

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 28 June 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:38 P.M., 28 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

■ **Attorney General: Consultants**

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[22548\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how much her Department spent on consultancy fees in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

The Attorney's General Office spent £7,000 in the 2020/21 financial year and £4,450 in the 2021/22 financial year on consultancy services. The figures for the last five years are available in the table below.

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
£0	£0	£0	£7,000	£4,450

■ **Roads: Accidents**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[23706\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the Crown Prosecution Services threshold for deciding whether to prosecute road death offences.

Alex Chalk:

The threshold for deciding whether to prosecute offences relating to fatal road traffic collisions in Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) cases is the same threshold that is used for all offences.

The CPS, in making decisions on whether or not a case should be prosecuted, will always apply the two-stage test set out in the [Code for Crown Prosecutors](#) (the Code).

The Code is issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) under section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 and gives guidance to prosecutors on the general principles to be applied when making decisions about prosecutions. It has been the subject of frequent reviews and public consultations, most recently in 2018, when the eighth edition was published.

The first stage of the two-stage test for prosecution (the evidential stage) requires the prosecutor to be satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of conviction on the evidence. The second stage (the public interest stage) requires the prosecutor to be satisfied that the prosecution is in the public interest. The case will not proceed unless both stages of the test are met.

The CPS guidance on [Road Traffic - Charging](#) assists prosecutors in charging cases involving fatal road traffic collisions. It outlines the charging standards and factors for consideration when prosecution decisions are taken.

In order to ensure consistency of approach, charging decisions in all fatal collision cases are required to be approved by a Chief Crown Prosecutor (CCP), a Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor (DCCP), or a senior decision-maker nominated for the role by the CCP or DCCP.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Boiler Upgrade Scheme

Darren Jones: [\[22505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications have been made to the Boiler Upgrade Scheme since its launch.

Greg Hands:

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme has received 1,966 applications from 23rd May to 17th June 2022.

■ Business: Government Assistance

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[21116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support local businesses in (a) Bournemouth and (b) England.

Paul Scully:

The Government is investing £375,000 in Dorset's Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to support local businesses in Bournemouth and across Dorset. We have also invested £231,000 in the Dorset Gateway to provide fully funded business support for a range of businesses including SMEs and start-ups. During Covid, we provided nearly £27 billion to local authorities across England through a package of business support including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, business rates relief, grants and loans. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council received £240m of business grant support and reported making over 34,000 payments worth £167m to their businesses.

■ Directors

Margaret Ferrier: [\[21209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of expanding the definition of de facto directors to include natural person directors of corporate directors.

Paul Scully:

The Government plans to make several changes to the rules governing corporate directors, including requirements that corporate directors of limited companies must

be entities with legal personality, directors (or equivalents) of corporate director entities must all be natural persons and be subject to ID verification, and that corporate directors must be UK-registered.

Any person is a de facto director if they assume the status and functions of a company director even if they have not been properly appointed. It is not possible to expand the definition of a de facto director, it being a factual rather than a legal status.

■ Food: Prices

Kate Hollern: [\[22442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on food prices of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report entitled, Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change, published in April 2022, which said that widespread use of bioenergy with carbon capture and storage could use up to 46 per cent of the world's arable land; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Government's Biomass Strategy, which will be published later this year, will establish the role which Bioenergy with Carbon Capture & Storage (BECCS) can play in reducing carbon emissions across the economy and set out how the technology could be deployed. No decision has been made on future BECCS deployment.

■ Heat Pumps

Jim Shannon: [\[21187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to train new heat pump installers in the UK in preparation for the future homes standard being implemented in 2025.

Greg Hands:

The Government is working with industry to ensure that sufficient installers are trained to install heat pumps in advance of the Future Homes Standard being implemented in England in 2025. In 2020 and 2021, the Government spent almost £6 million on the BEIS Skills Training Competition which delivered around 7,000 training opportunities for energy efficiency and low carbon heating supply chains in England. This scheme included training for over 2,000 heat pump installers.

Jim Shannon: [\[21188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to launch a public campaign to increase awareness of heat pumps as a low carbon heating technology.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises public engagement as a vital element for successful decarbonisation of heat and buildings.

The Simple Energy Advice service has had over 1.7 million users, providing homeowners with personal, tailored advice for improving and decarbonising their homes and links to local, accredited, trusted installers. The Government is currently reviewing this service to identify potential improvements and will shortly publish a new heat pump suitability tool and use case studies to help consumers make informed choices about installing heat pumps.

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme launched recently, with information published across consumer-facing websites to raise awareness of the benefits of the scheme.

■ Hydrogen: Exports

Alan Brown:

[\[21234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 18947 on Hydrogen: Exports, how much funding has been provided to companies to produce and export green hydrogen to date; and what future funding streams have been set aside.

Greg Hands:

The Government expects up to 1GW of electrolytic hydrogen capacity to be in operation or construction in the UK by 2025. Support to date has come through innovation programmes, including the £33m Hydrogen Supply competition and its £60m successor. This year, electrolytic projects may apply for capital co-funding, through the £240m Net Zero Hydrogen Fund and revenue support through the first hydrogen business model allocation round. The Government expects the UK industry to be well placed to capitalise on opportunities from the emerging global hydrogen economy as they arise.

■ Innovate UK: Grants

Chi Onwurah:

[\[23743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether Innovate UK uses agile project management as a criteria for performance management for recipients of its grants.

George Freeman:

Projects need to be managed against the plan that has been provided, but the project management methodology is up to the applicant, based on what best meets the needs of the innovation.

■ Sizewell C Power Station

Tom Hunt:

[\[22563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of Sizewell C on levels of employment in Ipswich.

Paul Scully:

The proposed Sizewell C Nuclear Power station is subject to a live planning application, which is entirely separate from the ongoing commercial negotiations on the project. Given the Department's statutory responsibility for determining individual planning applications for energy projects, the Government is unable to comment on specific matters related to this application, including the socio-economic impacts, as this could be seen as prejudicing the decision-making process.

Small Businesses: Energy and Taxation**Jim Shannon:**[\[21184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that small businesses are able to operate in the context of rising energy costs; and if he will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on tax reductions for small businesses.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises the impact rising energy prices is having on small businesses. Extensive engagement continues across government at both ministerial and official level on this situation to understand, and to help mitigate the impacts of, high global energy prices. The Government's priority is to ensure costs are managed and energy supplies maintained.

Tidal Power**Jim Shannon:**[\[21183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the development of tidal power projects; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of developing those projects in Strangford Lough.

Greg Hands:

The Government announced in November that the fourth Contracts for Difference allocation round will feature a £20m annual ringfenced budget for tidal stream energy. This builds on a long and continuing history of government support for the tidal power sector and opens up possibilities for Britain's marine energy sector to play a key role in strengthening energy security and reducing our dependency on fossil fuels.

Energy policy is a transferred matter to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Northern Ireland Executive so tidal stream deployment in Strangford Lough is principally a matter for Northern Ireland Departments.

UK Research and Innovation: Finance**Julian Knight:**[\[21215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to increase funding to (a) UK Research and Innovation and (b) mathematical sciences.

George Freeman:

UKRI's council level allocations were published on 30 May. The total UKRI allocation is £25.1 billion for 2022-25 and will reach its highest ever level in 2024-25 (over £8.8 billion).

This multi-year settlement provides UKRI and its constituent research councils with stability and certainty to deliver world class research and innovation across their portfolio, including in mathematical sciences.

CABINET OFFICE■ **EU Law****Sarah Olney:**[\[23782\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an estimate of the (a) number of civil servants who were involved in and (b) the cost to the public purse of the (i) creation and (ii) maintenance of the Retained EU law dashboard as of 23 June 2022.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

a) The Cabinet Office staff resource for the dashboard was less than 1 FTE.

b) There has been no additional non-pay cost to the public purse by creating the dashboard. The process was led by the Cabinet Office, who commissioned Government Departments to find REUL within their legislation and compile an authoritative account of where REUL sits on the UK statute book.

The dashboard itself is made by the Government Strategic Management Office and is hosted on Tableau Public, which is a free platform for hosting public dashboards. The dashboard will continue to be updated at no additional cost.

■ **Infected Blood Compensation Framework Study: Finance****Drew Hendry:**[\[23752\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the report by Sir Robert Francis entitled, Compensation and Redress for the Victims of Infected Blood, Recommendations for a Framework, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional funding allocations to ensure payments for compensation to those affected by contaminated blood products is not funded from existing health and social care budgets.

Drew Hendry:[\[23753\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the report by Sir Robert Francis entitled, Compensation and Redress for the Victims of Infected Blood, Recommendations for a Framework, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure timely action on implementing compensation for those infected and affected by contaminated blood products.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQ [16932](#) on 20 June.

DEFENCE■ **Antitank Missiles**

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[22360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many anti-tank Javelin missiles the army has as of 20 June 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

For Operational Security reasons, I cannot comment on stock numbers for anti-tank Javelin missiles. However, I can assure the right hon. Member that we monitor stock availability for UK forces and take action, where required, to maintain appropriate stock levels.

■ **Army**

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[21117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the Order of Battle is of the British Army.

James Heappey:

A breakdown of Army units by corps, is provided in the attached table. The units are listed in corps order of precedence and the table includes both reserve and regular units, including training regiments.

Under Future Soldier Plans, the Army is currently reshaping its structures. This means that some details will change as Future Soldier continues to be developed and implemented.

Attachments:

1. Order of Battle [21117_Answer_Table_Order_Of_Battle (1).pdf]

■ **Army: Discharges**

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[21109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel left the British Army in each year from 2017 to date.

Leo Docherty:

The information requested can be found in the following table.

Army Regular Outflow by Financial Year 2016-17 – 2021-22

FINANCIAL YEAR	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Army Outflow	9,775	9,650	9,046	9,533	7,431	8,856
Trained*	7,881	8,329	7,985	7,669	5,361	6,684
Untrained	1,894	1,321	1,061	1,864	2,070	2,172
Officers	949	906	904	936	745	856
Trained*	894	848	854	900	715	805
Untrained	55	58	50	36	30	51
Other Ranks	8,826	8,744	8,142	8,597	6,686	8,000
Trained*	6,987	7,481	7,131	6,769	4,646	5,879
Untrained	1,839	1,263	1,011	1,828	2,040	2,121

*These figures are for all personnel who have outflowed having completed Phase 1 training and include personnel outflowing from Trade Trained Strength and personnel outflowing from Phase 2 training.

Notes/caveats:

1. The figures are for Regular Army only and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service, Mobilised Reserves, Army Reserve and all other Reserves, but includes those personnel that have transferred from GURTAM to UKTAP.
2. Figures show outflow from the Regular Army, both trained and untrained, including personnel leaving the Services, deaths and recalled reservists on release. They do not include promotion from Ranks to Officers or personnel who leave the Army to join the Royal Navy, Royal Marines or Royal Air Force.

■ Defence: Finance

Luke Pollard:

[\[23405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the level of defence inflation for each year in the current spending review period.

Jeremy Quin:

In the first year of the current spending review period, defence inflation, which is the average change in pay and prices of goods and services that make up the defence budget, is estimated to have been 4.1% in 2020-21. The Department does not forecast future levels of defence inflation, as key factors such as pay inflation and contract inflation are subject to high levels of uncertainty.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Iron and Steel

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[23721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the proportion of steel that will be used in the new Fleet Solid Support Ships that will be UK steel.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 7 June 2021 to Question 7747.

Attachments:

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships: Iron and Steel [UIN 7747.docx]

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[23719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs that will be created by the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[23726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of how many jobs the Fleet Solid Support Ship will create in the UK.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 14 September 2021 to Question number 44199.

Attachments:

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships [44199 - Fleet Solid Support Ships.docx]

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[23725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Fleet Solid Support Ship contracts will be awarded.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 May 2022 to Question 2495 to the hon. Member for South Shields (Emma Lewell-Buck).

Attachments:

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships; Procurement [2495 - Fleet Solid Support Ships Procurement.docx]

■ Leuchars Station: Security

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[22546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has been made of the potential impact on security of converting Military Provost Guard Service positions at Leuchars base to civilian posts.

Leo Docherty:

Over the next four years, the Army Guarding Transition Plan (AGTP) will seek to transform Army guarding services, blending the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) workforce with Ministry of Defence Guard Service (MGS) personnel.

Leuchars Station will retain some armed MPGS personnel and, in accordance with Defence Security Policy, will convert certain tasks that do not require an armed guard over to unarmed MGS personnel. This blended model will not affect the security of Leuchars Station and is already an effective and common guarding model utilised successfully at other Army establishments.

■ Navy: Deployment**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[23724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what arrangements are in place for ships within the Carrier Strike Group to receive dry stores from the support ships of other nations during deployment as of 23 June 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

NATO nations maintain equipment that is compatible to enable replenishments at sea for Royal Navy warships, as well as permissions and protocols for re-supply through rotary wing aviation.

■ Tanks: Procurement**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[21112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing Panther KF51s to supplement the British Army's current stock of Main Battle Tanks while they wait for Challenger 3 to be completed.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence is progressing Challenger 3. We have no current intention of procuring Panther KF51 when it is ready for production (which is not the case at present).

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Alcoholic Drinks: Marketing****Neale Hanvey:**[\[21294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations she has received on widening the scope of the Communications Act 2003 to include alcohol marketing and alcohol advertising.

Neale Hanvey:[\[21295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations she has received in support of providing a statutory basis for the regulation of alcohol marketing and alcohol advertising in Great Britain.

Neale Hanvey: [\[21296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what further steps she plans to take to strengthen the regulation of alcohol marketing and alcohol advertising in Great Britain.

Neale Hanvey: [\[21297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with Ofcom to ensure that alcohol advertising is regulated across the range of relevant media including (a) television, (b) radio, (c) cinema and (d) internet-based and other digital media.

Neale Hanvey: [\[21298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has received any representations from the Scottish Government requesting that powers over the regulation of alcohol marketing and alcohol advertising be devolved.

Neale Hanvey: [\[21299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what further steps she plans to take to strengthen the regulation of alcohol marketing and alcohol advertising in relation to sports promotion.

Julia Lopez:

The Secretary of State has received no recent representations, including from the Scottish Government, about widening the scope of the Communications Act 2003 to include alcohol advertising, its statutory regulation or making it a devolved matter. The Secretary of State has also had no recent discussions with Ofcom regarding alcohol advertising.

There are already very stringent regulations in place for the marketing of alcohol in traditional forms of media, including radio, TV, and cinema, and online, as well as in relation to sports promotion, through the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) codes of practice for advertising. If new evidence emerges that clearly highlights major problems with the existing codes of practice, then the ASA has a duty to revisit the codes and take appropriate action.

As part of the Online Advertising Programme the government is currently reviewing how online advertising is regulated in the UK, including legal but harmful content, such as alcohol advertising. The consultation closed on 8 June and will help us determine how to tackle such harms. We hope to publish a Government response in due course.

■ **Broadband: Burton**

Kate Griffiths: [\[22567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to ensure the rollout of gigabit broadband to (a) Croxden, (b) Marchington, (c) Denstone and (d) other rural areas of Burton constituency.

Julia Lopez:

We are investing £5 billion through Project Gigabit so people in hard-to-reach areas can get gigabit broadband. As part of Project Gigabit, we will be launching a regional supplier procurement in Staffordshire, covering Croxden, Marchington, Denstone, and other rural areas in Burton. The procurement will target premises that would not otherwise get gigabit broadband through suppliers' commercial plans.

In preparation, we have conducted an Open Market Review and a Public Review across Staffordshire to survey suppliers' delivery plans and shape the areas that require intervention. The procurement is scheduled to begin between September and November 2022, with a contract expected to be awarded between July and September 2023.

Eligible premises that are not included in the chosen supplier's plans will be able to apply for subsidy via the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, which provides a micro-grant of up to £1,500 for residents and up to £3,500 for businesses towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband.

Constituents in Burton have made good use of the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme; to date, approximately 80 premises in the constituency have claimed and received payment for a voucher through the scheme, with approximately 200 further premises awaiting completion, for a combined value of over £550,000.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Consultants**

Wendy Chamberlain:[\[22551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much her Department spent on consultancy fees in the last five years.

Julia Lopez:

The Department has spent the following amount on consultancy services in the past 5 financial years. Values include VAT that is non-recoverable, whilst VAT that is recoverable has been deducted accordingly. The values for FY21/22 are subject to change following audit and the final value will be published in the DCMS Annual Report and Accounts FY21/22.

	FY17/18	FY18/19	FY19/20	FY20/21	FY21/22*
Consultancy	£2,700,000.00	£3,300,000.00	£3,900,000.00	£16,600,000.00	£17,512,000.00

■ **Internet: Older People**

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[21173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people over the age of 60 who are unable to access online services.

Chris Philp:

Earlier this year, it was reported that Ofcom's Media Literacy Tracker Computer-assisted telephone Interviewing survey found that of the 3,143 respondents, 26% of the 75+ did not have internet access at home and 8% of those 65-74 also did not have access.

It is research like this that is behind the government's focus on building a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone. DCMS is responsible for coordinating HMG digital inclusion policy, and aims to ensure that as many people as possible, no matter their age, have internet access and a base level of digital skills.

■ Tourism: Bournemouth**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[20225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is providing funding to Bournemouth Tourism Centre.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Bournemouth Tourist Information Centre forms part of the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for Bournemouth. Bournemouth engages with the DCMS's arms-length body and the national tourist board, VisitEngland.

DMO funding varies greatly but generally they receive their funding from or a combination of local authority and private sector funding and membership fees.

During the pandemic, VisitEngland ran the Destination Management Resilience Fund. Funding from this was awarded to Bournemouth through their Coastal Business Improvement District, with the aim of alleviating the financial pressure many DMOs in all regions of England were facing.

■ Tourism: Bournemouth East**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[20224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has plans to increase tourism in Bournemouth East constituency.

Nigel Huddleston:

As set out in the government's Tourism Recovery Plan, we are committed to supporting the tourism industry's return to pre-pandemic levels across England including Bournemouth East and other coastal destinations.

DCMS's arms-length body and the national tourist board, VisitBritain, promotes Bournemouth and other coastal destinations on their websites and social media.

VisitBritain works with Bournemouth's Destination Management Organisation who attend their best practice calls and have engaged in discussions related to marketing activity. Bournemouth engaged with VisitBritain's Escape the Everyday campaign to create dedicated content and itineraries. VisitBritain has also supported specific initiatives, such as the Beach Check App, which was aligned to responsible travel.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Gareth Thomas:

[\[23704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of adopting the UNICTRAL Model Law 2017 for UK-Australia trade; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

In the UK Australia Free Trade Agreement both parties agreed to “...*maintain a legal framework governing electronic transactions consistent with the principles of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce...*” and to “...*recognise the importance of developing mechanisms to facilitate the use of electronic transferable records.*”

In the Queen’s Speech, the Government committed to implementing the recommendations made by the Law Commission for England and Wales by legislating to put electronic documents on the same legal footing as paper documents, thereby delivering the principles of the UN Commission On International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law.

Reform in this area is a G7 commitment made under DCMS Secretary of State’s Digital Track of the UK G7 Presidency and confirmed by the Carbis Bay G7 Leaders’ Summit Communique.

■ Video Recordings: Disinformation

Damien Moore:

[\[22516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the role of technology companies in preventing the harmful use of deepfake technology.

Chris Philp:

The Government recognises the challenges digitally manipulated content such as deepfakes pose.

The Online Safety Bill requires service providers to tackle serious and illegal forms of manipulated media. All services in scope of the Bill will need to proactively remove and prevent users from being exposed to priority illegal content. This could include deepfake material where it is linked to existing priority offences, such as extreme or revenge pornography. Service providers will also need to prevent children from accessing content, including deepfakes, which is harmful or inappropriate. Major platforms will also need to set out clearly their terms of service in relation to priority content that is legal but harmful to adults, which may include deepfake content. They will need to enforce these terms of service consistently.

The Government has also asked the Law Commission to review the criminal law related to intimate images. This review is sponsored by the Ministry of Justice and includes ‘deepfake’ pornography. The Law Commission will publish its final report and recommendations later this year.

WiFi: Urban Areas**Tom Hunt:**[\[22562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of the impact of free public Wi-Fi on footfall in town centres.

Julia Lopez:

The Department has not made an assessment on the impact of free public Wi-Fi on footfall in town centres. However, we know that good quality digital infrastructure, including in public spaces, has substantial social and economic benefits, and this can play a role in supporting our broader policy objectives, including Levelling Up. We are developing a Wireless Infrastructure Strategy to set out a strategic framework for the development, deployment and adoption of 5G and future networks.

Youth Investment Fund: Travellers**Cat Smith:**[\[21216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much and what proportion of the funds allocated from the Youth Investment Fund have been to organisations working with Gypsy, Roma and/or Traveller communities.

Cat Smith:[\[21217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her strategy is for ensuring that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people are reached by youth work in England.

Nigel Huddleston:

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient youth services in line with local need. Before securing such services, local authorities are required to take steps to ascertain the views of young people in their area and must take those views into account when deciding on the services to be provided. Funding for these services come from the Local Government settlement, which was over £12 billion last year. DCMS are currently reviewing the guidance associated with the statutory duty.

DCMS funds Universal Youth Services that are open to all young people and is investing £560 million over the next 3 years in a new National Youth Guarantee, so that by 2025 every young person will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and opportunities to volunteer.

Phase One of the Youth Investment Fund, administered by BBC Children in Need, has delivered £12 million of funding this year to over 400 local youth organisations in levelling up priority areas in England. Five organisations working with Gypsy, Roma and/or Traveller communities were awarded funding. The grants have a total value of £202,346 which represents 1.7% of the total amount awarded. Phase Two of the Youth Investment Fund is expected to open in summer 2022.

■ Youth Services: Finance

Cat Smith: [\[21220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of long-term funding for youth services.

Nigel Huddleston:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28/04/22 to Question [159010](#).

■ Youth Work

Cat Smith: [\[21218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans she has for strengthening the duty on local authorities to provide youth work services.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS officials are currently reviewing the statutory duty and its associated guidance to assess its effectiveness after a call for responses from key youth stakeholders. We will publish the outcomes of the review in due course.

■ Youth Work: Training

Cat Smith: [\[21219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions officials in her Department have had with their counterparts in the Department for Education on the adequacy of youth work training places.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS is the department responsible for the youth sector workforce and is committed to supporting its development. DCMS funds the National Youth Agency to set professional standards, qualifications and a curriculum for youth work, including a new youth work apprenticeship and free-to-access training. DCMS bursaries have fully-funded hundreds of individuals to gain youth work qualifications who otherwise may have been excluded due to cost.

EDUCATION**■ Apprentices: Special Educational Needs**

Tom Hunt: [\[22561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of supported apprenticeships on (a) improving the confidence and (b) the future employability of SEND pupils.

Alex Burghart:

Apprenticeships are jobs and are available for all people of all backgrounds, including people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to start an exciting career in a variety of industries.

In recent years, the department has seen an improved representation of learners who have declared SEND starting apprenticeships, and we want this to continue. The department has improved its 'find an apprenticeship' service to allow people to identify Disability Confident employers offering opportunities and ensuring apprenticeships are available to all.

In partnership with the Disability Rights UK, the department has launched a Disabled Apprentice Network to provide valuable insight and evidence on how to attract and retain disabled people into apprenticeships. Disability Rights UK published a report during National Apprenticeship Week 2022 to support employers to improve the diversity of their apprenticeship programmes, whilst highlighting the barriers people may face when undertaking an apprenticeship. In this report, the apprentices identified the opportunity to build confidence, skills, and networks with people with different experiences and gain paid work experience as the key points which influenced them towards undertaking an apprenticeship.

To ensure that more people who declare learning difficulty or disability (LDD) feel confident to undertake apprenticeships, the department has lowered the English and maths requirements to apprenticeships for a defined group of individuals with LDD. We have also introduced British Sign Language (BSL) as an alternative to English Functional Skills for those who have BSL as their first language.

Furthermore, the department makes £1,000 payments to employers and providers for taking on 16 to 18 year olds, or those aged 19 to 24 with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. We also offer £150 per month to help providers make reasonable adjustments for eligible apprentices with special educational needs. Providers can claim additional funding if the cost of support exceeds this rate.

More widely, the department is investing up to £18 million over the next three years to build capacity in the supported internships programme, providing extra support to people with EHC plans to build the necessary skills they need to secure and sustain paid employment or transition into an apprenticeship if they wish to do so.

■ Children's Centres

Helen Hayes:

[23781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many designated Sure Start Children's Centres there were in each local authority in (a) 2010 and (b) 2021.

Will Quince:

Data on Sure Start children's centres and children's centre linked sites has been supplied by local authorities via the department's Get Information about Schools database portal since 18 September 2017. This data is available at: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>.

Based on the information supplied by local authorities, the attached table provides details of the number of children's centre sites by local authority in 2010 and 2021. Councils are reconfiguring services to deliver them more efficiently. If a council decides to close a children's centre, statutory guidance is clear that they should

demonstrate that local children and families would not be adversely affected, and local areas continue to have sufficient children's centres to meet their needs.

Attachments:

1. 23781_table [23781_data.pdf]

■ **Education: Publishing**

Andrew Lewer:

[\[23395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposals relating to the curriculum Arms-Length Body in the Schools Bill on educational publishers across the country; and if he will take steps to ensure that educational publishers are able to compete on equitable terms.

Mr Robin Walker:

As announced in the Schools White Paper, the department will establish a new arm's length curriculum body, building on the success of Oak National Academy's work during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will work with thousands of teachers to co-design, create, and continually improve packages of optional, free, adaptable digital curriculum resources and video lessons. These optional resources will be available across the UK, helping teachers deliver a high-quality curriculum.

Teachers in the UK benefit from a diverse commercial education resources market that offers a range of materials to support high-quality planning and teaching. The curriculum body will work with the market, leading a broad and inclusive national process that will involve commercial education resource suppliers as well as teachers, schools, school trusts, Subject Associations, National Centres of Excellence, and many others, as it develops and delivers its support offer for schools.

Building on our existing understanding, the department is currently working with commercial organisations to gather further information that will help us to understand the potential effect on the market. It is important to us that areas of the market that offer high-quality, carefully sequenced resources that meet teachers' needs can continue doing so. Opportunities for educational publishers and other partners to work with the curriculum body will be open to all across the sector.

■ **English Language: Education**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[22474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to provide Ukrainian refugees with English language training to support their ability to work in the UK.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[22477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to provide (a) basic, (b) intermediary and (c) advanced English language tuition to (i) Ukrainian and (ii) all other refugees.

Alex Burghart:

The department knows that language skills are crucial to help people integrate into life in England, as well as to break down barriers to work and further learning.

The government is committed to supporting all Ukrainians in the UK to give them the same access to education and childcare as a UK citizen. All Ukrainian adults and their family members supported through the Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, and Ukraine Extension Scheme have been made immediately eligible for education and training funded through the adult education budget (AEB), and are exempt from the 3-year residency requirement as per the current AEB funding rules. This includes English for speakers of other languages provision.

Currently, approximately 60% of the AEB is devolved to 9 Mayoral Combined Authorities and delegated to the Mayor of London acting through the Greater London Authority. These authorities are responsible for the provision of adult education and allocation of the AEB in their local areas. The Education and Skills Funding Agency is responsible for the remaining AEB in non-devolved areas where colleges and training providers have the freedom and flexibility to determine how they use their AEB to meet the needs of their communities.

Departmental officials and I continue to work closely with colleagues across government to consider where further support may be necessary.

■ Pupils: Per Capita Costs**Tom Hunt:**[\[18993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what was the average funding per pupil in mainstream schools in (a) Ipswich and (b) England in each of the last three years.

Mr Robin Walker:

This 2022/23 financial year, schools in the Ipswich constituency area are attracting an average of £5,089 per pupil through the schools national funding formula (NFF). This compares to a national average of £5,358 per pupil through the NFF.

In the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, a further national increase in the core schools budget of £1.6 billion in the 2022/23 financial year was announced. This has been allocated to schools through the schools supplementary grant (SSG). Schools in the constituency attracted an additional £149 per pupil on average in the 2022/23 financial year through the SSG, compared to a national average of £156. This is additional to the NFF figures set out above.

In the 2021/22 financial year, schools in the Ipswich constituency area attracted an average of £4,944 per pupil through the NFF. The national average in 2021/22 was £5,212.

In the 2020/21 financial year, schools attracted an average of £4,575 per pupil through the NFF, when the national average was £4,828 per pupil. These figures do not include the funding for the teachers' pay grant and teachers' pension employer contribution grant, which were allocated as separate grants in 2020/21. This funding

was rolled into the NFF from 2021/22. Therefore, the 2021/22 and 2022/23 NFF figures cannot be directly compared to the 2020/21 figures.

The constituency of Ipswich sees lower levels of funding per pupil than the national average. This is primarily due to the national average including schools in more expensive areas, such as London, that attract higher funding per pupil to reflect the higher costs they face. Schools in Ipswich also have a higher than average number of pupils per school. This means that they receive less than the average, per pupil, in respect of the school-led elements of the NFF that are provided at a fixed rate, such as the lump sum that each school is allocated.

The above figures relate to the amount of funding allocated through the schools NFF. The actual amount of funding schools received may be different, as it is determined by the Suffolk local authority's local funding formula for schools.

On top of this funding, pupil premium funding rates are increasing by 2.7% in the 2022/23 financial year, meaning that the per pupil funding rate will be the highest, in cash terms, since its introduction. For Ipswich, total pupil premium funding will increase to over £5.7 million in the 2022/23 financial year, from £5.3 million this year. This will ensure that this targeted investment continues to support the most disadvantaged children in our schools.

In the 2022/23 financial year, the department will be allocating approximately £2,000 per pupil, for all pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years (FSM6), through the NFF, the pupil premium and a 2022/23 school supplementary grant together.

The department has also committed almost £5 billion for an ambitious, multi-year education recovery plan to support young people to catch up on missed learning and invest in what we know works: teacher training, evidence-based support, including tutoring and extra education opportunities. This includes the time-limited recovery premium grant providing over £300 million of additional funding for state-funded schools in the 2021/22 academic year and £1 billion across the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years.

Ipswich has been selected as a Priority Education Investment Area (EIA). As a result, the department will offer intensive investment, in addition to the significant support available to all EIAs, so that we can drive improvement further and faster.

In all 55 EIAs, the department will be taking steps to support underperforming schools to make the necessary improvements, build trust capacity, support improved digital connectivity in the schools that need this most and offer the levelling up premium, worth up to £3,000 tax free, to eligible teachers. Our additional support to Priority EIAs includes a share of around £40 million of funding to address local needs, such as those acting as a barrier to improvement at primary and priority access to a number of other department programmes.

■ Religion: Education**Tim Farron:****[21151]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to introduce a national professional qualification for religious education leaders.

Mr Robin Walker:

National professional qualifications (NPQs) are a national, voluntary suite of qualifications, designed to support the professional development of teachers and school leaders.

NPQs are based on the latest evidence of what works and have been developed by teachers, leaders, and education experts, and are designed to allow for practical implementation in their own settings across the country. NPQs provide teachers access to the best possible in-role training and support, both in specialist areas of practice, such as leading the teaching and learning of a subject, key stage, or phase, and in leadership roles, too.

Each NPQ is underpinned by a content framework. The content of the NPQ frameworks build on and complement one another, to deliver a shared understanding of the principles of effective professional development.

While it is not subject-specific, the NPQ in Leading Teaching will enable professionals to develop expert teaching practice within their relevant context through the use of subject-specific, phase-specific, or domain-specific exemplification materials.

NPQs are also designed to allow professionals to develop expert teaching and leadership practice to apply this to their relevant context.

NPQs can and should be supplemented by a variety of subject-specific professional development, including that which is provided by schools, trusts, subject associations, charities, curriculum hubs, Oak National Academy, and other private training organisations.

The government is committed to delivering 500,000 teacher training opportunities over the next 3 years. As part of this, we are investing in training scholarships so that all teachers and school leaders in state-funded schools can access NPQs for free over the next three academic years.

The department encourages all Religious Education leaders to consider enrolling on a fully-funded NPQ. To do so, they should contact their local Teaching School Hub in the first instance. Further information about NPQs and the content frameworks can be accessed on: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms>.

■ Sign Language: Curriculum

Jim Shannon:

[\[22429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has had discussions with the Minister for Women and Equalities on the potential merits of including basic sign language in the social skills curriculum.

Mr Robin Walker:

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

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has not had discussions with my right hon. Friend, the Minister for Women and Equalities, on including basic sign language in a social skills curriculum.

The government does not set out guidance on a social skills curriculum for schools in England and there are no plans to make British Sign Language (BSL) part of the statutory curriculum. The statutory curriculum, including the national curriculum, is just one element in the wide-ranging education of every child which makes up the broader school curriculum.

Schools are free to offer BSL as part of their wider school curriculum, to meet the needs of their pupils if they wish.

The department is working with Ofqual and subject experts to develop subject content for a British Sign Language GCSE. We aim to consult publicly on the draft subject content in autumn 2022.

■ Teachers: Recruitment

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[23222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of current routes into the teaching profession.

Mr Robin Walker:

Following the department's commitment to review the initial teacher training (ITT) market in the 2019 Teacher Recruitment and Retention strategy, we welcomed the expert advisory group's recommendations to define all ITT that leads to qualified teacher status within three core routes of undergraduate, postgraduate fee-funded, and postgraduate employment-based.

By 2024, a reformed ITT provider market will be delivering quality-assured training that places a greater emphasis than ever before on embedding structured practice into courses, ensuring trainees are ready to thrive in the classroom in their early careers. The department is also working with stakeholders as part of the scheduled review of the employment-based postgraduate teacher apprenticeship route.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Environment Agency: Prosecutions****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[18822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the number of prosecutions undertaken by the Environment Agency has declined every year since 2007.

Rebecca Pow:

Taking cases forward to prosecution is only one part of the Environment Agency's (EA) overall enforcement activity. Other interventions such as Notices requiring action and civil sanctions are quicker and can be effective in securing good outcomes for the environment in different ways.

The Regulatory Enforcement & Sanctions (RES) Act 2008 made civil sanctions available to the EA to use from 2011. The number of enforcement undertakings accepted by the EA under the RES Act has nearly doubled from 2016 to 2020. This has included, for example, the compensation of £975,000 made by Wessex Water following sewage pollution at Swanage Harbour in November 2018.

The EA focuses prosecutions on the most serious and harmful pollution cases, allowing it to focus resources where the impact is greatest. We still take the most serious cases to court. The size of fines for environmental offences are at the highest they have ever been, and custodial sentences are now being imposed regularly for environmental offences.

■ Joint Unit for Waste Crime: Finance**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[18813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the current funding model for the Joint Unit on Waste Crime.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has ensured that recent additional funding to the Environment Agency (EA) to tackle waste crime is now part of its baseline, and so, the EA is able to prioritise funding for the Joint Unit for Waste Crime more effectively.

■ Rivers**Justin Madders:**[\[22447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of legislation concerning riparian rights and responsibilities; and if he will make an assessment of the potential implications of that legislation on flood risks.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to tackling flood risk and increasing the nation's resilience. We expect those responsible for all assets - including riparian landowners - to ensure ongoing maintenance and timely repairs where necessary. To support this the Government has commissioned a review of the statutory powers, roles and responsibilities in relation to assets and watercourse maintenance, including riparian landowners. It is expected to report in due course.

■ Wheat: Prices**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[21241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of rising wheat costs on catering businesses; and whether he plans to take further steps to support (a) small- and (b) medium-sized catering businesses.

Victoria Prentis:

All food businesses, including those operating in the catering sector, are facing challenges due to rising costs stemming from factors such as energy price increases, supply chain disruption and rising labour costs.

Defra has assessed that the pressures on the grain industry will result in impacts being felt in rising prices for cereal products such as bread. Grain used in animal feed will also impact on meat prices, although the timing of effect will vary across products, with poultry quickest impacted due to shorter production timescales.

Defra has well established ways of working with the industry and across Government to gather evidence and monitor risks that may arise. This includes extensive, regular and ongoing engagement in preparedness for, and response to, issues with the potential to cause disruption to food supply chains.

The Government recently published its Food Strategy, and this sets out a plan to transform our food system to ensure it is fit for the future. As part of this, the Government is developing an ambitious and transformational approach to public sector food and catering. We want the public sector to lead by example, championing small and medium enterprises (SMEs). We are consulting on public sector food and catering policy to reflect this ambition. The proposals aim to open public sector procurement to a wider range of businesses and make public procurement more accessible to SMEs.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Afghanistan: Earthquakes****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[23785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has taken steps to provide aid for people affected by the recent earthquake in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

The UK is providing £2.5 million to help give immediate life-saving support to people in Afghanistan affected by the earthquake on Wednesday 22 June. £2 million will go to the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) to provide shelter, healthcare, water and sanitation. The IFRC is already working on the ground to respond and help address the urgent humanitarian needs - including in Khost and Paktika, the two provinces most heavily impacted. A further £500,000 will go to the Norwegian Refugee Council to provide shelter and cash assistance to those affected. UK supported international partners, co-ordinated by the United Nations are delivering assistance and assessing ongoing humanitarian needs. The UK is in direct contact with them to offer assistance and stands ready to consider any requests for aid or support. UK funding is channelled through UN partners and NGOs and no funding goes to or through the Taliban.

■ **Afghanistan: Minority Groups****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[23786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent progress she has made on providing support to persecuted minority communities in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

The UK announced £286 million of aid for Afghanistan this financial year. Our humanitarian aid is distributed based on needs and targeted to reach the most vulnerable. Through our Conflict Stability and Security Fund programming, we are also supporting projects that seek to enhance Afghan capacity to reduce local-level tensions, and monitor and reduce human rights abuses against at-risk groups.

We continue to raise human rights, including rights of religious and ethnic minorities, in our meetings with the Taliban, including in visits of senior officials to Kabul in October 2021 and February 2022 and other meetings with Taliban leaders. We call on them to respect international law and uphold the human rights of all Afghans, including ethnic and religious minorities.

■ Afghanistan: Sikhs

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[23787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to prevent the persecution of Sikhs in Afghanistan, following the attack on the Karte Parwan Gurdwara in Kabul.

James Cleverly:

FCDO officials continue to raise human rights, including rights of religious and ethnic minorities, in our meetings with the Taliban, including in visits of senior officials to Kabul in October 2021 and February 2022 and other meetings with Taliban leaders. We call on them to respect international law and uphold the human rights of all Afghans. We are also encouraging them to engage in dialogue with a range of Afghans and to establish inclusive governance which better represents Afghanistan's diverse ethnic and religious groups. We continue to work closely with international partners to hold those responsible for human rights abuses to account. We supported a UN Human Rights Council resolution to establish a Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan (appointed April 2022) and worked through the UN Security Council to strengthen human rights reporting and monitoring in the new mandate for the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA).

■ Central Africa: Armed Conflict

Drew Hendry: [\[23754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with his Rwandan counterparts on (a) the resurgence in violence by M23 and (b) regional security in Central Africa.

Drew Hendry: [\[23755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the East African Community (EAC) on the impact of UK-Rwanda relations on regional security following the signing of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership, in the context of the EAC's regional force's announced deployment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to combat M23.

Vicky Ford:

In recent weeks we have raised our concerns about the increase in violence, hate speech and increased movement of armed groups with the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda and Rwanda, as well as the leadership of the UN Peacekeeping Mission, MONUSCO. The UK engages frequently and at a senior level with the Partner States of the East African Community (EAC) on regional security issues through our missions, and in the UK. The Prime Minister discussed these issues with Rwandan President Kagame during CHOGM last week and I [Minister Ford] most recently spoke with the Rwandan Foreign Minister on 16 June and the DRC Minister for Planning on 24 June to re-iterate the need for all sides to continue to work together to deliver de-escalation on the ground and an end to hate speech.

The UK is committed to supporting regional efforts to build stability and reduce violence in DRC, and we welcome the recent meeting of regional Heads of State in Nairobi towards this end. We will continue to closely monitor the situation, including developments on the deployment of the EAC's regional force.

■ **Developing Countries Trading Scheme: Human Rights**

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[21250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what human rights safeguards will be included in her Department's proposed Developing Countries Trading Scheme.

Amanda Milling:

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

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.

■ **Developing Countries: Development Aid**

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[21282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to her Department's International Development Strategy, what her Department's strategic approach is to investing in fragile and conflict affected states; and which fragile and conflict affected state is her priority.

Amanda Milling:

As our strategy sets out, aid will be spent where it is most needed and effective. We will target how we invest in fragile states and conflict effected states. In these contexts our development partnerships will tackle the root causes of instability, conflict and human suffering. Our work will focus on delivering honest, reliable investment, providing women and girls with the freedom they need to succeed, stepping-up our life-saving humanitarian work and taking forward our commitments on climate change, nature and global health.

■ **Development Aid**

Sarah Champion: [\[21195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which bilateral and multilateral Development Finance Institutions have received Government funding during the (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2021-22 financial year.

Vicky Ford:

During the 2021-22 financial year, the UK provided Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding in the form of capital and/or core replenishment contributions to the following Development Finance Institutions (DFIs): British International Investment; African Development Bank; Asian Development Bank; Caribbean Development Bank; and International Finance Corporation. During the 2022/23 financial year, up to 22nd June 2022, no ODA funding in the form of capital and/or core replenishment contributions has been provided to any of the above DFIs.

Sarah Champion:[\[21196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much UK Government funding has been spent through Development Finance Institutions in (a) Africa, (b) Asia, (c) the Americas and the Caribbean and (d) the Pacific in the 2021-22 financial year.

Vicky Ford:

Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) provide finance to the private sector in emerging markets and developing economies using a combination of capital from shareholders and returns from historic investments. Multilateral DFIs also use their capital to borrow from financial markets. The table below sets out UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding provided in the form of new capital and/or core replenishment contributions to each DFI during the 2021-22 financial year. It also sets out the total amount of financing provided by each DFI during the 2021-22 financial year.

DFI	REGIONS COVERED BY THE DFI	UK ODA FUNDING IN 2021-22[1][2] (£M)	TOTAL PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITMENTS FOR RELEVANT REGIONS IN FY 2021-22[3][4]	UK SHAREHOLDING (%)
			(\$BN)	
Bilateral DFI				
British International Investment (BII)	Africa and South Asia	£661m	\$2.3bn[5]	100%
Multilateral DFIs				
African Development Bank* (AfDB)	Africa	£212m	\$2.1bn	1.7%

DFI	REGIONS COVERED BY THE DFI	UK ODA FUNDING IN 2021-22[1][2] (£M)	TOTAL PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITMENTS FOR RELEVANT REGIONS IN FY 2021-22[3][4] (\$BN)	UK SHAREHOLDING (%)
Asian Development Bank* (AsDB)	Asia; the Pacific	£29.4m	\$4.3bn	1.9%
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank* (AIIB)	Asia, the Americas; the Pacific	£0m	\$2.0bn[6]	2.9%
Caribbean Development Bank* (CDB)	The Americas and the Caribbean	£5.25m	\$9m	9.3%
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development* (EBRD)	Central Asia; North Africa and	£0m	\$1.7bn[7]	8.5%
International Finance Corporation (IFC)	Africa; Asia; the Americas and the Caribbean; the Pacific	£39.9m	\$20.7bn[8]	4.7%

* These Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) provide financing to both the public and private sector, unlike other DFIs in the list.

[1] This table captures the UK's ODA funding in the form of new capital and core replenishment contributions only. The UK also provides some funding through Trust Funds to some of these DFIs for specific bilateral projects.

[2] The UK contributions to the AfDB, AsDB, CDB and EBRD are not used exclusively for private sector investment, as they are by other DFIs in the list.

[3] DFIs have different reporting periods. Data on total private sector commitments is reported for the following period for each DFI in the table above: i) BII: Jan-Dec 2021; ii) AfDB: Jan - Dec 2021; iii) AsDB: Jan-Dec 2021; iv) AIIB: 6th April 2021 - 5th April

2022; v) CDB: Jan - Dec 2020; vi) EBRD: Jan-Dec 2021; vii) IFC: July 2020 - June 2021.

[4] Some DFIs only report financing for non-sovereign operations. This is mainly private sector investment but can also include financing for sub-sovereigns.

[5] Converted to USD using an exchange rate of GBP1 = USD 1.22

[6] This is total financing for AIIB non-sovereign operations. The vast majority of this financing falls within the relevant regions, but some financing for projects in other regions (e.g. the Middle East) is also captured.

[7] Converted to USD using an exchange rate of EUR1 = USD 1.054.

[8] Due to IFC Regional classifications, this figure also includes IFC investment commitments (long and short-term) to Europe and the Middle East.

■ Development Aid: Equality

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[21279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she plans to take to ensure that gender equality is integral to the International Development Strategy.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[22538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the International Development Strategy published May 2022, how her Department defines mainstreaming gender equality.

Vicky Ford:

The Foreign Secretary has publicly committed to put women and girls at the heart of foreign and development policy and this is evident in the newly published International Development Strategy. Our new approach is framed around three Es and will be set out in full in the UK's 2022 Women and Girls Strategy. We will: Educate girls, standing up for the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education; Empower women and girls, unlocking the social, economic and political agency of all people; and End Violence, driving international action to end all forms of gender-based violence. We will mainstream action on gender which means addressing the root causes of gender inequality in all our work. As referenced in the International Development Strategy, the UK International Development Act (Gender Equality) 2014 makes it a legal requirement for the UK to consider gender equality in all its Official Development Assistance work.

■ Development Aid: Females

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[21280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the International Development Strategy, what her planned timetable is for publishing the UK's 2022 Women and Girls Strategy.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[21281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional details her Department's Women and Girls Strategy will provide that were not included in the International Development Strategy.

Vicky Ford:

The FCDO will publish a new 'Women and Girls Strategy' in autumn 2022. The Strategy will set out our new, longer-term strategic priorities and our commitments to 2030 on women and girls. It will build on the recently published International Development Strategy and showcase how the UK will take full advantage of our diplomatic and development levers to deliver on the 3Es (Educating girls, Empowering women and girls, and Ending violence against women and girls).

East Africa: Droughts**Mary Kelly Foy:** [\[23795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to her oral answer to the hon. Member for South Staffordshire on 21 June 2022, Official Report, column 706, if he will provide a detailed breakdown of the £72 million of additional support provided to countries east Africa to help tackle the impacts of drought.

Vicky Ford:

The £72 million comprises contributions to Ethiopia (£23.6 million), South Sudan (£3 million), Kenya (£6.15 million) and Somalia (£39.5 million). This funding includes assistance provided in financial years (FY) 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

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.

Female Genital Mutilation**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[21278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to meet the goal set out in the Government's strategy for international development, published on 16 May 2022, to end the practice of female genital mutilation.

Vicky Ford:

The UK continues to be a global leader in supporting the Africa-led movement to accelerate progress towards ending female genital mutilation (FGM). Through our first phase of support to the movement, the UK has supported over 10,000 communities pledge to abandon FGM (2013-2018).

Our second phase of support works with activists and local communities to lead change and hold governments to account. This involves using communication campaigns to stop the silence around FGM, promote open discussion and amplify changing social attitudes. Phase two includes support to the UN Joint Programme to

strengthen laws, policies and systems to end FGM in 17 countries in Africa; and to the World Health Organization to strengthen healthcare systems and support doctors, midwives and nurses help end FGM and care for survivors. We are also investing to generate improved data collection to better guide interventions and effectively measure change in social attitudes and norms.

In addition, our wider portfolio contributes to ending FGM. For example, in Sudan, UK Aid has driven trailblazing community engagement and national advocacy efforts. This programme contributed to the historic achievement of the law criminalising FGM in Sudan in 2020, Article 141. Other UK programmes to prevent violence against women and girls, such as our investment in the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, also support efforts to end FGM.

■ International Law

Sarah Champion: [\[21200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what her policy is on application of restrictive measures against states acting in serious breach of an obligation arising under a peremptory norm of general international law.

Vicky Ford:

The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 (the Sanctions Act) provides the legal framework for the UK to impose, update and lift sanctions autonomously. We use our sanctions regimes as part of an integrated approach to promote our values and interests and to combat state threats, terrorism, cyber-attacks, and the use and proliferation of chemical weapons. Regimes can be either thematic and relate to a particular issue, or geographic relating to a particular country or region.

■ Iran: Nuclear Power

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[21097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps she has taken to help promote the restoration of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

James Cleverly:

We have reached the end of talks in Vienna to restore the nuclear deal. There is a deal on the table that would return Iran to its JCPoA commitments, and return the US to the deal. Iran is currently preventing conclusion of the deal with demands beyond the JCPoA. If Iran does not take the deal in front of them, its continued nuclear escalation will bring about the collapse of the JCPoA. In this scenario, we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies.

■ Mexico: Homicide

Fabian Hamilton: [\[22350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of reports that the majority

of the 6,141 homicides registered in the 170 most violent municipalities in Mexico so far in 2022 were the result of confrontations between organised crime groups; and whether the Mexican Government has requested support from the UK Government in respect of that matter.

Vicky Ford:

Organised crime groups in Mexico have proliferated in recent years and are geographically concentrated, which leads to their competing for territory and an increase in levels of violence in some areas. We assess that organised crime groups have been implicated in numerous killings, acting with impunity and at times in collusion with federal, state and local security officials. We regularly discuss the security situation with the Mexican Government and with British companies operating in Mexico. The UK has supported the Mexican Government's efforts to tackle the underlying security and justice issues as well as addressing impunity and corruption.

■ **Private Infrastructure Development Group**

Sarah Champion:

[\[21197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Government funding has been allocated through the Private Infrastructure Development Group in the (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2021-22 financial year; and which three programmes received the largest amount of such funding for each of those financial years.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government has provided the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) with funding worth £116.5 million in financial year 2021-2022 and intends to provide it with funding of £61million in financial year 2022-23. The three PIDG programmes that received the largest amount of UK Government funding in financial year 2021-2022 were:

- InfraCo Africa Development/Investment: £52,720,000
- InfraCo Asia Development/Investment: £29,025,000
- PIDG Technical Assistance: £19,500,000

InfraCo Africa and InfraCo Asia originate, develop, structure, invest in and manage projects. They can make equity and debt investments in innovative and pioneering projects and remedy the absence of capital.

The allocation of UK Government funding across PIDG programmes in financial year 2022-23 has still to be decided.

Sarah Champion:

[\[21198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what performance targets her Department places on its spending through the Private Infrastructure Development Group.

Vicky Ford:

The Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) is multi-donor funded and jointly owned by six governments (the UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia, Sweden, Germany) and the International Finance Corporation. All Owners have agreed a set of Group wide Tier 1 key performance indicators (KPIs) against which to track PIDG's performance. These are high level metrics that represent the key priorities the Owners have for PIDG and focus on mobilising private investment; investing in the poorest countries; and the impact of investments. These are reported and discussed quarterly with Owners and are as follows:

Tier 1 KPIs

- a. Level of private sector investment mobilised by PIDG through its own investments in projects. Target multiplier is for Private Sector Investment/PIDG commitment in projects reaching financial close: to exceed 3.5x.
- b. Number of Projects in Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Other Low Income Countries. The target for new PIDG investments is that more than 50% are in LDCs.
- c. Number of projects in Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCAS): the target for new PIDG investments is that more than 45% are in FCAS.
- d. Sustainable Development Impact (SDI) Rating - Average SDI Gauge: target is > 64.5.

The SDI rating is a metric that assigns a score to each investment according to its impact on people, planet and the wider economy. These metrics have been in place for 2 years and PIDG have met or exceeded the targets set in 2021 and is on track in 2022. The PIDG Board also sets a number of Tier 2 KPIs which they monitor and also share with Owners on a quarterly basis.

Sarah Champion:[\[21199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the investment performance has been to the UK Government of its spending through the Private Infrastructure Development Group in the last three financial years.

Vicky Ford:

The Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) receives funding from a number of different donors and the UK Government does not receive a dividend. PIDG investment performance is measured according to a number of factors, primarily linked to the impact of the investments delivered for people and planet and the group's long-term trajectory towards financial sustainability. Performance measures include the number of new infrastructure investments delivered, the number of people expected to gain new or improved access from such infrastructure, jobs created, private sector investment leveraged, share of projects in Least Developed Countries, number of investments contributing to empowering women and the carbon intensity of the new investments.

PIDG reports annually on a calendar year on its expected development impact and financial performance and its latest report is available on the PIDG website at

<https://www.pidg.org/our-impact/our-2021-annual-review/>. In 2021, PIDG financially closed 19 projects that are expected to deliver new or improved infrastructure for 8.8 million people. These projects attracted \$2.3 billion of additional finance of which nearly \$1 billion was private sector finance. In addition to these development results, the report also includes a 3-year comparison of value for money metrics tracked by PIDG and its financial results.

■ **Russia: Sanctions**

Holly Lynch:

[\[23346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the process is for determining whether a person should face sanctions in connection with Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

The Government does not comment on our internal assessment processes for sanctions, or speculate who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future. To do this could reduce the impact of designations.

■ **Sri Lanka: Economic Situation**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[21167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the human development and social economic indicators of Sri Lanka in comparison to other SE Asian countries.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is closely monitoring the political, security, and economic situation in Sri Lanka, including the impact on livelihoods. We continue to encourage a peaceful, democratic, and inclusive approach to resolving the current political and economic challenges. The most recent available data (2020) for Sri Lanka indicates that it performs well against South Asia neighbours on high-level human development and social economic indicators, particularly infant mortality rates. However, the available data does not capture the severity of the current economic crisis and impact of recent economic shocks such as Covid-19, the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the floating of the Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR) and Sri Lanka's debt default in May 2022. We have not made a recent assessment comparing Sri Lankan indicators to those in South East Asian countries.

We recognise the difficult economic situation and welcome the start of in-depth discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on reforms needed to bring the economy back to a sustainable path. UK economic support is through multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and United Nations (UN), as underlined by the Prime Minister when he spoke to the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe on 30 May.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[21169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the effect of the amount of foreign exchange from UK tourism and migrant workers on the economy of Sri Lanka in the last three years.

Vicky Ford:

We are closely monitoring the economic situation in Sri Lanka, including foreign exchange data reported by Central Bank of Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan authorities. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism was a key export sector for Sri Lanka, making up almost 30% of total export revenues. However, Sri Lanka's tourism receipts declined by almost 80% in 2020 and fell by a further 60% in 2021. The UK is a key contributor to Sri Lanka's tourism sector. It has been among the top three source markets in the past three years, placed as the second major country of origin for tourists in Sri Lanka in 2019 and 2020, and third in 2021. Remittances from overseas workers have also been an important contributor to Sri Lanka's economy in the past three years, worth around 8% and 9% of Sri Lanka's total GDP in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Despite initially remaining constant in 2020, remittances fell by over 20% in 2021, down to their lowest levels since 2011.

The UK recognises the difficult economic situation and welcomes the start in-depth discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on reforms needed to bring the economy back to a sustainable path. The Prime Minister spoke to the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe on 30 May, and underlined the UK's continued support for the people of Sri Lanka during their current economic difficulties.

■ Sri Lanka: Food Supply

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[21166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of food security in Sri Lanka.

Vicky Ford:

We are closely monitoring the economic situation in Sri Lanka, particularly as it relates to food insecurity. We will be working to support the UN and its agencies in their coordinated response based on the UN's recent joint Humanitarian Needs and Priorities (HNP) Plan, launched on 9 June. This has called for \$47.2 million USD to provide life-saving assistance to 1.7 million people who are most at risk and need immediate support. The HNP Plan includes \$13.94 million USD to support food security and \$16.8 million USD to support agriculture and livelihoods.

The UK Government recognises the difficult economic situation and welcomes the start of in-depth discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on reforms needed to bring the economy back to a sustainable path. The World Bank has announced over \$400 million USD in assistance to provide economic as well as health sector support, with the UK being a major donor to the UN and World Bank.

■ Sri Lanka: Politics and Government

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[21168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the Samurdhi programme in Sri Lanka.

Vicky Ford:

The UK recognises the economic challenges that Sri Lanka is facing. We continue to monitor the economic situation in Sri Lanka closely, including the impact economic issues are having on food security and livelihoods. The existing social protection systems, including the Samurdhi programme, provide essential support to the most vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka and will be crucial at this difficult time.

The Sri Lankan authorities have taken a number of measures to help support the public, including an economic relief package of Rs. 200bn (\$1bn) announced in January 2022. This package includes a Rs. 5000 (\$25) monthly allowance for public sector employees, pensioners and disabled soldiers. Under the scheme, Rs. 1000 (\$5) has been allocated to the beneficiaries of the government's largest welfare programme 'Samurdhi', and a number of taxes and levies have been removed from essential foods and medicines. The Government of Sri Lanka agreed on May 2 to provide a special three-month cash allowance from May to July worth Rs. 13.36 billion to 3.34 million families affected by the current economic crisis, with funding from the World Bank of which the UK is a major donor. We regularly discuss economic policy with the Sri Lankan Government and encourage efforts to improve economic growth and protect vital economic interests such as key industries, commodities, employment and livelihoods.

■ Syria: Development Aid

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[21283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she plans to take to minimise the impact of reductions to UK Aid in Syria.

Amanda Milling:

The UK works closely with our humanitarian partners, including the UN, International and Syrian NGOs, to understand the impact of UK aid spending and will continue to keep this under review. The UK continues to use its position at the UN Security Council to ensure aid access into Syria. In May I [Minister Milling], visited the Turkey-Syria border region and noted the vital work done by the UN and NGOs to support over 4 million people in north west Syria.

The UK remains one of the largest donors to the Syrian crisis, committing over £3.8 billion in UK aid since 2012, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. We have supported millions of people, providing food, clean water, healthcare and education across the whole of Syria. Our focus remains on protecting and prioritising the most vulnerable and ensuring our aid is delivered in the most effective and efficient way.

■ Tropical Diseases: Disease Control

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[22370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK Government (a) has signed or (b) plans to sign the Kigali Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases; and what steps the Government is taking to tackle those diseases in the context of that declaration.

Amanda Milling:

The United Kingdom was pleased to endorse the Kigali Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) at its launch, to support continued progress on delivery of the WHO 2030 road map on NTDs.

In support of the Kigali Declaration, the FCDO will continue to invest in research and innovation in new drugs and diagnostics for diseases of poverty, including NTDs, through world-leading Product Development Partnerships (highly successful public-private partnerships for developing health technologies such as vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics) and other research organisations.

■ Tropical Diseases: Females

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[22371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the impact of neglected tropical diseases on (a) health, (b) education and (c) employment opportunities for women and girls.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[22372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Discrimination Against Persons with Leprosy at the UN Human Rights Council 50th Session in June 2022, what steps her Department plans to take to support leprosy-endemic countries in protecting, promoting and fulfilling the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for persons affected by that disease.

Amanda Milling:

Since January 2021, the UK has invested over £42 million in delivery of services to prevent and treat NTDs, and in strengthening of health systems to provide these essential services. Since January 2021, the UK has also invested £15.6 million in research on NTDs. This has supported research on the treatment and prevention of NTDs including leprosy and female genital schistosomiasis (FGS). These investments have contributed to progress on NTDs and to reducing the burden of these diseases on women and girls.

The UK will continue to invest in research into NTDs and also continue to support countries to strengthen their health systems. This supports countries to ensure that essential services, including those for leprosy and other NTD prevention and treatment, are integrated and accessible to all without discrimination. Additionally, our support to evidenced-based packages of comprehensive sexual and reproductive

health services and ensuring the realisation of rights, supports improving access to a range of health services for women and girls.

■ Tunisia: Politics and Government

Jerome Mayhew: [\[22528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed new Tunisian Constitution on democratic accountability in Tunisia, in the context of the low rates of participation of potential voters in the preceding online consultation.

Jerome Mayhew: [\[22530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) political, (b) economic and (c) social situation in Tunisia; what steps her Department is taking in response to the political roadmap of President Saied; and if she will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

The UK closely monitors the economic and political situation in Tunisia and will continue to do so as the new constitution is published on 30 June and the referendum takes place, scheduled for 25 July. The UK stands ready to play a constructive role as Tunisia addresses significant political and economic challenges. We also regularly emphasise the importance of accountability and inclusive political participation in the democratic process, most recently during the visit of Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, Minister of State for North Africa, in June.

Jerome Mayhew: [\[22529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made representations to the Tunisian Government on the prosecution of members of the Tunisian Parliament which may carry the death penalty.

James Cleverly:

The UK is monitoring legal cases being brought against politicians from the parliament and previous governments, including allegations of irregularities in the 2019 elections. We regularly raise respect for human rights and due legal process with the Tunisian Government.

Duncan Baker: [\[23803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make it her policy not to sign Memorandums of Understanding with the Tunisian Government in the context of President Saied's recent dissolving of Parliament.

James Cleverly:

The UK closely monitors the economic and political situation in Tunisia and will continue to do so as the new constitution is published on 30 June and the referendum takes place, scheduled for 25 July. The UK stands ready to play a constructive role as Tunisia addresses significant political and economic challenges. The UK believes that increasing cooperation and unlocking opportunities is beneficial both for the UK

and Tunisia. Sustainable energy, education, private sector trade and investment and other areas are important for mutual prosperity and the creation of jobs. We also regularly emphasise the importance of accountability and inclusive political participation in the democratic process, most recently during the visit of Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, Minister of State for North Africa, in June.

Duncan Baker:

[\[23804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the implications for its policies of the Tunisian Government's conduct in respect of civil society organisations.

James Cleverly:

During his visit to Tunisia in June, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, Minister of State for North Africa, met with civil society representatives. In his official meetings, including with President Saied, Lord Ahmad reiterated the UK's belief in the importance of civil society, strengthening human rights, and including all voices in building resilient and successful democracies.

■ **Yemen: Development Aid**

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[21284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she plans to take to minimise the impact of reductions to UK Aid in Yemen.

Amanda Milling:

In Yemen, the UK has spent more than £1 billion in aid since the conflict began. This year, the UK will provide at least £88 million in aid to the people of Yemen, which will help feed at least 200,000 people every month, provide lifesaving health care for 800,000 women and children, and treat 85,000 severely malnourished children.

We will ensure that we continue to prioritise protecting those most in need and will work with our delivery partners to ensure aid is disbursed quickly and effectively.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[22337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2022 to Question 15171 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, if he will publish the advice from the Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation on the deployment of the Novavax vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]: The Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) discussed the COVID-19 vaccine Nuvaxovid, developed by Novavax, at a meeting on 24 February 2022. A copy of the minutes of this meeting is attached.

The JCVI deferred consideration of whether Nuvaxovid should be recommended for introduction to the United Kingdom vaccination programme until later this year. The Government will consider any further advice from the JCVI in due course.

Attachments:

1. MINTUES [Minute JCVI Main meeting 220224_FINAL (1).pdf]

■ **Crops: Regulation**

James Wild:

[\[23436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will list the regulatory authorisations required from the Food Standards Agency for conventionally bred crops.

Maggie Throup:

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) does not generally have a role in authorising conventionally bred crops, unless these have been processed into food or feed and are defined within a 'regulated products' category. Where a crop has been grown overseas but has not previously been eaten to a significant degree in the United Kingdom or the European Union, it may need authorisation as a 'novel food' before it can be sold in this country. Similarly, if a crop has been eaten for generations in the UK, but is then processed into a significantly different form, it may need authorisation as a novel food. If food businesses are unsure about whether a product needs authorisation as a regulated product, the FSA can provide advice.

■ **Dementia: Health Services**

Feryal Clark:

[\[18099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress he has made on the development of the 10-year plan for dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

We will set out plans for dementia in England for the next 10 years shortly, which will focus on the specific health and care needs of people living with dementia and their carers, including diagnosis, risk reduction and prevention and research. We established task and finish groups in October 2021 to develop the strategy with stakeholders and received the outcome of these groups in December 2021. We updated the Dementia Programme Board on the refined proposals in March 2022. We have also worked with Alzheimer's Society to conduct an engagement exercise on proposals for strategy proposals with people living with dementia and their carers.

■ **Dental Health**

James Wild:

[\[23434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has provided funding for tooth brushing campaigns in schools in Norfolk in the last 12 months.

James Wild:

[\[23435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of effectiveness of tooth brushing programmes in schools.

Maria Caulfield:

Local authorities are responsible for funding and commissioning oral health interventions for the local population, including tooth brushing campaigns in schools. Public health services commissioned by local authorities in England are funded through the ring-fenced Public Health Grant. In 2022/23, the Public Health Grant to local authorities is £3.417 billion.

No recent national evaluation of the effectiveness of existing local authority-led tooth brushing programmes has been made. The Office of Health Improvement and Disparities regularly reviews the available evidence on the effectiveness of measures to promote oral health, including supervised tooth brushing. This includes evidence from schemes in England and in other parts of the United Kingdom.

■ **Dentistry: Qualifications**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[23334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make representations to General Dental Council to request a review of the passporting of dental qualifications of people who arrive in the UK as trained dentists.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]: We have no plans to make such representations. As an independent regulator, the General Dental Council (GDC) assesses the skills, knowledge and experience of healthcare professionals who have qualified outside of the United Kingdom, to ensure that UK standards of practice are met.

The Department recently consulted on legislative changes which will provide the GDC with greater flexibility to establish alternative routes to registration for international applicants. Officials are currently analysing the responses received to the consultation and we plan to publish the Government's response later this year.

■ **Health Professions: Migrants**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[23336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make representations to the higher education sector to encourage them to facilitate fast-track courses for health and social care professionals coming to the UK from overseas.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]: The Department has no plans to make such representations. Healthcare regulators retain the autonomy to set, maintain and assess international qualifications against United Kingdom standards.

Health: Disadvantaged**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[23806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Health Disparities White Paper will be published.

Maggie Throup:

The health disparities white paper will be published later this year.

Hull Royal Infirmary: Patients**Emma Hardy:** [\[15357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of inpatients in Hull Royal Infirmary do not meet the criteria to reside for inpatient care.

Gillian Keegan:

While NHS England and NHS Improvement collect data on patient discharges and delayed discharges, centrally validated data is not currently held at individual hospital level.

The Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, local government and social care providers to monitor and address the underlying causes of delayed discharges. This includes collating and reviewing data to identify and resolve local and regional issues which may delay a patient's discharge from hospital.

Huntington's Disease: Mental Health Services**Jeff Smith:** [\[23326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that people who have Huntington's disease can access mental health services.

Maria Caulfield:

Patients with Huntington's Disease have access to a range of mental health support, through general practitioners, local mental health services, specialised neurology services and clinical geneticists and genetic counsellors through the clinical genomic service.

The clinical genomic service specification is currently being reviewed, which includes strengthening access to mental health support services. The revised specification will be subject to public consultation before final approval. NHS England's neuroscience transformation programme is developing optimal pathways for neurology services, which include common principles regarding access to appropriate timely mental health support.

In addition, the neuropsychiatry service specification is in development, which will outline the multi-disciplinary approach to caring for patients with complex neurological conditions who require specialised assessment and mental health support.

Jeff Smith: [\[23327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to engage with people who have Huntington's disease as part of the consultation for the 10 Year Mental Health Plan.

Gillian Keegan:

We have launched a public call for evidence to support the development of a new, 10-year, cross-Government plan for mental health and wellbeing in England. We encourage those with lived experience to respond to the call for evidence, including those with Huntington's disease. The call for evidence is open until 7 July 2022.

■ Mental Health Services

Feryal Clark: [\[23444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Confederation's Mental Health Network, HACT and Home Group's Healthy Foundation report, whether the cross-government mental health plan will cover housing measures.

Gillian Keegan:

We have launched a public call for evidence to support the development of a new, 10-year, cross-Government plan for mental health and wellbeing in England. Housing will be included in the development of this plan in order to improve outcomes for mental health and wellbeing. The call for evidence is open until 7 July 2022.

■ Mental Health Services: Children

Jim Shannon: [\[21178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an estimate of the number of under-18s receiving NHS-funded treatments for panic disorders in the latest period for which figures are available.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific estimate has been made as this information is not held in the format requested.

■ NHS: Health Services

Martyn Day: [\[21237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department expects the reset of the NHS Long Term Plan to be published; and whether it is his policy that the existing targets for (a) cardiovascular disease, (b) cholesterol, and (c) familial hypercholesterolemia will not be (i) removed from the NHS Long Term Plan or (ii) delayed as part of that reset.

Edward Argar:

The Department is working with NHS England to review the progress against the commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan, including for those relating to cardiovascular disease, cholesterol and familial hypercholesterolemia. The updated NHS Long Term Plan will be published later this year.

■ Palliative Care: Children**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[23372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether support is available for clinical commissioning groups to help ensure that decisions on funding end of life care for children meet local needs.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England has established seven palliative and end of life care (PEoLC) strategic clinical networks to improve access to and the quality and sustainability of services. These networks support commissioners to deliver clinical and personalised care for people with PEoLC needs, including for children and young people.

NHS England works with national and regional partners to review current models of care, commissioning pathways and financial formulas to support commissioners on funding decisions. NHS England has also committed to increasing its contribution to children's PEoLC by matching the funding of clinical commissioning groups which commit to increase their investment in local children's PEoLC services, including children's hospices. This aims to increase National Health Service funding from £11 million to a combined £25 million a year by 2023/24.

■ Pancreatic Cancer: Health Services**Hilary Benn:**[\[23233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the (a) identification and (b) treatment of pancreatic cancer.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]: NHS England and NHS Improvement are accelerating access to cancer diagnosis and treatment, through non-symptom specific pathways and the new Faster Diagnosis Standard. In addition, we are investing £2.3 billion in community diagnostic centres and endoscopy services in the next three years, to improve the diagnosis and the detection of cancers, including pancreatic cancer.

The current 'Help us help you' campaign focuses on the barriers to earlier presentation across all cancer types. A further campaign is planned later in 2022 to address abdominal and urological symptoms, which can include symptoms relevant to pancreatic cancer.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned a new audit of pancreatic cancer services to support the National Health Service to identify and address variation in access to treatment. NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked

with Pancreatic Cancer UK to raise awareness of Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy and shared guidance with Cancer Alliances.

■ Smoking: Health Education

Adam Afriyie: [\[23246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing targeted messages to smokers on (a) e-cigarettes, (b) heat-not-burn products and (c) other reduced risk products through inserts in cigarette packs.

Adam Afriyie: [\[23247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward further regulations on nicotine pouches to ensure that they do not reach unintended audiences in the context of their growing popularity.

Maggie Throup:

The Department is currently considering the recommendations made in the 'The Khan review: making smoking obsolete'. This includes proposals related to e-cigarettes, heated tobacco and nicotine pouches and proposals to assist smokers to quit, such as through the introduction of pack inserts.

Our response to the review will be included in the forthcoming white paper on health disparities, which we plan to publish in summer 2022 and the Tobacco Control Plan, due to be published later this year.

■ Social Services: Fees and Charges

Mr Mark Harper: [R] [\[23733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the additional financial support announced by the Chancellor in the Economy Update of 26 May 2022 and set out in the Cost of living support factsheet: 26 May 2022 will be taken into account when individual contributions to social care costs are calculated.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department is currently determining the impact of the new cost of living payments on financial assessments for care costs.

■ Speech and Language Therapy: Staff

Munira Wilson: [\[17141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of speech and language therapists in England; and what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of schools' budgets for speech and language therapy which goes unspent as a result of a lack of available therapists.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England is currently working with Health Education England (HEE) to review the total speech and language therapy workforce. The Department of Health and Social Care will work with HEE, NHS England and the Department for Education to collate evidence of the demand for support for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) requirements from the therapy and diagnostic workforce.

While schools are not allocated specific funding for speech and language therapy, overall funding can be used for this purpose as necessary. The Department for Education does not collect information on schools' budgets available for expenditure on speech and language therapy in the format requested.

■ Tobacco: South Asia

Martyn Day: [\[22488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) make an estimate of the number of south Asians who use chewed tobacco products in the UK and (b) conduct a formal assessment of the impact of those products on people's health.

Martyn Day: [\[22489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of south Asians in the UK who (a) contract oral cancer and (b) die as a result of using chewed tobacco.

Maggie Throup:

We have no plans to make a specific estimate or conduct a formal assessment. While comparative data on the incidence of oral cancers in Asian and Asian British people in relation to other ethnic groups in the adult population is collected, this does not specifically record cases in south Asians.

Chewed tobacco products are harmful to health and can cause various cancers, including oral, oesophageal and pancreatic cancers. It remains the Government's policy to assist people to quit all forms of tobacco use through behavioural support from stop smoking services, nicotine replacement therapy or e-cigarettes.

■ Tomography: Waiting Lists

Mick Whitley: [\[22533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce wait times for diagnostic scans.

Edward Argar:

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' published in February 2022 sets out how the National Health Service will increase capacity in and expand elective services in the next three years. We have committed to invest £2.3 billion to increase the volume of diagnostic activity and reduce patient waiting times.

This includes the launch of up to 160 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) in the next three years to address backlogs for checks, such as magnetic resonance imaging, ultrasound and computed tomography scans. Since July 2021, CDCs have provided more than 1 million diagnostic scans.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Neale Hanvey: [\[20326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Competition and Markets Authority report entitled, CMA Rapid Review of PCR testing for travel, published in August 2021, on what date his Department responded to that Report's recommendations; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

Due to the evolving nature of this policy, the Department did not issue a written response to the Competitions and Markets Authority's (CMA) report. However, officials met with the CMA on 27 September 2021 to discuss the Department's response to the CMA's recommendations and the proposed changes to international travel testing from polymerase chain reaction testing to lateral flow device testing (LFD). On 23 December 2021, officials met with the CMA in light of the transition to LFD testing and the emerging Omicron variant. A further meeting was held in spring 2022.

Neale Hanvey: [\[20327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential effectiveness of creating a market for covid-19 travel testing in helping to ensure a domestic testing capacity.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made. Due to the separate domestic and international travel markets, testing in the international travel market would not affect domestic testing capacity.

HOME OFFICE

■ Afghanistan and Ukraine: Refugees

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[23250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many refugees from (a) Ukraine and (b) Afghanistan have been settled in Bolton South East constituency since June 2020.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]: The UK has a long and proud history of welcoming those in need of protection, including recent arrivals from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

This government is working closely to provide those we welcome to our country with access to the support and services they need, including a place to live.

Data on the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family Scheme, broken down by local authority, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority>

Data relating to local authorities who have pledged properties to Afghan families, through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) is not currently available, but is expected to be included in future publications, in line with equivalent data for other resettlement schemes. The Home Office publishes data on resettlement at:

[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.

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Dr Dan Poulter:

[22394]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2022 to Question 15228 on Agriculture: Seasonal Workers, on what basis her Department decided what the duration of seasonal worker visas for poultry workers should be; if she will make an assessment of the impact of the duration of those visas on incentives for poultry workers to come to the UK; and what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on helping to ensure that (a) recruitment processes for poultry workers are safe and (b) poultry workers are protected by UK employment rights.

Kevin Foster:

The Government will announce full details of how the detailed arrangements for poultry workers within the Seasonal Worker route will operate in due course. It will however operate along similar lines to the concession operated in 2021, supporting the sector for its seasonal peak in production in the run up to Christmas.

As with the core Seasonal Worker route, labour providers will be required to hold a sponsor licence and will be subject to the compliance arrangements for that route. Operators of the seasonal worker scheme must hold and retain relevant Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority licensing.

■ Asylum: Rwanda

Tom Hunt:

[22564]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda on the number of small boats crossing the English Channel.

Tom Pursglove:

Successfully implementing our ambitious and world-leading Migration and Economic Development Partnership will require a concerted effort but allowing this deadly trade

of evil people smuggling gangs to continue is not an option for any humanitarian nation.

Long-lasting change will not happen overnight, it requires a long-term plan. This arrangement with Rwanda is part of a suite of measures aimed at deterring small boat crossings and as with all policies its impact will be kept under review.

■ **Bank Services: Freezing of Assets**

Margaret Ferrier: [\[21207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many bank suspense accounts frozen on suspicion of financial misconduct, where the account was initially opened more than six years ago, are currently open in the UK.

Damian Hinds:

Under the Economic Crime Plan, Government is investigating policy options for unlocking suspected criminal funds held within suspended accounts to tackle economic crime. However, the requested information is not held by Government.

■ **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[21174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the Government's progress towards ratification of Article 44 of the Istanbul Convention in respect of serving members of the UK's armed forces serving overseas in foreign sovereign states.

Rachel Maclean:

On 17 May 2022 the Home Secretary made a Written Ministerial Statement which confirmed that the UK is ready to proceed to ratification of the Istanbul Convention, and on the same day the Foreign Secretary laid the Convention as a Command Paper, alongside an Explanatory Memorandum, before Parliament. [Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence \[MS No.3/2022\] - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Under the provisions of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, unless either House has by 29 June 2022 made a resolution that the Convention should not be ratified, we will proceed to ratify the Convention, and we aim to do so by the end of July 2022. The ratification will apply to all parts of the Convention, with the exception of two reservations which we are making, one of them on aspects of Article 44, concerning our ability to prosecute UK nationals and residents for crimes committed overseas when the act done was not an offence in the country where it was committed.

More detail on that reservation can be found in paragraphs 9.2-9.9 of the Explanatory Memorandum. The UK's compliance with Article 44 (subject to the reservation) is enabled by domestic legislation, principally in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which

applies to members of the UK's armed forces as well as to other UK nationals and residents.

■ Directories: Personal Records

Daisy Cooper:

[22556]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an what assessment of the effect of availability of personal data via online telephone directory services on risk of scamming to vulnerable and older people.

Damian Hinds:

The Government recognises that fraudsters will use any means they can to trick people into handing over their hard-earned money. We recognise these crimes can have significant and devastating impacts on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society.

We have sanctioned the banning of cold calls from personal injury firms and pension providers, unless the consumer has explicitly agreed to be contacted and introduced director liability for companies in relation to nuisance calls.

Through the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) we have imposed strict obligations on organisations that make direct marketing calls, live or automated, to individuals in the UK. We would advise people to register with the free Telephone Preference Service (TPS) which is a "do not call" register for landlines and mobile numbers. TPS reduces the number of unwanted sales and marketing calls you receive. To register call 0345 070 0707 or visit <https://www.tpsonline.org.uk/>.

We have supported the National Trading Standards Scams Team to roll out call blocking devices to vulnerable people. DCMS have provided over £1 million in the last three years to National Trading Standards for distribution of call blocking devices to vulnerable people. This funding has helped to protect some of the most vulnerable in society from nuisance calls and scams.

Tackling fraud requires a unified and co-ordinated response from government, law enforcement and the private sector to better protect the public and businesses from fraud, reduce the impact of fraud on victims, and increase the disruption and prosecution of fraudsters which is why, later this year, we will publish a new strategy to address the threat of fraud.

■ HM Passport Office: Telephone Services

Drew Hendry:

[23751]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of call back services by HM Passport Office.

Kevin Foster:

As has already been said in Parliament, the recent performance of the Passport advice line has been unacceptable.

Teleperformance, the contractor who runs the line on behalf of HM Passport Office, has been required to put in place an improvement plan which has seen additional staff recruited to enable the expected performance standards to be met.

■ Home Office: Media

Emily Thornberry: [\[21137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 15 June to Question 13684, whether all payments over £25,000 made by her Department to Omnicom Media Group UK under the expense areas (a) Ad Production and (b) Publicity between November 2018 and May 2022 took place under the Media Buying framework agreement RM6003.

Rachel Maclean:

The information requested is not held at sufficient granularity over the time period requested and would only be available at disproportionate cost.

■ Immigration: Applications

Justin Madders: [\[22457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 156507 on Immigration, if she will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the Home Office decision-making process for migration applications in (a) the UK and (b) overseas.

Kevin Foster:

We continually review the effectiveness of the visa system.

The Home Office is pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives which will speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting a decision, ensuring value for money and high-quality customer service and decisions.

■ Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[22404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to proscribe Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation.

Damian Hinds:

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters, including whether an organisation is under consideration for proscription.

The Government keeps the list of proscribed organisations under review.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largan: [\[22604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the application from a constituent of High Peak to the European Union Settlement

Scheme of 26 June 2021, reference 20034264; whether she plans to update the office of the hon. Member for High Peak on the status of that application further to her Department's correspondence of 4 March 2022; and for what reason that application has been subject to delays.

Kevin Foster:

Our consideration of this application has now been completed and the applicant advised of our decision on 22 June 2022.

We do not comment publicly on individual cases.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[23309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 18 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth on two outstanding visa applications.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 23 June 2022.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[23310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 17 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth on an outstanding passport application.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 23 June 2022.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[23311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 14 February 2022 and 9 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth on an outstanding passport application.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 24 June 2022.

■ **Migrant Workers: Graduates**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[21253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason international students who graduated from British universities prior to September 2020 are unable to apply for the UK post-study work visa.

Kevin Foster:

The Graduate route demonstrates our commitment to attract the brightest and best talent from around the world to study and work in the UK.

The route was introduced in 2021 to help new graduates who have successfully completed a relevant qualification in eligible UK universities get a head-start on their career by allowing these graduates to work or look for work for up to three years immediately following their graduation.

Those who graduated and whose leave expired before the Graduate route was introduced do not meet the requirements of the route. Most of these students had commenced their course prior to the announcement of the route, and therefore had no expectation of benefitting from such a route when they applied to study in the UK. However, these students are able to apply for other routes from overseas, including the Skilled Worker route, if they meet the requirements.

The expansion of the Skilled Worker route to include roles at RQF3 and above in December 2020 significantly increased the number of roles they could consider applying for in the UK which would qualify.

■ Migrants: Children

Kirsten Oswald:

[22445]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the number of children living in poverty in the UK with parents who are subject to No Recourse to Public Funds.

Kirsten Oswald:

[22446]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will hold discussions with Cabinet colleagues on amending the immigration regulations governing No Recourse to Public Funds to enable emergency access to Universal Credit for parents who become unable to work due to (a) ill-health or (b) caring responsibilities.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office is committed to further exploring data availability on No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and migrant poverty, including children in poverty, while recognising the challenges posed in identifying and gathering the relevant data.

Published correspondence between the Home Office and UK Statistics Authority sets out our proposals for further work to investigate data on migrant poverty:

<https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/jon-simmons-to-ed-humpherson-enhancing-data-on-statistics-about-those-subject-to-no-recourse-to-public-funds-nrpf-update/>

There are no plans to amend the regulations governing NRPF to enable emergency access to Universal Credit for parents who become unable to work due to ill-health or caring responsibilities.

Temporary immigration status holders are generally required to support themselves and any accompanying family members, including children, in the UK without recourse to public funds. This is a well-established principle which prevents access to taxpayer-funded public services from being the basis of migration to this country. The general expectation is temporary immigration status holders who can no longer financially support themselves and their families in the UK will return to their home country.

Safeguards exist to ensure people receive support where they are destitute, at risk of destitution, or have community care needs, including issues relating to human rights

or the wellbeing of children. For example, people with leave under the family and human rights routes, and those who have been granted leave on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa route as a British National (Overseas) status holder or a family member of a British National (Overseas) status holder, can apply, for free, to have their NRPF condition lifted by making a 'change of condition' application if they are destitute or at risk of destitution, if the welfare of their child is at risk due to their low income, or where there are other exceptional financial circumstances. Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution.

People who have made the necessary national insurance contributions can also claim contributory benefits such as contribution-based Jobseekers Allowance, statutory sick pay and state pension.

■ **Offenders: Gambling**

Damien Moore: [\[17108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to ensure that the police screen suspects for gambling addictions.

Kit Malthouse:

All police officers in England and Wales have access to a six-hour training course on understanding and spotting early signs of gambling addictions, which launched in September 2021.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) have acknowledged there is more work to be done in this area. They are currently gathering best practice from Police forces on early screening of gambling addicts, offering the right support and signposting them to where they can seek further help. This will involve partnership working with other agencies to provide the right support that anyone with a gambling addiction requires, reflecting that police intervention often comes at a late stage of addiction.

■ **Passports: Applications**

Justin Madders: [\[22461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June to Question 1193 on Passports: Applications, how many of the 98.5 per cent of passport applications completed in 10 weeks were upgraded by the applicant to a premium or fast track service.

Kevin Foster:

Upgrades to urgent services are only required where an applicant needs a passport sooner than ten weeks.

For the small percentage of customers whose applications take longer than ten weeks, there is an expedited service at no additional cost to help ensure they receive their passport ahead of their travel.

Justin Madders: [\[22462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport upgrades for (a) fast track and (b) premium services were made in (a) April 2022 and (b) May 2022; and how much additional revenue from processing fees has been collected from those upgraded applications.

Kevin Foster:

Upgrades to urgent services are only required where an applicant needs a passport sooner than ten weeks.

For the small percentage of customers whose applications take longer than ten weeks, there is an expedited service at no additional cost to help ensure they receive their passport ahead of their travel.

■ Police Deaths on Duty: Medals

Holly Lynch: [\[23344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the Police Federation's proposals for a Victoria medal to be awarded to the families of Police officers killed whilst on duty.

Kit Malthouse:

It is important that we recognise the vital role the police play in society. This is never more true than when officers and staff make the ultimate sacrifice in order to help keep us safe. That is why the Government supported the creation of the National Police Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum and enshrined the Police Covenant in law.

All UK honours and medals are in the personal gift of HM The Queen under the Royal prerogative. The Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medal (HD Committee) gives advice to The Queen on honours matters, including new forms of official national recognition. The Honours and Appointments Secretariat in the Cabinet Office supports the Committee and will consider the options for recognition.

■ Police: Complaints

Sarah Champion: [\[23300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the process is for making a complaint about a police officer without that complaint being referred to the local force.

Sarah Champion: [\[23301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how a (a) serving and (b) retired officer can make an independent complaint about the police force they served in.

Kit Malthouse:

Members of the public can use the police complaints system to complain directly to the police force, or via the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) online form on its website which also explains the process.

The law provides for the most serious and sensitive matters, including allegations of assaults or serious corruption, to be referred directly to the IOPC. Since the Government's reforms in February 2020, the IOPC has powers to initiate an investigation without having to wait for, or 'call in' a referral from the force itself. The IOPC has discretion to decide what matters it investigates and which it may direct the police to investigate or refer to the force to handle locally. All complaints have the right to a review to either the relevant Police and Crime Commissioner or the IOPC if they are dissatisfied.

Police officers are under a legal duty to report wrongdoing by fellow officers. They can do so via their own Professional Standards Department. An officer or former officer can also report concerns about actions of those within the police force with which they are serving or served by contacting the IOPC either via its dedicated report hotline or in writing. It is for the IOPC to decide how such reports are dealt with and which matters it investigates at the discretion of the Director General.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Rachael Maskell:

[\[22485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to help ensure that Ukrainian people fighting in the war in that country are able to access the UK during their 10 days' leave if they have family members in the UK under any refugee scheme; and whether she has had discussions with her counterparts in (a) Poland and (b) other countries on allowing their travel.

Kevin Foster:

Home Office officials continue to work closely with the Ukrainian Government on our measures to date to ensure our measures respond directly to their needs and asks. We will continue to consider their requests and respond to meet their needs.

It should also be noted Ukrainian Law places significant restrictions on men aged 18 to 60 from leaving the country at this time, which must be borne in mind by anyone planning travel to the UK.

Mick Whitley:

[\[9161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (a) what steps her Department is taking to prevent the exploitation of Ukrainian refugees being facilitated on social media sites and (b) what discussions her Department has had with social media companies regarding this issue.

Kevin Foster:

The Homes for Ukraine is a unique scheme which has been set up specifically to support those escaping the conflict in Ukraine who are not able to rely on family support. The scheme cannot be directly accessed through social media sites.

To access the scheme the sponsor and/or their prospective guest must apply for visas through the Home Office run website. This action initiates the first stage in the multi-layered safeguarding defence system which has been built into the scheme.

Neither Facebook nor any other social media platforms are part of the scheme design.

The Government is committed to tackling all forms of exploitation, including those facilitated online by organised crime groups and we will continue to clamp down on those who exploit vulnerable people while providing tailored support for victims to help their recovery.

We are working both domestically and internationally to minimise the risk of trafficking and exploitation to the Ukrainian people through the routes they take to the UK and once they arrive here.

To address the domestic risk, we are working with the Department for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities and the NCA to ensure that law enforcement bodies are linked into the scheme to assess potential risks around those looking to exploit the vulnerable and assist with any safeguarding enquiries and that local authorities are aware of who to work with, on the ground, to help mitigate those risks.

To address the international risk, we are providing funding, improving agency capability and pivoting our existing projects in neighbouring countries.

■ **Seasonal Workers: Airports**

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[22496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of providing seasonal visas to address staff shortages in UK airports.

Kevin Foster:

We note similar issues with recruitment are being reported at Airports within the EU and the USA, which indicate this would be an ineffective approach compared to focusing on other issues affecting recruitment in the sector, such as the pay and conditions offered to key workers.

Several roles in the aviation sector are already eligible to be recruited via the Skilled Worker visa.

■ **Travel: Documents**

Angela Crawley:

[\[21233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many permission to travel letters have been reissued by her Department in each of the last three years; and what her Department's timeframe is for reissuing a permission to travel letter once requested.

Kevin Foster:

Permission to Travel letters are only issued in relation to the recently launched Ukraine Schemes.

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

■ Visas

Justin Madders: [22463]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average processing time was for (a) visitor and (b) spousal/partner visa applications as of 21 June 2022.

Kevin Foster:

Standard visitor visas are taking on average 6 weeks to process. Information can be found on visit processing times here: [Visa decision waiting times: applications outside the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk)

Spouse / partner visas are taking up to 24 week to process. This increase in time has been advised to applicants and is related to the need to prioritise applications related to the situation in Ukraine.

Average processing times do not form part of any current transparency data for spousal/partner applications and are not published.

The transparency data does, however, include a range of processing data and the latest data can be found at: [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-transparency-data)

■ Visas: Serbia

Alberto Costa: [22464]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing visa free travel for people wishing to visit the UK from Serbia.

Kevin Foster:

The UK keeps its visa system under regular review. Decisions on changes reflect a range of factors. These will vary globally, but often include security, compliance, returns and prosperity.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Parliament: Catering

Luke Pollard: [23406]

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many plastic straws Parliament has bought for use in catering outlets in the last 12 months.

Sir Charles Walker:

Parliament has not bought any plastic straws in the last 12 months.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: TRIPS Agreement**

Gareth Thomas: [\[8947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish the (a) objectives her Department has prioritised for the text-based negotiations on the latest TRIPS waiver text; and what constructive engagement her Department has committed to in respect of the text-based negotiations on the latest TRIPS waiver.

Penny Mordaunt:

The WTO Membership reached a consensus-based decision on TRIPS at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), held between 12 and 17 June 2022. The Decision focuses on streamlining compulsory licencing processes for developing countries to produce and export COVID-19 vaccines. The UK engaged constructively in the discussions, demonstrating flexibility to help broker consensus.

■ Energy Charter Treaty

Kenny MacAskil: [\[21287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2022 to Question 14638 on Energy Charter Treaty, what proportion of cases brought by UK companies under that Charter have been in the (a) renewable energy sector and (b) oil, gas and mining sector; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 23 June 2022]: According to information held by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) cases have been brought by UK investors under the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) on 16 occasions. Of these, 8 relate to the renewable energy sector, and 8 to the oil, gas, and mining sectors. Full case details can be found on the UNCTAD website.

■ Foreign Investment in UK

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[21115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to increase Foreign Direct Investment into (a) Bournemouth East constituency and (b) England.

Mike Freer:

The Department for International Trade's (DIT's) regional teams engage with Metro Mayors, local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), local authorities, and our overseas network to promote Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in England, supporting 925 single site projects and creating 28,012 new jobs in 2020-21.

The Department leads several activities promoting FDI across the UK through mechanisms such as the Investment Atlas, our High Potential Opportunities (HPO) Programme and GREAT global trade campaign.

DIT are showcasing the Sustainable Aquaculture HPO won by Dorset LEP to international investors. Our Southern England investment team promote further investment capability in the area through supporting on projects such as the Dorset Innovation Park and BattleLab.

■ Import Duties

Emily Thornberry:

[\[21133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make an assessment of the applicability to decisions on tax treatment in the UK of the precedent established in the October 1958 GATT dispute initiated by Austria against Italy, case reference GD/54, and the resolution agreed between those countries in May 1961, publication reference SR 18/4.

Penny Mordaunt:

GATT dispute reports are often considered at the World Trade Organisation in dispute settlement proceedings. However, GATT dispute reports do not set precedents in the way that judgments do in the domestic legal system.

The particular case referred to (GD/54) was settled following consultations (SR.18/4) and never came before a GATT adjudicator. There was therefore no GATT dispute report for this case.

JUSTICE

■ Interpreters: Hearing Impairment and Speech and Language Disorders

Emily Thornberry:

[\[21145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much the Government has spent on interpreters for people with hearing impairments or difficulties with speech, in each of the last 12 years.

James Cartlidge:

HMCTS are committed to ensuring that court hearings are accessible to all our users and that users with hearing loss or difficulties with speech can fully participate in those hearings. HMCTS provides reasonable adjustments for court and tribunal users with disabilities in accordance with our legal duty under the Equality Act 2010.

To meet our Public Sector Equality Duty, HMCTS also has a wider duty to avoid treating people less favourably because of their disability. Court and tribunal users are encouraged to contact the court before any type of hearing to discuss the particular adjustments or support they require, to enable their individual needs to be met. Information about reasonable adjustments is available on GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-courts-and-tribunals-service/about/equality-and-diversity>.

Reasonable adjustment guidance and learning and broader disability guidance is provided to all HMCTS staff. All guidance raises awareness of the issues people with hearing loss may face, and the reasonable adjustments which may help them to fully participate in hearings.

Since October 2016, £6,594,896 has been spent on interpreters for people with hearing impairments or difficulties with speech. This spend is across HMCTS, HMPPS, LAA and other commissioning bodies.

YEAR:	TOTAL:
Nov - Dec 2016	145,424.45
Jan - Dec 2017	967,211.14
Jan - Dec 2018	1,086,325.58
Jan - Dec 2019	1,001,106.93
Jan - Dec 2020	1,199,690.68
Jan - Dec 2021	1,603,427.73
Jan - May 2022	591,709.57

The information prior to November 2016 has been archived as it relates to a previous contract and is therefore no longer held centrally.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Hearing Impairment and Speech and Language Disorders

Emily Thornberry: [\[21146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has made an assessment of the number of people with hearing impairments or difficulties with speech who are eligible for access to means-tested civil legal aid.

James Cartlidge:

Any individual can access civil legal aid if they meet the eligibility criteria: their issue must be in scope, as set out under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO), and they must satisfy means and merits tests. As eligibility for legal aid is not determined by reference to whether an individual has hearing impairments or difficulties with speech this data is not routinely collected and therefore no specific assessment has been made.

In March we published a detailed consultation on legal aid means-testing arrangements. This consultation has now closed, and we are considering responses. We plan to publish a response in Autumn which will set out our final proposals. These proposed changes seek to ensure that the system remains accessible to all who

need it. We estimate that they will mean that an additional 2m people in England and Wales will have access to civil legal aid as a result.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Publicity

Rachel Hopkins: [21335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many photographers and video producers were employed by his Department in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

No dedicated photographers or videographers were employed in these years. All photography and videography was undertaken by communications staff who work across a range of disciplines and communication channels.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Bob Stewart: [21337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the length of time sponsors of Ukrainian refugees can claim accommodation payments through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

Lead sponsors are eligible for monthly payments for as long as the guest remains living in their accommodation for up to 12 months. Further information can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils>.

■ Housing: Natural Gas

Rachael Maskell: [23769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has taken steps to prohibit the installation of gas in all new housing developments.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government recognises the need to transition away from fossil fuel heating. We must do this in a way which allows the construction sector time to develop the necessary skills and supply chains necessary to support low carbon alternatives. From 2025, the Government intends to set the performance standard of the Future Homes Standard such that heat pumps and heat networks will become the primary heating technologies for new residential buildings.

The Government has also committed in the 2020 Energy White Paper to consult on whether it is appropriate to end gas grid connections to new homes being built from 2025, in favour of clean energy alternatives.

■ Local Government: Companies

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[23705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy that limited companies owned and controlled by local authorities in England be required to have at least two independent directors; and if he will make a statement on the transparency and accountability of such companies to local payers of council tax.

Kemi Badenoch:

Local authorities are autonomous public bodies responsible to their electorate for the decisions they take. They have a duty to ensure good financial management and governance, including clear audits on how the local authority is allocating its funding. Concerns about how the council uses taxpayers' money or alleged impropriety in the handling of funds can be raised directly with the local authority's independent auditor. The Government considers the need to directly intercede with authorities only where it is appropriate and necessary to do so.

■ Local Government: Remote Meetings

Mike Amesbury:

[\[21264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of continuing remote and hybrid local authority meetings; and whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to enable local authorities to offer hybrid in-person and virtual meetings.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government launched a call for evidence last year to gather views and inform a longer-term decision about whether to make express provision for councils to meet remotely and in hybrid form on a permanent basis. The Department has considered the responses to the consultation and the Government will respond shortly.

■ Private Rented Housing

Mike Amesbury:

[\[21263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Fairer Private Rented Sector White Paper, published on 16 June 2022, what steps his Department is taking to review Local Housing Allowance rates; and if he will take steps to provide local authorities with stronger selective licensing powers by removing the requirement for Secretary of State approval for larger schemes to help tackle insecure and unfit housing.

Eddie Hughes:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions reviews Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates annually. In April 2020 investment in LHA rates was boosted by nearly £1 billion when rates were set at the 30th percentile of market rents, providing 1.5 million claimants with an average £600 more housing support in 2020/21 than they would otherwise have received. Rates have been maintained at their increased 2020 levels so that claimants continue to benefit from the significant increase.

On Thursday 16 June the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published The Fairer Private Rented Sector White Paper. The announced measures will ensure millions of families will benefit from living in decent, well looked-after homes as part of the biggest shake up of the private rented sector in 30 years. This includes a Property Portal which will provide access to information about privately rented properties and tackle one of the biggest and most time-consuming barriers faced by local councils when enforcing standards - identifying poor quality and non-compliant properties and who owns them.

Selective licensing schemes when used as part of a wider, well planned, coherent initiative, can be an effective tool for local authorities to drive better outcomes for good landlords and tenants. Overall, we think we have the right selective licensing approval process in place to support tenants, landlords, and local authorities.

■ Social Rented Housing: Finance

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[23249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to fund social housing projects in (a) Bolton South East, (b) the Borough of Bolton and (c) the UK.

Stuart Andrew:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]: Our £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme will deliver up to 180,000 homes (should economic conditions allow) - half of which will be for affordable and social rent. £715 million has been allocated to the North West, to deliver over 14,000 affordable homes.

Statistics are not available at Constituency level, but through the 2016-23 Affordable Homes Programme we have allocated over £242 million for affordable housing delivering over 7,000 affordable homes, including over 3,800 homes for affordable and social rent in Greater Manchester.

MEMBERS ESTIMATE COMMITTEE

■ Political Parties: Finance

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[19001\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the Members Estimate Committee, if he will publish the amount of (a) short money and (b) other additional parliamentary support funding provided to each political party on an annual basis since 2015.

Sir Charles Walker:

Since 2016–17 it has been a requirement to publish the amounts paid for each financial year and these can be found on the [Parliament website](#). The short money and Representative Money provided to each political party on an annual basis since 2015 can be found in the pdf attachment.

The Short Money and Representative Money allocations scheduled to be paid for the current financial year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023) are as follows:

SHORT/REPRESENTATIVE MONEY ALLOCATIONS 2022/2023

	Party	1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023
Main Allocation	Travel Budget	
Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	£202,484.60	£5,018.85
Green Party	£187,111.20	£4,637.76
Labour Party	£6,812,568.25	£146,451.25
Liberal Democrats	£929,590.70	£23,040.69
Plaid Cymru	£110,875.00	£2,748.13
Scottish National Party (SNP)	£1,149,355.15	£28,487.72
Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)	£110,875.00	£2,748.13
Sinn Fein *	£171,032.15	£4,239.21

* Representative Money

Information on previous budget allocations for Short Money and Representative Money can also be found on the App3 tab here:

[Data sheets for Library briefing on Short Money](#) (44 KB, Excel Spreadsheet)

Attachments:

1. Short Money allocations [Short Money allocations.pdf]

SCOTLAND

Regional Planning and Development: Scotland

Cherilyn Mackrory:

[\[22534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps the Government is taking to help level up communities across Scotland.

Mr Alister Jack:

UK Government investment which contributes to levelling up has already provided enormous benefit to Scotland with a total investment of over £2 billion.

This includes the £211m UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the £1.5bn City and Regional Growth Deals, across all parts of Scotland and for the Glasgow City Region, a share of £100m has been awarded for an Innovation Accelerator, one of three in the UK.

This is only the beginning, the levelling up fund and community ownership fund are ongoing and along with the community renewal fund, 68 projects have already received funding worth over £190m in Scotland.

We are focused on boosting pay and jobs, spreading opportunities and restoring a sense of pride in place by empowering local leaders and communities across Scotland.

TRANSPORT

■ Airports

Sarah Olney:

[\[21249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the likelihood of airports other than London Gatwick reducing the number of flights per day.

Robert Courts:

We have been extensively engaging with industry at both ministerial and official level since the beginning of the year. We have been clear that the volume of late notice cancellations are unacceptable and airlines must have realistic schedules they can deliver.

It is ultimately a commercial decision for airports if they also choose to reduce the number of daily flights. The Government has made it clear that the aviation industry should be reviewing their current staffing levels, passenger demand and then creating realistic flight schedules.

On 21 June, the Secretary of State laid before Parliament regulations that will help airlines prevent last-minute flight cancellations during the summer peak. The regulations will allow a one-off “amnesty” on airport slots rules, enabling airlines to plan ahead and deliver a realistic summer schedule that minimises disruption at the airports. Airlines will have a short window to hand back slots for the rest of the summer season that they are not confident they will be able to operate. This will help give passengers confidence in the schedules and more time to make alternative arrangements if they are needed, rather than face the kind of last-minute cancellations seen over the Easter and half-term holidays.

■ Aviation

Jim Shannon:

[\[21189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK residents subject to cancelled flights are able to return home from holiday.

Robert Courts:

The UK has a framework of consumer protections in place. In the event that a flight is cancelled where UK law applies, the consumers should be offered the choice between a refund within 7 days, or to be re-routed on similar conditions to their final destination. Airlines are under an obligation to provide information to passengers on their rights in the event of a cancellation.

It is of vital importance that consumers know their rights when travelling by air. Airlines and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) provide air passengers information on what to do if something goes wrong with their flight. To further support air passengers, Government is developing an Aviation Passenger Charter, alongside consumer groups and industry, to help consumers to understand their rights, responsibilities and reasonable expectations when travelling by air, from booking, to if something goes wrong.

Jim Shannon:[\[22430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with British airlines on late-notice cancellations of flights.

Robert Courts:

We have been extensively engaging with industry at both ministerial and official level since the beginning of the year. During these meetings we have been clear that the volume of late notice cancellations are unacceptable and airlines must have realistic schedules they can deliver.

On 21 June the Secretary of State laid before Parliament regulations that will help airlines prevent last-minute flight cancellations during the summer peak. The regulations will allow a one-off "amnesty" on airport slots rules, enabling airlines to plan ahead and deliver a realistic summer schedule that minimises disruption at the airports. Airlines will have a short window to hand back slots for the rest of the summer season that they are not confident they will be able to operate. This will help give passengers confidence in the schedules and more time to make alternative arrangements if they are needed, rather than face the kind of last-minute cancellations seen over the Easter and half-term holidays.

I am also chairing a Strategic Risk Group which meets weekly to bring together senior executives from across the sector to highlight issues, assess mitigations, and encourage collaborative working.

■ Bus Services: North Shropshire**Helen Morgan:**[\[22612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he (a) is taking and (b) plans to take steps to help ensure that councils provide access to bus services for isolated communities in North Shropshire constituency.

Trudy Harrison:

I recognise the importance of transport provision in rural and isolated areas and we as a Government are committed to finding solutions which ensure that local communities in areas such as those in North Shropshire have viable and improved transport services.

We have provided nearly £1.86bn in emergency and recovery grant funding for bus services in England outside London to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. Shropshire Council has so far received a total of £2.17m. Shropshire have also been allocated a further £558,906 through the Local Transport Fund, to continue supporting bus services from April until October, as well as £512,447 in funding from the £42m LTA Bus Service Operators Grant in 2020-21.

■ Dangerous Driving: Death**Johnny Mercer:**[\[21236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on the consultation into parts of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and the potential merits of immediately suspending the driving licences of anyone who causes death while driving.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department for Transport is currently working on the scope of the call for evidence on motoring offences.

■ Felixstowe Port: Railways**Tom Hunt:**[\[23429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact of rail strikes on the Port of Felixstowe.

Robert Courts:

The Department has been working closely with Network Rail and Freight Operating Companies, and those bodies with key users of rail freight such as the port of Felixstowe, to minimise disruption as far as possible during the strikes to protect critical freight flows in key industries. As part of this Network Rail is prioritising keeping essential freight routes open as far as possible, including lines to and from major ports like London Gateway, Felixstowe and Liverpool, to mitigate disruption to supply chains. Whilst a full service is not being run, there will continue to be rail freight provision for the port of Felixstowe throughout the strike period that will mitigate impacts on their operations. Departmental officials are engaged with the port, Network Rail and freight operating companies to monitor impacts.

Whilst there will be impacts on the port of Felixstowe, their current capacity levels mean that this should not cause any major congestion issues for the port at this time.

The Department maintains close engagement with the port and will be discussing mitigations and impacts with the port, post- strike, in order to inform actions for future strikes (if needed).

■ Gatwick Airport

Sarah Olney:

[\[21248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to (a) ensure that passengers are effectively informed of cancellations ahead of their departure date and (b) reassure people who have a flight departure booked at London Gatwick.

Robert Courts:

The decision taken by Gatwick airport to reduce the number of daily flights throughout the summer is a commercial decision taken by Gatwick Airport Limited, who will continue to work with their airline partners to operationalise this cap. We have been clear with the aviation sector that they need to ensure they can service the flights they offer to the passengers.

On 21 June the Secretary of State laid before Parliament regulations that will help airlines prevent last-minute flight cancellations during the summer peak. The regulations will allow a one-off “amnesty” on airport slots rules, enabling airlines to plan ahead and deliver a realistic summer schedule that

minimises disruption at the airports. Airlines will have a short window to hand back slots for the rest of the summer season that they are not confident they will be able to operate. This will help give passengers confidence in the schedules and more time to make alternative arrangements if they are needed, rather than face the kind of last-minute cancellations seen over the Easter and half-term holidays.

This Government has always prioritised consumer rights and is continuing to make progress, to that end we have published the Aviation Consumer Policy Reform Consultation on 31 January, this is aimed at strengthening further air passenger rights and are publishing an Aviation Passenger Charter. Airlines are under an obligation to provide information to passengers on their rights in the event of a cancellation. In the event that a flight is cancelled where UK law applies, the consumers should be offered the choice between a refund within 7 days, or to be re-routed on similar conditions to their final destination, and they may be eligible for compensation.

We have been clear with airlines that they need to undertake this process as quickly as possible.

The Secretary of State and I regularly meet with the aviation sector. In addition to these regular meetings, Gatwick joined me and the Secretary of State on 1 June to discuss disruption over the Half Term and they have been a central member of the Strategic Risk Group which I chair weekly, and the Summer Resilience Group chaired by my officials weekly. Additionally, senior officials have been meeting regularly with Gatwick over the past month and this will continue over the summer.

■ High Speed 2 Line: Greater Manchester**Graham Stringer:** [\[22357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to place in the Library the study commissioned by HS2 on a like-for-like comparison on the surface station and the underground station for HS2 at Manchester Piccadilly.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Manchester Piccadilly High Speed Station – Design of an Alternative Underground Station was placed in the Libraries of both Houses on 27 June. The report is also publicly available on the HS2 Ltd website.

■ Immigration Controls: Airports**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[21172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had discussions with his EU counterparts on reducing passenger waiting times at immigration checkpoints at airports.

Robert Courts:

Some UK and EU airports are facing similar problems this summer in addressing excessive waiting times at both arrival and departure as passenger demand rapidly recovers. My officials have been discussing these matters, including potential disruptions arising from summer traffic peaks at the border, with their EU counterparts to understand the situation more fully and to encourage sharing of experience and best practice amongst the industry.

■ Merseyrail**Kim Johnson:** [\[21332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including the devolution of power for the Liverpool City Region to run the Merseyrail network in the public sector.

Wendy Morton:

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail commits Great British Railways to agreeing partnerships with local government in England, to give local leaders a greater say in how transport services are delivered in their area.

The devolved Merseyrail arrangements with the private sector operator contracted to Liverpool City Region Combined authority have delivered a high performing railway for many years. We are working with the Combined Authority to explore a range of options for increased local influence over the Merseyrail network, to build on this and further improve outcomes for passengers and the local economy. We will provide a further update in due course.

■ Railways

Ben Bradley: [\[21259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of introducing a rail link between Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham on (a) the ability to build housing, (b) levelling up and (c) recovery from covid-19 in those cities.

Wendy Morton:

Midlands Connect produced an SOBC in May 2021 for this scheme, which examines the impacts of the proposed scheme on these areas.

We remain committed to publishing the Rail Network Enhancements Programme update, which has been delayed by the need to take account of the impacts of the pandemic and the Spending Review.

Ben Bradley: [\[21262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with council leaders on the creation of a direct rail link between Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham.

Wendy Morton:

I met with the CEO of Warwick District Council yesterday to discuss their priorities for rail infrastructure in the region, and welcome their continued efforts to provide informed insight into local transport needs.

Peter Aldous: [\[22417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the improved rail capacity outline business case for the Ely area capacity enhancement scheme; and what steps he is taking to increase rail capacity through Haughley Junction.

Andrew Stephenson:

An update on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) programme, and associated proposals at Haughley Junction, will be provided in the upcoming update to the Rail Network Enhancement Portfolio (RNEP).

■ Railways: Environment Protection

Ben Bradley: [\[21261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential environmental merits of creating a direct rail link between Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham.

Wendy Morton:

Midlands Connect produced an SOBC in May 2021 which provides a high-level summary of the environmental implications of this scheme.

We remain committed to publishing the Rail Network Enhancements Programme update, which has been delayed by the need to take account of the impacts of the pandemic and the Spending Review.

We want to provide as much clarity and certainty as possible on rail enhancements and will set out our plans shortly.

■ Railways: Freight

Peter Aldous:

[\[22414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Transport Decarbonisation Plan and Future of Freight Plan, what assessment he has made of his Department's progress on increasing the modal share of rail freight; and what steps he is taking to increase capacity for moving rail freight sustainably.

Wendy Morton:

The Government is fully committed to growing rail freight and unlocking the economic and environmental benefits that the sector can deliver. Our Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) set out our ambition to remove all diesel-only trains (passenger and freight) from the network by 2040. The Future of Freight Plan reflects the growing importance of the freight sector as a whole; until now, there has never been a cross Government and cross modal plan for the sector. In both the TDP and the William Shapps Plan for Rail we committed to introducing a rail freight growth target and to incentivising the early take up of low carbon traction to help operators have the confidence they need to invest in green technologies.

We continue to encourage and incentivise modal shift from road to rail through the £20m Mode Shift Revenue Support Scheme (MSRS), which delivers high value for money and in 2020/21 removed around 900,000 HGV lorries off our congested road network, saving 58,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions. Earlier this year the Department successfully secured MSRS funding of £20m a year for the next three years.

Peter Aldous:

[\[22415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department prioritises decarbonisation benefits alongside cost considerations when assessing schemes to increase rail freight capacity.

Peter Aldous:

[\[22416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether commitments on increasing the modal share of freight in the (a) Transport Decarbonisation and (b) Future of Freight plans will inform the (i) assessment and (ii) delivery of essential rail freight schemes such as that planned for Ely Junction.

Wendy Morton:

This Government is committed to delivering a net zero railway and recognises the considerable benefits of shifting goods from road to rail. Our Transport Decarbonisation and Future of Freight plans set out our support for rail freight, recognising that freight trains emit around a quarter of the carbon dioxide per tonne-

mile of road haulage. As we build back from the pandemic, and following the 2021 Spending Review, we want to provide as much clarity and certainty as possible on rail enhancements and will set out our plans shortly. We also continue to invest in rail freight through grants such as the Mode Shift Revenue Support scheme.

■ Railways: Industrial Action

Damien Moore: [\[22510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the financial impact on the (a) hospitality sector and (b) rest of the UK economy of the rail industrial action on 21, 23 and 25 June 2022.

Wendy Morton:

The Government regrets that the trade unions have chosen to go ahead with the strikes. These strikes are impacting local businesses and the ability of the general public to get to school, hospital and work.

The Government and rail industry, including Network Rail, have worked together and continue to work together to ensure plans are in place to minimise disruption allowing for freight and passenger services to remain operational where possible. The Civil Contingencies Secretariat is also convening ministers daily during the strike period to assess operational response and impact.

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) has estimated the cost to the economy of the three days of strike action to be at least £91 million: [Rail and tube strikes to cause hit of at least £91m to the UK economy \(cebr.com\)](#)

■ Railways: Yorkshire and the Humber

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[21092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to make improvements to the Penistone Line, linking Huddersfield, Barnsley and Sheffield.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[21093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the condition of the Penistone Line in Kirklees; and whether he plans to allocate funding for its improvement.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[21094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to deliver improvements to signals, level crossings and sections of track on the Penistone Line.

Wendy Morton:

I would encourage a bid to the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 which closes on 6th July.

■ Royal Mail: Delivery Services

Derek Thomas:

[\[22494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support Royal Mail's plans for drone deliveries in remote areas of the UK; and how many applications have the Civil Aviation Authority approved for such deliveries from Royal Mail.

Robert Courts:

The Department is working with industry and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to ensure the UK can realise the benefits of new and emerging aviation technology for industry and individuals. This includes the provision of additional funding for 2022/2023 to the CAA to significantly scale up their support to innovators.

It is the responsibility of the CAA to approve any plans the Royal Mail have for drone deliveries. Over the last two years they have received and approved requests from various sponsors to establish temporary danger areas to support the Royal Mail. This includes one from Windracers, which has been supporting the Royal Mail in the Shetlands area and one from Skyports in the Oban / Mull area. In addition to these, one other airspace request has been submitted by Windracers which is in support of the Royal Mail task. This request for an airspace structure has not yet begun the regulatory process.

Separate to the airspace work, the CAA have approved four applications relating to proposed Royal Mail delivery operations. These were submitted by Windracers and Skyports. In addition, Windracers has recently submitted another application linked to the Royal Mail.

■ Shipping: Carbon Emissions

Matt Vickers:

[\[22594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support the decarbonisation of the shipping sector.

Robert Courts:

My department is supporting the decarbonisation of the UK Maritime sector through a two-pronged approach: R&D funding and investment; and a comprehensive policy and regulatory programme.

In March 2022, the DfT announced £206m for the UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions, (or UK SHORE) as part of the refresh of the National Shipbuilding Strategy, marking the biggest UK government investment ever in the commercial maritime sector. In May 2022, we launched the first of a series of packages under UK SHORE, including a second Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition.

On the policy and regulatory side, we are delivering on commitments made in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan; will publish a summary of responses to a call for evidence on increasing the uptake of shore power shortly which will then be followed by a full consultation; and will be launching consultations on phasing out the sale of new non-zero emission vessels and the course to zero, this year.

We will also continue to build momentum towards the publication of a refreshed Clean Maritime Plan in 2023.

■ Train Operating Companies: Redundancy

Charlotte Nichols: [\[23441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if train operating companies are required under their franchise agreements to offer the current wage package and commit to redundancies.

Wendy Morton:

No. Train operating companies are not required under their contracts with the Secretary of State to offer any specific wage package, or to commit to redundancies.

■ Transport for London: Finance

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[21171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to introduce a new funding model for Transport for London.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government's extraordinary funding settlements recognise the reliance of London's transport network on fare revenue, and Government is committed to compensating TfL for loss of fare revenue as a result of the pandemic. Since the onset of the pandemic, Government has provided TfL with close to £5 billion of emergency funding support, through settlements agreed in May 2020, October 2020, June 2021 and February 2022.

In addition to these emergency funding settlements, the 2021 Spending Review settlement for London provides over a billion pounds of capital investment per year, in line with previous funding.

In accordance with the 25 February 2022 extraordinary funding agreement, Government is considering a longer-term settlement for TfL for a period of 1-3 years in a way that is fair to the national taxpayer and provides value for money.

■ Union Connectivity Review

Matt Vickers: [\[22599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy of the Union Connectivity Review's recommendations on strengthening transport links.

Trudy Harrison:

The Union Connectivity Review (UCR) was published on 26 November 2021. The UK Government is grateful to Sir Peter Hendy for his work and is considering his recommendations carefully, to identify the solutions that work best for the people of the UK. We expect to publish the UK government's response in due course.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles

Derek Thomas: [\[22492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to put a process in place for approving time-limited temporary danger areas for drone (a) trials and (b) routes.

Robert Courts:

The process for approving temporary danger areas (TDAs), including those for drone trials and routes, is the responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority and is outlined in their guidance document CAP 1616. TDA requests go through the Temporary Airspace Change Process and the temporary change may last for a maximum of 90 days.

TREASURY

■ Business Rates

Gareth Bacon: [\[900777\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans the Government has to implement the findings of the fundamental review of business rates.

Lucy Frazer:

Following the review of business rates the government announced measures worth £7 billion for businesses over the next 5 years.

We have already started implementing the findings from the review, by freezing the multiplier in 2022/23, introducing a 50 per cent retail relief, and introducing new plant and machinery and heat networks reliefs.

Other reforms, including the new improvement relief, will be implemented from April 2023.

■ Care Workers: Pay

Rachael Maskell: [\[23772\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to provide a pay increase to care workers that would help tackle (a) retention and (b) recruitment needs in the sector.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who ultimately set their pay, independent of central government.

The Government recently increased the rate of the National Living Wage, meaning many of the lowest paid care workers benefitted from a 6.6% pay rise effective from April 1st 2022. We have also set a target for the National Living Wage to increase further, to reach two-thirds of median earnings by 2024 for workers aged over 21, taking economic conditions into account.

We have announced an unprecedented investment of at least £500 million in the adult social care workforce, which will transform jobs in social care. We will deliver a vision where people can experience a rewarding career with opportunities to develop and progress, where they are recognised for the vital work they do and where they feel their wellbeing is prioritised.

■ Cryptocurrencies: Regulation

Adam Afriye:

[\[23734\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2022 to Question 11630 on Cryptocurrencies: Regulation, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy of existing skills and qualifications and (b) requirement to acquire further skills of brokers who (i) are already regulated and compliant with Money Laundering Regulations and (ii) do not intend to custody cryptoassets themselves but instead use a registered cryptoasset firm.

John Glen:

It is the responsibility of the FCA to assess whether cryptoasset firms have appropriate anti-money laundering controls.

As part of this assessment, firms must demonstrate they have the necessary skills and qualifications. Firms must also demonstrate they have proper policies and procedures in place to deal with the specific nature of the cryptoasset ecosystem. Where either is assessed to be below the required standard, they may have their application rejected or refused.

The Money Laundering Regulations established a risk-based approach to the supervision of cryptoasset businesses. The assessment which each firm must undergo is therefore proportionate to the risks generated by the kind of activities firms engage in.

This means that whether the broker holds cryptoassets themselves or uses a registered cryptoasset firm, the skills & procedures required will likely be different from those that a large cryptoasset exchange is expected to demonstrate.

■ Electricity Generation: Taxation

Peter Aldous:

[\[900773\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) stakeholders on the potential merits of a windfall tax on electricity generators.

Lucy Frazer:

On 26th May, the Chancellor announced that the Government was urgently evaluating the scale of extraordinary profits in the energy generation sector and the appropriate next steps.

As part of this process, officials have been engaging with industry stakeholders to gather evidence on energy generators' level of profitability and the operation of their business models.

■ Employment Schemes

Stephen Crabb: [\[900775\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Plan for Jobs in supporting people into work.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The success of our Plan for Jobs is playing a key role in spreading opportunity across the country.

The Government protected 11.7 million jobs through the pandemic, as well as moving millions of job seekers into work and supporting young people through programmes like kickstart and our apprenticeships offer.

It's clear our plan is working. 2 million fewer people are out of work than originally feared, and the unemployment rate remains close to a near 50 year low.

We will continue to build on this success with our Way to Work campaign, which aims to support 500,000 jobseekers into work by the end of June.

■ Energy and Fuels: Prices

Ben Lake: [\[900770\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the economic effect of the rise in (a) fuel and (b) energy costs on small businesses.

Helen Whately:

Businesses are experiencing increased costs driven by global events. One of these extra costs is fuel. At Spring Statement, we announced a 12-month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre, for the benefit of businesses as well as individuals.

More broadly, we are helping SMEs through tax cuts to national insurance and business rates.

■ Health Professions: Tax Allowances

Stephen Farry: [\[23816\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 16 June 2022 to Question 15398 on Tax Allowances: Health Professions, what the Government's policy is on the validity of medics incurring tax charges albeit managed via scheme pays, for inadvertently exceeding annual allowances due to inflation.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to ensuring that hard-working NHS staff do not find themselves reducing their work commitments due to the interaction between their pay, their pension, and the relevant tax regime.

The NHS pension scheme is one of the most generous schemes available, and protects pensions in payment by increasing them by CPI and revalues accrued CARE benefits by CPI+1.5% each year.

Pensions tax relief one of the most expensive reliefs in the personal tax system. In 2019/20 Income Tax relief on total contributions and National Insurance relief on employer contributions for pension savings cost the Exchequer £61 billion, with around 60 per cent of Income Tax relieved at the Higher and Additional rates. The annual allowance helps to ensure that the highest earning pension savers do not receive a disproportionate benefit.

99 per cent of pension savers make annual contributions below £40,000, the level of standard annual allowance which has applied from 2014/15. Individuals who breach the annual allowance on tax-relieved pension savings can also use an option called 'scheme pays', under which they can require their pension scheme to pay their annual allowance tax charge now (in return for an actuarially fair reduction in their pension), provided that the annual allowance charge is at least £2,000 and they have exceeded the annual allowance of £40,000. In England and Wales, the NHS Pension Scheme goes further, allowing Scheme Pays to be used on any annual allowance charges relating to accrual in that scheme.

■ Inflation: Cost of Living

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[22373\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to help reduce the impact of inflation on households' cost of living.

Paula Barker:

[\[22592\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to (a) mitigate and (b) tackle the impact on people's personal finances of the recent increase in the cost of living.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Millions of households across the UK are struggling to make their incomes stretch to cover the rising cost of living. The government is providing over £15bn of additional support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package builds on the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year.

The government is helping all domestic electricity customers in Great Britain to cope with the impact of higher energy bills, with £400 off their bills from October through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS). This is a doubling of the £200 of support announced in February, and there will no longer be any repayments. The government will deliver equivalent support to people in Northern Ireland.

The government is supporting over 8 million households across the UK in receipt of means tested benefits with a one-off Cost of Living Payment of £650, paid in two instalments.

The government is giving additional UK-wide support to help disabled people with the particular extra costs they will face, with 6 million people who receive non-means tested disability benefits receiving a one-off disability Cost of Living Payment of £150.

The government is also providing extra support to help all pensioners across the UK stay warm this winter. Over eight million pensioner households will receive an extra one-off £300 this year to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter.

For households that are not eligible for Cost of Living Payments or for families that still need additional support; the government is providing an extra £500 million of local support, via the Household Support Fund. The Fund will be extended from this October to March 2023, bringing total funding for the scheme to £1.5 billion.

Millions of the most vulnerable households will receive at least £1,200 of one-off support in total this year to help with the cost of living.

The government is also committed to tackling the underlying, long-term factors driving cost of living challenges. This includes: helping people into work and supporting them to keep more of what they earn; solidifying our supply chains and boosting our energy security; and driving economic growth through a lower tax, dynamic market economy.

■ **Mortgages: Interest Rates**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[23805\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of trends in the level of interest rates on people who are mortgage prisoners.

John Glen:

Ministers and officials meet regularly with industry, trade bodies, and regulators to understand their policies and the impact of the increased cost of living on all mortgage borrowers. I am also in regular contact with mortgage prisoner campaigners about their concerns.

The Treasury continues to work with industry to determine if there are any further solutions which would meaningfully benefit mortgage prisoners and are fair to other borrowers in the wider mortgage market, including those who are also paying variable rates.

The Government continues its efforts to support mortgage borrowers by offering Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) loans to homeowners in receipt of an income-related benefit to help prevent repossession. Recently, the Prime Minister announced a package of homeownership measures, including changes to SMI Loans. When introduced, these changes will provide support more quickly to homeowners by reducing the qualifying period for SMI loans and remove the 'zero earnings rule'. There is also protection in place in the courts under the Mortgage Pre-Action Protocol which stipulates that repossession should always be a last resort for lenders.

On the cost of living more broadly, the Government has introduced over £15bn of additional support, targeted particularly at those with the greatest need. This package

builds on the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year. Millions of the most vulnerable households will receive at least £1,200 of one-off support in total this year to help with the cost of living.

■ Offshore Industry: Taxation

Andrew Bowie: [\[900779\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the energy profits levy on investor confidence in the North Sea energy sector.

Lucy Frazer:

The Energy Profits Levy is a temporary measure, the revenues from which will help to provide vital support for households facing cost of living pressures.

The government expects the combination of the Levy and its investment allowance to lead to an overall increase in investment.

■ Pay: Cost of Living

Paula Barker: [\[22587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that workers are adequately remunerated in the context of the recent increase in the cost of living.

Mr Simon Clarke:

On 1 April 2022, the Government increased the National Living Wage by 6.6% to £9.50 an hour for workers aged 23+. This helps keeps us on track to meet our target to end low pay by 2024-25.

The April 2022 increase in the National Living Wage represents an increase of over £1,000 to the annual earnings of a full-time worker on the National Living Wage and is expected to benefit over 2 million workers.

We are also delivering a significant tax cut for low-income families by reducing the Universal Credit taper rate from 63p to 55p, and increasing Universal Credit work allowances by £500 p.a. This is essentially a tax cut for the lowest paid in society worth £2.2bn next year and means that around 2m families will save an extra £1,000 a year on average.

■ Public Expenditure

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[22374\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to help ensure value for money in public spending.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Spending Review 2021 placed a renewed emphasis on ensuring that every pound of taxpayers' money is spent well and focused on the areas that make the most difference to people's daily lives. The government set clear outcomes for what

spending will buy; ensured that all decisions are informed by the best quality evidence; encouraged joint working between departments; and took further action to drive out low value or inefficient spend.

At the Spring Statement, the government also set out plans to tackle waste and inefficiency across the public sector through a comprehensive efficiency agenda. This includes a new Public Sector Fraud Authority that will tackle fraud and a further £12 million investment in HMRC to help prevent error and fraud in tax credits. Work on ensuring value for money is being driven by the Chancellor-chaired Committee on Efficiency and Value for Money.

■ Public Sector: Pay

Rachael Maskell:

[\[23771\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to ensure that his public sector pay remits focus on poverty reduction.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government is providing over £15bn of additional support, to address global inflationary pressures, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package builds on the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year.

Millions of the most vulnerable households will receive at least £1,200 of one-off support in total this year to help with the cost of living.

For households that are not eligible for Cost of Living Payments or for families that still need additional support; the government is providing an extra £500 million of local support, via the Household Support Fund. The Fund will be extended from this October to March 2023, bringing total funding for the scheme to £1.5 billion.

The government is also committed to tackling the underlying, long-term factors driving cost of living challenges. This includes: helping people into work and supporting them to keep more of what they earn; solidifying our supply chains and boosting our energy security; and driving economic growth through a lower tax, dynamic market economy.

Pay for most frontline workforces – including nurses, teachers, armed forces and police officers - is set through an independent Pay Review Body process. The Pay Review Bodies will consider a range of evidence when forming their recommendations.

Spending Review 2021 confirmed that public sector workers will see pay rises across the whole Spending Review period (22/23-24/25).

Rachael Maskell:

[\[23773\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will set out his proposal for the level of public sector pay ahead of summer 2022.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Spending Review 2021 confirmed that public sector workers will see pay rises across the whole Spending Review period (22/23-24/25), with pay awards determined through normal process. Pay for most frontline workforces – including nurses, teachers, armed forces and police officers - is set through an independent Pay Review Body process. The Government carefully considers recommendations from Pay Review Bodies before responding. Pay awards for 2022/23 will be announced by Secretaries of State responsible for relevant workforces in due course.

Rachael Maskell:[\[23774\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what comparative assessment he has made of the impact of percentage increases in pay for (a) low earning and (b) other public sector staff; and if he will make it his policy to prioritise the largest public sector pay increases for the lowest earners, in the context of the rise in the cost of living.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government is providing over £15bn of additional support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package builds on the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year.

Millions of the most vulnerable households will receive at least £1,200 of one-off support in total this year to help with the cost of living.

For households that are not eligible for Cost of Living Payments or for families that still need additional support; the government is providing an extra £500 million of local support, via the Household Support Fund. The Fund will be extended from this October to March 2023, bringing total funding for the scheme to £1.5 billion.

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Pay for most frontline workforces – including nurses, teachers, armed forces and police officers - is set through an independent Pay Review Body process. The Pay Review Bodies will consider a range of evidence when forming their recommendations.

Spending Review 2021 confirmed that public sector workers will see pay rises across the whole Spending Review period (22/23-24/25).

■ Safe Hands Plans: Insolvency**Owen Thompson:**[\[23776\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to funeral plans coming under the the Financial Services Compensation Scheme as of 29 July 2022, whether previous Safe Hands Funeral Plans policy holders will be retrospectively awarded compensation

equivalent to what they would be due under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

John Glen:

In January 2021, the government legislated to bring all pre-paid funeral plan providers and intermediaries within the regulatory remit of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) from 29 July 2022. This will ensure that, for the first time, consumers are protected by compulsory and robust regulation.

Safe Hands Plans went into administration in March 2022. The government understands that this will be concerning for customers of Safe Hands and continues to monitor the implementation of regulation in this sector closely.

Dignity's recent commitment to provide ongoing support to Safe Hands' customers until November 2022 is welcome. This will ensure that any planholders who pass away during this time will receive a funeral without any additional charge.

Prior to the firm going into administration, Safe Hands Plans was not an authorised financial services firm. The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) is the UK's compensation scheme of last resort and pays compensation to consumers in respect of claims made in connection with regulated activities when authorised financial services firms fail. Extending the protection of the FSCS – which is funded by a levy on financial services firms – to unregulated firms would send an inappropriate and unhelpful message.

When the pre-paid funeral plan sector comes into regulation on 29 July, FSCS protection will apply for customers of firms that have obtained FCA authorisation, customers whose plans are transferred to such firms, and customers who buy funeral plans from such firms in the future.

■ **Taxation**

Emma Hardy:

[\[900781\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to ensure fairness in the application of the tax system.

Lucy Frazer:

At Spring Statement, we equalised the National Insurance and income tax starting thresholds.

Our work towards OECD Pillar 1 & 2 reforms will help to ensure multinational businesses pay their fair share.

The government is committed to tackling avoidance and evasion to ensure that everyone pays the right amount of tax at the right time.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Jobcentres: Training**

Alison McGovern: [\[23289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the data her Department holds on the referrals of benefit claimants for literacy training by Job Centre Plus to providers in 2021.

Alison McGovern: [\[23290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the data her Department holds on the referrals of benefit claimants for numeracy training by Job Centre Plus to providers in 2021.

Alison McGovern: [\[23291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the data her Department holds on the referrals of benefit claimants for digital skills training by Job Centre Plus to providers in 2021.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable Member to the answer given to [PQ15249](#)

■ **Refugees: Jobcentres**

Alison McGovern: [\[23292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many refugees have been interviewed at job centres in each year since 2017.

Mims Davies:

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

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Departmental Contingent Liability Notification; Energy Supply Company Special Administration Regime

Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Greg Hands): [\[HCWS145\]](#)

Today I will lay before Parliament a Departmental Minute describing a number of contingent liabilities arising from the issuance of letters of credit for the Energy Administrators acting in the Special Administration Regime for Bulb Energy Limited ('Bulb'). These letters of credit replace previous ones provided, announced within past Written Ministerial Statements, which soon expire.

It is normal practice when a Government Department proposes to undertake a contingent liability of £300,000 and above, for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Department concerned to present Parliament with a minute giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances.

I have ensured that Parliament has been afforded the full 14-sitting day notification period to allow the proper scrutiny of these new contingent liabilities.

Bulb entered the Energy Supply Company Special Administration Regime on 24 November 2021. Energy Administrators were appointed by court to achieve the statutory objective of continuing energy supplies at the lowest reasonable practicable cost until such time as it becomes unnecessary for the special administration to remain in force for that purpose.

My Department has agreed to provide a facility to the Energy Administrators, with letters of credit issued, with my approval, to guarantee such contract, code, licence, or other document obligations of the company consistent with the special administration's statutory objective. I will update the House if any letters of credit are drawn against.

The legal basis for a letter of credit is section 165 of the Energy Act 2004, as applied and modified by section 96 of the Energy Act 2011.

HM Treasury has approved the arrangements in principle.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Census 2021

Parliamentary Secretary (Mrs Heather Wheeler): [\[HCWS147\]](#)

The 22nd decennial census of population for England and Wales was taken on 21 March 2021. Today, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes the first results that I have laid in a report before the House this morning. These results are just the start of an

extensive range of Census 2021 statistics and analyses to be published during 2022 and 2023 and beyond.

Census 2021 was a great success. Delivered against the backdrop of the Coronavirus pandemic, the first digital-first census achieved response rates of 97%, with 89% of households completing it online. This household response rate far exceeded the ONS's target of 94% nationally and local response rates were above the target of 80% in each local authority area. I thank the public for their response.

The figures published today show that the usual resident population of England and Wales on Census Day – 21 March 2021 – was estimated to be 59,597,300 (56,489,800 in England and 3,107,500 in Wales); this was the largest population ever recorded through a census in England and Wales. The population of England and Wales grew by more than 3.5 million (6.3%) since the last census in 2011, when it was 56,075,912. The report laid before the House provides estimates of the population down to local authority level, broken down by age and sex, as well as the number of households, data on population density, and changes in population and households over time. The statistical datasets underlying the report have also been published today on the ONS website, along with other analysis and information.

Census data are critical to planning and delivering local services as well as informing decision making at national and local levels. Early data from Census 2021 have already been used to inform management of the Coronavirus pandemic. Information on where Ukrainian communities are located in England and Wales has been used to inform our humanitarian response to the crisis. The huge range of high-quality data and detail from the census, combined with other sources will ensure the changing needs of society can be understood and met.

Over the coming months, the ONS will publish data and analysis covering the range of topics and questions included in Census 2021, including the new questions on sexual orientation, gender identity and previous service in the UK Armed Forces. These will be followed by data releases which will allow users to conduct in-depth analysis using data across multiple census variables, as well as a range of ONS analytical publications exploring the data in more detail across the range of census topics. In total, these releases will include some five billion census statistics. Further detail of the planned releases and publications can be found on the Census 2021 outputs pages of the ONS's website.

The ONS is producing a suite of tools to enable users of all levels of experience with population data to explore the results of the census. To maintain the privacy of personal census responses, strict measures of statistical disclosure control ensure that no individual person or household can be identified from the information released.

The census in Northern Ireland was conducted on the same day as in England and Wales. However, the census in Scotland took place in March 2022. The statistical offices of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are working together to ensure the production of harmonised statistics across the UK and to address issues arising from the census in Scotland taking place a year later.

Alongside the delivery of the digital-first census in 2021, the ONS is transforming the population and migration statistics system. This work will enable more frequent and timely statistics about our population using administrative data supplemented by surveys. In addition to Census 2021 outputs and regular Mid-Year Estimates, throughout this year the ONS will continue to publish research updates, building towards “experimental” monthly age/sex profiles of the population relating to 2022. This will start with a proof of concept for admin-based monthly population estimates as soon as possible after the first Census 2021 results are released. As its methods mature, the ONS will embed these into its official estimates and move on from the “experimental” status. The ONS is continuing to develop its methods for producing population and migration statistics. It also aims to publish a proof of concept that demonstrates the feasibility of producing statistics from admin data combining two or more characteristics, starting with income by ethnicity, which builds on research published last year on admin-based income and ethnicity statistics. This new approach will inform a recommendation by the National Statistician in 2023 on the future of the census and population statistics in England and Wales.

DEFENCE

■ Call-Out Order Related to Countering State Threats

The Minister for the Armed Forces (James Heapey):

[\[HCWS148\]](#)

A new order has been made under section 56(1B) of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 to enable Reservists to be called into permanent service to prepare for, participate in, or support operations by Her Majesty’s Armed Forces to counter state threats.

States engage in and orchestrate overt and covert action which falls short of general armed conflict but nevertheless seeks to undermine or threaten the safety and interests of the UK, including the integrity of its democracy, its public safety, its military advantage and its reputation or economic prosperity. The characteristics of state threats are changing, diversifying and evolving. States who engage in hostile activity against the UK and our overseas interests are becoming increasingly emboldened, asserting themselves more aggressively, to advance their geo-political objectives and undermine the UK’s democracy, security, prosperity, resilience, values and global strategic advantage.

The Ministry of Defence is regularly tasked to support broader HMG objectives. As part of this support, Reserve Forces will be on standby, routinely as part of a Whole Force approach with Regular Services, to deliver a range of Defence outputs, including support to Partners Across Government. Outputs will be enabled by Reserve Forces providing capabilities such as (but not limited to) formed sub-units, individual augmentees and specialist skills.

The order shall take effect from the day on which it is made and shall cease to have effect 12 months from the date on which it is made.

EDUCATION**■ Children's Homes Update****Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families (Will Quince):**
[\[HCWS144\]](#)

Today I am providing an update on the department's response to whistleblowing allegations made to Ofsted and the BBC by former employees of Calcot Services for Children. The allegations describe shocking abuse and safeguarding failures in children's homes run by Calcot, including allegations of grooming, rape, sexual assault, and of Calcot cutting corners on staffing ratios. This is something that I, and the department, takes with the utmost seriousness. We expect all children's homes to provide the right support, care and protection for children who live there - no organisation should exploit those in need.

Calcot runs 8 children's homes and 3 independent schools in Reading and the surrounding areas for children with complex emotional / behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. Ofsted is responsible for regulating children's homes and ensuring that action is taken where homes are not providing good quality and safe care for the children they look after. I met Her Majesty's Chief Inspector at Ofsted on 14 June to discuss my concerns about Calcot. In the light of the most recent concerns, Ofsted have further accelerated their planned programme of inspection across Calcot's children's homes and schools. Following recent inspections, the first inspection report was published on 21 June and the children's home was rated as inadequate. Ofsted has issued the home with compliance notices and it is restricted from taking more children until it can demonstrate it has improved the quality of care.

As some inspections are still in progress, I cannot say more on the outcomes at this time. However, three further homes have had restrictions imposed limiting the number of children they can care for. If Ofsted find widespread and systemic failings, they will not hesitate to issue a notice to suspend the registration of the home and consider serving a notice to cancel the registration of the home if necessary. This action would be taken if Ofsted considered that the children were not safe and if they did not have confidence that the provider could make appropriate and sufficient changes quickly enough.

The safeguarding of the children in our collective care remains paramount and as these inspections progress Ofsted will update the department, and both will continue to work with placing Local Authorities to ensure that appropriate and proportionate action is taken to safeguard children.

With regards to the three independent schools run by Calcot, the department is working with the inspectorates to ensure they are meeting the Independent School Standards and keeping their children safe.

Independent schools should meet all of the Independent School Standards at all times. Where any school has serious failings or failings for an extended period of time, the Department may consider whether enforcement action is appropriate under its published regulatory and enforcement policy action, which can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/attachment_data/file/809551/Ind_schools_enforcement_policy_statement_post_consultation_13061

Separately, in January, the Education Secretary agreed that the independent Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel should undertake a national review into safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings. It will ask some important questions about how children with disabilities are safeguarded. Most importantly, it will seek to identify ways in which practice and policy might need to change to protect children better in the future.

We will consider all this information together with the findings from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and Competition and Market's Authority market study, to inform our implementation strategy, due to be published later this year.

HOME OFFICE

■ Implementation of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice and Tackling Illegal Migration (Tom Pursglove):

[\[HCWS150\]](#)

In April, the Nationality and Borders Act achieved Royal Assent. This landmark legislation will help to deliver a fair but firm asylum system; deterring illegal entry into the UK, breaking the business model of people-smuggling networks and speeding up the removal of those with no right to be here. In turn, this will free up the asylum system so we can better support those in genuine need of asylum through safe and legal routes.

Today, a new measures from the Act will come into effect. Including:

- Amended criminal offences with increased maximum penalties for those attempting to arrive in the UK illegally - from six months to four years - and maximum life imprisonment for people smugglers, including pilots of small boats in the Channel and others who dangerously smuggle migrants into the UK. In addition, we have increased the maximum penalty for Foreign National Offenders who return to the UK in breach of a deportation order from six months to five years;
- A suite of asylum reforms, with the central principle that those seeking protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. Our reforms also introduce a new differentiated approach, whereby those who did not come to the UK directly, did not claim without delay, or did not show good cause for their illegal entry or presence, may be given lesser entitlements than those who have complied with these requirements, for example refugees who have come to the UK via safe and legal routes. The different entitlements include a shorter grant of permission to stay (a minimum of 30 months instead of 5 years), no automatic right to settlement and access to family reunion only where a refusal would breach our international obligations.

- An ability to impose visa penalties – this means slowing or stopping our services where countries pose a risk to international peace and security and those that refuse to take back their own citizens who have no right to be in the UK.
- Nationality changes, creating fairer access to British nationality.
- Changes to bail and returns, which includes strengthening the Early Removal Scheme for Foreign National Offenders to remove them sooner than was the case previously

These reforms sit alongside other important changes, including a world-leading migration and economic partnership with Rwanda. Further reforms from the Act will be implemented over the coming months and into next year as we seek to build and deliver a fair, but firm asylum and immigration system.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ India Trade Negotiations: Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS149\]](#)

The fourth round of UK-India Free Trade Agreement negotiations began on 13 June and concluded on 24 June. The negotiations, at official level, were conducted in a hybrid fashion, with some negotiators in our dedicated UK negotiations facility, and others attending virtually.

During this round, talks focused on draft treaty text. Technical discussions were held across 20 policy areas over 71 separate sessions, with draft treaty text advanced across the majority of chapters.

The fifth round of official-level negotiations is due to take place in July 2022.

We remain clear that any deal the Government strikes must be in the best interests of the British people and the economy.

The Government will keep Parliament updated as these negotiations progress.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Machinery of Government

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): [\[HCWS151\]](#)

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Responsibility for private commercial arbitration policy and the Arbitration Act 1996 will move from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to the Ministry of Justice from 1 July 2022. This transfer will locate private commercial arbitration policy alongside other forms of dispute resolution policy. This will allow the Ministry of Justice to pursue a comprehensive and unified approach to the promotion and continued

competitiveness of the UK as a world-leading destination for all forms of dispute resolution. The transfer of policy responsibility will also allow the MoJ to meet its responsibilities of working in the interests of all parts of the UK's legal sector, of which arbitration is a vital component.

■ UK Covid-19 Inquiry

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS152\]](#)

On 15 December 2021 I appointed the Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett as chair of the UK Inquiry into Covid-19. Earlier this year, I published terms of reference for the inquiry in draft and asked Baroness Hallett to conduct a public consultation in order to inform refinements to those terms of reference. I am grateful to Baroness Hallett for the very extensive consultation she conducted and for the subsequent amendments to the inquiry's terms of reference which she put forward as a result.

Having considered Baroness Hallett's proposals carefully and consulted the administrations in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, I am content to accept her changes in full, subject only to a small number of clarificatory amendments put forward by the devolved administrations and agreed with Baroness Hallett. The inquiry's final terms of reference are set out in full below.

In appointing Baroness Hallett as the inquiry's chair I confirmed that I proposed to appoint additional panel members in order that the inquiry has access to the full range of expertise needed to complete its important work. I can now confirm that I propose to appoint two such panel members, and that I propose to do so in the coming months.

The UK inquiry into Covid-19 is now formally established and able to begin its important work. Its terms of reference are as follows:

"The Inquiry will examine, consider and report on preparations and the response to the pandemic in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, up to and including the Inquiry's formal setting-up date, 28 June 2022.

In carrying out its work, the Inquiry will consider reserved and devolved matters across the United Kingdom, as necessary, but will seek to minimise duplication of investigation, evidence gathering and reporting with any other public inquiry established by the devolved governments. To achieve this, the Inquiry will set out publicly how it intends to minimise duplication, and will liaise with any such inquiry before it investigates any matter which is also within that inquiry's scope.

In meeting its aims, the Inquiry will:

- a) consider any disparities evident in the impact of the pandemic on different categories of people, including, but not limited to, those relating to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and equality categories under the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- b) listen to and consider carefully the experiences of bereaved families and others who have suffered hardship or loss as a result of the pandemic. Although the Inquiry will not consider in detail individual cases of harm or death, listening to these accounts will inform

its understanding of the impact of the pandemic and the response, and of the lessons to be learned;

c) highlight where lessons identified from preparedness and the response to the pandemic may be applicable to other civil emergencies;

d) have reasonable regard to relevant international comparisons; and

e) produce its reports (including interim reports) and any recommendations in a timely manner.

The aims of the Inquiry are to:

1. Examine the COVID-19 response and the impact of the pandemic in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and produce a factual narrative account, including:

a) The public health response across the whole of the UK, including

i) preparedness and resilience;

ii) how decisions were made, communicated, recorded, and implemented;

iii) decision-making between the governments of the UK;

iv) the roles of, and collaboration between, central government, devolved administrations, regional and local authorities, and the voluntary and community sector;

v) the availability and use of data, research and expert evidence;

vi) legislative and regulatory control and enforcement;

vii) shielding and the protection of the clinically vulnerable;

viii) the use of lockdowns and other 'non-pharmaceutical' interventions such as social distancing and the use of face coverings;

ix) testing and contact tracing, and isolation;

x) the impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the population, including but not limited to those who were harmed significantly by the pandemic;

xi) the impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the bereaved, including post-bereavement support;

xii) the impact on health and care sector workers and other key workers;

xiii) the impact on children and young people, including health, wellbeing and social care;

xiv) education and early years provision;

xv) the closure and reopening of the hospitality, retail, sport and leisure, and travel and tourism sectors, places of worship, and cultural institutions;

xvi) housing and homelessness;

xvii) safeguarding and support for victims of domestic abuse;

xviii) prisons and other places of detention;

xix) the justice system;

- xx) immigration and asylum;
 - xxi) travel and borders; and
 - xxii) the safeguarding of public funds and management of financial risk.
- b) The response of the health and care sector across the UK, including:
- i) preparedness, initial capacity and the ability to increase capacity, and resilience;
 - ii) initial contact with official healthcare advice services such as 111 and 999;
 - iii) the role of primary care settings such as General Practice;
 - iv) the management of the pandemic in hospitals, including infection prevention and control, triage, critical care capacity, the discharge of patients, the use of 'Do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation' (DNACPR) decisions, the approach to palliative care, workforce testing, changes to inspections, and the impact on staff and staffing levels;
 - v) the management of the pandemic in care homes and other care settings, including infection prevention and control, the transfer of residents to or from homes, treatment and care of residents, restrictions on visiting, workforce testing and changes to inspections;
 - vi) care in the home, including by unpaid carers;
 - vii) antenatal and postnatal care;
 - viii) the procurement and distribution of key equipment and supplies, including PPE and ventilators;
 - ix) the development, delivery and impact of therapeutics and vaccines;
 - x) the consequences of the pandemic on provision for non-COVID related conditions and needs; and
 - xi) provision for those experiencing long-COVID.
- c) The economic response to the pandemic and its impact, including governmental interventions by way of:
- i) support for businesses, jobs and the self-employed, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, loans schemes, business rates relief and grants;
 - ii) additional funding for relevant public services;
 - iii) additional funding for the voluntary and community sector; and
 - iv) benefits and sick pay, and support for vulnerable people.
2. Identify the lessons to be learned from the above, to inform preparations for future pandemics across the UK."

TRANSPORT**■ Active Travel England Update****Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Trudy Harrison):****[\[HCWS146\]](#)**

I am pleased to announce further progress standing up Active Travel England, the new Executive Agency which will help deliver this Government's £2 billion commitment to active travel and creating a new golden age of walking and cycling.

A number of senior leadership appointments have now been made for Active Travel England. Chris Boardman MBE has been confirmed as England's National Active Travel Commissioner on a permanent basis. After his appointment as the interim Commissioner at the start of the year, he will continue to lead Active Travel England and chair the Interim Board which has now been established.

The Department expects to be able to confirm shortly the appointment of Danny Williams as Active Travel England's Chief Executive, who will be starting full time in August. He will bring a wealth of experience to the role from successfully setting up and growing both large and start-up businesses and from his dedicated campaigning for improving walking and cycling provision.

Louise Wilkinson has been appointed as Active Travel England's Chief Operating Officer. She has a successful career in financial management for the Civil Service and Local Government and has most recently been a Finance Deputy Director in the Cabinet Office.

The Department expects to confirm shortly the appointment of Graham Grant as its Director of Planning. He was until recently the Assistant Director of Transport at Newcastle City Council.

Brian Deegan has also started as the Director of Inspections. He has successfully developed and delivered street designs for improving active travel in Greater Manchester and London and will work with local authorities to design high quality schemes. A small number of DfT employees will also transfer to the new body.

Despite only having a handful of officers in place - Active Travel England has already started to deliver significant benefits, in line with the Gear Change commitment to deliver a step change in the quality of walking and cycling infrastructure. It has assessed and awarded £161 million of funding for 134 Active Travel Fund projects, announced on 14 May 2022, which will deliver high-quality schemes in 46 authorities in England, outside London. This early work will enable 16 million extra cycling and walking journeys to take place each year. It has also developed a suite of tools which will help local active travel projects deliver high-quality infrastructure, and it has delivered training and engagement events for local authorities. Its work will significantly improve value for money of cycling and walking schemes.

Improved active travel provision has many benefits. It will play an important role in improving the health of the nation by reducing physical inactivity and it is vital to the Government's commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Better walking

and cycling provision will also help make local areas greener, healthier and better places to live.