



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 June 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:49 P.M., 22 June 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Waste Disposal: Crime

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18818\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many employees of the Serious Fraud Office were deployed to combat money laundering created through waste crime as of 15 June 2022.

Alex Chalk:

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) does not structure its employees around particular categories of financial crime and therefore does not hold data on the number of employees deployed to combat money laundering created through waste crime.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Mr Steve Baker: [\[R\] \[17928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will hold discussions with the National Audit Office about the production of a follow-up to the report on the Bounce Back Loan Scheme: an update.

Paul Scully:

The National Audit Office (NAO) is independent of Government and sets its own agenda for investigations. It should be noted the Comptroller and Auditor General of the NAO has complete discretion in determining which areas of public spending to scrutinise.

■ Climate Change

Kerry McCarthy: [\[20231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Glasgow Climate Pact, whether his Department plans to amend the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution before the end of 2022.

Greg Hands:

The Government is continuing to review the latest available evidence to ensure that its target remains aligned with the Paris temperature goal and exploring other ways to strengthen its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

The Government will publish any updates to the NDC ahead of the UN synthesis report deadline on 23 September and urges other parties to do the same.

■ Electricity Generation

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[18075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it is his Department's responsibility to ensure adequate national electricity supplies.

Greg Hands:

National Grid Electricity System Operator is responsible for balancing electricity supply and demand in real time. The Government is confident that it has the tools needed to operate the electricity system reliably.

The Capacity Market is the Government's main mechanism for ensuring security of electricity supply. Through competitive, technology-neutral auctions, it secures the capacity needed to cope with future demand peaks.

■ Employment Agencies: Fines

Justin Madders:

[\[20263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) investigations have been commenced and (b) fines issued under regulation 7 of The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003 in each year since 2010.

Paul Scully:

The Employment Agency Standards (EAS) Inspectorate enforces the requirements of the Conduct Regulations.

EAS has historically received a limited number of complaints about regulation 7. EAS investigates all relevant complaints and takes enforcement action where necessary. It does not have the power to issue fines, which rests with the court.

The table at Annex A shows the number of complaints EAS recoded in relation to regulation 7. This data is locally held management information taken from a live case management system. To date no breaches have been established under regulation 7 and no enforcement action has been taken.

Annex A

<i>OPERATIONAL YEAR</i>	<i>NUMBER OF REGULATION 7 COMPLAINTS</i>
2012/2013	2
2013/2014	5
2014/2015	No reported complaints
2015/2016	No reported complaints
2016/2017	No reported complaints
2017/2018	No reported complaints

OPERATIONAL YEAR	NUMBER OF REGULATION 7 COMPLAINTS
2018/19	2
2019/2020	No reported complaints
2020/2021	2
2021/2022	3

■ Energy Bills Rebate

Bambos Charalambous: [\[18011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether residents of buildings with communal heating systems will be eligible for the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme grant.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 20 June 2022]: There will be different considerations for consumers depending on their circumstances and the way in which they pay their energy bills. All domestic electricity customers who have a direct relationship with a licensed electricity supplier will be automatically eligible for this Scheme.

The Government continues to work with consumer groups and suppliers on the delivery of the Scheme and is exploring options for other ways in which customers who do not have a domestic electricity contract might receive similar support. The full suite of help from the government is covered here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet/government-support-for-the-cost-of-living-factsheet>.

■ Energy Supply and Power Failures

Charlotte Nichols: [\[18076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish his Department's modelling and scenarios on the potential for (a) power cuts and (b) energy rationing.

Greg Hands:

Great Britain has one of the most reliable energy systems in the world.

National Grid publishes a winter outlook each year which presents an assessment on the security of gas and electricity supply, including operational challenges it expects to manage over the winter period. These scenarios are used to ensure that network planning activities are updated to reflect these changes.

■ Heat Pumps

Andrew Selous: [\[17891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason the Government's policy support for heat pumps is targeted at heat pumps which heat water rather than those that heat air.

Greg Hands:

BEIS analysis indicates that hydronic heat pumps, which use hot water to provide heat using a central heating system, are a more cost-effective means of decarbonising heat in the majority of homes and businesses across the UK. Therefore, the Government anticipates hydronic heat pumps will be the principal means of decarbonising heat in homes.

■ Hinkley Point B Power Station

Charlotte Nichols: [\[18077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions officials in his Department have had with EDF on a possible life extension for Hinkley Point B since 24 February 2022.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[18078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department received requests from third parties to examine the possibility of life extensions for (a) Hinkley Point B and (b) Heysham I and Hartlepool.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[18079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department first received requests from third parties to extend Hinkley Point B.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[18082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with EDF on possible life extensions beyond March 2024 for (a) Heysham I Nuclear Power Station and (b) Hartlepool Nuclear Power Station.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[18083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of granting further life extensions for (a) Heysham 1 and (b) Hartlepool nuclear power plants on the security of electricity supplies.

Greg Hands:

Whilst there has been parliamentary and public interest in the potential for life extensions, the Department has no formal role in these decisions so has not received any formal requests. The continued operation of any UK nuclear power station is a decision for EDF (the stations' owner and operator) and the independent nuclear regulator, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), based on safety and commercial

considerations. The Department is in regular communication with EDF and the ONR. Security of electricity supply is secured through the Capacity Market which provides capacity with the right incentives to deliver when needed.

Charlotte Nichols: [18080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the retirement of Hinkley Point B on (a) electricity prices, (b) security of electricity supply, (c) balancing costs and (d) CO2 emissions.

Greg Hands:

The Government regularly updates the latest assumptions around decommissioning dates of plants to ensure that its analysis of the power sector takes into account the latest available information. Published analysis captures the impact of plant retirements on electricity prices, security of supply, balancing costs and CO2 emissions.

Charlotte Nichols: [18081]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the price of electricity generated at Hinkley Point B and the wholesale market price of electricity.

Charlotte Nichols: [18084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made a comparative assessment of (a) the price of electricity generated at Heysham I and Hartlepool nuclear power plants and (b) the wholesale market price of electricity.

Greg Hands:

Wholesale electricity market data is available at <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/wholesale-market-indicators>. Data on the price of the electricity sold by individual generators is commercially sensitive and not held by BEIS.

■ Human Experiments

Anna Firth: [18118]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will develop an action plan for setting out how the widespread adoption of human relevant research techniques can be facilitated.

George Freeman:

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, published the UK non-animal technologies roadmap in 2015 alongside the NC3Rs, the research councils and the UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, setting out a long-term vision and strategy for non-animal technologies in the UK.

Innovate UK also supports innovative businesses in the development of non-animal technologies such as tumour organoids, stem cell-based disease models for drug

discovery and research through programmes such as the Biomedical Catalyst and SMART, with additional infrastructure support provided through the Medicine Discovery Catapult.

■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

Stuart Anderson: [\[18985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the steel industry has a sustainable future.

Lee Rowley:

The Government recognises the vital role the steel sector plays in our economy and has supported the steel sector extensively, including providing over £600 million since 2013 to help with electricity costs. In April the Government announced the extension of this scheme for a further three years; more than doubling the previous budget and significantly increasing the level of relief.

The Government will continue to work with the sector to support its transition to a sustainable future. My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I engage regularly with the sector, including through the Steel Council.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largan: [\[19024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the enquiry of 11 April 2022 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL37171.

Robert Largan: [\[19027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to respond to the enquiry of 28 April 2022 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL24042.

George Freeman:

My rt. hon. Friend the Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth wrote to the hon. Member on 14 April about rising energy costs (RL37171) and about the Local Electricity Bill (RL24042), which was received by the Department on 12 April and not 28 April. Further copies of these responses have been sent to your office.

■ Nuclear Power Stations: Construction

Sir Gary Streeter: [\[17862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment he has made of the potential merits of PWR nuclear reactors and molten salt reactors in the context of the Government's plans for new nuclear power stations in the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Government has commissioned several comparative assessments of nuclear energy technologies over the last decade, many of which have included consideration of Molten Salt technologies.

The outputs of these assessments were considered, alongside other evidence sources, in the development of the “Advanced modular reactors (AMRs): technical assessment” published in July 2021 as part of the decision on the technology choice for the Advanced Modular Reactor (AMR) Research, Development & Demonstration (RD&D) programme. This can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-modular-reactors-amrs-technical-assessment>.

Charlotte Nichols:**[18074]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government’s policy is on business rate retention for local communities which are to host new nuclear power plants; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

Community benefits will form one part of the Government’s work on delivering ambitions for new build nuclear, as set out in the British Energy Security Strategy. The specifics, such as business rate retention, have not yet been determined.

■ Off-payroll Working**Imran Hussain:****[17961]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to bring forward legislation on the umbrella company market following his Department’s recent call for evidence and consultation on that market.

Paul Scully:

The Government recently ran a Call for Evidence on the umbrella company market to ensure it has a detailed and up to date understanding of the market and how it is continuing to evolve. This Call for Evidence, which was issued jointly by HM Treasury, HMRC and BEIS, 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.

■ Offshore Industry: North Sea**Jim Shannon:****[17942]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential contributions to energy security of the Jackdaw Field Development in the North Sea.

Greg Hands:

Shell’s February 2022 Environmental Statement notes that at its peak, the Jackdaw development is expected to deliver 6.5% of UK Continental Shelf gas production for

less than 1% of UK Continental Shelf emissions and produce an amount of energy equivalent to heating over 1.4 million UK homes.

■ **Petrol: Prices**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[18089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that petrol stations do not apply unreasonable mark-ups for consumers.

Greg Hands:

The Government has asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to conduct an urgent review of the fuel market, as well as a longer-term market study under the Enterprise Act 2002, to explore whether the retail fuel market has adversely affected consumer interests. As part of this, the Government has asked for the CMA's advice on the extent to which competition has resulted in the fuel duty cut being passed on to consumers and the reasons for local variations in the price of road fuel.

■ **Solar Power: Feed-in Tariffs**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[17899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to increase the feed-in tariff for people with solar panels.

Greg Hands:

The FIT tariff rates are adjusted annually in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI) and there are no current plans to adjust this policy.

■ **Wind Power: South East**

Bob Seely:

[\[17114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to support the expansion of the offshore wind industry to the south-east coast.

Greg Hands:

The Government set out in the British Energy Security Strategy its ambition to deliver up to 50GW of offshore wind by 2030. The South-East stands to benefit from the growth of this sector with, for example, RWE developing the 1.2GW Rampion 2 project off the Sussex coast.

CABINET OFFICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:****[19618]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to strengthen the UK's cyber security in the context of the potential increased risk of malicious cyber activity from Russia.

Michael Ellis:

Our new National Cyber and Government Cyber Security Strategies set out our approach to making the UK more resilient to cyber attacks and countering cyber threats. We have undertaken significant outreach within the Government and Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) sectors, and the UK Devolved Administrations, providing mitigating advice to bolster the UK's cyber preparedness.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster recently wrote to Cabinet colleagues to seek assurances that their departments and sectors are implementing the necessary resilience measures.

All organisations should follow the [NCSC's guidance](#) on actions to take when the cyber threat is heightened. Individuals should follow the NCSC's Cyber Aware guidance.

■ **Coronavirus: Death****Paul Blomfield:****[18889]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 30 July 2021 to Question 35830 on Coronavirus: Death, if he will publish figures on the proportion of NHS staff who have died from covid-19 since March 2020 in each ethnic group for which figures are available.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

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

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 15 June is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter [UKSA_Response_to_PQ18889.pdf]

■ **Public Sector: Conduct****Dave Doogan:****[19678]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment has the Prime Minister made of the adequacy of the standards of probity in public life.

Michael Ellis:

Her Majesty's Government is committed to maintaining high standards of conduct and probity, whilst making improvements where necessary to policies and processes which help support this.

There are a range of mechanisms in place to maintain and drive up standards, including Codes of Conduct (such as the Ministerial Code, Civil Service Code, Special Adviser Code), policies and guidance (such as Managing Public Money), and bodies and offices charged with overseeing aspects of government activity (for example the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments and the Civil Service Commission). The Committee on Standards in Public Life also issues regular reports with ideas and recommendations for the Government and other public bodies to consider.

I also refer the Hon. Member to the written ministerial statement of 16 December 2021, Official Report, [HCWS500](#), on the Government's anti-corruption strategy work.

COP26

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Jim Shannon:

[\[19614\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps the Government is taking to play a leading role in delivering on the Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forest and Land Use.

Alok Sharma:

The UK Presidency is continuing to lead international collaboration on Forest and Land Use, building on progress made at COP26. We held an international ministerial meeting on 1 June in Stockholm and we are continuing to work with countries that have endorsed the Declaration to gather views on implementation. We are creating a space for countries that are actively engaged in accelerating progress on the GLD to drive momentum and collectively address shared challenges.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

[\[19629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date the oldest application that is yet to be fully processed was submitted to his Department through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP); how many staff in his Department are assigned to dealing with outstanding ARAP applications as of 16 June 2022; how many ARAP applications were closed due to the applicant (a) being killed and (b) dying since the scheme was launched; and what estimate has he made of the number of people awaiting an outcome of their ARAP application who are known to be at risk of being killed by the Taliban.

James Heapey:

The earliest unresolved case dates from 1 April 2021 and relates to an individual that we have contacted three times requesting further information relating to their eligibility.

Since January 2022, the Ministry of Defence has received approximately 3,000 ARAP applications per month. Many of these are duplicates of applications already made. The number of open cases, therefore, does not reflect the number of eligible people that remain in Afghanistan. We assess that to be around 8,000 (inclusive of their dependents). This figure is subject to change as we continue to work through the outstanding applications.

No cases have been closed because of the death of an applicant although we are aware of the acute threat that a number of applicants face whilst they remain in Afghanistan.

However, the speed of decision making in HM Government is not the regulator on the speed of evacuation. Many ARAP applicants are undocumented and cannot leave Afghanistan through any official route. We are bringing them out at the speed our partners in the region will allow.

Whilst we are putting additional resource into clearing a backlog of ARAP applications, our priority is in securing permission from regional partners to accelerate the pace at which we can bring undocumented applicants out of Afghanistan.

■ Armed Forces: Death

Crispin Blunt:

[\[18758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many British armed forces personnel who served in the (a) Gulf war in 1991, (b) Iraq war in 2003 and (c) Operation Herrick (i) died on active service during those conflicts or (ii) subsequently took their own lives due to (A) post-traumatic stress disorder and (B) other causes.

Leo Docherty:

The number of UK Armed Forces personnel who died during active service in each of the specified conflicts is presented in the following table:

UK Armed Forces deaths as a result of operations in Gulf 1, Iraq and Afghanistan, as of 28 February 2022

CONFLICT	DATE	NUMBER OF DEATHS
Gulf 1	2 August 1990 to 7 March 1991	45
Iraq (Op TELIC)	20 January 2003 to 22 May 2011	178
Afghanistan ^{1,2}	11 September 2001 to 28 August 2021	457

Table Notes:

1. As part of an ongoing commitment to report deaths for all operations overseas led by the Permanent Joint Headquarters, deaths as a result of these operations are

published biannually: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-and-uk-civilian-operational-casualty-and-fatality-statistics>.

2. Includes deaths on Operation VERITAS, Operation HERRICK and Operation TORAL.

The number of UK Armed Forces personnel who served during Gulf 1 who subsequently took their own lives was 216 as of 31 December 2015 (source: 1990/1991 Gulf Conflict UK Gulf Veterans Mortality Data: Causes of Death). This includes both coroner-confirmed suicides and open verdict deaths, in line with the definition used by the Office for National Statistics. Information is not held on the numbers of former serving personnel who deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan who subsequently took their own lives. However, Defence Statistics are in the process of setting up a new project to understand the long-term consequences of military service (including all deaths) for all personnel who have served since 2001, including recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2018, the then Secretary of State for Defence directed that, going forward, the study should include all personnel to understand the impact of continued deployments overseas, and it should provide near real time surveillance of causes of death in Serving personnel and veterans. The study is currently going through MOD Ethics and the NHS Health Research Authority Confidentiality Advisory Group ahead of the data flows starting between NHS Digital and MOD. Defence Statistics expect to start reporting for England and Wales later this year with data for Scotland and Northern Ireland following. The first report is expected in 2022.

Information is not held by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on whether subsequent deaths for former serving personnel were due to post-traumatic stress disorder or other causes. Cause of death information is collated from the death certificate; this source of information does not provide any insight into the life factors and medical conditions that may have resulted in individuals taking their own lives.

■ European Fighter Aircraft

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[17881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of recent usage of the Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft on the timescales for its replacement by the Tempest model.

Jeremy Quin:

Recent usage of the Typhoon will not affect the introduction of the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) which is being developed to enter service from 2035, before Typhoon's earliest possible out of service date of 2040. Routine fleet management of flying hours will ensure the Typhoon fleet is able to remain in frontline service and react to surge requirements until then.

■ Future Combat Air System

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made on the timetable for a final decision being made on the inclusion of international partners in the Future Combat Air System programme.

Jeremy Quin:

Our approach to the Future Combat Air System programme is international by design, helping us to strengthen global relationships, share expertise and cost and to develop a next generation capability that will meet future threats. Work to identify the optimal partnering arrangement is progressing at pace, so that we can build on this before the end of the Concept and Assessment Phase in 2024.

■ Hashem Abedi and Salman Abedi

Kenny MacAskill: [\[20316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Salman and Hashem Abedi were rescued from Libya by the Royal Navy in August 2014.

James Heapey:

As stated in my previous response to the hon. Member's Question 19000, the Ministry of Defence is aware of the historic Libyan links of the two named individuals (Salman Abedi and Hashem Abedi).

However, given the fact that this is a Named Day question, the Department would be happy to provide the hon. Member with a fuller written answer to facilitate interrogation of the relevant records relating to Operation Overleap in 2014.

Attachments:

1. UIN1900-Salman Abedi and Hashem Abedi [UIN19000 Hashem Abedi and Salman Abedi.docx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Communication

Rachel Hopkins: [\[19756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much expenditure was allocated by his Department in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021 to (i) internal communications and (ii) the employment of staff to work on internal communications.

Leo Docherty:

Expenditure on internal communications by the Ministry of Defence Head Office Directorate of Defence Communications (DDC) was as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR (FY)	2020-21	2021-22
Internal Communications	£2,000	£2,000
Employment of staff to work on internal communications	£775,000	£896,000

FINANCIAL YEAR (FY)	2020-21	2021-22
TOTAL	£777,000	£898,000

Information for (FY) 2019-20 is not held.

■ Ministry of Defence: Consultants

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[19754\]](#)

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

Jeremy Quin:

A summary of this spend is shown below;

FINANCIAL YEAR	VALUE (£MILLION)
2020-21	109.668
2019-20	98.080

Financial data relating to the 2021-22 financial year is currently being finalised as part of the Departmental Annual Report and Accounts (ARAc) which remains subject to NAO audit.

FY 2020-21 Breakdown by Area of Defence;

TOP LEVEL BUDGET	£MILLION
UK Strategic Command-Logistics and Support	23.095
Army Command-Headquarters	11.411
Defence Infrastructure Organisation	9.350
Head Office-Defence People	8.317
Defence Equipment and Support	7.252
Submarine Delivery Agency	6.125
Defence Nuclear Organisation	5.388
Army Command-Field Army	5.221
Head Office-Finance	3.277
Head Office- Security, Policy and Operations	2.783

FY 2019-20 Breakdown by Area of Defence;

TOP LEVEL BUDGET	£MILLION
Head Office-Corporate	13.204
Strategic Command-Headquarters	12.117
Submarine Delivery Agency	8.860
Defence Equipment and Support	8.152
Army Command-Headquarters	6.723
Head Office-Defence People	6.270
Strategic Command-Other	5.605
Strategic Command-Joint Force Development	4.979
Strategic Command-Logistics and Support	4.866
Defence Infrastructure Organisation	3.018

Rachel Hopkins:[\[19755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department spent in total on external recruitment consultants in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021; how many full time equivalent posts were filled as a result of that expenditure; and how many of those posts were filled by individuals recruited from outside the civil service.

Jeremy Quin:

Although examples will exist for specific roles, the Department does not, in general, make use of external recruitment consultants to fill fulltime roles and the information requested is not centrally held.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Digital Technology and Video Recordings**

Rachel Hopkins:[\[19758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much expenditure was allocated by his Department in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021 to (i) the production of digital and video content, (ii) the employment of in-house staff to produce digital and video content and (iii) the payment of external companies and individuals to produce digital and video content.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) Head Office Directorate of Defence Communications (DDC) currently has two military and two MOD civilian staff employed full-time in digital content production at a total cost of approximately £247,000 per year.

■ Ministry of Defence: Information Officers

Rachel Hopkins: [\[19757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many individuals were employed by his Department to work on internal communications in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Leo Docherty:

The average number of staff working in the Ministry of Defence Head Office Directorate of Defence Communications (DDC) to deliver internal communications functions in 2020-21 was 12 and in 2021-22 was 14. The information for 2019-20 is not held.

■ Ukraine: Military Aid

John Healey: [\[20208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many M109 long-range weapons his Department has purchased to gift to Ukraine.

Jeremy Quin:

As the Defence Secretary announced on 15 June, the UK has purchased and refurbished more than 20 M109 for delivery to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

John Healey: [\[20209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department spent purchasing M190 long-range weapons to gift to Ukraine.

Jeremy Quin:

Due to commercial sensitivities I am unable to confirm the exact figure committed to M109 purchases at this stage.

John Healey: [\[20210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the M190 long-range weapons purchased by his Department for Ukraine to arrive in that country.

James Heappey:

We expect the M109 to begin arriving in Ukraine imminently.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Birmingham City Football Club: Sales

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[18865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of Laurence Bassini's potential purchase of Birmingham City Football Club.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government does not currently assess the ownership or governance arrangements of individual football clubs, but we recognise that they have unique social value and it is vital that they are protected.

The Fan Led Review recommended that a new owners' and directors' tests for clubs should be established by an Independent Regulator for English Football. The Government agrees this will help to ensure the future sustainability of our football clubs and the stability of the game. The Government's response to the Review sets out that the tests should be strengthened by enhancing due diligence to check source of funds and the strength of business and financial plans, and that an integrity style test will be introduced. The forthcoming White Paper will provide further details on how the enhanced tests will work, and what will be in scope of the integrity test.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: MG OMD**Emily Thornberry:**[\[20238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the maximum value, inclusive of VAT, is of the contract that her Department has agreed with Manning Gottlieb OMD for the provision of strategic media activation services under the terms of the Crown Commercial Service's media services framework agreement reference RM6123.

Julia Lopez:

The Media Services (RM6123) framework agreement includes the provision of strategic media activation services (LOT 1) and was put in place following a competitive tender in December 2021. Customers can use this framework agreement by putting in place a call off. Manning Gottlieb OMD is the supplier for strategic media activation services (LOT 1).

The framework commenced on 14 December 2021 and is due to end on 13 December 2025.

The maximum contract value of the Department's Call-Off Contract with Manning Gottlieb OMD, under Crown Commercial Services Media Services Framework (RM6123), is £9,600,000 (including VAT). This is a maximum value and there is no commitment to spend.

Digital Technology: Productivity**Angela Rayner:**[\[18919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the research of Professor Bart van Ark from the University of Manchester on the digital economy, whether her Department is taking steps to help ensure that digital technologies can support inclusive productivity.

Chris Philp:

We recognise that, as highlighted in Professor's van Ark's research, digital technology can only fulfil its potential of increasing productivity without widening

societal inequality, when it is made available to everyone. Our recently published Digital Strategy sets out our ambitions for harnessing the power of digital technologies to the benefit of our economy and society as a whole. The Government recognises the barriers associated with digital exclusion, so we are addressing these in particular through our work on digital infrastructure and essential digital skills.

DCMS is backing Project Gigabit with £5 billion, so that hard to reach communities are not left out. To further improve access to the internet, help is available for low income households to access broadband, mobile and landline services through a range of low-cost social tariffs.

To improve access to vital digital skills, the government has introduced a digital entitlement for adults with no or low digital skills. This allows adults wishing to acquire essential digital skills to gain specified digital qualifications, up to level 1, free of charge. Essential Digital Skills Qualifications (EDSQs), introduced alongside the digital entitlement, are based on new national standards which set out the digital skills people need to get on in life and work. We also support the provision of essential digital skills training in community settings through the Adult Education Budget.

DCMS also launched the Digital Skills Council at London Tech Week in June 2022. The Council will bring together industry leaders and training experts from Manchester Digital, Amazon Web Services and Multiverse. Working directly with employers, the council will encourage investment in employer-led training to upskill workforces. The group will also look at ways the industry can inspire the next generation of talent from a wide range of backgrounds to consider a digital career and identify opportunities to accelerate existing good practice within other industry groups.

Public libraries also play an important role in tackling digital exclusion. Around 2,900 public libraries in England provide a trusted network of accessible locations with staff, volunteers, free wifi, public PCs, and assisted digital access to a wide range of digital services. Volunteers and library staff have been trained in digital skills so that they can provide library users with support in using digital applications and services.

■ Film and Television: Carbon Emissions

Dan Carden:

[\[20304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of using the tax system to incentivise low carbon or carbon neutral TV and film production.

Julia Lopez:

This Government believes the creative industries, including TV and film production, have a great opportunity to lead the way in transitioning to a low carbon economy, and welcomes the work delivered by a number of schemes in this area, including BAFTA's 'albert' sustainability initiative.

The Government will continue to facilitate discussions on sustainable production within the industry domestically and internationally, as it did when the UK held the

Presidency of the Council of Europe's European Audiovisual Observatory last year, with the theme 'sustainability'.

The Government keeps all tax reliefs under review and regularly receives proposals for changes to tax reliefs. When considering changes, HM Treasury must ensure they provide support to businesses across the economy in a fair way and represent good value for money for the taxpayer.

■ Gambling

Ronnie Cowan: [\[21230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the forthcoming gambling White Paper will specify that gambling affordability assessments should be put in place independently of the gambling industry.

Chris Philp:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17 May to [Question UIN 338](#).

■ Loneliness

Colleen Fletcher: [\[17954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the levels of loneliness and social isolation in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in each of the last three years; and what (i) financial and (ii) other steps her Department is taking to tackle loneliness and social isolation in those areas.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS collects data on levels of loneliness in England through its annual [Community Life Survey](#), which suggests that prevalence of loneliness has remained similar to pre-COVID levels, with 6% of adults reporting that they are always or often lonely. [Secondary analysis](#) of this data suggests that young adults (aged 16-34) are five times as likely to be lonely compared to people aged 65+ whilst people that experienced mental distress were four times as likely to be lonely than those who did not.

The Department does not routinely collect data on loneliness in local areas. However, DCMS works closely with experts such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to monitor other data sources and build our understanding. In 2021, ONS published the [first estimates of loneliness at a local authority level](#), which suggests 11% of adults over 16 in Coventry feel lonely often or always. However, as the [ONS report](#) states, because of small sample sizes and large confidence intervals, local authorities should not be ranked against each other. Unfortunately we don't have the data available to estimate loneliness levels at a regional or constituency level.

The Government continues to take action to tackle loneliness through public communications to reduce the stigma about loneliness, building the evidence base on loneliness and supporting other government departments and external organisations to consider loneliness in their work.

Copies of the [first](#), [second](#) and [third](#) annual reports on the government's work on tackling loneliness are available in the Libraries of the House and online.

■ Sports

Tom Hunt:

[18067]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact of increasing grassroots sport opportunities on the level of physical activity undertaken in local authority areas.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sport and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health and this government is committed to ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, should have access to and benefit from quality sport and physical activity opportunities.

Since the government launched its sports strategy, Sporting Future in 2015, we have achieved a huge amount.

Sport England has allocated over £1.5 billion to nearly 5,000 grassroots organisations across the UK, increasing opportunities for individuals all over the country to get active.

In 2020 alone, Sport England distributed over £340 million of Exchequer and Lottery funding to support the development of grassroots sport in England, in addition to £100 million through the National Leisure Recovery Fund.

The Government also invests £18 million each year in community sport facilities via the Football Foundation. In partnership with the Football Association and Premier League, this results in £70 million being invested into community sport facilities every year.

The Government has also recently announced a £30 million package to refurbish 4,500 park tennis courts throughout the country in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association.

On top of this, the Prime Minister has committed to delivering the grassroots pitches every community needs and this has already resulted in an investment of £25 million by the government in 2021/22 to upgrade and improve facilities across the UK. At the Spending Review, a further £205 million was pledged over the next three years, targeted at the communities most in need, with the aim of increasing participation in sport among under-represented groups, as part of the government's levelling up plans.

EDUCATION**■ Apprentices: Assessments**

Mr Toby Perkins: [20244]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the costs to business of the changes in End Point Assessment arrangements for degree apprenticeships from September 2022.

Mr Toby Perkins: [20245]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what representations he has received from civil engineering employers on the planned changes in End Point Assessment arrangements for degree apprenticeship from September 2022.

Mr Toby Perkins: [20246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what professions have been made exempt from the new End Point Assessment arrangements from September 2022 as outlined in the recent Degree Apprenticeship Review; and what criteria are used to determine their exemptions.

Mr Toby Perkins: [20247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, in advance of the changes to Degree Apprenticeship End Point Assessment in September 2022, what analysis his Department has conducted on how the new arrangements will assure competence in civil engineering if not undertaken by independent professional engineering institutions.

Alex Burghart:

This is a matter for the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. I have asked its Chief Executive, Jennifer Coupland, to write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Class Sizes

Colleen Fletcher: [17957]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an estimate of the average class size in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England in each of the last five years.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department publishes annual figures on average class sizes in state-funded schools in England. The data is from the January school census and is published in 'schools, pupils and their characteristics' here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

The attachment gives averages for primary and secondary class sizes for schools in Coventry North East from the 2017/18 academic year to the 2021/22 academic year. The department has calculated the figures from the published school level underlying

data. The following link is for a table showing comparable figures for Coventry, the West Midlands and England over the same period: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/e65ecbc6-9bbd-419e-8641-0abc370c7508>.

Attachments:

1. 17957_class_size_2018_to_2022
[17957_average_class_size_from_Jan_2018_to_Jan_2022.pdf]

■ **Free Schools**

Rob Roberts:

[19719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many free schools there are as of 16 June 2022; what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the free schools programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

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

There are 613 open free schools which, based on the latest Ofsted judgements, will create more than 155,000 good and outstanding school places for children when at full capacity. Mainstream primary and secondary free schools are more likely to be rated good or outstanding by Ofsted than state-funded mainstream schools nationally and all open 16 to 19 free schools with an Ofsted judgement are good or outstanding.

The free schools programme remains an important part of the department's plan to level up standards and respond where there is need for more school places.

The department launched a further round of free school applications on 10 June 2022 covering mainstream, special, and alternative provision free schools. The mainstream wave is seeking to approve free schools where there is the greatest need for new school places, prioritising proposals in Education Investment Areas. This will include a targeted number of new academic 16 to 19 free schools to help talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds get to leading universities.

Further information on free school application rounds is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/education/set-up-a-free-school>.

■ **Primary Education: Physical Education and Sports**

Stephen McPartland:

[20250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to confirm Primary PE and Sports Premium funding allocations for young children.

Will Quince:

The department is aware of the importance of giving primary schools as much notice as possible of the funding for the PE and sport premium in order to support its effective use. The department will confirm the level of funding for the PE and sport premium for the 2022/23 academic year in due course.

■ Primary Education: South West**Darren Jones:** [\[18016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an estimate of the average class size in primary schools in (a) North Swindon, (b) South Swindon, (c) Bournemouth East, (d) Bournemouth West, (e) Bristol East, (f) Bristol North West, (g) Bristol South, (h) Bristol West, (i) Exeter, (j) Filton and Bradley Stoke, (k) Kingswood and (l) Stroud constituency in (i) May 1997, (ii) May 2010, (iii) December 2019 and (iv) June 2022.

Darren Jones: [\[18017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an estimate of the average class size in secondary schools in (a) North Swindon, (b) South Swindon, (c) Bournemouth East, (d) Bournemouth West, (e) Bristol East, (f) Bristol North West, (g) Bristol South, (h) Bristol West, (i) Exeter, (j) Filton and Bradley Stoke, (k) Kingswood and (l) Stroud constituency in (i) May 1997, (ii) May 2010, (iii) December 2019 and (iv) June 2022.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department does not hold figures on class sizes for dates throughout the year. Class size is collected annually on January school census day and regarded as a representative sample of class size. The attached tables give average primary and secondary school class sizes as of January 2019 and 2022 for schools in the constituencies listed. We do not hold the data at constituency level for 1997 or 2010.

Attachments:

1. 18016_17_table_2 [18017_secondary_class_sizes.pdf]
2. 18016_18017_table [18016_primary_class_sizes.pdf]

■ Pupils: Exercise and Sports**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[17958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an estimate of the average number of hours per week of (a) sport and (b) other physical activity that was undertaken by pupils in (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in (A) Coventry North East constituency, (B) Coventry, (C) the West Midlands and (D) England in each of the last five years.

Will Quince:

The government is committed to supporting children and young people to be active and achieve the 60 active minutes of activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officer. Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People Survey provides a comprehensive overview of activity levels in children across England aged 5 to 16, and years 1 to 11. This data can be accessed via the latest report, which focused on the 2020/21 academic year, and is available at: <https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives>. The data can be broken down by local authority and region, but not by constituency, and includes data from the 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years.

■ Pupils: Refugees

Peter Gibson:

[\[18060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what language assistance he is providing to (a) schools and (b) colleges to assist them in serving the needs of (i) Afghan and (ii) Ukrainian children.

Mr Robin Walker:

Schools are responsible for ensuring that all of their pupils, including those who are classed as having a first language other than English, can access the full curriculum and have opportunity to achieve their potential.

Through the English as an additional language (EAL) factor in the national funding formula (NFF), schools are allocated funding for pupils who are classed as having EAL and who have started in the state-funded education system in England within the last three years. This equates to an additional £565 per primary school pupil and £1,530 per secondary school pupil in the 2022/23 financial year. The NFF will distribute a total of £410 million through the EAL factor in the current financial year. Schools have flexibility over how they use their overall funding budget to support their EAL pupils, as they are best placed to understand and respond to the particular needs of their pupils.

Ukrainians aged 16 to 19 living in the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme, and the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine) are eligible to enrol as a student in 16 to 19 education providers, although providers may ask to see evidence of their eligibility.

Afghans aged 16 to 19 recognised as having a legal right to reside in UK are immediately entitled to 16 to 19 funding and are therefore able to enrol at 16 to 19 education providers.

16 to 19 education providers include further education colleges, sixth form colleges and school sixth forms. 16 to 19 study programmes can include English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses or other English tuition, depending on the needs of the student.

■ Pupils: Roma

Paul Bristow:

[\[15776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help improve educational attainment by Romani children.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department recognises the issues faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people and understands how schools can make a difference. While some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils perform very well at school, as a group, their attainment and attendance at school is particularly low at every key stage of education.

The department understands that the most significant factor affecting pupil attainment, which cuts across all ethnicities, is economic disadvantage. That is why the department has continued to provide pupil premium funding and has increased the funding to over £2.5 billion in the 2021/22 financial year. The department has also reformed its funding system so that funding is distributed based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics. We have focused our education recovery funding on pupils most in need.

Schools serving pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds are likely to attract funding through additional needs factors in the schools national funding formula (NFF). This specifically includes the mobility factor, English as an additional language (EAL), and deprivation factors.

The NFF allocates 17%, or £6.7 billion of all funding in the 2022/23 financial year through additional needs factors based on deprivation, low prior attainment, EAL, and mobility. The total amount allocated through the deprivation factors in the NFF is increasing by £225 million, or 6.7%, in 2022/23. In addition, the 2022/23 schools supplementary grant will provide significant additional funding for deprivation.

The department wants to ensure all children and young people are able to reach their potential and experience the transformative effect of a high-quality education. We continue to support schools and leaders to respond to the needs of their schools and communities, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children.

■ School Meals: Food Supply

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[11586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has plans to provide support or extra resources to local authorities and schools to mitigate potential pressures on public food supplies due to rising energy, food and labour costs; and what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that that major suppliers can fulfil existing and new contracts for school meal provision.

Will Quince:

The provision of free school meals (FSM) to children who are eligible for them is of the utmost importance to this government. The department recognises the cost pressures that some schools and suppliers may be facing, and as usual are holding regular meetings with other government departments and with food industry representatives, covering a variety of issues including public sector food supplies.

Schools fund benefit-related FSM from their core funding which they receive through the schools block of the dedicated schools grant and 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.

In recognition of cost pressures, after the NFF rates were set, the department received additional funding from HM Treasury for core schools funding in the 2022/23 financial year, which we distributed through a schools supplementary grant. As a result of this additional funding, core schools funding for mainstream schools is

increasing by £2.5 billion in the 2022/23 financial year, compared to last year. We have also given schools the autonomy to agree individual contracts with school food suppliers and caterers, using their increased core funding.

On Tuesday 14 June my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced an increase to the per pupil meal rate for Universal Infant Free School Meals from £2.34 to £2.41. This will be backdated to April 2022.

■ **Schools: Platinum Jubilee 2022**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[18885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many of the Platinum Jubilee books procured for schools to mark the occasion have (a) been earmarked for use as ministerial gifts, (b) been earmarked for delivery, or have been delivered, to schools, (c) were delivered to schools ahead of the half term holiday which included the Jubilee weekend, (d) have since been delivered to schools and (e) remain to be delivered to schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department is due to deliver over 4.6 million copies of 'Queen Elizabeth: A Platinum Jubilee Celebration' to schools in England and Northern Ireland. This represents 4,513,000 copies for schools in England, and 184,541 copies for schools in Northern Ireland.

The department has given 40 books as ministerial gifts. Between 16 May and 20 June 2022, 2,411,000 copies of the book were delivered to schools. 562,000 of these were delivered ahead of the Jubilee weekend. All books have been delivered to schools in Northern Ireland. There are approximately 2,389,000 books still to be delivered to schools in England by 11 July 2022.

The Scottish and Welsh Governments requested that the department run an opt-in process, giving their schools the choice of whether to order books. The number of books required is being finalised. They will be printed over the summer and delivered to schools in September.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Animal and Plant Health Agency: Weybridge**

Dr Neil Hudson:

[\[18113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the National Audit Office's report on Improving the UK's science capability for managing animal diseases, what steps the Government plans to take to (a) support and (b) improve animal disease monitoring and prevention through development and upgrade of the Animal and Plant Health Agency's Weybridge site.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to the strongest possible standards of protection against animal diseases. It is investing £1.4 billion (including £200 million in this

Spending Review period) to secure the long-term future of the Weybridge facility. This substantial investment recognises the essential role of this laboratory, and will enable its excellent scientists to continue to protect the country, boosting our resilience and strengthening our understanding of health risks to, and from, animals and plants.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Energy**

Ruth Jones:

[\[18045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much his Department has spent on energy costs in each of the last three years.

Victoria Prentis:

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
£ 17,145,000	£ 17,121,968	£ 19,179,382

Energies covered in these costs are: electricity, gas, oil, LPG, biomass and any other liquid fuels.

The scope of organisations covered in this data is aligned to the Greening Government Commitments (GGC) as specified by the Annual Report and Account guidance.

It is important to note that changes to the GGC reporting scope mean that the figures for 2021-22 cover a different scope to 2019-20 & 2020-21.

2021-22 scope:

- Core Department
- Forestry Commission (Forestry England)
- The Water Services Regulation Authority
- Animal and Plant Health Agency
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
- Rural Payments Agency
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate
- Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
- Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
- Consumer Council for Water
- Environment Agency
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Marine Management Organisation

- Natural England
- Sea Fish Industry Authority
- Lake District National Park Authority
- Other Defra group bodies and other government departments (Under the major occupier rule, Defra reports the environmental impact of other government departments which occupy its buildings. Also included are some of Defra group Bodies which do not meet the threshold for GGC reporting but are of insufficient materiality to remove from the departmental dataset.)

2019-20 & 2020-21 scope:

- Core Department
- Forestry Commission (Forestry England)
- Animal and Plant Health Agency
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
- Rural Payments Agency
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate
- Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
- Environment Agency
- Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Other Defra group bodies and other government departments

■ Dogs: Electronic Training Aids

Greg Smith:

[18068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May to Question 3747, on what date did his officials become aware that academics his Department commissioned to research electronic training collars for dogs had previously made representations to the Department to ban them.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member back to my answer of 25 May to [PQ 3747](#). In particular, the Government is satisfied that the processes for tendering and considering bids, relating to the research on e-collars in 2007, were conducted in accordance with the rules on government procurement exercises. The Government is also satisfied that the resultant peer-reviewed Defra-commissioned research carried out between 2007 and 2010 is robust.

■ Dogs: Romania**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[18012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the Government's extended ban on the commercial import of dogs also includes the ban of rescue dogs from countries such as Romania.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments have temporarily suspended the commercial import of dogs, cats and ferrets into Great Britain if they originate from or have been dispatched from Belarus, Poland, Romania or Ukraine, until 9 July 2022.

We appreciate the impact that the temporary suspension will have on rescue organisations that operate in these countries. However, this measure is important to protect our biosecurity and the health of pets in this country.

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

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

In particular, there is evidence to suggest that commercial consignments of pet animals from Ukraine are being moved into Poland, Romania and Belarus, including strays, rescue and abandoned animals.

Unlike non-commercial pets accompanying Ukrainian refugees, these animals often have unknown history and disease status which increases the risk of disease spread.

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

This risk has been exacerbated further by serious cases of non-compliance. There is a history of non-compliant movements of rescue animals into Great Britain from this region, which further increases the biosecurity risk.

The Government appreciates the work of genuine rescue and rehoming organisations who work to ensure that unwanted and abandoned animals are given the opportunity to find a forever home while importantly complying with our animal health and welfare legislation. It is important to note that this is a temporary measure which will be reviewed in due course. We would encourage organisations which are temporarily

unable to import rescue dogs, cats, and ferrets into Great Britain to provide help and assistance to animals in situ.

■ Droughts

Rachael Maskell: [\[17024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to identify areas of the UK at risk of drought.

Rachael Maskell: [\[17025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government has an updated drought mitigation strategy.

Rachael Maskell: [\[17026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to use natural resources to mitigate drought in (a) urban communities and (b) rural communities and agriculture.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to a twin track approach to improving water supply resilience as set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the National Infrastructure Strategy. This involves action to reduce water demand alongside investing in new supply infrastructure where necessary.

The Environment Agency's National Framework for Water Resources, published in March 2020, sets out the strategic water needs for England, and all its regions and sectors, up to 2050 and beyond. The Framework sets out how we will reduce demand, halve leakage rates, develop new supply infrastructure, move water to where it's needed, increase the drought resilience of water supplies and reduce the need for drought measures that can harm the environment. The proposed Environment Act 2021 water demand target would make these demand and leakage reductions statutory.

Informed by the National Framework for Water Resources, five regional water resources groups are producing a set of co-ordinated, cross-sector plans. The plans will take account of the Adaptation Committee's Climate Change Risk Assessment, used to inform the Government's National Adaptation Programme. The plans will be consulted on at the end of 2022, with water companies own water resources plans. They will set out how water supply needs are met over at least a 25 year period, further assessing and achieving improved resilience to climate change and droughts.

■ Elephants: Animal Welfare

Layla Moran: [\[15364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to prevent stop tourist companies promoting holidays that support cruel treatment of captive Asian elephants.

Jo Churchill:

This Government takes the welfare of all animals seriously and the Government has been made aware that animals including Asian elephants, that are part of tourist attractions, can be subjected to cruel and brutal training practices to ensure their compliance.

As set out in our Action Plan for Animal Welfare, we are committed to promoting high animal welfare standards, both at home and abroad. We have engaged with the travel industry and other stakeholder organisations, and we support measures which ensure that money from tourists from this country is not channelled towards animal experiences abroad that involve the unacceptable treatment of animals.

The Government is committed to exploring available options to deliver the action plan, including to limit the advertising and offering for sale of these experiences.

■ Fertilisers**Mark Pritchard:**[\[16890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he expects his working group on fertilisers to report; what assessment he has made of the impact of rises in fertiliser prices on farmers in Shropshire; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

On 31 March Minister Prentis hosted the first meeting of the Fertiliser Taskforce with key industry bodies to discuss potential mitigations to the challenges which global supply pressures are causing. On 18 May I hosted the second Taskforce meeting. Ministers will continue to meet with key industry bodies for further Fertiliser Taskforce sessions in the coming months, to help identify and mitigate potential risks. Defra fertiliser blogs on gov.uk from 30 March and 11 May have reported on the Fertiliser Taskforce meetings.

Global gas prices have impacted production of fertilisers internationally and domestically. Some international companies halted or reduced production, and some countries such as China reduced the export of some fertiliser products to protect their domestic demands. However, supply of all fertilisers in the UK has remained available throughout the last 12 months although high prices reduced demand from farmers.

While global fertiliser prices have risen, the supply chain providing imports of fertiliser to the UK has remained dynamic. CF Fertilisers continues to produce ammonium nitrate fertiliser from its plant at Billingham.

Government actions, such as bringing forward half of this year's Basic Payment Scheme payment as an advance injection of cash to farm businesses, will help farmers deal with high fertiliser prices.

We are monitoring the situation closely, including through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group. Defra is in regular contact with key industry figures including the

National Farmers Union, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the Agricultural Industries Confederation.

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[19592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the availability of fertiliser in the last 12 months.

Jo Churchill:

Global gas prices have impacted production of fertilisers internationally and domestically. Some international companies halted or reduced production, and some countries, such as China, reduced the export of some fertiliser products to protect their domestic demands. However, supply of all fertilisers in the UK has remained available throughout the last 12 months although high prices reduced demand from farmers.

While global fertiliser prices have risen, the supply chain providing imports of fertiliser to the UK has remained dynamic. CF Fertilisers continues to produce ammonium nitrate fertiliser from its plant at Billingham. New season fertiliser prices since May have fallen from their peak caused by high global gas prices, allowing many farmers to purchase fertiliser and take-up was extremely good.

Government actions, such as bringing forward half of this year's Basic Payment Scheme payment as an advance injection of cash to farm businesses, will help farmers deal with high fertiliser prices. In addition, the Government announced on 30 March a number of actions to help mitigate the current issues and support farmers and growers ahead of the next growing season. These included changes to statutory guidance to the Environment Agency on how they should implement the "Farming Rules for Water" to provide clarity to farmers on how they can use slurry and other manures during autumn and winter to meet agronomic needs; increased grants funding to help farmers and growers boost research and development; and a delay to changes to the use of urea by at least a year. When the urea restrictions are introduced, they will be related to the use of ammonia inhibitors rather than a complete ban.

We are monitoring the situation closely, including through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group. Defra is in regular contact with key industry figures including the National Farmers Union, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the Agricultural Industries Confederation.

■ Food: Carbon Dioxide

Dr Neil Hudson:

[\[18111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the resilience of carbon dioxide supplies for the food and drink sectors.

Dr Neil Hudson:

[\[18112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the resilience of carbon dioxide supplies for use in abattoirs.

Victoria Prentis:

Towards the end of 2021, approximately 80% of UK carbon dioxide (CO₂) was sourced from a single UK producer. The market has now diversified and reliance on a single producer has now diminished. Currently, only 42% of supply comes from this producer, with the rest of CO₂ supply met by other producers ranging from biofuel plants, anaerobic digestion plants (AD) and European imports. In addition, the Government is supporting the further diversification of the market through work to ensure that CO₂ from AD plants meets food and beverage or industrial grade standards.

All major slaughterhouses were surveyed earlier this year on their CO₂ resilience. The majority of these slaughterhouses have mitigation strategies in place or do not use CO₂. The Government continues to analyse the situation to ensure that UK food and drink businesses and abattoirs, are able to secure CO₂.

Food: Waste**Rachael Maskell:**[\[17974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help encourage (a) the public and (b) businesses to limit food waste.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is investing £2.6 million this last year to combat food waste. That includes funding the Waste and Resources Action Plan (WRAP) and through them we work to address food waste in households and supply chains.

We support the Courtauld 2030 Commitment, a voluntary agreement with industry to tackle food waste, which includes a target of a 50% per capita reduction in food waste by 2030 against a 2007 baseline. Action through Courtauld includes working with businesses to measure and reduce food waste through the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap and the key tool to Target Measure and Act on waste. The Government is currently conducting a consultation on options to improve food waste reporting by large businesses as measuring leads to a reduction in waste.

[Improved food waste reporting by large food businesses in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improved-food-waste-reporting-by-large-food-businesses-in-england)

Courtauld signatories also play a key role in providing consumers with support in reducing food waste at home for instance through offering storage advice and appropriate labelling.

<https://wrap.org.uk/taking-action/food-drink/initiatives/courtauld-commitment>

The Government also funds WRAP's citizen campaigns such as Food Waste Action Week and Love Food Hate Waste, which aim to raise public awareness of food waste and the ways in which citizens can reduce it. This includes advice on how to shop for, store and cook foods in ways that minimise waste.

<https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

New s45 of the Environmental Protection Act (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) will require all local authorities in England to arrange for the collection of food waste for recycling. This must always be collected separately from residual waste and dry recyclable materials so that it can be recycled. Research has shown that helping people to understand what they throw away can help them to cut down on food waste. Dates for the requirement to introduce food waste collections from households will be published shortly.

■ Package Holidays: Animal Welfare

Alex Cunningham:

[\[17932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a domestic ban on the (a) advertising and (b) offering for sale of attractions, activities or experiences abroad that involve (i) elephant rides and (ii) other forms of exploitation of animals.

John McNally:

[\[17967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to introduce a ban on the domestic (a) advertising and (b) sale of wild animal experiences, including elephant rides overseas.

Henry Smith:

[\[19607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will introduce a ban on the domestic (a) advertising and (b) sale of (i) elephant rides and (ii) other wild animal experiences overseas.

Jo Churchill:

This Government takes the welfare of all animals seriously and the Government has been made aware that animals including Asian elephants, that are part of tourist attractions, can be subjected to cruel and brutal training practices to ensure their compliance.

As set out in our Action Plan for Animal Welfare, we are committed to promoting high animal welfare standards, both at home and abroad. We have engaged with the travel industry and other stakeholder organisations, and we support measures which ensure that money from tourists from this country is not channelled towards animal experiences abroad that involve the unacceptable treatment of animals.

The Government is committed to exploring available options to deliver the action plan, including to limit the advertising and offering for sale of these experiences.

■ Packaging: Recycling

Fleur Anderson:

[\[19004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring manufacturers to show in plain English on all forms of product packaging whether and in what way that packaging can be recycled.

Jo Churchill:

I would direct the hon. Member to the recently published response to consultation on Extended Producer Responsibility, where the Government set out its intention to introduce clear mandatory recyclability labelling on all packaging.

Public Footpaths: Christchurch**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[17863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Notice by the Secretary of State under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe, published on 6 April 2022, for what reason he made a decision on the route of the coastal path between Mudeford and Hengistbury Head inconsistent with the recommendation of the Planning Inspector; and what assessment he made of the potential (a) adequacy and (b) effectiveness of the ferry service that had been proposed to form part of that coastal path.

Rebecca Pow:

The Planning Inspector concluded that Natural England's proposals do not fail to strike a fair balance in respect of any of the grounds raised in objections to the route between Mudeford and Hengistbury. The Inspector suggested that consideration be given to a modification to make the Christchurch Harbour route a formal alternative route and the ferry service the main route, thereby alleviating the concerns of objectors. The Secretary of State gave due consideration to this option, as per the Planning Inspector's recommendation, but decided against adopting it.

The ferry service is seasonal and would not provide a continuous route for the England Coast Path. Moreover, the route around Christchurch Harbour will exclusively use existing paths and deliver significant recreational value. Where objections to the Christchurch Harbour route were submitted, the route will follow a public right of way and the land falling within the coastal margin is existing common land; therefore, there will be no material change as a result of the establishment of the England Coast Path.

Overall, following careful consideration, the Secretary of State determined that a route around Christchurch Harbour is consistent with the coastal access duty in the 2009 Act, which sets out the desirability of minimising interruptions to the route, and that the proposed route also follows the approach described in Natural England's approved Coastal Access Scheme.

Waste Management**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[18820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans to create a fit and proper person test for people operating waste management companies.

Jo Churchill:

The requirement to demonstrate competence for waste site permits is well established.

In 2019 the Government strengthened the regulators' assessment and enforcement of operator competence to raise the standard of competence across all permitted waste sites. This included expanding the list of convictions to be taken into account when assessing permit applications to include, for example, offences related to organised crime and violent or threatening behaviour as well offences relating to fraud and tax evasion.

The Government also recently consulted on reform of the waste carrier, broker, dealer regime and expect to publish the response in due course.

Waste: Crime**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[18816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to assess the cost of waste crime to the UK economy.

Jo Churchill:

The Environmental Services Association (ESA) estimates the cost of waste crime to the English economy in the 2018/19 financial year at £924 million. Scaled up to UK-level, the cost is estimated to be a little over £1 billion. The work done on behalf of ESA uses data produced by sources including HMRC, the Environment Agency (EA) and Defra, as well as EA analysis into costs and impacts of waste crime.

We have already taken action by introducing new powers to stop illegal waste sites posing a risk to the environment, including the ability to lock up sites and to force rogue operators to clean up all their waste. Building on this, measures in the Environment Act 2021 give agencies stronger powers of entry and access to evidence in prosecuting waste crimes. We have also set up the Joint Unit for Waste Crime to disrupt serious and organised waste crime and reduce its impact.

Our electronic waste tracking reforms will make it harder than ever to mis-identify waste or dispose of it inappropriately. Planned changes to the Carriers, Brokers and Dealers licensing regime will modernise licensing and make it even harder for rogue operators to escape detection. We will also soon publish our plans for reform of the exemptions regime, removing opportunities for criminals to abuse the system.

Water Supply**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[17959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the amount of water lost through leakage in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last three years.

Rebecca Pow:

The most recent leakage data water companies reported to the Environment Agency is for the financial year ending March 2021. The reported data is at water company level. Coventry is served by Severn Trent Water, which also provides water services to wider parts of the West Midlands. South Staffordshire water also supplies water to customers in parts of the West Midlands.

Reported leakage for Severn Trent Water for the last three years in millions of litres per day (Ml/d) is as follows:

- 2018-19, 417.8 ml/d;
- 2019-20, 398.8 ml/d;
- 2020-21, 410.2 ml/d.

Reported leakage for South Staffordshire Water for the last three years in millions of litres per day (Ml/d) is as follows:

- 2018-19, 70.5 Ml/d;
- 2019-20, 68.9 Ml/d;
- 2020-21, 65.5 Ml/d.

Reported leakage for England for the last three years in millions of litres per day (ml/d) is as follows:

- 2018-19, 2969.8 ml/d;
- 2019-20, 2772.6 ml/d;
- 2020-21, 2829.1 ml/d.

The Government had set clear expectations that water companies should cut their leakage by 50% by 2050, based on 2018 levels.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Colombia: Human Rights****Lloyd Russell-Moyle:****[18973]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Colombian counterpart on human rights in that country.

Vicky Ford:

Colombia is an FCDO Human Rights Priority Country and UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government.

Most recently, Lord Ahmad discussed human rights and the security situation in Colombia in his meeting with President Duque on 12 April.

■ Ghana: Politics and Government

Ruth Jones:

[\[18035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the political and security situation in Ghana.

Vicky Ford:

Ghana has a strong reputation for democratic rule. Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic there have been eight successful elections in Ghana. Through the Economic Community of West African States Ghana has led the response to recent coups elsewhere in the region - including in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso. The deteriorating situation across West Africa and the Sahel is concerning and we are committed to strengthening our defence partnership with Ghana as the Prime Minister and President Akufo-Addo set out in their meeting in April. In my own visit to Ghana last month I took forward those discussions, and we look forward to further progress at the upcoming UK-Ghana Security Dialogue.

■ Human Trafficking

Jim Shannon:

[\[17939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking with international counterparts to tackle human trafficking.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government continues to provide international leadership to end modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 by 2030. Under the UK's 2021 presidency of the G7, leaders committed to work collaboratively to eradicate forced labour, protect victims and improve transparency in global supply chains. The UK Migration and Modern Slavery Envoy, with the support of the FCDO, continues to coordinate these efforts internationally with multilateral and bilateral partners to address the key drivers of human trafficking.

The crisis in Ukraine has created an increased risk of human trafficking, in response we have allocated £220 million of humanitarian aid with a focus on protecting and supporting the most vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls. We continue to work with international partners to promote a coordinated UN and multilateral response and to drive forward our priorities on human trafficking. The UK Government will publish the review of the Modern Slavery Strategy in the coming months. This will set out our priorities over the coming years in tackling human trafficking internationally.

■ India: Humanitarian Situation

Ruth Jones:

[\[18049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made a recent assessment of the humanitarian situation in Uttar Pradesh.

Vicky Ford:

Protests this month have erupted in parts of Uttar Pradesh (UP) over Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson Nupur Sharma and former Delhi BJP media head Naveen Kumar Jindal's remarks on Prophet Muhammed. The police have arrested several suspects in connection with stone-pelting and illegal gatherings during protests. Following the protests, UP authorities have demolished the houses of some of the alleged Muslim protestors in what is being termed 'bulldozer politics', using violation of planning law as the justification. The demolitions triggered condemnation from opposition leaders and sections of the media for targeting the minority Muslim community, though many in India have also welcomed such measures. PM Modi and senior members of his Government have yet to make any public comment on these events.

■ **India: Muslims****Ruth Jones:**[\[18048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made recent representations to the Indian Government on the safety and security of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh.

Vicky Ford:

We are aware of recent reports about the situation in Uttar Pradesh and we condemn any instances of discrimination because of religion or belief, regardless of the country or faith involved. The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all and promoting respect and tolerance between different religious and non-religious communities. We engage with India on a range of human rights matters and where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at Ministerial level.

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions will continue to follow reports of violence and discrimination closely, while recognising that these are matters for India. It is for the Indian Government to address the concerns of all Indian citizens, regardless of faith.

■ **Jagtar Singh Johal****Catherine West:**[\[18001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will raise the case of Jagtar Singh Johal in her next discussion with her Indian counterpart.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government takes all allegations of human rights violations very seriously, and we regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India at official and Ministerial level. The Prime Minister raised Mr Johal's case with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 April as part of a wide-ranging discussion. The Foreign Secretary last raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Dr

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 31 March 2022. Consular staff have attended a number of hearings in Mr Johal's case in an observer capacity, and did so on 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9 June. This Government will continue to look to raise our concerns about Mr Johal's case at all appropriate opportunities.

■ **Mozambique: Climate Change**

Ruth Jones:

[\[18038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with her international counterparts on the aid funding required to help Mozambique tackle climate change.

Vicky Ford:

The PM's regional COP26 Envoy spoke to the Mozambican PM, Deputy Foreign Minister, Environment Minister, and Finance Minister about climate change and Mozambique's finance needs last year. The British High Commission in Maputo is co-leading a discussion between development partners and the Government of Mozambique to develop and implement a climate finance strategy to enable the country to significantly enhance its access to, and use of, climate finance from a diverse range of sources.

■ **Somaliland: Humanitarian Situation**

Ruth Jones:

[\[18036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her international counterparts on the humanitarian situation in Somaliland.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation across the Horn of Africa. Somaliland declared a drought emergency on 13 January 2022, indicating 810,000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

The UK is providing urgently-needed humanitarian assistance to those most affected across Somalia, including Somaliland. We acted early in our response to the humanitarian situation, including initial humanitarian funding of £14.5 million. In April, 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 which mobilised roughly US \$400 million in new funding. I [Minister Ford] announced an additional £25 million for famine prevention across Somalia. This raises our total humanitarian spend in Somalia, including Somaliland, to £39.5 million in 2022 alone. We continue to engage closely with our international partners to increase life-saving support from the international community. I have written to World Bank President Malpass this week urging further action on food security in the Horn of Africa.

■ Sudan: Political Prisoners**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[17905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an estimate of the number of political prisoners in detention in Sudan as of 14 June 2022.

Vicky Ford:

Verifiable data on the number of detainees in Sudan is hard to establish, but has clearly formed a major part of the suppression of opposition and dissent by the military. The decision of the Sudanese authorities to lift the State of Emergency and release a number of political detainees is a welcome and important step in creating a favourable environment for political talks. We are, however, pressing the authorities to take further steps and to release all those arbitrarily detained. Most recently, we made clear the need for the authorities to ensure all civil and political freedoms are respected and an end to violence against protestors at the UN Security Council on 3 June. We will also use the current session of the UN Human Rights Council to maintain attention on the situation in Sudan, including the issue of detainees.

■ Zimbabwe: Climate Change**Ruth Jones:** [\[18037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with her international counterparts on the aid funding required to help Zimbabwe tackle climate change.

Vicky Ford:

The Minister for Africa spoke to President Mnangagwa on 1 November 2021 at COP26 where she discussed bilateral relations, human rights, sanctions, elections and climate change. The UK has welcomed Zimbabwe's commitment to a 40% reduction in green-house gas emissions by 2030 and looks forward to engaging on its implementation. At COP26 Zimbabwe also endorsed the Glasgow Declaration on Forestry and Land Use, committing to end deforestation by 2030, and the Green Grids Initiative - a global coalition focused on increasing the production of clean energy.

The UK is working with the Government of Zimbabwe to create an enabling market environment that will attract British investment in clean renewable energy. The UK is also supporting Zimbabwe to deal with the effects of climate change through programmes focusing on water and energy infrastructure and climate-smart agriculture.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:**[\[19615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people diagnosed with orthorexia in the latest period for which data is available.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific estimate has been made, as data on the number of people with orthorexia is not collected centrally.

■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Labelling****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[19002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Alcohol Health Alliance UK's report Contents unknown: How alcohol labelling still fails consumers, published in June 2022, whether his Department plans to take steps to help improve consumers' knowledge of the sugar and nutritional content of alcoholic drinks.

Kenny MacAskill:[\[19003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Alcohol Health Alliance UK's report Contents unknown: How alcohol labelling still fails consumers, published in June 2022, if his Department will take steps to ensure that all alcoholic drink labels include up to date guidelines from the Chief Medical Officers on low risk drinking.

Maggie Throup:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 13 June 2022 to Question [14633](#).

Wayne David:[\[19579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of requiring alcohol product labels to display the Chief Medical Officers' low-risk drinking guidelines.

Maggie Throup:

The Government has worked with the alcohol industry to ensure that alcohol labels reflect the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs) low risk drinking guidelines for drinks produced after 1 September 2019.

We have announced the intention to consult on whether to introduce mandatory calorie labelling on prepacked alcohol and alcohol sold in on-trade businesses such as pubs and restaurants. The consultation will also seek views on whether the provision of the UK CMOs' low risk drinking guidelines should be mandatory or continue on a voluntary basis.

■ Alcoholism: Rehabilitation

Paul Bristow: [\[18072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including (a) Nalmefene and (b) Naltrexone as part of an alcohol harm reduction strategy.

Maggie Throup:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends nalmefene as an option for reducing alcohol consumption for people with alcohol dependence who have a high drinking risk level, without physical withdrawal symptoms and who do not require immediate detoxification. NICE also recommends oral naltrexone for harmful drinkers and people with mild dependence who have not responded to psychological interventions alone, and for people with moderate and severe dependence, following successful withdrawal. NICE recommends that these medications should only be prescribed along with psychosocial intervention.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities is developing United Kingdom guidelines for the clinical management of harmful drinking and alcohol dependence, which will include guidance on prescribing nalmefene and naltrexone. Publication of these guidelines is expected later this year.

■ Ambulance Services: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[19638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of ambulance waiting times on (a) mortality rates and (b) other clinical outcomes for patients in York.

Rachael Maskell: [\[19639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average time is between first contacting an ambulance and an ambulance arriving for people in York who have experienced (a) a myocardial infarction or (b) a stroke.

Rachael Maskell: [\[19640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the average amount of time between an ambulance arriving at York hospital and that ambulance crew handing over a patient to the hospital staff.

Rachael Maskell: [\[19641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made a recent assessment of (a) the potential merits of providing more emergency treatments to patients before they reach A&E and (b) the potential impact of that approach on patient outcomes.

Edward Argar:

No assessment of the impact of ambulance waiting times in York has been made.

The average time between first contacting an ambulance and an ambulance arriving

for people in York who have experienced a myocardial infarction or a stroke is not collected centrally. Strokes and myocardial infarctions are typically triaged as Category 2 'Emergency' calls. The average ambulance response time for Category 2 calls in Yorkshire for May 2022 was 32 minutes and 42 seconds.

No estimate of the average time between an ambulance arriving at York Hospital and the crew handing over a patient to the hospital staff has been made. This information is not centrally collected. No recent national assessment of providing more emergency treatments to patients prior to arrival in accident and emergency has been made.

■ Ambulance Services: Yorkshire and the Humber

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[14591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average ambulance response time was in (a) Barnsley, (b) South Yorkshire and (c) Yorkshire Ambulance Service Area in each year since 2010.

Edward Argar:

Ambulance response times in Barnsley and South Yorkshire are not held centrally, as data is collected at regional ambulance trust level.

The following table shows the mean average ambulance response time in hours, minutes and seconds for Yorkshire Ambulance Service from the introduction of the national response time standard in September 2017 to May 2022 in each incident category. Average ambulance response times were not collected under the previous 'Category A' national response time standards.

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	CATEGORY 3	CATEGORY 4	
September 2017 to March 2018	0:07:48	0:23:57	0:55:04	1:20:41
2018/19	0:07:21	0:20:26	0:50:28	1:08:59
2019/20	0:07:12	0:20:34	0:48:09	0:52:33
2020/21	0:07:38	0:20:36	0:47:23	1:04:06
2021/22	0:09:16	0:36:06	1:47:39	2:24:48
April to May 2022	0:09:35	0:42:03	1:59:08	2:26:57

Source: NHS Ambulance Quality Indicators.

■ **Batten Disease: Health Education**

Alexander Stafford: [\[19032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to raise awareness of Batten disease (a) in general and (b) since Batten Disease Awareness Day on 9 June 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

While we have no specific plans in relation to Batten Disease Awareness Day, the 2021 UK Rare Diseases Framework aims to improve the awareness of all rare diseases. England's Rare Diseases Action Plan, published on 28 February 2022, sets out specific actions to increase knowledge and improve the resources available to health care professionals. This includes education and training programmes and developing innovative digital resources, integrated into existing digital platforms or websites to provide easily accessible information on rare diseases.

■ **Batten Disease: Research**

Alexander Stafford: [\[19034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken steps to support research going into curing (a) Batten Disease and (b) other Neuronal Ceroid Lipofuscinoses.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department funds research into rare diseases such as neuronal ceroid lipofuscinoses, including Batten disease, through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). Applications for funding are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards made based on the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. In the past five years, the NIHR has awarded £105,000 for a study into Batten disease. In addition, the NIHR has supported the delivery of 10 studies relating to Batten disease or other neuronal ceroid lipofuscinoses via its infrastructure. The UK Rare Diseases Framework also addresses research, with each nation committed to publishing an action plan by the end of 2022.

■ **Bowel Cancer: Diagnosis**

Feryal Clark: [\[18100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve early-stage diagnosis of bowel cancer.

Maria Caulfield:

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out the ambition for 75% of cancers to be diagnosed at stage 1 or 2 by 2028, including bowel cancer. NHS England and NHS Improvement are extending the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme to include 50 to 59 year olds in a phased approach over four years, which commenced in 2021/22 for those aged 56 years old.

The call for evidence to inform the forthcoming 10 Year Cancer Plan contained a section on the early diagnosis of cancer and officials are currently analysing the responses received. The Plan will set out how we will improve cancer services and further details will be available in due course.

■ **Bowel Cancer: Screening**

Feryal Clark:

[\[18102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all hospitals are offering genetic testing for bowel cancer patients for Lynch syndrome.

Maria Caulfield:

Genomic testing for patients in the National Health Service in England is delivered through seven NHS Genomic Laboratory Hubs (GLHs), as outlined in the National Genomic Test Directory. The Directory sets out the eligibility criteria for patients, the genomic targets to be tested and the method used. This includes genomic testing for Lynch syndrome for eligible bowel cancer patients, in accordance with the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidance.

NICE advises that all patients with bowel cancer should be tested for Lynch syndrome. NHS England and NHS Improvement have published a framework for testing and surveillance and provided funding to Cancer Alliances. NHS England and NHS Improvement's Genomics Unit is supporting the implementation of testing pathways for Lynch syndrome, identifying champions in every colorectal multidisciplinary team and delivering training to cancer teams. Infrastructure to allow patients with Lynch syndrome to be enrolled into the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme is also being established.

■ **Breast Cancer: Plastic Surgery**

Liz Twist:

[\[18013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time for breast reconstruction has been since March 2020.

Edward Argar:

This information is not held in the format requested as Hospital Episode Statistics data is collected by financial year. In 2020/21, the mean average waiting time for breast reconstruction between a decision to admit and admission to hospital was 209 days, with an average median waiting time of 140 days. Provisional data for 2021/22 shows that the mean average waiting time was 256 days, with a median average of 132 days.

■ **Breast Cancer: Screening**

Elliot Colburn:

[\[17138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 March 2022 to Question 146652 on Breast Cancer: Screening, what steps his

Department plans to take this year to increase uptake of breast screening in areas and amongst communities with historically lower levels of uptake.

Maria Caulfield:

In 2022/23, National Health Service regional commissioners will work with Cancer Alliances and charities to develop regional uptake improvement plans. This will include incorporating the lessons learned from the successful COVID-19 vaccination programme in achieving a high uptake among disadvantaged communities.

■ **Cancer: Health Services**

Feryal Clark:

[\[18092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the Health Disparities White Paper will address disparities in capacity between cancer services.

Maria Caulfield:

The health disparities white paper will review the factors which influence health disparities. We will also publish a 10 Year Cancer Plan later this year, which will address the disparities in cancer care. Further information on the white paper and the Plan will be confirmed in due course.

■ **Care Workers and Nurses: Vacancies**

John McDonnell:

[\[14407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Royal College of Nursing report entitled Nursing Under Unsustainable Pressure: Staffing for Safe and Effective Care, published on 6 June 2020, that (a) 82 per cent of respondents from nursing and midwifery staff across the UK said there was a shortfall of one or more registered nurses on their last shift and (b) 63 per cent said there was a shortfall of one or more health care support workers; and what steps he plans to take to tackle those shortfalls.

Edward Argar:

Local National Health Service trusts are responsible for managing staffing levels and for recruiting the appropriate number of health professionals required to meet local service need. We have committed to deliver 50,000 more nurses and ensure the NHS is on a trajectory to a sustainable long-term supply. In March 2022, there were more than 30,000 additional nurses, compared to September 2019. Since 2020, nursing students have been eligible for a non-repayable training grant of a minimum of £5,000. Additional funding is also available for childcare costs, accommodation costs and travel costs.

■ **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[18974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his written ministerial statement of 12 May 2022 on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, if he will take steps to ensure that representatives of the British Association of

Clinicians in ME/CFS are consulted on policy proposals in the context of its expertise in assessing and managing patients; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

Officials are working with a range of stakeholders, including the British Association of Clinicians in ME/CFS, to develop a cross-Government delivery plan on myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome.

■ **Coronavirus: Medical Treatments**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[17910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that sufficient antiviral supply is in place for (a) pharmacies and (b) GPs to provide a test to treat scheme that enables people in vulnerable and elderly groups for whom vaccines might be less effective to get access to effective treatment quickly after testing positive for covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

The Government has secured a supply of 4.98 million patient courses of two oral COVID-19 antiviral treatments, nirmatrelvir + ritonavir and molnupiravir. At present, those in the highest risk patient cohort who test positive for the virus can directly access antivirals and free lateral flow device testing through the integrated triage and treatment service delivered by the COVID Medicines Delivery Units (CMDUs). This patient cohort includes people at the highest risk from severe disease progression, including those who cannot take a vaccine for medical reasons and those for whom vaccines may be less effective. COVID-19 antivirals cannot currently be accessed via primary care settings. Any decisions on the longer-term deployment of COVID-19 treatments beyond the highest risk groups through CMDUs will be subject to the outcomes of the PANORAMIC study on the effectiveness of antivirals in the United Kingdom population.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[17909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to roll out covid-19 boosters in autumn 2022 using an age and risk factor priority scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

On 19 May 2022, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on an autumn COVID-19 vaccine booster programme. This advised that a booster vaccine should be offered in autumn 2022 to residents in a care home for older adults and staff; frontline health and social care workers; all those 65 years old and over; and adults aged 16 to 64 years old in a clinical risk group. Vaccination of other groups and definitions of clinical risk groups remain under consideration within the JCVI's ongoing review. The Government will consider the JCVI's final recommendations for the autumn booster programme later this year.

■ Dental Services: West Sussex**Nick Gibb:** [\[18761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of dentists in West Sussex offering NHS dental services in the latest period for which figures are available.

Nick Gibb: [\[18762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of dentists in West Sussex accepting patients for NHS dental services in the latest period for which figures are available.

Maria Caulfield:

In 2020/21, the latest period for which figures are available, there were 527 dentists with National Health Service activity in the NHS West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group. To improve information on the number of NHS dentists accepting patients, including in West Sussex, we have written to dental practices to ensure that this information is updated via NHS.UK.

■ Depressive Illnesses: Nutrition**Jim Shannon:** [\[18904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of encouraging people diagnosed with depression to adopt a Mediterranean diet.

Maggie Throup:

Mental health outcomes are considered in the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's risk assessments, depending on the evidence base. The Department has no further plans to assess the impact of any dietary measures to prevent or treat depression as there is currently insufficient evidence to attribute mental health outcomes to any individual dietary pattern.

The Government promotes a healthy balanced diet, as depicted in the Eatwell Guide, for maintaining general health and wellbeing and for reducing the risk of diet-related diseases. While there is no single Mediterranean diet, such diets tend to include higher intakes of vegetables, fruit, legumes, cereals, fish and monounsaturated fatty acids; lower intakes of saturated fat, dairy products and meat. This dietary pattern broadly aligns with the Eatwell Guide.

■ Free School Meals and Healthy Start Scheme**Caroline Lucas:** [\[13088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 May 2022 to Question 7962 on Healthy Start Scheme, if he is considering other measures to cover the gap between the end of eligibility to Healthy Start and the start of free school meals; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

The Department is not considering other measures to cover the period between the end of eligibility for Healthy Start and the start of free school meals.

Health Professions: Cancer**Sarah Olney:**[\[18006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 26 April to Question 155729, how the additional £50 million will be invested to expand the cancer and diagnostic workforce; and what proportion of the funding will be allocated to (a) support and (b) grow the breast imaging and diagnostic cancer workforce.

Edward Argar:

The additional funding will contribute to the expansion of postgraduate medical training for cancer-related medical professions, such as pathologists and histopathologists, clinical radiologists and oncologists. Individual budgets for each area will be determined by Health Education England's business planning in due course.

Health Professions: Migrant Workers**Daisy Cooper:**[\[18063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to e-petition 604472, Reduce indefinite leave to remain fees from £2389 to £243 for health workers, whether he has had discussions with the Home Secretary on reducing the indefinite leave to remain fees for health and social care workers from £2389 to £243.

Edward Argar:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly discusses the immigration system with the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in particular the impact of immigration regulations and fees on those seeking to work in the health and care sectors. The Government is considering the findings of the Migration Advisory Committee's report into Adult Social Care and Immigration, published on 27 April 2022, and a response to the recommendations will be published in due course.

Health: Air Pollution**Feryal Clark:**[\[18108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs about reducing levels of air pollution in the context of the Environment Act 2021.

Maggie Throup:

We have ongoing discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on reducing air pollution and establishing new air quality targets through the Environment Act 2021.

■ Junior Doctors: Conditions of Employment and Pay

Thangam Debonnaire: [\[15732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to meet with representatives of junior doctors to discuss their working conditions and pay.

Edward Argar:

We have regular meetings with representatives of the British Medical Association, including through the quarterly Social Partnership Forum. Junior doctors are currently in a four-year collectively agreed pay and contract reform deal from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023. Through the NHS People Plan and People Promise we are modernising National Health Service working cultures to ensure that the NHS is an attractive place to work. This includes a focus on staff health and wellbeing, more support for flexible working and a commitment to tackling inequality.

■ Kidney Cancer

Laura Trott: [\[14640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to support the development of NICE guidelines and a quality standard for kidney cancer.

Edward Argar:

There are no current plans for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to develop a guideline or quality standard on kidney cancer. However, NICE has recommended a number of medicines for the treatment of renal cell carcinoma through its technology appraisal programme, which are now routinely available to National Health Service patients. NICE has also made recommendations on the referral of people patients with possible symptoms of renal cancer for further investigation in its guideline on suspected cancer. Where a NICE guideline or quality standard does not exist, clinicians should take into account other sources of clinical guidance.

■ Long Covid: Children

Stephen Morgan: [\[19673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to increase funding for research on children suffering from long covid.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). We have invested more than £50 million into research projects for Post-COVID-19 Syndrome. Of this £38.6 million has been allocated through two specific research calls. The first of these was jointly funded by the NIHR and UK Research and Innovation, with approximately £1.36 million awarded to the CLoCk Study, led by University College London, examining the long term effects of COVID-19 infection in children and young people. The NIHR welcomes funding

applications for research into any aspect of human health, including Post COVID-19 Syndrome in children.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Crispin Blunt: [\[18757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason his Department took more than five months to reply to correspondence from the hon. Member for Reigate sent on 5 December 2021 on behalf of a constituent regarding student nurse placement hours.

Edward Argar:

In 2021, the Department received over 43,500 items of correspondence – an increase of almost four times compared to 2019. While we endeavour to reply to cases within 20 working days, the increased volumes of correspondence have led to backlog of cases, which officials are addressing as quickly as possible. We are committed to restoring our response times for correspondence to pre-pandemic levels.

Rosie Cooper: [\[18852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 20 April 2022 regarding continence care, reference ZA59501.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 June 2022]: We replied to the hon. Member on 21 June 2022.

■ **Mental Health Act 1983**

Tony Lloyd: [\[17876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations he received on the needs of children and young people during public consultations on the White Paper on Reforming the Mental Health Act.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government consulted on the proposals for legislation made by the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act in 2018, including the white paper 'Reforming the Mental Health Act', which received more than 1,700 responses. Of the responses, 1,449 were used in the qualitative analysis, of which 1,119 responses were received from individuals. This included 74 from people aged under 25 years old; 1,020 from people aged 25 years old and over; and 25 respondents did not specify their age. There were also 330 responses received on behalf of organisations, including those representing the needs of children and young people.

Tony Lloyd: [\[17877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to address the needs of children and young people as part of the proposed reform of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Gillian Keegan:

A draft Mental Health Bill will be published shortly. The legislative reforms aim to give greater autonomy to children and young people to inform their care and treatment and ensure that inpatients, whether or not they are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, are given improved support to access their rights under the Act.

Monkeypox: Vaccination**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[18972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 6877 on Monkeypox: Vaccination, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of offering a monkeypox vaccine to at risk groups during a routine sexual health check-up.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency regularly reviews vaccine eligibility. The Imvanex vaccine is currently offered pre-exposure to healthcare workers who are at high-risk of coming into contact with the virus. This includes individuals working in sexual health services and high consequence infectious disease units. The vaccine is also offered post-exposure to higher categories of close contacts of confirmed cases, ideally within four days of exposure. This can be extended to 14 days for those in high-risk groups, including gay and bisexual men, men who have sex with men, pregnant women, young children, the elderly and those who are immunosuppressed.

NHS England: Staff**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**[\[18808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to consult with health and social care (a) organisations and (b) charities on the forthcoming NHS England workforce strategy.

Edward Argar:

We intend to engage with a range of stakeholders in developing this plan, including health and social care organisations and charities where appropriate.

Peter Aldous:[\[18895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to consult with representatives of health and social care (a) organisations and (b) charities on the forthcoming NHS England workforce strategy.

Edward Argar:

We intend to engage with a range of stakeholders in developing this plan, including health and social care organisations and charities where appropriate.

■ NHS: Car Allowances

Dan Jarvis:

[20253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent conversations with the National Joint Council on the potential impact of increasing the standard mileage and fuel rates for NHS workers in line with the increased cost of petrol.

Edward Argar:

We have had no recent discussions with the National Joint Council. The reimbursement of travel costs for National Health Service workers is a matter for the NHS Staff Council, the partnership of employers and NHS trades unions. This is addressed in the NHS Terms and Conditions, jointly agreed by employers and the NHS trades unions.

The current rate for staff who use their vehicles to make journeys in the performance of their duties is 56p per mile, which is above HM Revenue and Customs' approved mileage rate of 45p per mile. This rate reduces after 3,500 miles to 20p per mile. The NHS Terms and Conditions sets out the process for reviewing the rate of reimbursement every six months, which includes reviewing fluctuations in fuel prices.

The NHS Staff Council has recently published a joint statement on mileage, where the Council commits to write to the Department on the scope and the remit to undertake a possible review. The joint statement is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/009%20NHS%20SC%20-%20Joint%20statement%20on%20reimbursement%20of%20travel%20costs%20in%20England%20MAY%202022.pdf>

■ NHS: Drugs

Navendu Mishra:

[17149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with officials in his Department on the potential merits of introducing maximum time limits on medication waiting lists.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 June 2022]: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) evaluates all new licensed medicines and licence extensions for existing medicines and aims to issue draft guidance on use around the time of licensing, with final guidance within 90 days of licensing wherever possible. The National Health Service is legally required to fund medicines recommended by NICE within 90 days of the publication of its final guidance. Recent initiatives such as the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway, Project Orbis and the Innovative Medicines Fund will further support the rapid introduction of effective new medicines for the benefit of NHS patients.

■ NHS: Ethnic Groups**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[15369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking with NHS leaders to tackle discrimination and provide support for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority staff to progress into leadership roles in response to the findings of the independent report, Leadership for a collaborative and inclusive future, published on 8 June 2022.

Edward Argar:

The Government has accepted the recommendations in report and an implementation plan will follow. This will include embedding inclusive leadership practice as the responsibility of all leaders, more stringently enforcing existing equal opportunity and fairness measures, such as increasing the representation of ethnic minority staff at senior levels and enhancing the role of the Care Quality Commission to improve outcomes.

The National Health Service is overhauling recruitment and promotion practices to increase representation at senior levels and reducing the disproportionate number of minority ethnic people entering disciplinary processes.

■ NHS: Hearing Impairment**Mark Pawsey:**[\[8993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available to deaf people to access employment within the NHS.

Edward Argar:

The NHS People Plan commits to creating a diverse workforce and reforming staff recruitment and promotion practices to ensure greater inclusivity.

The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) is a mandated framework of ten measures, including recruitment, which compares the workplace experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff. National Health Service organisations use the data collected to develop action plans and it provides comparative information to demonstrate progress. Following the WDES's data analysis report in 2021, recommendations include developing opportunities for local unemployed disabled people to gain work experience within NHS organisations and convening inclusive recruitment panels to include disabled staff, particularly for senior roles.

■ NHS: Staff**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[17949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support NHS workers in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England with the rising cost of living.

Edward Argar:

The Government committed to providing a pay increase this year for National Health Service workers in England, in addition to the 3% last year when pay was frozen in the public sector. The Government is looking to the independent Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) for a recommendation for the NHS. The PRBs consider a number of factors when formulating these recommendations, including the cost of living and inflation, recruitment and retention, affordability and value for the taxpayer. The Government will consider the recommendations before responding.

Approximately eight million households in the United Kingdom, including in Coventry and the West Midlands, will receive at least £1,200 this year, including a new one-off £650 cost of living payment. Universal support also increases to £400 as the October discount on energy bills increases and the requirement to repay it is removed. This provides total support for the cost of living to £37 billion this year.

North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust**Wes Streeting:**[\[20275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the scope of the independent review into the North East Ambulance Service will include the use of non-disclosure agreements across the NHS.

Wes Streeting:[\[20276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the scope of the independent review of the North East Ambulance Service will include the role of understaffing and under-resourcing.

Wes Streeting:[\[20278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, by what date the independent review into the North East Ambulance Service will report.

Wes Streeting:[\[20279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the terms of reference are for the independent review into the North East Ambulance Service.

Maria Caulfield:

The review will be commissioned and overseen by NHS England and NHS Improvement and full details of its terms of reference, scope and reporting schedule will be announced in due course.

Wes Streeting:[\[20277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to ensure that whistleblowers will receive adequate (a) protection and (b) support if they come forward during the independent review into the North East Ambulance Service.

Maria Caulfield:

There are longstanding provisions in the Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which provide protection against detriment

in employment on the basis that a worker has made a 'protected disclosure'. To qualify for protection a disclosure must be made in accordance with the requirements as set out in the legislation.

For those who contribute to NHS England and NHS Improvement's forthcoming review into the North East Ambulance Service, we expect that appropriate data protection policies are established to ensure information obtained in the course of the investigation is confidential. The review should comply at all times with the current data protection legislation, including whistleblowing, or any future changes to this legislation, including the handling of personal data. Additionally, we would expect the Chair to take responsibility for preserving the integrity of the data and preventing the corruption or loss of such data.

■ Pharmacy: Health Services

Feryal Clark:

[\[18103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing investment in clinical services provided by community pharmacy.

Maria Caulfield:

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 commits £2.592 billion each year to the sector and sets out how community pharmacy will deliver more clinical services, such as treatment and advice for minor illnesses. In each year, further clinical services have been introduced or expanded. Negotiations with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee are currently ongoing to determine additional services which could be delivered under the Framework.

■ Prostate Cancer: Medical Treatments

Alex Norris:

[\[18022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May to Question 86 on Prostate Cancer, what assessment his Department has made of the NHS's readiness for using lutetium vipivotide tetraxetan in the treatment of prostate-specific membrane antigen positive metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body which makes recommendations for the National Health Service on the clinical and cost effectiveness of new medicines. NICE is currently appraising lutetium vipivotide tetraxetan for the treatment of prostate-specific membrane antigen-positive castration-resistant metastatic prostate cancer. If recommended, it will be eligible for funding and available to National Health Service patients through the Cancer Drugs Fund on publication of NICE's draft guidance. It expected to published in autumn 2022.

■ Protective Clothing: Storage

Angela Rayner:

[\[16968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average cost to the public purse is of storing personal protective equipment in a shipping container for one month.

Edward Argar:

The current average cost of storing personal protective equipment in a shipping container is £378 per month per container for site charges and an additional £107 per month if the container is rented, rather than owned by the Department.

■ Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment

Feryal Clark:

[\[18095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of radiotherapy treatment machines in current use in the NHS are over the 10 year recommended life span in use.

Maria Caulfield:

As of 31 March 2022, NHS England and NHS Improvement estimate that there were approximately 20 linear accelerators (LINACs) or 7% of all LINACs aged 10 years or more in routine use in the National Health Service. Since 2016, approximately £162 million has been provided to support the replacement and upgrade of 100 LINACs.

■ Urinary Tract Infections: Screening

Sarah Olney:

[\[18008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to UTI testing, what steps he is taking to support (a) better pain management, (b) treatment options and (c) additional education for the medical profession for that type of testing.

Gillian Keegan:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance has provided guidance for clinicians to improve the diagnosis, treatment and management of urinary tract infections (UTIs), which includes advice on self-care and pain management. In October 2018, NICE published 'Urinary tract infection (recurrent): antimicrobial prescribing' in order to improve treatment, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng112>

NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Accelerated Access Collaborative are working with NICE and the National Institute for Health and Care Research to identify the technologies which could potentially be accelerated into adoption in the National Health Service in England.

In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement's RightCare Programme have developed a dashboard incorporating metrics relevant to monitoring the quality of

care of patients with UTIs. This dashboard supports senior leaders in integrated care systems in assurance and oversight of UTI care and health professionals with quality improvement. NHS England and NHS Improvement's UTI workstream focuses on developing a co-ordinated pathway-based approach to improving the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of UTIs.

Health Education England's e-learning for healthcare has also added a new session to the Antimicrobial Resistance and Infections eLearning programme, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/new-session-on-antimicrobial-prescribing-for-urinary-tract-infections-now-available/>

HOME OFFICE

■ **Animal Experiments: Licensing**

Anna Firth:

[18119]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will carry out a review of the procedure for granting licences for animal experiments to help ensure that the provisions of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 are being enforced.

Damian Hinds:

The Regulator for the use of animals in science fully implements the provisions of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 by following a published procedure for the granting of project licences.

The regulator has recently improved its processes and systems through a regulatory reform programme to assure compliance of establishments with the legislation.

■ **Antisocial Behaviour: Newport West**

Ruth Jones:

[18039]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made a recent assessment of the adequacy of police responses to reported antisocial behaviour incidents in Newport West constituency.

Kit Malthouse:

There are various offences relating to illegal e-scooter use that the police can enforce with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN): uninsured driving can result in a FPN of £300 and 6 penalty points on a driving licence; riding without a driving licence can result in a FPN of £100 and 3-6 penalty points on a driving licence; while riding on the pavement can result in a FPN of £50.

Section 165 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 provides the power to seize privately owned e-scooters for driving without insurance or a driving licence.

Enforcement of road traffic law and deployment of available resources to tackle illegal riding of e-scooters is an operational matter for Chief Officers according to local policing plans.

■ **Electric Scooters**

Alberto Costa:

[\[18943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the penalties are for people found using e-scooters illegally.

Kit Malthouse:

There are various offences relating to illegal e-scooter use that the police can enforce with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN): uninsured driving can result in a FPN of £300 and 6 penalty points on a driving licence; riding without a driving licence can result in a FPN of £100 and 3-6 penalty points on a driving licence; while riding on the pavement can result in a FPN of £50. Section 165 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 provides the power to seize privately owned e-scooters for driving without insurance or a driving licence.

Enforcement of road traffic law and deployment of available resources to tackle illegal riding of e-scooters is an operational matter for Chief Officers according to local policing plans.

■ **Employment: Ukraine**

Peter Gibson:

[\[18056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to enable DBS checks to be undertaken on Ukrainians who are seeking employment in the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

Except in some sectors like health and education, where DBS checks are mandated by the sector, the use of DBS checks is at the discretion of the employer.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) are able to provide criminal record certificates for those who have lived overseas and DBS checks therefore can be undertaken for Ukrainians who wish to work in those sectors where DBS checks are mandatory or where employers require them. However, as the DBS cannot access overseas criminal records, DBS checks will only contain information on criminal records in the UK. The Home Office provides guidance to employers who wish to request overseas criminal records checks for time spent abroad.

Specifically, Ukrainian citizens can apply for their criminal record checks via the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Vetting

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[5494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what process is in place to communicate with applicants under the Homes for Ukraine scheme in the event that their sponsors are required to undertake additional security checks.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 24 May 2022]: Where the decision has been taken that a sponsor is unsuitable, for whatever reason, sponsors will be contacted and told they cannot proceed with sponsoring under the Scheme.

Applicants will be offered the option to be matched, by voluntary and charitable organisations, with a new sponsor, without needing to complete a new application.

■ Passports: Applications

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[17897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress her Department has made on reducing the backlog in passport applications.

Kevin Foster:

To support the processing of an unprecedented demand, Her Majesty's Passport Office has increased its staffing numbers across the UK. 650 new staff have joined HM Passport Office since April 2021, with plans for a further 550 to have joined by the summer.

This has helped to process applications in record numbers. Across March, April, and May, HM Passport Office completed the processing of approximately three million applications, with 98.5% of applications from the UK being completed within the published processing time of up to ten weeks

■ Passports: Newport West

Ruth Jones:

[\[18040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress her Department has made on reducing the backlog in passport applications from residents of Newport West constituency.

Kevin Foster:

To support the processing of an unprecedented demand, Her Majesty's Passport Office has increased its staffing numbers across the UK. 650 new staff have joined HM Passport Office since April 2021, with plans for a further 550 to have joined by the summer.

This has helped to process applications in record numbers. Across March, April, and May, HM Passport Office completed the processing of approximately three million applications, with 98.5% of applications from the UK being completed within the published processing time of up to ten weeks.

Ruth Jones: [\[18041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in Newport West constituency have waited longer than 6 weeks for their passport application to be processed in each of the last three years.

Kevin Foster:

Since April 2021, customers have advised it takes up to ten weeks to process a passport application.

In May 2022, over 91% of applications from across the UK were completed within six weeks, and 98.5% within ten weeks.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Caroline Lucas: [\[13691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral statement of the Minister for Afghan Resettlement of 6 January 2022, Official Report, column 185, how many refugees have (a) been referred and (b) been resettled in the UK following a referral by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 15 June 2022]: Eligible individuals can be referred onto the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) under one of three 'pathways', as set out in the policy statement of 13 September 2021:

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

Pathway two provides for vulnerable refugees who have fled Afghanistan to be referred for resettlement to the UK by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The launch of pathway two was announced on 13th June and we expect to begin receiving referrals soon

Peter Gibson: [\[18057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan families remain in temporary accommodation.

Peter Gibson: [\[18058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will publish the details of local authorities that (a) have and (b) have not offered homes to Afghan families.

Kevin Foster:

There are currently over 12,000 individuals from Afghanistan in bridging hotels.

We do not want to keep people in temporary accommodation for any longer than is necessary. We have moved, or are in the process of moving, over 6,700 people into homes since June 2021. Finding suitable homes for this number of people is a significant challenge. We are working across government and with over three hundred Local Authority partners to move Afghan evacuees into permanent homes

as soon as possible so they can settle and rebuild their lives. Alongside our engagement with local authorities, we are reaching out to landlords, developers and the wider private rented sector to encourage further offers of properties, either directly to Local Authorities or through our Housing portal.

Data is not currently published on local authorities who have pledged properties to Afghan families. The Home Office publishes data on resettlement in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data cover up to the end of March 2022.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Department for International Trade: Belfast

Peter Kyle: [\[19650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 155847 on Department for International Trade: Belfast, how many staff work in the Trade and Investment hub in Belfast.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 21 June 2022]: As of June 2022, nine full time employees are employed in the Department for International Trade's Northern Ireland hub.

■ Developing Countries Trading Scheme: Human Rights

Gareth Thomas: [\[17860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department plans to include human rights safeguards in its proposed Developing Countries Trading Scheme; and if she will make statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[17861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department's proposed Developing Countries Trading Scheme will include (a) equivalent or (b) improved human rights protections in comparison to the Generalised Scheme of Preferences; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The detailed proposals for the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) will be published in 2022. When these proposals are published, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade will provide a written ministerial statement.

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

■ Trade Agreements

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[14452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps she has taken to increase the proportion of UK trade through free trade agreements.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 16 June 2022]: We have secured trade agreements with 70 countries plus the EU, partners that accounted for £808bn of UK bilateral trade in 2021.

The Department for International Trade can report significant progress this year. We have signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with New Zealand and a Digital Economy Agreement with Singapore. We have completed three rounds of FTA negotiations with India and one round with Canada. We have completed a Call for Input on an enhanced FTA with Israel, and launched FTA negotiations with Mexico, Switzerland and Greenland. We are preparing to launch FTA negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council.

■ Whisky: Northern Ireland

Jim Shannon:

[\[15264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will take steps to encourage the US administration to grant Irish whiskey from Northern Ireland the same level of distinctive product protection as currently afforded to Scotch whisky.

Penny Mordaunt:

I am aware of the concerns raised by the Irish Whiskey Association with regard to protection of Irish whiskey, and their objective that Irish whiskey be offered equivalent protection to Scotch whisky in the US. We sought to address this issue through our previous free trade agreement negotiations, and we will continue to raise it in our ongoing engagement with the US.

JUSTICE

■ Duty Solicitors: Wales

Ruth Jones:

[\[18044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of trends in the number of duty solicitors in Wales on access to justice in that country.

James Cartlidge:

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) frequently reviews market capacity, including the number of duty solicitors on each local duty scheme, to make sure there is adequate provision of legal aid throughout England and Wales. The LAA moves quickly, where issues arise, to secure additional provision and to ensure continuity of legal aid services.

The LAA is satisfied that there continues to be sufficient duty solicitor coverage across all duty schemes in Wales. Provision under the duty scheme is demand led and so there may be variations in numbers across each local rota or other fluctuations in numbers depending on prevailing market conditions.

A procurement exercise for new criminal legal aid contracts commencing on 1 October 2022 is currently underway. The LAA will publish lists of providers and duty solicitors under those contracts once the contract has commenced.

■ Prisoners' Release

Ellie Reeves: [\[20296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his plans to reduce Friday release will be implemented.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government will legislate to enable offenders who are at risk of reoffending to be released up to two days earlier, where a release date falls on a Friday or before a bank holiday, when Parliamentary time allows.

We will continue to consider the views of stakeholders, including operational colleagues, prison staff and the third sector to shape the policy to ensure that legislative change reduces risk of reoffending, protects the public and effectively manages risk.

■ Prisons: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[20281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 9 February 2021 to Question 149308, what the most recent figures are for the number of (a) prison officers and (b) other staff members at (i) HMP Berwyn and (ii) other prisons in Wales who are Welsh speaking.

Victoria Atkins:

HMPPS do not gather official statistics about the number of Welsh speaking staff in prisons. Equalities Leads in Wales have not repeated the informal exercise to collect local information since the responding to the question on 9 February 2021.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Asylum: Housing

Rachael Maskell: [\[17985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent discussions has he had with the Home Secretary on (a) the supply of housing available for asylum seekers and (b) addressing any shortages in that supply.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[17986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to help ensure that housing proposals reflect the potential need to provide additional homes to support refugees and asylum seekers amid global instability.

Stuart Andrew:

The UK has a long and proud history of welcoming migrants including recent arrivals from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria and Hong Kong.

Our respective departments work closely to ensure that those whom we welcome to our country have access to the support and services they need, including a place to live. The Secretary of State for DLUHC launched the Homes for Ukraine Scheme on 14 March 2022 in support of Ukrainian arrivals.

Other schemes and support are available for refugees fleeing conflicts in other parts of the world.

As has been the case under successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed.

■ **Council Tax: Energy Bills Rebate**

Alicia Kearns:

[\[18088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department is making provisions for the council tax rebate to be given to people living in business-provided living accommodation.

Kemi Badenoch:

The rebate is available to occupants of property in council tax bands A – D who are liable for council tax. This includes those in business-provided living accommodation. If the council tax bill is usually paid by the employer on the occupant's behalf, the council will contact the occupant to arrange a payment method. Anyone not eligible for the rebate but in financial hardship can apply to their local council's discretionary fund for support.

■ **Council Tax: Rented Housing**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[20254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending the council tax banding for council houses where the tenant is renting.

Kemi Badenoch:

All properties are banded for council tax on a consistent basis, reflecting their open market capital value as at 1 April 1991. The Government has no plans to amend banding based on occupancy arrangements. The council tax system has a range of discounts and exemptions to reflect personal circumstances, including local council tax support schemes for households in financial need.

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: MG OMD**Emily Thornberry:** [\[20237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the maximum value, inclusive of VAT, is of the contract that his Department has agreed with Manning Gottlieb OMD for the provision of strategic media activation services under the terms of the Crown Commercial Service's media services framework agreement reference RM6123.

Eddie Hughes:

Spending on campaigns are published regularly on the gov.uk website as part of the department's transparency data made publicly available.

■ Help to Buy Scheme: Interest Charges**Royston Smith:** [\[17029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has considered waiving Help to Buy loan interests for those affected by unsafe cladding.

Royston Smith: [\[17030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing properties bought with a Help to Buy loan and affected by unsafe cladding to be let out.

Royston Smith: [\[17031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing people who bought a property with a Help to Buy loan which is affected by unsafe cladding to own a second home.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government has provided £5.1 billion to remediate residential buildings over 18 metres, and recently announced contributions from developers estimated at £5 billion to help to fix the building safety crisis.

We have extended the exceptional criteria for subletting through the Help to Buy scheme to include homes affected by unsafe cladding. Guidance can be found in the following link <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-sublet-your-help-to-buy-home#when-you-may-be-allowed-to-sublet-your-entire-home>.

There are no existing plans to change other aspects of the Help to Buy loan rules. However, we will keep these policies under review and recognise the unique circumstances of people affected by the cladding crisis.

■ Housing: Construction

Rachael Maskell:

[\[17976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will take steps to enable residents to determine housing tenure prior to sites being committed for development.

Stuart Andrew:

Our National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that local authorities should assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community and reflect this in their planning policies. As part of developing these policies, local authorities are required to engage in robust consultation to ensure that the views of local residents and communities are taken into account.

■ Levelling Up Fund

John Healey:

[\[20207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when the application portal for round two of the Levelling Up Fund bids will open.

Neil O'Brien:

Work is ongoing to open the application portal for the second round of the Levelling Up Fund as soon as possible. In the meantime, applicants already have access to all the information needed to develop their applications. We have encouraged places to use these tools to prepare their applications in readiness to upload when the portal launches.

■ Second Homes

Rachael Maskell:

[\[17977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has had discussions with relevant stakeholders on the most effective potential interventions for the purposes of slowing down second home ownership, whether as homes to live in, rent out or use commercially as holiday lets.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government recognises the benefits that second homes can bring to local economies and to the tourism sector and does not wish to interfere with people's freedom to live where they choose. However, the Government also recognises the adverse effect that large numbers of second homes can have on some areas. We have introduced a number of measures to help mitigate those effects, including introducing higher rates of Stamp Duty Land Tax for those purchasing additional properties

My department is speaking to local authorities and other stakeholders across relevant areas to understand the effects of second home ownership on local communities, and to hear their views on how best to address detrimental impacts where these occur.

■ Solar Power: Planning Permission

Simon Jupp:

[\[18114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of allowing local authorities to object to planning applications for solar farms due to there being too many (a) already built and (b) pending in the local area.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government's recent 'British Energy Security Strategy' sets out a series of changes to the planning system to support the delivery of renewable energy infrastructure. These technologies will play a key role in reaching the UK's ambitious Carbon Budget and Net Zero targets. We will consult on amending planning rules to strengthen policy in favour of solar development on non-protected land, while ensuring communities continue to have a say and environmental protections remain in place.

Solar projects are subject to strict planning controls to protect local communities and the environment. For larger projects (over 50MW in England), planning decisions are made through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime. The NSIP regime is a rigorous process designed to scrutinise larger projects and developers must engage closely with local authorities and communities before approval is granted.

By law, planning applications are determined on their own merits in accordance with the development plan for the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise. There may be occasions though where other existing or approved development may be relevant in determining an application, in particular where it is integral as part of a more substantial development. It is for local planning authorities to consider proposals, they act independently of central Government, and Ministers have limited remit to intervene in their day-to-day affairs, particularly where it is integral as part of a more substantial development.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Cost of Living: Northern Ireland

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[\[900566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on providing support for (a) working families, (b) pensioners and (c) benefit recipients in Northern Ireland in the context of the rise in the cost of living.

Conor Burns:

The Government has provided significant resources to the Executive to address these issues and I continue to urge the parties to form an Executive, so that the £435 million provided by the Government can be allocated to help people across Northern Ireland as a matter of urgency.

■ Northern Ireland Protocol Bill

Layla Moran:

[\[900573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he has had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the appropriateness of the use of the doctrine of necessity in relation to the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill.

Brandon Lewis:

I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues about issues affecting Northern Ireland, including the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The Northern Ireland Protocol Bill is lawful under international law. The legal basis on which we are acting is set out in the published statement of the Government's legal position.

■ Terrorism and Veterans: Northern Ireland

Lee Anderson:

[\[900565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to support veterans and help tackle the legacy of the Troubles.

Andrew Bridgen:

[\[900572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to support veterans and help tackle the legacy of the Troubles.

Brandon Lewis:

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill will establish a process that focuses on information recovery, delivering for victims and survivors, providing certainty for veterans and helping Northern Ireland to move forward.

■ Veterans: Northern Ireland

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[900570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the adequacy of support for veterans in Northern Ireland.

Brandon Lewis:

The unique circumstances in Northern Ireland mean delivery for veterans is approached in a different way from the rest of the UK. I can assure the hon. Member that I and my officials work closely with colleagues across Government, including the MOD and Office of Veterans Affairs, to ensure veterans can access gold standard care irrespective of where they live.

TRANSPORT**■ Bicycles and Electric Scooters: Regulation**

Darren Jones: [\[18975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has for the regulation of electric motor bicycles and electric scooters on public land.

Trudy Harrison:

The Transport Bill announced in the Queens Speech, offers an opportunity to set out a new, adaptable regulatory framework for small, light electric vehicles.

It is our intention that the Transport Bill will create a Low-Speed Zero Emission Vehicle category that is independent from the cycle and motor vehicle categories. New powers in the Bill would subsequently allow the Government to decide which vehicles will fall into this category, and how they should be regulated to ensure safe use.

No decisions have been made on the details of the regulations for e-scooters. We will consult before any new arrangements come into force, and all interested parties will have a chance to shape the new regime.

Electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs) are regulated for in the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles Regulations 1983. The Department undertook a review of the case for amending the current speed and power restrictions of EAPCs as part of the Future of Transport Regulatory Review Call for Evidence published in 2020. Having considered the evidence carefully, the Department's position is that the safety disbenefits of doing so would outweigh the potential benefits.

■ Bus Services: Concessions

Emma Hardy: [\[18026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will review the eligibility criteria for disabled bus passes to ensure that people with autism can obtain such a pass.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government committed in the National Bus Strategy to review eligibility for the disabled pass and this will consider whether invisible disabilities, such as autism, should be included within the eligibility criteria.

In addition to the statutory minimum concession guaranteed under the 2000 Act, the Transport Act 1985 (as amended) ('the 1985 Act') gives local authorities outside London the power, at their discretion, to offer additional travel concessions to people in any of the categories defined in section 93(7) of that Act.

■ Cycling

Andy Carter: [\[18070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the nationwide cycle network benefits both cyclists and motorists.

Trudy Harrison:

The management of local roads, including provision of cycling facilities, is the responsibility of individual local traffic authorities. It is for them to ensure their streets are designed to provide safe movement for all road users. The Department has published updated guidance on Cycle Infrastructure Design to help local authorities deliver high quality cycle infrastructure in the future which can be accessed at www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120. Cycling clearly does not work for everyone, or for every journey. But the more people that cycle, the more roadspace is freed up for those who really need to drive. High-quality infrastructure is a key part of enabling this.

The National Cycle Network (NCN), managed by Sustrans, is a UK-wide network of signed paths and routes for walking and cycling. It stretches over 12,000 miles and in 2019 an estimated 4.2 million people used the NCN to make almost 650 million journeys. Over 50% of journeys were made by modes other than a bicycle including equestrians.

On 14 May 2022 the Department announced £35m of funding for the National Cycle Network to deliver improved surfacing, widened paths and greater accessibility, such as the removal of barriers that impact disabled people and cyclists. Many of these projects are focused on canal towpaths, which are important elements of many local cycling and walking networks.

■ High Speed 2 Line: Forests**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[20303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to merge the HS2 Woodland Fund with the England Woodland Creation Offer.

Andrew Stephenson:

There are significant overlaps between the HS2 Woodland Fund and the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO), both in terms of their aims and the way that the schemes work. As a result, HS2 Ltd has been working with Defra and the Forestry Commission on a plan to bring the two into alignment with each other, to ensure that both woodland creation schemes can continue to meet their objectives, whilst avoiding confusion for applicants. This is unlikely to result in a full merger of the schemes as there are some differences to be preserved - for example, the HS2 Woodland Fund differs from EWCO in that it also provides grants to support the restoration of degraded woodland. Discussions with stakeholders to resolve some outstanding details are ongoing.

■ Ports**Mary Kelly Foy:****[19691]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list the maritime ports his Department classifies as nationally significant.

Robert Courts:

The Department for Transport does not designate ports as nationally significant or otherwise, and in general expects them to compete freely with each other irrespective of size. However, 52 ports are designated (based on handling more than 1M tonnes of cargo in a year) as "major ports" for statistical purposes. A list may be found at Annex A to the publication *Port Freight Statistics 2020: Notes and Definitions*.

(
www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002364/port-freight-notes-and-definitions.pdf).

Nationally significant port infrastructure projects are defined at s.24 Planning Act 2008.

■ Railway Stations: Boscombe

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [19582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has taken steps to progress the upgrade to Boscombe Railway Station.

Wendy Morton:

The Department for Transport is working closely with South Western Railway, Network Rail and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to pursue improvements for passengers at Pokesdown for Boscombe station. The Department will provide an update at the conclusion of the ongoing feasibility work.

■ Railways: Bournemouth East

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [19581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve rail links to Bournemouth east constituency.

Wendy Morton:

The Department regularly reviews levels of service to ensure that there is the best possible outcome for both passengers and the taxpayer. This work continues as we see demand returning following the pandemic.

■ Railways: Pay

Brendan Clarke-Smith: [20307]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average annual remuneration of train drivers in 2020-21.

Brendan Clarke-Smith: [20308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the average annual remuneration of train drivers on Southern Rail in 2020-21.

Brendan Clarke-Smith: [\[20309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the average annual remuneration of train drivers on Avanti West Coast in 2020-21.

Brendan Clarke-Smith: [\[20310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the average annual remuneration of train drivers on West Midlands Railway in 2020-21.

Brendan Clarke-Smith: [\[20311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the average annual remuneration of train drivers on Thameslink in 2020-21.

Wendy Morton:

Information relating to train drivers' salary is managed and set by the individual Train Operating Companies in line with their annual budgets.

The Office for National Statistics report that median gross annual pay for all train and tram drivers in the UK was approximately £59,000 in 2021.

■ Transport

Stephen Morgan: [\[19668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's planned timetable is for publishing further details on (a) proposals relating to e-scooters and (b) other proposals to be included in the Transport Bill announced in the Queen's Speech 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department will be publishing a full set of findings from its evaluation of the e-scooter trials in a report in due course. The Department is currently considering options for e-scooter regulations, however no decisions have been made.

The Department published a public consultation on the primary legislative changes that are proposed to meet the commitments in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail on 9 June 2022. Public consultations on the Future of Transport measures have taken place and the Government will publish responses to those consultations shortly.

■ Vehicle Number Plates: Fraud

Peter Gibson: [\[18054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department takes to help protect the victims of vehicle cloning.

Peter Gibson: [\[18055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to prevent vehicle cloning.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department for Transport understands how distressing this criminal activity can be for innocent motorists. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) works

closely with the police, motor trade, vehicle data checking companies and the vehicle security industry to help combat the problem of vehicle cloning. Advice for consumers is provided on the GOV.UK website. A step-by-step guide is also available that gives a list of things to look out for to ensure that the identity of the vehicle is correct. In most cases, the DVLA only becomes aware of incidents of vehicle cloning after the crime has been committed. However, when notified, the DVLA will investigate and pass on intelligence to the police who are responsible for investigating this criminal matter.

When the DVLA is notified of a suspected cloned vehicle case, officials will investigate and where appropriate, take action to record the correct identity of the vehicle in question. The DVLA can, on request, provide a replacement registration number to anyone who has been a victim of vehicle cloning.

TREASURY

■ Child Benefit

Holly Lynch:

[\[20271\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the fairness of the High Income Child Benefit Charge.

Lucy Frazer:

The High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) is a tax charge which applies to anyone with an income of over £50,000 who gets Child Benefit, or whose partner receives it. The charge increases gradually for those with incomes between £50,000 and £60,000 and is equal to one per cent of a family's Child Benefit for every extra £100 of income that is over £50,000 each year. Where income exceeds £60,000, the tax charge is equal to the amount payable in Child Benefit. HICBC is calculated on an individual rather than a household basis, in line with other income tax policy.

Basing HICBC on household incomes would mean finding out the incomes of everyone in each of the 7.7 million households currently registered for Child Benefit. This would effectively introduce a new means test, which would be costly to administer and create burdens on the majority of families who receive Child Benefit. The Government decided that charging HICBC to those on higher incomes ensures that everyone makes a fair contribution, while those with the lowest incomes continue to be supported.

The Government set the HICBC thresholds at these levels to help target public expenditure in the way it considered most effective. As with all elements of tax policy, the Government keeps this under review as part of the annual Budget process.

■ Debts: Zambia

Claire Hanna:

[\[20333\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to (a) support proposals to and (b) help ensure that lenders comply with a decision to cancel Zambia's debt.

John Glen:

Zambia is one of three countries – along with Chad and Ethiopia - to have so far requested the Common Framework. The Common Framework was agreed in November 2020 by the UK, along with the G20 and Paris Club, to help deliver a long-term, sustainable approach for supporting low-income countries to tackle their debt vulnerabilities.

Debt treatments under the Common Framework can include both the reprofiling of debt or, depending on need, a full restructuring where debt is also cancelled.

Comparability of treatment is also a fundamental principle under the Common Framework. This means that a debt treatment with other official bilateral creditors and private creditors must be agreed on at least as favourable terms as the one agreed by G20 creditors.

It is a UK priority to work with our G20 partners to ensure swift progress on Zambia's debt treatment so that the country can get back to debt sustainability and support its economic recovery.

■ Electric Vehicles: Taxation

Stephen McPartland:

[\[20249\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking towards setting benefit-in-kind taxation rates for 2025-26; and what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the potential impact of those rates on the adoption of electric vehicles.

Helen Whately:

Like all taxes, benefit-in-kind tax rates for company cars, also known as Company Car Tax (CCT), are kept under review. The Government aims to announce CCT rates at least two years ahead of implementation to provide certainty for employers, employees and fleet operators.

■ Environment Protection: Taxation

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[19715\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department has made on deciding the technical screening criteria which will decide which technologies will be classified as green under the UK Taxonomy.

John Glen:

In the coming months, the Government will be launching a consultation on the Technical Screening Criteria which underpin the Taxonomy. I encourage any interested parties to engage with that consultation.

After the consultation has concluded, the Government will make a final decision on which activities will be included in the taxonomy and the criteria they will need to meet.

■ NHS: Car Allowances

Dan Jarvis: [\[20252\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the standard mileage and fuel rates for NHS workers in line with the increased cost of petrol.

Helen Whately:

The Government sets the Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs) rates to minimise administrative burdens. AMAPs aim to reflect running costs including fuel, servicing and depreciation. Depreciation is estimated to constitute the most significant proportion of the AMAPs.

Employers, including the NHS, are not required to use the AMAPs. Instead, they can agree to reimburse the actual cost incurred, where individuals can provide evidence of the expenditure, without an Income Tax or National Insurance charge arising.

Alternatively, they can choose to pay a different mileage rate that is higher or lower than AMAPs. However, if the payment exceeds the amount due under AMAPs, and this results in a profit for the individual, they will be liable to pay Income Tax and National Insurance contributions on the difference.

The Government keeps this policy under review.

■ Petrol: Prices

Sarah Olney: [\[19655\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has completed an impact assessment on the fall in the value of sterling against the US dollar on the price of petrol since June 2012.

Sarah Olney: [\[19656\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has completed an impact assessment on the fall in the value of sterling against the US dollar on the price of petrol since June 2016.

Sarah Olney: [\[19657\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has completed an impact assessment on the fall in the value of sterling against the US dollar on the price of petrol since 16 June 2021.

John Glen:

HM Treasury has not conducted an impact assessment on the impact of changes in the value of sterling on petrol prices.

■ **Tax Allowances****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[20341\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the approximate annual cost in the initial year of raising the personal tax allowance to £15,000 per annum.

Lucy Frazer:

The impact to the Exchequer from changes to the Income Tax Personal Allowance may be approximated using the "Direct effects of illustrative tax changes" table, which is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/direct-effects-of-illustrative-tax-changes>.

The table shows the cost of £100, 1 per cent, and 10 per cent increases. These figures can be used to estimate the approximate impact from increasing the Personal Allowance to £15,000.

■ **Truphone****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[18090\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the sale of Truphone does not permit sanctioned individuals and their business partners to recoup a substantial part of their investment.

John Glen:

We understand that this question relates to the entity Truphone Limited.

Financial sanctions restrictions apply to any entity that is owned or controlled directly or indirectly by a designated person. This includes where that person holds (directly or indirectly) more than 50% of the shares or voting rights in an entity, has the right (directly or indirectly) to appoint or remove a majority of the board of directors of the entity, or it is reasonable to expect that the person would be able to ensure the affairs of the entity are conducted in accordance with the person's wishes.

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), in the Treasury, does not aggregate different designated persons' holdings in a company unless (for example) the shares or rights are subject to a joint arrangement between the designated parties or one party controls the rights of another.

Therefore, OFSI does not consider that Truphone is subject to an asset freeze.

If any sanctioned individuals are due to receive funds as a result of the sale of a company which is not subject to financial sanctions restrictions, any funds they receive from a UK company or into a UK bank account will need to be frozen. An OFSI licence would then be needed for any onward movement of such funds,

otherwise breaches of financial sanctions restrictions may occur. Any suspected breach of financial sanctions should be reported to OFSI.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences

Dan Jarvis: [\[20251\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, further to the oral contribution of the Minister for Women and Equalities on 8 June 2022, Official Report, column 794HC, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on that Department's strategy on handling cases of rape and serious sexual assault.

Kemi Badenoch:

Departmental officials and Ministers talk regularly on a range of issues, and have discussed the Ministry of Defence's strategy for tackling sexual offending in Defence, which will shortly be released.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Discretionary Housing Payments

Ms Karen Buck: [\[16824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 30 March 2022 to Question 139255 on Discretionary Housing Payments, if she will commission research on the potential impact of the reduction in funding for Discretionary Housing Payments from £140 million in 2021-22 to £100 million in 2022-23 on the number of tenants who will be able to receive support when experiencing a shortfall between the rent they owe and the Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance they receive.

David Rutley:

There are no plans to commission research on funding for Discretionary Housing Payments.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[14435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many jobs that were created by the Kickstart Scheme were lost when the scheme ended.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions will be monitoring and evaluating the Kickstart scheme throughout and after its implementation and will continue to evaluate the longer-term outcomes for Kickstart participants after they have completed their six-month jobs. This will include an estimate of the young people that remained employed (either with their Kickstart employer or moving into a job with a

different employer), as well as the number of young people no longer in employment upon leaving a Kickstart role.

The evaluation will include surveys to capture the views and experiences of Kickstart participants and of employers and gateway organisations. The fieldwork for the commissioned evaluation will continue until at least 2023.

■ **Post Office Card Account: Pensions**

Charlotte Nichols:

[19010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason she has decided to close the Post Office Account Pensions schemes; and if she will reconsider that decision.

Guy Opperman:

The Departments for Work and Pensions preferred method of payment support is into an account of the customer's choice bank, credit union etc. This provides access to more affordable products and services, which would otherwise not be available to them under POca.

All DWP payments into a Post Office card account have now ceased. This allows time for the account to be closed and any balance to be withdrawn by the customer in advance of the contract end date in November 2022.

Those POca customers who do not want a bank/ credit union account will now receive payments via the Payment Exception Service. This is a voucher based service and customers access cash payments at Post Office branches and PayPoint retailers.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Appeals**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[17047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral statement of 26 May 2022 by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether people who are successful in an (a) assessment, (b) mandatory reconsideration and (c) appeal to the first tier tribunal for (i) Employment Support Allowance, (ii) Universal Credit limited capability for work and work related activity and (iii) Personal Independence Payment will be (A) automatically paid or (B) need to make an application for a backdated payment of the cost of living payment of £650.

David Rutley:

People who have entitlement to a qualifying benefit in relation to the qualifying day - as set out in the Social Security (Additional Payments) Bill, which was introduced to the House of Commons on 15 June - will automatically receive the relevant Cost of Living Payment. This includes people whose entitlement is established later - for example as a result of a mandatory reconsideration or an appeal or an assessment which is in progress when the first payments are made.

The guidance with the full list of support can be found at:

[Cost of living support factsheet: 26 May 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114144/cost-of-living-support-factsheet-26-may-2022.pdf)

■ State Retirement Pensions: Age

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[20215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to change the estimated date by which the State Pension Age will begin at 68 years.

Guy Opperman:

Under existing legislation, the state pension age is due to increase to 67 between 2026 and 2028 and 68 between 2044 and 2046. The Pensions Act 2014 requires Government to undertake a periodic review of whether the rules about pension age are appropriate. The first review of State Pension age was undertaken in 2017. It set out the Government's intention to bring forward the increase to 68 in 2037-39 but that the Government would carry out a further review before tabling any changes to legislation.

Work has now begun on the second review of State Pension age, which will consider evidence from across the UK, including findings from two independent reports. It has not yet concluded and will be published by May 2023.

■ Support for Mortgage Interest

Navendu Mishra:

[\[17151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether Support for Mortgage Interest payments are in line with the increase in interest rates made by mortgage providers.

David Rutley:

Support for Mortgage Interest is calculated using a standard interest rate which is set at a level equal to the Bank of England's published monthly average mortgage interest rate. The rate is currently 2.09%, changes to that rate will occur when the Bank of England's average mortgage rate changes by at least 0.5%. In this way, help provided increases when mortgage interest rates rise.

■ Universal Credit

Martyn Day:

[\[17034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will change Universal Credit policy so that claimants whose assessment period misses the uprating date of the first Monday of the tax year do not have to wait two months before receiving an uplift.

David Rutley:

Increases in Universal Credit come into force from the start of the first assessment period beginning on or after the first Monday of the tax year (or from the start of the first assessment period beginning on or after any earlier date in April). As Universal Credit is a calendar monthly assessed benefit that is paid in arrears, a claimant will receive their newly-uprated benefit award at their first full Assessment Period that follows the change. There are no current plans to alter how the uprating of benefits interacts with claimants' assessment periods.

■ Winter Fuel Payment

Martyn Day:

[\[19649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to remove the qualifying date for the Winter Fuel Payment to ensure that all those in receipt of the State Pension will be eligible to receive this payment by the end of the calendar year.

Guy Opperman:

The policy since the introduction of the Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment Amendment Regulations 1999 has been the same under all Governments: Labour; the Coalition; and Conservative.

It has always been the aim to make Winter Fuel Payments before Christmas. Therefore, having a September qualifying week allows the Department the time to make the required checks on entitlement, calculate the payment an individual is entitled to, issue the notifications and start to make the payments; a process which begins in November.

The DWP makes over 11 million Winter Fuel Payments every year. The majority - over 99% - are paid automatically without the need to claim before Christmas. A small number of pensioners need to claim the Winter Fuel Payment and have until 31 March 2023 to do so.

There are no plans to change the qualifying criteria for Winter Fuel Payments. For winter 2022/23 a person has to have reached State Pension age on or before the end of the September qualifying week which is set out in legislation and is 19-25 September 2022.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ The Electricity and Gas (Energy Company Obligation) Order 2022

Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Greg Hands):

[\[HCWS125\]](#)

My noble friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility (Lord Callanan) has today made the following statement:

Upgrading our homes to be more energy efficient is the best long-term solution for reducing our energy costs, keeping ourselves warm and healthy in winter and tackling fuel poverty. It is also essential for our transition to net zero and in supporting local jobs and growth. This is why the Energy Company Obligation scheme remains a key policy in supporting low income and vulnerable households to upgrade their homes with energy efficiency and heating measures.

Making homes more energy efficient reduces heating costs permanently, mitigating the impacts of current and future price rises. There are wider benefits; energy efficient homes are more comfortable to live in, with consequent improvements to householder's health and wellbeing.

The Energy Company Obligation has a good track record of delivering such upgrades to homes. Since 2013, it has installed around 3.5 million energy efficiency measures in 2.4 million homes across Great Britain.

In April, we published the response to the consultation on the future of the Energy Company Obligation across Great Britain, committing to an expansion of the scheme from £640 million to £1 billion a year and extending it by four years to 2026. Today the Government has laid the regulations for the scheme.

The last iteration of the Energy Company Obligation scheme, ECO3, came to an end on 31 March 2022 and since 1 April 2022, ECO3 measures could continue to be delivered to previous scheme rules (subject to some exceptions) until 30 June 2022. Similarly, suppliers have had the option to deliver to the new scheme, ECO4, rules from 1 April 2022.

ECO4 will be focussed on low-income and vulnerable households in Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band D-G homes. The scheme will bring positive value to society, with estimated installations of around 800,000 measures in around 450,000 homes.

Households could save on average £290 annually off their energy bills over the lifetime, or up to £1,600 in the least energy efficient homes. However, those savings could average £600 next winter. 360,000 homes will be upgraded to EPC Band C, helping more households out of fuel poverty.

Government will mandate minimum energy efficiency improvements requiring Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band F and G homes to be improved to a minimum Band

D and Band D and E homes to be improved to a minimum Band C, contributing to our statutory fuel poverty target and interim milestone.

To make greater progress on upgrading the least energy efficient homes, there is a minimum target of upgrading 150,000 Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band E, F and G private tenure homes. This will ensure the least energy efficient homes are not left behind. Furthermore, a minimum target of 90,000 solid wall insulation measures is introduced to maintain the focus on insulating harder to treat homes, while supporting the solid wall insulation industry.

Under the scheme, support for repairs and replacements of broken gas and electric storage heating systems will be limited to 5,000 homes per year and the repair of inefficient oil and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) systems will be permitted as a last resort where renewable heating cannot be installed. This will ensure measures installed under ECO4 align with the Government's Heat and Buildings Strategy and net zero targets.

Homes in off-gas rural areas will be incentivised in Scotland and Wales, to ensure homes that may be harder to reach and more expensive to deliver are not left behind. ECO4 has been designed to complement the Home Upgrade Grant in off-gas homes in England, social housing funding and the private rented sector regulations. It will continue to work alongside existing energy efficiency and fuel poverty policies in Scotland and Wales.

Up to 50% of a supplier's obligation may be delivered under the reformed Flexible Eligibility mechanism (ECO4 Flex), an increase from 25% under the previous scheme. ECO4 Flex enables local authorities, the Scottish and Welsh Governments and energy suppliers to target and refer other low-income households who may not be in receipt of means tested benefits.

A new scoring methodology will be introduced, providing greater support to the worst performing homes. Support will continue for new and innovative installation methods and measures via a reformed Innovation Measure mechanism. Only fully tested measures with adequate consumer protection will be eligible.

This expansion of the scheme forms part of the wider support package to help households with rising energy bills.

In May, in recognition of increased cost of living and continued rising energy costs, a package of support worth £37 billion was announced, which includes the Energy Bills Support Scheme. Most vulnerable households will receive at least £1,200 of support this year and, all households will receive a £400 grant as a credit from energy suppliers from October 2022 onwards, which does not need to be repaid.

CABINET OFFICE

■ LGBT Veterans Review

Minister for Defence, People and Veterans (Leo Docherty):

[\[HCWS126\]](#)

The pre-2000 ban on LGBT personnel serving in the Armed Forces was totally wrong. In January this year, the Government committed to deliver an independent Review to

properly look at the lasting impact that this ban has on veterans today. The purpose of the Review is to make evidence-based recommendations as to how the government can meet its commitment in the Veterans Strategy to ensure the experience of LGBT veterans who were affected by the ban is understood, and their service valued.

Such a Review requires the right person to lead it and, after careful consideration, the Prime Minister has appointed the Lord Etherton PC QC as independent Chair. The Review will begin with immediate effect. It will conclude with a final report being presented to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Secretary of State for Defence no later than 25 May 2023. The full Terms of Reference for the Review can be found attached.

Attachments:

1. LGBT Veterans Review Terms of Reference [ATTACHMENT ToR FINAL (1).pdf]

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Reporting a contingent liability in relation to the Shared Rural Network

Minister for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure (Julia Lopez): [\[HCWS122\]](#)

I wish to inform the House that I have today laid a Departmental Minute recording the Government's proposal to enter into an agreement to indemnify Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited (a subsidiary of four mobile network operators), in respect of costs that may arise if there is a change in the operator of the Emergency Services Network.

The proposed indemnity will be reported as a contingent liability in line with the HM Treasury Contingent Liability Framework and managed in accordance with Managing Public Money (MPM).

The Shared Rural Network is the Government's £1 billion deal with four mobile network operators to deliver 4G coverage to 95% of UK landmass by the end of the programme. The government is investing over £500 million to target hard-to-reach areas where there is currently no 4G mobile coverage from any mobile network operator. The Government funded element of the programme includes upgrades to Extended Area Service mobile telephone masts being built as part of the Home Office's Emergency Services Network.

As set out in the Minute, the proposed indemnity would cover costs of up to £15.2 million which may be required for additional equipment and operating expenses should the terms of a future Emergency Services Network contract cause additional costs to be incurred by mobile network operators in order for them to operate their mobile network in accordance with Shared Rural Network requirements. Any costs incurred as a result of the indemnity will be funded from within Shared Rural Network programme approved funding.

A copy of the departmental minute will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Correction to PQ118520, PQ118521 and PQ118522****Minister of State (Minister for Health) (Edward Argar):****[[HCWS128](#)]**

On 28 February 2022, the Department answered three Parliamentary Questions asked by Nick Smith MP. The single answer given to all three questions included an incorrect reference to a supplier of PPE.

The questions were:

“118520: To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department paid £600 million to Unispace Global Ltd for the purchase of personal protective equipment in 2020.”

“118521: To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether Unispace Global Ltd met its contractual obligations for providing adequate personal protective equipment under the contractual terms set by his Department in 2020.”

“118522: To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any Government Department has taken steps to investigate why payments made to Unispace Global Ltd were not reported by that company in its financial accounts; and, if he will make a statement.”

The Departmental answer was:

“...Unispace Global partially met its contractual obligations, supplying the National Health Service with £484 million items of PPE from April 2020 till December 2021. We are working with the company on a commercial resolution for the remainder of the contract...”

However, all contracts between Unispace Global Ltd and the Department for Health and Social Care were novated to Unispace Health Products LLP in December 2020, which has since changed its name to Sante Global LLP. Accordingly, the Departmental answer should have referred to Sante Global LLP rather than Unispace Ltd.

Through this WMS I am correcting this error, which arose as one of our internal record management systems had not been updated to reflect the change in name. This system has also been updated.

■ Monkeypox Update**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid):****[[HCWS130](#)]**

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) yesterday published its updated vaccination strategy in response to the current monkeypox outbreak.

Based on the currently available vaccine supply, UKHSA recommends that the available doses of the vaccine should be used for a selective vaccine strategy with the aim of interrupting transmission in the subset of individuals at increased risk. This approach is supported by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Although anyone can contract monkeypox, data from the latest outbreak shows higher levels of transmission within, but not exclusive to, the social networks of gay, bisexual,

and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM). Therefore, the updated strategy recommends that vaccination should be offered as soon as feasible to GBMSM at highest risk. Targeted pre-exposure vaccination is also recommended for others, including healthcare workers who are at high risk of exposure.

In view of the current epidemiology and vaccine supply available, wider vaccination in low risk GBMSM individuals or the general population is not advised at this time.

NHS England is due to set out details on how eligible people can get vaccinated shortly.

To see the full updated strategy, which includes details of the recommendations for both pre- and post-exposure vaccination, please visit [Monkeypox outbreak: vaccination strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/monkeypox-outbreak-vaccination-strategy).

■ UK Life Sciences

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid): [\[HCWS131\]](#)

The life sciences have played an essential role in helping us to learn to live with COVID-19. The UK's natural strengths, and our world-beating vaccine programme, has allowed us to lead the way in this. As we learn the lessons of COVID-19, it is essential that we take steps to further strengthen UK life sciences and our resilience against both future threats and a possible future resurgence in COVID-19.

To date over £380 million has been invested to secure and scale up the UK's vaccine manufacturing capabilities and we have ambitious plans to invest more alongside industry to further our domestic vaccine resilience. As announced in the Spending Review (October 2021), the Government has now made available £9.6 billion for key COVID-19 programmes and related health spending and continues to work closely with industry to ensure our life sciences sector thrives.

Looking to the future, we are determined to take action to secure further investment into the UK's thriving life science industry and cement our position as a science superpower. To that end, the Government has agreed a detailed Heads of Terms with Moderna to create a strategic partnership over the next decade. A binding contract will be negotiated with Moderna over the coming weeks and, subject to approval of a Full Business Case, will be in place by early Autumn. The proposed partnership, led by the Vaccine Taskforce, will strengthen domestic mRNA capability and better equip the UK to respond to COVID-19 and future health emergencies.

Moderna would establish their Global Research & Development Centre in the UK as part of an R&D Strategic Partnership, siting R&D capability onshore, with academic and wider vaccine ecosystem engagement, including extensive use of the clinical trials network in the UK. Their facilities would support vaccines not just against COVID-19 but other diseases such as flu and RSV. The industry-leading, future-proof design of the plant will permit the addition of capability to manufacture a wide range of medicines and will be a massive boost to the UK's R&D capability. The site will also allow the UK to be better prepared in the event of future health emergencies. The project, which will provide an important boost to the local economy and to the country's life sciences sector, was

developed with the support and collaboration of the Vaccine Taskforce and will be a key investment to bring novel technologies and pandemic resilience onshore in the UK.

A consistent and resilient supply of COVID-19 vaccines will be critical in protecting against a possible future resurgence in COVID-19, ensuring jabs are provided in time to protect those who are most vulnerable to serious COVID-19. That is why one of the objectives given to the Vaccine Taskforce was to strengthen the UK's onshoring capacity and capability in vaccine development, manufacturing and the supply chain to provide resilience for future pandemics.

Moderna has demonstrated expertise in mRNA development and has offered a Strategic Partnership with HMG under which they would invest in a new state of the art manufacturing facility in the UK for the production of respiratory vaccines. This would be capable of accelerating production, with UK priority access, in the event of a future health emergency.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Gulf Cooperation Council Trade Negotiations Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS127\]](#)

Today I am formally launching free trade negotiations between the UK and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where I am meeting the GCC Secretary General, His Excellency Dr Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, and Ministers from the six GCC Member States.

In line with our commitments to scrutiny and transparency, the Department for International Trade has published, and placed in the House libraries, more information on these negotiations. This includes:

1. The UK's strategic case for a UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA)
2. Our objectives for the negotiations
3. A summary of the UK's public consultation on trade with the GCC
4. A scoping assessment, providing a preliminary economic assessment of the impact of the agreement

The Gulf Cooperation Council represents Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These 6 countries are home to 54 million people and have a collective economy of £1.2 trillion.^[1]

The GCC is equivalent to the UK's seventh largest export market, and total trade was worth £33.1 billion in 2021. An FTA would be a substantial opportunity for both our economies and a significant moment in the UK-GCC relationship. It will grow the economy, support jobs and the levelling up agenda.

Government analysis shows that an FTA is expected to increase trade by at least 16%, add at least £1.6 billion a year to the UK economy and contribute an additional £600 million or more to annual UK workers' wages.

All regions and nations of the UK are set to benefit from a trade deal with the GCC, supporting the government's levelling up agenda. Industries outside of London are expected to benefit most, with the East Midlands, West Midlands, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber in line for the greatest proportional gains.^[2]

The GCC countries are undergoing a period of economic change and they all have ambitious Vision Strategies, which highlight areas for future economic growth and development. Demand for international products and services is expected to grow rapidly to £800 billion by 2035, a 35% increase, which will create significant opportunities for UK firms. Now is the time to strike an ambitious and modern trade deal.

A strong trading relationship will allow the UK to play to our strengths as a manufacturing powerhouse and a world leader in technology, cyber, life sciences, creative industries, education, AI, financial services and renewable energy.

UK businesses in these industries have a role to play in supporting the GCC countries as they diversify their economies to move away from a reliance on fossil fuels and towards knowledge-based and green economies. The UAE, for example, has set a target of generating 50% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2050.

UK goods exporters could benefit from reduced or zero tariffs, making their products more competitive in the GCC market. For example, UK clothing, ceramics and wind turbine parts currently face tariffs of up to 15%. British farmers and food and drink producers can also benefit from new export opportunities for products including cereals (up to 25% tariff) and chocolate (up to 15% tariff), since the GCC countries import virtually all of their food. [3]

The UK and GCC countries share an important investment partnership, with at least £30 billion already invested in each other's economies, and an FTA will help to strengthen this even further. This will support jobs throughout the UK and the GCC countries.

The UK will continue to uphold our high environmental, labour, food safety and animal welfare standards in our trade agreement with the GCC.

The first round of FTA negotiations will take place over the summer. As negotiations progress, I will ensure that Parliamentarians, UK citizens and businesses are provided with regular updates.

^[1]IMF estimate for 2021, World Economic Outlook April 2022

^[2]Based on the percentage increases in the scoping assessment

[3] Tariffs in these sectors are mostly 5% across the GCC where in some cases individual countries charge higher tariffs on specific products. Note that tariffs on chocolate does not include products containing alcohol.

■ UK-Ukraine Infrastructure Summit

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS124\]](#)

On Friday 17 June, we hosted a UK-Ukraine Infrastructure Summit in London. The Summit, with Prime Minister of Ukraine, Denys Shmyhal and Minister of Infrastructure of

Ukraine, Olexandr Kubrakov, brought together Ukrainian Ministers and business leaders for talks on rebuilding Ukraine after the conflict and ensuring its long-term prosperity.

Discussions identified where UK companies have world-class skills that can support reconstruction efforts - such as digital infrastructure, water and sanitation, energy, homes, and transport.

During the Summit, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ukraine which set out elements of UK support for reconstruction efforts and established a joint task force, which will help build partnerships between UK and Ukrainian businesses to assist the reconstruction of infrastructure in and around Kyiv.

The task force will support greater collaboration between the UK's world-class infrastructure, energy, and transport companies and Ukrainian public organisations and private sector businesses. This will help plan for the future as well as repairing damaged and destroyed infrastructure, including transport systems, homes, and bridges more efficiently, safely and sustainably.

The UK has already committed to provide a combined economic, humanitarian, and military support package to Ukraine worth over \$3 billion. UK Export Finance has also pledged to retain its £3.5 billion worth of financial support for trade to Ukraine – helping the country to fund its reconstruction projects and allowing UK exporters and Ukrainian buyers to access the finance they need to trade commercially.

The UK has introduced one of the largest and most severe packages of economic sanctions against Russia. Measures cover over £4 billion worth of products that are traded with Russia, 1,000 individuals and 100 entities in key sectors such as defence, crippling Putin's war machine.

We also announced changes to trade remedy measures relating to the conflict. This includes reallocating ringfenced market access for steel imports from Russia and Belarus to other countries, including Ukraine.

The UK will do everything in its power to support Ukraine's brave fight against Russia's unprovoked invasion and to ensure its long-term security and prosperity.

JUSTICE

■ Introduction of the Bill of Rights

Deputy Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor (Dominic Raab): [\[HCWS129\]](#)

Today the Government is delivering on our manifesto commitment to overhaul the Human Rights Act and replace it with a Bill of Rights, which I am introducing to Parliament today.

This country has a long and proud tradition of freedom which our Bill of Rights will enhance, for example, in respect of free speech and recognition of the role of jury trial. Equally, over the years mission creep has resulted in human rights law being used for more and more purposes, with elastic interpretations that go way beyond anything that

the architects of the Convention had in mind and have not been subject to democratic, legislative oversight. Following the Government's consultation on the Bill of Rights, our reforms will curtail the abuses of human rights, restore some common sense to our justice system, and ensure that our human rights framework meets the needs of the society it serves.

I am grateful to the Chair and panel of the Independent Human Rights Act Review for their valuable report, which has influenced and informed our thinking in preparing both our consultation and the final Bill.

The measures in the Bill of Rights will:

1. Strengthen the right to freedom of speech. We are attaching greater weight to freedom of speech, defined as the exchange of ideas, opinions, information and facts, as a matter of utmost public interest, and widen the responsibility for attaching this greater weight to all public authorities.
2. Recognise the right to jury trial. The Bill recognises the right to trial by jury under, and subject to, the framework set by Parliament and the Scottish and Northern Ireland legislatures.
3. Clarify the interpretation of certain rights. Human rights, especially Article 8, have been used to frustrate the deportation of criminals. The Bill provides clearer criteria for the UK courts in interpreting rights and balancing them with the interests of society in particular in the context of deportation of foreign national offenders. This will restore credibility to the system and ensure we can protect the public by deporting those who pose a serious threat.
4. Reduce burdens on public authorities. We are stopping the imposition of positive obligations on our public services without proper democratic oversight. We will make clear that when public authorities are giving clear effect to primary legislation, they are not acting unlawfully. We will do this by restricting UK courts' power to interpret legislation, as we propose to do for section 3 above. This will deliver greater certainty for public services to do the jobs entrusted to them, without the constant threat of having to defend against expensive human rights claims.
5. Ensure that public protection is given due regard in interpretation of rights. The Bill contains a provision that obliges all those who interpret Convention rights to consider the need to reduce the risk to the public from convicted criminals serving a custodial sentence. This will support the Government's proposed reforms to the Parole Board and strengthen the Government's hand in fighting Article 8 claims from terrorists opposing their placement in Separation Centres.
6. Limit the Bill's territorial jurisdiction. Domestic and Strasbourg case law has extended beyond the intent of the Convention's drafters. The Bill excludes extraterritorial jurisdiction for military operations abroad.
7. Implement a permission stage to ensure trivial cases do not undermine public confidence in human rights. The introduction of a permission stage will ensure that courts focus on serious human rights claims and places responsibility on the

claimant to demonstrate that they have suffered a significant disadvantage before a human rights claim can be heard in court.

8. Recognise that responsibilities exist alongside rights. We are recognising that responsibilities exist alongside rights and ensuring that the appropriateness of paying damages to those who have infringed the rights of others are considered.
9. Strengthen domestic institutions and the primacy of UK law. The Bill empowers UK courts to apply human rights in a UK context, affirming the Supreme Court's independence from the Strasbourg Court. It will make explicit that the UK Supreme Court is the ultimate judicial arbiter.
10. Increase democratic oversight. The Bill makes sure that the balance between our domestic institutions is right, by repealing section 3 to ensure that UK courts can no longer alter legislation contrary to its ordinary meaning and the overall purpose of the law.
11. Enhance Parliament's role in responding to adverse Strasbourg rulings. The Bill enhances the role of Parliament in responding to adverse Strasbourg judgments against the UK. The Bill also affirms Parliament's supremacy in the making of laws.

The issues addressed by the Bill of Rights affect the whole of the UK, and any changes must be made on a UK-wide basis. We will ensure that the framework applies equally, whilst also allowing for difference in how the framework is applied and implemented across the UK. During the consultation period I visited Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to discuss our proposals and we will continue to engage with the Devolved Administrations, civil society and relevant stakeholders across the UK.

The Bill and all of its supporting documentation is available at <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227> copies of which have been presented to Parliament.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Homes for Ukraine: Update

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove): **[HCWS123]**

The Homes for Ukraine scheme will allow eligible children and minors under the age of 18 who have already applied through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to come to the UK without a parent or guardian, the Government announced today (22 June).

This policy will initially apply to the 1,000 children who have already applied to the Home Office but are unable to travel as they are not travelling or reuniting with a parent or guardian.

After working closely with the Ukrainian Government, the changes will enable a child to apply for a visa if they have proof of parental consent. This must be certified by an authority approved by the Ukrainian Government such as notary authorities or Ukrainian consul abroad.

Extensive sponsor checks will also be carried out by local authorities ahead of any visa being granted, with councils able to veto any sponsor arrangements they deem unsuitable.

The sponsor should also, except in exceptional circumstances, be someone who is personally known to the parents.

The Government is working with the Ukrainian Government, devolved administrations, local authorities and charities and voluntary groups.