there. The Home Office only seeks to return those whose asylum claim have been unsuccessful. By definition, they do not need protection and not at risk on return.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's travel advice to British nationals is not the correct legal test for determining whether or not a person qualifies for international protection or whether to remove a foreign national with no right to remain in UK.

## ■ **HM Passport Office**

**Rosie Duffield:**

[\[6882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will instruct HM Passport Office to make available more fast-track and premium service appointments.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]:* HMPO have implemented a range of interventions to increase our capacity for providing urgent service appointments.

Across March and April 2022, HM Passport Office completed the processing of nearly two million applications

**■ HM Passport Office: Agency Workers****Nick Smith:**[\[1152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost to her Department was by bringing agency staff in to clear backlogs at HM Passport Office.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The addition of Agency staff is a routine management action which ensures the seasonal demand for passports is resourced in the most cost efficient way.*

**■ HM Passport Office: Labour Turnover and Recruitment****Rosie Duffield:**[\[6881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to improve recruitment and retention of staff at HM Passport Office, in order to manage the backlog of outstanding passport cases.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]: To support the processing of an unprecedented demand of passport applications, Her Majesty's Passport Office has increased its staffing numbers across the UK.*

650 new staff have joined HM Passport Office since April 2021, with plans for a further 550 to have joined by the summer.

**■ HM Passport Office: Teleperformance****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[6783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were employed at the contractor Teleperformance to service the Passport Office contract in (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021 and (d) 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]: The table below shows the annual average full-time equivalents (FTE) employed by Teleperformance to resource the Passport AdviceLine and related services:*

YEAR	AVERAGE FTE
2019	195.45
2020	176.07
2021	249.72
2022 - (to 9 May)	1083.98

## ■ HM Passport Office: Telephone Services

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[1239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total cost has been of using Teleperformance to provide HM Passport Office's Passport Adviceline services.

**Kevin Foster:**

HM Passport Office's expenditure is published annually in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts.

For 2021/22, this is planned for publication prior to the summer recess, and will be laid in the House.

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[1309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many calls the passport advice line has received in each month of the last three years.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 19 May 2022]:* Ahead of unrestricted international travel returning, HM Passport Office prepared extensively to serve an unprecedented number of customers, with 9.5 million British passport applications forecasted throughout 2022

This unprecedented demand has led to higher customer contact on Passport Adviceline, and call waiting times are longer than usual. However, the provider of the Passport Adviceline, Teleperformance, are expected to meet the required standard as soon as possible. As part of their rectification plan, they will have added a further 500 call agents by mid-June compared to their position in mid-April.

## ■ Home Office: Training

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[11881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has plans to make training on domestic abuse, which includes recognition of specific needs of victims resulting from their ethnicity or cultural background, mandatory for public service providers engaging with victims of domestic violence; and what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of such services in meeting the needs of (a) black women and girls and (b) those from other marginalised communities.

**Rachel Maclean:**

This Government is committed to ensuring that all victims of violence against women and girls get the support they need. We know that domestic abuse affects a disparate group and that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate, especially for ethnic minority victims. This is why we committed £1.5 million in the Tackling Violence and Girls Strategy to increase provision of 'by and for' services, to further increase funding for specialist services. Alongside this, our Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan invests over £230 million of new cross-government funding, including £141 million for supporting victims, with a minimum of £47 million ringfenced for community-based services.

Training is an important part of tackling and responding to domestic abuse, but this needs to form part of a wider approach of guidance and support. We recognise the importance of the police receiving the right training to respond effectively, regardless of the victim's background. The College of Policing's foundation training includes police ethics and self-understanding, hate crimes, ethics and equalities, and policing without bias. Specialist training for officers dealing routinely with public protection issues explores these issues in more depth and detail.

The College of Policing has also developed specialist training, the 'Domestic Abuse Matters' programme, in collaboration with SafeLives and with input from Women's Aid, which helps first responders dealing with an incident or report. This considers the needs of different victims, including those from a diverse black community and ethnic minority communities. This training is being or has been delivered to the majority of forces already, and the Home Office will provide up to £3.3 million over three years to support further delivery.

The new full-time National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls, DCC Maggie Blyth, has included building trust and confidence as a key pillar for delivery: this includes working with charities supporting ethnic minority women and girls to avoid their specific needs being overlooked.

We are also finalising our Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance which will support frontline services in identifying and responding to domestic abuse, including recognising unique barriers and experiences that some victims, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds or with other protected characteristics, may face.

## ■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

**Angela Crawley:**

[11738]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Homes for Ukraine visas were approved and awaiting a permission to travel letter to be sent from the dispatch team as of 1 June 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

Information on the number of visas granted under the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme can be found in our published data on the GOV.UK webpage: [Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) visa data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ukraine-family-scheme-and-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-homes-for-ukraine-visa-data)

Information requested which is not contained within this published data is not routinely captured. To capture this would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

## ■ Housing and Visas: Ukraine

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[513]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to help ensure

that the number of visas issued to Ukrainian refugees is matched by the accommodation offered by UK nationals to those refugees.

**Kevin Foster:**

Homes for Ukraine has set up recognised providers who can help to match sponsors and people from Ukraine. Details of recognised providers are on the [Gov.uk](#) website. We are unable to issue visas without a named sponsor.

Currently there is no shortage of people willing to act as sponsors under the scheme.

**■ Immigration: Afghanistan****Chi Onwurah:****[6761]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support family reunion for people fleeing Afghanistan whose relatives escaped to other countries.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]:* The Government provides a safe and legal route to bring families together through its family reunion policy. This allows a partner or spouse and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. Additionally, our policy makes clear that there is discretion to grant visas outside the Immigration Rules, which caters for extended family members of those granted protection in the UK, in exceptional circumstances.

The Home Office responded rapidly to the challenging events in Afghanistan by creating the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, in addition to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy which was established in 2013.

**■ Immigration: Applications****Justin Madders:****[1195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to table VC\_02, Percentage of applications, for each route, processed within service standards, published as part of the Visas and Citizenship data: Q3 2021, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the proportion of applications for leave to remain meeting the eight week service standard in quarters one and two of 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

Despite the unprecedented challenges brought by the Covid 19 pandemic, 8-week service standard routes within Visas and Citizenship remained well above 90%, with the exception of Visitor and Spouse Partner where steps were taken at the time to increase output to bring these routes back within service standard.

## ■ Immigration: Fees and Charges

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[11538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to allow applicants for the bereaved partner concession to make a fee waiver request; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

There are no plans to allow applicants for the bereaved partner concession to make a fee waiver request. However, we keep the Immigration Rules and guidance under review and make changes when appropriate.

## ■ Migrant Workers

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[11701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time is to process right to work applications for non-UK workers; and what steps are being taken to address the application backlog.

**Kevin Foster:**

Due to supporting the Home Office's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, applications for Entry Clearance under our economic routes are currently taking longer than our published service standard.

With the return of staff to the teams who handle these cases, alongside additional resources also being deployed the length of time taken to receive a visa in these routes is reducing.

## ■ Migrant Workers: Doctors

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[6885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board 1 (PLAB 1) and Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board 2 (PLAB 2) candidates in the UK having to incur further costs to extend their visas in order to take the PLAB 1 or PLAB 2 exam, as a result of their exams being rescheduled for later in 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]:* Overseas graduates from medical or dental schools may take the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) test as visitors.

They may extend their stay six months at a time.

The Home Office is not involved in the administration of the General Medical Council's PLAB test in any way.

Visa fees are set taking account of the charging powers provided by Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, which include the ability to set fees based on: the cost of processing the application, the benefits provided by a successful application and the

wider cost of the Migration and Borders system. Full details are available via the following link - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68>

The Home Office has no plans to waive the fee for extending a visitor visa, for candidates taking PLAB 1 or 2 examinations.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[6886]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has any plans to allow Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board 1 and Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board 2 candidates to extend their visas without them having to incur further costs in order to take their exams in the event that they are rescheduled by the General Medical Council.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]: Overseas graduates from medical or dental schools may take the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) test as visitors.*

They may extend their stay six months at a time.

The Home Office is not involved in the administration of the General Medical Council's PLAB test in any way.

Visa fees are set taking account of the charging powers provided by Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, which include the ability to set fees based on: the cost of processing the application, the benefits provided by a successful application and the wider cost of the Migration and Borders system. Full details are available via the following link - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68>

The Home Office has no plans to waive the fee for extending a visitor visa, for candidates taking PLAB 1 or 2 examinations.

**Migrants: Employment****Sarah Green:****[9229]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the time taken to respond to requests submitted to the Employer Checking Service.

**Kevin Foster:**

Digital status has been an overwhelming success. Millions of customers have used the Home Office's digital services which enable customers to prove their immigration status immediately. Data on the usage of our digital services can be found on the GOV.UK webpage: [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

As part of the continuing transformation of the border and immigration system, we will phase out physical and paper-based products and services and replace them with accessible, easy to use online and digital services. These new services, alongside new technologies, will remove certain scenarios where customers have to rely on the Employer Checking Service to prove their permission to work, helping reduce the need for employers to submit queries in future.

The home office is currently recruiting additional staff to reduce the time taken to respond to requests on the Employer Checking Service. Information on the number of requests submitted to the Employer Checking Service and awaiting a response as of 25 May 2022 is not available in a reportable format as it is unassured management information.

## ■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Imports

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[4505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the current UK customs arrangements tackling the importation of illegal botox substitutes.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2022]:* The Department of Health and Social Care is responsible for policy on the importation of Botox and Botox substitutes.

In February 2022, the department published plans to crackdown on unregulated cosmetic procedures and introduce a licence for non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as Botox and fillers, the scope and details are yet to be determined.

Border Force does not currently carry out any specific customs controls on the importation of Botox and its substitutes as there are no specific controls that we are aware of on this substance.

Once any policy is passed into legislation Her Majesty's government would look at the merits of implementing import controls on any such products.

## ■ Passports: Applications

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[10035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of UK passport (a) applications and (b) renewals submitted in the week beginning 28 February 2022 were processed within 10 weeks by HM Passport Office.

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[10036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of UK passport (a) applications and (b) renewals submitted in the week beginning 7 March 2022 were processed within 10 weeks by HM Passport Office.

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[10037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of UK passport (a) applications and (b) renewals submitted in the week beginning 14 March 2022 were processed within 10 weeks by HM Passport Office.

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[10038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of UK passport (a) applications and (b) renewals submitted in the week beginning 21 March 2022 were processed within 10 weeks by HM Passport Office.

**Kevin Foster:**

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. 98.6% of all passport applications continue to be dealt with well within 10 weeks.

A British passport cannot be issued until all checks are satisfactorily completed to confirm the applicant is entitled to one. If further information is required to enable an application to be progressed, then it will take longer.

**Stella Creasy:**[\[11670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to passport applications, what the average length of time taken to return supporting documents is when documents are (a) British passports or other proof of British citizenship and (b) Passports or proof of identity from another country.

**Kevin Foster:**

We currently do not hold this data and to provide it would be at a disproportionate cost.

**Peter Kyle:**[\[11766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that documents are returned to passport applicants as soon as a new passport is issued.

**Kevin Foster:**

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

Her Majesty's Passport Office is working hard to ensure that all aspects of the processing of passport applications, including the return of documents to customers, are completed as quickly as possible.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[13218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a waiting list system for people seeking an appointment for an urgent passport renewal.

**Kevin Foster:**

Her Majesty's Passport Office continues to implement a range of measures to help support people seeking to use its urgent services. This work has led to the recent opening of an eighth public counter offering urgent service appointments, and further increasing appointment availability to help support those people who need their passport more quickly.

**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[1360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number of live passport applications currently awaiting approval by HM Passport Office.

**Kevin Foster:**

[Holding answer 20 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 10 weeks.

Her Majesty's Passport Office carries work in progress across the year as part of normal operational planning, and approximately 250,000 passport applications are being processed each week.

**Nick Smith:**[\[2448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of (a) fast-track passport applications were being processed within seven days and (b) premium passport applications were processed within four hours in each month in the last 12 months.

**Kevin Foster:**

Her Majesty's Passport Office provides urgent services for people who need their passport more quickly.

Where the processing time of an urgent service has been missed at no fault of the customer, they are encouraged to contact the Passport AdviceLine to arrange a refund of the relevant element of the fee.

**Sir Roger Gale:**[\[4446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications are (a) outstanding and (b) remain unprocessed for more than ten weeks.

**Kevin Foster:**

[Holding answer 23 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. 98.6% of all passport applications are dealt well within 10 weeks and we are processing around 250,000 per week,

A British passport cannot be issued until all checks are satisfactorily completed to ensure the applicant is entitled to hold one. If further information is required to enable an application to be progressed, then it will take longer.

**Stephen Kinnock:**[\[6784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings her Ministers had with the senior management of the Passport Office in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022 to discuss plans for responding to the expected increase in passport renewal applications that result from the re-opening of the travel industry and easing of covid-related lockdown restrictions.

**Kevin Foster:**

Senior officials in Her Majesty's Passport Office meet routinely with Ministers to discuss a range of matters relating to passport policy and performance.

**■ Passports: Children****Angela Crawley:**[\[11740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure documentation for children's passport applications are linked to their parents' documents sent as part of the application.

**Kevin Foster:**

Her Majesty's Passport Office endeavours to associate documents to the relevant passport application as quickly as possible.

Where the same document is required to complete checks upon multiple applications, HM Passport Office is working to deliver further technical solutions to improve this process for both its customers and staff.

**■ Refugees: Afghanistan****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[11721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) target timescale and (b) average wait time is for offering move on accommodation to people evacuated from Afghanistan under Operation Pitting who are housed in hotel accommodation as of 1 June 2022.

**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[11722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the process is for her Department to respond to requests for a person to be offered move on accommodation in a specific geographical area, where that person is an Afghan evacuee from Operation Pitting (a) who is (i) eligible for move on accommodation and (ii) in hotel accommodation and (b) there is compelling evidence to demonstrate that being housed in a specific area is necessary to the wellbeing of that person.

**Kevin Foster:**

We do not want to keep people in temporary accommodation for any longer than is absolutely necessary. We have moved – or are in the process of moving - over 6,000 Afghan Refugees since June 2021.

There is a huge effort underway to support families in bridging accommodation into permanent homes as soon as we can so they can settle and rebuild their lives, alongside ensuring those still temporarily accommodated in hotels are given the best start to their life in the UK.

The length of time that a family will remain in a bridging hotel is dependent on a number of factors including the availability of appropriate housing. We strive to allocate the right families into the right accommodation to ensure their integration into their new communities is as smooth as possible. To achieve this, we triage and prioritise families to ensure the settled accommodation provides the best possible match, taking in to consideration date of arrival into the UK, family size, vulnerability and integration factors.

Where Local Authorities or employers are able to offer accommodation in greater volume and more quickly, this overall timescale will reduce.

Whilst we will consider requests, and any compelling evidence, to be housed in specific geographical areas, the reality of housing pressures means this may not be possible especially in relation to London and the South East.

**Tim Farron:**

[4528]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which Minister is responsible for the operation of the (a) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and (b) Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2022]: Lord Richard Harrington is the joint Minister of State for Refugees for the Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. A full list of his responsibilities can be found at Minister of State (Minister for Refugees) - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))*

**Seema Malhotra:**

[4579]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many referrals the UNHCR has made to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme to date.

**Kevin Foster:**

*The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) commenced on 6 January, 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 ACRS in one of three pathways as set out in the policy statement of 13 September 2021:*

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement>*

*In light of the success of our evacuation efforts, we expect to exceed our initial aim of resettling 5,000 through the ACRS in the first year. There are around 6,500 people in the UK who have been brought to safety during and after the evacuation and who are eligible for the ACRS.*

*Under Pathway 2, we are working at pace to receive referrals shortly of vulnerable refugees in need of protection from UNHCR, so that individuals affected by the events in Afghanistan can come to the UK and rebuild their lives. Those referred by UNHCR will be assessed for resettlement by UNHCR using their established process.*

We have been working across Government and with external partners to design the scheme, amidst an evolving picture on the ground. It has been important to design the scheme carefully to ensure it prioritises those at risk, and to ensure the support and services required by those being resettled are in place to help them integrate into society and rebuild their lives.

**Helen Hayes:**[\[6843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of Afghan refugees that will be resettled in the UK following referral by the UNHCR.

**Helen Hayes:**[\[6844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when Afghan refugees referred by the UNHCR will begin arriving in the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 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.

We are working closely with UNHCR to begin receiving referrals under Pathway 2 of the ACRS. Under this Pathway, UNHCR will refer individuals and families based on an assessment of protection needs. Further detail will be set out in due course.

The pace of actual arrivals in any particular period will depend on a range of factors including the flow of referrals from UNHCR and the availability of suitable accommodation and support in the UK.

## ■ Refugees: Ukraine

**Caroline Lucas:**[\[1155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to ensure (a) the placement of large posters in all ports of entry with essential information on safeguarding in Ukrainian and Russian, including (i) phone numbers of the police, (ii) any other relevant national helplines, (iii) what to do if someone is worried about the sponsor or their placement breaks down, (iv) other key safeguarding information, (b) that the same information is available in leaflet format for Ukrainian refugees entering the UK to pick up and take away with them, (c) that her Department has an official on every train coming in from Europe who walks the carriages to ensure this information is given to all Ukrainians coming to the UK via Eurostar and (d) air staff hand out this information to every Ukrainian arriving by air; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

Thousands of Ukrainians have travelled to the UK as the Government continues its support for Ukraine in their fight against the Russian invasion.

The generous Ukraine Family and Homes for Ukraine Scheme provides an immediate pathway for people from Ukraine with family already in the UK to come here and those in the UK to extend their leave and remain here.

The Government is working closely with Border Force, transport operators and local partners to ensure appropriate information and support is made available to Ukrainian refugees arriving in the UK.

For example, Border Force have produced and distribute a support leaflet which is available at ports in Ukrainian and Russian languages. Eurostar has electronic signage in multiple languages at stations and additional staff deployed to provide support and contact details. In addition, as a primary port of entry, Camden Council has established a welcome point in St Pancras station to provide an initial welcome and any immediate support as required.

The online Ukraine Welcome Pack is available in Russian and Ukrainian and contains information on safeguarding, how to access UK public services and the UK emergency services.

For those arriving in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, Devolved Administrations are also working to ensure appropriate information is available upon arrival.

## ■ Repatriation: Syria

**Gordon Henderson:**

[5392]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Syrian refugees who claimed asylum in the UK since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011 have returned to that country.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 27 May 2022]:* The Home Office does not hold data on the location of refugees after they are granted asylum. We cannot therefore comment on the total number of Syrian asylum seekers who have since left the UK.

## ■ Schools: Buses

**Layla Moran:**

[6893]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many school group coaches entered UK ports in the first quarter of (a) 2019 and (b) 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]:* Border Force does not hold the data requested on the number of school group coaches entering the UK in an accessible format and therefore do not routinely publish this level of data.

Transport statistics for 2019 can be found here:

[Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-statistics-great-britain-2019)

## ■ Seasonal Workers: Ukraine

**Stephen Farry:**

[11913]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of access to (a) healthcare and (b) prescription medication for Ukrainian nationals who have seasonal workers' visas and no access to public funds.

**Kevin Foster:**

Access to healthcare is not considered as a public fund. For this reason, the ability of a migrant to access healthcare is not dependent on whether they are subject to a No Recourse to Public Funds condition.

Following the changes to the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas) Visitors Regulations made in March 2022, Ukrainian nationals with lawful status in the UK are exempt from being charged for NHS treatment received on or after 24 February 2022, except where statutory charges may apply i.e. NHS prescriptions, NHS dental care, NHS sight tests and optical vouchers. A person can qualify for exemption from charges if they meet one of the relevant exemption criteria.

**Paul Blomfield:**[\[7967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to extend visas for Ukrainian nationals entering the UK on seasonal workers visas after 18 March 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

Ukrainian nationals in this position will be provided with a biometric residency permit which will display details of their extended right to be in the UK under this scheme.

**■ Seasonal Workers: Visas****Dan Carden:**[\[11836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the level of risk to people on seasonal worker visas of being targeted by exploitative labour practices; and if she will make a statement.

**Dan Carden:**[\[11837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will launch an investigation into reports of seasonal workers being charged illegal fees by recruitment agents.

**Dan Carden:**[\[11838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has plans to increase resourcing to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority in response to the increase in the number of (a) visas issued under the seasonal worker scheme and (b) countries from which workers are being recruited.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office keeps all aspects of the Seasonal Worker route under close and ongoing review, including the welfare of participating overseas workers.

The Government is aware of the allegations of unlawful fees being charged to seasonal workers by overseas recruitment agents. This matter is under active investigation by the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority – the relevant regulatory body. It is not appropriate to comment on ongoing investigations.

The Home Office has allocated £6.6M to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) to carry out their functions this financial year.

One of the functions of the GLAA is to license labour providers in high-risk sectors to protect vulnerable workers from exploitation. Labour providers must hold a licence to legally operate in these sectors and are subject to ongoing checks and inspections to ensure compliance. Operators of the seasonal worker scheme must hold and retain a license by the GLAA.

The GLAA's will shortly publish its business plan for 2022 – 23 setting out how it will use its allocated funding to deliver its responsibilities, based on forecasts of anticipated demand on their services.

## ■ **Undocumented Migrants: English Channel**

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[11697]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the financial agreement between the UK and French governments to tackle small boats crossings in the English channel, what the total cost to the public purse was of the UK's payments to France; what the terms of that agreement stipulated the financial support would be allocated to; and what assessment her Department has made of the impact of these payments.

**Tom Pursglove:**

A bilateral arrangement was reached between the UK and France in July 2021 in which the UK pledged to make a financial investment of approximately £54 million (€62.7 million) in the Financial Year 2021/22. Further details can be found on the GOV.UK website here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-france-joint-statement-next-phase-of-tackling-illegal-migration>.

This funding was spread across four key thematic areas (law enforcement resource for onshore patrols; technology to detect and prevent crossing attempts; security infrastructure to reduce the opportunity for irregular migration from Northern France; and improving the access of migrants in Northern France to support from the French system). The funding pledged by the UK was used by France in line with the agreement. It is assessed that the investment directly contributed to France maintaining a prevention rate of nearly 50% of all crossing attempts, despite the overall number of attempts more than doubling in 2021. A significant proportion of the capabilities put in place as a result of the funding continue to actively prevent crossings.

The UK remains committed to continuing to address illegal migration with France via this enduring relationship and will continue to keep the impact of our investments with France under review to ensure we are responding to this ongoing issue.

## ■ Visas

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[6838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to reduce the 24 week processing time frame for a family visa to its original 12 week service standard.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]:* The Home Office is currently prioritising Ukraine Visa Schemes applications in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Staff from other government departments, including DWP and HMRC, are being surged into the department to help with Ukraine work and enable normal visa routes to return to normal service levels in due course

## ■ Visas: Afghanistan

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[6759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of the people fleeing Afghanistan that were granted six month emergency visas have now been granted longer term visas following the expiry of the emergency visa.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 26 May 2022]:* Over 15,000 people were supported to come to the UK directly following the evacuation of Afghanistan, with a further 3,000 having arrived since.

Following the evacuation from Afghanistan over the summer, work is underway to ensure information relating to all the individuals relocated under both schemes are recorded on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on ACRS and ARAP will be included in future editions of the Immigration Statistics.

## ■ Visas: Russia

**John McNally:**

[\[2526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Russian citizens who are in the process of applying for UK Visas.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 24 May 2022]:* Part of the government's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been to issue more than 107,000 visas to Ukrainians seeking to come to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. This has inevitably had an impact on visa applications from other nationalities coming through normal visa routes.

As a result of the current conflict in Ukraine, applications from Russian nationals to enter the United Kingdom are subject to additional checks. Russia is also subject to sanctions which may impact on the ability of individuals to pay for certain services

and a visa will not be granted if the purpose of the travel to the UK would be in breach of them.

**John McNally:**[\[2527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to expedite UK visas for Russian men who have been conscripted into the Russian military against their will and whom are morally opposed to war.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 24 May 2022]:* The government has no plans to expedite visas for Russian nationals subject to conscription in the military.

**Visas: Ukraine****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[9026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) arrangements and (b) support is in place to enable seasonal workers who have switched onto the Ukraine Extension Scheme visa to secure accommodation in order to act as sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Ukraine Extension Scheme ensures these individuals are granted the same rights and entitlements as those coming via the other two schemes, namely, three years' leave as well as full access to work, study and public funds. It went live on 3 May.

If they want to bring family members to the UK they do not need to show accommodation under the Family Scheme and once here the family will have the same access to benefits allowing them to rent an appropriate property. If they want to act as a sponsor to other Ukrainians under the Homes for Ukraine scheme they will need to show that their property is suitable to accommodate them and will receive the same thank you payment as other sponsors.

**JUSTICE****Aiding and Abetting: Convictions****Dan Carden:**[\[11833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the cost of keeping official statistics on the number of convictions that rely on the law of joint enterprise.

**James Cartlidge:**

HMCTS is currently investigating the best way to capture data about joint enterprise on the Common Platform – the new courts IT system. The cost of this will depend on the complexity of the change and the effort required to develop, test and implement it.

Once the relevant data is captured on the Common Platform, officials will be able to assess which further steps would need to be undertaken for it to be measured and reported on correctly. This data may then, with further work, be made publishable as a national statistic.

#### ■ **Ministry of Justice: Consultants**

**Angela Rayner:**

[11689]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department spent in total on external management consultants in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021; and what ten projects or work areas in each of those financial years required the greatest expenditure on support from those consultants.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Ministry of Justice makes use of management consultants to advise on resolutions to complex and challenging problems. To ensure value for money is secured from the engagement of management consultants, the Ministry's commercial policy is to put new requirements out to competition.

The Ministry of Justice total spend on external management consultants in the relevant period is set out in Table 1 below:

**Table 1**

**Consultancy Spend by Financial Year & Business Area, £000s**

	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
MoJ HQ	4,934	6,520	5,293
Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service	2,942	5,046	4,935
Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service	5,782	478	151
Office of the Public Guardian	0	0	21
Legal Aid Agency	0	0	4
<b>Total MoJ</b>	<b>13,658</b>	<b>12,045</b>	<b>10,403</b>

The 10 work areas with the greatest expenditure on external management consultancy for each of those financial years are as set out in Table 2 below:

**Table 2****Consultancy Spend by Financial Year & Projects/Work Areas, £000s**

		<b>2019/20</b>
<b>1</b>	HMCTS Reform Programme	5,806
<b>2</b>	MoJ Commercial and Contract Management	3,229
<b>3</b>	HMPPS - Community Interventions	1,305
<b>4</b>	MoJ People Group	695
<b>5</b>	HMPPS - Prisons	654
<b>6</b>	HMPPS - Probation	524
<b>7</b>	MoJ Property	509
<b>8</b>	HMPPS - Prison Supply	227
<b>9</b>	Directorate of Judicial Offices	173
<b>10</b>	HMPPS - Youth Custody Service	173
		<b>2020/21</b>
<b>1</b>	HMPPS - Prison Supply	2,065
<b>2</b>	HMPPS - Reducing Reoffending	1,979
<b>3</b>	MoJ Commercial and Contract Management	1,913
<b>4</b>	MoJ Property	1,463
<b>5</b>	MoJ Digitech	1,326
<b>6</b>	MoJ People Group	789
<b>7</b>	MoJ Security, Privacy and Live Service	723
<b>8</b>	HMPPS - Strategy, Planning & Performance	474
<b>9</b>	HMPPS - Prisons	438
<b>10</b>	HMCTS - Business Resilience	130
		<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	MoJ Digitech	2,957

**2021/22**

<b>2</b>	HMPPS - Prisons	2,485
<b>3</b>	HMPPS - Prison Supply	2,465
<b>4</b>	MoJ People Group	507
<b>5</b>	MoJ Data & Analytical Services	495
<b>6</b>	Directorate of Judicial Offices	456
<b>7</b>	MoJ Commercial and Contract Management	436
<b>8</b>	HMCTS - Common Platform Programme	151
<b>9</b>	Judicial Appointments Commission	146
<b>10</b>	HMPPS - Strategy, Planning & Performance	96

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES****■ Freeports****Emily Thornberry:****[11601]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to publish (a) the baseline studies, (b) key performance indicators and (c) data sources that will be used by his Department to evaluate progress against the objectives for the UK Freeports Programme.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The [Freeports Monitoring and Evaluation \(M&E\) strategy](#) sets out our high-level approach to evaluation of the Freeports Programme. The Department is currently defining the M&E framework in detail, including data indicators and data analysis methods required, in close collaboration with Freeports and stakeholders. Once confirmed, work will start on gathering relevant baseline data to inform the evaluation. To support data collection activities, guidance and templates will be developed for Freeports to be able to gather data in a consistent way.

**■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Children****Catherine West:****[11785]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether Ukrainian children who are travelling to the UK with relatives who are their legal guardians are eligible under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

**Eddie Hughes:**

I refer the Hon Member to the online guidance here:

[https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme)

**■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Payments****Gavin Robinson:**

[8018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the adequacy of issuing thank you payments under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Eddie Hughes:**

*[Holding answer 6 June 2022]:* The Government is providing £10,500 funding per guest to support Ukrainian families under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Councils provide guests with a £200 initial payment and guests are able to work, study and access benefits. The Government also provides a £350 optional "thank you" payment to recognise sponsors generous offer to accommodate people from Ukraine.

**■ Housing: Repairs and Maintenance****Sarah Jones:**

[11829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will (a) increase the remit of local leaders to enable them to implement ambitious local home insulation schemes in the context of rising energy bills and (b) take steps with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to allocate further funding for those schemes.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government believes that strong and dynamic local leadership, that can understand how complex issues come together in a place, tailor policy to local priorities, attract investment and seize each area's opportunities, is critical to levelling up.

This is why we set out a 'devolution framework' in the Levelling Up White Paper. The framework provides a clear menu of options for places in England that wish to unlock the benefits of devolution, including by giving places the opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's net zero targets.

We will continue to explore whether additional functions or roles could support local areas to achieve their local net zero priorities.

**■ Local Plans****Sarah Green:**

[11916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the process is by which a local development plan can be modified once adopted.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The law requires local planning authorities to review their local plans at least once every five years to assess whether updates are needed. When updates are needed, authorities must follow the local plan preparation process set out in law. The plan-making section of Government's planning practice guidance provides further details on this process. Government planning practice guidance also sets out the process for updating neighbourhood plans.

**Local Plans: Greenbelt****Sarah Green:**[\[11917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if the Government will make it its policy to make it mandatory for a planning inspector to visit any site that is being proposed for removal from the green belt as part of a local development plan.

**Stuart Andrew:**

Paragraph 140 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that 'once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans'

All local plans must be submitted for independent examination by an inspector. Where a local authority is proposing to amend Green Belt boundaries, it is for the inspector to decide if exceptional circumstances have been adequately demonstrated, and ultimately, whether the local plan is 'sound' and can be adopted.

Government policy on local plan examination site visits is set out in paragraph 3.23 of 'Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations'. It states that: 'The Inspector will decide which sites and locations they need to visit in order to assess the soundness of the plan and may also undertake a familiarisation tour of the area. Site visits may take place at any time during the examination'.

**TRANSPORT****Bus Services: Concessions****Emma Hardy:**[\[9122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will review the age at which people are eligible for the Concessionary Bus Pass scheme in England to ensure equal access throughout the UK.

**Trudy Harrison:**

In England, the age of eligibility for the concessionary bus pass is linked to the state pension age. This addresses the anomalous position of non-disabled, working age citizens receiving free bus passes, which in turn supports the financial sustainability of the scheme. There are no current plans to change the concessionary bus travel age

of eligibility in England. However, concessionary travel legislation gives local authorities the flexibility to offer local travel concessions, such as free or discounted travel to those who are not yet eligible for the bus pass, if they choose to do so.

## ■ **Buses: Batteries**

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[8962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will publish the risk assessment it carried out on the use of Lithium-ion batteries in buses.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Before a vehicle can be sold or registered in the UK, vehicle manufacturers must demonstrate compliance with a broad range of technical construction requirements. The majority of these requirements are established at an international level through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, in which the Department is an active member. Electric vehicles, including buses which use lithium-ion batteries, are subject to specific provisions regulating their electrical systems and batteries to protect passengers, emergency services personnel and other users from harm. The risks for electric vehicles, however, are different to traditional vehicles and need to be understood and controlled. The safety of electric vehicles is of paramount importance to the Government, and working with experts, we keep it under regular review.

## ■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[11567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the number of off-street electric vehicle charge points required in the Newcastle City Council area by 2030.

**Trudy Harrison:**

It is for Newcastle City Council to identify the number of chargepoints needed and the most effective electric vehicle chargepoint strategy for their residents.

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[11568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential cost to the public purse of rolling out electric vehicle charge points in Newcastle City Council area by 2030.

**Trudy Harrison:**

It is for Newcastle City Council to identify the most effective electric vehicle chargepoint strategy for their residents.

## ■ **Freight**

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[11791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Future of Freight Plan will be published.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government has committed to developing a long-term and cross-modal plan for the freight and logistics sector in collaboration with industry. The plan will focus on priority areas that will help deliver a cost-effective, reliable, resilient, environmentally sustainable and valued by society UK freight sector. My Department is currently finalising the Future of Freight plan, in which the Government and industry initiatives developed to tackle the identified priority areas will be outlined, with the aim of publishing as soon as possible.

**■ Motorways****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[9989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has any plans to reinstate hard shoulders on smart motorways already in use, following the Government's announcement in January 2022 that the rollout of smart motorways would be paused.

**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.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[9990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's public information campaign on smart motorways.

**Trudy Harrison:**

In March 2020, as part of the [Smart motorway safety evidence stocktake and action plan](#), the Transport Secretary committed an additional £5 million to communications campaigns to further increase awareness and understanding of smart motorways.

In March 2021 National Highways launched a new national public information campaign, 'Go left', to give drivers clear information about what to do in a breakdown.

Other public information campaigns being delivered by National Highways include urging drivers to adhere to Red X signals, to carry out tyre checks, to discourage tailgating and advise drivers on the use of the emergency (eCall) system in newer cars and vans.

In January 2022, National Highways launched a 'Driving on Motorways' hub on its website, providing a central point for all its information on motorway driving, including smart motorways. The hub was launched alongside a multimedia campaign, with content featured reaching over 6 million listeners.

#### ■ Roads: Cumbria

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[11548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of when the results of the Live Labs research programme, including the plastic road trial in Cumbria announced in January 2019, will be published.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) SMART Places Live Labs Programme was a two-year, £22.9m project funded by the Department for Transport that ran until the end of 2021.

The Live Labs Final Programme Review & Project Evaluations report, published in April 2022, is available on the ADEPT website.

The Cumbria Live Lab remains open beyond the end of the first Live Labs programme for further, longer-term monitoring of the plastic roads trial. There is a five-year monitoring and inspection programme in place to enable the Council to continue to feed into the overall SMART Places research programme, also run through ADEPT.

#### ■ Taxis: Training

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[11635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will introduce mandatory training for taxi and minicab drivers to ensure that people with sight loss are not discriminated against when using those services.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Effective disability awareness training can help ensure that taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide passengers with appropriate assistance, so that they can travel independently and with confidence.

On 28 March, we published a consultation on updated best practice guidance for local licensing authorities, which includes a stronger recommendation that every driver is required to complete disability awareness training.

We remain committed to introducing mandatory disability awareness training for taxi and PHV drivers through new National Minimum Standards for licensing authorities when Parliamentary time allows.

## ■ Transport: Rural Areas

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[11790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Future of Transport: rural strategy will be published.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Development of the Future of Transport Rural Strategy is underway with the aim to publish it as soon as possible. The Rural Strategy will set a vision for the future of rural transport and how the benefit of transport innovation is delivered in rural areas. This strategy will explore how future transport solutions and interventions can tackle rural mobility issues, improve connectivity and accessibility, increase low carbon travel options and deliver more integrated transport services.

## TREASURY

## ■ Cost of Living: Northern Ireland

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[11571\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his oral statement of 26 May 2022 on Economy Update, what estimate he has made of the amount and proportion of cost of living financial assistance that will be allocated to residents of Northern Ireland.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The government is providing over £37bn this year to support people with the cost of living.

The government is expanding the Energy Bill Support Scheme by doubling grants from £200 per household to £400. Equivalent support will be delivered to people in Northern Ireland.

We are supporting the most vulnerable households, by providing UK-wide support through one-off cost of living payments of £650 for households on means-tested benefits, £300 for pensioner households and £150 for individuals in receipt of non-means tested disability benefits. Some households will be eligible for more than one of these payments.

The government is also providing £500m of further support through the Household Support Fund. The Barnett formula provides around £79m of this to the devolved administrations of which around £14m will go to Northern Ireland.

## ■ Electronic Funds Transfer: Fraud

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[11572\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to take further steps to protect people affected by authorised push payment fraud.

**John Glen:**

The Government is committed to tackling fraud within payment networks, including to protect people against Authorised Push Payment (APP) fraud. This is a priority.

The recent Queen's Speech therefore confirmed that the government will legislate, when Parliamentary time allows, to remove barriers in law so that the Payment Systems Regulator is able to require banks to reimburse APP fraud losses.

**■ Hospitality Industry: VAT****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[11637\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of extending the 12.5 per cent VAT rates until the end of 2022 to help hospitality businesses.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced on 15 July 2020 to support the cash flow and viability of around 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors. As announced at Spring Budget 2021, the Government extended the 5 per cent temporary reduced rate of VAT for the tourism and hospitality sectors until the end of September. On 1 October 2021, a new reduced rate of 12.5 per cent was introduced for these goods and services to help ease affected businesses back to the standard rate. This relief ended on the 31 March 2022.

The Government has been clear that the reduced rate of VAT for hospitality and tourism was a temporary measure designed to support the sectors that have been severely affected by COVID-19. It was appropriate that as restrictions were lifted and demand for goods and services in these sectors increased, the temporary tax reliefs were first reduced, and then removed, in order to rebuild and strengthen the public finances.

**■ Sunscreens: VAT****Mrs Pauline Latham:**[\[8992\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will remove VAT on (a) suntan lotion and (b) other similar products to help ensure that families are able to access those products in the context of the rising cost of living.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Under the current VAT rules, sun protection products are subject to the standard rate of VAT. High-factor sunscreen is on the NHS prescription list for certain conditions and therefore is provided VAT free when dispensed by a pharmacist.

Expanding the scope of current VAT reliefs would impose additional pressure on the public finances, to which VAT makes a significant contribution. VAT raised around £130 billion in 2019-20 and helps to fund key spending priorities including on health, schools, and defence. Any loss in tax revenue would have to be balanced by a reduction in public spending, increased borrowing or increased taxation elsewhere. In

addition, this request must be viewed in the context of almost £50 billion of requests for relief from VAT received since the EU referendum. Finally, it is never guaranteed that any reduction in tax on a given item would be passed on by the manufacturers to the end consumer.

More widely, the Government is supporting the hardest hit with £37 billion of help to address the cost of living and cutting hundreds of pounds off household bills. Almost all of the eight million most vulnerable households across the UK will receive support of at least £1,200 this year, including a new one-off £650 cost of living payment. This intervention will substantially ease the burden on families in the face of high inflation.

Although the Government keep all taxes under review, there are currently no plans to reduce or remove VAT on sunscreen products.

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Dan Carden:**

[\[11839\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take to ensure that data shared with the UK under the Common Reporting Standard are used to estimate the proportion of UK residents that had properly reported their overseas accounts.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Common Reporting Standard (CRS) provides HMRC with critical information which is playing a major role in tackling offshore tax non-compliance.

When CRS data is received, HMRC systematically compare it to customer information and tax records, to establish whether UK taxpayers have properly reported their overseas income and determine the appropriate response.

The CRS data contains millions of records and is just one of many data sources which HMRC has access to. UK taxpayers are not generally required to report overseas accounts. Instead, they must report taxable income and gains, so HMRC cannot estimate the proportion of accounts properly reported. However, HMRC does plan to calculate and publish a new stand-alone estimate of the offshore tax not being correctly reported by individuals next year, an 'offshore tax gap', for the 'Measuring tax gaps 2023 edition'.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[900379\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent steps she has taken to promote equality of opportunity for young people from low income and deprived backgrounds.

**Michelle Donelan:**

I have rebooted our university access regime to focus on real social mobility.

Universities are being asked to set new targets on improving attainment in schools, reducing drop out rates and increasing degree apprenticeships.

We are also launching a new National State Scholarship for high achieving young people from lower income households, helping them to fulfil their dreams at university, at a college or in an apprenticeship.

**Harriett Baldwin:**[\[900380\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to improve workplace fairness and inclusivity.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Advancing fairness in the world of work is a key priority for this government. To tackle bias and ensure fairness in the workplace, the Cabinet Office Equality Hub will develop a new scheme for employers, drawing on the expertise of stakeholders in business, civil society and academia, to provide an evidenced framework for improving race equality and progression in the workplace, as set out in Action 71 of the Inclusive Britain response. It will use evidence provided by the Government's Inclusion at Work Panel, also announced in Inclusive Britain, and employers will be able to sign-up to the scheme voluntarily once it is launched in autumn 2023.

**■ Women and Equalities: Safe to Be Me Conference****Anneliese Dodds:**[\[11845\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will publish an estimate of the number of hours worked by officials in her Department in preparation for Safe to Be Me: A Global Equality Conference.

**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[11846\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will publish (a) details of each meeting held by her Department in preparation for the Safe to Be Me: A Global Equality Conference and (b) the number of departmental staff that were present at those meetings.

**Mike Freer:**

We announced our decision to cancel Safe To Be Me: A Global Equality Conference on 6 April 2022. At the time of cancellation, there were 9.25 FTE staff within the International LGBT team in the Cabinet Office who were working on the Conference full time with oversight from a Deputy Director. The Cabinet Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office worked closely together to deliver the Conference.

The request to publish details of each meeting held in preparation for the Conference and the number of staff present at those meetings can only be provided at disproportionate cost. The Conference was being prepared over the course of several years and until the time of cancellation, the Conference team held numerous meetings with key stakeholders within and outside of government, and through international networks.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Bereavement Support Payment

**Patricia Gibson:**

[11729]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that Bereavement Support Payments for unmarried couples with children will (a) come into effect from September 2022, (b) be fully backdated from August 2018 and (c) not be subject to further delivery delays.

**Guy Opperman:**

The draft Bereavement Benefits Remedial Order proposes to extend Bereavement Support Payment and Widowed Parent's Allowance to cohabiting partners with dependant children. We are currently considering representations received on the proposals during the Orders first laying period. On conclusion, the Order will be laid for a second and final 60-day sitting period. This will be followed by debates in both Houses of Parliament before the proposals can become law. Due to the nature of the Parliamentary processes, we cannot say at this stage when the Order will come into force.

DWP is working closely on the implementation of the Order, and we will be updating the GOV.UK website at key points during the parliamentary process:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bereavement-benefits-proposal-for-implementation-of-the-mclaughlin-2018-and-jackson-2020-judgments>

### ■ Employment and Support Allowance: Medical Examinations

**Bob Seely:**

[10010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the time taken to (a) conduct health assessments and (b) implement the results in the Employment and Support Allowance scheme.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Shaping Future Support: The Health and Disability Green Paper explored how the benefits system can better meet the needs of claimants now and in the future by improving claimant experience of our services, enabling independent living and improving employment outcomes.

We recognise that improvements could be made to the assessment process and we plan to publish a Health and Disability White Paper later this year.

### ■ Employment Support Allowance: Veterans

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[11815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many veterans were in receipt of Employment Support Allowance in Wales on average during 2021-22.

**Chloe Smith:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**■ Employment: Disability****Sir Iain Duncan Smith:**[\[8941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment has her Department made of the barriers facing people with complex disabilities looking to work more hours to meet the rising cost of living.

**Chloe Smith:**

There are a range of DWP initiatives that support disabled people and people with health conditions to live independent lives and start, stay and succeed in employment. These include the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advisers in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services.

The Green Paper explored how the benefits system can better meet the needs of claimants now and in the future, by improving claimant experience of our services, enabling independent living, and improving employment outcomes. We remain committed to responding to this Green Paper consultation with a White Paper later this year.

**■ Employment: Veterans****Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[11818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken with the Secretary of State for Defence to enhance the job opportunities for armed forces service leavers.

**Mims Davies:**

DWP regularly meets with departments responsible for key sectors to identify and promote opportunities. We offer significant support across Great Britain to access employment opportunities through our network of Jobcentres. Our Work Coaches provide veterans and others with the help and support they need, and our National Employer and Partnership team encourage our national employers to sign the Armed Forces Covenant, pledging to recruit veterans.

Through our Plan for Jobs, the Department is providing broad ranging support for all jobseekers with our Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP), Job Entry Targeted Support and Restart scheme.

DWP's network of 50 Armed Forces Champions and 11 Group Leads provide vital support to veterans and other members of the armed forces community, including providing additional help to get veterans in to work. 83% of veterans are employed within 6 months of discharge, which compares very favourably with the wider population where 75% are in employment.

The Armed Force Champions network receive Going Forward into Employment (GFiE) opportunities direct, supporting this cross government accredited scheme to provide veterans and veterans' partners (and others) with work placements and fixed-term opportunities across Civil Service departments, which could in turn lead to permanent employment.

#### ■ Personal Independence Payment: Veterans

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[11816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many veterans were in receipt of Personal Independence Payment in Wales on average during 2021-22.

**Chloe Smith:**

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

#### ■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

**Sir Iain Duncan Smith:**

[\[8940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits for people with complex disabilities of an exceptional uprating of benefits in line with the current inflation rate.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 6 June 2022]:* The Secretary of State undertakes an annual review of benefits and pensions. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) is the main measure of UK inflation. CPI in the year to September (published by the Office for National Statistics in October) is the latest figure that the Secretary of State can use to allow sufficient time for the required legislative and operational changes before new rates can be introduced at the start of the new financial year. From April 2022 benefits and pensions increased by 3.1%, in line with the CPI.

In addition, claimants will also get one-off support worth up to £1,200 this year including a new £650 cost of living payment for people on means-tested benefits and £150 for people on disability benefits to help them with their additional costs. These payments will be exempt from tax, will not count towards the benefit cap, and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards.

#### ■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[11674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit sanctions her Department has applied in each of the last three years, broken down by region.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department releases benefit sanction statistics at regular intervals.

Sanctions statistics for those people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Income Support (IS) and Universal Credit (UC) are published quarterly.

Monthly figures are available for JSA from April 2000 to January 2022, ESA from October 2008 to January 2022, IS from October 2016 to January 2022, and UC from April 2019 to February 2022.

Figures, broke down by region, are available [here](#).

Guidance for users is available [here](#).

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Liverpool Walton

**Dan Carden:**

[11843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Liverpool Walton are recipients of legacy benefits; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that people are made aware of the transition to universal credit.

**David Rutley:**

The data held for people in Liverpool Walton who are on Legacy benefits is published at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>. Everyone who is required to move to Universal Credit will receive a migration notice informing them that they need to make a claim for Universal Credit. The document also underlines the benefits to these claimants in considering a voluntary move to Universal Credit now. The Department is committed to raising awareness among legacy benefit claimants of the transition to Universal Credit and helping them decide whether moving sooner would be right for them. The latest data estimates that 55% of legacy claimants could be better off on Universal Credit. A national multi-channel advertising campaign launched in March. It is focused in particular on tax credit customers and encourages them to use an independent benefits calculator and seek independent advice to find out if they could be better off and help them decide whether to move to Universal Credit voluntarily.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> April, the Department published its [Completing the Move to UC Strategy](#) for Universal Credit. This document explains how the department will ensure that the 2.6m households currently on legacy benefits will migrate to Universal Credit by the end of 2024.

We will continue to keep our wider communications strategy under close review.

## ■ Universal Credit: Veterans

**John Healey:**

[11553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many veterans have been identified to be in receipt of universal credit in each month since September 2021.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[11814]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many veterans were in receipt of Universal Credit in Wales on average during 2021-22.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[11817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of data collection by Job Centres on veterans.

**David Rutley:**

The department began collecting the armed forces status on new Universal Credit (UC) claims from April 2021 and UC claimants declaring their work and earnings from June 2021. From July 2021, Jobcentre work coaches could add information if the claimant were known to be serving or a veteran and had not already provided their status.

The Department continues to look at what other opportunities might be available to better identify and record data on veterans on the Universal Credit system and has regular conversations with the Ministry of Defence (MOD). This is part of a much wider piece of work involving a number of Departments, including the MOD and the Office for Veterans' Affairs, to improve the collection and use of data relating to veterans.

DWP's network of 50 Armed Forces Champions (AFCs) and 11 Group Leads provide vital support to veterans and other members of the armed forces community. The AFCs have specific responsibilities for supporting members of the Armed Forces community and their role involves front line responsibilities including building staff capability within their districts, personally handling some claims, supporting veterans into work and helping resolve complex cases where necessary.

Every Work Coach can also support members of the Armed Forces community and their families, working in partnership with their Armed Forces Champions. In those areas where there are particularly high levels of demand, for example garrison towns, this will form a significant part of the work done in individual Jobcentres.

Data is currently only available for the latest month and at a national level. For assessment periods ending in April 2022, we held a response for approximately 45% of the UC caseload. From this data we have identified 33,800 UC claimants who have previously served in the Armed Forces.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Private Education

Emily Thornberry:

[5628]

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

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 26 May 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Vicky Ford:

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

The FCDO allocated £1,447,779.00 for children of FCDO staff on legacy FCO terms and conditions at these schools in FY 2021/2022. Given the numbers of children attending these schools, disclosing the breakdown of school places could potentially lead to the identification of individual children, and therefore the FCDO consider that this is not appropriate for safeguarding reasons.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ FCDO update

**Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Elizabeth Truss):** [\[HCWS81\]](#)

On 18 January 2021 (Hansard, HCWS716, column 32WS), The House was informed that the then Governor of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) had launched a Commission of Inquiry (COI) into claims that corruption, abuse of position and serious impropriety had taken place in public office in recent years.

On 4 April, the BVI Governor received the Report of the independent Commissioner, the Right Hon. Sir Gary Hickinbottom. The Governor announced that publication would follow in June after discussions between BVI political leaders and the UK Government on the Report's findings and recommendations. However, the arrest by US authorities on 28 April of the then Premier of BVI, Andrew Fahie, led to the Governor publishing the Report the following day.

The Report is a thorough, evidence-based assessment of the state of governance in the BVI. The Commissioner has identified serious impropriety and gross failures of governance by elected officials through several administrations is highly likely to have taken place. I have today placed copies of the Report in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Report makes 48 recommendations to address underlying issues including urgent reforms, investigations and medium-term measures. These will help deliver the deep change, which the people of the BVI deserve.

The Commissioner made a further recommendation, assessing that elected officials in the BVI would not deliver the essential reforms required, he reluctantly concluded that the only way to ensure required change would be for a temporary suspension of those parts of the Constitution by which areas of government are assigned to elected representatives, and the assumption of related powers by the Governor.

Since the Commissioner delivered his report there have been a number of significant developments, not least with the removal of Andrew Fahie as Premier through a vote of no confidence and the creation of the new Government of National Unity (GNU). The Governor has also ordered a number of criminal investigations, as recommended in the COI Report.

The UK and the Governor have worked with the GNU since its formation to turn its public commitments to reform into a strong implementation plan with a strict and comprehensive set of milestones that need to be met. If they are, it will protect against corruption and ensure the return of good governance.

I believe, in the first instance, the new government should have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to reform through the implementation of the 48 COI recommendations and the further measures they have proposed.

The Governor and UK Government will monitor implementation and assess progress quarterly. Each BVI Government ministry and department will also provide a monthly report. The detailed implementation plan will be published by the GNU in due course.

If it becomes clear that this approach is not delivering the reform the people of the BVI want and deserve we will take action. This may require the swift implementation of the final Report recommendation.

In order to be able to do so quickly if required, the UK Government has submitted an Order in Council to the Privy Council that would allow this administration to be introduced. The Order will be laid in Parliament, but not brought in to force. Should it prove necessary to do so, I will instruct the Governor to make a proclamation in the BVI Gazette appointing a day that the Order will come into force.

The people of the BVI want and deserve change and have made their desire for better governance clear. Elected officials know this. We want to support the new government in making this change and allow them the opportunity to reform. The Order in Council will provide the people of the BVI with complete reassurance that change will happen.

We have a duty to protect the people of BVI from corruption, criminality and poor governance. We will stand by them.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Health Update

**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid):**

[\[HCWS82\]](#)

Following the increased prevalence of cases of monkeypox in England, and transmission within the community for the first time, I would like to inform the House that as of Wednesday 8 June 2022, the following amendments have been laid and come into force:

1. The Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010 have been amended to include monkeypox as a notifiable disease in Schedule 1 and monkeypox virus as a notifiable causative agent in Schedule 2.
2. The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 have been amended to include monkeypox in Schedule 1.

The public health assessment remains that the threat to the public is low. These amendments will support the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and our health partners to swiftly identify, treat and control the disease, and reduce potential financial barriers to overseas visitors in England who require NHS-funded secondary care services in relation to monkeypox.

## Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010

From today, 8 June 2022, monkeypox is a notifiable disease and there is now an explicit legal duty on doctors to notify the “proper officer” of the relevant local authority if they see a patient they suspect of having monkeypox virus in England. While we believe cases have been reliably notified to date, this amendment puts beyond doubt the legal obligation of doctors to report cases of suspected monkeypox. Placing a legal duty on doctors to report suspected monkeypox cases, and provide the relevant patient information, will strengthen our understanding of the virus and its transmission within the UK and, if required, support the implementation of timely prevention and control measures.

We have also placed a legal duty on laboratories to notify the UKHSA if they identify monkeypox virus when they test a sample in England, by listing the virus as a notifiable causative agent. Positive laboratory samples will be an important core dataset, strengthening surveillance and helping to inform our understanding of outbreak progression and trends to underpin action. Laboratory notification will also help to identify the links between cases and act as an important contingency if case notification by doctors has not occurred.

## National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 (“the Charging Regulations”)

The Charging Regulations require providers of NHS-funded secondary care to make charges to people not ordinarily resident in the UK ('overseas visitors') except where an exemption category applies.

We have taken swift action to ensure that, should an overseas visitor in England need NHS-funded secondary care services in respect of monkeypox, they will not face any charge for them. Providing such services without charge removes a potential financial barrier to overseas visitors presenting for NHS-funded secondary care, therefore ensuring that the risk to the public's health from infected visitors is minimised. This brings monkeypox into line with most other infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and Covid-19.

The inclusion today of monkeypox in Schedule 1 of the Charging Regulations will mean that overseas visitors will not be charged for the diagnosis and treatment of monkeypox. The Charging Regulations have also been amended so that if any charges have already been incurred during this outbreak, they must be cancelled, or, if paid, they must be refunded.

## TREASURY

### ■ The Double Taxation Convention between the United Kingdom and Luxembourg

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Lucy Frazer):

[\[HCWS80\]](#)

A Double Taxation Convention with Luxembourg was signed in London on 7 June. The Convention reflects the improvements made in the latest version of the OECD's Model

Tax Convention. The text of the Convention is available on HM Revenue and Customs' pages of the GOV.UK website and will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. The text of the Convention will be scheduled to a draft Order in Council and laid before the House of Commons in due course.