



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 June 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:59 P.M., 14 June 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	6	■ Infrastructure: National Policy Statements	13
ATTORNEY GENERAL	6	■ Re-employment	13
■ Northern Ireland Protocol	6	CHURCH COMMISSIONERS	14
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	6	■ Church of England: Homes for Ukraine Scheme	14
■ Business: Coronavirus	6	DEFENCE	14
■ Carbon Capture and Storage	6	■ Afghanistan: Military Aid	14
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	7	■ Afghanistan: Refugees	15
■ Director of Labour Market Enforcement	8	■ Ajax Vehicles: Legal Costs	17
■ Electronic Equipment	8	■ Ajax Vehicles: Protective Clothing	17
■ Electronic Equipment: Electric Cables and Waste	9	■ Armed Forces: Bullying and Harassment	18
■ Energy Charter Treaty: Climate Change	9	■ Armed Forces: Vetting	18
■ Energy: Billing	10	■ Destroyers and Frigates: Deployment	19
■ Energy: Disability	10	■ Finland and Sweden: NATO Enlargement	20
■ Energy: Housing	10	■ Hercules Aircraft	20
■ Environment Protection: Taxation	11	■ Kenya: Military Alliances	21
■ Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups	11	■ LE TacCIS Programme	22
■ Footwear	12	■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure	22
■ Fuel Poverty	12	■ Ministry of Defence: Theft	23
■ Fuels: Prices	12		
■ Hydrogen Fuelling Stations	13		

■ Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference	23	■ Special Educational Needs	39
■ Shipbuilding: Isle of Wight	23	■ Special Educational Needs: Finance	41
■ Shipping	24	■ Students: Loans	41
■ Somalia: Peacekeeping Operations	24	■ Teachers: Career Development	42
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	24	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	43
■ Arts: EU Countries	24	■ African Swine Fever: Disease Control	43
■ Arts: Overseas Visitors	25	■ Agriculture: Subsidies	43
■ Digital Technology: Data Protection	26	■ Avian Influenza	44
EDUCATION	26	■ Bees: Conservation	45
■ Children and Young People: Social Services	26	■ Bottles	46
■ Children: Disability	27	■ Cats and Dogs: Animal Housing	46
■ Children: Protection	28	■ Convention on Biological Diversity	47
■ Classroom Assistants: Pay	29	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Public Opinion	48
■ Education: Labour Turnover	29	■ Dogs: Imports	48
■ Educational Institutions: Inspections	30	■ Food: Waste Disposal	57
■ Free School Meals	31	■ Nature Conservation: Planning Permission	57
■ Free School Meals: Barnsley East	31	■ Slaughterhouses: Small Businesses	58
■ HIV Infection: Health Education	32	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	58
■ National Implementation Board	33	■ Africa: Food Supply	58
■ Pupils: Per Capita Costs	33	■ Israeli Settlements: Overseas Companies	59
■ Schools: Closures	34	■ Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review	59
■ Schools: Discrimination	36	■ Platinum Jubilee 2022: Diplomatic Service	60
■ Schools: Energy	36		
■ Schools: Finance	37		
■ Schools: Platinum Jubilee 2022	38		
■ Schools: Publications	38		
■ Schools: Rural Areas	39		

■ School Meals Coalition	60	■ Tourette's Syndrome: Health Professions and Research	72
■ Wales: UK Trade with EU	61	■ Tourette's Syndrome: Health Services	72
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	61	■ Vaccination	73
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	61	■ Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access	73
■ Antimicrobials: Developing Countries	62	HOME OFFICE	73
■ Cancer: Children	62	■ Animal Experiments: Licensing	73
■ Cancer: Radiotherapy	62	■ Drugs: Misuse	74
■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments	63	■ Iran: Intelligence Services	74
■ Care Homes: Coronavirus	63	■ Refugees: Ukraine	75
■ Carers: South Yorkshire	63	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	75
■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments	64	■ Energy Charter Treaty	75
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	64	■ Overseas Trade: South America	76
■ Dementia: Ethnic Groups	65	■ Trade Agreements: Australia and New Zealand	76
■ Dental Services: Equality	65	■ Trade Agreements: Gulf States	76
■ Diabetes: Health Services	66	■ Trade Barriers	77
■ Diagnosis: Regulation	66	■ UK Export Finance	77
■ Evusheld	66	JUSTICE	77
■ Evusheld: Clinical Trials	67	■ Bill of Rights	77
■ Health Centres and Hospitals: Capital Investment	68	■ Bill of Rights: Humanism	78
■ Health: Disadvantaged	68	■ Courts: Energy	78
■ Kidneys: Transplant Surgery	68	■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: ICT	79
■ NHS Covid Pass	69	■ Marriage	79
■ NHS: Chiropractic	69	■ Offenders: Electronic Tagging	79
■ NHS: Dental Services	69	■ Prisoners' Release: Wales	80
■ NHS: Staff	69	■ Prisoners: Coronavirus	81
■ NHS: Training	70	■ Prisons: Energy	81
■ Psychiatric Hospitals: Safety	71	■ Probation Service: Pay	82
■ Social Services: Staff	71	■ Rape: Trials	82
■ Suicide: Organisations	71		
■ Tourette's Syndrome	72		

■ Reoffenders: Wales	83	■ Electric Scooters: Regulation	95
LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	83	■ Emergency Calls: Drivers	95
■ Community Housing Fund	83	■ Ferries: Electrification	96
■ Help to Buy Scheme	84	■ Govia Thameslink Railway: Rolling Stock	96
■ Help to Buy Scheme: Liverpool	84	■ Great British Railways: Contracts	96
■ Planning Permission	84	■ Great British Railways: Disability	96
■ Planning Permission: Appeals	85	■ Great British Railways: Industrial Relations	97
■ Planning Permission: Derbyshire	85	■ Great British Railways: KPMG	97
■ Private Rented Housing: Rents	86	■ Great British Railways: Staff	97
■ Right to Buy Scheme	86	■ Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance	98
■ Social Rented Housing: North East	87	■ Motor Vehicles: Testing	99
■ Social Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance	87	■ Rail Partners: Cost Effectiveness	100
NORTHERN IRELAND	88	■ Railways	100
■ Commonwealth Games 2022: Northern Ireland	88	■ Railways: Bus Services	102
TRANSPORT	88	■ Railways: Fares	103
■ Airlines: Standards	88	■ Railways: Freight	104
■ Airports: Staff	89	■ Railways: Leadership	104
■ Airports: Standards	89	■ Railways: North of England	104
■ Aviation	90	■ Railways: Passengers	105
■ Aviation: Air Pollution	91	■ Railways: Timetables	105
■ Aviation: Disability	91	■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance	105
■ Birmingham Airport: Commonwealth Games	92	■ Shipping: Minimum Wage	106
■ Department for Transport: Media	92	■ Shipping: Redundancy	106
■ Department for Transport: Vetting	93	TREASURY	106
■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Telephone Services	93	■ Members: Correspondence	106
■ Driving Licences: Administrative Delays	94	■ Tax Credits Ltd	107
		■ Treasury: Hikvision	107

WORK AND PENSIONS	107	■ Universal Credit	113
■ Care Leavers: Wales	107	■ Universal Credit: Barnsley East	114
■ Carers: Poverty	108	■ Universal Credit: Poverty	114
■ Cost of Living: Government Assistance	108	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	116
■ Department for Work and Pensions: Marketing	109	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	116
■ Household Support Fund	109	■ Care Homes: Coronavirus	116
■ Job Centres: Conditions of Employment	110	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	117
■ Job Centres: Recruitment	110	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	117
■ Motor Vehicles: Waste Disposal	111	■ Singapore Digital Economy Agreement Update	117
■ Social Security Benefits: Armed Forces	111	JUSTICE	118
■ Social Security Benefits: Energy	113	■ Prisons Strategy White Paper: Publication of response to consultation questions	118

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Northern Ireland Protocol

Emily Thornberry:

[\[15209\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the Answer of 3 July 2013 to Question 162424, whether it is her assessment that the issue of the UK's legal obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol falls into the category of being a particularly complex and sensitive matter.

Suella Braverman:

The Government published a legal statement on 13 June 2022 summarising its position that planned legislation to address elements of the Northern Ireland Protocol is lawful under international law. As the Government's legal statement makes clear, this is a genuinely exceptional situation against the challenging, complex and unique circumstances of Northern Ireland. Whilst it would not be appropriate to comment specifically on the content of the advice or who has given it, the government commissions a range of advice from appropriate specialists, and we have done so in this case.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Coronavirus

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[13222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason lenders under the Covid Recovery Loan Scheme do not provide reasons to companies which they deem not to match the loan criteria.

Paul Scully:

The Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS) is delivered by the British Business Bank (BBB) through a network of accredited lenders. Decision-making on whether a company is eligible for RLS and whether it is suitable for them is fully delegated to these accredited lenders.

The terms of RLS do not specify how lenders should communicate with prospective borrowers. Lenders may provide feedback to prospective borrowers in accordance with their own commercial processes.

■ Carbon Capture and Storage

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[15160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Professor Kevin Taylor's research from The University of Manchester, what progress

has been made on the plans outlined in the Energy Security Bill to develop Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) by making legacy data accessible to researchers developing CCUS.

Greg Hands:

BEIS has recently published substantial updates to the CCUS Knowledge Sharing page on the Gov.uk website, which has over 3000 pages of data including past case studies, technical research and lessons learned:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/carbon-capture-and-storage-knowledge-sharing>.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[15161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Dr Rob Bellamy's research from The University of Manchester, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of fixed payments to operators to incentivise bioenergy with carbon capture and storage.

Greg Hands:

The Government is aware of Dr Bellamy's work on the interactions between global environmental change and society. The Government has considered various potential business models for power Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage and will be releasing further information in its upcoming business model consultation on this matter.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Rachael Maskell:

[13170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his position is on adopting a proactive, predictive immunology approach to the development of the next generation of covid-19 vaccines.

George Freeman:

The Government supports a proactive approach to continue to develop the next generation of vaccines. Despite the highly successful national vaccination campaign, it is important we continue to study how to produce Covid-19 vaccines that induce robust, long-term protective immunity and which are effective across mutating variants.

To that end, following extensive engagement with academic and industry stakeholders, the Vaccine Taskforce are working with other stakeholders across government, to explore the establishment of a UK-wide Predictive Immunology Network, formed of centres of excellence spread across the UK.

The aim is to ensure the network will utilise the collaborative approach that was so successful during the pandemic, to bring together industry, academia, and the NHS to work towards a common goal and answer key immunology questions on how to improve vaccines including the next generation Covid-19 vaccines.

Alexander Stafford: [\[13287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department supports a proactive, predictive immunology approach to the development of the next generation of covid-19 vaccines.

George Freeman:

The Government supports a proactive approach to continue to develop the next generation of vaccines. Despite the highly successful national vaccination campaign, it is important we continue to study how to produce Covid-19 vaccines that induce robust, long-term protective immunity and which are effective across mutating variants.

To that end, following extensive engagement with academic and industry stakeholders, the Vaccine Taskforce are working with other stakeholders across government, to explore the establishment of a UK-wide Predictive Immunology Network, formed of centres of excellence spread across the UK.

The aim is to ensure the network will utilise the collaborative approach that was so successful during the pandemic, to bring together industry, academia, and the NHS to work towards a common goal and answer key immunology questions on how to improve vaccines including the next generation Covid-19 vaccines.

Director of Labour Market Enforcement**Imran Hussain:** [\[13152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2022 to Question 3626, on Director of Labour Market Enforcement, by what date his Department plans to publish the summary of responses to the Call for Evidence on the umbrella company market.

Imran Hussain: [\[13153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the umbrella company market following the Call for Evidence on that subject which closed on 22 February.

Paul Scully:

The recent Call for Evidence on the umbrella company market, which was run jointly with HM Treasury and HMRC, closed on 22 February 2022. Officials in the three departments are working closely together to consider the evidence submitted and the summary of responses will be published in due course.

Electronic Equipment**Patrick Grady:** [\[15276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency has had discussions with EU officials on proposals to introduce a common charging standard for electronic devices.

Patrick Grady:

[\[15277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to align regulations for the specification of charging ports on electronic devices sold in the UK with any common charging standard introduced by the EU for those devices.

Paul Scully:

The Government is aware of the EU's proposal for a single charging solution for certain electronic devices and there are no current plans to introduce similar requirements in UK domestic law.

As we do with other international trading partners, we have an ongoing dialogue with EU institutions on relevant regulatory changes both in the EU and the UK. The Government will continue to monitor developments in this area.

■ **Electronic Equipment: Electric Cables and Waste**

Hywel Williams:

[\[15193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the impact on (a) electronic waste by 2050 and (b) consumer costs of standardising phone charging cables to USB-C type.

Paul Scully:

The Government is aware of the EU's proposal for a single charging solution for certain electronic devices. While there are no current plans to introduce similar requirements in domestic law, we will monitor developments in this area.

■ **Energy Charter Treaty: Climate Change**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[14503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the compatibility of the Energy Charter Treaty with the UK's commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement; and if he 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: Billing

Caroline Lucas: [\[9868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take legislative steps to ensure that people who pay for their energy by (a) a pre-payment meter and (b) cash or cheque do not pay more for their energy than people paying by Direct Debit; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Glasgow South West on 21st February 2022 to Question [120813](#).

■ Energy: Disability

Mike Amesbury: [\[9136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to provide additional targeted support for all disabled people with high energy usage needs.

Greg Hands:

The Government understands that some households with a disability or medical condition will have higher energy costs than average. Certain specialised NHS England services do provide rebates on energy costs for patients using medical equipment at home, such as home oxygen concentrators or adult home dialysis. These arrangements are unique to the contracts or service specifications of these conditions. Clinical Commissioning Groups are best placed to support their local populace.

On 26 May, as part of an additional £15 billion package of cost-of-living support, it was announced that the six million people who receive disability allowance will get a payment of £150 to assist with rising energy prices. Additionally, households will get £400 of support with their energy bills through an expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

■ Energy: Housing

Layla Moran: [\[14602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's plans to invest £9.2 billion in the energy efficiency of homes, schools and hospitals, what proportion of the intended investment is to be funded by Government spending in relation to (a) homes, (b) schools and (c) hospitals; what proportion of the intended amount has (i) already been invested and (ii) been allocated in relation to (A) homes, (B) schools and (C) hospitals; and what plans he has in the next two years to spend the remaining amount which has not yet been invested or allocated in relation to (1) homes, (2) schools and (3) hospitals.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 13 June 2022]: The Government is investing £6.6 billion across this parliament to support building decarbonisation. For low-income, domestic households, £787 million has been allocated to the Local Authority Delivery scheme, in delivery since 2020, alongside an initial £219 million for the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) in 2021, which focuses on off-gas grid homes. c.£880 million more funding has been allocated to HUG by 2025. For the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, a further £800m has been committed for Wave 2. To date, c.£60m has been awarded through the Demonstrator, and c.£179m through Wave 1.

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme provides grants for public sector bodies to fund decarbonisation. £2.5 billion has been allocated to date, and £1.075 billion has been spent in years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Environment Protection: Taxation**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[13026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 7884, on Boiler Upgrade Scheme, whether his Department is committed to no new low carbon electricity levies until 2025, as stated in the Autumn Budget 2017.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 9 June 2022]: A growing proportion of UK electricity comes from renewables, which reduces exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets. Without the renewables the Government is putting on the grid today, and the green levies that support them, energy bills would be higher than they are now.

The Autumn Budget 2017 committed to further Contracts for Difference (CfD). This existing scheme has shared the risks of investing in new technologies to boost UK renewables and bring in billions of pounds of private investment. The Government will ensure the UK remains a world leader through annual CfD auctions, reducing costs through competition.

Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups**Imran Hussain:**[\[13149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's response to the Women and Equalities Committee's fourth report of Session 2021-22 on Ethnicity pay gap reporting, HC 110, published on 13 May 2022, when his Department plans to publish the analysis of consultation responses to the mandatory ethnicity pay reporting consultation which closed on 11 January 2019.

Paul Scully:

The Government set out its support for a voluntary approach to ethnicity pay reporting in "Inclusive Britain", the response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report. We will publish the analysis of the responses to the 2019 consultation in due course.

■ Footwear

Hilary Benn: [\[13058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to require retailers to sell one pair of different size shoes to people who have two different sized feet as a result of a disability or toe amputation.

Paul Scully:

This is a matter for individual retailers. However, the Government would encourage retailers to make reasonable adjustments to their store policies to cater for all consumers.

■ Fuel Poverty

Jim Shannon: [\[13135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to help tackle fuel poverty, in the context of the anticipated increase in the number of households who will be in fuel poverty in 2022.

Greg Hands:

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

Energy efficiency remains the best way to tackle fuel poverty in the long term, reducing the amount of energy required to heat a home and contributing to lower energy bills and carbon emissions. Support is available through schemes including the Energy Company Obligation which will be worth £1 billion pa, the Home Upgrade Grant and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

■ Fuels: Prices

Jim Shannon: [\[13129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of the increase in fuel prices on his Department's policies; and if he will hold further discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on financial packages to help support people affected by that increase.

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 road fuel costs on UK consumers.

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

■ Hydrogen Fuelling Stations

Alan Brown: [\[9040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on ensuring that the provision of hydrogen refuelling infrastructure for transport is considered in the development of new hydrogen production facilities.

Greg Hands:

The Department continues to work closely with the Department for Transport on the role of hydrogen in decarbonising transport. Government support has included £30m for refuelling infrastructure, which helps support the deployment of 124 hydrogen fuel cell buses.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[9197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has held discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on the potential merits of planning for the provision of hydrogen refuelling infrastructure for transport as part of the development of new hydrogen production facilities.

Greg Hands:

The Department continues to work closely with the Department for Transport on the role of hydrogen in decarbonising transport. Government support has included £30m for refuelling infrastructure, which helps support the deployment of 124 hydrogen fuel cell buses.

■ Infrastructure: National Policy Statements

Stephen Hammond: [\[13083\]](#)

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 Infrastructure.

Lee Rowley:

At present, the Government has no plans to create a single National Policy Statement for Infrastructure. Our strategies for infrastructure investment and performance are set out in the National Infrastructure Strategy (NIS) and Transforming Infrastructure Performance: Roadmap to 2030. The NIS includes ambitious reforms to the planning system for nationally significant infrastructure projects. Proposed infrastructure investments during the next decade are set out in the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline 2021, which identifies a pipeline of projects with a value of over £600 billion. The Pipeline is updated on a regular basis.

■ Re-employment

Imran Hussain: [\[13150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2022 to Question 3621, on Re-employment, with which

stakeholders he and officials in his Department have met to discuss the proposed statutory code of practice on fire and rehire practices.

Imran Hussain: [13151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2022 to Question 3621, on Re-employment, by what date his Department plans to publish a draft for consultation of the proposed statutory code of practice on fire and rehire practices.

Paul Scully:

The Government remains committed to bringing forward a new statutory code on the practice of dismissal and re-engagement. As BEIS officials progress this work, they will be meeting with a wide range of stakeholders with relevant expertise.

We will publish a draft for consultation in due course.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Justin Madders: [15730]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, whether any properties owned by the Church of England are being used under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Andrew Selous:

The Church of England does not keep a central database of those sponsoring Ukrainian refugees, but guidance for parishes and clergy on the processes involved is available from the National Church Institutions and published here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Ukraine%20toolkit%20draft%208.pdf>

Anecdotal evidence from dioceses suggests that expressions of interest number in the hundreds, including those in clergy accommodation, and that matches and arrivals have been steadily increasing. The Church Commissioners are aware of four bishops who have successfully sponsored refugees, with several others still waiting either to be matched or for their application to be completed. The Church of England Pensions Board and others have also issued guidance and are aware of residents taking up the opportunity to host Ukrainians in those properties

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Military Aid

John Healey: [13036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2022 to Question 4477 on Afghanistan: Military Aid, if he will publish a list of the equipment

recovered from Afghanistan (a) before and (b) during Operation Pitting that was gifted to partner nations.

James Heappey:

Between July and the UK's full military withdrawal in Afghanistan in August 2021, the UK gifted the United States five minibuses, one locally acquired coach, one forklift vehicle and 40 public order kits. All sensitive equipment and anything considered attractive to criminal and terrorist organisations was recovered or denied.

■ **Afghanistan: Refugees**

John Healey:

[\[13043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2022 to Question 4476 on Afghanistan: Refugees, how the data of ten individuals on the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme was breached.

James Heappey:

Data relating to ten individuals on the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme was breached when two batch email was sent with each email addresses in the CC (carbon copy) field, rather than BCC (blind carbon copy).

John Healey:

[\[13044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2022 to Question 4476 on Afghanistan: Refugees, when officials in his Department first learnt of the data breach involving the information of ten individuals in the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

James Heappey:

Officials in the Ministry of Defence learnt of the data breach involving the email addresses of ten individuals in the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy scheme on 7 February 2022.

John Healey:

[\[13045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2022 to Question 4476 on Afghanistan: Refugees, whether any data of the ten individuals, other than email addresses, was breached.

James Heappey:

No additional data other than email addresses was breached.

John Healey:

[\[13046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2022 to Question 4476, on Afghanistan: Refugees, whether an investigation into the cause of the data breach involving the data of ten individuals has taken place.

James Heappey:

An investigation into the cause of the data breach that occurred in February 2022, involving the emails of ten individuals has taken place.

John Healey:[\[15182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy principal applicants have been waiting more than 6 weeks to have their applications processed.

James Heappey:

As of 13 June 2022, decisions have been issued on two of the 3,226 applications received since the beginning of April 2022.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, applications to the ARAP scheme are considered in the order in which they have been received.

We are working at pace to consider each application on a case-by-case basis and timelines for processing applications vary significantly from case to case, due to the complexity and personal circumstances of each applicant.

In many cases, further information has to be requested from the applicant, and subject to that being received (and when) this may have implications for the timescale of processing these applications.

John Healey:[\[15183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel in his Department have been assigned to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy team each month since April 2021.

James Heappey:

The data requested can be found in the table below:

MONTH	ARAP PERSONNEL
April 2021	10
May 2021	24
June 2021	28
July 2021	30
August 2021	51
September 2021	69
October 2021	112
November 2021	125
December 2021	111
January 2022	103
February 2022	104

MONTH	ARAP PERSONNEL
March 2022	100
April 2022	94
May 2022	90
As of 10 June 2022	91

These figures include both civilian and military staff making eligibility decisions, policy and legal teams, and those based in the UK and in third countries who are working to arrange relocation of eligible persons. Figures include short term augmentees which vary over time; recent recruitment means that the team is increasingly resourced by permanent staff.

■ Ajax Vehicles: Legal Costs

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[14446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much the Government has paid from the public purse on legal representation in connection with the Ajax Armoured Fighting Vehicle programme up to 8 June 2022; what estimate his Department has made of projected total costs to the public purse for legal representation in connection with the Ajax Armoured Fighting Vehicle programme; and whether that money will come out of his Department's budget.

Jeremy Quin:

To date, the Ministry of Defence budget has incurred costs of around £300,000 on legal support to the Ajax programme since 2020 in relation to the current noise and vibration issues.

I am withholding details of forecast expenditure to protect our commercial interests.

■ Ajax Vehicles: Protective Clothing

John Healey: [\[15179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has begun the process of searching for new ear protective equipment for use with Ajax vehicles.

John Healey: [\[15180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department will be seeking PPE standard ear protective equipment for the use with Ajax vehicles.

Jeremy Quin:

As outlined in my written statement to the House on 19 May 2022 (HCWS42), the cautious parameters set by the Safety Panel within which the Ajax user validation trials are to be conducted included the temporary use of Crewgard headsets to allow the modifications proposed by General Dynamics to be trialled. The longer-term

solution is being taken forward through the Armoured Fighting Vehicle headset project, through which the first headsets are being procured and expected to enter service later this year.

■ Armed Forces: Bullying and Harassment

Stephanie Peacock: [\[14574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many calls the independent bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline has received each quarter since launch.

Leo Docherty:

Unacceptable behaviour, which includes bullying, harassment and discrimination, is not tolerated in Defence. Those who fail to meet our values and standards will be dealt with appropriately, which includes the use of administrative, disciplinary or misconduct action.

Defence has a wide programme of work ongoing to prevent and tackle unacceptable behaviour. This includes the bullying, harassment, and discrimination helpline, which is available 24 hours a day and staffed independently by trained professionals. The helpline has been running since September 2020. In this time, it has supported 660 staff across Defence to access support and guidance.

YEAR	QUARTER (QTR)	NUMBER OF CALLS IN QTR	TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS IN YEAR
2020	Qtr3*	73	178
	Qtr4	105	
	Qtr1	109	
2021	Qtr2	94	369
	Qtr3	79	
	Qtr4	87	
2022	Qtr1	95	113
	Qtr2**	18	

* Data starts at September 2020

** Data includes up to the end of April 2022

■ Armed Forces: Vetting

Stephanie Peacock: [\[14579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the Armed Forces have been subject to an Employment Suitability Risk Assessment each year since 2010.

Leo Docherty:

The Armed Forces do not have a singular "Employment Suitability Risk Assessment". This is neither a recognised term nor a policy or process that exists within the Armed Forces.

Risk and suitability within the Armed Forces are assessed in a variety of ways which include, but are not limited to, annual training tests, medical fitness tests, security vetting, and pre-deployment assessments.

■ Destroyers and Frigates: Deployment

John Healey:

[\[13040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days each Royal Navy (a) frigate and (b) destroyer spent at sea in each year since 2015.

James Heapey:

The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Type 23 Frigates:

FRIGATE	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ARGYLL	25	0	111	141	101	191	136
IRON DUKE	85	132	94	0	4	0	0
KENT	124	67	0	57	172	155	207
LANCASTER	157	0	0	0	6	144	121
MONMOUTH	68	113	209	131	37	10	0
MONTROSE	0	0	41	145	198	227	203
NORTHUMBERLAND	48	0	0	117	146	154	123
PORTLAND	107	176	41	0	0	0	125
RICHMOND	180	73	51	0	11	190	220
SOMERSET	131	113	95	60	0	0	0
ST ALBANS	122	136	138	120	77	0	0
SUTHERLAND	127	127	103	166	103	161	0
WESTMINSTER	0	0	126	152	131	114	162

Type 45 Destroyers:

DESTROYER	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
DARING	48	148	85	0	0	0	0
DAUNTLESS	114	2	0	0	0	29	0
DIAMOND	27	118	116	99	14	71	179

DESTROYER	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
DRAGON	69	56	56	145	163	110	152
DEFENDER	106	115	0	84	183	129	204
DUNCAN	188	86	107	135	153	0	0

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

■ Finland and Sweden: NATO Enlargement

John Healey:

[\[13037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had discussions with his Turkish counterpart on the applications of (a) Finland and (b) Sweden to join NATO.

James Heapey:

The UK is clear that having Sweden and Finland in the Alliance will increase our shared security. Our solidarity declarations signed with Sweden and Finland earlier this month by the Prime Minister demonstrate our steadfast and unequivocal commitment to both countries during their NATO membership process and beyond. At this time more than any, it is key we reinforce the unity of the Alliance. The UK hopes accession talks reach a rapid conclusion, to integrate Sweden and Finland into the Alliance quickly, and we hope that Sweden and Finland will attend next month's Madrid Summit as NATO Invitees.

The UK values its close alliance with Turkey as an integral part of NATO, we are clear that the strength of NATO as a whole is best served by facilitating the accession of Sweden and Finland as soon as possible, while addressing Turkey's valid security concerns. The UK is clear that Turkey has a right to defend itself against terrorism and we regularly discuss these matters and other matters of NATO importance with Turkey. We continue to discuss the Finnish and Swedish applications with NATO Allies, including Turkey. The Secretary of State for Defence has engaged directly with his Turkish opposite number and plans to meet him for further discussions in the near future.

■ Hercules Aircraft

John Healey:

[\[13644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what total saving will result from the early retirement of the C-130J Hercules fleet as set out in the 2021 Defence Command Paper.

Jeremy Quin:

The total saving from the early retirement of the C130J Hercules fleet is £1.829 billion.

Kenya: Military Alliances**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[13258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the defence cooperation agreement between the UK and Kenya, who are the members of the Inter-Governmental Liaison Committee.

James Heappey:

The UK and Kenya Co-Chair the Inter Governmental Liaison Committee, and must both provide at least four representatives to each meeting. At least two representatives must be senior military officers of the rank Colonel or above, and at least two senior civilian Government officers from both parties.

The UK's Co-Chair of the Committee is the Defence Adviser Nairobi (a Brigadier). Other UK members include the policy lead from the Ministry of Defence, Senior Lawyer from the Operational and International Humanitarian Law Team in Ministry of Defence, and military commitments lead for Kenya from Ministry of Defence. Kenya's Co-Chair is an equivalent officer from the Defence Headquarters of the Kenyan Defence Forces.

Kenny MacAskill:[\[13259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the UK-Kenya Defence Cooperation Agreement, on what dates has the Inter-Governmental Liaison Committee met in each year since 2016.

James Heappey:

The Inter-Governmental Liaison Committee (IGLC) is established under the UK-Kenya Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA). The DCA came into effect on 7 October 2016. Since then the IGLC has met on the following dates:

- 21 March 2017
- 7 December 2017
- 28 February 2018
- 27 November 2018
- 3 July 2019
- 4 June 2020
- 2 December 2020
- 18 May 2021
- 1 December 2021

Kenny MacAskill:[\[13260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the UK-Kenya Defence Cooperation Agreement, where the Inter-Governmental Liaison Committee has met in each year since 2016.

James Heappey:

The Inter-Governmental Liaison Committee (IGLC) is established under the UK-Kenya Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA). The DCA came into effect on 7 October 2016. Since then, the IGLC has met on the following dates and at locations:

- 21 March 2017 - Nairobi
- 7 December 2017 - Nairobi
- 28 February 2018 - London
- 27 November 2018 - Nairobi
- 3 July 2019 - London
- 4 June 2020 - Virtually
- 2 December 2020 - Virtually
- 18 May 2021 - Virtually
- 1 December 2021 - Virtually

LE TacCIS Programme**John Healey:**[\[13641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when officials in his Department first learnt that the first element of the Morpheus capability was affected by delays and would not meet its delivery date.

John Healey:[\[13642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he first learnt that the first element of the Morpheus capability was affected by delays and would not meet its delivery date.

Jeremy Quin:

In April 2020 General Dynamics Mission Systems (GDMS), who are the contractor responsible for the EvO TP Contract, wrote to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) asking for an extension to the Contract duration. The MOD consequently worked with GDMS on potential strategies to mitigate delays to delivery. Ministers were first informed of a risk of delays to the first element of the MORPHEUS project through an Information Note to the Secretary of State for Defence in December 2020.

Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure**John Healey:**[\[13632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish a breakdown of his Department's total costs for administration for each financial year from 2015-16.

Jeremy Quin:

A breakdown of the Department's total administration costs is included in the Annual Reports and Accounts for the respective financial year. A breakdown of the total administration costs for each year from 2015-2016 onwards is located in Annex C of the 2020-2021 Annual Reports and Accounts. This can be found at: Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1048706/MOD_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2020-21_WEB.pdf

Ministry of Defence: Theft**John Healey:**[\[13035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27010 on Ministry of Defence: Theft, if he will publish a list of the items stolen from his Department's sites with a value over £500 in the last 12 months.

Jeremy Quin:

In response to a similar question from the Rt Hon. Gentleman in July 2021 (Question 27010) I wrote to him with the details requested and deposited a copy of the letter in the Library. I will do so again in request of the further information requested.

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Defence; Theft [UIN 27010.docx]

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference**John Healey:**[\[14422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he will be personally attending the NPT Review Conference in August 2022.

John Healey:[\[14423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel from his Department will be part of the UK delegation to the NPT Review Conference in August 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is the lead Government department for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Review Conference. The UK delegation is currently being finalised. Ministry of Defence officials will form part of the UK delegation, alongside the FCDO and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, although numbers are yet to be confirmed.

Shipbuilding: Isle of Wight**Bob Seely:**[\[13237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the refreshed National Shipbuilding Strategy on Isle of Wight-based shipbuilders.

Jeremy Quin:

The National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh includes a package of measures to encourage UK exports, commercialise green technology, and improve skills shortages. It also includes support to increase UK shipyards productivity and competitiveness. The National Shipbuilding Office, which is closely engaged with the shipbuilding enterprise on the Isle of Wight, has a clear focus on supporting UK shipyards and related businesses.

Shipping**John Healey:**[\[13039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has made a comparative assessment of (a) the UK's and (b) Russia's icebreaker capability.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence is not aware of any direct comparative assessment between Russian and UK ice-breaking capability. The Royal Navy's Ice Patrol Ship, HMS PROTECTOR, does not receive its tasking in a traditional military manner, being employed most frequently in a support and survey capacity for the majority of its deployed time.

Somalia: Peacekeeping Operations**John Healey:**[\[13038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2022 to Question 4472 on African Union: Peacekeeping Operations, how many UK Armed Forces personnel are included in the Mission Support Team to the African Union Transition Mission (ATMIS).

James Heappey:

The ATMIS (AU mission) is for African Union nations to contribute to that operation. The UK trains contributors given the mutual value of the mission for security in Somalia.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**Arts: EU Countries****Alex Sobel:**[\[15365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to help allow UK creative artists to tour freely across the EU.

Alex Sobel:[\[15366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the EU Commission on access for UK creative artists.

Julia Lopez:

The Government is committed to supporting UK creative industries to adapt to new arrangements with the EU.

We are supporting the sector by clarifying arrangements on visas, movement of goods and haulage, including through bilateral engagement with Member States. We have taken steps to support specialist concert hauliers, and worked across government and with industry to develop guidance including 'landing pages' on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) specifically for touring musicians and other creative sectors.

We have clarified existing arrangements and established that:

- Nearly all Member States offer visa and work permit free routes for musicians and creative performers. This includes, following extensive engagement by the government and the creative sector, Spain and most recently Greece, who announced a visa and work permit free route in June 2022;
- Portable musical instruments, carried or in a vehicle, can be transported cost-free and should not require ATA Carnets; and
- Small 'splitter vans' are not subject to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement limits around 'haulage for the creative sectors' and 'cross trade'. In addition, the Department for Transport is implementing dual registration to support specialist hauliers, meaning they can benefit from more generous market access and cabotage arrangements in GB and the EU.

The Government raised touring with the European Commission at the first meeting of the UK-EU Partnership Council in June 2021. We continue to work with the few remaining Member States that do not allow any visa or permit free touring to encourage them to make touring easier.

■ Arts: Overseas Visitors**Rachael Maskell:****[15295]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to (a) encourage and (b) enable artists from the cultural sector to (i) come to and (ii) perform in the UK.

Julia Lopez:

The UK attracts world class artists, entertainers and musicians and we will continue to do so as the travel and entertainment sectors open up post-pandemic.

My department regularly engages with representatives from across the UK cultural sector to ensure we have an ongoing picture of mobility and migration needs. We use this evidence to work with the Home Office so we can continue to provide the best welcome for international talent.

There are several routes of entry available to artists wanting to come to perform and work in the UK for a variety of durations and purposes.

Using the Standard Visitor route, international artists and cultural professionals may perform at events, make personal appearances, take part in competitions, promotional activities and auditions, for up to 6 months without the need for formal sponsorship or a work visa if they are not being paid beyond expenses or prize money.

Under the Visitor route, artists can also receive payment for appearances at permit free festivals for up to 6 months, or for up to one month for a specific engagement.

Artists, cultural professionals, and support staff who are being paid in the UK may also qualify for entry under the Temporary Worker - Creative Worker route, if they are sponsored by a UK entity licensed with UK Visas and Immigration for this purpose. Entry is for up to 12 months and the relevant rules also provide for accompanying dependents. Entry under the Temporary Worker - Creative Worker route is visa-free for non-visa nationals where entry is for no more than three months.

The Global Talent Visa also offers a route for the very best international talent to come to the UK.

Going forward, we will continue our close dialogue with the creative and cultural sectors to support access to international talent and ensure the UK's creative and cultural content continues to be world leading.

■ Digital Technology: Data Protection

Chi Onwurah:

[\[13123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals on the role of data intermediaries to provide citizens with a means to gather copies of their own data produced by the digital products and services that they use.

Julia Lopez:

In November 2021 the government published the National Data Strategy Mission 1 Policy Framework which outlines our intention to develop a thriving data intermediary ecosystem. We recently consulted on whether the government should enable data intermediaries as part of the Data: A New Direction consultation. The Government is considering responses to this consultation and will publish its conclusions in due course.

EDUCATION

■ Children and Young People: Social Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[13184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that children and young people who are at serious risk to themselves and others have sufficient one-to-one support to provide safe supervision and interventions to divert them from risk and harm.

Will Quince:

The department is already taking action to ensure a safe environment is a priority in every school. In addition to the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, we have also invested in specific programmes, for example conducting a pilot of social workers in schools.

Through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, the department is consulting on proposals to improve AP, including the way it supports early intervention for children in mainstream schools. This is so behavioural or other issues can be addressed and prevented from escalating.

As part of the Beating Crime Plan, the department is investing over £45 million to fund AP specialist taskforces (APST) and SAFE Taskforces in the areas where serious violence is most damaging to the lives of young people. APST embeds multi-disciplinary teams, including mental health workers, Speech and Language Therapists, family workers and others, in AP schools in the 22 local authorities with the highest levels of serious youth violence. The SAFE Taskforces bring all schools together in 10 of those areas to provide support to those young people who are at risk of disengaging from mainstream education and becoming involved in serious violence.

■ Children: Disability

Alexander Stafford: [\[13292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to include proposals in the SEND green paper to help to tackle delays in accessing health and social care services for disabled children.

Alexander Stafford: [\[13293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to include proposals in the SEND green paper to allow parent carers to hold health and social care providers to account if they do not meet their statutory deadlines for providing support.

Alexander Stafford: [\[13294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking through the SEND Green Paper to ensure that every family with a disabled child receives the social care support they need.

Will Quince:

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper aims to ensure the right support is delivered for children and young people with SEND. The government is proposing to introduce national standards for how needs are assessed, identified, and met across education, health and care in order to drive greater national consistency. There is a clear focus on SEND in health workforce planning, new analysis will be commissioned into the level of demand for relevant health services for those with SEND.

There are also a number of measures in the green paper to strengthen accountability, including proposed new local and national dashboards which will set out performance data and metrics for education, health, and care. The Green Paper also sets out that statutory guidance will be produced clarifying that statutory responsibilities for SEND must be delegated to an ICB (Integrated Care Boards) Executive Lead and that The Health and Care Act provides intervention powers for NHS England where ICBs are found to be failing to deliver their statutory duties. The Green Paper is open for consultation until 22 July and the government will publish a national SEND and AP delivery plan later this year setting out the government's response to the consultation and how change will be implemented in detail.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care has also now published its final report, making a number of recommendations on the support that disabled children should receive. To respond to this review, the department will publish a detailed and ambitious implementation strategy later this year. The government is committed to aligning this with the SEND and AP reforms so that we build a coherent system with the best interest of all vulnerable children at its heart.

■ Children: Protection

Rachael Maskell:

[\[13183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that children who need it receive sufficient safeguarding to protect them from negative adult influence outside the school setting.

Will Quince:

The Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance is clear that all children must be appropriately safeguarded and supported, recognising threats may arise from within or outside the home.

The department is working across government to tackle all forms of exploitation and harm. In the 2021/22 financial year, we provided £1.5 million to 20 local authorities across seven regions to strengthen multi-agency approaches to safeguarding adolescents at risk of extra-familial harm. Between 2019 and 2022, we funded the Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme to support strategic leaders in 84 local areas. This year, the department is working with the sector, and other government departments, to bring together the best available evidence into a set of practice principles to support multi-agency approaches to tackling extra-familial harm. Protecting children is at the heart of the government's online harms agenda, and we continue to work with the Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Home Office on the Online Safety Bill, which is currently passing through Parliament.

The department is now reviewing the recommendations made in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and will publish an implementation strategy by the end of this year.

■ Classroom Assistants: Pay

Rachael Maskell: [\[11743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the pay of teaching assistants.

Rachael Maskell: [\[11744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the contribution made by Teaching Assistants to educational settings; and if his Department will undertake a review of Teaching Assistants pay.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department gives schools the freedom to determine the pay and conditions of their teaching assistants (TAs). Most are paid according to local government pay scales, and all are required to be paid at least the statutory minimum wage.

While the department does not set the pay for non-teaching staff, we can confirm that an agreement has been reached regarding support staff pay. Eligible support staff on pay spine points 2 and above will receive a 1.75% per annum pay rise, payable from April 2021, with staff on point 1 receiving a 2.75% rise.

TAs have a critical role in provide a huge breadth of support to pupils in different contexts, including supporting pupil outcomes. The department recently published the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, which highlights the key role of TAs in supporting children and young people with SEND to access learning in the classroom. We will set out clear guidance on the effective use and deployment of TAs to support children and young people with SEND as part of the national standards.

The Education Endowment Foundation has produced guidance for schools on making the best use of TAs and has conducted research which highlights the benefits made by TAs on pupil attainment and learning when deployed in educational settings.

■ Education: Labour Turnover

Julian Knight: [\[13163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to retain senior leaders within education.

Mr Robin Walker:

To ensure the department continues to retain teachers and leaders, we are building a world-class teacher development system for teachers and school leaders at all levels. The reforms create a golden thread of high-quality, evidence-based training and support running from initial teacher training through to school leadership. The department will deliver 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities by 2024.

The department has launched a refreshed suite of fully funded National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) for teachers and school leaders. The leadership NPQs will give

school leaders the expertise needed to improve teaching quality and pupil outcomes in their schools.

The department has also created an Early Headship Coaching Offer. This is for head teachers in their first five years of headship who are currently undertaking or have recently undertaken the NPQ for headship. The offer forms a targeted package of unassessed support when head teachers are less experienced and most at risk of leaving the profession.

The department is also funding a scheme for school leaders to improve and promote good mental health and wellbeing. The scheme, delivered by the charity Education Support, is providing one-to-one counselling, supervision, and peer support from experts to around 2,000 school leaders. Support is available for those at deputy head level and above in state-funded schools in England.

The education staff wellbeing charter is a set of commitments from the department, Ofsted, schools, and colleges to protect and promote the wellbeing of staff. Through the charter, the department pledges to work with the sector to drive down unnecessary workload, improve access to wellbeing resources, and champion flexible working, among a range of actions to support staff wellbeing.

The department is also taking action to ensure the schools system supports leaders and teachers. We want to spread the benefits of the best multi-academy trusts so that every child learns with the benefits of a strong, supportive family of schools. The department is supporting teachers and leaders to deliver higher standards of behaviour in schools by delivering an ambitious programme of work. This includes publishing the revised behaviour in schools guidance, implementing the department's £10 million behaviour hubs programme, and delivering the national behaviour survey.

Additionally, building on the success of Oak National Academy's work during the COVID-19 pandemic, the department will establish a new arms-length national curriculum body. These resources will ensure high-quality lessons are available nationwide for the benefit of all children. It will free teachers to teach using the best possible resources, reducing workload so teachers can concentrate on delivering lessons, and creating new resources only when there is a reason to do so.

■ Educational Institutions: Inspections

Dr Matthew Offord:

[13099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether Ofsted is on target to complete its scheduled inspections for the 2021-22 academic year.

Mr Robin Walker:

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to the hon. Member directly and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Free School Meals

Caroline Lucas:

[13089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 30 May 2022 to Question 7964 on Free School Meals and Healthy Start Scheme: Universal Credit, if he will make it his policy to extend free school meals to everyone who receives Universal Credit; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

Under the benefits-related criteria, the department provides a free, healthy meal to around 1.9 million children, ensuring pupils are well nourished and can concentrate, learn, and achieve in the classroom.

Eligibility has been extended several times, and to more groups of children, than any other government over the past half a century. This includes the introduction of universal infant free school meals and further education free school meals.

The department has permanently extended eligibility to children from all groups with no recourse to public funds.

Schools fund benefit-related free school meals (FSM) from their core funding, which they receive through the schools block of the dedicated schools grant. This is derived from the national funding formula (NFF). For the 2022/23 financial year, the funding schools attract through the FSM factor in the NFF is increasing to £470 per eligible pupil.

The department is committed to aiming provision at supporting the most disadvantaged, those out of work, or those on low income. The department will continue to keep all FSM eligibility under review, to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them.

■ Free School Meals: Barnsley East

Stephanie Peacock:

[15347]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children in Barnsley East constituency have been in receipt of free school meals each month since May 2021.

Will Quince:

Data on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is published annually in the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' National Statistics release, available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

In January 2022, there were 4,084 pupils eligible for free school meals in Barnsley East constituency. In January 2021, there were 3,792 pupils eligible for free school meals in Barnsley East constituency.

■ HIV Infection: Health Education

Stephen Morgan: [\[13231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all schools are teaching up-to-date information about HIV.

Stephen Morgan: [\[13232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance is provided to schools to ensure that HIV stigma does not occur among teachers or pupils.

Stephen Morgan: [\[13233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that children who are living with, or affected by, HIV are supported to do well in school.

Mr Robin Walker:

Relationships Education is a statutory subject in primary and secondary schools. Through this subject, pupils are taught about what healthy, respectful relationships are, and about the impact of their behaviour on others.

Through Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), pupils in secondary school are taught factual knowledge around sex, sexual health, and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships. Pupils should learn about contraception, sexually transmitted infections, developing intimate relationships, and resisting pressure to have sex.

The 'Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health' topic specifies that by the end of secondary school, pupils should know how the different sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, are transmitted. Pupils should also understand how risk can be reduced through safer sex and the importance of testing. Additionally, pupils are taught about HIV/AIDS at key stages 3 and 4 of the science curriculum.

To support teachers to deliver these topics safely and with confidence, the department has produced RSE and Health Education teacher training modules. At the beginning of each module, the school is encouraged to name the appropriate lead for the topic in school, any relevant policies, specialist support available locally, and additional information. The topic of 'Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health' includes content on sexually transmitted infections and sexual health advice which emphasises that everyone, regardless of age, has the right to free and confidential sexual health advice and services.

In 2014, the government introduced a new duty on schools to support all pupils with medical conditions. The government also published statutory guidance for schools. The guidance does not specify which medical conditions should be supported in schools. Instead, it focuses on how to meet the needs of each individual child and how their medical condition impacts their school life. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>.

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools are required to make reasonable adjustments and to not discriminate against disabled children, including those with long-term health conditions, in relation to their education. This is to ensure that schools are not putting those with long-term health problems at a substantial disadvantage.

■ National Implementation Board

Grahame Morris:

[\[11648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to include people with lived experience of childhood disability on the new National Implementation Board for children's social care.

Will Quince:

The department recognises the importance of engaging directly with people with lived experience, building on the impressive work of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care in hearing and accounting for the voices of children and their families, including people with lived experience of childhood disability.

We are committed to continuing this approach, by keeping the views and interests of those with lived experience at the heart of our work as we develop our implementation strategy for children's social care. The new National Implementation Board will include people with their own experience of the care system, alongside those with experience of leading transformational change.

■ Pupils: Per Capita Costs

Emma Hardy:

[\[13226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the trends in the levels of the average per pupil funding between local authorities in England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department publishes annual statistics on school revenue funding. The latest publication can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-funding-statistics/2021-22>. This gives an overview of trends in school funding from the 2010/11 to 2022/23 financial years. Nationally, per-pupil funding increased by 4.5% over the course of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years and then by a further 4.2% in the 2022/23 financial year, reaching £6,780 (in 2021/22 prices). The majority of core schools funding is distributed via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Local authority level funding allocations of the DSG by year can be found here: <https://skillsfunding.service.gov.uk/view-latest-funding/national-funding-allocations/DSG/2022-to-2023>.

The schools national funding formula (NFF) continues to distribute funding fairly, based on the needs of schools and their pupil cohorts. Most of the funding is distributed based on pupil numbers and characteristics, which ensures that resources

are delivered where they are needed most. The NFF allocates 17% (£6.7 billion) of all funding in the 2022/23 financial year through additional needs factors based on deprivation, low prior attainment, English as an additional language and mobility. The total amount allocated through the deprivation factors in the NFF is increasing by £225 million, or 6.7%, in the 2022/23 financial year. In addition, the 2022/23 financial year supplementary grant will provide significant additional funding for deprivation.

Similarly, the current high needs funding formula, introduced in the 2018/19 financial year after extensive consultation, was a significant step forward in making the allocation of funding fairer. The formula is based on the population of 2- to 18-year-olds in a local authority area and includes several factors which together are intended to reflect the level of need in the area. The government intends to consult and seek views on further changes to the funding formula in due course.

The department's national funding formulae are not designed to give every local authority the same amount of funding. It is right that areas with more children and young people with additional needs, or areas of socioeconomic deprivation, should get extra funding to enable the right level of support to be given.

■ Schools: Closures

Helen Morgan:

[\[13297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools closed in England in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021.

Mr Robin Walker:

CALENDAR YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS CLOSED
2018	30
2019	24
2020	19
2021	26

This data has been taken from Get Information about Schools, the department's register of schools[1]. The data shows all types of mainstream local authority-maintained schools, academies, and free schools. The data excludes closures of schools where they become an academy as a result of intervention following an inadequate Ofsted judgement or acquire a new unique reference number on transfer between trusts.

There are a variety of reasons for closing a school. These include where there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area, where provision has been rationalised, for example where an infant and a junior school have been amalgamated to form a primary school, or if a school is no longer financially viable.

The table below shows the numbers of schools that have opened between 2018 and 2021.

CALENDAR YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OPENED
2018	92
2019	58
2020	34
2021	24

[1] Responsibility for updating GIAS is shared between the department, schools, and local authorities and therefore we cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data.

Helen Morgan:

[\[13298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have closed in England since 2018, by parliamentary constituency.

Mr Robin Walker:

This data has been taken from Get Information about Schools, the department's register of schools[1]. The data shows all types of mainstream local authority maintained schools, academies, and free schools. The attached pdf document shows all parliamentary constituencies where a school has closed between 2018 and 2021, with the number per year provided for each.

The data excludes closures of schools where they become an academy as a result of intervention following an inadequate Ofsted judgement, or acquire a new unique reference number on transfer between trusts.

Constituencies not shown have 0 closures between 2018 and 2021.

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Attachments:

1. 13298_Table
[13298_Number_of_School_closures_by_Parliamentary_constituency_2018-2021.pdf]

■ **Schools: Discrimination**

Jim Shannon: **[13133]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle discrimination in schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

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

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must not discriminate against a pupil in a number of respects because of a characteristic protected by the Equality Act. The department has published guidance for schools on how to comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>.

Relationships education is now compulsory in all schools and the Relationships, Sex, and Health Education curriculum has a strong focus on equality, respect, the harmful impact of stereotyping, as well as the importance of valuing difference.

The department will also provide over £2 million of funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2023, to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. This includes projects targeting bullying of pupils who are more likely to be the victims of hate-related bullying and discrimination.

The department have also published Respectful School Communities, a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline. This can help schools to combat bullying, harassment, and prejudice of any kind, including hate-based bullying.

■ **Schools: Energy**

Emma Hardy: **[13225]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of (a) recent and (b) anticipated rises in the energy price cap on school budgets; and if he will take steps to support schools with the increase in the cost of energy.

Mr Robin Walker:

School energy bills are not impacted by the energy price cap, as their energy contracts are commercial rather than domestic.

The department has surveyed all schools in England to get basic data on their current and future energy tariffs to better understand how they have been affected by recent energy price increases. The survey closed on 2 June 2022, and the responses will be

used to understand the impacts of energy cost increases on schools and inform considerations of additional support the department could offer.

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

All schools can access a range of school resource management (SRM) tools to help them get the best value from their resources, save on regular purchases, and reduce non-teaching costs. The department's SRM tools include recommended deals for energy costs and ancillary services relating to energy. The Get Help Buying for Schools service will also be able to offer support to schools in switching and entering new contracts. Guidance will be updated on a regular basis to inform schools of the market and commercial position, with practical advice on exiting existing and entering new contracts. This guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-for-schools>.

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

■ Schools: Finance

Emma Hardy:

[13227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the length of time it will take under the National Funding Formula for similar schools in different areas to receive parity of funding.

Mr Robin Walker:

Since its introduction in the 2018/19 financial year, the schools national funding formula (NFF) has distributed funding for mainstream schools in England fairly between local authorities. This is based on the individual needs and characteristics of schools and pupils. Local authorities then distribute that funding among their respective schools, using their own formulae.

Following last year's 'Fair school funding for all' consultation, the department is moving to a direct funding formula for schools. The formula will complete the reforms to school funding which started when the NFF was introduced. A direct NFF will mean that the department determines funding allocations for individual schools without substantial local adjustment, on the basis of a single, consistent formula for the whole country.

Many local authorities have already moved their local formula to follow the NFF more closely. 105 out of 150 local authorities in England moved all of the values used in their local formulae closer to the NFF between the 2018/19 and 2021/22 financial years, or kept them within 1% of NFF values after allowing for the area cost

adjustment. 73 local authorities are now mirroring the NFF funding factors almost exactly.

The department will start the process of transitioning fully to the direct NFF in the 2023/24 financial year by requiring that local authorities use all, and only, NFF factors in their local formulae. Local formulae factor values should move at least 10% closer to the NFF.

The department is not setting a definitive end date at which the direct NFF will be implemented. It will be important to continue to be guided by the impact of the initial transition towards the direct NFF, before deciding on the further pace of change. However, to give a sense of the likely timescales to inform schools' and local authorities' planning, the department is setting out that it expects to have moved to the direct NFF within the next five financial years, or by the 2027/28 funding year.

The department hopes that it will move to the direct NFF sooner than this. As we move to the direct NFF, individual schools' budgets will continue to be protected, so that they do not suffer an excessive year-on-year reduction.

■ Schools: Platinum Jubilee 2022

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[13102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason only children in primary schools in the state sector will receive the Platinum Jubilee children's book.

Mr Robin Walker:

As the commemorative book is funded from the department's budget, it is appropriate that it should be given to children in state funded education.

The decision was made to set the readability at a level suitable for upper key stage 2, as it would be extremely difficult to produce a book of this type which would be suitable for early years, primary, and secondary school audiences. A book targeted at all primary aged children will allow the older children to read the book independently, while also encouraging reading by parents or guardians to the younger children.

■ Schools: Publications

Helen Hayes:

[\[11768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May to Question 6839, what steps is he taking to ensure future materials distributed to all schools are offered in (a) inclusive formats and (b) braille.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department acts in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, including having regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The department will continue to have due regard to the Act and the Duty in considering what format to provide future materials in.

■ Schools: Rural Areas

Helen Morgan:

[\[13296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools closed in rural areas in England in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021.

Mr Robin Walker:

This data has been taken from Get Information About Schools, the department's register of schools[1]. The data includes all types of mainstream local authority maintained schools, academies, and free schools. Schools are identified as rural via the Office of National Statistics Rural Urban Classification. The data excludes closures of schools where they become an academy as a result of intervention following an Inadequate Ofsted judgement or acquire a new Unique Reference Number on transfer between trusts.

CALENDAR YEAR	NUMBER OF RURAL SCHOOLS CLOSED
2018	13
2019	8
2020	7
2021	2

The presumption against the closure of rural primary schools means that when considering proposals to close a rural local authority maintained primary school, decision makers must refer to the list of rural designated schools. For a rural academy, both the department and the local authority need to agree to the closure.

The national funding formula (NFF) recognises the essential role that small, rural schools play in their communities through additional support provided through the sparsity factor. As a result of the changes to the design sparsity factor for the 2022/23 financial year, the total number of schools eligible for sparsity funding through the NFF has increased from over 1,200 to over 2,500, and the total allocation to small, remote schools through the sparsity factor has more than doubled, from £42 million in the 2021/22 financial year to £95 million in the 2022/23 financial year.

[1] *Responsibility for updating Get Information about Schools is shared between the department, schools, and local authorities and therefore we cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data.*

■ Special Educational Needs

Jim Shannon:

[\[13128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure provision of adequate support for children with (a) vision impairment and (b) other low incidence, high needs conditions in schools.

Will Quince:

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

Local authorities in England are required to publish information on the availability of specialist services, as well as information on support commissioned and provided for children and young people with a visual impairment in a local offer. To ensure local needs are met, local authorities must work with children, young people, and their families to develop this.

It is a legal requirement for qualified teachers of pupils with a sensory impairment to hold the relevant mandatory qualification. Providers must be approved by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, to offer these qualifications.

High needs funding, which is specifically for supporting children with more complex special educational needs and disabilities, including those with vision impairment, will be increasing by £1 billion in the 2022/23 financial year. This brings the overall total funding for high needs to £9.1 billion. This unprecedented increase of 13% comes in addition to the £1.5 billion increase over the last two years.

Alexander Stafford:**[13295]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that (a) specialist and (b) mainstream schools can provide the therapies and other services that disabled children need.

Will Quince:

The department encourages schools and colleges to work collaboratively with their local authority, Clinical Commissioning Group, and health providers to ensure that children and young people have access to the appropriate therapies and support, including addressing any backlogs in assessments. To support this we issued joint guidance last year for educational settings and health providers, working with a cross-sector group including the Royal Colleges and professional organisations, guidance is available here: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/about-cdc/media-centre/news-opinion/delivery-specialist-11-and-group-interventions-children-and>.

In December 2021, the department announced an additional £1 billion for the recovery premium over the next two academic years (2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024). This will help schools to deliver a range of evidence-based approaches to support the most disadvantaged pupils, and specialist providers receive an uplift in this funding in recognition of the significantly higher per pupil costs they face. Schools can use their recovery premium funding to help subsidise the cost of support such as speech and language therapies should they wish to do so. In addition, the school-led element of the National Tutoring Programme can be used for tutoring to support catch-up in the broader curriculum, such as practising and consolidating techniques in speech and language therapy.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision Green Paper sets out the departments proposals to improve the outcomes and

experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families. It aims to drive national consistency in how needs are assessed, identified, and met across education, health, and care through the introduction of national standards. This includes a proposal to commission analysis to better understand the support that children and young people with SEND need from the health workforce, so that there is a clear focus on SEND in future health workforce planning. The proposals within the Green Paper are currently open to a full public consultation until 22 July. The Green Paper is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/send-review-right-support-right-place-right-time>.

■ Special Educational Needs: Finance

Emma Hardy:

[\[13228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish a timeframe for the implementation of proposals in the SEND review, including those proposals in respect of equitable funding across the country for young children and young people in special schools and other specialist provision; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that funding is sufficient to implement those proposals from the date that they are introduced.

Will Quince:

The department is currently consulting on proposals in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, including those on funding. The consultation will close on 22 July 2022. The department will publish a response to the consultation and set out plans for delivery later in the year.

The government continues to deliver year-on-year, real terms per pupil increases to the core schools budget with a £7 billion increase in funding by the 2024/25 financial year, compared with the 2021/22 financial year. This takes total funding to £56.8 billion by the 2024/25 financial year. As a result, the department was able to announce last December that high needs funding for children and young people with complex needs is increasing in the 2022/23 financial year by £1 billion to a total of £9.1 billion.

Funding will continue to increase in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. Funding for the 2025/26 financial year onwards is subject to the next Spending Review.

Alongside annual allocations of funding for SEND provision, the department will support the delivery of reforms through a £70 million SEND and AP change programme. This is both to test and refine key changes, and to help local systems manage the necessary improvements.

■ Students: Loans

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[13786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of restricting eligibility for student loans to people with (a) GCSEs and (b) other equivalent qualifications on social mobility in England.

Michelle Donelan:

In the higher education policy statement and reform consultation, which closed on 6 May 2022, the department started a conversation on the principle of a minimum eligibility requirement (MER) for access to student finance for those intending to study a degree-level qualification.

The department sought views on what would be a fair and proportionate level at which to potentially set a MER and on proposed exemptions from such a MER, such as for mature and/or part-time students.

The department strongly believe that access to higher education should be based on a student's attainment and ability to succeed – not their background. It's important that students, of all backgrounds, are not pushed into courses they are not ready for, and that are unlikely to provide high-quality outcomes for them and good value for money.

In every scenario the department are considering students would have other means of progressing to a degree. This is including by first doing a Foundation Year, an Access to higher education course, retaking their GCSEs or A-Levels, or by undertaking a Level 4 or 5 qualification (for example, a Higher Technical Qualification). Successfully completing any of these would allow a student to progress to a degree, regardless of their GCSEs or A-Levels.

A decision has not yet been made on whether to introduce a MER. The department is considering consultation responses and will publish the government's response in due course.

Our published equality analysis covers impacts potentially arising from proposed higher education reforms, including minimum eligibility requirements. The published equality analysis can be accessed here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1058933/Higher_education_policy_statement_reform_consultation_-_Equality_analysis.pdf.

■ Teachers: Career Development**Julian Knight:****[13162]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support teachers wishing to take on leadership positions within schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department is delivering the single biggest programme of teacher development ever undertaken in this country and investing further in the skills and careers of teachers.

We will deliver 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities by 2024, giving all teachers and school leaders access to world-class, evidence-based training and professional development at every stage of their career.

This includes supporting school leaders to develop their expertise through delivering three refreshed leadership National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) in Senior Leadership, Headship, and Executive Leadership.

The government is investing £184 million in NPQs in this parliament, and have confirmed that our fully-funded scholarships for leaders at all levels will be continued for the next two years.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ African Swine Fever: Disease Control

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[13646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the level of risk posed to the UK from the spread of African swine fever; whether he has introduced biosecurity and border checks to minimise such risk; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

Managing the threat of African Swine Fever (ASF) remains a key UK priority. Whilst we have never had an outbreak of ASF in the UK, we continue to prepare for the eventuality of an outbreak.

Given the deteriorating epidemiological situation in Europe, DEFRA has commissioned an update to the 2018 risk assessment which looked at the risk of ASF entering Great Britain from the European Union via movement of humans, animals or animal products. The risk assessment has concluded that the risk to GB has remained the same as in 2018. The department is looking at a range of mitigations alongside this, including targeted interventions at the border.

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[9904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will provide details of his Department's expenditure on all agricultural support schemes in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

We have committed to maintain the farming budget for England at £2.4 billion for every year of this parliament. We are repurposing that budget to better support our farmers, but the amount spent will be the same.

Spend for the financial year 2020-21 is summarised in the table below against the buckets of spend outlined in the Agricultural Transition Plan, published in November 2020.

SCHEME COSTS £M	20/21
Direct Payments	1,873
Environmental and animal welfare outcomes	457
Improving farm prosperity	120
Total scheme costs	2,450

The Department, as required by section 5 of chapter 1 of the Agriculture Act 2020, will prepare an annual report about the financial assistance given during each financial year, starting with financial year 2021-22. The first report will be laid before Parliament and published before 1 October 2022.

■ Avian Influenza

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[14678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks in England on the health of bird populations; and what plans he has to ensure that the relevant (a) preparations and (b) arrangements are in place for an effective response to future outbreaks.

Jo Churchill:

The UK is currently experiencing the largest outbreak of Avian Influenza (AI) with (as of 9 June 2022) 121 cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) confirmed in poultry & captive birds (100 cases in England, 5 cases in Wales, 10 cases in Scotland, 6 cases in Northern Ireland). All cases have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1. To date 2.6 million birds have been culled and disposed, a small proportion of overall poultry production (c.20m birds a week). Prior to this the largest number of cases was 26 cases in 2020/2021 and 13 cases in 2016/7.

There is a robust programme of surveillance in poultry and wild birds.

As part of the wild bird surveillance scheme which looks at domestic cases and those notified overseas, as of 9 June 2022, there have been 1,094 findings of avian influenza in wild birds, in 295 locations involving 50 bird species in 77 counties.

Defra's objective in tackling any outbreak of avian influenza is to eradicate the disease as quickly as possible from the UK poultry and captive-bird population and regain UK World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) disease-free status. Defra's approach is set out in the Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain. Swift and humane culling of birds on infected premises coupled with good biosecurity aims to prevent the amplification of avian influenza and subsequent environmental contamination and to reduce the risk of disease spread from infected premises. Current policy is in line with international standards of best practice for disease

control. It reflects our experience of responding to past outbreaks of exotic animal disease.

Defra's disease control measures seek to contain the number of animals that need to be culled, either for disease control purposes or to safeguard animal welfare. We aim to reduce adverse impacts on the rural and wider economy, the public, rural communities and the environment, while protecting public health and minimising the overall cost of any outbreak.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) leads Government action on animal disease control and has outbreak response plans in place. These include measures to contract companies to support eradication and cover such matters as the deployment of non-Government vets and experts in culling and disposal of birds. APHA also works closely with other agencies to provide additional capacity. APHA is also leading on a cross-government, cross-agency review of lessons to be learned. This will identify what went well and areas where improvements can be made to improve the effectiveness of the response to future outbreaks.

■ **Bees: Conservation**

Jim Shannon:

[\[13132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to help protect bumblebee habitats.

Rebecca Pow:

Our National Pollinator Strategy Action Plan was published in May 2022, setting out how we will improve the status of pollinators in England. This includes restoring and creating habitat for wild and managed pollinators, including bumblebees.

In England we have an extensive network of protected wildlife areas, providing benefits for many species including pollinators. In addition, our agri-environment schemes, such as the Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme, include a range of actions to create, manage and restore habitats which are beneficial to bumblebees and other pollinators, including establishing nectar flower mixes, multi-species ley, and managing species-rich grassland. The Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package, and CS Wildlife Offers have been designed to deliver more for pollinators and other wildlife.

We are building on these measures in the design of our new Environmental Land Management schemes, which will enable many more farmers and land managers to take positive action for pollinators.

We are also working with landowners, farmers and growers alongside conservation bodies, to facilitate pollinator-friendly environments outside agri-environment schemes. The Bumblebee Conservation Trust's project to reintroduce the short-haired bumblebee in Dungeness - in partnership with Natural England, the RSPB, and over 100 farmers and landowners - has been so successful in creating extensive, quality habitat that other rare species have started to spread to areas where they have not been recorded for up to 40 years.

Defra also coordinates the annual Bees' Needs Champions Awards to recognise and celebrate exemplary initiatives undertaken by schools, local authorities, universities, community groups and bee farmers to support pollinators.

■ Bottles

Daisy Cooper: [\[13251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to allow local authorities to introduce plastic bottle deposit schemes in advance of the Government's planned roll-out of such a scheme in 2023.

Jo Churchill:

There are various examples of voluntary bottle return schemes to encourage recycling in operation across the country, and nothing to prevent similar schemes being taken forward.

■ Cats and Dogs: Animal Housing

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[15174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to ensure that businesses effected by the proposed changes to Conditions for Boarding for cats or dogs licence (England) are notified in advance of their introduction; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[15175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will consult with people who operate boarding facilities for cats and dogs on the proposed changes to licencing conditions; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 introduced an updated licensing system in England for specified activities including the provision of boarding for cats and dogs.

The supporting guidance for the Regulations is statutory and aims to improve consistency in interpretation and application of the licensing regime across England. Defra has not made any changes to the 2018 Regulations or brought in new legislation.

This means that the minimum welfare conditions that all operators must meet remain the same and all licences granted or renewed before the 01 February 2022 are valid for their stated licence length.

We are always seeking to learn from implementation and make improvements where necessary. The 2018 Regulations are due to be reviewed five years after they came into force and so, this will be an appropriate time to re-examine the standards, the associated guidance and consider any changes. We will be working with partners, including local authorities and stakeholder sector groups, while we undertake this review.

■ Convention on Biological Diversity

Rachael Maskell: [\[13176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his priorities are for COP15 in October 2022.

Rachael Maskell: [\[13178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken in response to part one of COP15.

Rachael Maskell: [\[13180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the president of COP26 on the potential outcomes of the COP15 conference in October 2022.

Rebecca Pow:

Biodiversity loss is a global problem that needs a global solution, and the UK is committed to playing a leading role in developing an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

As part of this framework, the UK will be advocating for ambitious global targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. This includes targets to ensure at least 30% of the global land and of the ocean is protected, ecosystems are restored, species population sizes are recovering, and extinctions are halted by 2050. The UK is calling for this ambitious set of targets to be supported by increased finance for nature from all sources (public and private) and at all levels (domestic and international), and for strengthened reporting and review mechanisms to facilitate the achievement of targets and hold Parties to account to their commitments.

Following COP15.1 in October 2021, the UK has continued to work towards achieving a high ambition outcome at COP15.2 this year. Progress was made at recent negotiations in Geneva, and all UK priorities remain on the table. The Government continues to meet regularly with a wide range of international partners to drive ambition on the CBD and to maintain momentum as we move from COP15.1 to COP15.2.

The UK's United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Presidency placed nature at the heart of COP26. Our priority is to continue to ensure there is global recognition that biodiversity loss and climate change is inextricably linked, and that action on nature is vital for achieving Paris goals. Defra works closely with the Cabinet Office and the COP26 Unit, led by the COP President, to ensure that these twin objectives are included in UK priorities for a successful outcome at COP15

Rachael Maskell: [\[13177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, by what method he plans to measure the UK's response to COP15.

Rebecca Pow:

A critical component of a high ambition outcome at the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 negotiations will be a robust, deliverable and clearly articulated agreement of how we will measure global progress towards achieving our commitments.

The current draft monitoring framework for the draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework contains a suite of ambitious proposals, many led by the UK, including on headline indicators, which should be used consistently by Parties to report on their progress.

In England our revised Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), set to be published by January next year, will set out the steps the Government intends to take to improve the natural environment, which we expect would include measures needed to meet the goals and targets under the new global framework expected to be agreed at COP15. The EIP is subject to a robust statutory cycle of monitoring whether the natural environment, or a particular aspect of it, is improving. This includes through our public reporting of progress towards meeting any targets, or interim targets such as those agreed at COP15, and in accordance with the current EIP.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Public Opinion**Angela Rayner:**[\[11688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much his Department spent on (a) focus groups and (b) polling services in 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

The information requested is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

■ Dogs: Imports**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[13252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were imported under the Balai Directive in each month of (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022 as of 6 June 2022; and from which countries those dogs originated.

Victoria Prentis:

Since we left the EU, the EU import data for 2021 and 2022 was collated from the Animal and Plant Health Agency's Post Import Management System (PIMS) and accounts for all imports into Great Britain that have been entered using IPAFFS (*Import of products, animals, food and feed system*).

For 2020, the data was extracted from TRACES NT through the data warehouse facility.

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

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

Please find data below.

2020 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Country of Origin	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
Austria						3
Belgium					1	1
Bulgaria	32	9	20			39
Croatia	13	17	2		9	32
Cyprus	286	271	185	61	229	348
Czechia	1	3	3		19	13
Denmark						1
England						
Estonia						
Finland		1	1			
France	1		7	17		4
Germany	6	2	1	2	5	20
Greece	22	44	22		26	42
Hungary	259	241	138	113	318	435
Iceland						
Italy		1		1	4	19
Latvia						
Lithuania	1	1				1
Luxembourg						
Malta			1			
Netherlands			5		1	1

2020 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Northern Ireland						
Norway						
Poland	108	102	106	80	187	279
Portugal	3	9	1			20
Republic of Ireland	694	658	467	99	309	480
Romania	1944	1705	870	529	2585	2814
Scotland						
Slovakia		3	3			2
Slovenia					2	1
Spain	440	324	155	32	491	646
Sweden					3	1
Switzerland					1	
Wales						
UK						
Isle of Man						
(blank)						
Grand Total	3810	3391	1987	934	4190	5202

2020 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Country of Origin	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Austria	1	2			1	1
Belgium				2	3	6
Bulgaria	20		20	1	41	40
Croatia	3	14	18	8	6	31
Cyprus	575	266	595	492	414	524

2020 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Czechia	14	14	10	9	10	39
Denmark					1	
England						
Estonia	5			7	2	7
Finland		1		2	2	
France	1		1	1		1
Germany	17		2	19	11	18
Greece	61	154	52	65	46	29
Hungary	542	395	588	649	717	670
Iceland						
Italy	17	19	41	54	42	45
Latvia	1				2	2
Lithuania	2	1	3	8	42	40
Luxembourg						
Malta		1			2	1
Netherlands	6	9		4	12	
Northern Ireland						
Norway						
Poland	349	314	514	527	678	700
Portugal	44	45	63	50	74	34
Republic of Ireland	461	449	640	572	508	477
Romania	3427	3166	3454	3854	3587	4590
Scotland						
Slovakia	11	14	15	24	17	17
Slovenia		1			1	

2020 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Spain	752	407	810	682	716	1020
Sweden				1	9	1
Switzerland						
Wales						
UK						
Isle of Man						
(blank)						
Grand Total	6309	5272	6826	7031	6944	8293

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Country of Origin	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
Austria			14		4	
Belgium	19	7	8	8	8	5
Bulgaria	35	65	113	74	116	131
Croatia		27	125	118	207	196
Cyprus	143	485	323	384	205	415
Czechia		14	14	19	17	20
Denmark			12		1	184
England	1	6	4	6	7	
Estonia				16	5	
Finland		1	2	1		
France	6	58	40	48	17	111
Germany		2	4	4	11	17
Greece	13	31	24	116	164	79
Hungary	35	234	865	621	582	358
Iceland			1			

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Italy	4	29	35	26	9	33
Latvia		36	25	66	61	45
Lithuania	28	35	75	62	32	28
Luxembourg						
Malta						1
Netherlands	9	4	2	5	6	3
Northern Ireland		2				
Norway				1		
Poland	131	318	564	587	688	566
Portugal	1	34	69	59	43	78
Republic of Ireland	96	529	717	560	654	640
Romania	558	3609	4220	4788	3696	3199
Scotland						1
Slovakia	5	32	39	27	17	22
Slovenia			1	3		1
Spain	117	269	637	702	573	590
Sweden		5	2	1	1	1
Switzerland			1	2	1	
Wales			1			
UK						
Isle of Man						
(blank)				1		
Grand Total	1201	5832	7937	8305	7125	6724

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Country of Origin	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Austria		2	1		1	
Belgium	7	6	5	3	2	
Bulgaria	96	44	157	110	86	66
Croatia	282	223	132	254	246	193
Cyprus	297	396	345	325	165	275
Czechia	22	18	25	22	20	30
Denmark		58	210	43	94	117
England	20	3	8	7	9	1
Estonia		1	1			
Finland		1		1	1	1
France	38	26	16	12	32	7
Germany	7	9	8	5	5	4
Greece	110	98	124	110	88	60
Hungary	322	223	402	302	277	296
Iceland						
Italy	35	29	35	17	36	8
Latvia	43	28	57	55	69	27
Lithuania	81	71	82	77	55	52
Luxembourg						2
Malta						2
Netherlands	4	34	23	28	16	18
Northern Ireland						
Norway		1			1	
Poland	480	486	543	492	405	333

2021 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

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

2022 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Country of Origin	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	1/6/22 to 6/6/22
Austria	3			2		
Belgium	10		4	5	3	
Bulgaria	79	40	95	115	244	57
Croatia	145	190	358	248	239	
Cyprus	335	282	275	77	253	11
Czechia	14	11	10	18	23	
Denmark	1	19	67	97	32	
England		1	2	7	3	

2022 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Estonia			4		8	
Finland	1	1	1			
France	16	18	16	2	3	
Germany	22	21	7	11	15	4
Greece	54	48	33	29	20	1
Hungary	164	253	224	226	271	33
Iceland						
Italy	7	44	32	35	18	
Latvia	56	32	54	41	38	2
Lithuania	36	63	52	31	28	9
Luxembourg			1			
Malta						
Netherlands	24	17	12	9	4	1
Northern Ireland	1				12	
Norway		3		2		
Poland	320	339	334	175	46	2
Portugal	30	36	30	24	43	9
Republic of Ireland	635	670	632	534	622	65
Romania	2529	2365	2531	1181	38	13
Scotland						
Slovakia	17	13	12	17	14	1
Slovenia					1	
Spain	480	529	448	415	352	65
Sweden	2	3	1		1	
Switzerland		1		1		

2022 NUMBERS OF DOGS IMPORTED UNDER BALAI DIRECTIVE

Wales

UK

1

2

Isle of Man 2

(blank)

Grand Total	4983	4999	5236	3304	2331	273
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■ **Food: Waste Disposal**

Andrew Bridgen:

[\[11675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he expects universal food waste collections to be implemented by local authorities.

Jo Churchill:

Food waste is already collected from some or all households by 53% of local authorities in England. Our recycling consistency reforms mean that new powers, included in the Environment Act last year, will require all local authorities in England to arrange for the separate collection of food waste for recycling. We recently published our second consultation on recycling reforms, including proposed dates for these requirements. We are currently analysing responses to the consultation and intend to publish our response, including dates by which food waste collections will be required from households, in due course.

■ **Nature Conservation: Planning Permission**

Mrs Pauline Latham:

[\[13103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what guidance his Department issues to planning authorities on approving planning applications in respect of land which adjoins ancient woodland and habitats of species, such as fallow deer, dormice, lapwings and bats.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government wants to make sure that our ancient woodlands are adequately protected and suitably managed to provide a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits to society.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees, should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission have published 'standing advice' for ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees. It is a material planning

consideration for local planning authorities and as such should be taken into account when making planning decisions that affect ancient woodland, ancient trees or veteran trees.

Furthermore, on 27 May 2022 the Government published the newly updated Keepers of Time policy which recognises the value of England's ancient and native woodlands and ancient and veteran trees. It restates our commitment to evaluate the threats facing these habitats and sets out our updated principles and objectives to protect and improve them for future generations.

■ Slaughterhouses: Small Businesses

Simon Jupp:

[\[13286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help small abattoirs remain financially viable.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra recognises the important role small abattoirs play in supporting the rural economy and is very much committed to engaging with the small abattoir sector to maintain a robust and competitive sector. To this end, Defra has convened the Small Abattoirs Working Group, which brings together representatives of Defra, the small abattoir sector and the various Government agencies that oversee the industry. This group provides a platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities faced by small abattoirs including those that impact on financial viability. Through this we have identified three key priority work areas: the regulatory framework, funding and adding value to animal by-products. We are working closely with industry through a series of focused sub-groups to facilitate workable solutions to issues in these areas, where possible.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Africa: Food Supply

Sir Robert Buckland:

[\[13701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help tackle food insecurity faced by Northern and East African states.

Vicky Ford:

We are aware that the inability to export grain from Ukraine is having a detrimental impact on food security in some North African countries. We are engaging with the relevant authorities to understand what challenges they are facing, and working with international partners to find ways to get grain out of Ukraine.

East Africa is experiencing one of its most severe droughts in history with more than 15 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia assessed to be acutely food insecure, according to the UN. The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East

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

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

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

■ **Israeli Settlements: Overseas Companies**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[13249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government plans to take in relation to the three UK registered companies listed in UN document HRC_43_71.

Amanda Milling:

In March 2016, the UK, along with other likeminded states, abstained on the resolution at the UN Human Rights Council which called for the creation of a database of businesses that trade with settlements. The UK strongly opposed this provision. Human rights obligations are directed at states, and not individuals or businesses. We advise British businesses to bear in mind the British Government's view on the illegality of settlements under international law when considering their investments and activities in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Ultimately it is the decision of an individual or company whether to operate in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

■ **Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review**

Derek Thomas:

[\[13208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish in full the three year review of the progress made in respect of the

recommendations set out in the Bishop of Truro's Support for Persecuted Christians Review commissioned by her Department in 2019.

Vicky Ford:

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.

■ **Platinum Jubilee 2022: Diplomatic Service**

Kenny MacAskil: [\[13257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which companies sponsored Platinum Jubilee celebrations at each British (a) Embassy and (b) High Commission.

Vicky Ford:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office publishes details of the sponsorship contracts it awards valued £5k or more in our Annual Report.

■ **School Meals Coalition**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[11583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department (a) has completed its monitoring of the School Meals Coalition and (b) plans to publish the findings of that monitoring; and for what reason the Government has not joined the School Meals Coalition.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government warmly welcomed the Secretary General's convening of the UN Food Systems Summit last year. The Minister of State for Pacific and the Environment delivered a UK national statement at the September Summit and led the UK's pre-Summit Delegation in July 21, using both opportunities to highlight the UK's leadership commitments on famine prevention and nature as well as our COP26 ambition on sustainable agriculture. The UK Government continues to engage with several coalitions emerging from the UN Food Systems Summit, and has been monitoring them.

FCDO's assessment of evidence from the international development community, is that supporting women and children from when they are conceived up to their second birthday is the most effective way to avert malnutrition and its long-term consequences globally. In the current context of worsening global food security - a situation exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine - the FCDO has committed to direct £3 billion to prevent famine and alleviate suffering through humanitarian aid, targeted at countries most affected.

We do not currently intend to join the School Meals Coalition or publish details of our engagement with this group. While the UK Government supports school meals in the

UK, membership could send a message that was inconsistent with best practice in addressing global hunger and malnutrition.

■ **Wales: UK Trade with EU**

Hywel Williams: [\[15194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has conducted an impact assessment of the cost of increased UK-EU trade barriers to the Welsh economy.

Hywel Williams: [\[15196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has conducted an impact assessment of the impact of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on (a) Holyhead, (b) Fishguard and (c) Pembroke Dock.

James Cleverly:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) is a comprehensive free trade deal which maintains zero tariffs and zero quotas on trade in goods between the UK and the EU. It also secures market access across a broad range of key service sectors and establishes close cooperation in areas like transport, digital, and fighting crime.

The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office has not prepared an economic Impact Assessment on the TCA. The Government is taking action to support businesses across the UK to trade effectively with Europe, including through the free-to-use Export Support Service. The Government is committed to working with the Welsh Government where it has an interest in TCA implementation.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

James Wild: [\[900484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the proposals submitted by Queen Elizabeth Hospital Trust King's Lynn as part of the new hospitals programme.

Edward Argar:

Last year the Government received an expression of interest (EOI) from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to be considered for the next eight new hospitals.

In the first of the two-stage assessment process, the 128 EOIs are evaluated alongside analysis of existing official datasets, including review from regional NHS leaders.

A national panel will consider the full breadth of this evidence to identify a longlist to progress to the next stage, and Ministers will announce the longlist in due course. We

aim to update trusts soon on the next steps and to announce the final decision later in the year. While the process is ongoing, we cannot comment on individual schemes.

■ Antimicrobials: Developing Countries

Chi Onwurah: [\[13121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support British expertise in water, sanitation and hygiene and public health to prevent infections and reduce the need for, overuse of, and misuse of antimicrobials in the world's least developed countries as part of the five year action plan on Tackling Microbial Resistance.

Maggie Throup:

In 2019 the 'UK 5-year action plan for antimicrobial resistance 2019 to 2024' was published which committed to reducing the need for and unintentional exposure to antimicrobials; optimise the use of antimicrobials; and invest in innovation, supply and access to antimicrobials. The United Kingdom has used this expertise to assist the development of health systems internationally to improve infection prevention and control. The Department for Health and Social Care's Fleming Fund has funded the Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship Scheme empowers pharmacists in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to participate in improving sanitation in healthcare settings.

In addition, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is investing UK Aid Direct in water, sanitation and hygiene programmes in LMICs to prevent infection, control its spread and reduce the need for antimicrobials. Between 2016 and 2020, this funding supported 62.6 million people to gain access to clean water and/or sanitation.

■ Cancer: Children

Navendu Mishra: [\[13838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of childhood cancer outcomes in (a) Stockport and (b) England.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 13 June 2022]: No specific assessment has been made as childhood cancer survival rates are not collected in the format requested. However, the one year age-standardised survival rate for the 1,367 children aged 0 to 14 years old diagnosed with cancer in England in 2019 is 93.4%.

■ Cancer: Radiotherapy

Henry Smith: [\[13093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase radiotherapy cancer treatment capacity and access to technology under the 10-Year Cancer Plan.

Maria Caulfield:

Officials are currently analysing the responses received in the call for evidence to develop the 10 Year Cancer Plan. The Plan will address cancer treatments, including radiotherapy.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments**Ms Anum Qaisar:**[\[900476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of prescribing medicinal cannabis on the NHS.

Maria Caulfield:

Licensed cannabis-based medicines are routinely prescribed and funded on the NHS. However, the latest National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines (written in 2019), demonstrate a clear need for more evidence to support routine prescribing and funding for unlicensed cannabis-based products.

We are working with regulatory, research and NHS partners to establish clinical trials to prove products safe and effective. We need the cannabis industry to come forward and work with us on this.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[11680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of ongoing covid-19 restrictions for care settings on (a) respite care home capacity and (b) patients and carers requiring respite care.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 8 June 2022]: No specific assessment has been made. However, we continue to monitor the delivery of the 'Living with COVID-19' plan. Updated guidance for the sector was published on 31 March 2022 to ensure there are sufficient protections for care recipients while safely removing restrictions as far as possible. We are investing up to £25 million to identify and test a range of new and existing interventions to support unpaid carers, which could include respite and breaks.

■ Carers: South Yorkshire**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[15343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of unpaid carers in (a) Barnsley East constituency, (b) Barnsley and (c) South Yorkshire.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific estimate has been made. However, the 2011 Census reported there were 6.5 million people of all ages providing unpaid care in the United Kingdom, with 5.4 million in England.

■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Bob Blackman: [\[11649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what monitoring and data systems are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of emergency treatments administered to patients vulnerable to covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

NHS England and NHS Improvement collect data on treatments for eligible patients hospitalised due to COVID-19, hospital-onset COVID-19 and non-hospitalised patients treated through COVID Medicines Delivery Units. Data is collected on the numbers of treatments prescribed and administered and published weekly at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-therapeutics-antivirals-and-neutralising-monoclonal-antibodies/>

Data is also collected on hospitalisation rates for treated and untreated patients. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to work with the research community to monitor this observational data and understand the impact of treatments on patient outcomes.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Fleur Anderson: [\[14642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Novovax vaccine will be available to patients in the UK.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[15171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many doses of the Novovax covid-19 vaccine are available in the UK; how many NHS patients have been given that vaccine; and whether people are able to access that vaccine throughout England as of 9 June 2022.

Maggie Throup:

We continue to be guided by the advice of the independent Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on the vaccines which should be deployed in the United Kingdom's COVID-19 vaccination programme. In line with the JCVI's current advice, the Novovax vaccine is not currently being deployed in the UK. We will consider further advice from the JCVI in due course.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[15172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine remains available across England to people who (a) have not yet been vaccinated and (b) are eligible for a booster vaccination; and whether there are any restrictions on the administration of that vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

All eligible individuals who have not yet been vaccinated continue to be offered a primary course of COVID-19 vaccination and, as appropriate, a booster dose. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that those eligible for the booster vaccination should be offered either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, due to the strong booster effect conferred by these vaccines. The JCVI's statement of 7 May 2021 on the use of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-the-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-jcvi-statement-7-may-2021/use-of-the-astrazeneca-covid-19-azd1222-vaccine-updated-jcvi-statement-7-may-2021>

■ Dementia: Ethnic Groups**Daisy Cooper:****[11871]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that organisations representing ethnic minority communities are involved in designing services for people living with dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department engaged with over 200 stakeholders in every region in England to design the white paper, 'People at the Heart of Care'. This included organisations representing ethnic minority communities, such as the Race Equality Foundation, which attends the Department's Dementia Programme Board. With the support of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance, we have continued to engage with organisations representing ethnic minority communities in designing adult social care policy, including for people living with dementia.

We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years later this year. We continue to update the Equality Impact Assessment for this plan, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

■ Dental Services: Equality**Mohammad Yasin:****[900481]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce inequalities in access to dental services.

Maria Caulfield:

We are aware that some patients find it difficult to access NHS dentistry. Work is underway to better target patients with complex needs. NHS England has provided a flexible commissioning toolkit to commissioners to focus available capacity on reducing oral health inequalities.

In addition, we provided an extra £50 million earlier this year for additional dental access. The appointments were targeted to vulnerable patients and those in most urgent need.

■ **Diabetes: Health Services**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[11867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a Diabetes Recovery Plan.

Maria Caulfield:

In 2022/23, systems have been asked to focus programme funding on recovering the delivery of routine care, prioritising patients most at risk and reducing inequalities relating to deprivation. In 2021/22, a £5 million national recovery fund was established to support the recovery of routine diabetes care with innovative projects. This programme has approved 28 projects and delivery will continue in 2022/23. This is in addition to £75 million made available to integrated care systems until 2023/24 to support routine care and the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan's commitments.

■ **Diagnosis: Regulation**

Feryal Clark: [\[11897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to strengthen regulation in the diagnostic testing industry.

Edward Argar:

The Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) held a public consultation in autumn 2021 on the future regulatory framework for medical devices. The MHRA consulted on amendments to the in vitro diagnostic (IVD) regulations focusing on improving patient safety and strengthening regulatory requirements. This included potential reforms to increase the level of scrutiny applied to IVD devices. The MHRA is currently finalising its response to the consultation and further details on new regulatory requirements and appropriate transitional arrangements will be made available in due course.

The Government intends to enable a proportionate fast-track route for IVDs should future health threats emerge, while maintaining quality and performance.

■ **Evusheld**

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[11547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS patients in England have been treated with Evusheld to date; and when will that drug become generally available on prescription to those with immunosuppressed conditions to protect against covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 8 June 2022]: To date, Evusheld has not been made available to National Health Service patients. Evusheld was granted a conditional marketing authorisation by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on 17 March 2022. However, the initial positive trial data on Evusheld was published prior to the emergence of the Omicron variant.

The UK Health Security Agency is testing the efficacy of Evusheld against the Omicron variant and we are identifying appropriate patient cohorts and approaches to the potential deployment of pre-exposure prophylaxis. Determining the efficacy of Evusheld against the Omicron variant will be necessary prior to any procurement or deployment decisions.

Ben Lake: [\[15354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2022 to Question 1109 on Evusheld, whether his Department has a timeline setting out a date by which they expect to receive advice from clinicians on the most appropriate option for the use of Evusheld.

Maggie Throup:

While there is no specific timetable, we expect to receive clinical advice shortly.

Ben Lake: [\[15355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the Welsh Government on making Evusheld available to immunocompromised people.

Maggie Throup:

On 17 March 2022, Evusheld was granted conditional marketing approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). However, the MHRA highlighted uncertainty over the appropriate dose needed for protection against the Omicron variant. Understanding its efficacy is necessary prior to any procurement or deployment decisions. Officials in the Antivirals and Therapeutics Taskforce regularly engage with the Welsh Government.

■ Evusheld: Clinical Trials

Bob Blackman: [\[13097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the MHRA press release on Evusheld approved to prevent covid-19 in people whose immune response is poor, published on 17 March 2022, whether the NHS (a) has made and (b) plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of trialling Evusheld in real-world evidence studies prior to its potential full rollout.

Maggie Throup:

The National Health Service and experts are evaluating all available evidence to inform decisions on Evusheld, including whether real world evaluation could improve our understanding of efficacy against new variants. In addition, the Antivirals and Therapeutics Taskforce is engaging with countries using Evusheld to understand any plans for assessing real world evidence as it becomes available.

■ Health Centres and Hospitals: Capital Investment

Luke Hall: [\[900475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to fund capital investment in new hospitals and health centres.

Edward Argar:

The Government has committed to deliver 40 new hospitals by 2030, backed by an initial £3.7 billion. Together with eight existing schemes, this will mean 48 hospitals by the end of the decade, the biggest hospital building programme in a generation.

In addition to this, multi-year funding to 2024/25 of £1.7 billion has been secured for over 70 hospital upgrades, including health centres, to improve health infrastructure across the country over the long term. The aim of this investment is to modernise and transform the NHS's buildings and services by funding physical upgrades across the country. We have already completed 65 upgrade schemes since 2017.

■ Health: Disadvantaged

Kate Osamor: [\[900483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timescale is for publishing the White Paper on Health Disparities in England.

Maggie Throup:

We intend to publish our Health Disparities White Paper later this year.

The White Paper will be clear that too many people die early and live for too long in ill-health and that these issues are concentrated in particular communities and places. The White Paper will set out a series of impactful measures to address health disparities at each stage at which they arise, building on the Levelling Up health mission.

■ Kidneys: Transplant Surgery

Dan Carden: [\[14599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of access for kidney transplant patients to (a) Evusheld and (b) other drugs that help increase resistance to covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 June 2022]: Kidney transplant patients are eligible for community-based treatments via COVID Medicines Deliveries Units, which includes antiviral and neutralising monoclonal antibody treatments.

While Evusheld had been granted conditional marketing approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on 17 March 2022, it highlighted uncertainty on the appropriate dose needed for protection against the Omicron variant. The UK Health Security Agency is undertaking further testing which will inform any decisions on next steps, including procurement.

■ NHS Covid Pass

Sir Desmond Swayne: [\[900477\]](#)

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

Maggie Throup:

Domestic certification ended on 12 May and the need for the domestic pass was removed.

The NHS COVID travel pass remains an important tool, allowing holiday makers and business travellers to demonstrate COVID-19 vaccination status when they travel outside of the UK.

■ NHS: Chiropractic

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[13098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to provide chiropractic treatments on the NHS.

Edward Argar:

While chiropractic treatment is not widely available on the National Health Service, it may be offered in exceptional circumstances in some areas. A patient's general practitioner or local clinical commissioning group can advise whether this treatment is available.

■ NHS: Dental Services

Grahame Morris: [\[900479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of available dental appointments for NHS patients.

Maria Caulfield:

This information is not currently collected, however as part of the next phase of our dental system reform work we will be considering all parts of the system and how it operates, including which data is collected where and how it is used, to ensure that we have a reformed and improved system which will deliver better outcomes for patients. NHS Dentists are remunerated for dental activity not by appointment. We provided an extra £50 million for additional activity and patient appointments at the beginning of this year and from April NHS dentists have been asked to deliver at least 95% of contracted activity.

■ NHS: Staff

Dan Jarvis: [\[900478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support NHS workers with the rising cost of living.

Edward Argar:

We are giving NHS workers a pay rise this year, on top of 3% last year when pay was frozen in the wider public sector. The independent pay review bodies will make a recommendation on the uplift's size, incorporating factors including inflation and the economy.

Additionally, many NHS workers will benefit from direct government cost of living support. Millions of households will receive a £400 discount on their energy bills from October. Furthermore, this year's Spring Statement included a £330 tax cut for millions of workers through the National Insurance contributions threshold increase in July and a 5p cut to fuel duty.

■ **NHS: Training**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[4551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when applications for the Graduate Management Training Scheme 2023 will reopen.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[4552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were accepted on the NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme 2022.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[4553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the proportion was of people accepted on the NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme by (a) gender and (b) ethnicity in the latest period for which figures are available.

Edward Argar:

NHS England has advised that while the 2022 Scheme is currently being finalised, 250 places are being offered. Applications for the 2023 cohort will open in September 2022.

The following table shows the most recent available information on gender and ethnicity for the Scheme in 2021. It should be noted that this information is self-declared by applicants.

MALE	33%
Female	64%
Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)	21%
Non-BAME	76%

■ **Psychiatric Hospitals: Safety**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[15176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on the safety of locking exit doors in Acute Mental Health Hospitals in order to ensure the safety of people who are resident there; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

Where a patient is detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 or deprived of their liberty under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 for care and treatment, there is a legal basis where providers of acute mental health care can restrict the person from leaving the ward to protect them from harm or from causing harm to others. This may include a locked door policy. However, Section 132 of the Mental Health Act sets out the duty to provide clear information to the patient about their detention status on a regular basis and this should include discussions with them about the locked door policy.

Providers of acute mental health care have a duty of care towards everyone in receipt of their service. If an informal patient wishes to leave and the nursing staff feel this is unsafe based on their current presentation, Section 5(2) of the Mental Health Act can be employed to temporarily prevent the person leaving whilst an urgent assessment is arranged.

■ **Social Services: Staff**

Kim Johnson:

[\[900482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the recruitment, retention and progression of care workers.

Gillian Keegan:

In the short to medium term we are developing a knowledge and skills framework, providing hundreds and thousands of training places, and delivering initiatives to support wellbeing, as outlined in our People at the Heart of Care White Paper and backed by at least £500 million. This investment will have long term benefits, boosting recruitment and retention of staff, whilst providing opportunities for staff to progress and undertake continuous professional development that demonstrates value to employers.

■ **Suicide: Organisations**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[900485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is providing to suicide prevention organisations.

Gillian Keegan:

In the last financial year, we provided £5.4 million to 113 voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations which offer help to people struggling with their mental health or thoughts of suicide.

We also provided £510,000 towards the Samaritans' helpline for people experiencing distress.

This is in addition to the over £10 million we provided to voluntary and charitable mental health organisations in 2020/21.

■ Tourette's Syndrome

Dan Carden: [\[15360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the need for NICE guidance for (a) Tourette's Syndrome and (b) other tic disorders.

Edward Argar:

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 includes the initial assessment of symptoms 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>

■ Tourette's Syndrome: Health Professions and Research

Dan Carden: [\[15362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of specialist practitioners (a) researching and (b) treating Tourette's Syndrome in England.

Gillian Keegan:

Patients with Tourette's syndrome may require support from a range of professionals, including clinical psychologists. Health Education England is increasing the number of trained clinical psychologists nationally, supporting a 60% expansion in the clinical psychology training intake in the past two years.

Whilst there are no specific plans to increase the number of specialist practitioners researching Tourette's syndrome, the National Institute for Health and Care Research and UK Research and Innovation welcome funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including Tourette's syndrome. All applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition.

■ Tourette's Syndrome: Health Services

Dan Carden: [\[15361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to improve the quality of training on (a) Tourette's syndrome and (b) other tic disorders for service providers in England.

Edward Argar:

Individual National Health Service employers are responsible for ensuring that staff are trained, competent and have the necessary skills to safely and effectively treat patients in their care, including those with Tourette syndrome. Health Education England's e-learning for healthcare also offers sessions including content on Tourette's Syndrome. Patients with Tourette's syndrome are usually referred to specialist neurology services and the General Medical Council's approved curriculum includes a section on movement disorders.

■ Vaccination**Alexander Stafford:**[\[13291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department will publish England's national all vaccine strategy.

Maggie Throup:

The strategy is being kept under review given the continuously evolving understanding of COVID-19, its vaccines and vaccination programmes and the impact of these developments.

■ Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[14494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to monitor the effectiveness of the voluntary scheme for branded medicines pricing and access.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 13 June 2022]: The effectiveness of the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access is monitored through bi-annual Operational Review meetings held between the Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement, the devolved administrations and the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. A Mid-Scheme Review was carried out at the Operational Review meeting in September 2021.

HOME OFFICE**■ Animal Experiments: Licensing****Alex Sobel:**[\[13235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for project licences to conduct experiments on animals under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 were refused permission between January and December 2021.

Damian Hinds:

No applications for a project licence to conduct experiments on animals under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 were refused between 01 January and 31 December 2021.

The Government publishes extensive Guidance on applying for licences. Applications are internally reviewed by an establishment's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body before being submitted to the regulator for assessment. During the application process applicants have the opportunity to amend or withdraw an application in response to feedback from the regulator.

■ Drugs: Misuse**Rachael Maskell:**[\[15287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made for the implications of her policies of the Drug Death Prevention Bill in the Scottish Parliament.

Rachael Maskell:[\[15288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals similar to those in the Drug Death Prevention (Scotland) Bill.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has made no assessment of the implications of the proposed Drug Death Prevention (Scotland) Bill and has no plans to introduce similar measures.

In particular, we have no plans to introduce overdose prevention centres or drug consumption rooms in the UK.

■ Iran: Intelligence Services**Jamie Stone:**[\[11802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information she holds on Iranian intelligence operatives attempting assassinations in (a) mainland Europe and (b) Britain and Gibraltar in the last five years.

Damian Hinds:

We do not routinely comment on intelligence matters or specific threats.

The safety and security of our citizens is the Government's top priority and we will continue to use all tools at our disposal to protect the UK and our interests from any Iran-linked threats.

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

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Caroline Lucas:

[1154]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that effective protection from (a) abuse and (b) exploitation is provided to Ukrainian refugees in the UK (i) before and (ii) after their arrival; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

Sponsors and all adults in sponsor households will be subject to standard security and criminality checks by the Home Office before visas are granted. Accommodation and DBS checks are also conducted by local authorities and this includes enhanced DBS checks where appropriate.

People from Ukraine arriving in the UK are signposted to a Welcome Pack which provides advice on settling in the UK, including who to contact if they encounter any issues such as child safety concerns, domestic abuse, modern slavery and exploitation. The guide is available in English, Ukrainian and Russian via www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk.

In England, Councils must also make at least one in-person visit shortly after a guest has arrived to confirm that the guest is safe and well and that there are no serious health and safety or welfare concerns. Councils have a statutory duty to promote the welfare of adults and children at risk and reserve the right to check in on guests and inspect accommodation once they have arrived.

Detailed information regarding safeguarding including information around exploitation can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils> and here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions>.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Energy Charter Treaty

Ruth Cadbury:

[14506]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the upcoming Energy Charter Conference meeting.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 13 June 2022]: The Department for International Trade and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy work in close collaboration in representing the United Kingdom at the negotiations to modernise the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). The United Kingdom is seeking to ensure the modernised ECT is aligned with her climate objectives and advances the British and global clean energy transition.

■ Overseas Trade: South America

Matt Vickers: [\[13280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to increase trade with South American nations.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

This year, we reached the final phase of the process to join the £9 trillion GDP Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) trade bloc, which includes Chile and Peru.

Beyond trade agreements, we are working with regional partners to grow trade and open markets. British pork producers are now able to export to Chile, a market worth over £280 million in 2021 and, through initiatives like our annual roadshow, we are helping British businesses to seize opportunities in the region, like GlaxoSmithKline who are set to open a new vaccine distribution centre in Uruguay.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia and New Zealand

Tim Farron: [\[14457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the economic impact of the UK's trade deals with (a) Australia and (b) New Zealand on farmers in the South West.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 13 June 2022]: Impact Assessments of the Free Trade Agreements between the UK and Australia and the UK and New Zealand have been published by the department and are available on gov.uk. These include impacts on UK nations and English regions and on sectors of the economy.

In the central estimates, the UK-Australia FTA could increase GVA in the South West by £131m, and the UK-New Zealand FTA by £34m, in the long run.

The documents also describe the potential impacts on the agri-food sectors for the UK. Sectoral impacts by nation and region are not available.

■ Trade Agreements: Gulf States

Ruth Cadbury: [\[15271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to Answer of 24 May 2022 to Question 5415, did any of the questions in the polling research carried out by IPSOS Mori on member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council relate to attitudes of individuals in the UK in regards to human rights in the Gulf.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Department carries out such research for internal use to aid ongoing negotiations, and details are not released due to negotiation sensitivities.

■ Trade Barriers

Matt Vickers:

[\[13279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to reduce barriers to global trade for British businesses.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

In the financial year 2020-21, we resolved over 200 trade barriers across 74 countries. Removing these barriers supports British businesses to trade globally, such as opening access to Indonesia's cosmetics market that imports £374 million a year, and access to the US for British lamb that is estimated to be worth £37 million in first five years of trade.

■ UK Export Finance

Matt Vickers:

[\[13275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of UK Export Finance in supporting UK businesses.

Mike Freer:

As advised in my response to the Honourable Member's previous question (UIN 148424), during financial year 2020/21 UK Export Finance (UKEF) provided support of £12.3 billion to UK exporters selling to 77 countries around the world, supporting 549 companies directly (of whom 79% were small and medium sized enterprises), and thousands more indirectly in supply chains. During that year, UKEF supported around 107,000 UK jobs. UKEF provided £29 billion of support to UK exporters during the period 2016/17 to 2020/21.

UKEF was recently named the world's best ECA at the International TFG Trade Awards 2022.

JUSTICE

■ Bill of Rights

Steve Reed:

[\[15266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 9th June 2022 to Question 13141 on Bill of Rights, whether he intends to publish a draft Bill of Rights before the House rises for summer recess in July 2022.

James Cartlidge:

The Government's proposals for a Bill of Rights were published in our consultation 'Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights' on 14 December 2021 which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights>. The consultation ran for 12 weeks and over 12,000 responses were received. We do not intend to publish a draft Bill of Rights. We will introduce the Bill in this Parliamentary session.

■ Bill of Rights: Humanism

Daisy Cooper:

[\[13247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to include proposals in the planned Bill of Rights to end the common interpretation of religious protections that includes humanism.

James Cartlidge:

The Bill of Rights will protect people's fundamental rights, including Article Nine: freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This protects the right to manifest one's beliefs whether they are religious or non-religious.

The Government consulted on proposals to replace section 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998. Section 3 imposed a duty to read and give effect to legislation in a way which is compatible with the Convention (European Convention on Human Rights) rights where possible. In practice, this has led to courts interpreting legislation in a compatible way, without Parliament's input, so far as it is possible to do so. We think that a less expansive interpretive duty would provide greater legal certainty, a clearer separation of powers, and a more balanced approach to the proper constitutional relationship between Parliament and the courts on human rights issues. The Government will set out its final proposals in due course.

■ Courts: Energy

Steve Reed:

[\[15265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what was the cost of (a) heating and (b) electricity for (i) magistrates' courts and (ii) crown courts in England and Wales in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

The table below provides the costs of heating and electricity for Magistrates' and Crown Courts in England and Wales over the previous five years. Please note that 2021-22 figures are provisional as the NAO audit of 21-22 is ongoing.

COURT	SERVICE	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Magistrates	Heating	1,720,227	2,217,155	2,419,368	2,875,887	2,882,704
Magistrates	Electricity	5,171,382	5,371,210	5,635,806	6,147,125	7,396,315
Crown	Heating	1,201,653	1,187,805	1,624,536	2,321,146	2,374,774
Crown	Electricity	4,068,445	4,819,287	5,422,571	5,308,240	5,980,278

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: ICT

Steve Reed: [\[15267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department and HM Courts and Tribunals Service will make an announcement on the next phase of delivery for the Common Platform.

James Cartlidge:

Common Platform is currently live in 112 courts, equating to 50% of all criminal courts, and has managed over 120,000 criminal cases since rollout began. Following a suite of improvements and upgrades, we implemented Common Platform in criminal courts in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, commencing Monday 28 March 2022. System performance and stability have significantly improved as a result of a number of upgrades we have delivered, and we have recorded far greater reliability, as well as better running speed – confirmed by independent user feedback and system reporting. We are in the process of agreeing the next phase of delivery of Common Platform within HMCTS and across our CJS partners, and we will be in a position to share this plan more widely soon.

Steve Reed: [\[15268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total spend to date is on (a) the Common Platform and (b) external management consultants on work relating to the Commons Platform.

James Cartlidge:

Common Platform falls within the crime pillar of the HM Treasury approved £1.3bn HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) Reform Programme. As at 31 March 2021, HMCTS had spent (a) £236m on the implementation of the Common Platform Programme, of which, (b) £0.3m was on external management consultants on work relating to the Common Platform.

■ Marriage

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[13697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Law Commission will publish its findings on marriage laws in England and Wales.

Tom Pursglove:

The Law Commission's review on weddings will explore options for wholesale reform to the law governing marriage ceremonies. The report is due to be published with recommendations for the Government in July 2022.

■ Offenders: Electronic Tagging

Steve Reed: [\[15269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the finding in the report of the National Audit Office on Electronic monitoring – a progress update, HC 62 of Session 2022-23, published on 8 June 2022, that HMPPS is not providing stakeholders with

location monitoring data in line with its original aims, limiting its added value for supervising offenders and protecting the public, whether his Department is taking steps to address that issue.

Kit Malthouse:

In 2021, HMPPS took a decision to cancel the development of a new Electronic Monitoring case management system and stakeholder portal because the project was late and over budget. This left stakeholders without access to GPS tag-generated location monitoring data in line with the Department's original aims. HMPPS have developed new reporting tools for location monitoring which will address many of the data reporting features that were to form part of the capability of the cancelled investment of the user portal for electronic monitoring information. The NAO reports states that the optimal decision was made to cancel the investment and we have identified innovative, alternative ways to deliver the planned benefits.

Acquisitive crime offenders:

Probation practitioners can access a portal that provides location monitoring data for people on probation in this cohort. This tool is currently available in 19 police force areas. This provides direct access to trail monitoring data, and for instance enables them to plot points of interest such as premises where alcohol is available.

Participating police force areas receive crime mapping reports showing any qualified matches against crime data submitted by the force. Forces can make additional requests for information on acquisitive crime tags.

Other GPS tagged offenders:

Probation practitioners can request trail monitoring data for anyone on a GPS tag.

■ **Prisoners' Release: Wales**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[13795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison leavers in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021 had an origin address in Wales, by prison establishment.

Victoria Atkins:

The information we hold about prisoners' origin address is not uniform and, in some cases, is incomplete – for example where the prisoner was homeless before going into custody. We need to hold information about prisoners' addresses at local level, but we have not identified a requirement to collate it centrally. It could not therefore be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[15320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the accommodation status of prison leavers was who had an origin address in Wales (a) 2020 (b) 2021.

Kit Malthouse:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Prisoners: Coronavirus

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[15319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of covid-19 have been recorded among inmates at each prison in Wales in each month since 1 October 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

The information requested is shown in the table below.

NUMBER OF PRISONERS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 AT EACH PRISON IN WALES EACH MONTH FROM 1 OCTOBER 2021.

Values of 1 and 2 are confidential (c) to prevent disclosure of individuals. As of 30th April 2022:

Prison	Oct21	Nov21	Dec21	Jan22	Feb22	Mar22	Apr22
Berwyn	4	(c)	87	145	47	15	28
Cardiff	48	14	17	238	34	76	72
Parc	15	50	129	132	108	52	15
Swansea	3	3	57	19	7	83	26
Usk/Prescoed (c)		3	3	23	4	15	113

■ Prisons: Energy

Steve Reed:

[\[14497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what were the cost to the public purse of (a) heating and (b) electricity for prisons in England and Wales in each of the last five years.

Victoria Atkins:

The cost breakdown of gas and electricity for public sector prisons in England and Wales for the last 5 financial years are set out below.

There are four prisons that do not utilise gas as a main heating source; the costs for other fuel sources cannot be extracted within incurring a disproportionate cost.

FULL COSTS	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Electricity	35,145,237	39,035,939	42,632,535	41,719,400	44,420,196
Gas	21,019,436	22,387,331	24,647,774	24,075,846	25,556,790
Total	56,164,673	61,423,270	67,280,309	65,795,246	69,976,986

The design of new prisons has gone through an intensive “greening” process with the twin objectives of delivering buildings that are both Net Zero Carbon Ready and achieve a BREEAM Outstanding environmental rating.

■ Probation Service: Pay

Ellie Reeves: [\[13220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the suitability of the grading for the Victim Liaison Officer role in the Probation Service being at National Probation Service pay band 3.

Kit Malthouse:

Each role within the Probation Service is evaluated via a Job Evaluation Scheme (JES), jointly owned with Probation Trade Unions, to compare and measure the relative demands of jobs across the Service. This provides a rational basis for the design and maintenance of an equitable grading structure. The VLO role was assessed in 2016, via that scheme, to be at pay band 3.

However, as identified by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation, recent enhancements to the Victims Code has changed some of the work of VLOs. This, along with last year’s unification of the Probation Service, means we are currently looking at whether the VLO is banded appropriately through a process agreed with trade unions involving staff engagement and trade union consultation, followed by consideration of a draft job description by a joint employer and trade union panel.

■ Rape: Trials

Jim Shannon: [\[13134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department is taking steps to help tackle delays in the commencement of trials for rape.

James Cartlidge:

The Government is committed to supporting the recovery of the courts for all court users, including those who face delays in accessing justice in rape cases.

The listing of cases is a judicial function and judges continue to work to prioritise cases involving vulnerable complainants and witnesses, such as serious sex cases.

To allow for more cases to be heard more quickly, we have extended 30 Nightingale courtrooms beyond the end of March 2022 and removed the limit on the number of days the Crown Court can sit this financial year.

We have already seen an encouraging improvement in timeliness in the Crown Court; with the average number of days for adult rape from CPS charge to the case being completed falling by 8.3% (38 days) since the peak in June 2021.

We are increasing funding for victim and witness support services to £185 million by 2024/25, from £41m in 2009/10. This funding will increase Independent Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence Advisors by 300 to 1000 by 2024/25 – a 43%

increase over the next three years - and introduce new key services like a 24/7 support service for victims of rape and sexual violence.

We are expanding the use of pre-recorded cross-examination, known as Section 28, which has been available for children and vulnerable adults in all Crown Courts since November 2020. We are now rolling out Section 28 for complainants of sexual and modern slavery offences nationwide. On 9 June, we rolled out Section 28 to 11 more Crown Courts, bringing the total number to 37.

In addition to these measures, the Rape Review Action Plan which was published in June 2021 set out a robust programme of work to achieve significant improvement in the way the criminal justice system responds to rape.

We recognise the impact the pandemic has had on timeliness in the Crown Court and continue to work to reduce waiting times for victims, witnesses, and other court users. Thanks to the measures we're taking, this year, we expect to get through 20% more Crown Court cases than we did pre-Covid.

■ Reoffenders: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[15318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he made of the total cost of reoffending in Wales per year since 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

The specific information requested is not available and producing the information could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

We do know, however, that the estimated economic and social cost of reoffending in England and Wales is approximately £18.1 billion per year.

That is why the Prisons Strategy White Paper, published in December 2021, sets out this Government's ambitious plans to reduce reoffending. We will spend £200 million a year by 2024-25 to improve prison leavers' access to accommodation, employment support and substance misuse treatment and further measures for early intervention to tackle youth offending.

This builds on investments in 2021, when we spent £70m to tackle drivers of reoffending, including to keep prison leavers off the streets.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Community Housing Fund

Stephen Morgan:

[\[11844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to extend the Community Housing Fund for a further three years.

Stuart Andrew:

We are considering a range of options through which the Department may support the community-led housing sector.

■ Help to Buy Scheme**Rachael Maskell:**[\[13171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Answer of 21 April 2022 to Question 154173 on Help to Buy Scheme, in the event that a first time buyer has saved for their mortgage under the Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme but no affordable new Help to Buy properties are available, for what reason that first time buyer cannot use the equity loan against a second hand property.

Stuart Andrew:

The Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme was designed to support people into homeownership, but also has a second key objective to increase housing supply. As a result, the scheme is only available on new build properties in order to support new house building and supply. Making the scheme available on second-hand properties would not have the same supply impact. For customers who are not able to utilise the Help to Buy scheme, the Government has a range of other housing products to support people into homeownership such as First Homes and the mortgage guarantee scheme.

■ Help to Buy Scheme: Liverpool**Dan Carden:**[\[13812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent estimate he has made of the number homes for sale in (a) Liverpool Walton constituency and (b) the Liverpool local authority area that are eligible for the Government's Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme.

Stuart Andrew:

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities does not collect data on the number of homes that are eligible for the Help to Buy Home Equity Loan. We can confirm that between 1 April 2013 and 31 December 2021, 2,184 homes were purchased in the Liverpool Local Authority and 225 in the Liverpool Walton Constituency using the Help to Buy Equity Loan Scheme. Further data on the number of households in England which have benefitted from the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme can be found in the latest Help to buy Equity Loan scheme statistics.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-buy-equity-loan-scheme-data-to-31-december-2021>

■ Planning Permission**Mrs Pauline Latham:**[\[13105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to promote collaboration between local planning authorities on planning

applications that have implications for (a) school places and (b) other public services in neighbouring local authorities.

Stuart Andrew:

The provision of the right infrastructure at the right time is very important to new and existing communities. It allows infrastructure like schools, GP surgeries and new roads to be provided in a more effective, transparent and efficient manner. While I agree that there should be collaboration between local authorities and key infrastructure providers to ensure these matters are properly planned for, we believe this is best done as part of the plan-making process.

To this end, we will be introducing an Infrastructure Levy to replace the complex and discretionary Section 106 regime. The levy will be a mandatory, non-negotiable charge, set and collected locally. It will give a greater say to local councils on what their infrastructure priorities are and give greater transparency to local people about how funds will be spent and what infrastructure will be delivered.

To strengthen infrastructure delivery further, we will be introducing a requirement for local authorities to prepare infrastructure delivery strategies. These will set out a strategy for delivering local infrastructure, including education and other types of community facilities, and spending Infrastructure Levy proceeds. We are also introducing a new requirement for infrastructure providers and other bodies to provide assistance to local authorities in drafting their local plans. This will ensure local authorities get the information they need in a timely manner so that they can identify how infrastructure and new housing development should be sited and provided

I agree that it is vital for local planning authorities to work together to make sure that cross-boundary issues are properly addressed, and we expect them to plan for and deliver the housing and infrastructure our communities need.

■ **Planning Permission: Appeals**

Julian Knight:

[\[11712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many appeals HM Planning Inspectorate received in 2021.

Stuart Andrew:

The number of appeals received by the Planning Inspectorate in the calendar year 2021 can be found in the January monthly statistics via this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1048275/FINAL_Planning_Inspectorate_Statistical_Release_January_2022_002.pdf

■ **Planning Permission: Derbyshire**

Mrs Pauline Latham:

[\[13104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy is on the extent to which local planning authorities should take into

account local objections when considering applications to build on green belt land, in the context of site SGA26 in Mid Derbyshire.

Stuart Andrew:

I regret that, due to the Secretary of State's quasi-judicial role in the planning system, I am unable to comment on the details of a specific Local Plan, including proposed sites.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Rents**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[13196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will commit to not developing any forms of rent control as part of the planned white paper and legislation on reform of the private rented sector.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government does not support the introduction of controls on the amount of rent that landlords can charge in the private rented sector. Historical evidence suggests that rent controls would discourage investment in the sector and would lead to declining property standards as a result, which would not help landlords or tenants.

■ **Right to Buy Scheme**

Mr Mark Harper:

[\[15203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Right to Buy scheme announced by the Prime Minister in his speech on 9 June 2022, whether housing associations will be under a legal obligation to use the proceeds from selling their houses to tenants to invest in more social housing stock.

Mr Mark Harper:

[\[15204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Right to Buy scheme announced by the Prime Minister in his speech on 9 June 2022, how eligibility will be determined in the event that the cap on how many homes may be bought under the scheme is exceeded.

Stuart Andrew:

This Government is committed to the Right to Buy, which has helped nearly two million council tenants to realise their dream of home ownership.

As the Prime Minister has announced, we want housing association tenants to have the same opportunity as local authority tenants to be able to enjoy the benefits that homeownership brings.

We will be working closely with the housing association sector as we develop the scheme and will announce more details in due course.

■ Social Rented Housing: North East

Chi Onwurah:

[\[13113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the impacts of storms over the winter of 2021-22 on (a) social housing and (b) the number of outstanding repair requests in (i) Newcastle and (ii) the North East.

Stuart Andrew:

The impacts of severe weather events, such as those resulting from storms over the winter of 2021-2022 are traumatic for those communities they impact, and the Government has support routes in place to assist local authorities for emergencies such as these. However, following Storms Arwen, Malik and Corrie the flooding impacts reported did not support activation of these schemes. No specific additional funding was available for local authorities to repair social housing.

All social rented homes are still required to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The Standard requires that homes are free of serious hazards, are in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services such as kitchens and bathrooms, and have efficient heating and effective insulation.

This Government has set an ambitious mission to halve the number of non-decent homes, to drive up standards, in all rented sectors by 2030 with the biggest improvements in the lowest-performing areas.

■ Social Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance

Gareth Thomas:

[\[11539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing financial support to not-for-profit social housing providers to assist with the funding of mandatory fire safety repairs for buildings they manage; and if he will make a statement.

Stuart Andrew:

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities operates two schemes offering financial support for registered providers of social housing to remediate unsafe cladding on buildings over 18 metres in height.

Under its Social Sector ACM fund, the Department has committed £400 million to support registered providers of social housing to remove and replace unsafe ACM cladding on buildings over 18 metres, of which £277 million has been allocated.

Under its £4.5 billion Building Safety Fund, the Department has to date committed £133 million to support registered providers of social housing to remove and replace unsafe non-ACM cladding on buildings over 18 metres. Registered providers of social housing are able to apply for support under the Building Safety Fund under the following conditions:

- To meet the cost of remediation where a registered provider of social housing becomes financially unviable due to the cost of remediation.

- To provide funding equivalent to the amount which providers would otherwise be entitled to pass on to leaseholders, including shared owners.

The Department continues to work closely with Registered Providers of social housing to look at ways to make sure that buildings with unsafe cladding are remediated quickly and proportionately.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Commonwealth Games 2022: Northern Ireland

Claire Hanna:

[\[14658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) on the decision not to allow Rhys McClenaghan, Eamon Montgomery and Ewan McAteer to represent Northern Ireland at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham this summer because those athletes hold FIG licenses to represent the Republic of Ireland.

Conor Burns:

Discussions with FIG are being led by Commonwealth Games Northern Ireland. However, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has written to the FIG President to express his concern at the decision not to allow these gymnasts to participate. He has emphasised that this appears to frustrate their birthright to identify and be accepted as British or Irish, or both, and to hold both British and Irish citizenship.

It is the Government's firm position that, given that these gymnasts were born in Northern Ireland they should be free to compete both for Ireland and the UK as set out in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

I am also aware that colleagues at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport are engaging on this issue.

TRANSPORT

■ Airlines: Standards

Catherine West:

[\[13205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to provide advice to people who miss their flights as a result of airport disruption and delays.

Robert Courts:

Airlines and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) provide air passengers information on what to do if something goes wrong with their flight. To further support air passengers, the Government announced as part of the Flightpath to the Future, that it will publish an Aviation Passenger Charter, developed in partnership with the sector and consumer groups, to ensure consumers are aware of their rights and responsibilities throughout their journey, including what to do if something goes

wrong. The Charter will be essential for consumers, granting them clear and easily accessible information that they need when travelling by air.

■ Airports: Staff

Catherine West: [\[13206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to tackle airport staff shortages.

Robert Courts:

The aviation industry operates in the private sector and therefore it is the responsibility of the industry to manage demands, recruit and roster staff, and have appropriate mitigations in place. However, we are working closely with the sector and airports to ensure resilience and services are as should be expected for passengers, and are pressing the sector to ensure their summer schedules are deliverable.

As set out in *Flightpath to the future: a strategic framework for the aviation sector*, published on 26th May 2022, skills retention for highly trained jobs needs to be a key element of the aviation sector's recovery plan. That is why my Department launched the Aviation Skills Retention Platform and Talentview Aviation in February 2021 and November 2021 respectively to support skills retention and recruitment in the aviation sector.

In addition, we have introduced new legislation to allow certain training to be undertaken while industry background reference checks are completed. I have also permitted HMRC employment history letters to be used as part of the reference check. Both will help to speed up recruitment times.

■ Airports: Standards

Catherine West: [\[13203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with airport leaders on disruption and delays at UK airports.

Catherine West: [\[13204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of airlines on disruption and delays at UK airports.

Robert Courts:

Since the beginning of the year, Ministers and Officials have been engaging extensively with the sector to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing the industry. We have taken action in a range of areas, including security alleviations, skills and recruitment to support the aviation industry. This includes the Secretary of State changing the law on the 29 April to alleviate pressures on industry background checks for new recruits going through training and has allowed HMRC Employment History letters to be used as part of the background check, with suitable safeguards in place. This will help speed up the recruitment process.

On 12 May Minister Hinds, Minister of State for Security and Borders and I, hosted a roundtable with leaders from across the aviation industry. This meeting addressed the upcoming increase in passenger demand for the May Half Term and Summer holidays as well as providing industry with a comprehensive update from Border Force on their preparations.

At the same time Senior Officials established the Summer Resilience Group ahead of the May half-term that brings together Operational Directors to work through key resilience issues, which continues to meet regularly in addition to regular bilateral meetings.

On 1 June, the Secretary of State and I chaired a meeting with airports, airlines and ground handlers in order to understand the specific issues they were facing over half term and the actions they were taking to result these.

An action from this meeting was to set up the Strategic Risk Group which I am now chairing on a weekly basis. This will bring together senior representatives of airlines, airports and ground handlers to focus on solutions that minimise disruption over the summer for the public.

■ Aviation

Louise Haigh:

[\[13193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, prior to 26 May 2022, when he last met representatives of the (a) airlines and (b) aviation industry on arrangements to avoid disruption for passengers.

Robert Courts:

Since the beginning of the year, Ministers and Officials have been engaging extensively with the sector to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing the industry. We have taken action in a range of areas, including security alleviations, skills and recruitment to support the aviation industry. This includes the Secretary of State changing the law on the 29 April to alleviate pressures on industry background checks for new recruits going through training and has allowed HMRC Employment History letters to be used as part of the background check, with suitable safeguards in place. This will help speed up the recruitment process.

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■ Aviation: Air Pollution

Tulip Siddiq: [\[13792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact of aviation induced cloudiness on the environment.

Robert Courts:

There is significant uncertainty about the impact of aviation on “cloudiness” - more usually referred to as ‘contrails’ - which can lead to both warming and cooling, though the net effect is expected to be warming.

We are working closely with the academic community to understand non-CO₂ impacts of aviation better, along with potential mitigation methods to ensure that future policy development is based on the latest available climate science.

Through the Jet Zero Consultation, we sought views on our approach to decarbonising aviation and on how to address non-CO₂ impacts. We are carefully considering the consultation responses which will inform the final Jet Zero Strategy, due to be published later this year.

■ Aviation: Disability

Tulip Siddiq: [\[13789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help improve accessibility on flights for disabled passengers.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[13790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to help improve the on-board flight experience for disabled passengers.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[13791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to introduce requirements for airlines to provide seats on flights suitable for people with disabilities.

Robert Courts:

Accessible air travel is a key priority for Government, as highlighted in the recent Flightpath to the Future strategy, which reaffirms Government’s commitment to rebuilding consumer confidence. Government also announced, as part of Flightpath to the Future, that it will publish an Aviation Passenger Charter to ensure passengers

are aware of their rights and responsibilities when travelling by air, including information on accessibility.

We recently consulted on a variety of consumer rights issues, including what reforms we could consider to encourage more support for passengers with accessibility needs when travelling by air, and ensuring adequate compensation for damaged or lost wheelchairs on domestic UK flights. We are currently conducting a comprehensive review and analysis of responses and will set out next steps in due course.

The Inclusive Transport Strategy includes commitments to help improve accessibility in aviation and Government is working with consumer groups and disability representatives, to further understand the barriers faced by disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility, particularly in relation to the information available on accessibility in aviation.

Airlines are legally required to provide assistance to passengers according to their individual needs, free of charge. This includes the allocation of a suitable seat, subject to safety and availability.

■ **Birmingham Airport: Commonwealth Games**

Louise Haigh: [\[13195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what meetings he has held with Birmingham airport on arrangements for ensuring appropriate capacity for the Commonwealth Games.

Robert Courts:

On 1 June Birmingham Airport joined a cross industry roundtable with the Secretary of State and I to address the disruption that the sector had been experiencing over the May Half Term and what mitigations were in place to ensure that this disruption did not continue into the summer and hinder sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games and the Women's European Championship.

As part of the detailed planning for the Commonwealth Games the department has been regularly engaged with Birmingham Airport. Along with regular meetings with the airport, officials have also been part of the Resilience and Planning Group formed with the airport and the Organising Committee. These groups had addressed a multitude of issues in the planning for transport around the Commonwealth Games including the mitigations in place to handle the increase in passenger numbers along with the Games family and spectators.

■ **Department for Transport: Media**

Emily Thornberry: [\[13678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what total cost to the public purse, inclusive of VAT, was incurred by his Department between May 2018 and May 2022 for media buying services provided under the Crown Commercial Service's media buying framework agreement reference RM6003.

Andrew Stephenson:

The total cost incurred by the Department between May 2018 and May 2022 for media buying services is not readily available. The resource implications to manually check actual spend for each invoice raised against this supplier over the four-year period would be at a disproportionate spend to the Department.

Department for Transport: Vetting**Louise Haigh:**[\[13194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether airports will be given access to HMRC validation services to speed up security checks for new recruits.

Robert Courts:

HMRC does not provide a validation service for recruitment purposes for any organisation. It is for the aviation industry and airports to validate that a potential employee meets the required background checks for aviation purposes. I have agreed as part of that the aviation industry may use HMRC employment history letters as a suitable form of reference check.

Airports cannot be given direct access to HMRC records showing the employment history of potential employees for reasons of data privacy. These prevent HMRC from sharing individuals' employment history directly to an agent or any third party.

Advice has been provided to airports and the aviation industry about how potential employees can access the information for themselves through their digital account and an alternative route has been provided for any individual who is unable to access their information digitally. The individual can then share that information themselves within the aviation industry recruitment process.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Telephone Services**Gareth Thomas:**[\[14405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will make an estimate of the average time it took to answer calls to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency contact centre in the last 12 months; whether he plans to take steps to reduce call waiting times for customers; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas:[\[14406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to help ensure that the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency webchat facility is always available to the public; and if he will make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

The table below shows the average waiting time for customers to speak to a Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) agent by telephone in each of the last 12 months.

MONTH	MINUTES
May 22	10.5
April 22	12.4
March 22	14.5
February 22	18.0
January 22	13.2
December 21	9.9
November 21	9.1
October 21	7.3
September 21	8.7
August 21	9.8
July 21	9.9
June 21	13.2

The DVLA contact centre is actively recruiting and training additional staff to help reduce the waiting times for customers.

The DVLA has increased the number of services it offers through webchat, which can be accessed at any time. Advisors are available during the contact centre opening hours. The webchat services have been enhanced to use chatbots, which are also always available to help with general information. These are popular with customers as they reduce the time taken to deal with a query, many of which are answered without the need to speak to an advisor. In the last 12 months over 2 million customer enquiries have been answered either by a webchat advisor or by chatbot.

■ Driving Licences: Administrative Delays

Chi Onwurah: [\[13126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the DVLA is taking to tackle delays in providing driving licences.

Chi Onwurah: [\[13127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact of trends in the number of employees in the DVLA on delays in processing licence applications.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online services are the quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their driving licence within a few days.

There are now no delays in DVLA's processing of postal applications for driving licences. These are now issued within normal turnaround times. Applications where the driver has a medical condition that must be investigated before a licence can be issued will take longer.

The DVLA's operational staff have worked in the office throughout the pandemic as paper applications must be processed in person. DVLA staff who can only do their job effectively in the office must attend for all of their contracted working days and are doing so. The delays in processing paper applications were significantly exacerbated by six months of industrial action by the Public and Commercial Services union, which was targeted at the areas that would have the most impact on the motoring public.

■ Electric Scooters: Regulation**Ben Everitt:**[\[13844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing regulations on (a) minimum wheel size, (b) maximum speed limits, (c) braking systems, (d) lights and reflectors and (e) other minimum product specifications for e-scooters.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department is currently developing technical standards for the construction of e-scooters. Careful consideration of the merits of each requirement, including those highlighted, will be made. Knowledge gained from the e-scooter trials as well as relevant evidence from other sources will be taken into account.

■ Emergency Calls: Drivers**Emma Hardy:**[\[13230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to include official standardised emergency response driver training amongst those offered by the DVLA.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency does not deliver emergency response driver training. Individuals wanting to gain recognised qualifications in emergency response driver training can do so via private companies.

■ Ferries: Electrification

Bob Seely: [\[13236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the possibility of using funding under UK SHORE to support the electrification of cross-Solent ferries.

Robert Courts:

The UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE) has been allocated £206m research and development funding to address the technological barriers to domestic maritime decarbonisation. As such, DfT has not made a specific assessment of using funding from UK SHORE to support the electrification of cross-Solent ferries. However, UK SHORE interventions will have a direct reduction of emissions impact on our domestic ferries and lifeline services.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway: Rolling Stock

Louise Haigh: [\[15303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what contractual arrangements for the leasing of rolling stock were agreed by his Department as part of the Govia Thameslink Railway National Rail Contract announced on 1 April 2022.

Wendy Morton:

As a condition of signing the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern National Rail Contract, Govia Thameslink Railway was required to enter into contractual arrangements for the leasing of appropriate rolling stock. Units have been leased from a number of different rolling stock companies under varying terms.

■ Great British Railways: Contracts

Louise Haigh: [\[15300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the value for money of the contracts agreed between his Department and (a) Boston Consulting Group and (b) Deloitte for the rail transformation programme.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for Transport has strong financial controls to ensure value for money in all procurement, including for consultancy spend. This includes Departmental, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury Controls to ensure public money and resources are used properly and efficiently.

■ Great British Railways: Disability

Rachael Maskell: [\[13776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many disabled workers there are in the Great British Railways Transition Team; and what comparative assessment he has made of levels of disability representation in (a) GBR and (b) the rail sector workforces.

Wendy Morton:

Of the 89 colleagues hired during the Great British Railways Transition Team initial secondment tranches, 8% of those were colleagues who had declared a disability which compares to 3% of Network Rail employees who have declared a disability.

■ Great British Railways: Industrial Relations

Rachael Maskell: [\[13765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to (a) improve industrial relations at Great British Railways and (b) enable staff to participate in determining the future of that organisation and have their concerns tackled.

Wendy Morton:

The Department and the Great British Railways Transition Team are working with the rail sector to ensure a common understanding of the vision and to design our new guiding mind for the railways, Great British Railways (GBR).

■ Great British Railways: KPMG

Louise Haigh: [\[15299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the value for money of the contract agreed between the Great British Railways Transition Team and KPMG.

Wendy Morton:

The Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT) utilised a robust commercial framework to ensure that the contract provided good value for money for taxpayers. GBRTT produced a statement of work which included a number of criteria that applicants were assessed against, including commerciality and value for money.

■ Great British Railways: Staff

Rachael Maskell: [\[13775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to take steps to help ensure a more diverse workforce within Great British Railways.

Wendy Morton:

Passenger services rail operators are required under their respective contracts to provide apprenticeships to people from under-represented groups within the rail sector. The Department has also included requirements in recent contracts for Train Operating Companies to develop and deliver Diversity and Inclusion Strategies. Once established, Great British Railways will work with the sector to develop a new workforce plan with a joined-up cross-sector training and skills offer.

■ Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance

Fleur Anderson: [\[14645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) TfL and (b) Hammersmith and Fulham Council on the progress of the strengthening works taking place on Hammersmith Bridge.

Trudy Harrison:

Department for Transport officials meet regularly with their counterparts in London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and Transport for London to monitor the progress made with the strengthening works, and my noble friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport is regularly updated with the results of these discussions.

Fleur Anderson: [\[14646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to ensure Hammersmith Bridge reopens to motor traffic.

Trudy Harrison:

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) is responsible for the repairs to Hammersmith Bridge. LBHF is developing a business case to examine the options for strengthening the bridge to reopen it to motor traffic, which it will share with Transport for London and my Department when complete.

Fleur Anderson: [\[14648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Hammersmith Bridge Task Force will next meet.

Trudy Harrison:

The Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce will meet when members have put forward substantive agenda items for discussion. At present, the focus is on completing the stabilisation works and continuing the development of the business case for strengthening.

Fleur Anderson: [\[14649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he last met with Treasury (a) Ministers and (b) officials to discuss financing options for the reopening of Hammersmith Bridge.

Trudy Harrison:

Ministers and officials at the Department for Transport have met counterparts in Her Majesty's Treasury regularly to discuss the ongoing support provided to Transport for London. Hammersmith Bridge has been discussed as part of wider funding settlement arrangements.

■ Motor Vehicles: Testing

Sarah Olney:

[\[13215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 21 March 2022 to Question 141263 on Motor Vehicles: Testing, what estimate he has made of the initial MOT failure rate for (a) diesel, (b) petrol, (c) plug-in hybrids and (d) battery electric vehicles in each of the last five years, by age of vehicle.

Trudy Harrison:

The tables below show the initial failure rate for all MOT vehicle classes from Class 1 (small motorcycles) up to and including Class 7 (goods vehicles between 3,000kg and 3,500kg). It is possible that some older vehicles have had the fuel system converted.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency does not hold data to differentiate between hybrid vehicles that are Plug-In, and those which are not.

DIESEL YEAR	3-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-20 YEARS	21-40 YEARS	OVER 41 YEARS
2017	20.17%	34.99%	48.25%	45.10%	29.15%
2018	19.76%	34.44%	47.40%	44.80%	27.89%
2019	18.58%	32.35%	45.92%	43.67%	25.35%
2020	17.92%	30.39%	44.08%	42.40%	24.49%
2021	17.26%	28.60%	43.44%	42.78%	24.39%

PETROL YEAR	3-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-20 YEARS	21-40 YEARS	OVER 41 YEARS
2017	16.21%	32.09%	45.30%	33.46%	21.02%
2018	15.92%	31.29%	44.83%	32.85%	20.05%
2019	14.94%	29.17%	43.58%	32.45%	19.67%
2020	14.47%	27.20%	41.83%	32.47%	18.81%
2021	13.11%	25.14%	40.85%	32.51%	19.73%

HYBRID YEAR	3-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-20 YEARS	21-40 YEARS	OVER 41 YEARS
2017	15.43%	25.18%	31.24%	0.00%	0.00%*
2018	14.94%	25.41%	31.86%	25.00%	0.00%

HYBRID YEAR	3-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-20 YEARS	21-40 YEARS	OVER 41 YEARS
2019	13.50%	23.01%	30.89%	0.00%	0.00%
2020	12.74%	20.26%	30.00%	50.00%	0.00%
2021	11.87%	18.10%	29.51%	49.37%	50.00%

* Denotes that no vehicles were presented for test

ELECTRIC (BATTERY) YEAR	3-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-20 YEARS	21-40 YEARS	OVER 41 YEARS
2017	15.60%	22.38%	35.49%	27.27%	31.25%
2018	16.40%	23.15%	31.59%	32.56%	28.47%
2019	16.53%	24.25%	32.04%	24.49%	25.89%
2020	14.92%	23.72%	29.78%	18.87%	20.45%
2021	13.67%	23.79%	27.01%	28.92%	22.70%

■ Rail Partners: Cost Effectiveness

Louise Haigh:

[\[15301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the value for money for the public purse of the cost of membership of the new Rail Partners organisation for train operating companies.

Andrew Stephenson:

Most of Rail Partners' funding is paid directly by industry to cover the organisation's advocacy activities, none of which are funded via the public purse. A small amount of other industry activity has been transferred from Rail Delivery Group to Rail Partners - this will continue to be funded by train operators through their business plans, with no additional costs to the taxpayer as a result of this transfer.

■ Railways

Rachael Maskell:

[\[13766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Control Period 7 (CP7) is planned to implement the Integrated Rail Plan; and whether CP7 is planned to enable the allocation of funding to new projects.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government is currently considering the funding and outputs framework for Control Period 7, which focusses on the operation, maintenance and renewal of the current rail network. Network Rail enhancement projects are authorised separately through the Rail Network Enhancements Portfolio (RNEP) which includes relevant Integrated Rail Plan projects. The IRP is a multi-decade programme made up of both Network Rail and HS2 schemes; further details are set out in the Plan published in November 2021.

Rachael Maskell:[\[13767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the aims of the 30-year strategy for the railways, chaired by Keith Williams, are in comparison to The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail report and the Integrated Rail Plan.

Wendy Morton:

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail (WSPR), published May 2021, set out a wide-ranging package of commitments and reforms that represent the biggest change to the railway in three decades. One commitment is the development of a 30-year strategy for the whole rail sector, which will be produced for Ministers by the Great British Railways Transition Team, and is currently known as the 'Whole Industry Strategic Plan' (WISP). It is designed to provide a strategic framework, framed around five strategic objectives for rail, for decision-making over a 30-year horizon, but is not a specific package of investments. The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands gives effect to another key plank of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail that we want to grow, not shrink, the network. Published in November 2021, it sets out government's plan for delivering and sequencing major investment in rail network of the North and Midlands, the biggest ever Government investment in rail.

Rachael Maskell:[\[13773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will set targets for (a) increased use of the railways and (b) the level of increased use of the railways produced by (i) air to rail and (ii) road and car to rail modal shift.

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 use of the railways. A new public body, Great British Railways, will run the network in the public interest.

Great British Railways will have a new relationship with passenger train operating companies defined by tough new contracts incentivising punctual and reliable services. As the pandemic is changing travel habits, train operators are reassessing their services to ensure rail timetables meet new passenger travel patterns, are fit for the future, and carefully balance cost, capacity and performance. We do not currently have any plans to set specific targets for increased passenger use of the railways. The Government has committed to introducing a rail freight growth target which will

contribute towards broader Government objectives of modal shift for freight and will reflect the sector's own business growth ambitions.

Rachael Maskell: [\[13777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for Great British Railways to work with seaports and airports to reduce passenger and freight use from those locations.

Wendy Morton:

The reforms set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail are designed to improve services for rail passengers and freight customers to encourage rail use. The Government is fully committed to bringing forward this vital sector-wide reform.

The maritime and aviation sectors are key to UK trade. They facilitate our valuable UK imports and exports, as well as passenger movement. Once established, Great British Railways will have a clear mandate to strengthen rail freight and will work with other locations to incentivise a modal shift from road to rail when freight moves inland, to unlock the economic and environmental benefits that the rail freight sector can deliver.

■ Railways: Bus Services

Rachael Maskell: [\[13175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to take steps to increase travel by (a) rail and (b) bus.

Wendy Morton:

As the pandemic is changing travel habits, train operators are reassessing their services to ensure rail timetables meet new passenger travel patterns, are fit for the future, and carefully balance cost, capacity and performance.

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 encourage a shift to rail. 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.

The National Bus Strategy, published March 2021, set out the Government's vision for delivering better bus services for passengers across England. In April, we announced over £1 billion of new funding for Bus Service Improvement Plans, part of £3 billion of bus investment during this Parliament, including £525 million to deliver zero emission buses.

■ Railways: Fares**Rachael Maskell:**[\[13174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reducing the cost of rail fares in order to increase travel on railways, as the German government has recently announced it will do.

Wendy Morton:

We have launched a number of measures to help passengers save on rail fares. Most recently, we launched the Great British Rail Sale, the first ever nationwide rail sale. Over 1.3 million tickets were sold, offering around £7 million worth of savings for passengers. A number of railcards are also available to passengers that offer discounts on most rail fares.

Taxpayers also provided significant financial support to keep trains running throughout the pandemic, with Government having committed almost £16 billion since March 2020 to ensure vital services continued to run and key workers were able to keep using them. It is important now to put rail finances back on a sustainable footing in a way that is fair to passengers and taxpayers as we recover from the pandemic.

Any new rail fare discounts need to be carefully balanced for their potential impacts on passengers, taxpayers and the railway.

Rachael Maskell:[\[13774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of lowering rail fares on (a) the level of railway use and (b) social mobility.

Wendy Morton:

We already have a number of measures in place which help passengers to save on rail fares. Most recently, we launched the Great British Rail Sale, the first ever nationwide rail sale. Over 1.3 million tickets were sold, offering around £7 million worth of savings for passengers.

Young and student travellers, disabled passengers and those over 60 are also offered discounted travel as a requirement of the Railways Act 1993 (Section 28(3)) as amended, because they are likely to be earning less than adults of typical working age. The Act requires that all train operating companies participate in certain approved discount card schemes. A number of railcards are available, offering discounts against most rail fares, which includes passengers from these groups.

Taxpayers provided significant financial support to keep trains running throughout the pandemic, with the Government having committed almost £16 billion since March 2020 to ensure vital services continued to run and key workers were able to keep using them. It is important now to put rail finances back on a sustainable footing in a way that is fair to passengers and taxpayers as we recover from the pandemic.

Any new rail fare discounts need to be carefully balanced for their potential impacts on passengers, taxpayers and the railway.

■ Railways: Freight**Rachael Maskell:**[\[13778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges he plans to create.

Wendy Morton:

Government supports the development of a network of Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFIs) and associated infrastructure. SRFIs are key to enabling the efficient transportation of goods around the country and reducing cost to customers. Such infrastructure also broadens the reach of the rail freight industry, allowing it to tap into new regions and markets, facilitating growth and importantly allowing the industry to be more competitive when compared to road haulage.

The policy position is set out in the National Networks' National Policy Statement (NN-NPS) and more generally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NN-NPS does not specify where SRFIs should be located. Applications are considered on a case by case basis and the onus is therefore on private sector developers to bring forward proposals if they are deemed to be operationally and commercially viable.

■ Railways: Leadership**Louise Haigh:**[\[15302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the value for money of the cost of the Connected Leaders programme for senior executives of (a) train operating companies, (b) Network Rail and (c) his Department.

Andrew Stephenson:

As referenced in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, the Connected Leaders scheme was launched in 2020 to equip future leaders across the sector with a deeper understanding of customer needs and a greater cross-sector perspective. Connected Leaders is an independently run programme, governed through Rail Delivery Group's People Strategy Board. It is self-funded through charges made to each participant.

■ Railways: North of England**Rachael Maskell:**[\[13770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that Great British Railways focuses on the rail needs of the north of England.

Wendy Morton:

Once established, Great British Railways will be organised around several regional headquarters so that decisions are made closer to the places the railways serve. Cities and regions in England, including the north, will have opportunities for greater influence over local ticketing, services and stations through new partnerships with Great British Railways.

■ Railways: Passengers

Rachael Maskell: [\[13772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will take steps to ensure that financial sustainability at Great British Railways will help lead to increases in passenger numbers on the rail network.

Wendy Morton:

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail seeks to reduce inefficiency and maximise opportunities for both short and long-term cost reductions to our railways. This will help to embed financial sustainability and intensify greater efficiency now and in the long term as our new rail body, Great British Railways (GBR), is established. This will play an essential role in making rail more affordable for passengers and supporting economic recovery.

New Passenger Service Contracts will focus on improving the passenger experience, and as the guiding mind at the centre of the new, customer-focused system, GBR will put the needs of rail users at the heart of everything thing it does to draw people back to rail and grow usage of the network.

■ Railways: Timetables

Rachael Maskell: [\[13771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to (a) centralise and (b) otherwise reform timetabling to help improve (i) reliability and (ii) connectivity on the rail network, in the context of the establishment of Great British Railways.

Wendy Morton:

Once established, Great British Railways (GBR), will provide strong unified leadership across the rail network. GBR will bring ownership of the infrastructure, fares, timetables and planning of the network under one roof. It will bring the fragmented railways under a single point of operational accountability – ensuring the focus is delivering for passengers and freight customers. GBR will also have a new relationship with the private sector through new Passenger Service Contracts that incentivise train operators to deliver punctual and reliable services.

■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Rachael Maskell: [\[13185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will take steps to improve the safety of unadopted streets, including those on marked cycle routes, that are in poor condition and pose a significant risk to cyclists and other road users.

Trudy Harrison:

The responsibility for the management of unadopted roads rests with the owner, or more usually the frontagers, those who own property that fronts, or abuts, the road concerned. Neither the Government nor the local authority has any obligation over works on unadopted roads.

Section 230 of the 1980 Act empowers the 'street works authority' (i.e. the local authority) to order the frontagers to repair an unadopted or private road in the event that said repairs are needed to "obviate danger to traffic".

■ Shipping: Minimum Wage

Alan Brown: [\[13762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that foreign flagged vessels serving UK ports comply with UK minimum wage requirements when in international waters.

Robert Courts:

Legislation will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time allows that intends to ensure that seafarers working on vessels that regularly use UK ports are paid at least an equivalent rate to the UK National Minimum Wage, irrespective of the nationality or the seafarer or flag of the vessel. We intend to achieve this by making access to UK ports conditional on vessel operators demonstrating that they are paying at least an equivalent rate to the UK National Minimum Wage to their seafarers while in UK waters. In addition we are also working with like-minded partners on the development of bilateral minimum wage corridors, ensuring seafarers on direct ferry routes are paid the equivalent to the minimum wage of either country, whilst in our respective territorial waters and subject to the legislative competence of each Government.

■ Shipping: Redundancy

Alan Brown: [\[13760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to take steps to prevent mass redundancies of UK seafarers, in the context of P&O Ferries' dismissal of 800 staff.

Robert Courts:

The Government has made clear our commitment to protecting seafarer welfare and employment rights, especially from dismissals without meaningful employee consultation. Through our new seafarer protections nine-point plan we will introduce a Seafarer Protection Framework, which will set out a common level of employment protections. In addition to this, BEIS are progressing a new statutory code on fire and rehire practices, which will clamp down on unscrupulous employers who fail to engage in meaningful consultations with employees.

TREASURY

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron: [\[13648\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to correspondence dated 10 March, 13 April and 12 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay, relating to a constituent, case reference JB36685.

Mr Simon Clarke:

HM Treasury apologises for the delay in responding, the Honourable Member was sent a response on 14th June.

■ Tax Credits Ltd**Ben Lake:**[\[15353\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the propriety of the business practices of Tax Credits Ltd and its relationship with HMRC.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC takes its obligations on customer confidentiality seriously and does not comment on the specific circumstances of any of its customers, whether they are companies, organisations, or individuals.

■ Treasury: Hikvision**Sir Iain Duncan Smith:**[\[15422\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answers of 6 June 2022 to Question 9826 on Treasury: Hikvision and of 6 April 2022 to Question 124950 on Hikvision, and with reference to the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner's recommendations regarding the use of Hikvision cameras by Government departments, what steps is his Department taking in response to those recommendations.

Helen Whately:

As has been the case under successive administrations, it is not government policy to comment on the security arrangements of government buildings.

The National Cyber Security Centre and the Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure provide guidance on the use of IP-connected cameras and cyber-connected physical security systems.

Security measures within departments are tailored to protect each site, proportionate to the level of threat, aligned with the HMG Minimum Security Standards and, take into account the building risk categorisation and the physical composition of the site.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Care Leavers: Wales****Hywel Williams:**[\[15199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the Welsh Government on (a) the Basic Income Pilot for Care Leavers in Wales and (b) plans for further universal basic income trials in Wales.

David Rutley:

As part of our regular engagement, my officials are in discussions with their Welsh Government counterparts on the upcoming Basic Income Pilot for Care Leavers in

Wales. Further universal basic income trials in Wales are a matter for Welsh Government.

■ Carers: Poverty

Rachael Maskell: [\[15291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of carers are living in poverty in England.

David Rutley:

Statistics are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication. The latest detailed statistics containing this breakdown can be found here: [Households below average income: for financial years ending 1995 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

On average from 2007/08 to 2009/10 there were 200,000 (rounded to the nearest 100,000) or 15.9% of households with a family in receipt of carer’s allowance living in absolute poverty before housing costs in England. On average from 2017/18 to 2019/20 there were 200,000 (rounded to the nearest 100,000) or 13.8% of households with a family in receipt of carer’s allowance living in absolute poverty before housing costs in England.

■ Cost of Living: Government Assistance

Jessica Morden: [\[13082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason people in receipt of contributions-based benefits are not eligible for the £650 cost of living payment.

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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Marketing

Matt Rodda:

[\[15363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department spent on the recent marketing campaign to improve take up of pension credit that included an advert in the print version of the Daily Mirror on 8 of June 2022.

Guy Opperman:

The most recent Pension Credit take up campaign, aimed at pensioners and their family members, was launched in April.

Paid communications activity to promote Pension Credit is ongoing, and is supported by no cost activity such as Press and Stakeholder communications - including the Pension Credit 'day of action' on 15 June, which aims to provide a focal point for the campaign DWP is leading a concerted promotional push across media including broadcast, print, online and social.

The total budget committed to the paid campaign so far this year, including paid press advertising, is £1.2m. The campaign is continuously monitored and optimised to deliver the best value for the money spent.

This is in addition to the Pension Credit material included in the annual uprating mailing, which is sent to over 11m pensioners in Great Britain, and further communications in a variety of ways.

■ Household Support Fund

Caroline Lucas:

[\[13087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it his policy to allow local authorities to make decisions on the allocation of Household Support Fund monies to households based on local population needs; and if she will make a statement.

David Rutley:

Local Authorities in England have received their allocations from the £421m Household Support Fund extension for April – September 2022, alongside the grant determination and guidance. The allocations for Local Authorities for this period can be found [here](#). Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how and when this funding is used within the scope set out in the guidance, based on their assessment of local need.

From October 2022, Government is providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England £421m will be used to further extend the Household Support Fund (October 2022 – March 2023). Guidance and individual local authority allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

■ Job Centres: Conditions of Employment

Feryal Clark: [\[13265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what procedure her Department followed to convert the temporary, fixed term contracts of work coaches who were hired during the covid-19 outbreak, to permanent contracts.

Mims Davies:

DWP EO fixed-term colleagues, which included colleagues in Work Coach roles, were invited to apply for permanence via ring-fenced internal campaigns.

To manage overall volumes, we split the overall exercise into 37 campaigns, one per District, using the same standards. As context, in considering where subsequent offers could be made, we did also consider roles in the wider geographic vicinity and where appropriate across nearby Districts.

Colleagues were invited to submit written examples of their work and achievements against Civil Service behaviours with an additional online work-based judgement test. This provided opportunity for colleagues to provide evidence of their knowledge and experience that were assessed, using DWP agreed standards, by our recruitment partner and audited by our own trained DWP business assessors from across the Department throughout to ensure standards aligned and were consistent.

■ Job Centres: Recruitment

Feryal Clark: [\[13266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many temporary, fixed term contract work coaches were hired during the covid-19 outbreak; and how many of those were subsequently made permanent.

Mims Davies:

From March 2020 and the start of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Department delivered on our commitment under the Government's Plan for Jobs to recruit an additional 13,500 EO Work Coaches. This recruitment was a blend of both permanent and fixed term appointments.

As at March 2022, we had 12,000 fixed term EOs across DWP Service Delivery which included 9,950 in Jobcentres. To date, we have made permanence offers to c8,800 DWP EO fixed-term colleagues, which includes 6,400 into Work Coach roles. As we are continuing to consider where we may be able to make any further permanence offers, where further opportunities become available, we are currently unable to give a final number.

■ Motor Vehicles: Waste Disposal

Sam Tarry:

[\[13273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to treat the ULEZ car and motorcycle scrappage scheme grant payment as savings in respect of applications for means-tested benefits; and if she will ensure that those payments are not treated as savings in the context of the wider benefits of that scheme.

David Rutley:

Transport for London's Ultra Low Emissions Zone Scrappage Scheme payments would for the purposes of means-tested benefits be treated as capital. However, they would only impact on a person's entitlement if – together with any other capital they might have – they brought their overall capital above one of the relevant lower capital limits.

Within working-age means-tested benefits (Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance) the lower capital limit is £6,000. In Universal Credit, which is calculated monthly, capital above £6,000 reduces entitlement by £4.35 for every whole or part £250 above £6,000. In the other working-age means-tested benefits, which are calculated weekly, capital above £6,000 reduces entitlement by £1 for every whole or part £250 above £6,000. Entitlement to working-age means-tested benefit usually ends where capital is above £16,000 (the upper capital limit.)

With regard to State Pension Credit and Housing Benefit for people over pension age, the lower capital limit is £10,000. Capital above £10,000 reduces entitlement by £1 for every whole or part £500 above £10,000. There is no upper capital limit applying to State Pension Credit. There is however an upper limit of £16,000 for people over pension age receiving Housing Benefit.

The capital limits set out above strike a balance between protecting less well-off people and protecting the taxpayer, whilst at the same time recognising the conscientious efforts of people who have built up capital. Whilst it is important to encourage saving, it has never been thought right for capital to be ignored and therefore it is also reasonable there should be capital limits above which benefits are not available. The limits ensure that the help which comes from taxpayers, many of whom are themselves on low incomes and have limited capital, is directed to people who need it most.

■ Social Security Benefits: Armed Forces

John Healey:

[\[11554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many service personnel and veterans have (a) been identified as eligible and (b) received an additional benefits payment to help with the cost of living as of 1 June 2022.

David Rutley:

Six million individuals who qualify through their entitlement to disability benefits including War Pension Constant Attendance Allowance, War Pension Mobility Supplement or Armed Forces Independence Payment on May 25th will receive a one-off Disability Cost of Living payment of £150 in the Autumn.

Latest published statistics on those in receipt of the Armed Forces Independence Payment can be found at:

[20210624 - Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Annual Statistic 2021 - Statistic - O \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/20210624-Armed-Forces-Compensation-Scheme-Annual-Statistic-2021-Statistic-O)

Latest published statistics on those in receipt of the War Pension Constant Attendance Allowance and the War Pension Mobility Supplement can be found at: [War Pensions Scheme statistics: 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/war-pensions-scheme-statistics-2021)

Some service personnel and veterans may also be entitled to other payments announced in this package, these include:

- The £650 Cost of Living Payment, that will be paid to more than 8 million low-income households on a means-tested benefits over two instalments - the first from July, the second in the autumn.
- A separate, one-off payment of £300 to pensioner households (through and as an addition to the Winter Fuel Payment).
- 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.
- An additional £500 million to support households, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England this will take the form of an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £421m. Devolved administrations will receive £79 million through the Barnett formula.
- 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.

The department began collecting the armed forces status on new Universal Credit (UC) claims from April 2021 and UC claimants declaring their work and earnings from June 2021. From July 2021, Jobcentre work coaches could add information if the claimant were known to be serving or a veteran and had not already provided their status. For assessment periods ending in April 2022, we held a response for approximately 45% of the UC caseload. From this data we have identified 33,800 UC claimants who have previously served in the Armed Forces.

No assessment has been made of the total number of service personnel and veterans who are eligible for and will receive Cost of Living payments across all eligible benefits.

Further information on these payments will be discussed in Parliament as part of the legislative process to ensure their delivery.

■ Social Security Benefits: Energy

Virginia Crosbie: [\[15400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the £650 support for the rise in energy prices to people who receive (a) Personal Independence Payments and (b) Carer's Allowance.

David Rutley:

The £650 means-tested benefit one-off Cost of Living Payments have been designed to target support for 8 million households with low incomes, on means-tested benefits. Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance are not means tested, but customers in receipt of these, and other, non-means tested who are also entitled to an eligible means-tested benefit will receive the payment. This means nearly 60% of those who are working age on Carer's Allowance will get a Cost of Living Payment.

In addition, 6 million disabled people who receive an eligible non-means tested disability benefits, including Personal Independence Payments, will receive a one-off disability Cost of Living Payment of £150. Where people met the criteria for both types of payments, they will receive both the £650 and the £150, and carers living in the same household as the disabled person for whom they care will benefit from the disability Cost of Living Payment. The payments will be made automatically in September, bringing total support for households this year to £37 billion.

These payments are part of the government's £15bn package of support and sits alongside the £400 per household universal support being provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme, an increased Winter Fuel Payment and the extension of the Household Support Fund, on top of the £22bn the government has already announced to support households with the cost of living.

■ Universal Credit

Jessica Morden: [\[11613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are claiming Universal Credit as of 1 June 2022; and how many of those people have deductions from their Universal Credit in (a) the UK, (b) Wales and (c) Newport East constituency.

David Rutley:

The Government recognises the importance of supporting the welfare of claimants who have incurred debt. We seek to balance recovery of debt against not causing hardship for claimants and their families. Processes are in place to ensure deductions are manageable, and in April 2021 we further reduced the cap on deductions from Universal Credit awards to 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance enabling them to retain more of the award

Protocols are in place to ensure deductions are manageable and customers can contact DWP Debt Management if they are experiencing financial hardship to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, or a temporary suspension, depending on financial circumstances.

The latest published statistics show, of the 4,728,957 households on Universal Credit, in February 2022, there were 2,100,800 UC households in Great Britain with a deduction; of these 107,700 were in Wales and 3,500 in the Newport East Constituency.

■ Universal Credit: Barnsley East

Stephanie Peacock: **[15346]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Barnsley East constituency have been recipient to Universal Credit in each month since May 2021.

David Rutley:

Monthly statistics on the number of people who are on Universal Credit, by parliamentary constituency, are published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Universal Credit: Poverty

Hywel Williams: **[15198]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the number of children in each nation of the United Kingdom that would be lifted out of child poverty if Universal Credit was increased by (a) £20, (b) £30 and (c) £40 per week.

David Rutley:

No assessment has been made.

This Government is committed to reducing child poverty and supporting low-income families, and believes work is the best route out of poverty. Our approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of parental employment - particularly where it is full-time – in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for families and children. The latest available data on in-work poverty shows that in 2019/20, children in households where all adults were in work were around six times less likely to be in absolute poverty (before housing costs) than children in a household where nobody works.

The government is providing over £15bn in further support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package is in addition to the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year. This means that millions of low-income 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.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[11681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of (a) respite care homes, (b) care homes and (c) nursing homes limiting their patient capacity due to covid-19 restrictions in the latest period for which information is available.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 14 June 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Gillian Keegan:

The information requested is not held centrally. **Updated guidance for the sector was published on 31 March 2022 to ensure there are sufficient protections for care recipients while safely removing restrictions as far as possible.**

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Singapore Digital Economy Agreement Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS100\]](#)

Today, I am proud to announce that the UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement (DEA) enters into force, following the completion of the necessary domestic procedures on both sides. This will allow UK businesses to start benefitting from the provisions contained within the agreement, helping them to trade and grow.

This ground-breaking agreement is the world's most innovative digital trade agreement, concluded as it was between two of the most advanced digital trade nations. The UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement is deeper and wider than previous trade agreements covering the modern digital economy. Complementing and building on the G7 Digital Trade Principles that we brokered under the UK's G7 Presidency, the Singapore Digital Economy Agreement will serve as an ambitious model for modern trade agreements in future – cementing the UK's place as a world leader in digital trade.

By securing open digital markets, prompting the free flow of trusted data, and cutting red tape through overhauling outdated paper-based processes, businesses across the UK can expand into new markets and thrive.

- Now that this ground-breaking trade agreement has entered into force, businesses and consumers across the UK will start to benefit from: Support to UK businesses to access Singapore's digital markets. Digitally delivered services makes up around a third of UK services trade globally - this was worth over £361 billion in 2020, and this deal will help strengthen this further.
- Securing and locking-in trusted cross-border data flows, the foundation for today's modern digital economy – representing up to 26.3% of UK GVA in 2019. This will enable businesses to trade more easily, cheaply, and more quickly, facilitating everything from more efficient manufacturing and supply chains to more reliable infrastructure.
- Cutting red tape by supporting the overhaul of outdated, paper-based trading systems. For example, the agreement contains specific commitments around maintaining legal frameworks that enable the digitisation of trade documents such as Bills of Lading.
- Keeping our country and citizens safe through deepening our partnership with Singapore in areas such as cybersecurity, as well as legally binding commitments covering online consumer protection and personal data protection.
- Supporting our bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), alongside Singapore and 10 other vibrant trading nations.

Membership would mean access to a £9 trillion free trade area with some of the biggest and fastest-growing markets in the world.

With this agreement coming into force, our economy and brilliant businesses can build back better from the pandemic and start to benefit from easier, quicker, and more trusted access to the valuable Singapore market.

JUSTICE

■ Prisons Strategy White Paper: Publication of response to consultation questions

Minister of State for Prisons (Victoria Atkins): [\[HCWS99\]](#)

Today I am publishing the Government response to the Prisons Strategy White Paper consultation.

The Prisons Strategy White Paper was published in December 2021. The commitments in the paper tackle this Government's priorities for prisons: building the next generation of prisons and managing an estate that is safe and secure for staff and prisoners; supporting rehabilitation and resettlement through education, employment and accommodation; and creating prison and probation services that cut crime and protect the public.

19 questions were included in the White Paper to ensure the views of interested parties were considered. The consultation opened on the 7 December 2021 and closed on the 4 February 2022, receiving 155 responses. The Government has carefully considered the responses and is grateful for all of the contributions.

Since publication of the White Paper, this Government has moved swiftly to deliver its aims:

- HMP Five Wells opened in March, delivering 1,700 modernised places.
- Digital upgrades have been delivered to a further 7 prisons, with 4 additional sites completed by October 2022.
- The landmark Security Investment Programme was completed in March 2022, including the deployment of Enhanced Gate Security across 42 high-risk sites.
- Committed an additional £25m investment in prison security: installing high-specification drugs trace detection, mobile phone blocking technology, x-ray baggage scanners, and an Intelligence Management System.
- Secured £34m to improve prison safety and move towards a more preventative approach.
- Accelerated the roll out of Employment Hubs with 23 now established and the appointment of 20 Employment Board Chairs.
- Announced that we will legislate to enable prisoner apprenticeships, in collaboration with the Department for Education.

- Committed to action on Friday releases to tackle the strain this can cause if prisoners cannot access essential services; this includes pursuing legislation to address this issue for those at risk of reoffending, when parliamentary time allows.
- Plans to open a Residential Women's Centre in Wales to provide a community-based alternative to a short custodial sentence.
- Launched our staff retention toolkit into all prisons alongside a number of new initiatives to support retention, including a new buddy scheme.
- Key Performance Indicators, introduced in April 2022, set clear expectations of delivery, and Governors will be held to account as part of their performance reviews.

As the consultation response makes clear, this is the start of an ambitious delivery plan in the years to come and the Government is committed to continued engagement with stakeholders to ensure we deliver on it.

Today, I lay in Parliament this response, which sets out the views of respondents to our consultation questions and how the government proposes to implement the commitments in the White Paper.