



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 10 June 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:31 P.M., 10 June 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Insolvency Service

Luke Pollard: [\[9138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will place a copy of the full business case for the Insolvency Service Future Estate Strategy in the Library.

Paul Scully:

It would not be appropriate to place a copy of the business case for the Insolvency Service's move to regional centres in the Library as it contains commercially sensitive information.

This strategy involves closing 10 smaller sites and developing regional centres in the 11 locations in which the Insolvency Service currently has offices. These centres will enable it to provide services more efficiently, with greater flexibility to respond to future changes in demand for services. The Insolvency Service has put in place measures to support staff in affected offices to transfer to their nearest regional centre.

■ Insolvency Service: Closures

Luke Pollard: [\[9139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the decision to close the Insolvency Office in (a) Plymouth and (b) other areas; and whether that assessment found any staff to be negatively affected by the closure in Plymouth.

Paul Scully:

An overarching Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for all offices, including Plymouth, affected by the plan to restructure the Insolvency Service's estate to eleven regional centres. Discussions are currently taking place with each staff member affected by these plans, and there is a range of support available to help people transition to their nearest regional centre.

Luke Pollard: [\[9140\]](#)

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

Paul Scully:

The overarching Equality Impact Assessment which has been completed for all offices, including Plymouth, affected by the plan to restructure the Insolvency Service's estate to eleven regional offices will be placed in the House Library.

Remote Working

Rachael Maskell: [\[9933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to encourage sharing of local office space in the context of fewer people commuting to work five days a week.

Rachael Maskell: [\[9934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of helping to ensure businesses have shared spaces to facilitate creative business (a) thinking and (b) sharing.

Paul Scully:

The Government does not believe there can be a 'one size fits all' approach to hybrid working arrangements and employers should consider what works best for them, in consultation with their staff. Where it makes sense to do so, employers will consider the merits of utilising shared office space.

Small Businesses: Government Assistance

Rachael Maskell: [\[9935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to publish a growth strategy to help small businesses.

Paul Scully:

The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy is developing an Enterprise Strategy which will be published in due course, to make the UK one of the best places in the world to start and grow a business. It will focus on creating an enterprising culture where everyone, everywhere, that wants to start a business has the confidence to become an entrepreneur. It will also focus on ensuring that every business that wants to invest and grow has the means and know-how to do so.

CABINET OFFICE**Civil Servants: Retirement**

Daisy Cooper: [\[13245\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants retired from central Government departments between 1 March 2020 and 1 March 2022; and of those how many had worked in the civil service for 20 consecutive years or more, broken down by Government department.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

National Statistics on the size, shape and structure of the Civil Service, including the number of civil servants leaving, by leaving cause, between 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, was published as part of the release of Civil Service Statistics 2021 and is available at the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2021> at table 42.

The attached data table shows that 7,580 civil servants retired in the year ending 31 March 2021. Of these, 4,900 were recorded as having entered the Civil Service 20 years or more prior to their retirement with numbers broken down by main government department in the table attached separately.

Statistics on those who retired in 2021/22 are not yet available.

Attachments:

1. [Attached data table \[PQ13245 attached data table.xlsx\]](#)

DEFENCE**■ Ajax Vehicles: Testing****John Healey:****[8958]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel have been injured or are now off work as a result of trials of AJAX vehicles since 12 May 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

I have committed to keep the House informed regarding Ajax programme, most recently through my Written Ministerial Statement of 19 May 2022 (HCWS42).

The Safety Panel that approved the user validation trials on 12 May at Bovington put in place, appropriately, a very cautious safety protocol, including pre and post-trial checks on the hearing of Service personnel, a level of monitoring more rigorous than that used for the trials of any other armoured vehicle. These checks included all individuals exposed to Ajax, and, alongside them, some who were not. We detected as a result of these protocols transient subtle anomalies in some individuals in both the exposed and non-exposed groups. I can confirm the hearing of all individuals concerned has returned to their pre-existing recorded levels, however I am withholding more detail to protect the medical confidence of the small number of personnel involved. The trials were paused on 13 May.

The occurrence of the transient anomalies detected is being followed up by the Army, supported by the Surgeon General, working with external experts to understand their significance.

14 Service personnel were recorded as crew for the independent Ajax trials conducted in June 2021 by Millbrook. Between July 2021 and 12 May 2022, a Safety Notice meant that Service personnel were not used as crew for any trials, including those conducted by Millbrook.

The trials conducted on 12 May 2022 were conducted at the Armoured Trials and Development Unit Bovington by Service personnel with active support and involvement by Millbrook.

■ Nuclear Submarines: Decommissioning

Douglas Chapman: [\[13159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many decommissioned submarines are awaiting disposal as of 6 June 2022; and what his planned timetable is for the completion of the current programme of disposals.

Douglas Chapman: [\[13160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the probability that the disposal of SSN Swiftsure will be completed by its target date in 2026.

Douglas Chapman: [\[13161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to submarines being dismantled as of 6 June 2022, what recent assessment he has made of the likelihood that (a) each of those projects will be completed in line with planned timescales and (b) completion dates will be met.

Jeremy Quin:

There are 21 decommissioned submarines awaiting disposal as of 6 June 2022. Good progress continues to be made with submarine dismantling in Rosyth as illustrated by the completion of removing all low-level radioactive waste from the third boat, REVENGE, in January 2022.

The Submarine Dismantling Project remains on track to deliver a safe, secure, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible solution for dismantling all our non-operational submarines. The first disposal, SWIFTSURE, is being used as a demonstrator submarine to define and refine the dismantling process now taking place at Rosyth dockyard and this remains on schedule for completion by the target date of 2026. As that work progresses, the outcomes will provide more certainty on the dates when the current programme of disposals will be completed.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Voluntary Work

Stuart Anderson: [\[11864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to tackle potential barriers to volunteering; and whether she plans to make funding available to tackle those barriers.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government recognises that volunteering is critical to a vibrant and resilient civil society; it benefits volunteers and the organisations involving them and has transformational impacts on beneficiaries and their communities.

As a department, we are focused on simplifying routes into volunteering and seeking to make volunteering more inclusive.

Through the £7.4 million Volunteering Futures Fund, volunteering opportunities are being created to remove barriers to volunteering in arts, culture, sports, civil society, youth and heritage sectors. Young people, people with disabilities and those experiencing loneliness will be given the opportunity to volunteer and help others. DCMS is investing £6.25 million in the fund, together with £1.17 million provided by matched funders.

Our delivery partners for this programme are the Arts Council England, NHS Charities Together and Pears Foundation. The 19 Arts Council England funded projects will work with over 160 partners across heritage, arts, libraries, festival, community and sport organisations to increase accessibility to volunteering.

We are also supporting the development of the sector-led Vision for Volunteering, through which an ambitious ten year action plan is being developed to improve the volunteer experience. One of the five themes of the Vision is 'Equity and Inclusion', in recognition of the barriers that some people face to participating in volunteering.

EDUCATION**■ Children in Care****Jon Trickett:**[\[11555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the (a) number of children in care provided by (i) private companies and (ii) local authorities and (b) average cost differential between those two provisions.

Will Quince:

The department does not hold specific data on the number of children in care placed with private providers or local authorities. Ofsted publishes data on the number of places available in children's homes or foster care that are provided by local authorities or private companies, but not the proportion of places taken up by children.

As of 31 March 2021, private companies ran 83% of children's homes (2,032) in England, providing 78% (7,555) of places. Local authorities ran 14% (339) of children's homes, providing 16% (1,643) of places. Twenty-three of these local authority homes were run by organisations that provide the children's services function of the council, including trusts. Voluntary providers ran 91 homes (4%), providing 501 places (5%).

There were 13 secure children's homes in England as of 31 March 2021, offering 234 places in total. 12 of these homes are run by local authorities and one by a voluntary organisation.

Local authorities provided 64% (29,500) of foster placements in England as of 31 March 2021, with the remaining 36% (15,800) provided through independent fostering agencies.

The recent children's social care market study completed by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) considered evidence of cost differentials between private providers and local authority run children's homes (excluding secure children's homes) and foster care. Their analysis found that for children's homes, the cost to local authorities to provide their own placements was no lower than procuring these through private providers. However, the analysis also found indicative evidence that for fostering placements, local authorities could provide some placements more cheaply in-house as opposed to purchasing them through private providers.

The department has welcomed the report and is carefully considering the CMA's recommendations.

■ Children: Disability

Grahame Morris:

[\[11647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the new National Children's Social Care Framework works with the proposed new National SEND Standards, as outlined in the SEND Review, to meet the social care needs of families with disabled children.

Will Quince:

The government is committed to building a coherent children's social care system that has the interests of families and vulnerable children at its heart.

The department will align its implementation strategy for children's social care with reforms to the special educational needs and disabilities system that it is consulting on through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper.

■ Lord Wharton of Yarm

Matt Western:

[\[9099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he was given notice of the Chair of the Office for Students, Lord Wharton's, (a) attendance and (b) speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference.

Matt Western:

[\[9100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the compatibility of the address given by the Chair of the Office for Students to the Conservative Political Action Conference with the duties under paragraph 3.11 of the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

Michelle Donelan:

Paragraph 3.14 of the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public bodies, referring to paragraphs 3.11 to 3.13 of the code, states 'If you are an MP, member of the House of Lords, member of a devolved legislature, directly elected mayor, local councillor or police and crime commissioner, you are exempt from these requirements.' As a member of the House of Lords, Lord Wharton is therefore exempt from the requirements of 3.11.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education was not given notice of Lord Wharton's attendance or speech at the recent Conservative Political Action Conference and will not be making an assessment of the compatibility of the address given by Lord Wharton.

■ National Implementation Board

Alexander Stafford: [\[9212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his timetable is for establishing the Care Review Implementation Board of experts.

Alexander Stafford: [\[9213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government plans to take to help ensure that care-experienced young people will be included in the implementation process following the independent review of children's social care.

Will Quince:

The department will now consider the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care carefully with those with care experience and all interested stakeholders. This will include establishing a National Implementation Board that includes people with experience of leading transformational change and those with their own experience of the care system.

The department will publish an implementation strategy later this year, setting out how we will improve children's social care. More detail about the National Implementation Board will also be provided in due course.

■ National Union of Students: Elections

Matt Western: [\[9101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, under what provision the Minister of State for Universities contacted Civica Election Services to challenge the election of the incoming president of the National Union of Students.

Matt Western: [\[9102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made a recent assessment of the financial implications for the National Union of Students of his decision to freeze funding until the conclusion of the independent investigations into anti-Semitism.

Matt Western:

[\[9103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that students are represented within Government in the context of his Department's decision to disassociate with the National Union of Students.

Michelle Donelan:

I have been deeply concerned to hear the allegations of antisemitism linked to the National Union of Students (NUS) and believe that strong action is needed, especially as NUS has been the subject of similar allegations on at least another two occasions in recent years. This is why I announced on 13 May 2022 that the government would be disengaging with them, until we are satisfied that they have taken effective steps to address the allegations.

The financial impact of this decision is a matter for the NUS, not for the government. But we are working to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by our disengagement with the NUS. We will continue to talk with students' groups such as the Office for Students' panel and directly with students' unions throughout the period of disengagement.

I have also contacted Civica Election Services to ask whether they are satisfied with the integrity of the elections for the incoming NUS president, given the publicity around antisemitic statements she is alleged to have made.

Jewish students need to have confidence that the NUS is a body that represents them, as well as other students. The government will re-engage with them once we and the Union of Jewish Students and Community Security Trust (in relation to the broader Jewish community) are satisfied that it does so.

■ Overseas Students: Fees and Charges

Nadia Whittome:

[\[9225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to take steps to allow people with discretionary leave to remain to pay the same University tuition fees as people with indefinite leave to remain.

Michelle Donelan:

The department is committed to a sustainable funding model that supports high-quality provision, meets the skills needs of the country and maintains the world-class reputation of UK higher education (HE). It is crucial that the student finance system is just and sustainable, provides value for money for society and represents a sound investment for students.

Holders of temporary leave to remain who are in need of international protection, such as those awarded refugee status or humanitarian protection, are eligible for automatic home fee status, as are those with pre-settled status who are covered by the Withdrawal Agreements. Discretionary leave to remain is a type of temporary leave granted for a limited period only outside the immigration rules. The department has no plans to extend eligibility to those with discretionary leave to remain.

However, where a student is not automatically eligible for home fee status, HE providers can waive or reduce fees where they consider it appropriate to do so. The onus would be on individual applicants to provide a compelling and persuasive case to their individual university which would warrant the exercise of this discretion in their favour, as to do so would mean a loss of income for the provider. Additionally, most HE providers, as independent and autonomous organisations, provide support direct to their students through scholarships and bursaries.

■ Pre-school Education

Nadia Whittome:

[\[9226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps he has taken on developing proposals to reduce the ratio of children to adults within early years settings; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential safety implications of that potential change.

Will Quince:

I refer the hon. Member for Nottingham East to the answer I gave on 23 May 2022 to Question [3802](#).

■ Pupils: Bus Services

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[9200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending free bus travel to those studying aged 16 to 18 in light of the proposed increase of the leaving school age to 18.

Mr Robin Walker:

Local authorities are responsible for transport to education and training for 16- to 19-year-olds, including where students travel to school or college. Many students already receive a discount or concession, but it is for local authorities, along with local transport providers and schools or colleges, to decide whether to provide support and which students are eligible. These decisions are best made locally considering local needs, the resources available, and other local circumstances.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund can be used for transport costs to support young people to access education and training. Schools and colleges are responsible for deciding how to distribute their bursary allocations to students, and for establishing what criteria to use.

■ Regional Planning and Development: Children

Damien Moore:

[\[10007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that children are integral to the Government's levelling up agenda.

Mr Robin Walker:

The government's Levelling Up White Paper includes a specific education mission which states that by 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this means 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third. The Levelling Up White Paper can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>.

The department is committed to levelling up education standards. The recent Schools White Paper sets out our long-term vision for a school system that helps every child to fulfil their potential, by ensuring that they receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time founded on achieving world-class literacy and numeracy. The Schools White Paper can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child>.

This is why the government is building capacity in the places that need this most. We are offering significant support for our 55 Education Investment Areas (EIAs) so that we can improve outcomes for pupils in these areas where attainment is weakest. The government will also be offering additional intensive investment in a subset of 24 Priority EIAs.

In all 55 EIAs, we will be taking steps to support underperforming schools to make the necessary improvements, build trust capacity, support improved digital connectivity in the schools that need this most and offer the Levelling Up premium, worth up to £3,000 tax-free, to eligible teachers.

In the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, the government announced £82 million to create a network of family hubs in 75 areas. This is part of a wider £302 million package to transform services for parents, carers, babies, and children in half of council areas across England. The 75 local authorities eligible to receive the funding were announced on 2 April 2022. Information on support for vulnerable families can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/infants-children-and-families-to-benefit-from-boost-in-support>.

■ Religion: Education**Andrew Lewer:****[9999]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the withdrawal element of the Education Act 1944 on (a) a child's education in religious education lessons and (b) the expectation that schools promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

While the department considers religious education (RE) to be an important subject, we respect parental rights and have no plans to change the right of withdrawal.

Legislation gives parents the right to request withdrawing their child from all or part of a school's RE. Parents are not required to give a reason for their requests, which must be complied with. The right of withdrawal from RE does not extend to other areas of the curriculum where religious matters are spontaneously raised by pupils or arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

The department believes that the current position is correct, as it balances the rights of parents and of children.

It is, of course, important that schools promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The Education Act 2002 requires schools to ensure the Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development of all their pupils. There are many opportunities within the curriculum for schools to promote SMSC, including through RE, history, and citizenship. State-funded schools are also required to actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

■ Schools: Energy

Holly Lynch:

[\[9937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department will be providing to schools to help ensure they can manage increased energy costs.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department recognises that schools will be facing cost pressures in the coming months, particularly due to the increase in energy prices. We are looking carefully at how this will impact schools and are considering what additional support we could offer.

The department contacted all schools in England to get basic data on their current and future energy tariffs to better understand how they have been affected by recent energy price increases. The survey closed on 2 June 2022, and the responses will be used to understand the impacts of energy cost increases on schools and inform considerations of additional support the department could offer.

Cost increases should be seen in the wider context of funding for schools. The government is delivering a £4 billion cash increase in the core schools budget next year, taking total funding to £53.8 billion. This includes an additional £1.2 billion for schools in the new schools supplementary grant for the 2022/23 financial year. Overall, this represents a 7% cash terms per pupil boost, which will help schools meet the pressures we know they are facing, particularly around energy costs.

All schools can access a range of school resource management (SRM) tools to help them get the best value from their resources, to help them save on regular purchases and reduce non-teaching costs. Our SRM tools include recommended deals for energy costs and ancillary services relating to energy. The department will also update and strengthen guidance on a regular basis to inform schools of the market and commercial position, with practical advice on exiting existing and entering new

contracts, available here: <https://www.get-help-buying-for-schools.service.gov.uk/procurement-support>. The get help buying for schools service will also be able to offer support to schools in switching and entering new contracts.

The department recognises that every school's circumstances are different, and where schools are in serious financial difficulty, they should contact their local authority or the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

■ Special Educational Needs: Appeals

Daisy Cooper: **[10018]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the (a) shortest, (b) average and (c) longest period of time between a pre-tribunal settlement for education, health and care provision being agreed and a settlement order being signed for each upper tier local authority.

Will Quince:

The department does not hold or collect information on the period of time between a pre-tribunal settlement for education, health and care provision being agreed and a settlement order being signed.

■ Special Educational Needs: Finance

Zarah Sultana: **[11883]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will take steps to meet Sense's call for a £34.3 million multi-sensory impairment (MSI) education fund to ensure that children who need a trained MSI teacher have access to one.

Will Quince:

The department is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those with multi-sensory impairments, receive the support they need to succeed in their early years, at school, and at college.

High needs funding, which is specifically for supporting children with more complex SEND, including those with multi-sensory impairment, is increasing by £1 billion in the 2022/23 financial year, bringing the overall total funding for high needs to £9.1 billion. This unprecedented increase of 13%, compared to the 2021/22 financial year, comes as well as the £1.5 billion increase over the last two years.

The department has no current plans to create a new funding stream specifically for the education of children with multi-sensory impairment. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities and schools have responsibilities for supporting all children and young people with SEND, including those with multi-sensory impairments. As a result, they are best placed to decide how to prioritise their spending on the range of resources and activities that will best support their pupils.

■ St Benet's Hall

Alexander Stafford: [R] [\[9215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has had discussions with the University of Oxford University Council on its decision not to renew the official licence of St Benet's Hall.

Alexander Stafford: [R] [\[9216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to prevent the closure of St Benet's Hall, Oxford University.

Alexander Stafford: [R] [\[9217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to help secure the long-term future of St Benet's Hall, Oxford University.

Alexander Stafford: [R] [\[9218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with representatives of the University of Oxford on ensuring that St Benet's Hall, Oxford's official licence is renewed.

Alexander Stafford: [R] [\[9219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with the governing body of St Benet's Hall, Oxford University, on potential solutions to ensure that institution's continued operation.

Alexander Stafford: [R] [\[9220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with (a) St Benet's Education Trust, (b) the Ampleforth Abbey Trust and (c) the Roman Catholic Church on potential solutions to ensure the continued operation of St Benet's Hall, Oxford University.

Alexander Stafford: [R] [\[9221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the closure of St Benet's Hall, Oxford University, on the (a) history, (b) heritage and (c) educational diversity of that institution.

Michelle Donelan:

We cannot intervene to influence the decision that Oxford University Council has made as they are an autonomous body responsible for their own decision making.

We are confident that the council would have been privy to all the relevant information needed and will have taken careful consideration before reaching its final decision.

We were also reassured to note from media sources that on 16 May 2022 the current students were informed that the likelihood of them being re-located to different colleges throughout the university has been addressed, and that arrangements are underway to ensure their continued education.

■ Students: Travel

Matt Western:

[\[9105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of the rising cost of transport on students who commute.

Michelle Donelan:

Up-front loans are available as a contribution towards undergraduate students' living costs including transport costs while attending university with the most support available for students from the lowest income backgrounds. Additional support is available as a means-tested travel grant for students attending clinical placements that are part of their courses in medicine and dentistry. Students who are obliged to incur additional spending while studying as a result of a disability can apply for non-means-tested disabled students' allowance to meet their additional travel costs.

Maximum grants and loans for living costs were increased by 3.1% this academic year 2021/22 and we have announced that they will increase by a further 2.3% in 2022/23. In addition, we are freezing maximum tuition fees for the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. By 2024/25, maximum fees will have been frozen for seven years.

In our guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) on funding for the 2021/22 financial year we made clear that the OfS should protect the £256 million allocation for the student premiums to support disadvantaged students and those that need additional help. The 2022/23 financial year guidance to the OfS confirms universities will continue to be able to support students in hardship through the student premium. Ministers' Strategic Priorities Grant guidance letter to the OfS asks that the OfS looks to protect the student premium in cash terms for 2022/23.

Alongside this, the government is also making available discretionary funding of £144 million to support vulnerable people and individuals on low incomes, including students, to support those ineligible for council tax.

■ Teachers: Recruitment

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[9094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the percentage shortfall in the cumulative targets for recruitment of trainee secondary teachers of (a) religious education and (b) modern foreign languages for the recruitment period 2017-18 to 2021-22, excluding the 2020-21 recruitment year.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[9095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether adjustments have been made to the target number of trainee secondary teachers being recruited for (a) modern foreign languages and (b) religious education in 2022-23 on the basis of historical recruitment levels.

Mr Robin Walker:

The attached table shows the new entrants to postgraduate Initial Teacher Training for modern foreign languages and religious education for the recruitment years from 2017/18 to 2021/22. These figures have been taken from the ITT Census publication which can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census/2021-22#releaseHeadlines-tables>.

The table also presents the postgraduate ITT recruitment targets for those subjects as well as the percentage of the target reached in each of the recruitment years. It is not recommended to add up shortfalls to targets over several years to obtain a 'cumulative shortfall'. This would likely over-state the true recruitment shortfall over the period - a consequence of the methodology used to set the targets each year.

The 2022/23 recruitment year Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training (PGITT) targets include an adjustment to build in impacts of recruitment being below targets for the two PGITT rounds prior to 2022/23 (the 2020/21 and 2021/22 recruitment year rounds).

The 2022/23 recruitment year Modern Foreign Languages (including Classics) PGITT target of 2,170 trainees includes such an adjustment due to missed targets in the two previous ITT cycles.

For Religious Education, the 2022/23 recruitment year PGITT target of 450 trainees does not include any adjustments for under-recruitment in the two previous ITT cycles. Whilst the 2021/22 recruitment year target for Religious Education was slightly below target (99% of target), this under-recruitment was offset by increases in supply from other routes such as returners to teaching.

For more information on the 2022/23 recruitment year PGITT targets and the underlying methodology, please see the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/postgraduate-initial-teacher-training-targets/2022-23#releaseHeadlines-summary>.

Attachments:

1. [9094_9095_table \[9094_9095_table_showing_ITT_entrants.pdf\]](#)

■ Uni Connect Programme: Finance**Matt Western:****[9104]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of the reduction in Uni Connect funding on rates of participation in higher education.

Michelle Donelan:

Uni Connect programme was originally set up as a four-year investment programme to support the creation of a strong and versatile network of local partnerships, aimed at providing sustained outreach to young people across England. During this initial start-up phase, funding was set at £60 million to support the establishment of local partnerships and establishing projects to support hard-to-read students.

The programme is now in its third phase, and we have set out in strategic priorities guidance in 2021 and 2022 that funding should be reduced, with funding to be spent on maintaining core infrastructure and delivering the most effective interventions which meet specific policy aims.

On 26 May 2022, the Office for Students (OfS) published the Uni Connect national evaluation which provides an updated evaluation of one of the stated aims of the Uni Connect programme: to reduce the gap in higher education participation between the most and least represented groups of learners. The full report can be found on the OfS website, available here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/uni-connect-national-evaluation-updated-analysis/>.

In November 2021 we issued new guidance to the OfS on rebooting the access and participation regime in England. As part of this new approach, the director for fair access and participation has asked providers to play a greater role in improving equality of opportunity in further and higher education within schools.

In April 2022 the OfS issued guidance to providers inviting them to vary their current plans in order to better support real social mobility – delivering interventions that allow students to both succeed in and progress from higher education, rather than just getting more students through the door. Providers are being asked to incorporate in their current access and participation plans more attainment raising activities in partnership with schools, and to develop more diverse pathways into their institution, including levels 4 and 5 and apprenticeships. Providers are being asked to consider the needs that exist both nationally and within their own regional and local context.

■ Universities: Industrial Disputes

Chi Onwurah:

[13122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with universities on threats to deduct 100 per cent of staff pay in response to marking boycotts by employees.

Michelle Donelan:

The quality of higher education (HE) and the learning and opportunities it offers for students are priorities for this government. Students have suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic, and any further disruption caused to their learning is wholly unfair and completely unnecessary.

This government believes that students should be at the heart of the HE system. This is why we set up the Office for Students (OfS) to regulate the HE sector in England, protect student rights and ensure the sector is delivering real value for money.

The OfS expects providers to do all they can to avoid disruption for students. Prior to the recent industrial action starting, the OfS wrote to universities outlining how they will approach the protection of students' interests and the upholding of standards. They have made clear that they expect universities to abide by the conditions of registration, maintain the delivery of HE and minimise disruption to students in the

event of any industrial action. The OfS also highlighted providers' obligations under consumer protection law in relation to the impact of industrial action.

Throughout this industrial action, we have strongly encouraged all sides to continue to engage in constructive talks and bring these disputes to an end.

Government guidance on deducting pay for 'partial performance' in respect of action short of a strike is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/if-your-business-faces-industrial-action/strike-pay-and-working-records#:~:text=If%20workers%20take%20action%20short,they%20fulfil%20their%20contractual%20duties.>

Ultimately, HE providers are independent, autonomous institutions responsible for their own decisions about the terms and conditions of employment.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Products: Imports

Mrs Pauline Latham:

[\[8991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to bring forward legislative proposals on banning the import of hunting trophies from endangered species announced in December 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

We have pledged to bring forward legislation to ban imports of hunting trophies from thousands of species. This ban will be among the strongest in the world, leading the way in protecting endangered animals. We intend to bring this forward as soon as parliamentary time allows.

■ Birds: Conservation

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[13067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the Seabird Conservation Strategy.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is working with Natural England to develop a comprehensive and ambitious English Seabird Conservation Strategy (ESCS). This strategy will provide an assessment of the vulnerability of seabird species in light of the pressures they are facing and propose a comprehensive set of actions to address them.

A significant amount of work has already been undertaken on development of the ESCS including a sensitivity review for English seabirds at sea, which will become a vital evidence-base for informing understanding of seabird sensitivities. However, largely as a consequence of COVID-19 impacts, we are now planning to consult with stakeholders on draft outputs during a series of engagement sessions starting in the summer and aim to publish a final ESCS in spring 2023.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Abdul Kolim**

Mark Tami: [\[8965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2022 to Question 626 on Abdul Kolim, when consular officials met (a) Mr Kolim and (b) his family; and what representations she has made to her Moroccan counterpart on Mr Kolim's case since 7 December 2021.

James Cleverly:

Officials remain in regular contact with Mr Kolim and his family and are providing consular support. We continue to raise his case with the Moroccan authorities.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Armed Conflict

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[11618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to the Government of Rwanda on that country's support for rebels fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Vicky Ford:

The fragile security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is concerning. The recent increase in violence risks efforts to pursue peace. In recent weeks we have raised our concerns about the increase in violence, protection of civilians and increased movement of armed groups with the governments of DRC, Uganda and Rwanda, as well as the leadership of the UN Peacekeeping Mission, MONUSCO. The UK engages frequently and at a senior level with the governments of Rwanda and DRC through our missions on the ground, and in the UK. I [the Minister for Africa] raised our concerns about the escalating violence in the region most recently with the Rwandan Foreign Minister on 18 May 2022.

The UK is committed to supporting efforts to build stability and reduce violence in DRC. At the recent UN Security Council session on DRC, the UK urged leaders of the region to re-double their efforts to pursue dialogue, de-escalation and the use of effective regional mechanisms to resolve disputes. The UK continues to be a major funder of MONUSCO and to liaise extensively on their deployments to improve security and ensure the protection of civilians and the safety and security of UN personnel and humanitarian workers. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and engage with all governments in the region to improve the security situation.

■ Development Aid

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[9962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the National Audit Office's report entitled Managing reductions in Official Development Assistance spending published on 31 March 2022, if she will make an

assessment of the impact on development outcomes of the budget allocation exercise in 2021 referred to in recommendation (a) of that report.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO and HMT will identify lessons learned from the 2021 budget allocation exercise, taking into account the recommendations of this report, including recommendation (a).

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[9968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the recent NAO report, Managing reductions in Official Development Assistance spending, published on 31 March 2022, if she will accept the recommendation set out in that report on assessing the impact of the reduction and reprioritisation of ODA spending on performance in the short, medium and long term.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO continually assesses the impact of our spend in the short, medium and long term. Value for Money is embedded in everything we do in the FCDO. We ensure that our actions align with evidence to maximise the impact of our foreign policy and help countries to grow through enterprise, trade and development.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[9958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff were assigned to the Conflict Centre announced in the Integrated Review; and how many and what proportion of those staff originally assigned to the Conflict Centre have since been transferred to the Office of Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation.

Vicky Ford:

The Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation (OCSM) is the name of the FCDO conflict directorate that is described as a conflict centre in the Integrated Review. OCSM has a planned headcount of 100 full time equivalent staff for financial year 2022/2023.

■ **Iran: Disinformation**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[13072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to set out how the UK plans to combat the threat posed by Iranian disinformation in the UK and internationally.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government takes the issue of disinformation very seriously and is working with partners to combat false and misleading narratives. We have long been clear about our concerns over Iran's continued destabilising activity. This includes information operations against our allies in the Middle East, Europe and North America. As the Foreign Secretary has made clear, the UK is committed to working

with the international community to ensure Iran abides by international laws and norms and is held to account for its destabilising activity.

■ **Iran: Espionage and Terrorism**

Mr Toby Perkins:

[8986]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the possibility of Iran being engaged in espionage and terrorism in the UK through its embassy and diplomats.

James Cleverly:

It is the longstanding policy of successive British Governments not to comment on intelligence matters.

The UK has over 200 sanctions designations in place against Iran including in relation to human rights, nuclear proliferation and terrorism. This includes against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety. The UK is committed to working with the international community to ensure Iran abides by international laws and norms and is held to account for its destabilising activity in the region.

■ **Jim Fitton**

Hilary Benn:

[9838]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to the Government of Iraq on the case of Jim Fitton, a retired geologist and British citizen, who has been arrested and charged with offences relating to artefacts.

Amanda Milling:

Following the verdict, consular officials in Iraq and the UK are continuing to provide consular assistance to Mr Fitton and his family. The British Ambassador in Baghdad has and will continue to, raise our interest in Mr Fitton's case with the Iraqi Government. This included raising with the authorities the UK's strong opposition to the death penalty - both the possibility of it being applied in Mr Fitton's case and in all circumstances as a matter of principle. Whilst he is detained, we will continue to register our interest in Mr Fitton's case and that the conditions of the prison are in line with international standards. Mr Fitton's safety and welfare remain of the utmost importance.

■ **Solomon Islands: China**

Alberto Costa:

[9916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of a Chinese military base on the Solomon Islands.

Amanda Milling:

As set out in the Integrated Review (March 2021), the UK is committed to and strategically focussed on the Indo-Pacific region. As a longstanding partner and friend, the UK works to support peace and prosperity for the people of Solomon Islands and across the Pacific region. Our recent deployment of a UK Emergency Medical Team demonstrates our commitment to Solomon Islands.

■ **Yasin Malik**

Sarah Owen: [\[9184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the implications for her policies of the (a) arrest, (b) imprisonment and (c) sentencing of Yasin Malik under India's Public Safety Act.

Vicky Ford:

We note that Yasin Malik was convicted and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences for a number of charges under Indian law. We expect all countries to respect and uphold their international obligations regarding the treatment of detainees and raise cases where necessary.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[9228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the (a) arrest, (b) imprisonment and (c) sentencing of Yasin Malik in India.

Vicky Ford:

We note that Yasin Malik was convicted and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences for a number of charges under Indian law. We expect all countries to respect and uphold their international obligations regarding the treatment of detainees and raise cases where necessary.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **Botulinum Toxin**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[8968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps (a) her Department and (b) the police are taking to address the impact of illegal botox substitutes on members of the public.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 6 June 2022]: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has powers to investigate and take action when breaches or suspected breaches of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 are identified. The action taken is determined on a case-by-case basis and will reflect relevant factors and evidence. Offences under the Regulations are criminal and if appropriate, the

MHRA will bring a prosecution through the criminal courts. Penalties range from a fine to a two-year prison sentence.

The MHRA works with external healthcare partners to ensure the safety of the public and the Border Force on the importation of illegal Botox substitutes. The MHRA will take action if any trends associated to the safety or efficacy of a healthcare product are identified. The information requested on police action is not held as this is a matter for the Home Office.

■ Brain Cancer: Diagnosis

Julian Knight: [\[13750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the 10-Year Cancer Plan includes proxy measures for staging data of brain cancer so that it can be included and measured in the early diagnosis target and ambition.

Julian Knight: [\[13751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the 10-Year Cancer Plan commits to providing access to a clinical nurse specialist for all brain tumour patients.

Maria Caulfield:

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

■ Drugs: Licensing

Chi Onwurah: [\[13120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that new, innovative medicines are recommended by NICE as quickly as is possible; and what assessment he has made of the difference between the average wait time for access to new licensed medicines between NHS patients and patients in other OECD nations.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 9 June 2022]: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) aims to issue draft recommendations on new medicines close to the point of licensing, with final guidance within 90 days of licensing wherever possible. In 2021/22, NICE issued guidance within 90 days of licensing for 100% of new active substances where timelines were within NICE's control. Topics outside of this timeframe were affected by external factors, such as where the pharmaceutical company requests a delay to NICE's evaluation.

In 2022/23, NICE aims to increase the flexibility and capacity of its technology appraisal programme through a more proportionate approach to assessments. From April 2023, NICE aims to expand its capacity for technology appraisals by 20% to respond to increasing numbers of new medicines.

No specific assessment of the differences in average waiting times has been made. As countries operate different health systems, direct comparisons of patient access to medicines can be challenging. The EFPIA Patients W.A.I.T. Indicator 2021 Survey compares time to availability of new medicines across different European countries and is available at the following link:

<https://efpia.eu/media/636821/efpia-patients-wait-indicator-final.pdf>

HOME OFFICE

■ Anti-social Behaviour

Emma Hardy: [\[9118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of community engagement methods in reducing anti-social behaviour.

Emma Hardy: [\[9120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to increase support for youth services aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in Kingston upon Hull.

Rachel Maclean:

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the police and local authorities with flexible tools and powers they can use to respond quickly and effectively to anti-social behaviour (ASB). The powers in the 2014 Act are local in nature, and it is for local agencies to determine whether their use is appropriate in the specific circumstances.

It is for Chief Constables and PCCs, as operational leaders and elected local representatives, to decide how best to respond to local crime priorities, but to help ensure that the police have the resources they need, we have given them the biggest funding increase in a decade and are recruiting 20,000 additional officers by March 2023, which provides extra resource to protect the public and keep us safe.

The Home Office announced in March this year that ASB would be one of the primary crime and issue types being targeted in the fourth and fifth rounds of the Safer Streets Fund. This is a total of £150m over two rounds which aims to support local areas in preventing and tackling neighbourhood crimes, ASB and violence against women and girls. As part of this, the Home Office welcomes innovative bids relating to community-based projects and early intervention.

Violence Reduction Units are delivering a range of early intervention and prevention programmes to divert people away from a life of crime, and have reached 100,000 young people in year one alone. In addition, we are providing £200m through the 10-year Youth Endowment Fund to prevent a cohort of children and young people at highest risk of involvement in serious violence from becoming involved in crime and violence, including reoffending; to reduce the numbers of children and young people

becoming perpetrators and victims of crime; and to reduce offending and re-offending in the target cohort across other crime types.

Also, the Government is investing £560 million in youth services in England over the next 3 years, including the Youth Investment Fund, to transform the Government's offer for young people and level up opportunities right across the country.

■ Asylum: Rwanda

Stella Creasy:

[\[6750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which national human rights institutions will be able to inspect the provision of services for those refugees whose applications for asylum will be covered by the joint new migration and economic development partnership with Rwanda.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 26 May 2022]: As set out in paragraph 15 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) governing the Migration and Economic Development Partnership, an independent Monitoring Committee will monitor the entire relocation process and compliance with assurances in the MoU, including the processing of asylum claims and provision of support in Rwanda. More details on this, including membership, will be set out in due course.

■ Passports: Applications

Rachael Maskell:

[\[1228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the average length a time a person should expect to wait for an application for a (a) new passport, (b) renewal of their passport and (c) a fast track passport.

Kevin Foster:

Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks to get their British passport when applying under the standard service, as more than 5 million people delayed applying due to the pandemic. This advice applies to all first-time and renewal applications from the UK. The Fast Track service is a one-week service

■ Refugees: Hotels and Rented Housing

John McNally:

[\[9037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made a comparative assessment of the cost of housing refugees in (a) hotels and (b) rented accommodation; and whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of housing more refugees in rented accommodation.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has not made a comparative assessment of the cost of housing asylum seekers in either hotels or in rented accommodation on the basis that hotel accommodation is and always has been contingency accommodation where we are

unable to procure sufficient Dispersed Accommodation to meet our statutory obligation. Whilst we are working to reduce our use of hotels, we must continue to ensure there is sufficient capacity in the system to meet our obligations.

That is why we wrote to all Local Authorities on 13 April 2022 to set out plans for Full Dispersal. This will reduce and then eliminate the use of hotels for asylum seekers by moving to a full dispersal model for asylum accommodation.

We will achieve this through three key interventions:

1. To reduce and eliminate the use of hotels for asylum seekers by moving to a full dispersal model for asylum accommodation. This will mean expanding our existing approach of using private rental sector housing to all local authority areas across England, Scotland and Wales.
2. We are committed to working with local authorities to move to a fairer distribution of asylum seekers and have launched an informal consultation with local government to inform how this model will work across England, Scotland and Wales and within regions and nations. The consultation will explore how asylum dispersal can better take account of the impact of other protection based immigration on local authorities, including resettlement and the care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
3. Providing specific funding to recognise the existing contribution of local authorities and for new dispersed accommodation. We will continue to work with local government to capture and evaluate data to understand the impact of asylum dispersal on local authorities going forward.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Trade Agreements: Somaliland

Alexander Stafford: [\[10056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she plans to take steps to negotiate a trade deal between the UK and Somaliland.

Penny Mordaunt:

For a decade the United Kingdom has been the only Western bilateral donor with a permanent diplomatic presence in Hargeisa. However, there are no plans to negotiate a free trade agreement with Somaliland. Somalia, including Somaliland, qualifies for duty free quota free access on goods imported to the United Kingdom through the United Kingdom Generalised Scheme of Preferences.

■ TRIPS Agreement

Gareth Thomas: [\[11541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the (a) outcome of the most recent discussion at the World Trade Organisation on a

comprehensive temporary waiver on the provisions of the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement and (b) implications for her policies of the associated proposal to mandate covid-19 healthcare technology transfers from nationally based pharmaceutical companies; and if she will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[8945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of (a) introducing a comprehensive temporary waiver on the provisions of the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement and (b) mandating covid-19 healthcare technology transfers from nationally based pharmaceutical companies; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK believes that there is no evidence that a waiver of intellectual property rights would help with equitable vaccine distribution and their prompt administration. Rather, it would have the extremely negative effect of dismantling the framework which allows the development of COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. Instead, we are encouraging the pharmaceutical industry to continue to form additional voluntary licensing and technology transfer partnerships. Working with commercial partners and within the existing international Intellectual Property framework is the most effective way to produce life-saving medicines at pace.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[8946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many times (a) she and (b) officials in her Department have met members of the pharmaceutical industry to discuss the TRIPS waiver proposal before the WTO; on what dates those meetings occurred; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

Department for International Trade officials have met regularly with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the TRIPS waiver proposal. With regards to members of the pharmaceutical industry, officials held meetings on 3 occasions where the current TRIPS waiver proposal text was discussed, namely 11 May, 19 May, and 26 May.

JUSTICE

■ Prison Accommodation: Construction

Ellie Reeves:

[\[11803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average cost per cell is of each new or planned prison place in 2022-23.

Victoria Atkins:

The information requested is commercially sensitive due to the on-going and future procurements planned across the programme.

Additional prison places will come online in the financial year 2022/23 with 480 places to be delivered via the rapid deployment cells project, 90 places at High Down and the ongoing increase in the number of prisoners at HMP Five Wells.

■ Prisons: Telephones

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[11653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much the Government has spent on installing in cell telephones on the prison estate in the last five years.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government has spent £36.34m on installing in cell telephony on the prison estate in the past 5 years. This technology is vital in boosting prisoners' rehabilitation prospects, as it helps them maintain family ties and access the support they need to stay away from crime on release.

In-cell telephony has also reduced the need for prisoners to share communal pin phones, which can be potential trigger points for violence, arising from prisoners queuing for public phones on the landings. Disagreements around communal phones can in turn fuel demand for illicit mobile phones.

All calls remain restricted to pre-approved numbers only, and public protection and safeguarding factors have been considered prior to the number being approved by the prison. All calls are recorded for the purpose of call monitoring, with the exception of legal calls and support lines such as the Samaritans. Phones are active during the agreed operating times specified by the prison.

■ Solicitors: Sanctions

Steve Reed:

[\[9884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to support the Solicitors Regulation Authority in ensuring compliance of solicitors' firms with the Government's sanctions regime.

James Cartlidge:

Under the framework established by the Legal Services Act 2007, the legal profession in England and Wales operates independently of the government. Regulation of legal services is independent of the professions and government.

Lawyers are required to follow strict procedures when transacting with sanctioned individuals. Those individuals are required to obtain a licence from the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation to make payments for legal services, and lawyers should carefully consider whether their advice is helping the client to comply with the sanctions or is participating or facilitating a breach of those sanctions. There are severe penalties for breaches, including fines and potential imprisonment.

Legal sector regulators are looking at what can be done to further improve the enforcement of the restrictions under the current sanction and anti-money laundering

regime. The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) has also recently consulted on increasing its internal fining powers.

Following the SRA's consultation on financial penalties, my right hon. Friend, the Deputy Prime Minister, has sought the views of the Law Society, SRA and Legal Services Board on increasing the SRA's maximum internal fine amount from £2,000 to £25,000, with the view of enhancing the SRA's enforcement powers to create a stronger deterrent to solicitor misconduct. The Department is also continuing to work closely with regulators and professional bodies to identify tools that will further assist regulators in carrying out their duties under the sanctions regime, while protecting the rule of law.

■ Special Educational Needs: Tribunals

Daisy Cooper:

[\[10019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) hearings that were due to be heard in the last twelve months have been cancelled, broken down by the age of each young person concerned.

James Cartlidge:

In the First-tier Tribunal (Special Needs and Disability) (SEND), all appeals are listed for hearing on the next available date, on receipt. If the hearing date allocated is unsuitable for whatever reason, the cancellation of the original hearing date is counted as a postponement in the SEND tribunal's case-handling system – GAPS2. If that second hearing is cancelled and the case re-listed, that is counted as another postponement in the system. Examples of the reasons why a hearing might be postponed include that:

- the date is unsuitable for one or both of the parties involved;
- a key witness is unavailable;
- the child or young person who is the subject of the appeal is unwell;
- the case isn't ready for hearing because evidence has not been produced; and
- the tribunal is unable to constitute a panel to hear the case.

The number of hearings postponed in the last 12 months (i.e. from 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2022) by age of the young person concerned is set out in the table below.

AGE OF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON*	NO. OF HEARINGS POSTPONED
0-1	9
1-2	7
2-3	3
3-4	14
4-5	96

AGE OF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON*	NO. OF HEARINGS POSTPONED
5-6	406
6-7	322
7-8	397
8-9	370
9-10	379
10-11	501
11-12	781
12-13	981
13-14	428
14-15	420
15-16	381
16-17	271
17-18	211
18-19	107
19-20	93
20-21	99
21-22	47
22-23	34
23-24	42
24-25	16
25	22

*The age range is determined by the date of birth of the child or young person subject of the appeal.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme**

Kirsty Blackman: [11695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what proportion of Homes For Ukraine matches have had the DBS check completed by the time the sponsored Ukrainian arrives in the UK.

Eddie Hughes:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN [2504](#) on 23 May 2022.

Kate Griffiths: [11874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to publish further details on how community groups and organisations will be able to sponsor refugees through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

At present, members of community groups and organisations can apply to be individual sponsors through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Leeds

Fabian Hamilton: [11563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities how many people have used the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to settle in the Leeds Local Authority Area.

Eddie Hughes:

Data on local authorities can be found here: www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Armed Forces Day**

Stuart Anderson: [13240]

To ask the Prime Minister, what steps he is taking to mark Armed Forces Day.

Boris Johnson:

I am immensely proud of our armed forces, and I thank them and their families for their service to our country. Armed Forces Day is a fantastic opportunity for the nation to show our appreciation of all those who serve and have served. Almost 300 events are registered on the Armed Forces Day website and the National Event will be taking place in Scarborough on Saturday 25 June. The Ministry of Defence is providing general grants, people, equipment, flypasts, and air displays all by way of support. The Armed Forces Day flag will also be flying aloft 10 Downing Street.

TREASURY**■ Child Benefit**

Munira Wilson: [\[11877\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in England claim child benefit for (a) their birth child or the birth child of their partner, (b) their foster child, (c) their adopted child and (d) the child of a friend or relative that they look after, whether under a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or an informal arrangement.

Lucy Frazer:

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

■ Housing: Repairs and Maintenance

Gareth Thomas: [\[11540\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) a VAT exemption for materials purchased for mandatory fire safety repairs for residential buildings and (b) making VAT recoverable on materials purchased in the last three years for mandatory fire safety repairs; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

The supply of fire safety equipment under qualifying circumstances is already eligible for VAT relief when provided alongside the construction and renovation of residential or charitable buildings. The cost of replacing cladding can also be zero rated if it is tied to the initial construction of the building and the cladding is shown to be defective.

There are no plans to extend the reliefs already available, however, the Government keeps all taxes under constant review.

■ Offshore Industry: Tax Allowances

Rachael Maskell: [\[9927\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will ringfence the tax relief to oil and gas companies for use for developing sustainable alternatives to hydrocarbon fuels.

Helen Whately:

Tax relief for companies undertaking oil and gas exploration and production in the UK and on the UK Continental Shelf is only available in relation to expenditure incurred for activity that is charged under the oil and gas ring fence corporation tax regime.

Where expenditure is not incurred for such activity, other tax reliefs may be available. These could include the super-deduction and the UK's competitive research and development tax credit regime.

■ Solar Power: VAT

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[11622\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Departments guidance on Energy-saving materials and heating equipment (VAT Notice 708/6) updated in April 2022, whether batteries used for solar panels are zero rated for VAT.

Lucy Frazer:

Battery storage supplied as part of the installation of solar panels will benefit from the VAT zero rate for the next five years. Battery storage itself has not been added to the list of qualifying materials and therefore will continue to be standard rated when installed as a standalone product.

■ Taxation

Adam Afriyie: [\[11628\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to reduce tax for working people.

Lucy Frazer:

As the Government announced at Spring Statement 2022, the basic rate of Income Tax will be reduced from 20 per cent to 19 per cent in April 2024. This will be the first cut to the basic rate in 16 years, and is over a £5 billion tax cut for workers, savers, and pensioners.

The Government is committed to doing this in a responsible and sustainable way. The cut to the basic rate of Income Tax will require continued fiscal discipline and depend on the broader economy

The Government has raised the Personal Allowance (PA) by over 40 per cent in real terms in the last decade. A typical basic rate taxpayer will still be over £600 better off in 2025-26 than they would have been if the Government had not taken this action to increase the PA above inflation since 2010-11.

The Government is aligning the Primary Threshold and Lower Profits Limit – the point at which employees and the self-employed respectively start paying Class 1 and Class 4 National Insurance contributions– with the internationally high Income Tax Personal Allowance rising to £12,570 from July 2022. This means the amount that people will be able to earn tax free will increase by £2,690 and is a tax cut worth over £330 for a typical employee in the first year.

■ UK Trade with EU

Thangam Debonnaire: [\[11728\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to speed up the time it takes for goods from the EU entering the UK to go through border checks and customs.

Lucy Frazer:

The 2025 UK Border strategy sets out the Government's vision for the UK border to be the most effective border in the world. At its core, the strategy is about making it as straightforward as possible for businesses to comply with customs requirements whilst keeping the UK safe and protecting our fiscal interests. To do that, the Government are embracing innovation and technology. This includes investing £180 million to build a UK Single Trade Window which will streamline how traders share information with the Government.

Wines: Excise Duties**Adam Afriyie:**[\[13084\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the impact of the proposed increase in excise duty on small and medium size enterprises in the wine industry.

Helen Whately:

The Government is currently considering all feedback put forward to it through the alcohol duty review consultation, which closed on 30 January. The Government will respond to the consultation in due course.

WORK AND PENSIONS**Universal Credit****Stephen Crabb:**[\[9855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in receipt of Universal Credit and subject to deductions of their Standard Allowance who were (a) assessed and (b) not assessed to have (i) limited capability for work and (ii) limited capability for work and work-related activity had (A) up to five per cent, (B) between six and 10 per cent, (C) between 11 and 15 per cent, (D) between 16 and 20 per cent, (E) between 21 and 25 per cent and (F) more than 25 per cent of their Standard Allowance deducted in the most recent month for which data is available.

David Rutley:

The information requested for Universal Credit households with limited capability for work and work-related activity with deductions is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

Deductions are made for a number of reasons including to help claimants pay back rent arrears or debt to energy companies so they are not evicted and can heat their homes, as well as to pay court fines.

Attachments:

1. [Spreadsheet \[PQ9855 Spreadsheet.xlsx\]](#)