

## Daily Report

Friday, 1 July 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 1 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:31 P.M., 01 July 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

#### ■ Criminal Liability

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[23225\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 23 May 2022 to Question 5345 on Criminal Liability, for what reason the CPS does not maintain a central record of any defence employed by defendants in criminal proceedings.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) collects data to assist in the effective management of its prosecution functions. This data is derived from structured data fields completed on individual case records held in the Case Management Information System (CMS) and reported in the Management Information System (MIS).

Any information recorded in the CMS about the defence(s) employed by defendants would be added as 'freetext' which cannot be centrally collated in the MIS and would only be obtainable by manually reviewing CPS case records. Defences employed are by their nature specific to the circumstances of each individual case, so collecting related data would provide little benefit as CPS operational management information.

#### ■ Emergency Services and Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[26004\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking with the CPS to improve prosecution rates for offences against retail and emergency workers.

**Alex Chalk:**

The CPS treats assaults against retail and emergency workers extremely seriously. In accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors, charges are selected to reflect the seriousness and extent of the offending and give the court adequate powers to sentence.

The CPS is a signatory to a [Joint Agreement on Offences against Emergency Workers](#) which provides a framework to ensure the more effective investigation and prosecution of cases where emergency workers are the victim of a crime. It also sets the standards victims of these crimes can expect.

The CPS has issued [legal guidance](#) to prosecutors on the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018. This guidance highlights that the Act requires courts to consider an offence against an emergency worker as an aggravating factor in sentencing. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 has extended the statutory aggravating factor cover to assaults on those providing a public service including those who provide goods or facilities to the public.

## ■ Road Traffic Offences: Administration of Justice

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[23226]**

To ask the Attorney General, whether she is taking steps to improve access to justice for victims of death by driving offenders.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) recognise that deaths caused by driving offences are particularly tragic cases and ensuring that the victim's family is appropriately informed and supported in the aftermath is incredibly important.

Crown Prosecutors must always adhere to the two-stage test set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors when making charging decisions in any case. This means first objectively assessing whether the evidential threshold is met, and if this aspect of the test is satisfied, going on to consider whether a prosecution is required in the public interest.

The CPS operates a Victims' Right to Review (VRR) Scheme which enables close relatives of a person whose death was directly caused by criminal conduct to seek a review of a CPS decision not to bring a prosecution, or to discontinue a case. This scheme has been designed to be as accessible as possible, with no obligation on a victim's family to make specific representations relating to the CPS decision, it is sufficient to simply ask that the decision be reviewed.

The CPS also has specific guidance and practices which deliver an enhanced standard of service to bereaved families, in recognition of the particularly difficult nature of these cases. This will include offering a meeting with the victim's family to explain any CPS decision not to charge, and at various other stages of a case.

Improving the experience of victims of crime is a priority for the CPS and last year it commissioned independent research to better understand what victims want and need; and to identify areas for improvement. On the 27 June, the CPS published its response to the research findings, setting out four key areas of action which will form the basis of a long-term programme of work to improve how it engages with victims.

## ■ Road Traffic Offences: Prosecutions

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[23228]**

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment she has made of adequacy of recourses for the Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute defendants of road death offences.

**Alex Chalk:**

The CPS does not have dedicated teams that deal with road death cases. However, these cases are always dealt with carefully and sensitively by prosecutors who have the skills and experience to apply the relevant law and CPS policies.

Crown Prosecutors must always adhere to the two-stage test set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors when making charging decisions in any case. This means first objectively assessing whether the evidential threshold is met, and if this aspect of the

test is satisfied, going on to consider whether a prosecution is required in the public interest.

In addition, 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.

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

### ■ Carbon Emissions

**Ian Lavery:** [\[23747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of average annual household carbon equivalent emissions broken down by constituency.

**Ian Lavery:** [\[23748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of average annual household carbon equivalent emissions broken down by income.

**Ian Lavery:** [\[23749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of average annual household carbon equivalent emissions broken down by social class.

**Greg Hands:**

BEIS publishes statistics on UK territorial carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, but these are not broken down by constituency, social class, or income.

Instead, statistics showing carbon dioxide emissions by local authority and average carbon dioxide emissions per capita by local authority up to 2019 are available:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2019>.

Statistics showing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions by local authority up to 2020 were published on 30 June 2022.

**Martyn Day:** [\[23778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to his Answer of 1 April 2022 to Question 146696 on Carbon Emissions: Coal and Timber, what quantity of carbon dioxide emissions did the UK report internationally as a memo item for (a) Drax Group from the burning of wood in its power station and (b) all UK bioenergy production in the last 12 months.

**Greg Hands:**

Defra publish the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register to comply with the Kyiv Protocol requirements. For 2020, the most recent year with available data, the total

carbon dioxide emissions from the Drax site in North Yorkshire were 14.3 million tonnes and the carbon dioxide emissions excluding biomass were 1.53 million tonnes. This implies that burning wood at the Drax power station emitted 12.8 million tonnes of biomass derived carbon dioxide.

The quantity of carbon dioxide emissions from biogenic sources that the UK reported internationally to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for 2020 was 47.198 million tonnes.

#### ■ **Drax Power Station: Timber**

**Martyn Day:**

[23777]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2022 to Question 132331 on Drax Power Station: Timber, what was the age profile of forests felled for use in the Drax power station.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government does not hold this data. Generators only receive subsidies for biomass that complies with strict sustainability criteria, which includes requirements under both land and greenhouse gas criteria. More information on the sustainability criteria can be found on the Ofgem website

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/renewables-obligation-sustainability-criteria>.

#### ■ **Electricity: Finance**

**Ruth Jones:**

[22524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his oral statement of 26 May 2022 on Economy Update, Official report, column 449, what steps he is taking to ensure that people on shared electricity tariffs receive financial support.

**Greg Hands:**

Households supplied with electricity via a contract entered into by their landlord are protected by the Maximum Resale Price provisions put in place by Ofgem. This prevents landlords reselling energy at a higher price than they paid the energy supplier.

Further to my rt. hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer's announcement on 26 May, the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has announced the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS), a £37billion cost of living assistance package and will deliver a £400 non-repayable grant to households over winter 22/23. The Government continues to work with consumer groups and suppliers on delivery and is exploring ways in which households, who do not have direct contract for electricity might receive similar support

## ■ Fuel Oil

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[23819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will take steps to help encourage people who use domestic heating oil to switch to more environmentally friendly forms of heating.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[23823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to provide support to people who use domestic heating oil until green heating alternatives become more affordable.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[23824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes that previously used domestic heating oil have successfully applied for funding through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme since the commencement of that scheme.

**Greg Hands:**

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme provides grants for heat pumps and biomass boilers to support people using domestic heating oil to make the transition to lower carbon heat. Since launch, 373 properties which used oil have applied to the scheme.

The Energy Company Obligation scheme (ECO4) is available for those who use domestic heating oil and who meet the eligibility criteria. This includes replacing their oil heating system with renewable heating or a District Heating System.

Where these customers meet the eligibility criteria and are customers of a participating energy supplier, they may qualify for a £150 Warm Home Discount rebate.

## ■ Fuel Oil: Price Caps

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[23820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to introduce a cap on the prices of domestic heating oil.

**Greg Hands:**

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

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



## ■ Fuel Oil: Rural Areas

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[23821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help tackle the effect of the rise in the cost of energy on rural homes reliant on domestic heating oil.

**Greg Hands:**

BEIS Ministers are in regular contact with the fuel industry and have made it clear operators should do everything they can to reduce costs to end users.

Through the cost of living support package, the Government is providing over £15 billion in support to households, targeted at those with the greatest need. This is in addition to all domestic electricity customers receiving £400 from October.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[23822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help connect rural homes that rely on domestic heating oil to mains gas heating.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[23825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a grant scheme for connecting rural homes to mains gas.

**Greg Hands:**

Under the gas network price control Ofgem oversees the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES), which is delivered by the Gas Distribution Networks.

The FPNES provides a discount to eligible households against the cost of connecting to the gas network.

## ■ Heat Pumps

**Jim Shannon:** [\[22436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the number of trained heat pump installers in the UK in 2021.

**Greg Hands:**

There are currently over 1300 businesses in the UK certified with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) to install heat pumps, estimated to employ approximately 4,000 installers. The total number of trained installers is likely to be greater than this, as not all trained heat pump installers are required to be MCS Certified. MCS Certification is only required for installations receiving Government grant funding. The Government has commissioned further research into the existing heating and cooling installer workforce in England, which will be completed later this year.

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[22437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of a bespoke heat pump installer certification scheme, similar to the gas safe register, to protect consumers who are purchasing heat pumps.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government oversees authorisation of a number of competent person schemes, including the Gas Safe Register. This includes schemes which allow heat pump installers to self-certify compliance with Building Regulations in England. Contractors installing heat pumps within UK Government schemes, such as the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, are additionally required to be certified by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS). MCS certification provides additional protections to consumers getting a heat pump installed.

## ■ Industry

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[23352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to encourage industrial symbiosis.

**Lee Rowley:**

BEIS is exploring the role that industrial symbiosis can play in reducing emissions from industry and how best to facilitate this. The Department is engaging with stakeholders to learn from regional and international experiences, most recently through interactions with the All-Party Parliamentary Manufacturing Group's event "Industrial Symbiosis: using resource efficiency to achieve net zero goals".

DEFRA is developing a digital waste tracking system, which will improve understanding of stocks and flows of waste returned to the economy as secondary materials. This improved access to data can unlock further industrial symbiosis opportunities

## ■ Offshore Industry: North Sea

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[23259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of oil and gas from new licences in the North Sea that will come to the UK market.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[23260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what powers the Government has to ensure that oil and gas extracted in the North Sea comes into the UK market.

**Greg Hands:**

The North Sea Transition Authority publishes projections of oil and gas production in the UK, including comparisons with forecasts of demand, at

[www.nstauthority.co.uk/data-centre/data-downloads-and-publications/production-projections](http://www.nstauthority.co.uk/data-centre/data-downloads-and-publications/production-projections).

Statistics on current UK oil and gas production and supply are available at [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/oil-and-oil-products-section-3-energy-trends](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/oil-and-oil-products-section-3-energy-trends) and [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gas-section-4-energy-trends](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gas-section-4-energy-trends) respectively.

### ■ **Park Homes: Electricity**

**Dr Dan Poulter:** [\[23270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support park home owners who do not have a domestic electricity supply contract with the cost of energy.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government raised this in its technical consultation on the Energy Bills Support Scheme. The responses to this consultation are being analysed and will be published later in the summer.

Vulnerable consumers, including park home residents will be eligible for a £150 contribution towards their energy bills each winter through the Government's Warm Home Discount Scheme. It is anticipated that the Park Homes Warm Home Discount scheme will re-open again in September 2022. There will also be payments to households on means tested benefits and pensioner and disability cost of living payments. Other support available includes the Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments.

### ■ **Park Homes: Energy Bills Rebate**

**Dr Dan Poulter:** [\[23269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that domestic energy customers living in park homes are eligible for the £400 discount on energy bills in autumn 2022.

**Greg Hands:**

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for St Albans on 20th June 2022 to Question [18990](#).

### ■ **Private Rented Housing: Electricity**

**Dr Dan Poulter:** [\[23271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support tenants who do not have a domestic electricity supply contract with the cost of energy.

**Greg Hands:**

Ofgem's Maximum Resale Price provisions prevent landlords from reselling energy to residents at a higher price than they paid to the licensed energy supplier.

Customers without a domestic electricity supply contract are not eligible for the Energy Bills Support Scheme, so the Government is exploring options for other ways in which they might receive similar support. This was raised in a recent Government consultation and a response will be published later in the summer. The Government has also provided £144 million of discretionary funding for Local Authorities to support households who need support but are not eligible for the Council Tax reduction.

## ■ Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[23833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the Public Sector Decarbonization Steering Board's terms of reference.

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[23834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the Public Sector Decarbonization Steering Board's meeting minutes from 1 January 2020 to 22 June 2022.

**Greg Hands:**

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal meetings are not normally disclosed.

## ■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Disability

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[23735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to put his plans to remove eligibility for the warm homes discount from disabled people not on income related benefits on hold for the purpose of holding discussions with disabled people's organisations on the impact of this plan on disabled people; what assessment he has made of the (a) net difference between the amount a disabled person who would previously have been eligible for the Warm Home Discount loses and gains with the Disability Cost of Living Payment and the (b) adequacy of this for paying for the additional costs faced by disabled people referred to by the Chancellor in his statement to the House on 26 May; and if he will make a statement on the impact of this plan on disabled people.

**Greg Hands:**

Due to the expansion and reform of the scheme, the Government estimated that 160,000 more households where someone has a disability or long-term illness will receive a rebate compared to the unreformed scheme. The scheme will be better targeted to households in fuel poverty and on the lowest incomes. Around 62% of Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance recipients also receive one of the qualifying means-tested benefits. Those households with high energy costs would therefore be eligible for a rebate.

The cost-of-living support measures announced this year will mean low-income people with a disability and in receipt of a means-tested benefit will receive £1,350 this year.

## ■ **West Burton Power Station**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[23262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he approved the agreement between (a) the National Grid and (b) EDF on keeping the West Burton A coal plant open until March 2023.

**Greg Hands:**

The extension to operations at West Burton A was made to further boost the UK's energy security and domestic supply, in light of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. It remains the Government's firm commitment to end the use of coal power by October 2024.

## DEFENCE

## ■ **Armed Forces: Sexual Offences**

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[14577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2022 to Question 1525 on Armed Forces: Sexual Offences, how many serving personnel are on the Sex Offender Register as of 8 June 2022.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has made it absolutely clear there is no place for unacceptable behaviour in the Armed Forces. On 30 March this year the MOD published a Zero-Tolerance to Sexual Offending policy which introduced mandatory discharge from the Armed Forces for anyone convicted of a sexual offence, this includes anyone subject to notification requirements as set out in Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act (SOA) 2003 (more widely recognised as the Sex Offenders Register). Prior to 30 March 2022, termination of Service was an option, but it was not mandatory.

As of 8 June 2022, a total of 10 Serving personnel are on the Sex Offender Register. This figure has been rounded to 10 to limit disclosure and ensure confidentiality, in-line with Departmental rounding policy. Please note that this figure is based on data which is not gathered for statistical purposes or subject to the same level of scrutiny as that applied to our Official Statistics.

Ministers are carefully considering further options for strengthening our Zero Tolerance policy taking legal advice.

**■ F-35 Aircraft: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[24555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 21101, what the next stage of contract activity consists of.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[24556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 21101, whether his Department has started the next stage of contract activity.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The next stage for Tranche 2 contract activity is to negotiate the delivery profile. We do not anticipate being required to complete that stage until 2024 but discussions are already underway.

**■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[23722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has held meetings with representatives of (a) industry and (b) trade unions on ensuring that the UK supply chain benefits from the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

Myself and the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin) meet regularly with representatives from defence industry. There has not been a meeting with either group specifically on the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[23723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the contract value is for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Jeremy Quin:**

As announced on 1 September 2021, four consortia were awarded Fleet Solid Support ship Competitive Procurement Phase contracts, each worth around £5 million. No contract has yet been awarded for the manufacture of the Fleet Solid Support ships.

**■ Military Aircraft: Exports**

**Sir Mark Hendrick:** [\[25739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had recent discussions with his counterparts in (a) Europe, (b) the Middle East and (c) Asia on procurement of the (i) Eurofighter Typhoon and (ii) other defence aircraft which were designed and manufactured in the UK.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The UK Government supports industry partners with the export of UK defence equipment, including Typhoon, across a number of global campaigns. Ministers across Government are actively involved in these campaigns.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Children and Young People: Disability

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[23818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure every (a) disabled child, (b) young person and (c) their families receive the social care support they need.

**Will Quince:**

I refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Rother Valley, to the answer I gave on 25 May 2022 to Question [3798](#).

### ■ Children: Advocacy

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[23331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has any plans to merge advocacy services with independent reviewing officers.

**Will Quince:**

The government will give careful consideration to the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care relating to advocacy and the role of independent reviewing officers. Further information will be provided in the publication of a detailed and ambitious implementation strategy later this year.

### ■ Children: Nutrition

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[23761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that children have access to healthy meals during the school summer holidays when free school meals are not provided.

**Will Quince:**

The department is investing over £600 million in the holiday activities and food programme over the next three years. Children who are in receipt of free school meals are eligible for a place on the holiday activities and food programme, free of charge. This is being delivered in all 152 local authorities in England and ensures that disadvantaged children have access to healthy food and enriching activities during the longer school holiday periods.

### ■ Children: Social Services

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[23332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the proposal in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care to place (a) fostering and (b) other children's services at a regional level; and whether he has made an assessment of how his Department would maintain an effective relationship with the local authorities that deliver those services.

**Will Quince:**

The recommendations from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care must be considered carefully.

Very shortly, the department will organise many more of its functions including children's social care, special educational needs and disability improvement and schools functions regionally to ensure we can better meet the needs of our users, including local authorities. This will set the department up to respond more effectively to local needs and understand how local contexts impact children and families.

**■ Electronic Publishing: Competition**

**Matt Western:** [\[23378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will instruct the Competition and Markets Authority to conduct a market review of the academic e-book market.

**Matt Western:** [\[23379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he is taking steps to regulate the use of non-disclosure agreements concerning the pricing and licensing arrangements of academic e-book agreements between universities and providers.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The department is aware of the concerns about pricing and licensing of e-books, which are at the heart of the campaign led by a group of UK-based academic librarians seeking an investigation into the academic publishing industry by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

There are different views across the publishing and higher education (HE) sectors, as these concerns engage wide-ranging issues, including consumer protection.

I will be hosting a discussion shortly with representatives of the publishing sector, government and HE bodies, including the body for university libraries. Any moves to request a market study or challenge practice on confidentiality agreements will be decided after this discussion.

While it is possible for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education to ask the CMA to look into issues in markets, the CMA is independent of government and makes its own decisions about its work according to published prioritisation principles. Under statute, it is the CMA Board who decides whether to publish a market study notice, and thereby launch a market study.

**■ Freedom of Expression: Public Appointments**

**Matt Western:** [\[23373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the process of appointing the Director of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom will be anonymised.



**Michelle Donelan:**

The Director of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom is not a post listed in the Public Appointments Order in Council, but we have committed that the recruitment process will be done in accordance with the public appointments process.

The Governance Code on Public Appointments does not require data to be anonymised at any stage of the appointments process. It does require the process to be open, transparent and conducted with integrity. It also requires that public appointments should reflect the diversity of the society in which we live.

The scrutiny of candidates' CVs allows for the completion of due diligence and supports a robust process. Therefore, the process of making this appointment will not be anonymised.

**■ Medicine: Higher Education****Matt Western:**[\[23376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to lift the cap on (a) medicine and (b) dentistry course places for the academic year 2022-2023.

**Michelle Donelan:**

It is important to carefully manage dental and medical places to ensure a sustainable pipeline of practitioners to the NHS across all regions of the UK. The department will continue to monitor current arrangements to ensure student intakes are in line with workforce requirements. However, we have no immediate plans to increase the number of medical and dental school places.

The number of places available to study medicine and dentistry is regulated by the government and controlled through intake targets operated by the Office for Students. These places are quality assured by the General Medical Council to ensure the availability of sufficient provision of high-quality education, training and clinical placements and therefore have all been allocated for this coming academic year.

The department funded an additional 1,500 undergraduate medical school places each year for domestic students in England, a 25% increase over three years. This expansion was completed in September 2020 and has delivered five new medical schools in England. In addition, we temporarily lifted the cap on medical and dental school places for students who completed A levels in 2020 and 2021, and who had an offer from a university in England to study medicine or dentistry, subject to their grades.

The department is working with the British Dental Association to reform the NHS dental contract to make it more attractive to the profession. Health Education England set out a range of recommendations in their Advancing Dental Care Review, which will improve recruitment and retention of dentists and other professionals. Action is being taken to implement these through their Dental Education Reform Programme. We are also working to allow greater flexibility to expand on the registration options open to international dentistry applicants.

My hon. Friend, the Minister for Health and I have made clear to all medicine and dental schools, through joint letters sent in October and March, that there is no room for flexibility this year, and it is the department's firm expectation that all schools will only recruit up to the maximum number of students as set in the Office for Students' intake targets. Students recruited above these numbers would need to be fully funded by the institutions and relevant clinical placements secured without department support.

## ■ Universities: Admissions

**Matt Western:**

[\[23375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to provide additional support to universities in preparation for A-Level results day in 2022.

**Michelle Donelan:**

I will continue to work closely with the higher education (HE) sector to support the 2022 intake of students to ensure they can go on to their next step in life following A level and T Level Results day on 18 August, whether that's university, on-the-job training, moving into employment or continuing to study elsewhere.

In November 2021 I wrote to Vice Chancellors to recognise the hard work and dedication that the sector has shown to students throughout the last 2 admissions cycles, and to ask that they build additional resilience into their offer making strategies for the 2022 HE admissions cycle. I have also engaged HE sector bodies through the HE Taskforce to commend them on their efforts to date and to ask that they continue to put students first through the 2022 admissions cycle.

Furthermore, the department, in collaboration with Ofqual, has actively engaged with and sought the views of the HE sector in shaping the decisions for the 2022 exam series for AS and A levels and vocational and technical qualifications. We have put a package of measures in place to ensure that students can take their exams fairly to recognise the disruption that this year's students have faced.

In addition, this summer Ofqual will ask exam boards to set grade boundaries in a way that avoids disadvantaging some students who might otherwise have just missed out on a higher grade. This means that overall 2022 results are very likely to be stronger than in 2019, but lower than we saw in 2021. This package of adaptations, combined with Ofqual's approach to grading, provides unprecedented support to maximise fairness and help students reach their potential.

## ■ University of Gibraltar: British Students Abroad

**Matt Western:**

[\[23380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure English students wishing to attend the University of Gibraltar are able to apply for funding under Student Finance England.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The department is exploring options to finance English students to study in Gibraltar, whilst ensuring that these students receive an education and benefit from safeguards broadly comparable with those in England.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Agriculture: Subsidies****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[24606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of direct payments made to farmers were (a) less than £30,000, (b) £30,001 to £50,000, (c) £50,001 to £150,000 and (d) more than £150,000 in the most recent financial year for which information is available.

**Victoria Prentis:**

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

Direct payments in England are made to farmers through the Basic Payment Scheme, which is administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). The scheme runs on the calendar year, but the figures provided cover all payments released by RPA in the 2021/22 financial year, irrespective of which scheme year they relate to.

GROUPING (£)	21-22 FINANCIAL YEAR	% PROPORTION BY VOLUME
£0>=£30,000	68,482	81.15%
£30,001>=£50,000	8,186	9.70%
£50,001>=£150,000	6,971	8.26%
>£150,000	746	0.88%

**■ Air Pollution: Pollution Control****Marsha De Cordova:**[\[23403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Detailed evidence report on Air quality PM<sub>2.5</sub> targets, published by his Department on 6 May 2022, for what reasons the reductions achieved by the high scenario are lower than those required by the National Emissions Ceiling Directive.

**Jo Churchill:**

The indicative scenarios used in the development of the Environment Act PM<sub>2.5</sub> targets were based on realistic and feasible measures specific to our national circumstances.

A different approach was taken for the National Emissions Ceiling Regulations comparison scenario which was constructed to meet our EU legacy emission ceilings and does not take into account feasibility.

Neither are proposed policy pathways which will be developed as part of the Environmental Improvement Plan due in 2023.

## ■ **Environment: Public Appointments**

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[23829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the terms of reference for the 25 Year Environment Plan Board.

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[23830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the 25-Year Environment Plan Board's meeting minutes from 1 January 2020 to 22 June 2022.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Defra-led cross-Government 25 Year Environment Plan Board was established in December 2020. The Board is responsible for overseeing, co-ordinating and driving forward action to implement the 25 Year Environment Plan and associated requirements under the Environment Act 2021. It aims to join up, secure and accelerate action across government to deliver the Government's commitment of leaving the environment in a better state than we found it. It focuses on delivering the ten goals set out in the Plan, as well as implementation of the Government's 30x30 commitment and the Greening Government Commitments.

## ■ **Horticulture: Seasonal Workers**

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[25874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 17 June 2022 to Question 9902, on what basis his Department estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 seasonal workers are needed annually across the horticultural sector to bring in the harvest.

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[25875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the research his Department conducted to determine that approximately 50,000 workers are employed seasonally on UK farms.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra statistics from the Annual June survey of Agriculture and Horticulture provide a snapshot of seasonal, casual and gang labour workforce numbers working in the whole of agriculture for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (not including Wales). The figure for this was 57,000 in 2020.

Whilst numbers vary year on year, we estimated approximately 50,000 to 60,000 seasonal workers have been needed annually across the horticulture sector to bring home the harvest.

## ■ **Housing: Air Pollution**

**Tim Loughton:**

**[21074]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to support local authorities to limit domestic sources of air pollution, including wood burning stoves, as the leading cause of the air pollutant PM2.5.

**Jo Churchill:**

Local authorities have a number of powers to tackle air pollution, such as introducing speed restrictions including on school streets, enforcing anti-idling laws and environmental permitting to reduce emissions from many local industries.

On domestic sources of air pollution and specifically domestic burning, local authorities have the power to declare Smoke Control Areas (SCAs), where householders are not allowed to emit a substantial amount of smoke from a chimney. The recently introduced Environment Act makes it easier for local authorities to enforce SCA requirements by replacing the criminal offence applying to smoke emissions in SCAs with a civil penalty regime. Local authorities in England can now issue financial penalties of up to £300 to those emitting a substantial amount of smoke from their chimneys in an SCA. The Environment Act also extends the system of statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act to private dwellings in SCAs, enabling local authorities to take action against smoke emissions that are harmful to human health.

To further support local authorities, we have also provided £880 million to help local authorities develop and implement local nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) reduction plans and to support those impacted by these plans. We also have awarded £11.6 million from Defra's annual Air Quality Grant Scheme to 40 local authorities in England for local projects to tackle air pollution. The scheme will reopen for applications later this year, building on more than £38 million investment so far since 2010.

## ■ **Nitrate Vulnerable Zones**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[22402]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he will next review nitrate vulnerable zones.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The review for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones occurs every four years to account for changes in nitrate concentrations. The next review will take place in 2024.

## ■ **Pets: Ukraine**

**Drew Hendry:**

**[24622]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing the Animal and Plant Health Agency to conduct regulatory checks on animals travelling with refugees from Ukraine immediately upon their arrival in the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government wishes to ensure that people fleeing from Ukraine can come here with their pets, in a way which also safeguards our rabies-free status.

The UK has been rabies-free for many years, and we wish to remain so. Ukraine is a high-risk country for rabies and animals coming to the UK from Ukraine need to meet the health preparation requirements before they travel. In practice, this means having a microchip, a rabies vaccination, passing a blood test 30 days later and then waiting for three months before travelling.

However, we recognise that many people fleeing from Ukraine will not have been able to complete all of these requirements. Therefore, people fleeing from Ukraine can bring their pets with them under licence. In cases where their pets need to spend time in quarantine, we are covering the costs of this.

We have streamlined the license application process for people fleeing from Ukraine with their pets. Pets from Ukraine may also be eligible for home isolation in England if they are found to have rabies antibodies, subject to strict criteria.

## ■ **Plastics: Cumbria**

**Dr Neil Hudson:**

**[23815]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he is taking steps to encourage investment in plastic reprocessing facilities in Cumbria.

**Jo Churchill:**

From April this year the Government introduced a Plastic Packaging Tax on plastic packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled plastic. This will provide a clear economic incentive for businesses to use recycled plastic in the manufacture of plastic packaging, which will create greater demand for this material and also give the private sector the certainty to invest in more recycling capacity, including in Cumbria.

The Government has also stimulated the development of industry through support for research and innovation notably through a package of over £100 million to tackle the issues that arise from plastic waste. £38 million was set aside through the Plastics Research and Innovation Fund and Resource Action Fund for research and development, including £10 million specifically to pioneer innovative approaches to boosting recycling and reducing litter. The Government has also put £60 million of funding into the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, alongside a £150 million investment from industry.

## ■ **Plastics: Northern Ireland**

**Carla Lockhart:**

**[26051]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has taken steps to provide clarification for Northern Ireland based businesses on the impact of the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive, and what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on this issue.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Northern Ireland Executive is responsible for providing guidance to industry, as this is a devolved matter. This has been communicated to the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

## ■ **Railways: Strikes**

**Julian Knight:**

**[23318]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of the RMT strikes on 21 June 2022 on levels of air pollution in London.

**Jo Churchill:**

Each year Defra undertakes an air quality assessment across all zones in the UK, including London. This latest report is available here:

[https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/viewonline?year=2020\\_issue\\_1&jump=5-1#report\\_pdf](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/viewonline?year=2020_issue_1&jump=5-1#report_pdf)

Changes in transport trends across the UK are considered in our modelling of ambient concentrations, used to supplement our monitoring network in our annual compliance assessments. Monitoring data in London is uploaded and available in near real-time on UK-Air ( <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/> ).

The impacts of changes in transport activity on the emissions of air pollutants will also be reflected in our National Atmospheric Emissions inventory.

## ■ **White Fish: Prices**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[23297]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the impact of the rise in the price of cod on fishmongers.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK Government is working with representatives across the UK seafood and catching sector, and the fish and chip shop sector to understand the impacts relating to increases in the cost of living, recognising the multitude of issues and challenges the wider industry faces.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ Afghanistan: Earthquakes****Dr Matthew Offord:****[23739]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance her Department is providing to those people affected by the earthquake in Afghanistan on 21 June 2022.

**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) Cross 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: Humanitarian Situation****Ruth Jones:****[23790]**

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

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign Secretary is in regular contact with international counterparts on Afghanistan. Most recently, at the G7 Foreign Ministers meeting in May 2022, they addressed the current security, humanitarian, and human rights situation as well as longer term prospects for the country and region. FCDO Ministers and the Foreign Secretary continue to engage international partners in support of UK objectives and long-term stability for the Afghan people. Her ministers have regular discussions with humanitarian actors working in Afghanistan, most recently during Lord Ahmad's trip to Geneva in June 2022, where he met the Red Cross and United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Our commitment to Afghanistan is enduring and work on priority areas, including responding to the humanitarian crisis remains one of our highest priorities.



## ■ Jagtar Singh Johal

**Julian Knight:**

[\[23321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the opinion of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention relating to Jagtar Singh Johal, what diplomatic and consulate support her Department has provided to Jagtar Singh Johal and his family.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK Government takes all allegations of human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, very seriously and we regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India at official and Ministerial level. The Prime Minister raised Mr Johal's case with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 April as part of a wide-ranging discussion. The Foreign Secretary last raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 31 March 2022 and met with Mr Johal's family to discuss their concerns on 9 June. Consular staff have attended a number of hearings in Mr Johal's case in an observer capacity, and did so on 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9 June. This Government will continue to look to raise our concerns about Mr Johal's case at all appropriate opportunities.

## ■ Myanmar: Politics and Government

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[23791\]](#)

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

**Amanda Milling:**

We consistently raise the situation in Myanmar with counterparts, including at the UN, G7 and ASEAN, to try and bring an end to the crisis. We have also coordinated a number of joint Foreign Minister statements, including to mark the first anniversary of the coup on 1 February.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[23800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's guidance entitled, Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 3: eligibility for British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening Alumni, published on 13 June 2022, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the limit of 1,500 applicants to that pathway in meeting the needs of those eligible groups.

**James Cleverly:**

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will build upon the UK's continuing efforts to support those at risk. Through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) over 9,500 eligible Afghan citizens and their family members have been approved for resettlement. The ACRS will see up to 20,000

people from Afghanistan and the region resettled to the UK over the coming years. Under the third Pathway, up to 1500 people will be referred for resettlement in the first year from three specific cohorts - eligible at-risk Chevening alumni and British Council and Gardaworld contractors. The capacity of the UK to resettle people under this scheme is not unlimited. However, beyond the first year of the third pathway, the Government will work with international partners and NGOs to welcome other groups of Afghans at risk.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Darren Jones:**

[24648]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many ECAA applicants awaiting a decision have been waiting for longer than the standard service provision as of 23 June 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2022]:* This information requested is routinely published as part of UKVI Transparency data.

The most recent published data for outstanding ECCA applications can be found here: [Visas and Citizenship data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/visas-and-citizenship-data-q1-2022)

Under Visas and Citizenship Data, Tab VC\_02 includes the number of straightforward applications and non-straightforward applications which remained outstanding at the end of the last reported period.

### ■ Asylum: Finance

**Anne McLaughlin:**

[24611]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of asylum seekers awaiting an initial screening interview are in receipt of section 98 support.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2022]:* The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers on Asylum Support. These statistics can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>.

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of these statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers awaiting an initial screening interview are in receipt of section 98 support. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Asylum: Northern Ireland

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[23450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what mechanisms her Department uses to cooperate with the Northern Ireland Executive on monitoring devolved services for asylum seekers.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office works closely with multiple partners in Northern Ireland to ensure appropriate provision of services for asylum seekers, which includes the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[23351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 7 of April 2022 from the hon. Member for Sheffield Heeley, reference LH9348.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office responded to the Hon. Member's correspondence on 23 June 2022.

## ■ National Cyber Force

**Rob Roberts:**

[\[24664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress her Department has made on the establishment of a new national cyber crime force; and what recent steps her Department has taken to provide the police with new technologies to help reduce crime.

**Damian Hinds:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2022]:* Fraud is a national threat and often cases can be complex and sophisticated. It is therefore paramount our policing colleagues have what they need to keep pace with criminals and encourage innovation within industry. That is why, through the Spending Review 21 settlement and the Economic Crime Levy an overall package over the next three years of circa £400 million is being used to tackle economic crime, including fraud.

This funding will be used to replace and upgrade Action Fraud with a new national Fraud and Cyber Reporting and Analysis Service which will gather better analysis to improve the number, quality and timeliness of information packages given to police and expand fraud investigation teams across all Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) and increase investigative capacity in the City of London Police (CoLP). This funding will also support the National Crime Agency, (NCA) to increase their capabilities on fraud.

The pilot of a national cyber crime force focused on fraud, based in the NCA was set out in the 2021 Statement of Progress on the Economic Crime Plan. The NCA's pilot has delivered new tasking, intelligence and strategic communications capabilities in

the NCA. This new national cyber crime force focused on fraud will be fully established by 2025.

Later this year, we will publish a new strategy to address the threat of fraud. This will further set out how we will work with law enforcement to tackle fraud and bring offenders to justice.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[23801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that Afghan refugees accepted under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme receive their Biometric Residence Permits without undue delay.

**Kevin Foster:**

Over 15,000 people were supported to come to the UK directly during Op Pitting. In the nine months since we have helped a further 4,000 people to safety in the UK via neighbouring countries. Those who arrived in the UK were granted limited leave to enter which allows access to public funds and employment.

We are continuing the process of granting Indefinite Leave to Remain to everyone who arrived during the evacuation, and who is eligible. Biometric Residence Permits are produced automatically, usually within a few weeks of people being granted Indefinite Leave to Remain.

We have made arrangements to ensure prospective employers and landlords can contact the Home Office to confirm individuals' right to take employment and rented accommodation prior to them receiving a Biometric Residence Permit.

## ■ Refugees: Hotels

**John McNally:**

[\[23322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2022 to Question 9037 on Refugees: Hotels and Rented Housing, with reference to refugees being accommodated in hotels, whether her Department has set a target for the (a) number of asylum seekers to be hosted in hotels at any one time and (b) date for completing any necessary reduction to meet that target.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office does not have a target for the number of asylum seekers who should be housed in hotels.

Our aim is to eliminate the use of hotel accommodation as contingency accommodation and we are working with Local Authorities and our Commercial Partners to do so.

This includes moving to a system of full dispersal covering all local authority areas in England, Wales and Scotland, as opposed to the previous position where many, including 31 out of 32 local authority areas in Scotland, did not take part in the dispersal accommodation system.

## ■ Refugees: Ukraine

**Carol Monaghan:**

[20266]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of altering the rules of the Ukraine visa schemes, to make it possible for people to transfer from the Ukraine Family scheme to the Homes for Ukraine scheme in those cases where circumstances change so that family support becomes unavailable to them after they have arrived in the UK.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Ukraine Family Scheme was set up to ensure family members were able to reunite with family fleeing Ukraine Ahead of the development of the Homes for Ukraine scheme It is based on family visa routes which existed before the Ukraine conflict, where public services are funded out of council budgets and the same principle is applied here. The UK-based family member is expected to provide support and accommodation for those coming to join them, who in turn benefit from the wider integration advantages in joining an existing family network.

Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme are given access to work, benefits and public services as laid down in Appendix Ukraine to the Immigration Rules, details of which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-ukraine-scheme>

Homes for Ukraine on the other hand 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 UK based family support. The Government is providing additional funding to local authorities which includes resource to enable them to carry out sponsorship-specific functions such as safeguarding checks and property checks, administering payments, as well as providing support such as English language training to help their integration into communities.

We continue to keep the UK Government's support under review and will adapt and develop the visa routes in place to ensure they keep pace with the situation in Ukraine.

**Wera Hobhouse:**

[23783]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of differential treatment on Ukrainian refugees arriving via the Homes for Ukraine scheme and those arriving through family visas.

**Wera Hobhouse:**

[23784]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what financial support her Department is providing for Ukrainian refugees arriving in the UK through family visas.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Ukraine Family Scheme was set up to ensure family members were able to reunite with family fleeing Ukraine Ahead of the development of the Homes for

Ukraine scheme It is based on family visa routes which existed before the Ukraine conflict, where public services are funded out of council budgets and the same principle is applied here. The UK-based family member is expected to provide support and accommodation for those coming to join them, who in turn benefit from the wider integration advantages in joining an existing family network.

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We continue to keep the UK Government's support under review and will adapt and develop the visa routes in place to ensure they keep pace with the situation in Ukraine.

## ■ Terrorism

**Rob Roberts:**

**[24666]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017, what steps she has taken to improve the (a) safety and (b) security of public venues.

**Damian Hinds:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2022]:* The Government, working with the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) and the Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI), continues to ensure that all stakeholders have access to the advice, training and guidance to ensure they understand terrorist threats and measures which can be taken to protect their staff and the public.

To further support delivery across the public and private sector and sharing of CT content, the Home Office has collaborated with NaCTSO and Pool Reinsurance to develop a new interactive online platform; ProtectUK. The platform was released at Security & Policing 2022 and is gathering feedback ahead of a more formal, public launch later this year.

Whilst our engagement and advice has done much to improve security and preparedness measures at public places, this is undertaken on a voluntary basis. This Government announced our intention to introduce a 'Protect Duty' in legislation.

The new duty will seek to improve the safety and security at public venues through the application of proportionate security measures.

## ■ Visas: USA

**Chris Law:**

[\[23314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2022 to Question 8024 on Visas: USA, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of fees charged by VFS to UK visa applicants in the US on people's ability to visit the UK.

**Kevin Foster:**

US nationals are not required to apply for a visa before travelling to visit the UK.

US nationals applying in other visa routes do not need to pay to access a biometric appointment, instead they can use the free service run by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) which is available in 136 locations in the US.

If customers wish to opt for additional priority services, they can use one of the 10 Premium Application Centres (PAC) run by our commercial partner, VFS, in the US to provide an enhanced visa service which comes with an associated fee. The PAC service is entirely optional and a customer's visa decision will not be impacted if they choose not to use this service.

**Chris Law:**

[\[23315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2022 to Question 8024 on Visas: USA, if her Department will amend its online application system to allow the family members of British citizens to access the VFS premium services in the USA.

**Kevin Foster:**

Work is underway on the Home Office's online application system, Access UK (AUK), to allow them to access the VFS premium services in the United States and we would expect this to be implemented by Autumn this year, subject to successful testing.

The PAC service in the United States is an entirely optional premium service and a customer's visa decision will not be impacted if they do not use this service and apply at a United States Application Support Centre.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[15189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if the Government will take steps to support the time limited waiver on covid-19 vaccine manufacture in the global south ahead of the World Trade Organisation's 12th Ministerial Conference from 12 to 15 June 2022.



**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[15190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in (a) India, (b) the US, (c) South Africa and (d) the EU on an agreed draft deal for a time limited waiver on covid-19 vaccine manufacture ahead of the World Trade Organisation's 12th Ministerial Conference from 12 to 15 June 2022.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Membership reached a consensus-based decision on the TRIPS Agreement at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), held between 12 and 17 June 2022. The Decision, which has a five-year duration and is limited to COVID-19 vaccines, streamlines compulsory licencing processes for developing countries. The UK engaged constructively in the discussions with the wider WTO Membership, including India, the US, South Africa and the EU, demonstrating flexibility to help broker consensus.

■ **Department for International Trade: Media**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[13663\]](#)

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

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Media Buying framework agreement (RM6003) started 7 November 2018 and ended 21 May 2022 and has now expired. The framework agreement was awarded to OMD Group Ltd (OmniGov) following a competitive tendering process in 2018. Customers used this framework agreement by putting in place a call-off contract.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has spent £39.7m (excluding VAT, which is recoverable) under RM6003 between May 2018 and May 2022. This has delivered marketing campaigns both domestically and internationally, promoting British goods and services and working to secure investment into the UK.

■ **Department for International Trade: Written Questions**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[24562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she intends to answer Question UIN 13663, tabled on 7 June 2022.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2022]:* I refer the Right Honourable Member for Islington South and Finsbury to the answer I have given today, UIN 13663.



## ■ Maritime Capability Campaign Office

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[23731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much money from the public purse has so far been allocated to the Maritime Capability Campaign Office.

**Mike Freer:**

The Maritime Capability Campaign Office (MCCO) was launched on 10 March 2022, to support maritime exports and investment opportunities. The MCCO's spend for 2021/22 financial year was £1.432m this was to carry out initial development work. The MCCO has been allocated an additional £10.569m for 2021/2025 subject to approval of a full business case. This business case is currently under review by HM Treasury.

## ■ Maritime Capability Campaign Office: Staff

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[23729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many full-time staff are employed by the Maritime Capability Campaign Office.

**Mike Freer:**

The Maritime Capability Campaign Office (MCCO) was launched on 10 March 2022 to support maritime exports and investment opportunities. We are still in the process of recruiting to the MCCO but as of 27 June 2022 the MCCO employed 17 full-time staff and 5 part-time staff.

## ■ Trade Promotion: Mexico

**Dan Carden:** [\[R\] \[25984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has held discussions with the Prime Minister on appointing a Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Mexico.

**Mike Freer:**

*[Holding answer 30 June 2022]:* The Department for International Trade is constantly reviewing suitable markets to identify where the appointment of a Trade Envoy can be of greatest benefit to the trade and investment aims of the UK.

Discussions are ongoing with respect to the appointment of a Trade Envoy to Mexico.

## JUSTICE

## ■ Human Rights Act 1998

**Matt Vickers:** [\[23814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress his Department has made on updating the Human Rights Act.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Bill of Rights received its first reading in the House of Commons on Wednesday 22 June 2022. This follows the consideration of over 12,800 response to the Government's consultation, which closed on 19 April 2022. The Bill delivers on the Government's manifesto commitment to '[...] update the Human Rights Act and administrative law to ensure there is a proper balance between the rights of individuals, our vital national security and effective government.' Our reforms will curtail the abuses of human rights, restore some common sense to our justice system, and ensure that our human rights framework meets the needs of the society it serves.

■ **Parole****Matt Vickers:**[\[23809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reform the parole system.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Root and Branch Review of the Parole System was published on 30 March 2022 and set out a number of reforms to the parole system. Key reforms include: refining the statutory release test and adding criteria which Parole Board panels must consider; creating a 'top-tier' of the most serious offenders, who will be subject to increased ministerial oversight, including the ability of the Secretary of State to refuse their release; and increasing the number of panel members with law enforcement experience, mandating that these members sit on 'top-tier' cases. We will legislate for these proposals as soon as parliamentary time allows.

We have already implemented a tougher test and increased ministerial oversight when considering the most serious offenders for a move to open prison conditions. In addition, a Statutory Instrument has recently been laid in Parliament, which will amend the Parole Board Rules to allow for some parole hearings to be heard in public. It will also provide for the Secretary of State to present the Parole Board with a single view on the suitability of a prisoner for release, which will allow for ministers to put in their view to the Board in the most serious cases. All of these measures aim to enhance public protection and improve confidence in the parole system.

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ **Council Tax: Energy Bills Rebate****Matt Western:**[\[23381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure councils distribute council tax rebates to student households.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Despite being exempt from council tax, student households living in eligible properties should receive the council tax rebate in the same way as other households

that do not pay council tax by direct debit. My department has issued guidance and FAQs on the delivery of the rebate and has discussed the particular issues related to student households with councils that have large student populations.

## ■ Elections: Fraud

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[23255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment his Department has made of the levels of electoral fraud in the UK.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Electoral Commission collects data from all UK police forces about allegations of electoral fraud and publishes an annual report on the numbers, types and outcomes of these allegations. The reports can be found on their website [here](#).

## ■ Empty Property: Auctions

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[23756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of opportunity for local small and medium size enterprises to engage in high street auctions to occupy empty high street units.

**Neil O'Brien:**

High Street Rental Auctions will seek to increase cooperation between Landlords to make town centre tenancies more accessible and affordable for tenants, including SMEs and community groups

Rental rates reflecting market value achieved through auction will allow a broad spectrum of tenants to occupy town centre properties. In turn this will increase vitality, footfall, pride in place and business growth and encourage diverse mixed-use high streets

We are continuing our engagement with the sector, including with SME representatives, to ensure the process is accessible for all parties and plan to publish further guidance.

## ■ Faith New Deal Pilot Fund

**Cherilyn Mackrory:**

[\[23796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to publish further details on the Faith New Deal Pilot Fund, including award decisions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Faith New Deal Pilot Fund will provide £1,000,000 to support Faith groups deliver innovative partnership projects. We received a high number of applications following the launch of the scheme late last year. Once the assessment process has fully concluded, we will announce the outcome and inform successful applicants in due course.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[23340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of commissioning independent scrutiny on the effectiveness of the delivery of the levelling up agenda.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The statutory duty to publish an annual report on the Levelling Up missions will report on progress against all the missions, using the published list of metrics that support each mission. The initial set of these metrics have already been published in the Levelling Up White Paper and will be refined over time. The analysis included in the annual report will be based on these metrics

By publishing the missions and supporting metrics, we are providing all the information necessary for Parliament and the public to scrutinise the missions as well

The Levelling Up Advisory Council will also provide independent and expert advice to the Government on the missions.

## ■ Right to Buy Scheme

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[23736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many of the homes sold during the Voluntary Right to Buy Midlands pilot have been replaced since the commencement of that scheme; what recent assessment he has made of whether the pilot will lead to a one-for-one replacement of the homes that have been sold; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[23737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Evaluation of Midlands Voluntary Right to Buy Pilot, what steps he is taking to address the indication from housing associations that they will find meeting the collective commitment to one for one challenging, particularly without putting their own resources in to part-fund replacements.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[23738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his plans to extend right to buy housing association properties, what comparative assessment he has made of the (a) difference in cost to Government of one-for-one compared to like for like replacement of each social housing property sold and (b) level of potential risk that (i) properties will be sold on to buy to let private landlords in the future and (ii) the policy will contribute to a reduction in the overall number of social homes for rent; and if he will make a statement.

**Stuart Andrew:**

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

Housing associations that took part in the Midlands pilot have 3 years to use the receipts from a sale for replacement affordable housing. Replacement is therefore still ongoing. 1,839 homes were sold between 2019 and 2021 under the Midlands Voluntary Right to Buy pilot. We are monitoring replacement of homes sold under the pilot, including through our annually published data collection.

The Prime Minister announced on 9 June 2022, the intention to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants, and that homes sold under an extended Right to Buy scheme will be replaced one-for-one.

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

### ■ **Right to Buy Scheme: Housing Associations**

**James Wild:**

[\[23438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to ensure that housing association tenants living in rural areas can access right to buy schemes.

**Stuart Andrew:**

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

The Prime Minister announced on 9 June 2022, the intention extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants.

We will be working closely with the housing association sector as we develop the scheme, including the approach to those living in rural areas, and will announce more details in due course.

### ■ **UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Social Rented Housing**

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[23218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department took to engage with the social housing sector whilst devising its guidance for delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities worked with a range of local government, devolved government and sector specific stakeholders when developing the fund. Places are encouraged to work with a diverse range of local stakeholders, appropriate groups and organisations to develop their investment plan.

**TRANSPORT****■ Bus Services: Finance****Daisy Cooper:****[23798]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June to Question 14617, with reference to the around £780 million funding allocated for bus infrastructure from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, how much and what proportion of that funding has been (a) allocated to (i) local authorities and (ii) city region partners and (b) spent by those authorities and partnerships on expenditure other than that for bus infrastructure.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government has committed to investing £5.7bn through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) in the transport networks of eight city regions in England over the next five years until 2027. Settlements were [confirmed to 7 eligible Mayoral Combined Authorities in April 2022](#) based on proposals put forward by Mayors. The funding is distributed to the Mayoral Combined Authorities, who will report regularly to the Department for Transport on how the funding is spent. Negotiation of a settlement for the North East region is pending appropriate governance being in place.

CRSTS will support capital investments in public and sustainable transport across a range of modes including rail, bus, tram, and walking and cycling. Based on the programmes set out by city regions, this is expected to include an investment of approximately £780m in bus interventions over this Parliament.

**Daisy Cooper:****[23799]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June to Question 14617, with reference to the £42 million per year funding for Local Transport Authorities under the Bus Service Operators Grant scheme, how much and what proportion of that funding has been spent by those authorities on expenditure other than directly financing bus routes in each of the last five years, broken down by local authority area.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department each year sends a survey to all Local Transport Authorities who receive funding from BSOG requesting they provide the Department with information as to how this funding is applied. This survey is undertaken on a voluntary basis. For financial years prior to 2021/2022 insufficient information is available from responses to the survey in order to enable the Department to provide this information. Changes to the information requested in the survey undertaken in 2021 enable the following information to be provided.

<b>2020/21 BSOG</b>		
	Spend on "Non-Bus"	% Spend on "Non-Bus"
Local Transport Authority		
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	£0	0%
Bedford Borough Council	£0	0%
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	£0	0%
Blackpool Borough Council	£0	0%
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£0	0%
Bracknell Forest	-	-
Bradford MBC	£0	0%
Brighton and Hove City Council	£0	0%
Buckinghamshire County Council	£0	0%
Calderdale MBC	£0	0%
Cambridgeshire County Council	-	-
Canterbury City Council	£0	0%
Central Bedfordshire Council	£0	0%
CENTRO (WEST MIDLANDS CA)	£0	0%
Cheshire East	£0	0%
Cheshire West and Chester	£0	0%

	<b>2020/21 BSOG</b>	
City of York Council	£0	0%
Coventry City Council	-	-
Cornwall County Council	£0	0%
Cumbria County Council	£0	0%
Darlington Borough Council	£0	0%
Derby City Council	-	-
Derbyshire County Council	£0	0%
Devon County Council	£0	0%
Dorset County Council	£0	0%
Durham County Council	£0	0%
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	£0	0%
East Sussex County Council	£0	0%
Eastleigh Borough Council	£0	0%
Epsom and Ewell	-	-
Essex County Council	£0	0%
Gateshead MBC	-	-
Gloucestershire County Council	£0	0%
Halton Borough Council	-	-
Hampshire County Council	£0	0%



	<b>2020/21 BSOG</b>	
Hartlepool Borough Council	-	-
Havant Borough Council	-	-
Herefordshire County Council	£0	0%
Hertfordshire County Council	£0	0%
Isle of Wight Council	£0	0%
Kent County Council	£0	0%
Kettering Borough Council	-	-
Kingston upon Hull City Council	£0	0%
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	-	-
Lancashire County Council	£0	0%
Leeds City Council	-	-
Leicester City Council	£0	0%
Leicestershire County Council	£0	0%
Lincolnshire County Council	£0	0%
Liverpool City Council	£0	0%
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	-	-
London Borough of Barnet	£0	0%
London Borough of Brent	£0	0%

	<b>2020/21 BSOG</b>	
London Borough of Camden	-	-
London Borough of Enfield	£0	0%
London Borough of Harrow	£0	0%
London Borough of Hillingdon	£21,666	100.0%
London Borough of Hounslow	£0	0%
London Borough of Islington	-	-
London Borough of Merton	£0	0%
London Borough of Newham	£0	0%
London Borough of Redbridge	£10,000	22.3%
Luton Borough Council	-	-
Medway Council	£0	0%
Merseyside Travel PTE	-	-
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	£0	0%
Middlesbrough Borough Council	£0	0%
Milton Keynes Council	£0	0%
Newcastle City Council	£0	0%
Nexus	£0	0%
Norfolk County Council	-	-

	<b>2020/21 BSOG</b>	
North East Lincolnshire Council	£0	0%
North Lincolnshire Council	£0	0%
Northamptonshire County Council	£0	0%
North Somerset Council	£0	0%
North Yorkshire County Council	£0	0%
Northumberland County Council	£0	0%
Nottingham City Council	£0	0%
Nottinghamshire County Council	-	-
Oxfordshire County Council	£58,927	7.4%
Peterborough City Council	£0	0%
Plymouth City Council	£0	0%
Portsmouth City Council	£0	0%
Reading Borough Council	£0	0%
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	£0	0%
Rotherham MBC	£20,959	100.0%
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	£0	0%

	<b>2020/21 BSOG</b>	
Rutland County Council	£0	0%
Salford City Council	£21,478	100.0%
Sheffield City Council	-	-
Shropshire County Council	£0	0%
Slough Borough Council	£0	0%
Somerset County Council	£0	0%
South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive	£0	0%
Southampton City Council	£0	0%
St Helens MBC	-	-
Staffordshire County Council	£0	0%
Stockport MBC	-	-
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	£0	0%
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	-	-
Suffolk County Council	£0	0%
Surrey County Council	£0	0%
Swindon Borough Council	£249	0.1%
Telford and Wrekin Council	£0	0%
Tameside MBC	-	-
Thurrock Council	£0	0%

	2020/21 BSOG	
Torbay Borough Council	-	-
Transport for Greater Manchester	£0	0%
Wakefield Council	£29,770	78.9%
Warrington Borough Council	£0	0%
Warwickshire County Council	£0	0%
West Berkshire District Council	£0	0%
West of England Combined Authority	£0	0%
West Sussex County Council	£61,490	14.1%
Wigan Council	-	-
Wiltshire County Council	£0	0%
Winchester City Council	£0	0%
Wirral Borough Council	-	-
Wokingham District Council	-	-
Worcestershire County Council	£0	0%

A dash indicates the local authority did not respond to the voluntary survey.

## ■ Cycling: Rural Areas

**James Wild:**

[\[23437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of funding issued under the Active Travel programme has been awarded to cycling projects in rural areas.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Active Travel Fund has supported a wide range of walking and cycling schemes in both urban and rural areas in the last two financial years. It is for authorities to determine what schemes to promote and support in their areas. Allocations to local authorities have been published at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-active-travel-fund-local-transport-authority-allocations/emergency-active-travel-fund-total-indicative-allocations>.

The Department announced another £200 million of funding for active travel schemes on 14 May 2022, which included £35 million to improve the quality, safety and accessibility of the National Cycle Network. Much of this network is in rural areas.

**Electric Vehicles****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[26706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to incentivise car manufacturers to reduce the weight of their electric vehicles.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government sets the standards for vehicles but does not currently provide any incentives to manufacturers or others regarding reducing the weight of vehicles.

**TREASURY****Members: Correspondence****Richard Thomson:**[\[23439\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Gordon of 3 March 2022 on the VAT rate for the hospitality and tourism sectors.

**Lucy Frazer:**

A response was sent to the hon. Member for Gordon on 23 June 2022.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****Department for Work and Pensions: Consultants****Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[23413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department spent on external consultants in each of the last five years.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) publishes details about headcount and payroll costs for permanent staff and contractors on GOV.UK, monthly.

[DWP workforce management information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

The DWP consultancy spend for the financial years ending 2018 through to 2022 is shown below.

2017/18 £7,200,259

2018/19 £4,446,169

2019/20 £4,570,665

2020/21 £1,284,861

2021/22 £1,041,058

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Universal Credit**

**Alison McGovern:**

**[23293]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of Department for Work and Pensions staff are in receipt of universal credit.

**Guy Opperman:**

Employees claiming Universal Credit have no obligation to inform DWP they are receiving benefits.

■ **Pension Credit: Romford**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[25752]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pensioners are in receipt of pension credit in Romford constituency as of 27 June 2022.

**Guy Opperman:**

In November 2021, there were an estimated 1,746 Pension Credit claimants in Romford constituency.

Estimates for the number of Pension Credit claimants per constituency can be found on Stat-Xplore. The latest data is for November 2021.

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for using Stat-Xplore is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>