



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 13 June 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:01 P.M., 13 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

■ **BioYorkshire: Finance**

Rachael Maskell: [\[11742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department expects to allocate funding to the BioYorkshire programme; and what the reason is for the length of time between the receipt of an application for project funding by his Department and the award of that funding.

George Freeman:

All applications for programme funding are treated as confidential.

If the application has been made through UKRI, details of how the research council's and Innovate UK's experts review and the assessment process can be found in the UKRI Principles of Assessment and Decision Making (copy attached).

As announced in the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government is currently engaged in negotiations with York and North Yorkshire on a mayoral devolution deal including how it might support the area's bioeconomy ambitions.

Attachments:

1. UKRI Principles of Assessment and Decision Making [UKRI-310321-Principles-of-Assessment-and-Decision-Making-V2.pdf]

■ **Bulb Energy: Insolvency**

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[13623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many customers Bulb Energy had (a) on 7 June 2022 and (b) before the Government entered it into the Special Administration Regime with the company in November 2021.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[13624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what loans to Bulb Energy have been serviced by payments to investing bodies under the Bulb Special Administration Regime.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[13627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the length of time Bulb Energy will remain in the Special Administration Regime.

Greg Hands:

Bulb Energy had 1.513million domestic customers as of November 2021 when it went into administration. The company now has 1.489million domestic customers.

No payments have been made to service loans to Bulb from investors during Special Administration Regime (SAR).

The Government shares the view that any SAR should be a temporary measure and should end as quickly as possible. The administrator has a statutory duty to ensure that SAR is delivered at lowest reasonably practicable cost.

■ Conditions of Employment

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[13819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to take steps to (a) maintain and (b) strengthen the rights of employees of umbrella companies.

Paul Scully:

The Government recently ran a Call for Evidence on the umbrella company market, which closed on 22 February 2022. Officials in HM Treasury and HMRC are working closely together to analyse the evidence submitted and will publish a summary of responses in due course. The Government is also continuing to work closely with business to improve compliance across the sector.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Public Opinion

Angela Rayner:

[\[11687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department spent on (a) focus groups and (b) polling services in 2021.

George Freeman:

The information required to answer this question is not held centrally. This means that any information provided would not be fully accurate and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Drax Power Station

Sir Peter Bottomley:

[\[9824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the potential maximum annual amount of CO₂ that captured in the UK (a) bioenergy with carbon capture, use and storage and (b) that technology operating at Drax power station by 2050.

Greg Hands:

Through the Biomass Strategy, which will be published later this year, the UK will establish the role of Bioenergy with Carbon Capture & Storage (BECCS) in reducing carbon emissions across the economy and set out how the technology could be deployed.

The Net Zero Strategy, outlined the UK's ambition of 5MtCO₂/year of engineered removals by 2030 and included illustrative ranges of 22-23MtCO₂/year of engineered

removals by 2035 and 75- 81MtCO₂/year by 2050. Power BECCS projects have the potential to play a role in reaching these ambitions.

The UK is currently assessing the potential for carbon capture at existing UK biomass plants, however no decision has been made on future BECCS deployment or the award of power BECCS contracts.

■ **Drax Power Station: Timber**

Sir Peter Bottomley: [\[9825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will consult Parliament on whether to extend Government funding for the burning of pellets for fresh wood at Drax beyond 2027.

Greg Hands:

There are no intentions to extend any contracts under the Renewables Obligation or Contracts for Difference schemes. In November 2021 the Government announced it would develop a business model to support bio-based power generation with carbon capture and storage. Any implementation of this would be subject to the appropriate parliamentary procedures.

■ **Electricity and Natural Gas: Standing Charges**

Jessica Morden: [\[11610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the impact of increases in gas and electricity standing charges on (a) single person households and (b) low-income households.

Greg Hands:

The standing charge is a fixed charge that suppliers pass on to their customers to cover the cost of providing a live supply. The standing charge is passed on to consumers as a flat rate per day, rather than as a percentage charge, based on how much energy they use.

The Government has announced a package of help for consumers, including a £400 grant to domestic electricity customers' bills as well as further payments targeted specifically at households on benefits, pensioner households and the disabled.

■ **Electricity: Prices**

Virginia Crosbie: [\[14676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that payments made under the Smart Export Guarantee Scheme reflect the increase in prices for electricity that have been introduced under the new price cap.

Greg Hands:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for York Outer on 28 February to Question [125141](#).

■ Energy Bills Rebate

Mike Amesbury: [\[9134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to remove the requirement to pay back the £200 payment for energy costs through the Energy Bill Support Scheme.

Greg Hands:

On the 26 May my Rt hon Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Energy Bills Support Scheme will increase to £400 from October 2022, which will now be a non-repayable grant.

■ Energy Bills Rebate: Park Homes

Jill Mortimer: [\[13858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether people who pay their energy bills indirectly via a (a) landlord and (b) park home site owner will receive all or part of the £400 energy rebate.

Greg Hands:

The Government expects landlords with a domestic electricity connection who charge 'all inclusive' rent, where tenants' energy costs are included in their rental charges, to ensure that the £400 energy bill reduction is passed on to tenants.

The Government is aware that not all households have their electricity provided through a domestic electricity supply contract, and this includes park home residents. Households without a domestic electricity supply contract are not eligible for the scheme and the Government is exploring options for other ways in which they might receive similar support. Responses to the Technical Energy Bills Support Scheme consultation are being analysed and the Government response will be published later in the summer.

■ Energy Charter Treaty: Carbon Emissions

Ruth Cadbury: [\[14505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment has she made of the adequacy of the energy charter treaty in relation to the UK's net zero policy; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Energy Charter Treaty already calls on Contracting Parties to minimise the environmental impacts of energy operations.

Contracting Parties to the Energy Charter Treaty are negotiating the modernisation of the Treaty to ensure it is aligned with common climate objectives. The Government supports the process to modernise the Treaty in a way that advances the global energy transition, such as the right for States to regulate to reach emissions reduction targets and ensuring a stronger focus on climate security.

■ Energy Company Obligation

Ben Lake: [\[14592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has taken steps to ensure that households that are reliant on (a) oil heating and (b) solid fuel qualify for financial support under the Energy Company Obligation: Help to Heat scheme.

Greg Hands:

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) does not provide direct financial support. Homes currently reliant on oil and solid fuel heating in off gas-grid areas can benefit from insulation or certain types of low carbon heating measures, such as heat pumps.

In order to qualify, these households must be on relevant means-tested benefits or identified by their local authority or energy supplier as vulnerable. For owner occupier households, the homes must also be energy efficiency Band D-G. For the private rented sector and social housing, the homes must be energy efficiency Band E-G.

Ben Lake: [\[14593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of financial support offered under the Energy Company Obligation: Help to Heat programme to (a) low-income and (b) rural households in Wales.

Greg Hands:

The Government has committed to expanding the Energy Company Obligation from £640 million to £1 billion a year over four years from 2022, continuing the focus on low-income households. Across England, Scotland and Wales, this will deliver installations of an estimated 800,000 measures, in 450,000 homes, of which 360,000 homes will be upgraded to Energy Performance Certificate Band C.

There are specific incentives for the upgrading of off gas-grid rural homes in Wales and Scotland.

■ Energy Entrepreneurs Fund

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[11797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what resources were allocated under Round 8A of the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund, by gender of the recipients.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[11798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications were made to Round 8A of the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund, by gender of the applicants.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[11799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of applicants for funding under Round 8A of the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund were successful, by gender.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[11800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what (a) amount and (b) proportion of funding allocated under Round 8A of the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund went to (i) men and (ii) women.

Greg Hands:

A total of 232 applications were received for Round 8A of the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund: 187 applications were submitted by males, 35 applications were submitted by females, and 10 applications were not declared as either male or female.

The number of grants won by female applicants is 10, and the number of grants won by male applicants is 48. Total grant won by female applicants is £5,047,972.43; with an average grant of £504,797. Total grant won by male applicants is £24,896,036.38; with an average £518,667.

■ Energy: Disability

Debbie Abrahams: [\[9015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that funding through Industry Initiatives to provide a safeguard for disabled people with high energy costs as a result of their impairments does not place a higher administrative burden on disabled people than the Warm Home Discount.

Greg Hands:

Industry Initiatives provide valuable support to households in, or at risk of, fuel poverty through a range of measures, including energy advice, financial assistance, and energy efficiency improvements.

To date, energy suppliers have only been required to report on the overall spending on Industry Initiatives measures to Ofgem. From the 2022/23 scheme year, suppliers will be required to report on the estimated value and proportion of Industry Initiatives spending on fuel poor households where someone has a disability or significant health problems.

■ Energy: Grants

Charlotte Nichols: [\[11889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to exempt secondary residences from eligibility for the £400 energy payment grants; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The £400 grant will be delivered to households via energy suppliers through electricity bills over six months from October.

The Government held a technical consultation on the Energy Bills Support Scheme from 11 April to 23 May. The responses to this consultation are being analysed and a response will be published later in the summer.

Energy: National Policy Statements**Stephen Hammond:**[\[8978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to review the potential merits of creating a single National Policy Statement for Energy.

Greg Hands:

A review of the energy National Policy Statements is underway and the draft documents and their structure have been subject to consultation and scrutiny by Parliament. In the British Energy Security Strategy the Government committed to improve the energy planning system, including by strengthening the energy National Policy Statements. This is being taken forward as a matter of urgency and the Government will publish revised energy National Policy Statements in due course.

Environment Protection: Taxation**Adam Afriyie:**[\[11627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to remove green levies for the short term to help consumers with energy bills.

Greg Hands:

Environmental and social policy costs currently represent 8% of the average dual fuel bill, however, they have actually saved consumers money on their energy bills overall over the past 10 years.

The Government's investments in renewables and energy efficiency have led to a 26% fall in UK demand for natural gas since 2010, helping to reduce our exposure to global price volatility.

Furthermore, the Government has announced a package of support measures, totalling over £37 billion this year, including a £400 grant to households to help with their energy bills when it will be needed most.

Fringe Benefits: Fuels**Daisy Cooper:**[\[10020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a scheme to allow companies to offer employees fuel bank vouchers, as a trivial benefit for tax purposes.

Greg Hands:

The Government is not currently considering introducing a scheme to allow companies to offer employees fuel bank vouchers.

The Government understands the pressures households are facing with increased cost of living caused by global energy prices and has therefore announced a cost of living package worth a total of £37bn this year in support to households.

Fuel Oil: Prices**Cat Smith:**[\[11733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will introduce a price cap on heating oil.

Greg Hands:

The Government has carefully considered the introduction of a price cap to help heating oil customers with high fuel prices. However, the Government's analysis indicates that a cap would not be in the long-term interests of consumers.

The existing gas and electricity price cap was designed to protect consumers on default tariffs from the loyalty penalty, which the Competitions and Markets Authority warned was causing customers to be overcharged. The structure of the heating oil market is different and imposing a price cap below wholesale costs would drive companies out of the market, reducing competition and possibly result in supply shortages.

Tim Farron:[\[14459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government is planning to introduce a cap on the price per litre of heating oil for domestic heating.

Greg Hands:

The Government has carefully considered the introduction of a price cap to help heating oil customers with high fuel prices. However, government analysis indicates that a cap would not be in the long-term interests of consumers.

The existing gas and electricity price cap was designed to protect consumers on default tariffs from the loyalty penalty, which the Competitions and Markets Authority warned was causing customers to be overcharged. The structure of the heating oil market is different and imposing a price cap below wholesale costs would drive companies out of the market, reducing competition and possibly result in supply shortages.

Fuel Oil: Rural Areas**Tim Farron:**[\[14458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to support people in rural areas who use heating oil as their primary heating method with the cost of living.

Greg Hands:

The Government understands that fuel prices are an important component of UK household and business expenditures and is sympathetic to the impact of domestic fuel costs on UK consumers.

The Government recently announced a £15 billion package to support households with the cost of living, in addition to the over £22 billion that had already been committed.

Fuels: Excise Duties**Sarah Olney:**[\[11795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that petrol wholesalers and/or retailers pass on the 5p reduction to fuel duty to consumers.

Greg Hands:

Drivers should be getting a fair deal for fuel across the UK. Healthy competition between forecourts is key to achieving this, with competition working to keep pressure on prices. The Government has asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to conduct an urgent review of the fuel market, as well as a longer-term market study under the Enterprise Act 2002, to explore whether the retail fuel market has adversely affected consumer interests. As part of this, the Government has asked for the CMA's advice on the extent to which competition has resulted in the fuel duty cut being passed on to consumers and the reasons for local variations in the price of road fuel.

Virginia Crosbie:[\[14674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) ensure the five pence reduction in fuel duty announced in the Spring Statement is passed on to consumers and (b) monitor fuel prices at service stations.

Paul Scully:

Drivers should be getting a fair deal for fuel across the UK. Healthy competition between forecourts is key to achieving this, with competition working to keep pressure on prices. The Government has asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to conduct an urgent review of the fuel market, as well as a longer-term market study under the Enterprise Act 2002, to explore whether the retail fuel market has adversely affected consumer interests. As part of this, the Government has asked for the CMA's advice on the extent to which competition has resulted in the fuel duty cut being passed on to consumers and the reasons for local variations in the price of road fuel.

Green Deal Scheme**Peter Grant:**[\[13758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Green Deal cases have received a decision since his Department received the

preliminary outcome of a lead appeal earlier in 2022 which allowed his Department to re-commence issue of intention and final sanction notices.

Greg Hands:

Under the Green Deal Framework Regulations, where eligible complaints are referred to the Secretary of State for consideration, he is required to first issue an intention notice before a sanction is imposed. Since re-starting this process, the Department has issued 15 intention notices and 14 final decisions in respect of complaints about mis-selling of Green Deal Plans.

■ **Heat Pumps**

Alan Brown:

[\[9043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what accreditation processes are in place for contractors installing heatpumps under the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive scheme.

Greg Hands:

The Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (DRHI) scheme closed to new applications on 31 March 2022. In order to be eligible under that scheme, installations needed to be completed by installers that were certified by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS).

■ **Heat Pumps: Imports**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[9188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the proportion of air source heat pumps sold in the UK in the last year that were imported to the UK from abroad.

Greg Hands:

In 2020, the Government published the Heat Pump Manufacturing Supply Chain Research Project, which estimated that around 70 per cent of all heat pumps sold in the UK were imported from abroad.

The Government want the UK's clean heat revolution to create tens of thousands of new jobs and do not want to make the same mistakes of the Labour Party where manufacturing was decimated and, 1.7 million jobs were lost.

■ **Heat Pumps: Sales**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[9187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) air source and (b) ground source heat pumps sold in the UK in 2021.

Greg Hands:

Industry estimates that over 55,000 hydronic heat pumps were sold in the UK in 2021. This included around 50,000 air source heat pumps and 5,000 ground source heat pumps.

Heat Pumps: Standards**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[9186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Electrification of Heat Demonstration project, what is the (a) mean average, (b) lower quartile and (c) upper quartile coefficient of performance for air source heat pumps.

Greg Hands:

Interim heat pump performance from the Electrification of Heat Demonstration project is currently being reviewed and quality assured. Project findings, including heat pump performance, will be released in due course following the completion of quality assurance processes.

Hydrogen**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[9198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to encourage cooperation between the Department for Transport and relevant stakeholders on the delivery of the increased hydrogen production ambition set out in the British energy security strategy published in April 2022.

Greg Hands:

The Department continues to work with the Department for Transport and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to deliver on the production ambition set out in the British Energy Security Strategy. This includes working through the Regulators Forum to identify, prioritise and implement any changes to the existing regulatory frameworks to support the growth of a hydrogen economy.

Hydrogen: Transport**Alan Brown:**[\[9041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential role of hydrogen transport in delivering the increased hydrogen production target set out in the British energy security strategy.

Greg Hands:

Hydrogen will be fundamental to achieving the full decarbonisation of UK transport. The UK has increased its ambition for up to 10GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. Government analysis, set out in the UK Hydrogen Strategy, shows that transport will be a leading early market for low carbon hydrogen, with up to 6TWh demand in 2030 and up to 45TWh demand in 2035. The Government is exploring all options for low carbon hydrogen use across road freight,

buses, trains, maritime and aviation to support the development of a thriving UK hydrogen sector – including through the recently announced £200m Zero Emission Road Freight Demonstrator programme and £206m UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE).

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[9196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what analysis his Department has conducted of the role hydrogen transport can play in delivering the increased hydrogen production ambition set out in the British energy security strategy published in April 2022.

Greg Hands:

Hydrogen will be fundamental to achieving the full decarbonisation of UK transport. The UK has increased its ambition for up to 10GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. Government analysis, set out in the UK Hydrogen Strategy, shows that transport will be a leading early market for low carbon hydrogen, with up to 6TWh demand in 2030 and up to 45TWh demand in 2035. The Government is exploring all options for low carbon hydrogen use across road freight, buses, trains, maritime and aviation to support the development of a thriving UK hydrogen sector – including through the recently announced £200m Zero Emission Road Freight Demonstrator programme and £206m UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE).

■ Innovation

Chi Onwurah:

[\[14484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to de-risk innovative, high tech spinouts from universities for investors.

George Freeman:

Improving our ability to commercialise ideas from our world-leading research base is critical to becoming an Innovation Nation. That is why we committed in the Innovation Strategy to enhance the broad system of support for commercialisation, and why we provide financial support to a significant proportion of high-tech spinouts. This includes UKRI funding to de-risk specific R&D projects, and British Business Bank support for investors providing external capital. In the hon. Member's own constituency, the Northern Accelerator, a partnership of five universities supported by £8.5 million from UKRI, is de-risking spinouts by establishing a seed investment fund.

■ Insolvency Service: Bristol

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[11724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the planned closure of the Insolvency Service Office in Bristol, where will interviews for individuals in that city requiring those services be carried out following the closure of that office.

Paul Scully:

Following the closure of the Bristol Office in September 2024, interviews will be held in either a local interview facility or at one of the Insolvency Service 11 Regional Centres. Alternatively, interviews will be conducted remotely using telephone and online channels, this is already established practice where it works for the individual and the Service.

Thangam Debbonaire:[\[11725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the (a) Bristol Chamber of Commerce and (b) Federation of Small Businesses were consulted on the decision to close the Insolvency Service office in Bristol.

Paul Scully:

The Insolvency Service engaged with personal and business debt advice organisations over proposals to restructure its estate for improved efficiencies.

Local Enterprise Partnerships: Finance**Chi Onwurah:**[\[13704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of the 50 per cent reduction in funding for business support teams in Local Enterprise Partnerships on (a) start-ups and (b) small and medium-sized enterprises.

Paul Scully:

The Government provided additional funding to Growth Hubs over the last two years to support businesses through EU Exit Transition and the COVID-19 Pandemic. The funding settlement for 2022/23 represents a return to a level closer to that of previous years.

The core offer of Growth Hub functions and services has the flexibility for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to choose how they deliver services, including any enhancements according to local business needs.

Local Government: Carbon Emissions**Kim Johnson:**[\[11907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what additional funding his Department is making available to local authorities to help enable them to meet decarbonisation targets.

Greg Hands:

The National Audit Office recently identified £1.2 billion in grant funding made available to Local Government in 2020-2021 targeted on specific net zero actions, such as building retrofit. These figures do not include the extensive funding that enable local authorities to incorporate net zero action into their wider delivery, such as the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund, where projects need to be aligned to net zero goals.

In addition, the Local Government Finance Settlement makes available £54.1 billion in 2022/23 for local government in England. The majority of this funding is not ringfenced so local authorities decide spending priorities, including on decarbonisation.

■ Measurement

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[13198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to publish a cost-benefit analysis of the reintroduction of imperial measurements.

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[13199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with retail business owners on plans to reintroduce imperial measurements.

Paul Scully:

The Government's commitment to review the current law on units of measurement was first announced in September 2021, as part of our plans to capitalise on the benefits of Brexit.

The purpose of the review is to identify how we can give more choice to businesses and consumers over the units of measurement they use for trade, while ensuring that measurement information remains accurate.

As part of this review, we are carrying out an early-stage consultation to gather views and to ensure that we have the best evidence available to make changes. We encourage retail business owners to share their views in response to the consultation.

An assessment of any economic impact will be carried out in due course, as part of the normal policy-making process.

■ Missguided: Insolvency

John McNally: [\[11715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to help support (a) suppliers and (b) small businesses affected by the clothing retailer Missguided's fall into administration.

John McNally: [\[11716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that (a) suppliers and (b) employees are not adversely affected financially by the clothing retailer Missguided's fall into administration.

Paul Scully:

On 1st June 2022 it was announced that Missguided had been bought out of administration by the Frasers Group. The company will be supervised by the administrators for a transition period of eight weeks, after which the new owners will

take over responsibility for running the business. The Government has no role in the strategic direction or management of private retail companies.

No announcement has yet been made regarding redundancies. However, we recognise that this will be a worrying time for Missguided's employees and their families and the Government stands ready to support those who may be affected. As a consequence of Missguided's administration, any employees who have been made redundant can apply to the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service to claim for redundancy, unpaid wages, holiday pay and loss of notice pay. To qualify for a redundancy payment, employees must have at least two years' continuous employment with their former employer. Employees who do not have two years' continuous employment can still claim for wages, holidays and loss of notice. Further information regarding how to submit a claim will be provided by the joint administrators.

Catherine West: [\[11780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with suppliers of the fashion brand Missguided on the potential impact of that company going into administration on employment and on UK consumers.

Catherine West: [\[11781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the clothing retailer Missguided falling into administration, what assessment he has made of the potential impact on job security for UK factory workers who supply that company.

Catherine West: [\[11782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the clothing retailer Missguided falling into administration, what steps he is taking to support affected UK (a) suppliers and (b) factory workers.

Catherine West: [\[11783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with fashion brand Missguided on whether UK (a) suppliers and (b) factories will receive payment for products ordered prior to it going into administration.

Paul Scully:

On 1st June 2022 it was announced that Missguided had been bought by the Frasers Group. The company will be supervised by the administrators for a transition period of eight weeks, after which the new owners will take over responsibility for running the business. The Government has no role in the strategic direction or management of private retail companies.

No announcement has yet been made regarding redundancies. However, we recognise that this will be a worrying time for Missguided's employees and their families and the Government stands ready to support those who may be affected. As a consequence of Missguided's administration, any employees who have been made

redundant can apply to the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service to claim for redundancy, unpaid wages, holiday pay and loss of notice pay. To qualify for a redundancy payment, employees must have at least two years' continuous employment with their former employer. Employees who do not have two years' continuous employment can still claim for wages, holidays and loss of notice. Further information regarding how to submit a claim will be provided by the joint administrators.

■ **Motor Neurone Disease: Research**

Peter Aldous:

[\[11667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to reduce potential bureaucratic barriers for scientists wishing to access the £50 million funding for motor neurone disease research announced in November 2021.

George Freeman:

Funding for Motor Neurone Disease (MND) research is available now through applications to the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The NIHR and UKRI are undertaking new activities to support the MND research community in effectively accessing funding. This includes a new £4.25 million MND partnership, which the government is delivering alongside charity partners, to pool expertise and resources across the research community to coordinate access to the committed funding.

■ **Nuclear Fuels: Russia**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[13625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the energy security implications of the potential withdrawal of VVR fuel by Russia from reactors reliant on that fuel for their operation.

Lee Rowley:

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia has made it important to reduce international dependencies on Russian energy supplies, to support global energy security and facilitate the transition to low-carbon energy.

Whilst the UK is not dependent on Russia for nuclear fuel, we recognise a number of our international partners are. Supply of fuel is a commercial matter for reactor operators and relevant countries. However, the Government recognises the importance of ensuring there is a resilient and diversified global supply of nuclear fuel and is committed to working closely with industry and fuel suppliers to achieve this.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[13626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is providing support to countries seeking to diversify their reactor fuel requirements from dependence on fuel supplied by Russian suppliers.

Lee Rowley:

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia has made it important to reduce international dependencies on Russian energy supplies, to support global energy security and facilitate the transition to low-carbon energy.

Whilst the UK is not dependent on Russia for nuclear fuel, we recognise a number of our international partners are. Supply of fuel is a commercial matter for reactor operators and relevant countries. However, the Government recognises the importance of ensuring there is a resilient and diversified global supply of nuclear fuel and is committed to working closely with industry and fuel suppliers to achieve this.

■ Nuclear Reactors**Adam Afriyie:**[\[11626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the viability of modular nuclear reactors.

Greg Hands:

The Government's £385m Advanced Nuclear Fund includes funding for an Advanced Modular Reactor Research, Development & Demonstration Programme which aims to enable a High Temperature Gas Reactor (HTGR) demonstration by the early 2030s to understand the potential of the technology. The Government's decision to pursue HTGR technology was informed by publicly available reports and a [technical assessment of advanced modular reactors](#).

The Government has also announced £210m of funding to support development of the Rolls-Royce Small Modular Reactor design. This has been matched by private investment. The work will further develop the design and enable it to undergo the first two of three stages of regulatory assessment.

■ Recovery Loan Scheme**Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[11824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the criteria are for the Covid Recovery Loan Scheme.

Tonia Antoniazzi:[\[11825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government takes to help explain why a company may have been unsuccessful in a bid for a Covid Recovery Loan.

Tonia Antoniazzi:[\[11827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason the Covid Recovery Loan companies are only accessible through a broker.

Paul Scully:

The Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS) is delivered by the British Business Bank (BBB) through a network of accredited lenders. The scheme is open to small and medium sized businesses that:

- Have a turnover not exceeding £45 million per annum
- Have been impacted by Covid-19
- Are carrying out trading activity in the UK
- Would be viable if not for the pandemic
- Are not in collective insolvency proceedings

Further information on who is eligible for the scheme can be found on the BBB's website: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/recovery-loan-scheme/for-businesses/>.

Decision-making on whether a company is eligible for RLS and whether it is suitable for them is fully delegated to the accredited lenders. Prospective borrowers do not need to use a broker to access the scheme and are able to apply to lenders directly, subject to each lender's internal processes. Where a company has applied for an RLS facility and been unsuccessful, the lender is responsible for explaining why the company's application was declined.

Tonia Antoniazzi:**[11826]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish data for the Covid Loan Recovery scheme on all companies that been successful.

Paul Scully:

The British Business Bank (BBB) publishes data on loans offered under the Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS). The latest data was published in October 2021 and is available on the BBB's website: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/press-release/recovery-loan-scheme-offers-over-1bn-to-smaller-businesses/>.

Some information about individual loans accessed through RLS are made available on the European Commission State Aid Transparency Database and the UK Subsidy Transparency Database, where required to ensure compliance with EU and international law. Where this does not apply, the Department does not currently plan to publish information about individual loan recipients.

■ Recovery Loan Scheme: Swansea**Tonia Antoniazzi:****[11821]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Covid Recovery Loans have been awarded in Swansea since 1 January 2022.

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[11822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications for Covid Recovery Loans have been made in Swansea since 1 January 2022.

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[11823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Covid Recovery Loans have been refused relating to Swansea since 1 January 2022.

Paul Scully:

The Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS) is delivered by the British Business Bank (BBB) through commercial lenders. The most recent data published on RLS is available at the following link: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/press-release/recovery-loan-scheme-offers-over-1bn-to-smaller-businesses/>. The BBB does not capture application data on RLS. Lenders are only required to notify the BBB of RLS facilities that have been offered and drawn.

The BBB intends to publish updated data on usage of the scheme in due course.

■ Streaming: Billing**Mohammad Yasin:** [\[11796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of taking steps to ensure that streaming services that allow users to subscribe on devices also allow subscribers to cancel on those same devices.

Paul Scully:

On 20 April 2022, the Government published its response to the consultation 'Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy – Driving growth and delivering competitive markets that work for consumers'. The response reaffirmed our commitment to boosting consumer rights and preventing scams and rip-offs, including proposals to make subscriptions easier to exit. The Government will legislate to implement the reforms when Parliamentary time is available.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Disability**Mike Amesbury:** [\[9135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will amend the changes to the eligibility criteria for the Warm Home Discount to retain support for disabled people's higher energy usage needs.

Greg Hands:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to the Hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford on 28 April 2022 to Question [155833](#).

My Rt hon Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has also announced a one-off £150 payment for people on disability benefits this year, alongside other cost of living support measures.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Aviation: Vetting

Louise Haigh:

[\[14543\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many priority passes for National Security Vetting for prospective employees have been issued to (a) airports and (b) airlines.

Michael Ellis:

United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV) does not issue priority passes to prospective employees. However, I can advise that since 12 April 2022 arrangements have been made to expedite all National Security Vetting cases for the aviation industry, with dedicated resources allocated, in response to operational challenges currently impacting the aviation sector.

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

■ Blood: Contamination

Ian Lavery:

[\[13136\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Infected Blood Inquiry on (a) ongoing funding for the support scheme payments and (b) financial settlements recommended in Sir Robert Francis' report.

Michael Ellis:

The Government has committed to providing support for those infected and affected. Ex-gratia support has been provided to those affected by this issue since 1988. No policy discussions have taken place with the statutory Inquiry, that is independent.

As the responsible Minister for the Infected Blood Inquiry, I announced earlier this week the publication of the study by Sir Robert Francis QC into a framework of compensation for people directly affected by infected blood. Sir Robert will give evidence about his work to the Infected Blood Inquiry on 11th and 12th July. The government is considering Sir Robert's recommendations.

■ Civil Servants: Dyslexia

Jessica Morden:

[\[14456\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has had recent discussions with the (a) British Dyslexia Association and (b) other relevant organisations on steps the Government can take to make all civil service departments dyslexia-friendly workplaces.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

As set out in the Declaration on Government Reform and the recent Civil Service Diversity Strategy, the civil service is committed to setting a new standard for inclusive workplaces. The Cabinet Office values the importance of ensuring our workplaces are inclusive for colleagues with dyslexia and we engage with relevant organisations where appropriate. Across the civil service we provide support via a range of individualised workplace adjustments to remove workplace barriers to enable dyslexic colleagues to thrive at work. Our Civil Service Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Network also supports improving the working environment for Civil Servants impacted by dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia across civil service departments.

■ Civil Servants: North East**Chi Onwurah:**[\[13708\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the proposed reduction of civil servants on employment in the North East.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Prime Minister has told Secretaries of State and Permanent Secretaries to work together on producing a plan for returning the Civil Service workforce numbers to 2016 levels over the next three years. This work will be overseen by the Efficiency and Value for Money Cabinet Committee.

Places for Growth is contributing towards the Declaration on Government Reform and the Levelling Up priority by increasing the geographic spread of Civil Servants across the UK, increasing opportunities for people from a wider range of places, including establishing the Darlington Economic Campus where more than 110 HM Treasury staff are now in post. As the Levelling Up White Paper set out, departments have committed to moving more than 15,000 Civil Service roles out of Greater London by 2025, and 22,000 by 2030.

Secretaries of State will lead the drive for reductions within their departments and the Civil Service organisations for which they have responsibility. Planning is underway, with departments considering opportunities and the potential impacts that need to be mitigated. As plans are still in development, no decisions have yet been made.

■ Civil Service: Recruitment**Catherine West:**[\[11776\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what opportunities the Government plans to make available for university graduates to join the civil service in the context of the civil service fast stream programme not running in 2023.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Fast Stream places for this Autumn 2022 will be honoured and our direct entry and internship schemes will continue to bring new and diverse talent to the Civil Service. Whilst we pause the Fast stream for the 2023 intake, we will take the opportunity to

further improve the Fast Stream offer. This reform will ensure that when the scheme reopens, it is focused on driving up specialist skills in the Civil Service, as well as improving the regional representation of the Fast Stream.

■ Investigation into Alleged Gatherings on Government Premises during Covid Restrictions

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[13645\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2022 to Question 9843 on Investigation into Alleged Gatherings on Government Premises, on what date and at what time (a) the Rt Hon. Member for North East Cambridgeshire and (b) staff answerable to him in his role as Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, were granted access to review the Sue Gray report entitled Findings of second permanent secretary's investigation into alleged gatherings on government premises during covid restrictions.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the hon. Member to my response to [PQ 9843](#) on 7 June.

■ Suicide: Travellers

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[13052\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) women and (b) men have taken their own lives in the latest year-end statistics who were from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ethnic group.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[13053\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) women and (b) men have taken their own lives in the latest year-end statistics who were in immigration removal centres.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[13054\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) women and (b) men have taken their own lives in the latest year-end statistics who were LGBTQ+.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[13055\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) women and (b) men have taken their own lives in the latest year-end statistics who had been experiencing gambling related harms.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[13056\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) women and (b) men have taken their own lives in the latest year-end statistics who had been homeless.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[13057\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) women and (b) men have taken their own lives in the latest year-end statistics who had sought help for (i) substance or (ii) alcohol use.

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 6 June is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_Response_to_PQ13052-13057 (1).pdf]

■ UK Trade with EU: Devon

Layla Moran: [\[14600\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, in the county of Devon, what the total value of goods exports to the EU was in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021.

Layla Moran: [\[14601\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total value of service sector exports to the EU was in the county of Devon in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021.

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 8 June is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_Response_to_PQ14600 and 14601 (1).pdf]

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Refugees**

Jessica Morden: [\[13686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the daily cost is of housing those who have arrived in the UK under the (a) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy Scheme and (b) Afghan Resettlement Scheme in bridging hotels; and what steps the Government is taking to provide that group of people with secure long-term accommodation as quickly as possible.

Leo Docherty:

The total cost currently incurred by the Home Office in procuring hotel accommodation for both resettled persons from Afghanistan and other groups housed in hotels amounts to £4.7 million per day.

We continue to work across government with local authorities to source appropriate long-term accommodation as quickly as possible. As of the 7 June, 4,829 ARAP individuals have been settled into permanent accommodation.

■ Ajax Vehicles: Testing

John Healey: [\[13635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Written Statement of 19 May 2022, HCWS42, on Ajax Update, how many forces personnel are involved in the trials for the Ajax vehicles at Millbrook.

John Healey: [\[13636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Written Statement of 19 May 2022, HCWS42, on Ajax Update, what his planned timetable is for the completion of the assessment of data on hearing anomalies in forces personnel taking part in the Ajax trials at Millbrook.

John Healey: [\[13637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Written Statement of 19 May 2022, HCWS42, on Ajax Update, when trials for the Ajax vehicles, which resumed on 12 May 2022, were paused.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave to Question 8958 on 10 June 2022.

Attachments:

1. Ajax Vehicles Testing [8958 - Ajax Vehicles Testing.docx]

■ Antitank Missiles: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[14441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether recent contracts have been signed for the purchase of new Next-generation Light Anti-tank Weapon stocks.

Jeremy Quin:

For Operational Security reasons, I cannot comment on contracts awarded for Next Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapons (NLAW). However, I can assure the right hon Gentleman that we monitor stock availability and act, where required, to maintain appropriate stock levels.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[14443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to introduce a new variant of Next-generation Light Anti-tank Weapon.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence will ensure that our forces retain a lightweight shoulder launched weapon capable of engaging and defeating adversary main battle tanks.

The introduction of a new variant of the Next Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapon is dependent upon ongoing industry research and development.

We are unable to comment on industry's developmental pathways due to commercial sensitivities.

■ Armed Forces: Bullying

Stephanie Peacock: [\[14575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many formal investigations relating to allegations of initiation ceremonies in the Armed Forces took place in the last year.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[14576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many allegations concerning initiation ceremonies have been investigated by Service Police in the last year, due to an alleged crime being committed.

Leo Docherty:

Initiation ceremonies are prohibited within Defence and are not tolerated. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to the welfare of its people and anyone who finds themselves a victim of any form of assault or harassment can access a range of support. This includes from the Service Police, from welfare officers, the chain of command, and pastoral support via the chaplaincy. Assisting Officers are also available to support people where cases are being investigated. In addition, we have an independent bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline run by trained professionals and local Diversity and Inclusion Advisers.

Independent support is also available via the charitable sector. For example, SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity) provides help to all Service personnel and veterans with mental or emotional health concerns. SSAFA can signpost individuals to specific organisations for further targeted support. In addition, the MOD works with The Samaritans and other charities to support Serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

In the Royal Air Force (RAF), between 1 June 2021 and 31 May 2022, there has been one allegation of an initiation ceremony; that allegation has been investigated by the RAF Police.

The Royal Navy are unable to provide the requested information as they do not centrally record the conduct of formal investigations, and nor they use 'initiation ceremonies' as a category for investigations.

It will take time for the Army to collate the requested information and I will write to the hon. Member with an answer in due course.

■ Armed Forces: Families

Simon Baynes: [\[900436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Armed Forces Families Strategy.

Leo Docherty:

The Government recognises the critical role that families play in support of Service personnel. The new 10-year Strategy provides a framework for the Nations of the UK,

service providers, and other sectors to improve outcomes for families, and strengthen operational effectiveness.

Progress is assessed quarterly against an Action Plan, published on GOV.UK. Formal reports are provided to the Defence Secretary biannually and updates are included in the Covenant Annual Report, providing an opportunity for external scrutiny.

■ **Armed Forces: Pay**

John Healey: [\[13049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has received the Armed Forces Pay Review Body's recommendation for Forces Pay for 2022-23.

John Healey: [\[13050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the Armed Forces Pay Review Body's recommendation on Forces pay for 2022-23.

Jeremy Quin:

The Secretary of State for Defence has not yet received the Armed Forces Pay Review Body's recommendations. When they are received, the Government intends to respond and publish an announcement as soon as practicable.

■ **Armed Forces: Recruitment**

Alberto Costa: [\[13164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to improve the recruitment process for people who wish to join the armed forces.

Leo Docherty:

The single Services continue to deliver improvements to recruiting practices to ensure they recruit sufficient numbers of personnel to meet the Defence need, and to make the candidate experience as efficient as possible. These improvements include the increased use of virtual application and selection techniques, balanced with opportunities for face-to-face recruiting events. This blended approach ensures the opportunities afforded by a career in the Armed Forces are accessible by people from as diverse a set of backgrounds as possible.

Concurrently, work is ongoing to enable, from April 2025, the Armed Forces Recruiting Programme to deliver a world class tri-Service recruiting experience that places the candidate at the heart of the future operation. It will inspire, motivate and develop candidates whilst meeting the needs of the single Services and wider Defence.

■ **Armed Forces: Sexual Harassment**

Christine Jardine: [\[900440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to tackle sexual harassment in the Armed Forces.

Leo Docherty:

Defence has a Zero Tolerance Policy for unacceptable behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual offences. Any incidents will be investigated, and appropriate action taken. Anyone in the Armed Forces convicted of a sexual offence will be discharged. We continue to build more independence from the Chain of Command into the Service Complaints System around sexual service complaints, and we are establishing the Defence Serious Crime Unit.

■ Artillery: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[14442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether contracts have been signed by his Department for new multiple-launch rocket systems stocks.

Jeremy Quin:

For Operational Security reasons, I cannot comment on contracts awarded for new multiple-launch rocket systems stocks. However, I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that we monitor stock availability and act, where required, to maintain appropriate stock levels.

■ JBS: Contracts**Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:**[\[11569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in the context of allegations of environmental violations by JBS SA, including the systematic destruction of the Amazon rainforest and the systematic corruption and human rights abuses, if he will take steps to prevent that company and its UK subsidiaries from tendering for his Department's contracts to supply meat and other foodstuff for the British Armed Forces, including ration packs.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:[\[11570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in the context of the Government's commitment to the COP26 pledge on environment protection and allegations against JBS SA relating to the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest and human rights abuses, if he will take steps to require companies seeking contracts to supply meat and other foodstuff for British troops' ration packs to source their produce from reputable suppliers, excluding JBS SA and its UK subsidiaries.

Jeremy Quin:

I have asked MOD officials to look into this matter and will write to the hon. Gentleman in due course, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

■ Members: Correspondence**John Healey:**[\[14417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2022 to Question 46 on National Cyber Force: Samlesbury, when his Department plans to

respond to the correspondence of 29 April 2022 from the Rt hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne on the headquarters of the National Cyber Force.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Defence will respond to the right hon. Member's correspondence in due course.

■ **Military Aid: Coronavirus**

John Healey:

[\[13633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Military Aid to Civil Authority tasks relating to covid-19 have been completed since January 2020, by region; and how many forces personnel were involved in those tasks.

James Heappey:

Since January 2020, 466 Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) tasks relating to COVID-19 have been completed across the following command regions:

- Northern Ireland - 17
- Scotland - 44
- Wales - 42
- London - 120
- North East - 23
- North West - 43
- West Midlands - 26
- East - 39
- South East - 42
- South West - 22
- Multiple regions - 48

Approximately 34,000 Armed Forces personnel were involved in those tasks.

■ **Ukraine: Armed Conflict**

Mrs Sheryll Murray:

[\[900434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of Ukrainian resistance to Russian aggression.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Ukrainian forces have outperformed their Russian opponents using conventional military defensive tactics, the resourceful employment of special forces, and guerrilla attacks. They have stubbornly held ground, carried out counter-attacks to keep Russian forces off-balance, and prevented repeated Russian attempts to breakthrough or encircle their forces. Russia is now using massed artillery to wear

down Ukrainian defences. Ukraine has proved to be nimble and resilient against this approach, limiting Russian gains.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[900437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to help protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Defence continues to play a leading role in helping Ukraine defend its territorial integrity, working with Allies and partners to support Ukraine's right to be a sovereign, independent and democratic nation.

We are providing lethal and non-lethal military aid to meet Ukrainian Armed Forces' requests for assistance and coordinating the provision of additional military support from our Allies and partners to enable Ukraine to repel Russian aggression.

■ **Ukraine: Military Aid**

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[11620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department is providing to the Ukrainian navy.

James Heapey:

The UK announced the sale of two Sandown Class Minehunters to Ukraine last year as part of the Ukrainian Naval Capabilities Enhancement Programme (UNCEP). We remain committed to this agreement and have started training Ukrainian Navy personnel to operate the vessels.

In addition, building on the success of Operation ORBITAL, the UK-led Maritime Training Initiative (MTI) began training in September 2020. Maritime courses have been delivered across a broad range of areas such as damage control, firefighting, military diving, operational and logistics planning, tactical navigation, sea surveillance and vessel boarding search and seizure.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[11621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department is providing to train the Ukrainian army in the use of heavy artillery.

James Heapey:

We have worked closely with allies and partners to ensure that Ukrainian Armed Forces requirements for equipment, training and support are met at pace. With respect to heavy artillery, we are delivering training on the Multiple-Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) we are providing to Ukraine, as well as on a counter-battery system. We are also hosting a team from New Zealand who are providing Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel with training on the M119-105mm-gun.

John Healey: [\[14419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how long it will take to train Ukrainian forces to use the M270 multiple rocket launch systems his Department has provide to Ukraine.

James Heappey:

We expect Ukrainian troops to complete their UK-based training on how to use the M270 Multiple-Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) by the end of June 2022. This training will enable the Armed Forces of Ukraine to maximise the effectiveness of the systems.

John Healey:[\[14420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the M270 multiple rocket launch systems provided to Ukraine to reach frontline forces in that country.

James Heappey:

We will be sending our Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) to Ukraine as a matter of urgency. For operational and security reasons, we cannot be more specific. The pinpoint accuracy and range of MLRS will offer Ukraine a significant boost in capability, one that will enable it to counter Russia's attritional and brutal use of artillery.

John Healey:[\[14421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Ukrainian Government requested more than the three M270 multiple rocket launch systems his Department will provide to that country.

James Heappey:

Our gifting of Multiple-Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) follows detailed discussions with the Armed Forces of Ukraine on what they need to meet their operational requirements. The highly capable MLRS will provide Ukraine with a significant boost in capability. The UK's decision has been co-ordinated closely with the US decision to gift the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) variant of MLRS.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[900432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the UK is taking to provide medium-term military assistance to Ukraine.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Ukraine's current focus is rightly on the immediate fight and we are continuing to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine with the provision of both lethal and non-lethal aid to meet their operational requirements. However, the UK is also liaising closely with Ukraine to understand what further military support Ukraine will need, beyond the current conflict, to defend its sovereign territory in the medium and longer term.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Arts: Artificial Intelligence****Giles Watling:**[\[11862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made regarding the impact of artificial intelligence developments on employment opportunities for performers and creative workers.

Chris Philp:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the global trends which will transform our future, changing jobs across the economy, including those working in the arts and creative industries.

The creative industries' growing interdependence with the digital sector is inspiring business growth, invention and investment. The sector already makes ingenious use of AI in many ways: to recommend content on streaming platforms, to create Luke Skywalker's voice in *The Mandalorian*, and to govern the behaviour of non-playable characters in video games. However adoption of AI is not uniform across the sub sectors, which risks us missing prime opportunities to improve productivity and growth.

We want our creative workers to be able to build further on these technological opportunities, which will play an increasingly vital part in the sectors' success, whilst safeguarding against risks associated with increasing automation. Our Creative Industries Sector Vision will set out a long-term strategy focused on promoting growth, with a section dedicated to the exciting future of this dynamic workforce, including the impact of AI.

In the National AI Strategy, the government set out a number of steps it is taking to develop the brightest, most diverse workforce: from bolstering the provision of higher level skills at PhD and Masters level to developing research that helps employees, from across sectors, to understand what skills are needed for them to effectively use AI in a business setting.

Additionally, UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) is developing a programme to help accelerate the adoption of AI in certain low AI maturity sectors which are key to the UK economy, with the creative industries being a potential priority sector to explore, which will help to improve the sector's productivity.

■ Arts: Data Protection**Chi Onwurah:**[\[13124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact on the creative industries of the ending of the Adequacy Agreement with the European Commission in data protection.

Julia Lopez:

UK Government recognises the importance of the EU-UK data flows to cooperation and economic activity across a broad range of sectors, including the creative industries.

The UK Government [published](#) an assessment of the impact of changes to our adequacy status with the EU as part of the Data: a new direction consultation. This assessment estimates that the total direct, financial impact on UK businesses economy-wide would be approximately £1.4 billion over five years. The assumptions underlying this estimate are currently being updated by the department and a statistical model that will estimate the sectoral impact will follow.

■ Data Protection: EU Law**Chi Onwurah:****[13125]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will publish any risk assessment undertaken on the loss or revocation of the Adequacy Agreement with the European Commission relating to data transfers from the UK to the EU and vice-versa which arise from the changes proposed in the consultation document entitled Data: a new direction.

Julia Lopez:

As the Department responsible for securing adequacy from the EU, DCMS has a robust internal process for monitoring the risk of those decisions being revoked or amended. As the government made clear in the Data: a new direction consultation, we believe it is perfectly possible and reasonable to expect the UK to maintain EU adequacy as it designs a future regime.

The UK is firmly committed to maintaining high data protection standards - now and in the future. We will continue to operate a high-quality regime that promotes growth and innovation, and underpins the trustworthy use of data. EU adequacy decisions do not require an 'adequate' country to have the same rules, and our view is that the changes proposed in the consultation document are compatible with maintaining flows of personal data from Europe.

The UK has two EU adequacy decisions, under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Law Enforcement Directive. We recognise the importance of the EU adequacy decisions to public services, law enforcement and national security cooperation, and economic activity across a broad range of sectors. The Data: a new direction consultation included an [assessment](#) of the impact of a change in adequacy status with the EU arising as a result of proposed reforms. We will further address concerns raised about the risk to these decisions in the Government response to the consultation.

■ Data Protection: Regulation

Chi Onwurah:

[\[13709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she had discussions with the Secretary of State for Justice, prior to publication of that Department's proposals in the document entitled Human Rights Act Reform: a Modern Bill of Rights, on the potential risks to the adequacy agreement from proposals in that document relating to the human rights regime that affect the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, as identified by the Information Commissioner.

Julia Lopez:

As was set out in the Bill of Rights consultation, the UK remains fully committed to the international human rights treaties to which it is party.

The Bill of Rights will ensure those rights in the European Convention on Human Rights can be interpreted in the UK context, with respect for our legal traditions and the will of elected lawmakers.

The UK has two EU adequacy decisions, under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Law Enforcement Directive. As the European Commission itself has made clear, a third country is not required to have exactly the same rules as the EU in order to be considered adequate. Indeed, there are thirteen other countries which have EU adequacy, including Israel, Japan, New Zealand and Canada. All of these nations pursue independent and varied approaches to data protection and human rights.

The UK is firmly committed to maintaining high data protection standards and ensuring that rights and liberties are protected - this will not change. Our view is that reform of UK legislation on human rights is compatible with maintaining free flow of personal data from international partners.

■ Gambling

Sarah Owen:

[\[13827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress her Department has made on the Gambling Act Review; and when she plans to publish the Gambling Review white paper.

Chris Philp:

The Gambling Act Review is wide-ranging and aims to ensure that the regulation of gambling is fit for the digital age. We will publish a White paper setting out our conclusions and next steps in the coming weeks.

■ Gambling Commission: Visits

Philip Davies:

[\[R\] \[11615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many visits the Chief Executive of the Gambling Commission has made since his appointment to (a)

casinos, (b) betting shops, (c) online gambling companies, (d) bingo halls, (e) adult gaming centres and (f) family entertainment centres.

Chris Philp:

The total number of visits made to each type of premise requested since the Chief Executive's appointment in June 2021 is detailed below.

NUMBER OF VISITS MADE BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE GAMBLING COMMISSION SINCE APPOINTMENT

Type of premises	Casinos	Betting shops	Online gambling companies	Bingo halls	Adult gaming centres	Family entertainment centres
Number of visits	1	0	0	1	2	0

Visits to premises are only one form of engagement with licensees that the Chief Executive undertakes. He has focussed stakeholder plans each year to reach a broad range of stakeholders, including regular meetings with CEOs and trade bodies, speaking at events and attending industry conferences. Since his appointment the Chief Executive has had 9 meetings with online operators and 13 with representatives of trade bodies, as well as speaking at events such as trade shows and trade body AGMs, to reach more operators. There is a further programme of engagement for the year ahead which includes more premises visits following disruptions caused by Covid in 2021 and 2022.

■ **Hikvision: CCTV**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[14486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has asked the National Cyber Security Centre to investigate the security of the HIKVISION surveillance cameras; and if she will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

The Government does not comment on the details of national security assessments.

As set out in the National Cyber Strategy this year, the government takes the security of all sectors of the economy, including consumers, seriously.

The Department is leading on a number of aspects in the National Cyber Strategy. We are taking forward legislation to protect consumers in the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill, and working with the National Cyber Security Centre to assist private and public sector users of connected devices, such as surveillance cameras, to operate in a safe and secure way.

■ Horse Racing: Gambling

Adam Afriyie: [\[11632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of a ban on gambling advertising and sponsorship on the international competitiveness of the horse racing industry.

Chris Philp:

The Government recognises the contribution that horse racing makes to our sporting culture and in particular to the rural economy.

The Gambling Act Review is wide-ranging and aims to ensure that the regulation of gambling is fit for the digital age. We will publish a White Paper setting out our conclusions and next steps in the coming weeks, with appropriate consideration of impacts being made at all stages.

■ Platinum Jubilee 2022: Medals

Rosie Cooper: [\[11609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether volunteers from St John Ambulance are eligible for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee medal.

Chris Philp:

To qualify for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal recipients must be in an eligible public sector role in a frontline emergency service accessed via a call to the 999 emergency telephone number or equivalent, and this does not include St John Ambulance volunteers.

■ Retail Trade: Technology

Matt Vickers: [\[11912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment her Department has made of the role of technology in creating a more accessible retail experience for British consumers.

Chris Philp:

Our forthcoming Digital Strategy will set out our ambitions for harnessing the power of digital technologies to the benefit of our economy and society as a whole. The strategy will highlight that digital technologies, through innovation, can drive better services across various sectors.

The Government believes that there are great gains to be made through the adoption of digital technologies across all sectors. According to ONS data, SMEs which use two or more business management technologies demonstrate productivity gains of up to 25%. That is why last year we announced our Help to Grow scheme which provides financial incentives for increased digital adoption by SMEs.

■ Unboxed: Marketing

Emily Thornberry:

[\[13077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the procurement reference BIP694971327 published on the Contract Finder website on 1 June, if she will publish the key performance indicators for the marketing campaign funded by her Department to promote the Unboxed festival up to the end of December 2022; and whether those key performance indicators have been approved by her Department.

Nigel Huddleston:

The three key performance indicators for the marketing campaign are Awareness, Attendance and Online Engagement. UNBOXED, which is an arm's length body, will be working with KPMG as lead evaluator, and BMG who are measuring awareness levels.

Formal evaluation delivered by KPMG is due to be published in early 2023.

■ World Heritage Sites

Rachael Maskell:

[\[13783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the committee assessing World Heritage Site bids will place equal value on the social, architectural and archaeological heritage of a location.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Independent Expert Panel assessing bids for the UK's Tentative List will use criteria based on [UNESCO's criteria](#) for selection to the World Heritage List.

These require sites to be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one of ten criteria, which identify a wide range of values a location can demonstrate.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[13784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how will she ensure that places that are successful with their bid submission for the Tentative List for World Heritage Sites receive support to become a World Heritage Site.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sites selected for the UK's Tentative List will receive support from relevant Heritage Bodies to develop their bid and to pass a Technical Evaluation stage before submitting their nomination for the World Heritage List.

As part of the assessment process to be included in the UK's Tentative List, sites must demonstrate they have sufficient support from stakeholders and sufficient funding for the future management of the site.

EDUCATION**■ British Students Abroad: Publicity****Ian Levy:****[11865]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to inform young people about opportunities to study abroad.

Alex Burghart:

The department values international exchange and collaboration in education and training as part of our vision for a global Britain. That is why we support a number of outward mobility and exchange programmes which broaden access to international opportunities, including Fulbright scholarships and the Turing Scheme.

The department provides grant funding to the US-UK Fulbright Commission, which promotes and provides opportunities for young people to undertake education exchanges between the UK and the US.

The Turing Scheme is the UK government's programme to provide funding for international opportunities in education and training across the world. The Turing Scheme is provider-led with communications and promotion targeted at education providers who are responsible for applying for funding and promoting opportunities to their students, learners, and pupils. Education providers successfully applied for funding for over 41,000 individual placements to over 150 destinations across the 2021/2022 academic year.

The department also works with the British Council, which is funded to deliver programmes such as English Language Assistants and Generation UK, to promote opportunities for UK students the opportunity to study and work abroad in countries such as Spain, Italy, and China.

The British Council's 'Study and Work Abroad' website contains information about opportunities to study, work, or volunteer in another country through the British Council and other organisations. The site includes a section targeted at UK-based students and graduates, providing information about current and upcoming opportunities to study, work or volunteer outside the UK through British Council programmes and the Turing Scheme.

■ British Students Abroad: Ukraine**Zarah Sultana:****[11886]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to facilitate British national students studying medicine and other degrees in Ukraine, who have had to leave their studies due to the war in that country, to transfer to the same courses at UK universities.

Michelle Donelan:

Unfortunately, it is not possible for British Nationals who were studying in Ukraine to transfer automatically into medical and dental courses in England. However, I have

urged institutions in England to consider students' circumstances sensitively and show as much flexibility as possible when considering students' applications to UK courses.

The number of places available to study medicine and dentistry is regulated by the government and controlled through intake targets operated by the Office for Students. These places are quality assured by the General Medical Council to ensure the availability of sufficient provision of high-quality education, training, and clinical placements and therefore have all been allocated for this coming academic year. There are also complex issues surrounding transferring students whose prior learning has taken place overseas directly onto medical places here in the UK.

However, the department is continuing to work closely with the education sector and across Government to ensure that students are supported and have a range of options available to them during this difficult time. These options include:

- Continuing courses through online learning, the department is encouraging students to contact their education provider in Ukraine to understand what support they may be providing to support students to study remotely. We know that universities in Ukraine are striving to maintain the education of their students under extremely challenging conditions and therefore this may be particularly beneficial to students nearing the end of their course. We are working closely with the Medical Schools Council and the Council of Deans of Health who are liaising with universities in Ukraine to help ensure online learning materials are available to this group of students, to help them maintain their skills and continue their education remotely.
- Applying to study a related subject in England, for the 2022/2023 academic year, the department has also been working closely with UCAS and can confirm that although the standard process to apply to study at university in the next academic year is almost complete, students can continue to apply via UCAS for courses commencing in Autumn 2022. Students can consider applying to a related subject for the next academic year. There are many opportunities to study related subjects within the UK and UCAS is ready to support anyone who would like to know more about their options. If submitting an application, prospective students can list the course and modules they have studied in Ukraine.
- Applying to medical school in England, for the 2023/2024 academic year, like all prospective year 1 undergraduates, students have the option to apply to courses at medical and dental schools, starting in the 2023/2024 academic year, and beyond. During the application process, students could declare their study in Ukraine as part of their UCAS personal statements so that providers would be aware of this at application, however, overall, students will be applying on the basis of their A levels and would need to take a clinical aptitude test for entry and be assessed alongside other applicants.

Separately I can confirm the Student Loans Company will treat students who were living in England before leaving to study in Ukraine, and who join a course on return

to the UK, as being temporary absent when assessing the requirement for three years' ordinary residence in the UK or Crown Dependencies prior to study. Students should contact Student Finance England (or other relevant funding body if you lived in one of the Devolved Administrations prior to study in Ukraine) for further details.

■ Children: Day Care

Dan Carden:

[\[9991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether support is available to people who are unable to access free childcare as a result of having started new employment after the term start date.

Will Quince:

30 hours free childcare for three and four-year-olds is available to parents who expect to earn at least the equivalent of 16 hours a week at national minimum or living wage, and under £100,000 per year. Parents who meet this income criteria can take up a 30 hours free childcare place from the term following a successful application. This means parents can start using their 30 hours entitlement from the 1 April, 1 September or 1 January following their application.

Parents who have secured new employment after the term start date can apply to start a 30 hours place the following term. In the meanwhile, there is other support available. Parents will be eligible for the universal 15 hours free early education entitlement for all three and four-year-olds.

Alongside the universal 15 hours free early education entitlement, parents who meet the eligibility criteria for Tax-Free Childcare can make further savings on their childcare. Tax-Free Childcare can help parents save on up to 20% of their childcare costs, worth up to £500 every 3 months for children aged 0-11, or up to £1,000 every 3 months for disabled children aged 0-16, and has the same income eligibility criteria as 30 hours free childcare. Parents can start using Tax-Free Childcare immediately following a successful application and do not need to wait until the following term.

Working parents with a lower income can receive support from the childcare element of Universal Credit. This can be used in addition to the 15 hours universal free early education entitlement. Through Universal Credit, parents can get help with up to 85% of their eligible childcare costs, reimbursed through their Universal Credit award.

■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[13860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing pupils who are eligible for free school meals with food vouchers during the summer holidays; and if he will make that his policy.

Will Quince:

Free school meals (FSM) are an educational entitlement and intended to support children while they are learning. Pupils do not receive FSM when they are not receiving education, including during school holidays.

Children who are in receipt of FSM are eligible for a place on the holiday activities and food programme, free of charge. This is being delivered in all 152 local authorities in England and ensures that disadvantaged children have access to healthy food and enriching activities during the longer school holiday periods.

■ Further Education: Finance

Navendu Mishra:

[13833]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will offer an income guarantee for colleges where student numbers were impacted by the grade inflation in last summer's exams which led to young people staying in school sixth forms.

Alex Burghart:

The Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 has made available an extra £1.6 billion for 16-19 education in the 2024/25 financial year, compared with the 2021/22 financial year. As part of this, significant increases were made to funding rates for the 2022/23 academic year, including:

- Increasing the 16-19 national funding rate for students aged 16 and 17, and students aged 18 and over, with high needs in band 5, from £4,188 to £4,542, with other funding rates also receiving an increase.
- Increasing the high value courses premium from £400 to £600.
- Increasing programme cost weightings in five subject areas considered to be under-weighted.
- Increasing the disadvantage funding rate for students who have low prior attainment.

Funding for the 2022/23 academic year is based on student numbers in 2021/22. Provisional data suggests that further education colleges, not including sixth form colleges, had in aggregate a fall of just over 1% in their 16-19 students in the 2021/22 academic year, compared with the previous year, which has had an impact on funding. However, the higher funding rates mean that despite this slight fall in student numbers, colleges will see a significant increase in funding in the 2022/23 academic year. The department expects to see only a small proportion of colleges with a reduction in funding for 16-19 students in the 2022/23 academic year, compared with the 2021/22 academic year, when allocations are published.

The department recognises that colleges are facing financial pressures from increased costs, including the extra hours for 16-19 students, which will be delivered from the 2022/23 academic year onwards. Each year, the department looks to put in place exceptional in-year growth funding, subject to affordability. This is to help providers seeing a significant increase in students. The department will be looking carefully at what can be put in place to help colleges in the 2022/23 academic year.

Where colleges are at risk of running out of funding, emergency funding is considered on a case-by-case basis. It is based on a thorough assessment of each college's

circumstances and on the minimum funding needed to minimise disruption to learners.

■ Overseas Students: Fees and Charges

Chi Onwurah:

[14483]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of (a) levels of reliance of UK universities on (i) international student fees from students who come from geopolitically insecure nations and (ii) all other international fees and (b) the effect on UK research of the sudden absence of students from particular countries due to geopolitical events.

Alex Burghart:

We are proud that the UK is a world-leading destination for international students, but we do assess the impacts and possible risks associated with dependence on a single source of funding, whether that is from a single organisation or a single nation.

There is a need for providers to diversify their intake of international students and broaden the regions they recruit from which is why the International Education Strategy and recent update make clear that the diversification and sustainable recruitment of international students remains a key strategic priority, details of which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-education-strategy-2021-update/international-education-strategy-2021-update-supporting-recovery-driving-growth>.

As autonomous institutions, universities will have their own student recruitment policies in place, though universities due diligence processes should consider reputational, ethical and security risks.

Professor Sir Steve Smith, who was appointed as the International Education Champion in June 2020, helps to deliver our international education ambitions by opening up international opportunities, developing strong international relationships in new and established markets, and helping to tackle challenges and barriers.

The government is also supporting researchers to continue work interrupted by global events. For example, Ukrainian nationals involved in academic research can benefit from a £3 million UK government package of support to continue their vital work in the UK.

■ School Meals Coalition

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[11581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he (a) has made and (b) plans to make a further assessment of the potential merits of joining the School Meals Coalition.

Will Quince:

The government does not currently intend to join the School Meals Coalition, although we are engaged with several initiatives that resulted from the UN Food Systems Summit last year.

At this time, no further assessment of the merits of joining the School Meals Coalition is planned.

■ Schools: Agency Workers

Holly Mumby-Croft: **[11915]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 1 April 2022 to Question 148351 on Schools: Agency Workers, if he will publish the (a) terms of reference and (b) timescale for the review of the teaching agency supply deal.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department is currently undergoing a re-procurement process in conjunction with Crown Commercial Services for the agency supply deal which is due to expire in August 2022. The re-procurement process will establish a list of suppliers for the next version of the agency supply deal. The review of the teaching agency supply deal will be released in due course. Once released, the expected initial duration of the framework will be three years with the option to extend for up to one year.

Further information about the framework, including the contract and timescale for the review of the teaching agency supply deal can be found here:

<https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/RM6238>.

■ Schools: Platinum Jubilee 2022

Helen Hayes: **[11767]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May to Question 6839, what steps he is taking to ensure Platinum Jubilee commemorations in schools are inclusive of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Mr Robin Walker:

In addition to a hardback version of 'Queen Elizabeth – A Platinum Jubilee Celebration' that has been given to all pupils in state-funded schools in the UK, the department has also made an audio version of the book available through the QR code on the publisher's website, which can be found here: <https://jubilee.dk.com/>. This website also contains links to various teaching resources about the Platinum Jubilee, which can be adapted to meet the specific needs of pupils.

The department believes that schools are best placed to identify and address the special educational needs of their pupils. Schools should endeavour to make sure that all pupils are able to engage with activities to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.

■ Schools: Risk Management

Charlotte Nichols: **[11890]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what targets his Department maintains for the proportion of eligible schools in England that are covered by the Risk Protection Arrangement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department does not maintain a target for the proportion of eligible schools. To date Risk Protection Arrangement membership currently stands at 43% of all eligible schools. Whilst it is not mandatory, the provision of an alternative to commercial insurance continues to provide schools with choice, enabling them to make the most suitable decisions based on their individual needs.

■ Sex and Relationship Education**Sarah Champion:****[11678]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what was the cost to the public purse of teacher training for the relationship and sex education curriculum since September 2020.

Mr Robin Walker:

It is for schools to determine their needs following changes in the curriculum, and to use their budget allocation to resource their implementation costs, including teacher training. Core school funding increased by £2.6 billion in the 2020/21 financial year, £4.8 billion in the 2021/22 financial year and is increasing by £7.1 billion in the 2022/23 financial year.

The department recognises the need to support schools to teach relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) subjects more effectively, and that is why we have invested over £3.2 million since the 2019/20 financial year (£2 million since the 2020/21 financial year) in a package of support to help schools implement the RSHE curriculum. The package of support includes a training and peer support programme delivered by teaching schools, webinars, training materials, and implementation guidance available online for teachers to use in their own schools to support delivery of high-quality RSHE teaching.

Following the publication of Ofsted's review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges last year, the department has committed to provide additional support to help teachers deliver RSHE effectively and confidently to support young people to develop healthy relationships and to prevent sexual violence and sexual harassment. Our existing package of support is available via a one-stop page for teachers on GOV.UK, which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

To provide additional support to schools in all areas of the curriculum, the Schools White Paper announced the establishment of a new curriculum body which builds on the success of Oak National Academy's work during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will create and continually improve packages of optional, free, adaptable digital curriculum resources for all subjects, including RSHE, to help teachers deliver a high-quality curriculum that is informed by the best available evidence. These resources will ensure high-quality lessons are available nationwide for the benefit of all children. The department will provide further information on when the new resources will be available in due course.

■ Special Educational Needs

Daisy Cooper:

[10016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to (a) require local authorities to ask parents who request an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) form whether or not English is their first language and (b) offer additional language support to parents throughout the EHCP process.

Will Quince:

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to have regard to the importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions. All local authorities must have arrangements for information and advice and should ensure that advice and guidance for children and young people is tailored appropriately for them. All local authorities must publish a local offer about all their services. One of the requirements of local offers is that they must be accessible to the local population, which does include ensuring access those for whom English is not their first language. The special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) code of practice also makes clear that the format of an education, health and care (EHC) plan is agreed locally. Local authorities must decide on the languages that EHC plans are available in, depending on local need.

In addition, it is the department's aim, through the proposals set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper to provide parents and carers with a clearer understanding of the support that should be available to meet their child's needs. This includes a proposal to standardise the EHC plan process to drive consistency in how needs are identified and assessed. The public consultation for the Green Paper is due to close on 22 July 2022.

Daisy Cooper:

[10017]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to require upper tier local authorities and clinical commissioning groups to provide parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities with a list of potential sources of financial support to which they might be entitled.

Will Quince:

Local authorities must provide information on personal budgets as part of their local offer. This should include a policy on personal budgets that sets out a description of the services across education, health and social care that currently lend themselves to the use of personal budgets, how that funding will be made available, and clear and simple statements of eligibility criteria and the decision-making processes. Personal budgets are optional for the child's parent or the young person, but local authorities are under a duty to prepare a budget when requested. Local authorities must provide information about organisations that may be able to provide advice and

assistance to help parents and young people to make informed decisions about personal budgets.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: New Businesses

Daniel Zeichner: [\[13144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the pilot incubator projects.

Victoria Prentis:

The budget for the New Entrants Pilots is £1 million. This is based on benchmarking costs with comparable private and public sector schemes.

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Daniel Zeichner: [\[9907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of businesses expected to receive over (a) £100,000 (b) £200,000 (c) £250,000 and (d) £500,000 in Basic Payments in (i) 2022, (ii) 2023, (iii) 2024, (iv) 2025, (v) 2026 and (vi) 2027.

Victoria Prentis:

We have estimated the number of farm business in England which could receive Direct Payments above the specified amounts as follows:

	NUMBER OF FARM BUSINESSES BY		
	PAYMENT AMOUNT	SCHEME YEAR	
2022	2023	2024	
More than £100,000	1,136	701	375
More than £200,000	107	63	29
More than £250,000	99	52	32
More than £500,000	23	18	7

These estimates take account of the progressive reductions that we intend to apply to the payments, as announced in our Agricultural Transition Plan in 2020.

We have not provided estimates for years 2025 to 2027 as the Government has not yet announced the progressive reductions which will be applied to Direct Payments in those years as we continue to phase the payments out.

Money saved by Direct Payment reductions will be directly re-invested into English agriculture through our new schemes. These include our new environmental land

management schemes as well as grants to enable farmers to invest in equipment, technology, and infrastructure. These will improve efficiency and productivity while also benefiting the climate and environment.

■ Air Pollution

Ian Byrne:

[10042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the areas in the (a) England and (b) Liverpool where air pollution has been increasing; and what steps are being taken by central Government to reverse that process.

Jo Churchill:

Assessment of air pollution concentration changes across the UK is reported annually in "Air Pollution in the UK" and the latest report covering 2020 can be found here: [Annual Report 2020 Issue 1 Online Viewer - Defra, UK](#).

Assessment of changing emissions across the UK is also reported annually and the latest report covering 2020 can be found here: [Emissions of air pollutants in the UK - Summary - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Local assessment is carried out by Liverpool council as part of its statutory Local Air Quality Management function.

NOx concentrations recorded by two Automatic Urban Rural Monitoring sites in Liverpool have been on a downward trend, though we recognise there is more to be done. That is why the Government has taken a range of steps to tackle air pollution, including:

- Publishing the Clean Air Strategy (2019) which focuses on the actions we will take to reduce emissions of the five most damaging air pollutants: ammonia, fine particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, non-methane volatile organic compounds.
- Setting two new targets for fine particulate matter (PM2.5) under the Environment Act 2021. Our dual-target approach will tackle the highest concentrations and ensure continuous improvement across the country.
- Continuing to take action to protect people from pollutants released from domestic burning by bringing forward regulations to ensure people use cleaner fuels and solid fuel stoves.
- Working to provide a coherent regulatory framework for the setting, updating, and enforcing of standards for air quality emissions from the full range of industry sectors. This includes the development of the UK 'best available techniques' (BAT) framework, which will enable regulators and industry to work together to identify and apply up to date, challenging standards.
- Publishing our 2017 UK Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations and its 2018 supplement, which set out our approach to bringing NO₂ air pollution to within statutory limits. This includes placing requirements on a number of local

authorities, including Liverpool City Council, to develop local air quality plans. This is supported by £880 million dedicated funding to help local authorities develop and implement their plans, and to support those impacted by these plans. This Government is also taking action across transport by supporting the switch to electric vehicles with over £3 billion of investment, and £2 billion in funding for cycling and walking over this Parliament.

We continue to make significant investment in transport in the Liverpool City Region, including a £710 million City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement over 5 years to transform local transport networks, alongside £37.52 million from the Levelling Up Fund to improve local transport, including high quality segregated walking and cycling routes.

■ **Animal Feed: Insects**

Owen Thompson: [\[11763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of insect farming as a potentially sustainable source of protein for use in pig and poultry feed in the UK.

Owen Thompson: [\[11764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans to bring forward legislative proposals enabling the use of insect protein in pelleted chicken and pig feed in the UK, as approved by the EU in 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

In 2021 the EU amended their Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) legislation to allow the use of insect protein in pig and poultry feed.

The EU had been working on these changes since the publication of their TSE Roadmap 2 in 2010. The European Food Safety Authority completed multiple risk assessments on behalf of the EU to inform the changes to their feed controls.

Following EU exit, Defra has been working with devolved administrations and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on a review of our domestic controls of livestock feed. Risk assessments were commissioned from the Animal Plant and Health Agency in summer 2021, to assess the animal health risk of the changes. These risk assessments are being finalised and public health considerations assessed by the FSA.

The conclusions of these risk assessments will inform decisions on whether to revise our existing feed controls.

Defra has also recently commissioned a scientific review on the use of insects as animal feed, including examining the evidence around nutritional, socio-economic and environmental considerations.

An enhanced evidence base will help us to better understand how insect farming could contribute to sustainable poultry and pig feed production.

■ Animal Feed: Soya Beans

Owen Thompson: [\[11761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the estimated amount of soya cultivated each year for use in animal feed in the UK.

Owen Thompson: [\[11762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact on biodiversity and deforestation of soya cultivated globally for use in animal feed in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

In 2020, the UK imported approximately 2.7 million tonnes of soybean meal equivalents directly as beans, meal, and oil.¹ This is in turn equivalent to a total of approximately 3.7 million tonnes of soybean. Of the 2.7 million tonnes of soymeal equivalents imported in 2020, the majority (2.3 million tonnes or 85%) can be attributed to use in animal feed.

The UK Government is committed to tackling forest and biodiversity loss associated with all domestic uses of soya, and as such, does not specifically assess the impact on biodiversity and deforestation of soya cultivated for use in animal feed in the UK. In 2018, the Government convened the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Soya for industry actors to work together towards the common goal of legal and sustainable soya. The Roundtable's 2021 Annual Progress Report shows that 62% of the UK's soya consumption is either covered by a certification standard, has been produced in compliance with the Amazon Soy Moratorium contract, or has been sourced from an area where there is a low risk of deforestation linked to production.

The Government recognises that voluntary commitments by businesses have not been sufficient to tackle deforestation and is committed to ensuring there is no place for illegally produced commodities on our supermarket shelves or in our supply chains. That is why we have introduced a world-leading due diligence law through the Environment Act. The law will prohibit larger businesses from using commodities produced on land occupied or used illegally and make it mandatory for businesses to conduct due diligence on their supply chains. Once operational, it will help to eradicate illegal deforestation from our supply chains.

¹ [UK Roundtable on Sustainable Soya: Annual Progress Report 2021](#)

(www.efeca.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/UK-RTSS-APR-2021.pdf)

■ Clean Air Zones

Judith Cummins: [\[11704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what equalities impact assessment his department has made of Clean Air Zones; and if he will make an assessment of the equalities impact of methods of notification to (a) local and (b) non-local road users of (i) Zone location and (ii) payment requirements.

Jo Churchill:

A wide range of distributional and equalities analysis is carried out to determine which groups could be unduly impacted by proposed Clean Air Zones (CAZ). Each local authority's distributional impact assessment is conducted in line with Defra guidance, which mandates the types of analysis and demographic groups that must be considered, as a minimum. These assessments are subsequently used to inform what mitigation measures could be introduced to alleviate the adverse impacts identified for the relevant groups. Individual local authority CAZ distributional impact assessments can be found published on their respective websites.

■ Clean Air Zones: Bradford**Philip Davies:**[\[11614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will place a copy of all correspondence between the Government and Bradford Council relating to the introduction of a Clean Air Zone in the Library.

Jo Churchill:

Placing details of all correspondence in the Library would incur disproportionate cost. We will be placing copies of the relevant Ministerial directions under the Environment Act in the Library. Comprehensive information on the Clean Air Zone is available via [breathe better BRADFORD | Bradford Council](#).

■ Clean Air Zones: Publicity**Judith Cummins:**[\[11705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy and (b) effectiveness of national publicity of Clean Air Zones to all road users, including the (i) location and (ii) applicable time periods of those Zones.

Jo Churchill:

We believe that local authorities are best placed to deliver communications on their local Clean Air Zones (CAZ). To support the local authorities with the communication of their local air quality plans, in this financial year, we have allocated £1.5m for their regional marketing campaigns.

We commissioned evaluations of the communications campaigns which showed that they were effective in raising and supporting awareness of the CAZ, driving people to the vehicle checker which provides further details of the individual CAZs.

Judith Cummins:[\[11706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to establish a national standard notification framework to ensure that Clean Air Zones are (a) fairly and (b) clearly notified to non-local road users.

Jo Churchill:

Under the Clean Air Zone Framework, a national standard notification was established through the requirement to delineate zones by use of standard signs along major access routes.

Local authorities are best placed to deliver communications on their local Clean Air Zones (CAZ). To support the local authorities with the communication of their local air quality plans, in this financial year, we have allocated £1.5m for their regional marketing campaigns. We also work with local authorities to ensure that their communications are appropriate to notify non-local road users.

Judith Cummins:[\[11707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government has taken steps to ensure road users are fairly and clearly notified of the implementation of Clean Air Zones including to non-local drivers.

Jo Churchill:

Communications related to Clean Air Zones (CAZ) are the responsibility of local authorities. However, under the Clean Air Zone Framework, a national standard notification was established through the requirement to delineate zones by use of standard signs along major access routes.

In addition, early notice letters are issued to owners where their vehicles drive in a CAZ prior to the activation of charging. These measures help road users to identify and understand that they need to check whether their vehicle is compliant.

■ Dangerous Dogs Act 1991**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[11769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of conducting a review of (a) Breed-Specific Legislation and (b) the Dangerous Dogs Act by the end of 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

The primary purpose of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 is public protection. The Government must balance the views of those who want to repeal or amend the breed specific legislation relating to the Pit Bull terrier, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro and the Japanese Tosa with that responsibility.

The Government considers that a lifting of the restrictions on these types of dogs would more likely result in an increase in dog attacks, rather than contributing to any reduction in such incidents. This position is supported by the police.

In December 2021, Defra published research in collaboration with Middlesex University investigating measures to reduce dog attacks and promote responsible dog ownership across all breeds of dog.

Defra have subsequently set up a Responsible Dog Ownership project in collaboration with the police, local authority representatives and animal welfare stakeholders to consider the recommendations set out in the Middlesex University

Report in detail and provide advice to the Government as to how these could be taken forward.

We expect the work of the work of the Responsible Dog Ownership project to be concluded in early 2023, at which point the Government will consider the advice.

■ **Disposable Wipes: Waste Disposal**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[11659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the findings of the research by the University of Stirling on the impact of wet wipes disposed through the sewage system on Scottish beaches.

Rebecca Pow:

We are committed to tackling the issues caused by wet wipes. The Government recently conducted a call for evidence on commonly littered and problematic plastic items in England and this included potential regulatory options around wet wipes, including a ban on those containing plastic. We continue to analyse the responses and all other UK research carried out on this important issue. We will publish an update in due course.

■ **Dogs: Romania**

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[11640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to assist UK citizens who seek to adopt dogs from Romania.

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[11641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason his Department introduced a temporary suspension on the ability of UK citizens to adopt rescue dogs from Romania.

Victoria Prentis:

Rescue animals or animals being moved to Great Britain for rehoming involves either the sale or the transfer of ownership of the animal and are classed as commercial movements. Therefore, these animals must move under the commercial rules. Great Britain has temporarily suspended the commercial import of dogs, cats and ferrets if they originate from or have been dispatched from Belarus, Poland, Romania or Ukraine, until 9 July 2022.

We appreciate the impact that the temporary suspension will have on those looking to adopt from these countries, however, this measure is important to protect our biosecurity and the health of pets in this country.

This decision has been taken because of the serious health risk to humans and animals in Great Britain from commercial cats, dogs and ferrets from Belarus, Poland, Romania or Ukraine that do not comply with UK health and documentation requirements.

We understand the fluid situation at present due to the crisis and are aware that Romania, Belarus and Poland are currently experiencing high volumes of animal movements from Ukraine. Movements from these countries into Great Britain therefore present a higher risk at the current time due to the flow of animals from Ukraine.

In particular, there is evidence to suggest that commercial consignments of pet animals from Ukraine are being moved into Poland, Romania and Belarus, including strays, rescue and abandoned animals. Unlike non-commercial pets accompanying Ukrainian refugees, these animals often have unknown history and disease status which increases the risk of disease spread.

We have amongst the highest standards of biosecurity in the world. The Government takes the importation of pets seriously and is committed to preserving our high standards of biosecurity. The movement of commercial pets from Belarus, Poland, Romania and Ukraine represents a clear and serious enough biosecurity risk at the current time, that we therefore consider the suspension of these movements necessary to protect the health of people and pets in Great Britain.

The Government appreciates the work of genuine rescue and rehoming organisations who work to ensure that unwanted and abandoned animals are given the opportunity to find a forever home whilst importantly complying with our animal health and welfare legislation. We continue to engage with stakeholders on the issue. However, this is a temporary measure which will be reviewed in due course.

■ Environment Protection

Geraint Davies:

[\[9829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the financial impact for relevant industries of delays by the Environment Agency in issuing permits; and what estimate he has made of the amount of UK investment lost to overseas markets as a result of those delays.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has been made of delays in processing permit applications at the Environment Agency or the potential effect of those delays. Each application for a permit is considered on its own merit and it is important that they are assessed thoroughly.

■ Fishing Gear: Seabed

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[11655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to bring forward legislative proposals to prevent the siting of seabed fishing equipment in any location within 300 metres of a navigational mark.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries management in the UK is devolved. Defra has no plans to bring forward legislation on locating fishing equipment near navigational marks.

In England, passive gear, such as creels, used out to 12 nautical miles must be marked with labels, or if used between 12 and 200 nautical miles they should have a marker buoy. However, existing guidance available online also recommends that passive gear is marked with buoys from 0-12 nautical miles in English waters. There may also be specific rules regarding the marking of passive gear within 0-6 nautical miles managed at a local level by the relevant Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

■ Fishing Gear: Standards

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[11654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to standardise the marking of creels across the UK and up to 12 nautical miles by following the guidelines published by Marine Scotland.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries management in the UK is devolved. Defra has no plans to bring forward legislation on locating fishing equipment near navigational marks.

In England, passive gear, such as creels, used out to 12 nautical miles must be marked with labels, or if used between 12 and 200 nautical miles they should have a marker buoy. However, existing guidance available online also recommends that passive gear is marked with buoys from 0-12 nautical miles in English waters. There may also be specific rules regarding the marking of passive gear within 0-6 nautical miles managed at a local level by the relevant Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

■ Horticulture

Sir John Hayes:

[\[11551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment has he made of the potential merits of an (a) earned recognition and (b) trusted trader imports system for the UK's professional tree and plant growers.

Victoria Prentis:

Great Britain's plant health regime is risk-based, and the history of compliance of specific trades (where the trade is the combination of a specific commodity from a specific origin) is a significant factor in determining biosecurity risk. Defra has recently consulted on a revised system of import inspection frequencies, to reflect better the level of biosecurity risk associated with particular categories of commodities. Taking account of views expressed by stakeholders, new arrangements will be implemented from July 2022 and will be kept under review to determine any future changes required.

While the biosecurity risk of imported goods is largely trade based, there are areas where trader considerations may also play a role. Defra are currently exploring future options in relation to the Target Operating Model, including the possibility of trusted

trader arrangements for plant health imports. Any proposal will be consulted thoroughly with stakeholders.

■ Horticulture: Peat

Sir John Hayes:

[\[11550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's consultation on Ending the retail sale of peat in horticulture in England and Wales, what steps he is taking to ensure tree and plant growers (a) can remain competitive globally and (b) are able to meet the demand of the domestic horticulture industry.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has always been clear about the need to end the use of peat and peat-containing products in horticulture in England. A voluntary approach was first introduced in 2011, but has not succeeded. The Government therefore published a full consultation on banning the sale of peat and peat-containing products in the amateur sector by the end of this Parliament in England and Wales. The Government also asked for any evidence stakeholders can provide on the impacts of ending the use of peat and peat-containing products. We will publish our response to this consultation in due course.

We have worked with the horticulture industry to develop a Responsible Sourcing Scheme for Growing Media, which allows manufacturers and retailers to make informed choices of growing media inputs to peat free products, based on environmental and social impacts. We continue to support industry in their efforts to go peat free, including providing over £1 million for a project to provide the necessary applied science to help underpin the development and management of alternative growing media.

■ Horticulture: Seasonal Workers

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[13145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department's plans to publish new official statistics for seasonal labour in horticulture for England.

Victoria Prentis:

Official statistics relating to the number of visas issued under the Seasonal Workers visa route, for seasonal labour in horticulture, will be released in the usual way by the Home Office as part of their quarterly immigration statistics reporting requirements.

■ Insects: UK Trade with EU

Owen Thompson:

[\[11765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) increase the speed and (b) reduce the administrative costs of

border checks to enable the UK's insect breeding industry to sell their products in the EU market.

Victoria Prentis:

Exports to the EU are subject to the EU's import controls. All border checks at EU Border Control Posts are managed by the EU and associated costs are set out in EU law.

Exports of live insects for human consumption require the relevant Export Health Certificate (EHC), which are available via EHC Online. Exports of live insects not-for human consumption are subject to National Rules, meaning individual Member States can set their own import requirements.

There is no fee for the EHC itself when issued by the Animal and Plant Health Agency; however, an EHC needs to be certified by a suitably qualified certifying officer who will likely charge for their time. Official Veterinarians (OV) operate in a private market and will charge accordingly. Local authorities can charge on a cost recovery basis for the time of their Food Competent Certifying Officers. The number of OVs qualified to certify products of animal origin has increased from around 600 in 2019 to over 2,000 to date.

■ **Tree Felling: Subsidence**

Catherine West:

[\[13200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he made of the number of trees removed by local councils each year as a result of insurance companies claiming trees as liabilities due to the subsidence risk.

Rebecca Pow:

There is a general presumption against deforestation in England, and the vast majority of permitted felling of trees comes with restocking conditions attached. For this reason there are no official figures on the number of trees felled in England. Dangerous and nuisance trees are exempted from felling regulations.

We will be introducing the new Duty to Consult on street tree felling, as mandated in the Environment Act 2021, which will increase the awareness and transparency in decision making on street trees and create a space for the public to contribute to these decisions. We are currently developing appropriate guidance for the new Duty to Consult and will be seeking to commence the measure in 2023.

■ **Zoos Expert Committee: Aquariums**

Alex Sobel:

[\[11852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) re-naming the UK Zoos Expert Committee as the UK Zoos and Aquariums Expert Committee and (b) ensuring that aquariums are represented on that Committee.

Victoria Prentis:

One of the primary functions of the Zoos Expert Committee (ZEC) is to provide advice to Ministers of the operation and implementation of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981. Aquariums are included in the definition of zoos in the 1981 Act. The Committee is constituted to ensure it contains a wide range of expertise from across the zoo licensing industry, and aquaculture experts have previously sat on ZEC and its predecessor committee, the Zoos Forum. Members of the Committee are appointed via an open recruitment process based on merit and Defra would encourage experts in operating aquariums to apply for any appropriate vacancies on the Committee as and when they are advertised.

Zoos: Animal Welfare**Alex Sobel:**[\[11853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans for a further consultation on proposed updates to the Standards of Modern Zoo Practice, having had regard for the feedback received from stakeholders during the consultation which is underway as of 1 June 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

Once the current consultation on the proposed updated Standards of Modern Zoo Practice has closed on 21 June 2022, Defra and the UK Zoos Expert Committee will consider the responses received. Further targeted stakeholder engagement will be considered once the responses have been analysed.

Alex Sobel:[\[11854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to ensure that changes being proposed to the Standards of Modern Zoo Practice are (a) proportionate and (b) justified, in order to ensure that appropriate standards of animal welfare and conservation are met.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra is currently consulting on updated Standards of Modern Zoo Practice for Great Britain. The Standards have been reviewed by Defra and the UK Zoos Expert Committee to reflect updates in best practice for keeping wild animals in captivity. They have also been redrafted to make them clearer to aid compliance and enforcement. Further changes to the proposed Standards will be considered after the consultation has closed, to ensure they are both proportionate but also represent current best industry practice. The consultation, which has been extended by four weeks, is due to close on 21 June 2022.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Bruno Araújo Pereira and Dom Phillips****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[14448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Brazilian counterpart on the disappearance of Dom Phillips and Bruno Araújo Pereira in the Amazon.

Vicky Ford:

My thoughts are with the families of Mr Phillips and Mr Pereira during this difficult time. I am engaged and closely following this case. I discussed the search and rescue effort with Brazil's Justice and Public Security Minister on 9 June, who provided reassurances that the Brazilian authorities are doing all they can via land, air and river support to find Mr Phillips and Mr Pereira. We have confirmed to the Brazilian authorities that the UK stands ready to provide support if it is requested. My officials at the British Embassy in Brazil remain in regular and close contact with the Brazilian authorities at the most senior levels for updates on the Brazilian search operation to locate Mr Phillips and Mr Pereira. I am extremely thankful and appreciative of their search and rescue effort.

Consular officials in Sao Paulo and London are providing support to Mr Phillips' family in Brazil and the UK.

■ Climate Change: Developing Countries**Jeff Smith:**[\[11735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for his policies of the IPCC's report entitled Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability; and whether she plans to provide additional funding to secure the operationalisation of the Santiago Network at COP27 in the context of that report's findings.

Vicky Ford:

The UN IPCC's Working Group II report on the vulnerability of socio-economic and natural systems to climate change provides a stark assessment on the impacts of climate change. Findings show that impacts are worse than previously predicted and current efforts to adapt are insufficient.

The UK is committed to supporting countries' efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including through our International Climate Finance (ICF), which will total at least £11.6 billion between 2021-2026. As COP26 President, the UK will work with the incoming Egyptian Presidency for COP27 and others to progress the actions set out in the COP26 Decision text. This includes the Glasgow Dialogue which will discuss the arrangements for the funding of activities to avert, minimise and address loss and damage. We are also supporting the process to operationalise the Santiago Network. Decisions on UK funding for the Santiago Network will be taken as this work

progresses. Between 2016 and 2019, the UK spent £2 billion of ICF on adaptation and investments in areas needed to address loss and damage.

Jeff Smith:

[\[11736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding the UK (a) has provided and (b) plans to provide to support more resilient crops through the Santiago Network.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to supporting efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including through our International Climate Finance (ICF), which will total at least £11.6 billion between 2021-2026. As COP26 President, the UK will work with the incoming Egyptian Presidency for COP27 and others to progress the actions set out in the COP26 Decision text. This includes the Glasgow Dialogue which will discuss the arrangements for the funding of activities to avert, minimise and address loss and damage. We are also supporting the process to operationalise the Santiago Network. Decisions on UK funding for the Santiago Network will be taken as this work progresses.

Negotiations continue on the Santiago Network's organizational structure. The focus of the Santiago Network's support will be developed and agreed once the Network is operational. Current FCDO Agriculture Research programmes continue to support climate resilient crops and food systems. These includes our major joint research initiatives with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation supporting work at the Crop Science Centre in Cambridge to sustainably increase yields for small-holder farmers in Africa, and Edinburgh-based research on livestock health.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Armed Conflict

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[11619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department plans to provide support to the Democratic Republic of Congo to help combat rebels in that country.

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 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.

■ Developing Countries Trading Scheme

Ruth Cadbury: [\[13742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what human rights safeguards her Department plans to include in its proposed Developing Countries Trading Scheme.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[13743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the new Developing Countries Trading Scheme will include equal or improved level of human rights protections when compared to the existing Generalised Scheme of Preferences used by the UK.

Amanda Milling:

The Secretary of State for International Trade is responsible for the UK's unilateral preferences scheme, including the design of the new Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS). The detailed proposals for the DCTS will be published in 2022.

HM Government believes that growing trading relationships increases UK influence in open conversations with partners on a range of difficult issues, including human rights. The UK will continue to show global leadership in encouraging all states to uphold international human rights obligations and hold those who violate human rights to account.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[14636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that the proposed Developing Countries Trading Scheme does not cause significant preference erosion.

Amanda Milling:

The Secretary of State for International Trade is responsible for the UK's unilateral preferences scheme, including the design of the new Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS). Proposals for the DCTS will be published in 2022.

The DCTS will provide improved access to the UK market for developing countries through a set of simpler, more generous trading arrangements than those in the UK Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) whilst ensuring that existing developing country preferences are maintained where significant interests exist.

■ Development Aid: Climate Change

Jeff Smith: [\[11737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the IPCC's report entitled Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability; and whether she plans to

take steps to work to reduce the debt owed by countries in the Global South to enable those countries to free up resources to better adapt to climate change.

Vicky Ford:

The UK agrees with the IPCC that global action to adapt to the changing climate has been insufficient. We recognise how urgent and important it is to ensure countries most vulnerable to climate change are able to respond to the risks they face.

We are providing £11 billion of international climate finance over five years, with an extra £1 billion in 2024-2025 if the economy grows as forecast. Recent UK commitments on adaptation include significant support to developing countries, with £274 million to help countries across Asia and the Pacific to build resilience, £143.5 million to support African countries to adapt and almost £50 million to help Small Island Developing States.

The UK has put action on climate change and debt at the top of its international agenda with our COP26 Presidency in 2021/22. We have increased the level of quality climate financing, which means offering financing to countries on terms that are suitable to their economic situation and consistent with their path to a more sustainable debt situation. This includes the provision of grants for countries at highest risk of debt distress.

We are working to ensure that countries get effective and timely debt treatments that put them on a more fiscally sustainable path and allow them to channel future funds to productive investments that are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, including climate change adaptation. In November 2020, the UK, along with the G20 and Paris Club, agreed the Common Framework to help deliver a long-term sustainable approach for supporting lower income countries to tackle their debt vulnerabilities.

■ **Development Aid: Health Services**

Derek Thomas:

[\[13209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to (a) invest in global health systems and (b) maintain access to critical routine immunisations.

Amanda Milling:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is working to deliver the objectives set out in our recently published Health Systems Strengthening Position Paper. This includes mainstreaming of health systems strengthening approach across all the UK's health influencing activities and investments through country programmes, research and multilaterals such as the World Health Organisation, Global Fund and Gavi. The UK's £1.65 billion commitment to Gavi's core immunisation programme 2021-25 is the largest of any donor, and will support Gavi to immunise 300 million children and save up to 8 million lives, and enable countries to restore immunisation services during and after the pandemic.

■ Development Aid: Water

Daisy Cooper:

[\[13246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her G7 counterparts on jointly contributing US\$600 million annually for water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities in the least developed countries, as called for by WaterAid.

Amanda Milling:

Improving access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services, including in healthcare facilities, is a key global health priority for the FCDO. It forms a core part of the UK's new Ending Preventable Deaths of mothers, babies and children strategy published in December 2021, and is critical to our wider global health objectives.

The UK will continue to work with our international partners, including through the G7, to ensure WASH is included in efforts to prevent the spread of infections including COVID-19, to prevent future pandemics, and to reduce the threat of anti-microbial resistance. We will also continue to pursue these objectives through our membership of the WASH In Healthcare Facilities international taskforce, through our bilateral programming such as our innovative hand hygiene partnership with Unilever, and through our core multilateral funding including to the World Bank and the World Health Organisation.

■ Hong Kong: Rule of Law

Sir Robert Buckland:

[\[13703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Chinese counterpart on the rule of law in Hong Kong.

Amanda Milling:

The Foreign Secretary is in contact with her international counterparts on issues relating to Hong Kong, including the Chinese government. The UK has made clear our strong opposition to the National Security Law, which is being used to curtail freedoms, punish dissent and shrink the space for opposition, free press and civil society.

Hong Kong's way of life relies on respect for fundamental freedoms, an independent judiciary and the rule of law. We will continue to support the international laws, rules and norms that underpin the rules-based international system. As a co-signatory to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, we will also continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to its international obligations.

■ **India: Forced Marriage and Religious Freedom**

Derek Thomas:

[\[13207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Indian counterpart on (a) abductions, (b) forced conversions and (c) forced marriages of women and girls in India; and what steps she is taking to help support that Government in ending those practices.

Vicky Ford:

We engage with India on a range of human rights matters, including at Ministerial level, working with Union and State Governments and with Non-Governmental Organisations. Reports of human rights abuses or discrimination against religious minorities are matters for the Indian police and local legal system and should be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and transparently.

The UK Government works through UN partners UNFPA and UNICEF to support the actions by the Indian Government and civil society to end child marriage. The first phase of the UK's support to the UN Global Programme to End Child Marriage (2015-20) helped five Indian states to implement evidence-based action plans, provided over four million girls with life skills training, and nine million community members to explore alternatives to child marriage. In November 2021, the UK announced £18 million of new funding to prevent child marriage across 12 focus countries, including India.

■ **Iran: Hostage Taking**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[13071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK is taking internationally to challenge Iran's state hostage taking against UK and dual nationals.

James Cleverly:

The UK does not, and never will, accept our nationals being used as diplomatic leverage. It is vital that the international community take a firm stand against this abhorrent practice, wherever it arises. Under the UK Presidency of the G7 in 2021, leaders made opposing arbitrary detention a key priority for international action, including amplifying the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations. The UK was among the first countries to endorse this declaration, an initiative led by Canada. We continue to work with likeminded partners around the world to challenge Iran's practice of unfairly detaining British and other foreign nationals.

■ **Jim Fitton**

Ben Lake:

[\[14594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made recent progress on ensuring the safe return of Jim Fitton from detention in Iraq.

Amanda Milling:

Following the verdict, consular officials in Iraq and the UK are continuing to provide consular assistance to Mr Fitton and his family. We cannot, of course, interfere in the judicial process of another country, just as we would not expect interference in our own. 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 and that the conditions of the prison are in line with international standards. Mr Fitton's safety and welfare remain of the utmost importance.

■ Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review**Derek Thomas:**[\[11789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken on implementing recommendation 21B of the Bishop of Truro's Review into Christian persecution catalyst for action.

Vicky Ford:

The Bishop of Truro's review provided recommendations for a Government response to support members of all faiths, beliefs, and those of no religious belief. We have taken forward the 22 recommendations in a way that makes a real change for everyone persecuted for their religion or belief.

Recommendation 21 focuses on sharing lessons across Government from implementing the recommendations of the Truro Review, and proposes agenda items for a Cabinet discussion. Proposed agenda item b focuses on championing the prosecution of ISIS perpetrators of sex crimes against Yazidi and Christian women, not only as terrorists. The UK was the driving force behind the establishment of the UN Investigative Team for Accountability of Daesh (UNITAD), providing £2 million to support investigations into violence against minority communities and developing a platform for witnesses and survivors to submit information securely in relation to Daesh crimes. In May 2022, the Minister of State responsible for human rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, sent an update note to his ministerial counterparts in Government outlining the UK's support for Yazidi and other minority communities in Iraq to rebuild their lives after Daesh, secure justice, and exercise the right to freedom of religion or belief.

■ Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[13688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the independent review of the Truro Review will be (a) undertaken and (b) published.

Vicky Ford:

The Bishop of Truro's review provided recommendations for a Government response to support members of all faiths, beliefs, and those of no religious belief. We have taken forward the 22 recommendations in a way that makes a real change for everyone persecuted for their religion or belief.

In line with recommendation 22, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office commissioned an independent review to assess the implementation of the Bishop of Truro's recommendations. The independent report will be published in due course.

■ Sri Lanka: Police**Sam Tarry:**[\[11910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the review commissioned by the British High Commission in Colombo into the impact of UK support to the Sri Lankan police will include the training delivered to its special task force by British security firm, KMS Limited, in the 1980s.

Vicky Ford:

The British High Commission in Colombo commissioned a review to look at the impact of UK Government support to the Sri Lankan police from 2016 until 2021, identify lessons learned and make recommendations with regards to future programmes. The current iteration of the UK police training programme began in 2018 and focused on strengthening the police's capacity to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, promoting gender equality, and community policing. This project contract and Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) programme cycle concluded on 31 March 2022. The British High Commission is considering its approach to any future CSSF programme and its review will be taken into account alongside a number of factors.

The UK Government was not party to the agreement between the Sri Lankan Government and Keenie Meenie Services (KMS) in the 1980s. The Government of Sri Lanka approached KMS without the involvement of the UK, and the UK Government had no ability to intervene in what was a commercial contract between the two parties. This is therefore out of scope of the review.

■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict**John McNally:**[\[11714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic approaches the Government supports in relation to the war in Ukraine; and what steps her Department has taken to support a diplomatic approach to de-escalation of that conflict.

James Cleverly:

President Zelenskyy has stated that the only way to halt the war is through diplomacy. The UK supports this view and Ukraine's desire for a just negotiated

outcome that ensures a full Russian withdrawal, respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and deters Russia from future aggression. The UK calls upon Russia to halt its illegal war and to engage in genuine and meaningful negotiations. The Foreign Secretary continues to lead the diplomatic effort, regularly meeting and speaking with Foreign Minister counterparts, including the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, G7 and NATO Foreign Ministers.

■ **Ukraine: Religious Freedom**

Derek Thomas: [\[11788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the arrest of Pastor Glushko of the Mariupol Evangelical Church by Russian forces, what recent assessment she had made of freedom of (a) religion and (b) belief violations in Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO is aware of reports of violations and abuses of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression. We call on Russia to end its violations of human rights. We use our public communications and position in multilateral fora to raise abuses and violations of human rights in Ukraine. The UK is committed to defending FoRB for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities.

■ **Yemen: Development Aid**

Paula Barker: [\[13270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will (a) support a peace dividend for Yemen, (b) allocate funding to that county to restore public infrastructure, including health, education, roads, water supplies and sewerage systems, and (c) encourage regional powers to take similar steps in the context of the recent truce.

Amanda Milling:

The UK welcomes the extension on 2 June of the UN-brokered truce in Yemen. We urge the parties to continue dialogue towards a durable ceasefire and an inclusive political settlement under UN auspices. After over seven long years of conflict, a negotiated political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen, end humanitarian suffering and enable the conditions for the sustainable recovery of public services. We continue to use our diplomatic relations and role as penholder on Yemen in the UN Security Council to support efforts towards political dialogue and peace.

The UK supports health, water and sanitation institutions across Yemen as part of our £88 million aid commitment this financial year. The UK is active in engaging regional partners on UN-led peace efforts and humanitarian issues and welcomes the recent announcement by Saudi Arabia and the UAE of the \$3 billion economic support

package for Yemen. The UK will continue to work with regional partners to help address both the immediate and longer term needs of vulnerable Yemenis.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Breast Cancer**

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[14634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to (a) improve awareness of the association between alcohol consumption and breast cancer development and (b) reduce alcohol consumption rates in populations at higher risk of breast cancer.

Maggie Throup:

The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines highlight that the risk of developing a range of health problems, including breast cancer, is increased by greater alcohol consumption. We continue to promote these guidelines through public health messaging, including the 'Better Health' campaign and the Drink Free Days app.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends that National Health Service professionals should routinely carry out alcohol screening as an integral part of practice, particularly focusing on groups which may be at an increased risk of harm from alcohol and those with an alcohol-related condition. Local authorities are responsible for the provision of high-quality services to prevent, mitigate and treat alcohol-related health harm. These include identification of those at risk, advice and an alcohol risk assessment in the NHS Health Check.

■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Labelling**

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[14633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' Low Risk Drinking Guidelines published in August 2016, what steps he is taking to help improve public health awareness of alcohol through (a) product labelling, (b) ingredient listing, (c) calorie listing and (d) other measures.

Maggie Throup:

The Government has announced its intention to consult on whether to introduce mandatory calorie labelling on prepacked alcohol and alcohol sold in on-trade businesses such as pubs and restaurants. The consultation will also seek views on whether the provision of the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines should be mandatory or continue on a voluntary basis. Respondents to the consultation can also suggest additional labelling requirements for consideration, such as ingredient listing. The Department continues to promote the low risk drinking guidelines through public health messaging, including the 'Better Health' campaign and the Drink Free Days app.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Kenny MacAskill: [\[14635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of people who were admitted to A&E due to (a) drink driving, (b) alcohol poisoning, (c) alcohol overdose, (d) physical abuse caused by a third party who was under the influence of alcohol and (e) other reasons related to alcohol consumption in the last 12 months.

Maggie Throup:

The information requested is not collected centrally.

■ Ambulance Services: Standards

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[11661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the length of time taken by ambulance services to answer 999 calls in each month of the last 12 months.

Edward Argar:

The following table shows the mean average answering time for 999 call in each of the last 12 months.

MONTH	MEAN ANSWERING TIME IN SECONDS
May 2021	7
June 2021	17
July 2021	42
August 2021	26
September 2021	45
October 2021	56
November 2021	41
December 2021	45
January 2022	19
February 2022	22
March 2022	42
April 2022	28

In March 2022, a £1.3 million campaign to recruit 999 call handlers was launched. As of May 2022, the number of 999 call handlers nationally has increased to over 2,300.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also allocated £150 million to address pressures on the ambulance service in 2022/23, supporting improvements to response times through additional call handler recruitment and retention.

■ **Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates: Regulation**

Jessica Morden:

[\[14455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question UIN 7943 on Health Professions: Regulation, whether anaesthesia associates will be included in his plans to regulate physician associates through draft legislation later in 2022.

Edward Argar:

Anaesthesia associates will be included in the draft legislation.

■ **Brain Cancer: Children**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[13837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve survival rates for children with (a) medulloblastoma and (b) relapsed medulloblastoma.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence's guidance 'Suspected cancer: recognition and referral' provides advice for general practitioners (GPs) on the symptoms of cancer in children, recommending urgent referral within 48 hours for children presenting with a range of potential cancer symptoms including any unexplained lump, bruising or bleeding, neurological symptoms or bone pain. GPs can also refer a patient to non-symptom specific pathways when symptoms are vague. As of February 2022, there were 86 live non-symptom specific pathways in hospitals in England.

■ **Cancer: Mortality Rates**

Julian Knight:

[\[13749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the 10-Year Cancer Plan includes specific targets on less survivable cancers, including brain cancer, to ensure that progress is made on survival rates for those cancers.

Ben Everitt:

[\[13845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that the 10-Year Cancer Plan includes specific targets on less survivable cancers, including brain cancer, to ensure that progress is made on survival rates for those cancers.

Maria Caulfield:

Officials are currently analysing the responses received to the call for evidence to develop the 10 Year Cancer Plan. The Plan will address all cancer types, including rarer and less survivable cancers such as brain cancer.

■ **Cancer: Nurses****Feryal Clark:**[\[11901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the (a) training and (b) recruitment of cancer nurse specialists meets projected demands of the population in 2037.

Edward Argar:

In 2022/23, Health Education England (HEE) is investing an additional £50 million to expand the cancer and diagnostics workforce, including cancer nurse specialists. HEE is offering training grants to enable existing and aspiring cancer nurse specialists to undertake additional training to develop specialist clinical, leadership, education and research capabilities. It is the responsibility of individual employers to ensure that appropriate staff are recruited, which are trained and competent to carry out these roles.

The Department has commissioned HEE to review long-term workforce demand and supply. The Department has also commissioned NHS England to develop a long-term workforce strategy, including supply projections. The forthcoming 10 Year Cancer Plan will also ensure that the appropriate workforce is in place.

■ **Cancer: Research****Chi Onwurah:**[\[13715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much and what proportion of funding for clinical cancer research has been spent in each region of the UK in the latest period for which data is available.

Maria Caulfield:

This information is not collected in the format requested. The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The following table provides expenditure on all health and care cancer research in 2020/21 by the NIHR's Local Clinical Research Network regions.

REGION	EXPENDITURE
East Midlands	£2,173,608
Eastern	£9,360,055
Greater Manchester	£7,358,350
Kent, Surrey and Sussex	£800,978

REGION	EXPENDITURE
North East and North Cumbria	£1,744,994
North Thames	£10,405,198
North West Coast	£1,417,034
North West London	£14,435,486
South London	£3,669,719
South West Peninsula	£1,466,125
Thames Valley and South Midlands	£5,167,781
Wessex	£2,217,572
West Midlands	£3,381,748
West of England	£2,199,194
Yorkshire and Humber	£5,762,533

■ Carers: Respite Care

Catherine West:

[\[11775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a recovery and respite plan for unpaid carers.

Gillian Keegan:

There are no plans to publish a specific recovery and respite plan for unpaid carers in England. In 'People at the Heart of Care', published in December 2021, we set out plans to empower unpaid carers to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives. This includes an investment of up to £25 million in the services provided to support unpaid carers. We expect this will identify and test a range of new and existing interventions to support unpaid carers, which could include respite and breaks and peer group and wellbeing support.

In addition, funding provided through the Better Care Fund (BCF) is used to support carers breaks and respite. The BCF Framework for 2022/23 will be published shortly and will request that all local BCF partnerships set out how funding is being used to support unpaid carers. On 13 May, we wrote to local authorities to reiterate the importance of respite support for carers and to understand any challenges in restoring full capacity.

Additionally, unpaid carers in low-income households will benefit from the Means-Tested Benefit Cost of Living Payment and those living in the same household as the disabled person for whom they care will benefit from the disability Cost of Living

Payment. Families with a pensioner in the household will benefit from the Pensioner Cost of Living Payment.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Darren Henry:

[\[11888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the effectiveness of measures to protect people who are most vulnerable from covid-19; and whether he plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing such measures.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency's COVID-19 vaccine surveillance report shows that as of 21 April 2022, vaccine uptake among those identified as severely immunosuppressed was 95.7% for at least one dose, 94.5% for at least two doses and 88.1% for at least three doses. NHS England's COVID Therapeutics data for the week ending 22 May 2022 shows that the number of non-hospitalised people in England who have received antivirals or neutralising monoclonal antibody treatments is 45,745. The Office for National Statistics' survey 'Coronavirus and clinically extremely vulnerable people in England' published on 13 May shows that 81% of respondents were aware of guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk. We have no plans to make a further assessment of the current measures which are in place.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Feryal Clark:

[\[11898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to monitor the capacity of private sector covid-19 testing.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) regularly engages with retailers to allow the private market for testing to flourish and ensure all tests sold on the market are of the required standard. The UKHSA does not collect information on market capacity.

Feryal Clark:

[\[11900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the ending of free covid-19 testing on sickness related absences of staff in the public sector.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made. However, free testing has been retained for eligible individuals, including in the public sector. As of 1 June 2022, the Office for National Statistics' infection survey estimated that the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 has been declining since early April.

Feryal Clark:

[11903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of randomised covid-19 testing for international travellers arriving in the UK.

Edward Argar:

The Government considered a number of potential border measures, including randomised COVID-19 testing of international arrivals. In considering any intervention, the Government's objective is to pursue the least interventionist measure necessary to protect public health and minimise the impact on travel and on the taxpayer. To delay any future harmful variants of COVID-19 entering the United Kingdom, we are maintaining a range of contingency measures.

Feryal Clark:

[13267]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of removing the capacity to register covid-19 lateral flow tests.

Maggie Throup:

Free lateral flow device test results can be reported through GOV.UK. Surveillance capabilities will remain, including the COVID-19 Infection Survey population level survey, genomic sequencing and additional data. This will be supported by continuing the SIREN and Vivaldi studies.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Esther McVey:

[11669]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure adequate scrutiny of potential side effects of covid-19 vaccines.

Maggie Throup:

All vaccines deployed in the United Kingdom have been authorised through a rigorous and expert review process by the independent regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA). The MHRA continually monitors vaccine safety and works with public health partners to review the effectiveness and impact of vaccines to ensure the benefits continue to outweigh any possible side effects.

The MHRA publishes weekly information on cases of side effects from COVID-19 vaccines, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-adverse-reactions>

The MHRA continues to assess emerging data on all side effects reported from COVID-19 vaccines and any necessary regulatory action is communicated to the public and healthcare professionals.

Rachael Maskell: [\[13169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to monitor the long-term effectiveness of covid-19 booster vaccines.

Alexander Stafford: [\[13288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to monitor the long-term effectiveness of covid-19 booster vaccines.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency continues to work with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, NHS England and other government, devolved administration and academic partners to monitor the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Several studies of vaccine effectiveness have been conducted in the United Kingdom against different COVID-19 variants and continue to be updated.

Post implementation effectiveness studies are required to understand vaccine effectiveness against outcomes such as severe disease and onwards transmission, effectiveness in different subgroups of the population, against different variants and the duration of protection. Vaccine effectiveness is estimated by comparing rates of disease in vaccinated individuals to rates in unvaccinated individuals. Where available, we are focusing on data related to the Omicron variant which is currently dominant in the UK.

Alexander Stafford: [\[13289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the rollout of a fourth covid-19 vaccine to the general population.

Janet Daby: [\[13299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending eligibility to people aged 65 and over for the covid-19 Spring booster jab.

Daisy Cooper: [\[14630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the rollout of a fourth covid-19 vaccine to the general public.

Maggie Throup:

On 21 February 2022, the Government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to offer an additional spring booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine to those most vulnerable as a precautionary measure. The additional COVID-19 booster dose is being offered to all residents in care homes for older adults, individuals aged 12 years old and over who are immunosuppressed and all adults aged 75 years old and over.

On 19 May 2022, the JCVI published interim advice on an autumn COVID-19 booster programme. The JCVI's interim advice is that a COVID-19 vaccine should be offered

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

Sir Christopher Chope:

[14409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 June to Question 2325 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, what account was taken of Coroners' verdicts in producing that Answer; what weight he attaches to Coroners' verdicts in identifying the cause of a death; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) considers all coroners' reports it receives which list vaccination as a possible contributing factor of death. Coroners' verdicts form part of the range of evidence collected and analysed by the MHRA, including self-reporting tools such as Yellow Card reports.

Mr Clive Betts:

[R] [3471]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to notify immunocompromised people who are eligible for a covid-19 spring booster vaccination; and which part of the NHS is responsible for informing those people.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 May 2022]: Individuals aged 12 years old and over who are immunosuppressed are eligible to receive a spring booster dose. Local National Health Service systems are responsible for inviting eligible individuals with appointments available online through the National Booking Service or via 119.

The NHS and charity and community leaders have published an open letter to encourage people with a weakened immune system to receive their COVID-19 vaccinations, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2022/05/open-letter-from-nhs-charity-and-community-leaders-to-people-with-a-weakened-immune-system/>

■ Defibrillators and First Aid: Training

Kim Leadbeater:

[10059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to encourage members of the public to undertake CPR and first aid training.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement and St John Ambulance are co-ordinating skills development to increase the use of automated external defibrillators by individuals in the community, supported by confident cardiopulmonary resuscitation skills. This will include a national network of community advocates to champion the importance of

first aid and training for 60,000 people to help save up to 4,000 lives each year by 2028.

■ Dementia: Diagnosis

Bob Blackman:

[\[11651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 31 May 2022 to Question 6744 on dementia diagnosis, what assessment he has made of the impact the £17 million in funding to clinical commissioning groups on dementia diagnosis rates in England.

Gillian Keegan:

No formal assessment has been made as the full impact of the funding cannot yet be determined. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the monthly diagnosis rate and are analysing trends at regional and sustainability and transformation partnership level to aid targeted recovery efforts. Work to improve dementia diagnosis rates will continue in 2022/23. 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.

Caroline Ansell:

[\[11772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people diagnosed with dementia have a sub-type specified; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

As there are over 200 subtypes of dementia, NHS England and NHS Improvement do not provide pathway guidance by subtype. However, best practice in delivering a dementia diagnosis should ensure that patients and their families are given the information they need, including the cause of the dementia syndrome.

Caroline Ansell:

[\[11773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the development of novel methods for the early diagnosis of dementia; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

We are investing in research on dementia diagnosis, such as a £9 million invitation for research proposals for submission to the National Institute for Health and Care Research on digital approaches for the early detection and diagnosis of dementia which was launched in November 2021.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned resources including an e-learning course developed by University College London to support memory services to manage a change in practice, ensuring the delivery of a personalised assessment and diagnosis via a blended service model; and a guide developed by Leeds Beckett University to support continuous development, improvement and innovation in memory services.

We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year, which will include a focus on diagnosis, risk reduction and prevention and research.

Jim Shannon: [\[13732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for dementia appointments.

Sarah Owen: [\[13826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackling the backlog in dementia diagnoses as a result of the outbreak of covid-19.

Rachael Maskell: [\[14525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve waiting times for Parkinson's-related dementia diagnosis; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

In 2021/22, we allocated £17 million to address dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses, including for Parkinson's-related dementia. This funding was made available to clinical commissioning groups in June 2021. In 2022/23, NHS England will provide funding to general practitioners in some areas to undertake pilot approaches to increase the dementia diagnosis rate and improve access to post-diagnostic support.

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

Rachael Maskell: [\[14524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of publishing diagnosis rates of dementia subtypes as part of the Recorded Dementia Diagnosis monthly data set; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

We have no plans to make an assessment as the sub-type of dementia is not collected. There are over 200 subtypes of dementia. NHS England and NHS Improvement do not provide pathway guidance by subtype for dementia and therefore NHS Digital is not requested to extract dementia data by subtype.

■ **Dental Services: Contracts**

Luke Pollard: [\[9155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if it will publish a list of all current flexible commissioning arrangements which are in place for UDA contracts in England in the current financial year.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally. NHS England has provided a flexible commissioning toolkit to local commissioners to ensure that available capacity is directed at those most in need and to reduce oral health inequalities.

■ Dental Services: North East**Chi Onwurah:**[\[13119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of (a) provision and (b) capacity of NHS dentists in (i) Newcastle and (ii) the North East.

Maria Caulfield:

Data on the number of dentists undertaking work on behalf of the National Health Service is collected by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). In 2020/21, 300 dentists delivered NHS activity in NHS Newcastle Gateshead CCG and 3,840 in the NHS North East and Yorkshire region.

NHS England's regional commissioners continue to work with local contractors to restore access to NHS dentistry to pre-pandemic levels. 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 for patients.

■ Dentistry: Registration**Luke Pollard:**[\[9150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many dentists who qualified outside the UK were given a performer number in each NHS region of England in each of the last five years; and what the average time was for the performer number to be given in each case.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate cost. However, there are currently 32,781 dentists on the Dental Performers List for England.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: JBS**Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:**[\[6700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to reports of JBS SA's involvement in illegal deforestation of the Amazon and allegations of practices of modern day slavery, if his Department will review any contracts awarded to this firm and its subsidiaries.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:[\[6701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the NHS procures any meat products from (a) JBS SA or (b) the UK subsidiaries of that company.

Edward Argar:

The Department does not hold any contracts with JBS SA or any of its subsidiaries. The NHS Supply Chain is the largest supplier of clinical and non-clinical products and consumables to the National Health Service. While NHS Supply Chain's framework contracts do not include JBS SA, one meat product is offered through a United Kingdom based distributor, Marillo Foods, which is a supplier on one framework contract.

Department of Health and Social Care: Radox Laboratories**Angela Rayner:**[\[2499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to response to the Return to an Address of the Honourable the House of Commons on 17 November 2021, for specified minutes, notes, and correspondence relating to Government contracts awarded to Radox Laboratories Ltd, HC1072, for what reason there is no entry in the register of ministerial meetings of (a) the Microsoft Teams meeting between the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation and Radox on 7 August 2020 to discuss a letter sent by the CEO of Radox to the Secretary of State on 6 August 2020, (b) the calls between the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation, Radox and Owen Paterson of 14 May 2020 and (c) the telephone call between the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation and the CEO of Radox over the weekend of 5-6 April 2020; and whether his Department holds minutes of those meetings.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: The Government is committed to publishing details of ministerial meetings with external organisations and aims to ensure that all meetings which meet the relevant criteria are included in the register. Where there are omissions, this is due to administrative error.

The Department does not hold a record of the meetings of 14 May 2020 and of 5 to 6 April 2020. The Department has identified a note of meeting on 7 August 2020, which was located following the Humble Address and the National Audit Office's investigation into the Department's contracts with Radox Laboratories Ltd. A copy of the note is attached, which has been redacted to remove personal information.

Attachments:

1. NOTE [PQ2499 - minutes of 7 August 2020_Redacted.pdf]

Ear Wax: Medical Treatments**Hilary Benn:**[\[13060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued to GP services in England about the treatment of excessive ear wax which has led to deafness.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) no longer advises manual ear syringing due to the associated risks, such as trauma to the ear drum or

infection. NICE suggests alternative arrangements for treatment of excessive ear wax, such as ear irrigation using an electronic irrigator, micro-suction or another method of earwax removal. General practitioner services are increasingly recommending self-care methods as the primary means to support the safe removal of ear wax, such as in cases of deafness. Commissioners should ensure that there is appropriate access to ear wax removal services where it is clinically appropriate for the patient.

■ **Emergency Services and First Aid**

Emma Hardy: [\[13229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of including First Responder and Emergency Medical Technicians amongst regulated professions.

Edward Argar:

No specific assessment has been made. However, we are committed to a proportionate system of safeguards for professionals working in the health and care system. We believe that statutory regulation of healthcare professionals should only be used where the risks to public and patient protection cannot be addressed in other ways, such as through employer oversight or accredited voluntary registration.

While the professions subject to statutory regulation is kept under review, we do not believe that there is an immediate case to amend those staff groups which are currently regulated.

■ **General Practitioners: Incentives**

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[11720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing senior academic General Practitioners to access clinical excellence awards.

Edward Argar:

The National Clinical Excellence Awards have been reformed and renamed the National Clinical Impact Awards. Academic general practitioners (GPs) are eligible to apply for an award if they meet the criteria within the 2022 guidance for applicants, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clinical-excellence-awards-application-guidance/guide-for-applicants-national-clinical-excellence-awards-2021-awards-round>

Access to the Local Clinical Excellence Award scheme is a contractual entitlement for all consultants employed on the 2003 terms and conditions. Academic GPs are not eligible for the scheme as they are employed on separate terms and conditions.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine

Andrew Gwynne: [\[13075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to establish a new implementation group to oversee the delivery of the new sexual and reproductive health strategy.

Maggie Throup:

Further information on implementation and governance will be provided in the forthcoming sexual and reproductive health strategy.

■ Health and Care Bill

Angela Rayner: [\[2500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 22 March 2022 to Question 109233 on Health and Care Bill, if he will place a copy of the minute of the meeting on 21 May 2021 between the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Innovation, Lord Farmer, and RK Trinity and Virgin Care, in the Library, with redactions if necessary.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 19 May 2022]: A copy of the minute, which has been redacted to remove personal information, is attached.

Attachments:

1. Minute [PQ2500 -- Minutes_Redacted.pdf]

■ Health Professions: Ukraine

Rachael Maskell: [\[13782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to support refugees from Ukraine who are (a) dentists and (b) other health professionals to acquire (i) language skills and (ii) registration to enable them to work in the UK.

Edward Argar:

The Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Refugee Employment Network to identify and support healthcare professionals who wish to practise in the United Kingdom. There are currently no specific plans to support dentists.

The General Dental Council is responsible for the UK's dental register and seeks to support refugees with registration applications. Its 'temporary register' may enable Ukrainian dentists work in specific posts under supervision while they prepare to register. Those aged 19 years old and over who have entered the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme or the Homes for Ukraine Scheme are able to access English for Speakers of Other Languages.

■ Long Covid: Clinics

Daisy Cooper: [\[13248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have attended a long-covid clinic; and how many of those patients have been attended to by phone appointment only.

Maria Caulfield:

From 5 July 2021 to 10 April 2022, 41,589 people received a specialist assessment following referral to a post-COVID-19 syndrome service.

Data on whether patients were assessed virtually or in person is not collected centrally. Many services triage patients by telephone following a referral from primary care to determine the appropriate care pathway prior to the initial specialist assessment in a clinic.

■ Long Covid: Medical Treatments

Catherine West: [\[13798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what specialist medical care is offered to people with long covid.

Catherine West: [\[13799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many specialist clinics treat patients with long covid in England; and what assessment he has made of whether additional specialist clinics are required to meet demand.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England has established more than 90 specialist services in England to assess adults, children and young people experiencing the long-term effects of COVID-19 infection and direct patients to appropriate care pathways. The 'Your COVID Recovery' online service also provides an interactive and personalised recovery programme.

While no formal assessment has been made, NHS England monitors provision of post-COVID-19 syndrome services to ensure patient needs are met.

■ Mental Health Act 1983

Mr Andrew Mitchell: [\[14439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's forthcoming reform of the Mental Health Act, if he will make it his policy to (a) ensure that legislative proposals address the concerns of respondents to the public consultation to the Mental Health Act White Paper about how the reforms will serve the needs of children and young people and (b) work closely with stakeholders to test and develop policy proposals concerning children and young people as part of a pre-legislative scrutiny process prior to the introduction of legislative proposals to Parliament.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[14460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to legislative proposals to report the Mental Health Act 1983 announced in the Queens Speech 2022, if he will include provisions to meet the needs of children and young people; and what plans he has to (a) consult stakeholders on policy proposals on children and young people and (b) provide for pre-legislative scrutiny of those proposals.

Cat Smith: [\[14516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's forthcoming reform of the Mental Health Act, if he will make it his policy to (a) ensure that legislative proposals address the concerns of respondents to the public consultation to the Mental Health Act White Paper about how the reforms will serve the needs of children and young people and (b) work closely with stakeholders to test and develop policy proposals concerning children and young people as part of a pre-legislative scrutiny process prior to the introduction of legislative proposals to Parliament.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[14557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's forthcoming reform of the Mental Health Act, what steps he plans to take to ensure that legislative proposals address the concerns of respondents to the public consultation to the Mental Health Act White Paper on how the reforms will serve the needs of children and young people.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[14558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's forthcoming reform of the Mental Health Act, if he will make it his policy to work closely with stakeholders to test and develop policy proposals concerning children and young people as part of a pre-legislative scrutiny process prior to the introduction of legislative proposals to Parliament.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[15237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in view of the Government's forthcoming reform of the Mental Health Act 1983, if he will include provisions in the Mental Health Bill following concerns raised by respondents in response to the consultation, Reforming the Mental Health Act, updated 24th August 2021, on how the reforms will serve the needs of children and young people; and if he will commit to working closely with stakeholders to test and develop policy proposals in respect of children and young people as part of the pre-legislative scrutiny process prior to the introduction of that Bill to Parliament.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government will publish a draft Mental Health Bill shortly. Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Bill will then be a matter for Parliament.

The Government consulted on the proposals for legislation made by the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act in 2018 and through the 'Reforming the Mental

Health Act' white paper, which received over 1,700 responses. We have also worked with charities to gather the views of people, including children and young people, who were either in inpatient services or had lived experience of the Act. The development of the draft Bill has been informed by these consultations.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

Rachael Maskell: [\[14522\]](#)

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:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Edmonton (Kate Osamor) on 8 June 2022 to Question [4642](#).

■ **National Child Measurement Programme**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[13100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether parents and carers can choose to prevent their children from engaging in the National Child Measurement Programme.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[13101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of children whose parents or carers have refused to allow them to engage with the National Child Measurement Programme.

Maggie Throup:

Through the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP), children attending state schools in England in Reception aged four to five years old and Year 6 aged 10 to 11 years old have their height and weight measured.

Prior to children being measured, parents receive a premeasurement letter informing them of the programme and giving them the opportunity and option to withdraw their child if they wish. This requirement is set out in the NCMP regulations. The letter provides relevant information about the programme including which data is collected and how it is used to allow parents to make an informed decision. A child who chooses not to participate on the day is not measured.

The number of children withdrawn by their parent or carer in the 2017/18 collection year was 19,960.

■ NHS Covid Pass

Sir Desmond Swayne: [\[13622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has for a Covid Pass.

Maggie Throup:

The NHS COVID Pass was launched on 17 May 2021. The COVID Pass allows English, Welsh and Isle of Man residents to demonstrate COVID vaccination status abroad and will continue to be developed in line with international standards. This is expected to remain a common requirement for international travel until the summer of 2023.

The Domestic Pass was removed on 12 May 2022 following the end of domestic certification.

■ NHS: Dental Services

Paula Barker: [\[13271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many dentist practices are not accepting NHS patients, broken down by each CCG area.

Maria Caulfield:

The data requested is not held centrally. Practices are responsible for regularly updating their NHS.UK profiles to inform the public whether new patients are accepted.

Paula Barker: [\[13272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the accessibility for patients of NHS funded dentistry care.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with stakeholders, including the British Dental Association (BDA), on improvements to the National Health Service dental system, with negotiations currently underway. This aims to improve patient access, reduce health inequalities and make the NHS a more attractive place to work for dentists. We will set out a timetable for implementation when these negotiations conclude.

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 for patients.

Luke Pollard: [\[9147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many dentists delivered NHS care in each of the last five years in each region of England.

Maria Caulfield:

The following table shows the number of dentists with National Health Service activity in each region in England in each of the last five years.

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
London	4,179	4,548	4,495	4,435	4,380
South West	2,560	2,664	2,656	2,692	2,700
South East	4,136	4,442	4,499	4,458	4,351
Midlands	4,341	4,549	4,479	4,428	4,311
East of England	2,955	3,129	3,141	3,088	3,024
North West	3,301	3,438	3,368	3,360	3,312
North East and Yorkshire	3,840	3,956	3,979	3,928	3,939

■ NHS: Pay

Darren Jones:[\[13806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing the pay of NHS staff in line with the rate of inflation.

Edward Argar:

The Government is looking to the independent Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) for a pay recommendation for the National Health Service. The PRBs consist of industry experts and recommendations are based on an assessment of evidence from stakeholders, including NHS system partners, trade unions, and the Government. These recommendations are informed by factors such as the cost of living and inflation, recruitment and retention, affordability and value for the taxpayer. We expect to formally receive the PRBs' report shortly and we will consider the recommendations.

Beth Winter:[\[8206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish any modelling his Department has (a) conducted or (b) received for the 2022 pay review round on the impact on staff retention at different pay offers.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 6 June 2022]: The Government has not conducted or received any specific modelling for the 2022/2023 pay review round on the impact on staff retention. The Government has asked the independent Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) to

make a recommendation on pay for all National Health Service staff not in multi-year deals.

As part of this process, the Department provided written evidence to the PRBs including information on the recruitment, retention and motivation of NHS staff. In formulating the recommendations, the PRBs also consider evidence from a range of stakeholders, including NHS system partners, and trade unions. The Government will consider the PRBs recommendations when received.

■ **NHS: Staff**

Feryal Clark: [\[11902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a funding plan for the 15 year NHS workforce plan.

Edward Argar:

In January 2022 the Department commissioned NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop a long-term workforce strategy. The conclusions of this work will be published in due course. Publication of funding plans will be subject to business and financial planning and investment decisions. Funding plans beyond the current Spending Review period will be subject to the outcome of future Spending Reviews.

■ **Pancreatic Cancer: Health Services**

Afzal Khan: [\[8159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to include pancreatic cancer in the 10-Year Cancer Plan for England.

Maria Caulfield:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Scunthorpe (Holly Mumby-Croft) on 24 May 2022 to Question [3800](#).

■ **Pancreatic Cancer: Mortality Rates**

Richard Fuller: [\[11638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the 10 Year Cancer Plan will include a strategy to improve pancreatic cancer survival rates; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure improved survival rates from pancreatic cancer.

Maria Caulfield:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Scunthorpe (Holly Mumby-Croft MP) on 24 May 2022 to Question [3800](#).

■ **Refugees: Ukraine**

Alex Sobel: [\[11850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to provide mental health provision for the civilians fleeing conflict in Ukraine.

Gillian Keegan:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 June 2022 to Question [11851](#).

■ Sepsis: Health Services**Sir Oliver Heald:****[8938]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS hospitals follow the sepsis six care pathway approach; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally. However, all 29 pathology networks in the National Health Service in England have the capability to undertake the tests required to support the diagnosis of sepsis. Healthcare providers are encouraged to adopt the National Early Warning Score (NEWS2) which supports clinicians to identify and respond to patients at risk of acute deterioration, including those with suspected sepsis. Since 2019, NEWS2 has been implemented in 100% of ambulance trusts and all except one acute trust in England.

■ Sexually Transmitted Diseases**Andrew Gwynne:****[13076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the World Health Organisation's goal to end STIs as a public health concern by 2030.

Maggie Throup:

While no formal assessment has been made, the Government supports the broad objectives of the World Health Organization's Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The forthcoming sexual and reproductive health strategy for England will set out plans to improve outcomes and wellbeing, including addressing STIs. The strategy will focus on reducing the harms associated with STIs, including reducing the incidence and adverse outcomes such as stillbirths or infertility and tackling stigma, morbidity and mortality.

■ Social Services: Training**Rachael Maskell:****[14523]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the £500 million of funding over the next three years to support the development of social care staff includes specific training on Parkinson's-related dementia; and what plans his Department has for the delivery of training under that funding.

Gillian Keegan:

We will invest £500 million over the next three years to support and develop the workforce. We will produce a sector-wide Knowledge and Skills Framework and a linked learning and development offer to fund qualifications and training to improve skills and support the workforce to develop further expertise and progress within roles and the sector.

Later this year we will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for the next 10 years, including a focus on dementia training.

■ **Tourette's Syndrome: Health Services**

Derek Thomas: **[11786]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to (a) address the absence of NICE guidance on Tourette's Syndrome and (b) ensure that any new guidance addresses (i) diagnosis, (ii) treatment and (iii) ongoing support.

Gillian Keegan:

There are no current plans for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to develop a guideline on Tourette's syndrome. NICE's guideline on suspected neurological conditions covers the initial assessment of symptoms and signs which may indicate a neurological condition and makes recommendations on tics and involuntary movement in children. Best practice guidance on the management of Tourette's syndrome is available from the British Medical Journal at the following link:

<https://bestpractice.bmj.com/topics/en-gb/1042>.

Derek Thomas: **[11787]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the (a) diagnosis, (b) treatment and (c) support for (i) children with Tourette's Syndrome and (ii) their families.

Gillian Keegan:

The majority of services for people with Tourette's syndrome are commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups, which are best placed to plan the provision of services, subject to local prioritisation and funding. Services to support diagnosis, treatment and support for children with Tourette's Syndrome and their families are commissioned through local community paediatric services or child and adolescent mental health services.

For those who require more detailed specialist support, there are a small number of recognised services with focused multidisciplinary teams assessing and supporting children with tics, Tourette's syndrome and motor stereotypies and their families. These centres have internationally recognised expertise in the assessment and management of Tourette's syndrome and frequently discuss complex patients in an informal clinical network.

■ **Unispace Global: Protective Clothing**

Dawn Butler: **[11573]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, from which companies Unispace Global Ltd purchased personal protective equipment in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

Edward Argar:

We are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive.

■ University Hospital of North Durham: Hospital Beds**Mary Kelly Foy:**[\[10013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of bed capacity at University Hospital North Durham in relation to the local population.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 6 June 2022]: No specific assessment has been made. However, NHS England and NHS Improvement advise that County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust assessed the demand on services and reviewed current bed capacity at University Hospital North Durham as part of its annual planning requirement. In response, an additional 24 beds will be made available during the second half of 2022/23.

■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme**Mick Whitley:**[\[11866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long the average claim to the Vaccine Damages Payment Scheme takes to be (a) investigated and (b) processed.

Maggie Throup:

The NHS Business Services Authority investigates and processes an average claim in approximately six months from the date of receipt. Medical assessments for each claim commence once the NHS Business Services Authority receives full medical records from a claimant's general practitioner, medical providers, local authorities and other relevant healthcare providers. Once sufficient evidence is gathered, claims are assessed by an independent and experienced medical adviser. The NHS Business Services Authority provides updates on progress to the individual claimant.

Sir Christopher Chope:[\[14411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many claims for payments under the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme were assessed by the Government's contractor, Crawford and Company, in the weeks beginning (a) 16 May, (b) 23 May and (c) 30 May 2022; and what was the outcome of those assessments.

Maggie Throup:

The Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme medical assessments commenced from the week of 23 May 2020, with none currently concluded. As these claims are the first related to COVID-19 to be assessed under the Scheme, the NHS Business Services Authority is unable to provide a timescale for the conclusion of these assessments. The NHS Business Services Authority is updating claimants on progress and working with the supplier to progress the cases

As medical assessments have recently commenced, initially the number of cases is being limited to ensure effective and consistent training of medical assessors and therefore outcomes. The NHS Business Services Authority intends to increase the number of medical assessments to ensure claims are assessed as soon as possible.

The following table shows the number of cases shared with Crawford and Company for medical assessment in the weeks commencing 23 May and 30 May 2022.

WEEK COMMENCING	NUMBER OF CLAIMS SENT FOR MEDICAL ASSESSMENT
23 May 2022	10
30 May 2022	10

Nadia Whittome:

[\[9227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the capacity to deliver the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme to ensure there are no delays to payments of that scheme.

Maggie Throup:

Following the transfer of the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme's administrative function to the NHS Business Services Authority in November 2021, the NHS Business Services Authority has increased the size of team processing these claims. The NHS Business Services Authority has procured a new medical assessment contract, awarded on 21 March 2022. The supplier is establishing its systems and staff to commence assessments as soon as possible. Medical assessments for each claim will be undertaken once the NHS Business Services Authority receives full medical records from a claimant's general practitioner, medical providers, local authorities and other relevant healthcare providers. The NHS Business Services Authority is now digitising and modernising the claimants' process, including an online application.

■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme: Greater London

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[6704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been paid under the Vaccine Damage Payment scheme in (a) the UK, (b) the London Borough of Havering and (c) Romford.

Maggie Throup:

From its inception to 25 May 2022 inclusive, 947 claimants in the United Kingdom have received a payment from the Vaccine Damage Payment scheme.

We are unable to provide the information requested on claimants in Havering and Romford as this relates to personal information which could identify individuals.

HOME OFFICE■ **Asylum**

Zarah Sultana: [\[11880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) adjustments, (b) translation services and (c) other support her Department (i) has in place and (ii) plans to put in place for people seeking asylum who may initially provide incorrect personal details as a result of either translation issues or fear of political persecution in their country of origin.

Kevin Foster:

All asylum claimants undergo a screening interview with the option of having an interpreter present.

If inaccuracies are identified with the information they have previously provided Home Office systems are amended and relevant checks are re-run.

■ **Asylum: Northern Ireland**

Claire Hanna: [\[13269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people seeking asylum are residing in Northern Ireland and have an asylum claim that has been ongoing for 36 months or longer as of 6 June 2022, by parliamentary constituency.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office are unable to state how people seeking asylum are residing in Northern Ireland and have an asylum claim that has been ongoing for 36 months or longer as of 6 June 2022, by Parliamentary constituency as this information is not routinely reported.

The Home Office do report on the number of cases that have been open over 36 months and can be found at Asy_03: [Immigration and protection data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

■ **Asylum: RAF Linton-on-Ouse**

Alison Thewliss: [\[8032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to impose entry and exit restrictions on people housed at the new asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

Alison Thewliss: [\[8034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's timescale is for commencing use of the Linton-on-Ouse site to house people seeking asylum.

Alison Thewliss: [\[8035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to set a maximum length of time that a person can be housed at the proposed Linton-on-Ouse asylum accommodation centre.

Alison Thewliss: [\[8036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the maximum number of residents is for the proposed Linton-on-Ouse asylum accommodate site.

Alison Thewliss: [\[8037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether residents will sleep in (a) dormitories or (b) shared rooms at the new asylum accommodation centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse; and what the capacity is of those rooms.

Alison Thewliss: [\[8038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff will be required at the Linton-on-Ouse asylum reception centre and how many of those staff have been recruited.

Kevin Foster:

We have been developing proposals to accommodate asylum seekers at Linton-on-Ouse once it is safe and lawful to do so. We would only consider accommodating individuals onsite once all the legal requirements have been met.

We are undertaking feasibility assessments to understand what the capacity of the site is. To meaningfully relieve the pressures on our accommodation estate, we would initially look to accommodate circa 60 people at Linton, then using a phased approach increase occupancy.

Accommodation at Linton would consist primarily of single, double, and triple rooms with a small number of four-person rooms. Where rooms are shared by service users, the size of the rooms will be in accordance with accommodation regulations.

The number of staff required at Linton-on-Ouse will vary depending on the number of asylum seekers onsite. This would ensure we have the required number of staff to support delivery of services to asylum seekers accommodated at Linton-on-Ouse.

The accommodation centre at Linton-on-Ouse would be non-detained. We take safeguarding of asylum seekers seriously which is why we would ask residents and visitors to sign in and out of the site.

■ Home Office: Non-departmental Public Bodies

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[11652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on her Department's involvement in applications for non-departmental public body appointments.

Damian Hinds:

Ministers make public appointments in line with the Cabinet Office Governance Code on Public Appointments.

This code sets out the principles that underpin all public appointments.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578498/governance_code_on_public_appointments_16_12_2016.pdf

■ Home Office: Photographs and Video Recordings**Angela Rayner:****[11691]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many photographers and video producers were employed by her Department in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Tom Pursglove:

No photographers were employed during this period.

Three people have been employed as videographers over the course of the period 2019-2021, including one contractor: 2019 (1), 2020 (1), 2021 (3, with two employed at one time).

They have worked in the department's social media team within the Communications Directorate.

■ Home Office: Red Snapper Group**Emily Thornberry:****[11606]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to contract reference CF-0248900D5800000L5A4EAK1, published on 31 May 2022, on what issues the external adviser recruited through Red Snapper Ltd., under the terms of that contract, is advising her Department.

Tom Pursglove:

The contract in question is to provide Policing Subject Matter Expertise, supporting the delivery of Police Professionalisation internationally through CSSF (Conflict, Stability and Security Fund) programmes.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme**Daisy Cooper:****[13244]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 June 2022 to Question 6921 on Homes for Ukraine Scheme, notwithstanding the availability of the MPs Urgent Enquiries email inbox and the Portcullis House walk-in hub, what the average call wait time was until calls were answered in the latest period for which data is available.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 9 June 2022]: As mentioned in the previous response several options are available to Hon and Rt Hon members to pursue their query, with additional resources having been made available to support this.

From 1st June to 6th June the average waiting time for those using Option 2, indicating it is a Ukraine related query, on the MPs Enquiry Line was 25 mins and 9 seconds

Members: Correspondence**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[13146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to the emails of 6 April and 25 May 2022 from the office of the hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth regarding an outstanding naturalisation application.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the Hon. Member's correspondence on 7 June 2022.

Noise: Nuisance**Hilary Benn:**[\[11558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 157275 on Noise: Nuisance, which specific powers that are available to the police in Scotland to deal with noise complaints she plans to introduce in England and Wales.

Kit Malthouse:

The relevant Scottish legislation is Section 54 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

Passports: Applications**Ian Byrne:**[\[10039\]](#)

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 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.

Yvette Cooper: [\[1108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications processed by her Department missed the 10-week processing target in each year since 2015.

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.

Between March and May, over 90% of applications processed were completed within six weeks, with approximately 98.5% completed within ten weeks.

Justin Madders: [\[1193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average processing time is for (a) a child's and (b) an adult's (i) first passport and (ii) passport renewal as of 12 May 2022.

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.

Between March and May, over 90% of applications processed were completed within six weeks, with approximately 98.5% completed within ten weeks.

Chi Onwurah: [\[13116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce delays in processing passport renewal applications.

Kevin Foster:

Over 5 million people delayed their passport applications in 2020 and 2021, and as passport demand has returned applications will take longer. Since April 2021, customers have been advised it takes up to ten weeks to process a passport application. Between March and May, over 90% of applications processed were completed within six weeks, with approximately 98.5% completed within ten weeks.

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

Louise Haigh: [\[13189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 9065 on Passports: applications, how many and what proportion of passport applications were dealt with within 10 weeks.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 9 June 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.

Between March and May, over 90% of applications processed were completed within six weeks, with approximately 98.5% completed within ten weeks.

Louise Haigh:[\[13190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of current passport applications are not processed within 10 weeks.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 9 June 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.

Between March and May, over 90% of applications processed were completed within six weeks, with approximately 98.5% completed within ten weeks.

■ Police: Emergency Calls**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[11660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the length of time it takes police service to answer 999 calls.

Kit Malthouse:

Police forces are operationally independent and the handling of 999 calls is a matter for them. Each force has its own unique set of pressures and challenges that may affect their response to 999 calls, including geography, demographic changes and local crime trends. It is for Police Chief Constables and elected Police and Crime Commissioners and Mayors to take these into account when setting their local priorities and approaches.

The Home Office is making sure that the police have the resources they need to beat crime, which remains one of the Government's top priorities. We also know that transparency is important, to help the public hold the police and their PCCs to account. That is why on the 31st May we published league tables for the first time showing 999 call answering times.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan**Brendan O'Hara:**[\[9892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people that will be resettled in the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme UNHCR pathway in 2022.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[9894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people, including principals and relatives, have been supported through Community Sponsorship under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme as of 26 May 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 10 June 2022]: The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) commenced on 6 th January, providing up to 20,000 women, children and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK.

We helped over 15,000 people to safety in the biggest and fastest emergency evacuation in recent history, and we have continued to bring people to the UK, with over 3,000 people helped to enter since the evacuation.

In light of the success of our evacuation efforts, we expect to exceed our initial aim of resettling 5,000 through the Scheme in the first year.

Community Sponsorship provides the opportunity for friends and neighbours, charities and faith groups to play a direct role in supporting families resettled to the UK as they restart their lives here. Sponsors are able to welcome and support families through the ACRS.

The number resettled through the ACRS and Community Sponsorship will be published soon in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[9895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) British nationals and (b) relatives of those nationals have been or are being resettled under the first pathway of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (i) during and (ii) since Operation Pitting.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 10 June 2022]: 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.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan and Ukraine

Brendan O'Hara: [\[9893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff and contractors (a) are processing cases for the (i) Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and (ii) Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and (b) have been redeployed from (A) ARAP and (B) ACRS to support the (1) Ukraine family reunification and (2) Homes for Ukraine schemes.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 10 June 2022]: We are committed to ensuring our operational teams have the resources they need to run an efficient and effective system, and we actively monitor workflows to ensure sufficient resources are in place to meet demand, including from pressures relating to the situations in Afghanistan and Ukraine.

■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence**Catherine West:**[\[11777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the British Retail Consortium 2022 Crime Survey.

Catherine West:[\[11778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle crime against retail workers in their place of work.

Catherine West:[\[11779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with representatives of the retail sector on crime against retail workers in their place of work.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is working closely with retailers, trade organisations and enforcement partners via the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) to ensure the response to crimes affecting the retail sector is as robust as it can be. The NRCSG is co-chaired by Tom Ironside, Director of Business & Regulation at the British Retail Consortium and me. This is an important forum to discuss crime issues experienced by retailers and to work together to find solutions.

The Government has taken action to tackle violence and abuse by introducing a statutory aggravating factor via the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The public facing nature of the victim's role will be considered an aggravating factor when it comes to sentencing for assault offences. It applies where an assault is committed against those providing a public service, performing a public duty or providing a service to the public. This rightly includes those working in retail and other public-facing roles. The provision will commence on 28 June and builds on the important work already underway through the NRCSG to ensure assaults are not seen as part of a retail worker's job.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Foreign Investment in UK and Overseas Trade: India

Matt Vickers: [\[13282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has had recent discussions with her Indian counterpart on increasing (a) trade with and (b) foreign direct investment from India.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom's trading relationship with India was worth £24.3 billion in 2021 and we are already India's top investment destination in Europe. A trade deal with India could take our trading relationship even further.

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade recently met her counterpart, Indian Minister Goyal in London, to discuss the opportunities between both our countries.

■ Overseas Trade: British Overseas Territories

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[11664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to increase trade with the UK Overseas Territories.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Department for International Trade continues to work with the British Overseas Territories and has included an extension mechanism in trade deals, giving them the opportunity to be part of these should they choose.

■ Trade Agreements: Switzerland

Matt Vickers: [\[13281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of amending the UK's trading relationship with Switzerland.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government recognises the merits of strengthening our trading relationship with Switzerland and has kickstarted work on an enhanced trade deal.

While many British businesses currently benefit from tariff-free trade on goods, we want to do more for our world-leading services sector in particular, where we benefit from over £12 billion in exports to Switzerland annually. A new deal will seek to expand our relationship into industries of the future, including digital trade.

JUSTICE

■ Community Orders: Unpaid Work

Steve Reed:

[\[13736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the number of offenders with community sentences that were permitted to complete unpaid work from home in each of the last three years.

Kit Malthouse:

Independent working projects (formerly known as Project in a Box) enable eligible people on probation to complete some of their hours from home. They were introduced as a temporary delivery method in response to COVID-19 restrictions and have enabled us to maximise delivery as the Probation Service recovers from the impact of the pandemic. Independent working projects were not in use prior to April 2020.

Independent working projects are currently only being deployed in a limited and targeted way to support our recovery from COVID-19. We will be conducting a review of independent working projects in the summer with a view to phase out their use completely by September.

In 2020 – 2021 a total of 3680 offenders with community sentences were given an Independent working project as part of their sentence.

In 2021 – 2022 a total of 9385 offenders with community sentences were given an Independent working project as part of their sentence.

This data was sourced from the Probation Case Management System, nDelius. While reasonable efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of this data, the inaccuracy inherent in any large-scale administrative data source means data should not be assumed to be accurate to the last unit presented.

■ Courts: Databases

Steve Reed:

[\[13737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department is taking steps to standardise listing data across courts in England and Wales.

James Cartlidge:

The allocation and listing of individual cases is a judicial responsibility. The Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice does, though, continue to take steps to support the judiciary in efforts to improve listing practice, and recognises that having a standardised, transparent view of court data will help senior judges to consider how improvements and greater consistency can be achieved.

The HMCTS Reform Programme will deliver a strategic, national scheduling and listing tool to support judges in listing cases across all courts, replacing the range of systems currently in use by October 2022. The new tool “List Assist” will provide an efficient and effective, standardised listing system, with improved data.

Steve Reed:

[13738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans HMCTS has to further update on progress against recommendations from Dr Natalie Byrom's 2019 report on data and academic engagement.

James Cartlidge:

HMCTS has published two progress updates to the original Digital Justice report. The first update was published in October 2019 and is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hmcts-response-and-progress-update-on-dr-natalie-byrom-report>.

The second update was published in December 2021 alongside the HMCTS data strategy. The 2021 update report can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038714/HMCTS_Data_Update_December_2021.pdf.

Delivery of the recommendations continues as part of the HMCTS Reform programme, as set out in our December 2021 report. That publication also includes how we have engaged externally, including with academics, and will continue to do so. There are no current plans for a further standalone publication so soon after the last one. HMCTS will continue to report on the implementation of the recommendations through appropriate mechanisms, including to Parliamentary committees.

Steve Reed:

[13740]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) potential merits and (b) risks of introducing unique identifiers for people in the justice system.

James Cartlidge:

A full assessment of the impact has not been carried out, however we have been considering where such an identifier might be used in the future.

Our work on replacing legacy technologies opens up the potential for progressing this, and as part of this work we would assess the risks and impacts further.

We are also engaged more broadly with the Government Digital Service on their single ID for government programme.

■ Cremation: Fees and Charges

Charlotte Nichols:

[11892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to remove doctor's fees for cremations.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government's response to the 2016 consultation on reforms to death certification in England and Wales set out plans to remove cremation medical referees, as well as

the two cremation medical certificates (forms Cremation 4 and Cremation 5), with the associated fees, following implementation of a statutory medical examiner scheme.

Form Cremation 5 was permanently removed on 25 March and we are committed to removing form Cremation 4 once the statutory medical examiner system has been implemented in full. Cremation medical referees will also be removed after a transitional period following full implementation.

■ Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review

Steve Reed:

[\[14496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish a timeline for his Department's implementation of the recommendations of Sir Christopher Bellamy's Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid.

James Cartlidge:

The Government's consultation on the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review is now closed. I am grateful to everyone who provided constructive feedback on the future of the sector. We will respond as soon as possible so we can implement the final proposals, including increased funding for practitioners.

■ Criminal Records

Ellie Reeves:

[\[11813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of implementing a system for sealing criminal records as employed in many US states.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government agrees with the conclusion of the 2017 Justice Select Committee report, 'Disclosure of youth criminal records', which found that, whilst there may be some merits in a mechanism whereby records could become 'sealed', this would create "unsustainable pressures" on the body responsible for deciding if a record should be sealed. While this report focused only on youth cases, this finding and the Government's conclusion would also apply to adult offenders. As the report recommended, we are instead focused on using and reforming the existing automatic filtering system.

In November 2020 we implemented secondary legislation that changed the rules governing criminal records disclosure for those working with children, vulnerable adults or in a position of public trust, removing (for example) the requirement to disclose youth cautions. Further changes introduced by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act significantly reduce the length of time that someone needs to disclose their criminal record for custodial sentences of under four years and community sentences.

We believe that these reforms will continue to ensure we strike the right balance between public protection and ensuring that individuals who have ceased offending can move on with their lives as quickly as possible.

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Agency Workers

Steve Reed: [\[14499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) number and (b) cost of agency staff working in HM Courts and Tribunals Service was in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

The number and cost of agency staff working in HM Courts and Tribunals Service in each of the last five years, are detailed in the following table:

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER	COST £000
2017-18	1,987	75,820
2018-19	1,954	70,142
2019-20	2,141	78,421
2020-21	2,174	91,010
2021-22 *	2,332	88,709

The number is based on the average number of full-time equivalent agency staff.

* 2021-22 numbers are draft numbers until the NAO audit of the Annual Report and Accounts is complete.

■ Independent Monitoring Boards: Finance

Zarah Sultana: [\[11879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funding his Department has made available to the independent monitoring board in 2022-23; and how does that figure compare to the funding for 2021-22.

Victoria Atkins:

Ministry of Justice resource funding for the Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBs) for 2022/23 is £2.67m - an increase from £2.23m in 2021/22.

The department has also provided the IMBs with £0.5m of capital funding, which will fund the development of a new organisational database to support improvements to member recruitment and retention.

■ Magistrates' Courts: Wakefield

Alex Cunningham: [\[14481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases were heard at Wakefield Magistrates' Court in each of the five years before its closure.

Alex Cunningham:

[14482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the backlog of outstanding cases was at (a) Leeds Magistrates' Court and (b) Leeds Crown Court (i) at the end of March and (b) in each year since 2010.

James Cartlidge:

PQ 14481

In response to this request, we have interpreted 'cases heard' as the number of receipts.

Wakefield Magistrates' Court closed in September 2016; therefore, these figures only exist up to Q3 2016. We do not hold caseload data prior to Q2 2012 for Magistrates' courts. We have only agreed to close a court where sufficient capacity existed in other nearby courts to accommodate the work of the closing courts.

Receipts at Wakefield magistrates' court (Q2 2012 - Q3 2016)

YEAR	RECEIPTS
2012 (Q2-Q4)	4,164
2013	9,253
2014	10,301
2015	10,929
2016 (Q1-Q3)	4,805

PQ 14482

The Ministry of Justice has published information on outstanding Crown Court cases by courthouse up to December 2021, in the '*Crown Court cases received, disposed and outstanding tool*' available at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2021>

Outstanding cases at Leeds magistrates' court and Crown Court (Q2 2012 – Q4 2021)

YEAR	LEEDS MAGISTRATES' COURT	LEEDS CROWN COURT
2012	3,415	-
2013	2,935	-
2014	3,703	1,579
2015	3,555	1,688

YEAR	LEEDS MAGISTRATES' COURT	LEEDS CROWN COURT
2016	3,327	1,206
2017	4,281	1,301
2018	4,481	1,156
2019	4,709	1,308
2020	7,448	1,919
2021	5,533	1,839

Magistrates' Court and Crown Court figures are only available from 2012 and 2014 respectively. The number of outstanding cases is taken from the final month of each calendar year, e.g., as at the end of December.

■ Ministry of Justice: Databases

Steve Reed: [\[13739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much funding has been allocated to improvements in his Department's data infrastructure in 2022-23.

James Cartlidge:

In financial year 2022/23, Ministry of Justice Digital has allocated £1m to improvements in its data infrastructure. In addition, for 2022/23, £3 million has been allocated within MoJ HQ to fund data improvement and £2 million has been allocated as part of a Criminal Justice System data improvement programme.

In line with its published data strategy, HMCTS has also been investing in its data function. This includes a £1 million annual uplift to the running costs of the team and £6.2 million investment in the financial year 2022/23.

■ Ministry of Justice: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Steve Reed: [\[14498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to publish a strategy on his Department's role in the delivery of net zero by 2050.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice intends to publish its Net Zero Carbon Strategy later this year.

■ Ministry of Justice: Staff

Steve Reed: [\[14500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what modelling his Department has undertaken on possible reductions to the number of officials working at (a) his Department and (b) associated public bodies.

James Cartlidge:

Following the announcement of the Government's intention to reduce the size of the civil service to 2016 levels, the Ministry of Justice and our associated public bodies continue to keep staffing levels under regular review. This is part of our efforts to ensure we have the necessary resources to continue delivering our essential public services and fulfil our commitments.

■ Offenders: Unemployment**Ellie Reeves:**[\[11812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has commissioned a study on the costs of unemployment among ex-offenders.

Kit Malthouse:

We know that the economic and social cost of reoffending is approximately £18 billion per year. Evidence also shows that prison leavers who get a job within a year after release are up to nine percentage points less likely to reoffend compared to those who do not.

That is why we are committed to delivering a presumption in favour of offering offenders the chance to work in prison, on Release on Temporary Licence and on release, including by building stronger links with employers. We are on track to roll out Prison Employment Leads, Employment Hubs and Employment Advisory Boards across all 91 resettlement prisons by April 2023.

The proportion of prisoners released from custody employed at six months from their release rose by almost two thirds to 23% between April 2021 and March 2022.

■ Prisoners' Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme**Ellie Reeves:**[\[11806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which prisons have established a forum for officers and prisoners to review the fairness and effectiveness of their incentives and earned privileges regime.

Victoria Atkins:

The Incentives Policy Framework mandates that forums must be in place to review the fairness and effectiveness of the local incentives policy, including the efficacy of the incentives on offer. It also confirms that they must involve staff and prisoners, including all prisoner groups with protected characteristics where present in the local population.

All prisons either have a specific forum in place to discuss the incentives policy or facilitate the opportunity to do so through other methods. The capacity for such forums to take place has been reduced during the pandemic, however, as the majority of Covid restrictions within prisons are being removed regular operation is returning.

■ Prisoners: Restraint Techniques

Ellie Reeves: [\[11807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will provide details of the members of use of force committees in each prison, broken down by ethnicity.

Ellie Reeves: [\[11808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which prison use of force committees have a member whose remit is to consider the interests of prisoners.

Victoria Atkins:

HMPPS has accepted recommendation 25 of the Lammy Review, which states prison governors should ensure Use of Force Committees are not ethnically homogeneous and involve at least one individual, such as a member of the prison's Independent Monitoring Board, with an explicit remit to consider the interests of prisoners.

A Use of Force Good Practice Guide has been produced and issued to all governors, reiterating this recommendation from the Lammy Review. Whilst this information is not collected centrally, all governors have been written to by the Director of Security Order and Counter Terrorism, restating the expectation that Use of Force Committees should be ethnically diverse and should have a member whose remit is to consider the interests of prisoners.

■ Prisons: Complaints

Ellie Reeves: [\[11809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the number of prisons that have adopted a problem-solving approach to tackling complaints; and whether complainants are able to state what action they want taken as a result of an investigation into their complaint.

Victoria Atkins:

The current Prisoner Complaints policy framework was published in August 2019 and implemented across all prisons in England and Wales. There is a clear requirement within this for staff in all prisons to adopt a problem-solving approach and give prisoners the opportunity to state what they want to see happen as a result of their complaint.

Operational managers are required to complete routine checks of samples of complaint forms in order assure themselves of the quality of responses and address any staff training issues. Work is underway with the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's complaints leads to review this assurance process.

Outside of this process, people in prison are also able to submit a DIRF (Discrimination Incident Reporting Form) if they perceive that they have experienced, or witnessed, an incident of discrimination. This process is confidential and each incident must be investigated via a designated process within a set timeline.

■ Prisons: Staff

Ellie Reeves:

[\[11810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will provide details of the ethnicity of prison staff, broken down by each (a) prison and (b) ethnic group.

Victoria Atkins:

The figures for the number of Public Sector Prison and Youth Custody Estate staff in post are published and available in Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service's workforce quarterly publication. The latest figures can be found here in Table 5a and b of HMPPS workforce statistics bulletin: March 2022 tables:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-march-2022>.

This publication provides headline statistics at an organisational, group/division level. We are not able to break this down further to establishment level.

■ Prisons: Standards

Ellie Reeves:

[\[11811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service has made on developing performance indicators for prisons on equality of (a) treatment and (b) outcomes for BAME and white prisoners.

Victoria Atkins:

We recognise that race disparities persist in the Criminal Justice System, and we are committed to actively tackling the impact of this across MoJ. As part of this commitment, in December 2020 HMPPS launched the Race Action Programme (RAP), which builds on the MoJ Race Action Plan.

The RAP will increase the diversity of our workforce, address the risk of bias in our policies and tackle disparity in outcomes for prisoners, people on probation and children in our system. This will also help to reduce reoffending and enhance rehabilitative practices.

Prisons use a monitoring tool which shows the distribution of prisoner protected characteristics across a range of components of prison life. This includes prisoners placed on the incentives scheme, as well as adjudications and complaints. The tool will be expanded to include other areas such as release on temporary licence and use of force.

Governors use this tool to monitor the characteristics of their local prison population, and in this way can better explain local conditions and discern whether changes may be warranted.

■ Vagrancy Act 1824: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[13794]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been (a) charged and (b) prosecuted under the Vagrancy Act 1824 in each police force area in Wales each year since 2012.

James Cartlidge:

The Government accepts that the Vagrancy Act 1824 is outdated and has recently consulted on proposed replacement legislation for the Act. The Act will be repealed with delayed commencement under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities are working on replacement legislation.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions for offences under the Vagrancy Act 1824, by police force area, for 2017 to 2021, available in the 'Outcomes by Offence' data tool, which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1076459/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2021-v2.xlsx.

The same information back to 2013 is available in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code' data tool, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063892/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2020-revised.xlsx.

Please see the attached table for the number of prosecutions by police force areas in Wales for 2012.

In the data tool linked above, you can use the 'Offence code' filter to select the offences of interest. The following is a list of offences that fall within the Vagrancy Act 1824:

- 10431 – Resisting or obstructing a constable in execution of duty - offences under the Vagrancy Act 1824
- 18200 – Wandering abroad or being in any street etc to beg or gather alms or causing or procuring any child so to do
- 18300 – Wandering abroad and lodging in any barn, outhouse, deserted or unoccupied building, etc. or in the open air, etc.
- 18501 – Being on enclosed premises for an unlawful purpose
- 18801 – Any petty chapman or peddler trading without a licence
- 18805 – Collecting alms or endeavouring to procure charitable contributions by fraudulent pretence

To isolate data for each police force area in Wales, use the 'Police force area' filter to select:

- North Wales

- South Wales
- Dyfed-Powys
- Gwent

The Ministry of Justice does not hold information on charges given.

Attachments:

1. 13794_table [2022-06-13 PQ 13794 -2012 table .xlsx]

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ All Party Parliamentary Groups: Finance

Zarah Sultana:

[\[11885\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if he will make an assessment of the compatibility of the level of funding for all party parliamentary groups (APPGs) received from the private sector since 2018 with public interest; and if he will hold discussions with relevant stakeholders on the potential merits of regulating the provision of corporate funding and benefits in-kind to APPGs.

Mark Spencer:

The rules governing APPGs are ultimately a matter for the House. I welcome the Committee on Standards' recent report 'All-Party Parliamentary Groups: improving governance and regulation' which is available on its website (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/22081/documents/163809/default/>). As the Committee notes, APPGs contribute to the work of Parliament, providing an informal framework for cross-party and bicameral work and facilitating access to the political system for many organisations and individuals who might perhaps be excluded. I welcome the Committee's suggestion of the House carefully considering the regulation and transparency of the funding and support of APPGs. Ultimately, any decisions on how to improve the regulation and functioning of APPGs will be for the House to make as a whole and I look forward to seeing the Committee's final proposals for reform in this area.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Energy Bills Rebate

Steve McCabe:

[\[11549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason non-direct debit applications for the council tax energy rebate are required to be verified via a credit and bank check before a payment is issued.

Kemi Badenoch:

Councils should undertake pre-payment checks prior to the payment of any rebate which is not awarded to the holder of a live direct debit instruction. The checks are

intended to help reduce the risk of fraud or error through ensuring the person applying for the rebate is entitled to the payment and that the payment details provided belong to an entitled person and relate to the relevant address.

Grahame Morris: [\[13696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what data his Department holds on the percentage of Councils that have issued all their energy rebate payments to people who pay by (a) direct debit and (b) non-direct debit as of 7 June 2022.

Kemi Badenoch:

My Department is processing data on delivery of the council tax rebate and intends to publish this data in due course.

■ Freeports

Emily Thornberry: [\[11602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to publish the framework and guidance provided by his Department to the UK's new freeports on compliance with the programme's monitoring and evaluation requirements.

Neil O'Brien:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the answer I gave to question UIN 11601 on 08/06/2022.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-01/11601>

■ Gazprom

John Howell: [\[14461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department is taking steps to enable local councils to avoid contracts with Gazprom.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government was pleased to lay the *Local Government (Exclusion of Non-commercial Considerations) (England) Order 2022* on Wednesday 25th May, as set out here: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/ukdsi/2022/9780348235500>

The Order will be debated in the House of Commons on Monday 20 June and if made, will allow local authorities to follow the Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Notice (PPN 01/2022), as set out here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0122-contracts-with-suppliers-from-russia-and-belarus>

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Jessica Morden: [\[13687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to enable Afghan refugees in bridging hotels to be housed with a host.

Eddie Hughes:

We continue to review options for housing Afghan families. Afghan families have been given Indefinite Leave to Remain, and we are matching them to more long-term accommodation options.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Insurance

Tim Farron: [\[9865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has had discussions with the Association of British Insurers on reducing insurance premiums for households hosting non-Ukrainian asylum seekers.

Eddie Hughes:

Asylum seekers are housed by the Home Office during the processing of their asylum claim.

In response to the Ukraine crisis, The Association of British Insurers has adopted a position to reflect support regardless of nationality: [Association of British Insurers - Humanitarian response](#). As a result, policy holders will not experience any increase in the cost of their insurance premium when hosting a guest in their home for the first 12 months.

■ Homes For Ukraine Scheme: Leeds North East

Fabian Hamilton: [\[11564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many applications to sponsor refugees have been made via the Homes For Ukraine Scheme by households in Leeds North East constituency as of 1 June 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

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

■ Local Government Finance

Kim Johnson: [\[11904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has plans to review local authority funding.

Kim Johnson: [\[11905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of inflation on local authority budgets.

Kim Johnson: [\[11906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of rising energy prices on local authority budgets.

Kim Johnson: [\[11908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of base budget pressures on local authority budgets.

Kim Johnson: [\[11909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what support his Department is making available to local authorities facing funding shortfalls.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Spending Review settlement for local government considered a wide range of unit cost pressures, including inflation and public sector pay. The Local Government Finance Settlement makes available £54.1 billion in 2022/23 for local government in England, an increase of up to £3.7 billion on 2021/22. We are providing an additional £1.6 billion of grant funding to councils in each of the next 3 years, from 2022/23 inclusive. This new funding is the largest cash-terms increase in grant funding for 10 years.

The Department continues to work closely with local councils to understand the impact of macro-economic changes.

We stand ready to speak to any council that has concerns about its ability to balance its budgets. We also work closely with CIPFA, who have encouraged local authorities to contact the Department in the first instance to discuss any immediate financial concerns.

Kim Johnson: [\[13268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the potential gap between local authority funding requirements and budget allocations in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018, (e) 2019, (f) 2020, (g) 2021 and (h) 2022.

Kemi Badenoch:

At a national level, local government funding is set through Spending Reviews, and is confirmed each year at the Local Government Finance Settlement. The Department assesses the level of funding required for Ministers' assessment of the services that people need. When agreeing the Spending Review settlement, the Department

considers increases in income and potential spending pressures, including inflation and wage growth, and local income growth.

It is for local authorities to decide on levels of service provision within their areas, operating within the national statutory framework. Authorities have flexibility to vary their income – for example by setting Council Tax levels. Local authorities are required to set a balanced budget each year.

The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23 makes available an additional £3.7 billion to councils in England, including funding for adult social care reform. This is a cash-terms increase in local authority funding for 2022/23 of up to 7.4% compared to last year.

This follows year-on-year increases for local government since Spending Review 2019.

Justin Madders:

[\[14514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department is reviewing the adequacy of local authority funding settlements as of 8 June 2022.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Spending Review settlement for local government took into account of a wide range of unit cost pressures, including inflation and public sector pay. The Local Government Finance Settlement makes available £54.1 billion in 2022/23 for local government in England, an increase of up to £3.7 billion on 2021/22. We are providing an additional £1.6 billion of grant funding to councils in each of the next 3 years, from 2022/23 inclusive. This new funding is the largest cash-terms increase in grant funding for 10 years.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Penrose:

[\[11624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the letters of 4 April and 3 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare on behalf of his constituent, Louis Stuart-Kelso.

Eddie Hughes:

A response to my Hon Friend has been issued.

■ **National Trust: Leasehold**

Simon Jupp:

[\[11914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when the Government plans to respond to the Law Commission's recommendations relating to National Trust leaseholders in its report entitled Leasehold home ownership: buying your freehold or extending your lease, published on 21 July 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government remains committed to creating a fair and just housing system that works for everyone. The Government will be taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market.

In 2017 the Government asked the Law Commission to review the legislation on leasehold enfranchisement, with the aim of making it easier, quicker and more cost effective for leaseholders to buy their freehold or extend their lease.

The Law Commission's report on enfranchisement includes recommendations relating to how and when leaseholders would qualify for enfranchisement and lease extension rights. This included a proposal on how the rules would apply to leaseholders of the National Trust. We will bring forward a response to this and the other remaining Law Commission recommendations in due course.

■ Oxford-Cambridge Arc

Daniel Zeichner: [\[11702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of May 17 2022 to Question 3611, on Oxford-Cambridge Arc, when the findings of the 12-week public consultation are planned to be published.

Neil O'Brien:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given to Question 3611 on 17 May. The Government is continuing to work through next steps following the completion of the public consultation on a Spatial Framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and will provide more information in due course.

■ Oxford-cambridge Arc

John Howell: [\[14679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to develop areas within Oxfordshire as part of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc initiative.

Neil O'Brien:

Government has supported growth in Oxfordshire through a range of measures, such as through the Getting Building Fund, Enterprise Zones and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. Local authorities in the county also have the opportunity to bid for further support through the second round of the Levelling Up Fund and will benefit from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

■ Parking: Private Sector

Sarah Olney: [\[11794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that private car park operators adhere to the Code of Practice published by his Department on 7 February 2022.

Neil O'Brien:

As my honourable friend may be aware from recent media reports, following the publication of the Private Parking Code of Practice, some private parking companies started legal proceedings against the decisions to introduce new levels of parking charges and ban additional fees. The Code has been temporarily withdrawn until these decisions are reviewed and their impact assessed.

However, my department is committed to reintroducing a Code that provides the best possible protection for motorists while giving parking companies the tools to crack down on motorists who park obstructively or dangerously.

We will continue to work with industry and consumer groups to reintroduce the Code as quickly as possible.

■ Playgrounds: Disability**Catherine West:**[\[9084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating an inclusive playground fund to develop accessible playgrounds for disabled children.

Eddie Hughes:

Through our national design guidance we encourage public spaces, including play areas, to be designed in an accessible and inclusive way.

The Local Government Finance Settlement makes available £54.1 billion in 2022/23 for local government in England, an increase of up to £3.7 billion on 2021/22. The majority of this funding is un-ringfenced in recognition of local authorities being best placed to understand local priorities, such as local playgrounds.

■ Private Rented Housing: Rents**Rachael Maskell:**[\[11741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to introduce (a) mitigations for and (b) controls on increases in rents for private rented accommodation in the context of private renters also facing increases in energy costs.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. That is why we have taken action to support those who need it most worth over £37 billion in 2022-23. Almost all of the eight million most vulnerable households will get £1,200 of one-off support in total this year to help with the cost of living, with all domestic electricity customers receiving at least £400.

To support those who need further help, the Government is providing an additional £500 million of local support to help households with the rising cost of food, energy and water bills. This brings the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion and extends the Household Support Fund until March 2023.

In the Queen's Speech 2022, we committed to introducing a Renters Reform Bill in this parliamentary session. Through this, we will abolish 'no fault' evictions by removing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, providing security for tenants in the private rented sector and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of retaliatory eviction.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Richard Fuller: [\[11639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing (a) free and (b) subsidised bus travel to Ukrainian refugees who have settled in rural areas.

Eddie Hughes:

Bus travel schemes are administered by the local councils and bus companies.

■ Regional Planning and Development: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[14521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the City of York Council's investment strategy for the York Central Development Infrastructure Project on the (a) security and risk profile of that local authority's budget and (b) value for money in spending from the public purse.

Stuart Andrew:

City of York Council (CYC) Enterprise Zone funding was a key part of the HIF funding request for the infrastructure required to enable York Central to come forward. The decision by the SoS to provide funding was done on the basis that the scheme demonstrated the strategic case to unlock homes and wider uses on publicly owned land, working alongside CYC, demonstrated value for money, and was considered deliverable. Homes England was Commissioned in 2020 to deliver the project in collaboration with Network Rail.

■ Urban Areas: Technology

Matt Vickers: [\[11911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the role of technology in levelling up British high streets and the independent retail sector.

Neil O'Brien:

Regenerating our high streets and town centres is essential to this Government's commitment to level up the country. Now, more than ever, it is vital that we continue to help our local economies by supporting town centres and high streets to innovate, evolve and thrive.

Government has already committed billions of pounds to support economic growth and regeneration for high streets. Regeneration and Town Centres is one of the three

bidding themes used in the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund, which has recently opened its second round. We would welcome any applications related to using technology to level up high streets across the UK. This is in addition to the £3.6 billion Towns Fund, which includes support for 101 Town Deals and 72 Future High Streets Fund projects.

Beyond substantial funding offers, Government is providing support to local leadership with the High Streets Task Force. Over five years this is providing hands-on support to 152 local areas to develop data-driven innovative strategies and to connect local areas to relevant experts.

The retail sector is innovative. Technology, innovation and levelling up are key themes for the industry-led Retail Sector Council in considering their sector's strategic issues.

TRANSPORT

■ Airports: Security

Louise Haigh:

[\[14541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his appearance on the Sunday Morning BBC television programme on 5 June 2022, what further steps his Department is taking on airport security; and whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of the aviation industry on these steps.

Robert Courts:

Ministers and officials have been meeting regularly with the aviation industry. The Secretary of State met with members of the sector on 1 June 2022 which included discussing aviation security.

While the industry is responsible for security at airports, my department has always worked with industry to develop proportionate aviation security regulation that mitigates the threats that we face.

On the 29 April we laid a Statutory Instrument before Parliament to make use of our newly won Brexit powers to allow Ministers greater flexibility over regulation. This allowed us to agree temporary changes to permit certain training to be undertaken while background checks are completed, helping to speed up recruitment times.

Having listened to industry, we also agreed that an HMRC employment history letter can be temporarily used as a suitable form of reference check (with safeguards) – this should help to reduce the time it takes to obtain references as these new processes are embedded.

There is no backlog in Government security clearances. These continue to be processed in a timely manner.

We will continue to work with industry to consider and agree, as we have already done, a series of alleviations to aviation security regulations to support the

recruitment and deployment of staff. The travelling public however must have confidence that appropriate security measures are in place at airports.

■ Aviation

Louise Haigh: [\[14542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the press release entitled Transport Secretary meets with aviation industry following disruption at UK airports, published on 1 June 2022, whether the Government and aviation industry working group has met; what the composition of that working group is; and whether he will be the chair of that working group.

Robert Courts:

Following a meeting with industry on 1 June we committed to establishing the Strategic Risk Group which I will chair as the Aviation Minister. This group will bring together CEOs from across the industry to meet weekly. The next meeting of this group will be taking place on 14 June.

Louise Haigh: [\[14546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he had with aviation industry representatives between 8 April and 27 May 2022.

Robert Courts:

The Secretary of State and I undertake regular meetings with aviation industry. On the 12 May I hosted a roundtable with Minister Hinds, Minister of State for Security and Borders, which brought together leaders from across the sector to address issues experienced over the Easter holiday period. On 1 June the Secretary of State and I also held a roundtable meeting with industry leaders to address the disruption seen over the first days of the May Half Term.

The Secretary of State and I have established the Strategic Risk Group which I will chair weekly with CEOs from across the sector.

■ Buses: Fires

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[14610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of bus fires in England.

Trudy Harrison:

Bus operators are subject to a range of requirements aimed at ensuring the safe operation of vehicles and the avoidance of incidents, including fires. These requirements, imposed under the operator licencing scheme, include regular vehicle maintenance checks, annual vehicle testing, and incident reporting requirements. In addition, enforcement checks may be carried out by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[14611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department maintains a central record of all bus fires in England.

Trudy Harrison:

The DVSA record instances of vehicle fires against individual operators. The DVSA monitor reports of vehicle fires and will report any trends or unexplained causes of vehicle fires to its Vehicle Safety Branch (VSB). The VSB may initiate a safety recall should this be deemed necessary for safety reasons.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[14612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to require all bus operators in England to report any vehicle fires to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

Trudy Harrison:

Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operators are already required to report an incident (such as a vehicle fire or collision) which involves a PSV to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

■ **Cycling and Walking**

Gill Furniss:

[\[13801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to publish the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy before the summer recess.

Trudy Harrison:

Yes.

■ **Department for Transport: Information Officers**

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[13854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people were employed by his Department to work on internal communications in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Andrew Stephenson:

The central department employed the following number of staff in the Internal Communications team. The numbers provided are for employee headcount as at 31 March of each year and do not include any vacant posts.

2019: 10 employees

2020: 10 employees

2021: 7 employees

■ Department for Transport: Management Consultants

Rachel Hopkins: [\[13856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department spent 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.

Andrew Stephenson:

The following link provides the total published spend on consultants for the core Department, covering financial years 2018-19 to 2020-21:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dft-annual-reports-and-accounts>.

The department is not able to identify the top 10 projects in the time available, however, the main areas of spend over the last 3 years has been on Rail and Aviation related projects.

■ Department for Transport: Photographs and Video Recordings

Rachel Hopkins: [\[13853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) photographers and (b) video producers were employed by his Department in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020 and (iii) 2021.

Andrew Stephenson:

The breakdown for video producers employed by the Department for Transport is as follows; in 2019 one video producer, in 2020 two video producers and in 2021 two video producers.

No photographers were employed by the Department for Transport between 2019 and 2021.

■ Department for Transport: Public Opinion

Rachel Hopkins: [\[13857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department spent on (a) focus groups and (b) polling services in 2021.

Andrew Stephenson:

The information requested could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

■ Department for Transport: Recruitment

Rachel Hopkins: [\[13855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department spent in total on external recruitment consultants in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021; how many full time equivalent posts were filled as a result of that expenditure; and how many of those posts were filled by people recruited from outside the civil service.

Andrew Stephenson:

Due to the financial reporting system in the department it is not possible to separate out spend associated with external recruitment consultancy services from all other consultancy spend for the majority of departmental recruitment.

■ Driving under Influence: Drugs**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[11658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward legislative proposals requiring motorists convicted of being under the influence of illegal drugs to complete a mandatory rehabilitation course before receiving their licence back.

Trudy Harrison:

On 5 April 2022 the Government launched a call for evidence on Protecting the public from repeat drug-driving offenders. This closes on 28 June 2022. The Government will publish a response to this call for evidence once it has fully considered the responses received.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[11662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the evidence received by the consultation entitled Protecting the public from repeat drug-driving offenders, once it has concluded.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government will publish a response to the call for evidence on protecting the public from drug-driving offenders once it has fully considered the responses received.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[11663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many motorists have been convicted for being under the influence of illegal drugs whilst driving since 2015.

Trudy Harrison:

In 2015 the Government brought in an offence under Section 5A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 of driving, attempting to drive or being in charge of a motor vehicle with a specified controlled drug in the blood or urine in excess of the specified limit for that drug.

The Ministry of Justice maintains the statistics of convictions for offences.

I note the following convictions for this offence of drug driving:

2015 - 1,466

2016 - 5,170

2017 - 5,465

2018 - 10,325

2019 - 12,296

2020 - 13,869

[Criminal justice statistics quarterly - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly)

■ **Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes**

Ian Byrne: [\[13843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2022 to Written Question 5695, on Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes, whether the Government plans to publish its final report on e-scooter trials within the current Parliamentary year.

Trudy Harrison:

We intend to publish our plans as soon as possible.

■ **Leamside Line: Sunderland**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[11585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic benefits of re-opening the Leamside Line for Washington and the Coalfields within Sunderland City.

Wendy Morton:

The Government considers the re-opening of the Leamside Line is best considered as part of a future city region settlement, which will be available once appropriate governance arrangements are in place.

I expect to receive a locally-led business case in the Autumn, at which time my officials will consider the potential economic benefits of re-opening the Leamside Line.

■ **Manchester Airport**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[11665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason the Greater Manchester Police has a role in advising passengers about flight cancellations at Manchester Airport over the half term holiday.

Robert Courts:

On 31 May TUI announced a number of flight cancellations from Manchester Airport to their schedule for the whole of June. Disappointingly, this announcement was made too late for a number of passengers who had already arrived at the airport for flights scheduled to depart that day. It is the responsibility of airlines to communicate this to passengers. All airports have a police presence, and in this instance a passenger liaised with the police due to limited airline staff availability.

The Secretary of State and myself met with industry (including TUI) last week. We strongly expressed our view that the behaviour of some airlines has been unacceptable and have asked for assurances that realistic schedules will be in place to avoid a repeat of the scale of disruption that was seen.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions**

Sarah Olney:

[\[11793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing fines for car idling.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department does not consider that increasing fine levels would be a suitable way to reduce the numbers to drivers idling unnecessarily. We believe there are other effective ways of influencing driver behaviour and increasing public awareness of the damaging air quality impact of unnecessary idling. Local Authorities should utilise a range of methods to encourage motorists to change their behaviour, including public information campaigns.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Noise**

Mr Gagan Mohindra:

[\[11896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to tackle noise pollution from vehicles.

Trudy Harrison:

The police and local authorities have powers to enforce against vehicles that have been modified, or are driven in a way, to create excessive noise. However, barriers exist to effective enforcement. Following encouraging initial research, the Department is conducting further trials of the latest “noise camera” technology to understand if it can be used to automatically detect excessively noisy vehicles.

As the research develops, the Government will keep under review the way “noise cameras” can be used to tackle noise pollution from vehicles.

■ **Network Rail: Finance**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[11723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to reduce the budget for Network Rail.

Wendy Morton:

The budget and outputs for Network Rail for day to day running of the railway (operations, maintenance and renewals) are set over five year Control Periods. The current Control Period 6 settlement guarantees this funding until March 2024.

■ **Railways**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[11752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of trends in levels of rail use by (a) business and (b) leisure users; and what steps his Department is taking to encourage rail use by those groups of users.

Wendy Morton:

The department has not made a recent estimate of the number of business and leisure travellers by rail. The last estimate was made for 2020 and was published in 2021 as part of the National Travel Survey.

The department continues to work closely with the rail industry to encourage rail use. Recent initiatives include:

- National marketing campaigns reminding potential passengers of the benefits and good value of rail travel.
- The Great British Rail Sale, the first ever nationwide rail sale. The Great British Rail Sale helped save families money, and connect them with friends and families. Over 1.3 million tickets were sold, offering around £7 million worth of savings for passengers.

The Department is also working with operators and Network Rail to ensure that service levels are appropriate to passenger demand, whilst prioritising the good performance passengers need, and delivering good value for the taxpayer.

The industry will focus on promoting good value rail products such as rail cards, flexible season tickets and Advance on a national, local, and regional level.

■ Railways: Fares**Rachael Maskell:**[\[11751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will reduce the cost of rail travel for families and make it competitive with road use.

Wendy Morton:

When comparing the difference in costs when travelling using the railway or road network then the costs of driving, such as every day running costs, depreciation and insurance of a vehicle should also be taken into consideration.

There are a number of railcards available that offer discounts against most rail fares, including the Family and Friends Railcard which offers a third off rail fares for adults and 60 per cent off rail fares for children.

More recently, we launched the Great British Rail Sale, the first ever nationwide rail sale. The Great British Rail Sale helped save families money and connect them with friends and families. Over 1.3 million tickets were sold, offering around £7million worth of savings for passengers.

■ Railways: Industrial Disputes**Rachael Maskell:**[\[11748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his letter to all hon. Members on Rail Industrial Action, dated 30 May 2022, and a fair deal for staff, passengers and taxpayers, whether he plans to take into account the responsibility of the industry to achieve significant modal shift from car to rail passenger and from road freight

to rail freight as part of the negotiations with the trade unions; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

Securing both of these key shifts and attracting more people and freight back to rail is key to its long term sustainability. The industry knows this, as do the rail trade unions.

However, all the hard working going in to being able to achieve these aims risks being undermined if trade unions like RMT call industrial action which disrupts passengers and freight.

The employers, who lead the negotiations with the rail unions, keep reminding the unions of how damaging industrial action would be to the sector, driving passengers and freight back onto road.

■ **Shipping**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[11657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to require commercial vessels to continuously maintain the operation of an automatic identification system whilst at sea.

Robert Courts:

As per the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS), the automatic identification system (AIS) carriage on board and continuous operation at sea is already mandatory for commercial vessels.

The Merchant Shipping (Safety of Navigation) Regulations 2020 transpose the above SOLAS AIS regulations in United Kingdom.

■ **Shipping: Apprentices**

Emma Hardy:

[\[14598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 2636 on Shipping: Apprentices, if he will take steps to review P&O Ferries' membership of the Maritime Apprenticeship Trailblazer Working Group.

Robert Courts:

Membership of trailblazer groups is a matter for industry and ultimately determined by the Chair.

The Department for Education and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education hold overall policy responsibility for apprenticeships, including trailblazer groups.

The Department for Transport will continue to work with the Merchant Navy Training Board to keep the situation with the P&O Ferries apprentices under review. DfT remains committed to the protection and welfare of all seafarers and minimising disruption for those in training.

■ Shipping: Crew

Emma Hardy: [\[14597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 2634 on Shipping: Crew, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the amendments to the points-based visa system on employment opportunities for UK seafarers working on international routes from UK ports; and what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on this issue.

Robert Courts:

There is ongoing engagement between the Department of Transport and the Home Office officials on this and other issues relevant to UK seafarers.

■ Travel

Rachael Maskell: [\[11749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take to encourage people to transition from the use of road and air travel to rail.

Wendy Morton:

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, published May 2021, set out the biggest transformation of the railways in three decades with reforms designed to improve services for passengers and freight customers and encourage rail use. A new public body, Great British Railways, will run the network in the public interest and have a new relationship with train operators defined by tough new contracts incentivising punctual and reliable services.

Our reforms will also see a modernisation of fares and ticketing with better value, simpler fares and a huge expansion of modern payment methods. We've already sold over 250,000 of our new flexible season tickets launched in June 2021, offering commuters significant savings.

Cars will always remain an option for people who wish to travel that way.

■ Tyres: Pollution

Sarah Olney: [\[13803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made a comparative assessment of the particulate pollution produced by (a) tyre wear and (b) exhaust fumes; and whether his Department plans to take to steps tackle particulate pollution from tyre wear.

Trudy Harrison:

The development of regulations to limit emissions from tyre wear depends on the development of an internationally recognised test procedure for measuring them. This issue is being examined by the UN ECE Particle Measurement Programme (PMP), which includes DfT officials, other international governments, and the automotive industry. DfT is one of the founders of PMP and has played a leading role since its inception.

To support the work of the PMP group, DfT commissioned a 3-year research project in February 2021 aimed at understanding better the measurement techniques, material properties and control parameters of non-exhaust emissions from road vehicles, which include tyre wear emissions. The findings of this project will also enable a comparative assessment of the particulate emitted by tyre wear in real driving conditions and exhaust fumes.

This project will inform policy and legislation aiming at reducing these emissions on a domestic and international level.

■ Tyres: Regulation

Sarah Olney: [\[13802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to introduce regulations on (a) the wear rate of and (b) chemicals contained within tyres.

Trudy Harrison:

The development of regulations to limit emissions from tyre wear depends on the development of an internationally recognised test procedure for measuring them. This issue is being examined by the UN ECE Particle Measurement Programme (PMP), which includes DfT officials, other international governments, and the automotive industry. DfT is one of the founders of PMP and has played a leading role since its inception.

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This project will inform policy and legislation aiming at reducing these emissions on a domestic and international level.

TREASURY

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Jim Shannon: [\[13719\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of changes to the entitlement of the metal recycling sector to use red diesel since April 2022, in light of increases in fuel prices.

Jim Shannon: [\[13720\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to inform businesses in the metal recycling industry of the potential impact of the change in use of red diesel since 1 April 2022.

Jim Shannon:

[13721]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to support the metal recycling sector following the end of its entitlement to use red diesel since 1 April 2022.

Helen Whately:

At Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced that he would remove the entitlement to use red diesel from most sectors April 2022, except in agriculture (as well as forestry, horticulture and pisciculture), rail and for non-commercial heating (including domestic heating).

The Government recognised that this would be a significant change for some businesses and ran a consultation to gather information from affected users on the expected impact of these tax changes and make sure it had not overlooked any exceptional reasons why other sectors should be allowed to continue to use red diesel beyond April 2022. As part of this, my officials met representatives from the waste processing sector to discuss these changes and carefully analysed the consultation response from the British Metals Recycling Association after the consultation closed.

Following the consultation, the Chancellor announced at Spring Budget 2021 that the Government would grant further entitlements to use red diesel after April 2022 for a limited number of users. However, having assessed the cases made by other sectors to retain their red diesel entitlement, including the metal recycling sector, the Government did not believe that they were compelling enough to outweigh the need to ensure fairness between the different users of diesel fuels, the Government's long-term environmental objectives and the need for the tax system to incentivise the development of greener alternatives to polluting fuels.

These tax changes mean that most businesses in the UK which used red diesel prior to April 2022 no longer get a significant tax break compared with ordinary motorists; they instead now need to use diesel fuel taxed at the standard rate for diesel, which more fairly reflects the harmful impact of the emissions they produce. These reforms are also designed to ensure that the tax system incentivises users of polluting fuels like diesel to improve the energy efficiency of their vehicles and machinery, invest in cleaner alternatives or use less fuel. The development of these alternatives is being supported by the Government at least doubling its investment in energy innovation by committing over £1 billion to the Net Zero Innovation Portfolio.

In recognition of the unique circumstances that are currently pushing up fuel prices, the Government announced at the Spring Statement that it is cutting fuel duty on petrol and diesel by 5 pence per litre for a period of 12 months. This is a significant tax cut that will deliver considerable savings to businesses, including those that use diesel, and is the first time in over a decade that the main rates of petrol and diesel have been cut.

■ Beer: Excise Duties

Claire Hanna:

[\[14659\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to extend the new draught duty rate to include kegs and casks holding 20 and 30 litres.

Helen Whately:

At Budget, the Government set out its proposals for draught relief to provide support for pubs and other on-trade venues through the alcohol duty system.

The Government is currently considering all proposals put forward to it through the alcohol duty review consultation, which closed on 30 January, including the feedback received on qualifying criteria for draught relief. The Government will be publishing a response to the consultation in due course.

■ Business: Tax Allowances

Bill Esterson:

[\[13698\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce tax credits for businesses that invest in research and development.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government offers two separate Research and Development (R&D) tax reliefs, the Research and Development Expenditure Credit (RDEC) and an additional Corporation Tax deduction for Small and Medium-sized enterprises. Both are available to loss-makers as well as profit-makers.

The estimated total number of R&D tax credit claims for the year ending March 2020 was 85,900, with total support claimed £7.4 billion. This corresponds to £47.5 billion of R&D expenditure.

The Government is currently undertaking a review of the reliefs. The objectives of the review are to ensure the UK remains a competitive location for cutting edge research, that the reliefs continue to be fit for purpose, and that taxpayer money is effectively targeted.

■ Capital Allowances

John McDonnell:

[\[11542\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost to the Exchequer of the investment allowance announced in his Economy Update on 26 May 2022.

John McDonnell:

[\[11543\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what modelling his Department has undertaken on the extra investment that will be brought forward as a result of the introduction of the investment allowance announced in his Economy Update on 26 May 2022.

Dan Carden: [\[11840\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Government's temporary Energy Profits Levy, what assessment was carried out of the potential impact of the investment allowance incentivising new oil and gas extraction on the Government's net-zero commitments.

Lucy Frazer:

The new Energy Profits Levy will raise around £5 billion over the next year. This figure factors in the investment allowance.

The Government expects the combination of the Levy and the investment allowance to lead to an overall increase in investment.

The Levy will be legislated for shortly, and a Tax Information and Impact Note will be published as standard. A full costing of the policy will be certified by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility at Autumn Budget 2022.

■ Cost of Living: Government Assistance**Luke Pollard:** [\[11863\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much of the additional cost of living support he announced on 26 May 2022 will apply to (a) second homes and (b) holiday lets.

Helen Whately:

The Government is providing over £15bn of additional support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package builds on the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year.

The Government is helping all domestic electricity customers in Great Britain to cope with the impact of higher energy bills, with £400 off their bills from October through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS). This is a doubling of the £200 of support announced in February, and there will no longer be any repayments.

The Government's intention is for EBSS to reach as many households as possible, while minimising the administrative complexity of the scheme. BEIS has consulted on the basis of paying EBSS via all domestic electricity meter points. A small number of households have multiple meter points – for example, some households have a second home or second meter points in their garage. The Government does not expect this to be a widespread issue.

■ Cryptocurrencies: Regulation**Adam Afriyie:** [\[11630\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will allow UK FCA regulated firms, such as brokers, to be exempt from the FCA Cryptoasset Register as they already have equivalent approved processes in place.

John Glen:

Under the Money Laundering Regulations (MLRs), any firm operating as a cryptoasset exchange provider or custodian wallet provider must be registered with the FCA for anti-money laundering supervision as a cryptoasset business. It is the responsibility of the FCA, as the independent supervisor for these firms, to assess whether firms have appropriate anti-money laundering controls in place for the kinds of activity they carry out, prior to admitting them to the register. There is no statutory exemption to this requirement for firms that are already registered with the FCA for another activity.

It is necessary for firms dealing with cryptoassets to demonstrate that their controls are adequate to deal with the specific nature of the cryptoasset ecosystem. Having adequate AML controls for one type of business activity does not guarantee that these controls are suitable for another.

The government is committed to supporting the safe and sustainable growth of the cryptoasset sector. The MLRs established a risk-based approach to the supervision of cryptoasset businesses, and the assessment which each firm must undergo should therefore be proportionate to the risks generated by the kind of activities it engages in. The processes that a broker is expected to put in place will therefore likely be different from those that a large cryptoasset exchange is expected to demonstrate.

Adam Afriyie:[\[11631\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the FCA's decision to classify cryptoassets as a restricted mass market investment.

John Glen:

In January 2022 the government published a response to its consultation on a proposal to bring certain cryptoassets into the scope of the Financial Promotion Order to ensure that cryptoasset promotions are fair, clear, and not misleading.

The forthcoming legislation, and supportive FCA rules, will regulate in-scope cryptoasset financial promotions. This is aimed at improving consumers' understanding of the risks and benefits associated with cryptoasset purchases and ensuring that cryptoasset promotions are held to the same standards as similar risk financial services products.

The FCA's consultation on its rules closed in March 2022 and it is currently considering representations from firms.

■ Digital Technology: Greater London**Adam Afriyie:**[\[11629\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to (a) foster digital innovation and (b) maintain London as a key global capital market and fintech centre.

John Glen:

Digital innovation is a major priority for the Government and the UK has a world leading tech sector valued at over \$1 trillion. To foster cutting-edge innovation, at the 2021 Autumn Budget and Spending Review the Chancellor announced an increase in public research and development investment to £20bn by 2024/25, including £1.1bn for core Innovate UK programmes targeting business innovation. At Spring Statement 2022, the Chancellor went further in support of digital innovation by announcing reforms to R&D tax credits which will expand qualifying costs to include data and cloud computing.

The UK is well known internationally as a hub for high quality capital markets backed by strong and effective regulation. Last year, the Chancellor launched the Wholesale Markets Review (WMR) with the aim to deliver a rulebook that is fair, outcomes-based and supports competitiveness, whilst ensuring the UK maintains the highest regulatory standards.

In addition, a sweeping set of reforms to sharpen the UK's competitive advantage in financial services is underway. As set out in the Queen's Speech, the upcoming Financial Services and Markets Bill will implement the outcomes of the Future Regulatory Framework (FRF) Review as well as a series of important initiatives underpinning the Government's ambitious vision for the financial services sector.

Finally, innovation and technology are central to the Government's vision for the future of the UK's financial services sector. The Government and regulators are taking forward the recommendations of the recent Kalifa Review of how government, regulators and industry can maximise the future growth of the fintech sector across the UK. In particular, on 29 October 2021, the Government announced £5 million of seed funding for a new Centre for Finance, Innovation and Technology (CFIT) as part of the Spending Review.

■ Energy: Taxation**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[14440\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of establishing a windfall tax on energy companies.

Helen Whately:

The Government is introducing the Energy Profits Levy, a new 25% surcharge on the extraordinary profits the oil and gas sector is making.

The new Energy Profits Levy will raise around £5 billion over the next year which will go towards supporting people with the new cost of living measures announced by the Chancellor.

As part of the levy a new tax relief is being introduced to encourage firms to invest in the UK. The new 80% Investment Allowance will mean businesses will overall get a 91p tax saving for every £1 they invest.

The levy does not apply to the electricity generation sector. However, certain parts of it have also seen extraordinary profits partly due to record gas prices. As set out in the Energy Security Strategy, the Government is consulting with the power generation sector and investors to drive forward energy market reforms and ensure that the price paid for electricity is more reflective of the costs of production. Those reforms will take time to implement. In the meantime, the Government is urgently evaluating the scale of these extraordinary profits and the appropriate steps to take.

■ Financial Conduct Authority: Staff

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[13197\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employees, excluding third-party contractors, (a) began employment with and (b) ceased employment with the Financial Conduct Authority in each month in the period (i) May 2019 to February 2020 inclusive and (ii) August 2021 to May 2022 inclusive.

John Glen:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is operationally independent from the Government. Questions about the FCA's day to day decision making, including details about its employees, are matters for the independent FCA.

These questions have therefore been passed to the FCA who will respond directly to the honourable member by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Virginia Crosbie: [\[14675\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a further cut in fuel duty to support consumers.

Helen Whately:

At Spring Statement 2022 in response to fuel prices reaching record levels, the government announced a temporary 12-month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre.

This is the largest cash-terms cut across all fuel duty rates at once, ever, and is only the second time in 20 years that main rates of petrol and diesel have been cut. This cut represents savings for households and businesses worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23.

All taxes, including fuel duty, remain under review.

■ Fuels: Taxation

John Redwood: [\[11536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the difference in tax taken from (a) VAT on fuel, (b) North Sea oil production and profits taxes

and (c) all taxes on petrol and diesel sales in 2022 compared with the last Budget forecasts.

Helen Whately:

Forecasts for Government tax revenues are provided by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

Their most recent published forecast, provided for Spring Statement 2022 on 23 March, is available on the OBR website at the following link

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2022/>.

For the financial year 2022-23, Value Added Tax is forecast to be £154.2bn; UK oil and gas revenues are forecast to be £7.8bn; and fuel duty revenues are forecast to be £26.2bn. An updated forecast will be published by the OBR at the next Fiscal Event.

HM Revenue and Customs publishes monthly tax receipts statistics, including for UK oil and gas production, VAT, and fuel duties, on a cash receipts basis, at GOV.UK at the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmrc-tax-and-nics-receipts-for-the-uk>.

■ **Government Assistance**

John McDonnell:

[11545]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the impact on economic growth of the measures for households announced in his Economy Update on 26 May 2022; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Government has published analysis alongside the May 2022 Cost of Living support package. This includes an analysis of the impact of the support package on households across the income distribution. The published report can be found at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1078837/DA_May_2022_publication.pdf

Alongside this the published Cost of Living support factsheet can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-living-support/cost-of-living-support-factsheet-26-may-2022>. This includes illustrative case-studies which show the combined impact of the Cost of Living package, support announced in February 2022, and changes in the labour market.

HM Treasury does not prepare formal forecasts for the UK economy. The macroeconomic impacts of the support package will be incorporated into the next forecast produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

■ Government Securities: Bank of England

John Redwood:

[\[11535\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his latest estimate is of the Bank of England's loss on bonds held in the Asset Purchase Facility guaranteed by his Department.

John Glen:

To date, £120 billion has been transferred to HM Treasury from the Asset Purchase Facility (APF) which has been used to reduce the government's debt issuance. The size of future cash flows is uncertain and depends on developments in Bank rate, the speed of APF unwind, and the evolution of bond market prices. It is likely that as monetary conditions normalise HM Treasury will make cash transfers to the APF to cover losses.

However, the eventual size of the net payments to or from HMT should not be used as a measure of the success of asset purchases, or of the impact of the scheme on the public sector accounts as a whole. The scheme should instead be judged by the degree to which it helps the Monetary Policy Committee meet its objectives.

In their most recent forecast in March 2022, the Office of Budget Responsibility forecasted net cash transfers from the APF to the Treasury of £3.5bn between 2022-23 and 2026-27.

■ Military Aid: Ukraine

John Healey:

[\[13634\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to take account of inflation when calculating the funds to be provided to the Ministry of Defence for replacing the stockpiles of weapons supplied to Ukraine.

Mr Simon Clarke:

HM Treasury provides departments with settlements on a cash basis, and they are expected to manage the impacts of inflation within these settlements.

Last month, the Government announced an additional £1.3bn funding for military support to Ukraine. This funding was provided for the 2022/23 financial year and reflective of latest cost forecasts.

■ Offshore Industry: Taxation

John Redwood:

[\[11537\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the (a) windfall tax on oil and gas producer profits and (b) planned increase in corporation tax on the UK's position in global league tables of the best places to do business.

Helen Whately:

The UK's oil and gas ring fence tax regime balances attracting investment with ensuring a fair return for the nation.

The Energy Profits Levy is an additional, temporary tax which reflects the extraordinary global context. It will raise around £5 billion over the next year. The OBR will take account of this policy in their next forecast.

The UK's rate of Corporation Tax is currently 19%.

To balance the need to raise revenue with having an internationally competitive tax system, the Chancellor announced at Spring Budget 2021 that the rate of Corporation Tax would increase to 25% from April 2023, after the point at which the economy is expected to recover to its pre-pandemic level. 25% is the lowest rate of tax in the G7.

■ Pay: Cost of Living**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[13652\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to ensure that working people's pay aligns with the rising cost of living.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living because of high inflation. The government is providing over £15bn of additional support, building on the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totaling over £37bn this year. Support includes helping all domestic electricity customers in Great Britain with the impact of higher energy bills, with £400 off their bills from October.

In addition, the government has also increased the National Living Wage (NLW) by 6.6% to £9.50 an hour for workers aged 23 and over, which will benefit more than 2 million workers. This means an increase of over £1,000 to the annual earnings of a full-time worker on the NLW. In the long term, the best approach to managing the cost of living is to help people into work, supporting them to increase their incomes, helping them keep more of what they earn and growing the economy sustainably.

■ Pensions: Advisory Services**Alan Brown:**[\[14520\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what measures his Department has in place to help ensure unregulated financial advisors cannot provide financial advice on pensions.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to ensuring that consumers can access high-quality, affordable and suitable financial advice, as well as free-to-access financial guidance, when they need it.

HM Treasury works closely with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), who are the independent regulator of the financial advice market, to ensure that this market works

well, competitively and fairly for both firms and consumers, and that the advice being provided is of high quality.

Individuals who provide advice on pensions need to be authorised by the FCA and have the appropriate qualifications, including an additional qualification if the advice involves a transfer from a defined benefit pension.

The FCA can take action through the courts against firms or individuals who carry out regulated activity without authorisation. Consumers may also report any concerns through the FCA's ScamSmart website (<https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart>).

■ Public Expenditure

John McDonnell:

[11544]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what modelling his Department has undertaken on the economic stimulus effect of the measures for households announced in his Economy Update on 26 May 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has published analysis alongside the May 2022 Cost of Living support package. This includes an analysis of the impact of the support package on households across the income distribution. The published report can be found at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1078837/DA_May_2022_publication.pdf

Alongside this the published Cost of Living support factsheet can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-living-support/cost-of-living-support-factsheet-26-may-2022>. This includes illustrative case-studies which show the combined impact of the Cost of Living package, support announced in February 2022, and changes in the labour market.

HM Treasury does not prepare formal forecasts for the UK economy. The macroeconomic impacts of the support package will be incorporated into the next forecast produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

■ Tax Avoidance

Liz Saville Roberts:

[14571]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of individuals affected by the Loan Charge have been (a) contacted by an Enquiry Officer when their case is placed on hold for any reason and (b) updated annually about the status of their open tax enquiry.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC wants to help taxpayers get out of tax avoidance schemes as soon as possible and rarely put enquiries on hold.

HMRC has opened approximately 25,000 enquiries into individuals who are subject to the Loan Charge. As part of its overall compliance processes and its commitment to update taxpayers at least annually, all of these taxpayers should have received

correspondence from HMRC in the last 12 months, either to open the enquiry or to update them on their position.

■ **Taxation: Self-assessment**

Kirsten Oswald: [\[14509\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the amount of interest charged to people whose self-assessment tax accounts have been queried and who face delays in receiving information from HMRC.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[14510\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to minimise the amount of interest charged to people whose self-assessment tax accounts are in query and who face delays in receiving information from HMRC.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC does not have an estimate of the amount of interest that is being charged on tax that is outstanding on self-assessment tax accounts and this information could only be obtained and compiled at a disproportionate cost.

■ **Tourism: Taxation**

Charlotte Nichols: [\[11893\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to introduce a tourist tax.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government has no plans to introduce a tourism tax.

As with all taxes, the Government keeps this under review and the Chancellor always welcomes suggestions for improving the tax system.

■ **Treasury: MG OMD**

Emily Thornberry: [\[13665\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) procurement reference, (b) start date, (c) end date and (d) maximum value, inclusive of VAT, is of the contract that his Department has agreed with Manning Gottlieb OMD for the provision of strategic media activation services under the terms of the Crown Commercial Service's media services framework agreement reference RM6123.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury publishes details of its contracts on the Contracts Finder website. None have been awarded to Manning Gottlieb OMD using Crown Commercial Service's Media Services framework agreement (RM6123).

■ Voluntary Work: Car Allowances

Navendu Mishra:

[\[13839\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2022 to Question 2690, on Voluntary Work: Car Allowances, whether his Department plans to extend the tax free limit on Approved Mileage Payment Allowance for volunteer drivers in the context of rising fuel costs.

Helen Whately:

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

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

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

■ Women Against State Pension Inequality

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[14560\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when any Minister in his Department last held a meeting with representatives of the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign; and when they next intend to do so.

Mr Simon Clarke:

HM Treasury does not hold records of any recent meetings ministers have held with representatives of the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign. There are currently no confirmed dates for such a meeting.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equal Pay

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[15349\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps her Department is taking to reduce disparity in pay by gender.

Kemi Badenoch:

The national gender pay gap has fallen significantly under this government - and by approximately a quarter in the last decade.

In 2017, we introduced regulations requiring large employers to publish the differences in average salaries and bonuses for men and women every year. The

regulations have helped to motivate employers, and focus attention on improving equality in the workplace.

However, in order to continue making progress we need to understand the real barriers people face in the workplace, and ensure everyone is empowered to fulfil their potential.

■ Period Poverty

Caroline Lucas:

[\[14464\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she has taken to (a) end period poverty and shame in the UK by 2025 and (b) invest £250,000 on new period poverty programmes; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[14465\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make it her policy to (a) provide further funding to end period poverty in response to rising inflation and (b) actively monitor levels of period poverty, and if she will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

Period poverty is an issue the government takes very seriously and has taken a number of steps to address the problem.

Since January 2020, a Department for Education scheme provides free period products in schools and 16-19 education institutions in England. 94% of eligible secondary schools had accessed this scheme by December 2021.

Additionally, from 1 January 2021, the 'tampon tax' has been abolished - with a zero rate of VAT applying to all period products. Prior to the abolition of the tax, a Tampon Tax Fund was in place to allocate the funds generated from the VAT on period products, to projects which improve the lives of disadvantaged women and girls. A final round of £11.25 million in grant funding was awarded in November 2021 to distribute the VAT collected on period products in the final nine months of the 2020/21 financial year, before the tax ended.

As well as these steps, in 2019, NHS England announced that it would offer period products to every hospital patient who needs them and the Home Office changed the law to ensure that all people in custody are provided with health and hygiene products for free, to include period products.

In March 2020, in light of COVID-19, the work of the Period Poverty Taskforce was paused to free up resources to focus on the pandemic.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Car Allowances: Universal Credit

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[11623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether reimbursed fuel expenses from visiting clients in their home during the course of employment is counted as income in Universal Credit claims.

David Rutley:

To keep Universal Credit as simple and clear as possible, the definition of earnings aligns very closely to the rules in tax legislation, namely the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 (ITEPA). This is so that rules across tax and benefits are aligned where possible. Under ITEPA payments classed as 'allowable expenses' would not be counted as employed earnings and would be excluded from the calculation of the Universal Credit award.

Reimbursed fuel expenses which would come under the general rule of allowable expenses are those where the employee is obliged to incur and pay these as a holder of that employment and the amount is incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the duties of their employment. Reimbursed expenses which would not come under the general rule of allowable expenses are those that are in the employee's own interest or benefit, such as the cost of travel to a single place of work.

■ Carer's Allowance: National Insurance Contributions

Rachael Maskell: [\[15293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of paying National Insurance contributions for people who receive carers allowance.

Chloe Smith:

A National Insurance Class 1 credit is generally awarded for each week that Carer's Allowance is paid to a working age carer. Class 1 credits can help towards the conditions of entitlement to all contributory benefits, as well as the new State Pension. Credits are not awarded after a person has reached pension age as they would not be of any benefit to the contributor.

■ Cost of Living: Government Assistance

Charlotte Nichols: [\[11891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make the £650 one-off cost of living payment for people on means tested benefits also available to those claiming (a) contribution based Employment Support Allowance and (b) other non-means tested benefits.

David Rutley:

The Government is committed to managing the public finances in a responsible way by targeting the £650 Cost of Living Payment support at low income means tested households where it is most needed.

The guidance with the full list of support can be found at:

[Overall government support for the cost of living: factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/factsheets/overall-government-support-for-the-cost-of-living)

Cost of Living Payments have been designed to target support for households with low incomes, on means-tested benefits. These payments are in addition to the £400 of support for energy bills that the Government is providing through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme, doubling the £200 of support announced earlier this year and making the whole £400 a non-repayable grant. In addition, individuals may be able to benefit from the disability and pensioner Cost of Living Payments if they are in receipt of disability benefits or eligible for Winter Fuel Payments.

From October 2022, Government is also providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, £421m will be used to further extend the Household Support Fund (October 2022 – March 2023). Guidance and individual local authority indicative allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

In addition to the new support, people on low incomes but not means-tested benefits may also benefit from previously announced measures to help people tackle the cost of living, including frozen alcohol duty and fuel duty, raising the NICs threshold, council tax rebates and the further rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 an hour from April 2022.

■ Employment: Disability**Holly Mumby-Croft:****[13851]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the employment opportunities available to disabled school leavers.

Chloe Smith:

There is a range of government initiatives supporting disabled people and people with health conditions to live independent lives and start, stay and succeed in work. Over the next three years we will invest £1.3bn in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions. The latest data shows that the number of disabled people in employment increased by 1.3m between 2017 and Q1 2022 – the goal to see a million more disabled people in employment has been met after only five years.

To support the transition of disabled individuals from education into employment, Access to Work is delivering a series of Adjustment Passport pilots in a variety of settings. The pilots will enable us to understand if a passport can support a more coherent journey of receiving support, reduce the need for additional assessments

and empower the passport holder to have a more confident conversation with potential employers enabling smoother transitions into employment.

The government runs multiple initiatives to help young disabled people whilst they are still in education. The National Careers Service enables individuals to make informed choices about the best route to take for different careers. This includes exploring whether an apprenticeship is right for them. The service helps young people apply for apprenticeships, improving the quality of applications received by employers and advising those not ready for an apprenticeship of alternative routes e.g. traineeships.

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) works with special schools across England, as well as with Careers Leaders, who design and deliver careers education programmes tailored to the needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) regardless of their educational setting (i.e., mainstream schools and colleges, special schools or alternative provision). All local authorities must set out the support available to help children and young people with SEND move into adulthood as part of their local offer. This should be co-produced with children, young people, and their families to ensure it meets local needs.

In February 2022, Department for Education (DfE) announced it would invest up to £18million over the next three years to build capacity in the Supported Internships programme, aiming to double the number of Supported Internships to give more young people with an Education Health and Care Plan the skills to secure and sustain paid employment. We have also worked with stakeholders across the sector to update our Supported Internship guidance to support education providers and employers to deliver quality internship placements for young people across the country.

■ **Extra Costs Taskforce**

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[9013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which (a) organisations and (b) individuals have been approached to join the Extra Costs Taskforce; and if she will prioritise organisations that are led by disabled people for membership of that taskforce.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 6 June 2022]: Delivery of the Extra Costs Taskforce has been paused at the request of the Secretary of State Work and Pensions, while permission is sought to appeal the High Court's declaration in *Binder vs Secretary of State Work and Pensions*.

■ **Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[11895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the number of people downsizing as a result of the bedroom tax.

David Rutley:

No recent estimate has been made. The final report into the evaluation of the removal of the spare room subsidy policy published in December 2015 found that up to eight per cent of those affected by the policy had downsized.

■ **Job Centres: Staff****Feryal Clark:** [\[13264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the ending of the temporary contracts of temporary work coaches on 30 June 2022 on the level of customer service her Department will provide; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given to [PQ1133](#).

■ **Members: Correspondence****Peter Grant:** [\[13759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to the correspondence dated 9 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Glenrothes and Central Fife regarding delays with state pensions in summer 2021, reference PG5490.

Guy Opperman:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on the 10 June.

Gerald Jones: [\[13785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to the enquiry of 12 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, reference POSCMP2022/29080.

Guy Opperman:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member by the Director for Retirement Services, on behalf of the Secretary of State, on 8 June 2022.

■ **New Enterprise Allowance: Females****Kirsten Oswald:** [\[14511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of ending the New Enterprise Allowance programme on the number of women in receipt of benefits starting their own business.

Mims Davies:

Between April 2011 and December 2020 approximately 99,000 women (41% of all participants) started on the NEA and 59,000 (42%) of these progressed to set up a business. The NEA programme was however, only one form of support and The Department for Work and Pensions does not collect data on the total number of businesses which are started by all benefit recipients.

Alternative support such as the Small Business Helpline in England, Business Wales, Fair Start Scotland and the Start Up Loans Schemes remain available. Support for the self-employed is also built into Universal Credit. Self-employed claimants on Universal Credit receive financial support to supplement their earnings, and during a start-up period, regular support from self-employment work coaches. This includes signposting claimants to tools and resources to develop the skills and experience they need. DWP also partners with local and national organisations so that claimants can access tailored, all-round support.

■ Pension Funds

Ben Lake: [\[13223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of changing fiduciary rules for pension fund managers to prioritise de-risking exposure to stranded assets.

Guy Opperman:

The Law Commission confirmed in two reports – in 2014 and 2017 – that trustees have a fundamental fiduciary duty to their members. Government agree that trustees have primacy in investment decisions.

Fiduciary Duties of Investment Intermediaries (LC350) - July 2014

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/fiduciary-duties-of-investment-intermediaries/>

Pension Funds and Social Investment (LC374) – June 2017

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/pension-funds-and-social-investment/>

■ Social Security Benefits

Jessica Morden: [\[11611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) households and (b) children are affected by the two-child rule as of 1 June 2022.

David Rutley:

The Government has committed to annual statistics releases related to the operation of the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children. Statistics related to the period up to April 2021 were published in July 2021 and can be accessed at [Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit claimants: statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of 2 children, April 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Statistics related to the period up to April 2022 will be published in the summer.

Jessica Morden: [\[11612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information is given to claimants on deductions from their benefits (a) when completing an online calculation to move to Universal Credit and (b) before moving to Universal Credit; and whether a person who receives a lower award after moving to Universal Credit is able to move back to legacy benefits in the event that deductions were not used in the calculation of their move to Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

We do not give prospective Universal Credit (UC) claimants personalised information on potential deductions from their benefits before moving to UC. This is because the Department only holds limited information about any potential debts a new claimant before a claim is made.

When considering a voluntary move to Universal Credit (as outlined in our recent [publication](#)), claimants should check how outstanding debts they may have are recovered through universal credit. They can do this by using an independent benefits calculator and by seeking independent advice, such as through the Help to Claim Service.

Once claimants make a claim, they are not entitled to move back to legacy benefits. This reflects the overarching principle that Universal Credit will replace legacy benefits by the end of 2024.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad**

Sir Peter Bottomley:**[15165]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which department authorised the four most recent agreements for overseas British pensioners to receive state pension increases; and what dates those agreements were made.

Guy Opperman:

Disregarding any agreements which continued the existing arrangements for State Pension uprating, such as those with Ireland, the EU and Switzerland, the table below lists the four most recent social security agreements that provide for State Pension uprating with countries where the pension was not previously uprated. These agreements were approved by Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions or its predecessor Department.

COUNTRY	AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO FORCE
Barbados	1 April 1992
Philippines	1 December 1989
Iceland	1 August 1985
Mauritius	1 November 1981

■ **Universal Credit: Children**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[11584]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many children of (a) infant school age, (b) primary school age inclusive of infant years, (c) primary school age excluding infant years and (d) secondary school age are from families in receipt of Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

The available statistics on the number of households with children on Universal Credit, by number of children and by the age of the youngest child, is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Plans to extend the statistics to include the age breakdown of all children in Universal Credit households are under development, as detailed in the Department's [Statistical work programme](#).

■ Women Against State Pension Inequality**Dr Rupa Huq:****[14559]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when any Minister in her Department last held a meeting with representatives of the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign; and when they next intend to do so.

Guy Opperman:

A Departmental Minister met with representatives of the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) on 29 June 2016. There are currently no plans to the meet with representatives of the group.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ UK Digital Strategy

Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy (Chris Philp):

[\[HCWS90\]](#)

I am pleased to have published today the [UK's Digital Strategy](#), a wide reaching and inclusive statement of the Government's vision for the future of the UK's digital economy. The Digital Strategy harnesses our strengths in knowledge and R&D intensive industries to further our position as a global Science and Technology Superpower, and support the UK's future prosperity and security.

This is a cross-Government strategy which aims to bring cohesion to the various important digital policies being driven by different parts of Government. Bringing these initiatives together in one place enables us to take the Government's vision of the digital economy and turn it into reality by exploring new technological frontiers and delivering tech innovation on a scale the country has not previously seen.

This Government champions the UK as a global hub for digital talent and growth. Data suggests that, last year, a new UK unicorn was created every eleven and a half days, with £27.4 billion of private capital flowing into UK tech in 2021. That is more than any other European country. We are committed to continuing to support our fantastic venture capital investment initiatives such as the Enterprise Investment Scheme and the Seed Investment Scheme to ensure that UK companies continue to grow and raise capital to scale up.

The UK is presented with an important opportunity to draw upon our position as a world leader in emerging fields such as AI, advanced semiconductor design, and quantum computing to become a force for digital good on the global stage. The Digital Strategy makes clear our intention to work toward a global consensus with like-minded partners and allies to shape a system of digital standards and trade that enables UK businesses to innovate and thrive. We have the opportunity to build on our status as a science and technology superpower, to take advantage of our regulatory freedom, and to champion the dynamic businesses and start-ups that have helped make Britain a focal point for digital skills and innovation.

As well as championing the UK as a global digital hub, the Government also recognises the power of digital technology to transform our own economy, boost jobs, and help level up regions across the UK. Britain's digital might has given us the flexibility to adapt to unprecedented challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and will be vital in our fight against climate change. Indeed, the UK's economic future, our security, our standard of living, and our place in the world are all reliant on our continued success in digital technology. We can take steps now to future-proof our economy, to invest in developing world-class expertise, to build our evidence base, to boost innovation, to grow employment opportunities across the UK, and to strengthen transnational ties.

The future of our economy, of UK jobs, of every region of the country, is digital. Over 80% of all jobs advertised require digital skills, and the rate of tech Gross Value Added has grown on average by 7% per year since 2016. It is vital that we equip businesses and citizens with the skills and tools they need to navigate this rapid change. That means not only rolling out world-class digital infrastructure across the UK, but also ensuring that the benefits of the digital economy are felt by all members of society.

A copy of the UK Digital Strategy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

EDUCATION

■ Higher Education Update

The Minister of State for Higher and Further Education (Michelle Donelan):

[\[HCWS94\]](#)

I am announcing today a temporary reduction in student loan interest rates to come into effect 1 September 2022. This unprecedented action brings student loan interest rates in line with the forecast prevailing market rates for comparable unsecured personal loans.

In accordance with the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998, where the Government considers that the student loan interest rate is higher than the prevailing market rate for comparable unsecured loans, we will take steps to bring student loan interest rates in line with the prevailing market rate.

The Government regularly monitors the interest rates set on student loans against the interest rates prevailing on the market for comparable loans.

Student loans are set with reference to the RPI for the month of March prior to the start of the academic year, as published by the ONS. Following a significant increase in RPI in March 2022, I am announcing today [13/06/2022] a cap to the Post-2012 income contingent repayment undergraduate and the Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate in line with the forecast prevailing market rate for the 22/23 academic year. Subject to the will of Parliament, the cap will come into effect from 1 September 2022 and last for a period of twelve months.

The Post-2012 undergraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate and the Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rate will be 7.3% between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023.

This intervention by ministers means that in September 2022 Post-2012 undergraduate student loan borrowers and Postgraduate student loan borrowers face a maximum interest rate of 7.3% rather than 12%. This is the largest reduction of its kind on record.

No borrower will be paying more per month as a result of this change. Monthly student loan repayments are calculated as a fixed percentage of earnings above the relevant repayment threshold and do not change based on interest rates or the amount borrowed.

Subject to continued monitoring of the prevailing market rate, from 1 September 2023, the Post-2012 undergraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rates

will revert to variable rates of standard rate to standard rate +3% and Postgraduate income contingent repayment student loan interest rates will revert to the standard rate +3%.

Should the confirmed prevailing market rate turn out lower than forecast, a further cap will be implemented to reduce the Plan 2 and the Postgraduate loan interest rates accordingly.

Further caps may be put in place should the prevailing market rate continue to be below student loan interest rates.

■ **Qualified Teacher Status in England for overseas teachers**

The Minister of State for School Standards (Mr Robin Walker): [\[HCWS95\]](#)

In early 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) will change the way teachers who qualified overseas can have their teaching qualifications recognised. The new Apply for Qualified Teacher Status in England service will mean those with high-quality teaching qualifications can come to work in England, wherever they are from. This will include teachers from Ukraine.

Current legislation means that teachers from some countries can get qualified teacher status (QTS) through a simple process, but for others it is more difficult, even if they are equally well-qualified. We are committed to ensuring the best teachers from around the world can come to teach in England and that there is consistency and fairness for all suitable applicants, regardless of where they are from. Apply for Qualified Teacher Status in England will award teachers QTS based on an assessment of their qualifications and experience against set criteria.

Further details of our proposed criteria and the new service can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualified-teacher-status-to-overseas-teachers/a-fairer-approach-to-awarding-qts-to-overseas-teachers>.

We are continuing our engagement with the sector so that they have time to understand and prepare for these changes ahead of their introduction in 2023. We will lay the necessary regulations in the Autumn.

■ **Update on Social Work England**

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families (Will Quince): [\[HCWS96\]](#)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to support local authority children's services and adult social care providers, the Government enabled Social Work England to establish a temporary emergency register. Social Work England maintains the emergency register using powers conferred to it under the Coronavirus Act (CVA) 2020. The circumstances to justify the continuation of the emergency register are reducing as the impact of the pandemic reduces. I am today announcing our intention that the emergency register will close on 30th September 2022. This will provide those social workers who are practising on the basis of emergency registration sufficient notice in which to take up full registration

if they so wish. Prior to the closure of the emergency register the Secretary of State for Education will notify Social Work England that the emergency conditions no longer apply, and the register will close.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Government Food Strategy

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice): **[\[HCWS92\]](#)**

Today I have published the government's first ever food strategy, outlining our plan to transform our food system to ensure it is fit for the future.

The government food strategy follows the independent review of the food system led by Henry Dimbleby last year, which set out an analysis of the challenges facing the food system. The food strategy takes on several of the independent review's recommendations, and I would like to thank Henry Dimbleby and his team for their work examining our food system and the vital role it plays in all our lives.

Food security sits at the heart of this government's vision for the food system – boosting food production, job creation and the wider economy with a focus on skills and innovation, to level up across the country.

We want to create a sustainable food system, from farm to fork and catch to plate, seizing on the opportunities before us and ensuring that everyone has access to nutritious and healthier food.

To do this, our objectives for this strategy are:

- A prosperous agri-food and seafood sector that ensures a secure food supply in an unpredictable world and contributes to the levelling up agenda through good quality jobs around the country.
- A sustainable, nature positive, affordable food system that provides choice and access to high quality products that support healthier and home-grown diets for all.
- Trade that provides export opportunities and consumer choice through imports, without compromising our regulatory standards for food, whether produced domestically or imported.

This strategy builds on work that is already underway across government. Significantly, it confirms that we will:

- support farmers to broadly maintain levels of domestic production through productivity gain and our new farming schemes,
- support our farmers through our new farming schemes and innovation programmes and boosting production in key sectors, including horticulture and seafood,
- release the additional provision of 10,000 visas under the seasonal worker visa route, including 2,000 for the poultry sector,

- work with industry to support the upcoming Migration Advisory Committee review of the Shortage Occupation List, and commission an independent review to ensure the quantity and quality of the food sector workforce,
- work with the food and drink industry to review existing skills programmes, identify improvements, and tackle barriers that currently prevent uptake, helping to drive up completion of skills training, pay and productivity in all areas of the UK to support levelling up,
- publish a land use framework in 2023 to ensure we meet our net zero and biodiversity targets, and help our farmers adapt to a changing climate,
- launch a Food Data Transparency Partnership, bringing together government, industry and civil society to drive a real transformation in health, animal welfare and environmental outcomes through our food,
- consult on Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF), including whether to widen the scope of GBSF mandatory organisations to cover the whole public sector and introducing an aspirational target that at least 50% of food spend must be on food produced locally or certified to higher environmental production standards, while maintaining value for money for taxpayers,
- harness the benefits of new Free Trade Agreement (FTAs) made possible following Brexit, whilst maintaining our world-leading domestic standards, by using a range of levers within our bespoke trade agreements.

The levers influencing the food system are dispersed. We will work collaboratively across UK government departments, as well as closely with the devolved administrations, industry and civil society to achieve our ambitions. We will report on our progress against the food strategy goals alongside the next UK Food Security report.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Health and Social Care Update

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

[\[HCWS98\]](#)

I would like to inform the House that the final version of *Data saves lives: reshaping health and social care with data* has been published today. It builds on the ground-breaking use of data during the pandemic and sets out ambitious plans to harness the potential of data in health and care, while maintaining the highest standards of privacy and ethics.

When facing this country's greatest public health emergency for generations, one of the most effective tools at our disposal has been the power of data. Now, as we look to live with Covid, we must apply those same tools as we tackle the most pressing challenges facing the country including elective recovery and integration of health and social care.

Earlier this year, I made a speech setting out my four priorities for reform in health; prevention, personalisation, performance and people. We cannot deliver the change we

need to see, and our 10 year plans for cancer, dementia and mental health, unless we embrace the opportunities from data-driven technologies. Last week, Sir Gordon Messenger and Dame Linda Pollard published their review into leadership of health and social care, and I accepted their recommendations in full. Today's data strategy is the next step in our plans to modernise the NHS.

This strategy shows how we will use data to bring benefits to all parts of health and social care; from patients and care users, to staff on the front line, to the pioneers driving the most cutting-edge research. It is backed by a series of concrete commitments, including investing in secure data environments to power research into new treatments, using technology to allow staff to spend more quality time with patients, and giving people better access to their own data through shared care records and the NHS App. The strategy will support NHS providers to tackle the Covid backlog, providing them with the means to monitor and optimise capacity through improved data sharing and the development of advanced analytics. This is all on top of the huge investment that we have already made, for instance investing £200 million in our Data for Research and Development programme.

It is vital that, as we deliver these benefits, we work in a way that maintains the high level of public trust in how the NHS uses health and care data. That means maintaining the highest standards of privacy and ethics, investing in secure data environments and cyber security, involving the public in decisions about how data is used in the future, listening and responding to their views and concerns.

We published a draft of this strategy in June 2021 and I would like to thank the hundreds of people and organisations who provided feedback which was invaluable in shaping this final version of our strategy for the future.

I would also like to thank Dr Ben Goldacre for his work on the Goldacre Report, which was published in April, and made a compelling case for how data can drive innovation and improve healthcare. I fully support his recommendations and this strategy shows how we will take them forward.

I will deposit a copy of the draft strategy in both Libraries.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Launch of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathways 2 and 3**

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safe and Legal Migration (Kevin Foster): [\[HCWS91\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Minister of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Home Office (Lord Harrington of Watford) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to announce to the House today the opening of the two remaining referral pathways to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Last August, as the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated rapidly, this Government worked at great speed to evacuate more than 15,000 people from Afghanistan within a fortnight. This was the biggest mission of its kind in generations and the second largest evacuation carried out by any country and we are rightly proud of what we achieved.

The evacuation included British nationals and their families, Afghans who had loyally served the UK, and other vulnerable people. Since the events of last August, we have continued to support those at risk with over 4,000 more people being brought to safety.

In January 2022, the then Minister for Afghan Resettlement announced the launch of a new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), which will resettle up to 20,000 eligible people over the coming years. This is in addition to those who have been relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

There is no application process for the Scheme, instead eligible individuals will be referred for resettlement via three referral 'pathways'.

The first of these referral pathways offers a place on the ACRS for some of the individuals and families who were brought to safety in the UK under Op PITTING. We will honour our commitments to eligible people who were called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but who were unable to board flights.

Today, I am pleased to announce the opening of the two remaining referral pathways onto the ACRS.

Firstly, under pathway 2, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will refer for resettlement to the UK, refugees who have fled Afghanistan. UNHCR has the global mandate to provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees. We are pleased to announce that we are now ready to begin receiving referrals. We anticipate receiving referrals from UNHCR for up to 2,000 refugees during the first year of this pathway, although this number will be kept under review. We will continue to receive UNHCR referrals to the scheme in coming years.

Under pathway 3, we committed to considering eligible at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) will refer up to 1,500 people from Afghanistan and the region to the Home Office for resettlement, including any eligible family members. The FCDO will launch an online system on Monday 20 June, where eligible individuals will be able to express interest in UK resettlement. Expressions of interest will be considered in the order they are received, although some groups will be prioritised because the role they performed or the project they worked on mean they are particularly at risk, or because there are exceptionally compelling circumstances. Expressions of interest will be accepted until Monday 15 August 2022, when the online system will close. Guidance on the expression of interest process is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) [from Monday 13 June].

Any offer of resettlement under the ACRS will be contingent on security screening, including checks against security and other databases, and provision of biometric information. In the interests of public safety, it is right that individuals who are found to

have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, terrorism or other serious crimes will not be eligible for resettlement.

Whilst we recognise the plight of many vulnerable individuals who remain in Afghanistan and the region, the capacity of the UK to resettle people under this scheme is not unlimited and difficult decisions have had to be made on who will be prioritised for resettlement. Nevertheless, we will continue to be committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan and after the first year of the third referral pathway, we will continue to work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk.

Resettlement is just one element of the UK Government's response to the situation in Afghanistan, in addition to our diplomatic efforts and international aid in the region, working alongside like-minded states and as part of the international community.

Through the ACRS, the United Kingdom continues to offer safe and legal routes to those in need of protection. The scheme provides another demonstration of our New Plan for Immigration in action.

We are proud to provide those affected by events in Afghanistan with a route to safety and look forward to warmly welcoming individuals and families into our communities across the UK.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Appointment to the UK Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): [\[HCWS97\]](#)

Lord Wharton of Yarm has been appointed as a substitute member of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in place of Baroness Foster of Oxtou.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Disability Update

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Chloe Smith):
[\[HCWS93\]](#)

The aim of this government, as set out in our manifesto commitment, is to transform the everyday lives of disabled people across the country.

We are also working towards equality on the global stage, through both the example we set here in the UK and our international cooperation. On the 13th of June, as the UK Minister for Disabled People, I will travel to the 15th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP15).

Participating in bilateral meetings and wider debates, I will meet my global counterparts with the aim of strengthening the international political commitment for the rights of disabled people.

Our ambition is clear: to deliver long term change through practical actions and wide-ranging policies across government which enable disabled people to live full and independent lives.

We are delivering on this ambition. We have seen 1.3 million more disabled people in work than in 2017 – delivering a government commitment five years early. And since 2013, the general trend in disability employment has been positive, with strong growth in the number and rate of disabled people in employment and a narrowing of the disability employment gap. Over the next three years, this government will invest £1.3bn in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions. We have supported the introduction of the British Sign Language Act and the Down Syndrome Act in the last parliament, and we will be publishing our Health and Disability white paper later this year which will set out more important work.

In July 2021 we published the National Disability Strategy (the “Strategy”), which set out our ambition to improve the lives of millions of disabled people. It was a turning point in government commitment to coordinate disability policy, setting out in a high-level framework document over 100 cross-government initiatives driving change in all parts of society.

However, in January 2022, the High Court declared the Strategy was unlawful because the UK Disability Survey, which informed it, was held to be a voluntary consultation that failed to comply with the legal requirements on public consultations. We strongly disagree with this finding and are disappointed that the declaration prevents us from taking forward some of our important work. The DWP Secretary of State has therefore sought permission to appeal this decision from the Court of Appeal.

Whilst awaiting a decision on permission to appeal from the Court of Appeal, we are required to take steps to comply with the Court’s declaration. The Secretary of State wants to minimise the risk of acting inconsistently with the Court’s declaration, without compromising on the ambitious agenda we are delivering for disabled people. As such, we are pausing a limited number of policies which are referred to in the strategy or are directly connected with it.

We remain committed to improving opportunities and outcomes for disabled people as we await the outcome of the appeal.

Our intent remains to create more opportunities for disabled people to participate and thrive; to protect and promote the rights of disabled people; and to tackle the barriers that prevent disabled people from fully benefiting from, and contributing to every aspect of our society. Ensuring the voice of disabled people is properly heard remains a priority for government. We wish to continue to engage closely with disabled people and disabled people’s organisations.

We are committed to disability policy that supports all areas of life and taking action to create a society that works for everyone.