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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

■ Government Legal Department

Emily Thornberry: [27566]

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June to Question 7940 on Government Legal Department, when she intends to publish the updated Legal Risk Guidance for lawyers in government.

Alex Chalk:

The Legal Risk Guidance for lawyers in government is important and used in all aspects of their work. The Attorney General recently refreshed, updated and broadened its application across Government in light of the collective experience of Ministers and lawyers of its practical application.

The guidance has been launched with lawyers across the Government Legal Profession and will be published very shortly.

The previous version is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-note-on-legal-risk>

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Advertising: Standards

Mr Kevan Jones: [24557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what sanctions Trading Standards can impose on advertisers referred to them by the Advertising Standards Agency for consistently breaking advertising standards.

Paul Scully:

Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards Service (B&STSS) acts as the prosecuting authority for investigations carried out by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

B&STSS uses its own legal powers to assess, investigate and take action, where appropriate, on any matter ASA refers to it. Action available to B&STSS includes arranging undertakings with traders and prosecutions.

■ Carbon Emissions and Hydrogen: Finance

Chi Onwurah: [27595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the (a) carbon footprint of the methane plasma process for producing hydrogen and (b) suitability of that process for Government decarbonisation grants such as the net zero hydrogen fund.

Greg Hands:

The most common form of converting methane into hydrogen is through steam or thermal reformation. Plasma technology could also be used to convert methane into hydrogen, but this has not yet been proven at commercial scale. This was not one of the hydrogen production routes modelled to support the development of the UK Low Carbon Hydrogen Standard as this was not considered to be amongst the main potential routes for production in the UK pipeline and lacked broadly available emissions data. As set out in the standard, the Government welcomes evidence from stakeholders on emerging technologies and potential production routes that could contribute to the UK's future net zero energy system.

■ Companies: Environment Protection and Human Rights**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[26823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to require companies to conduct (a) human rights and (b) environmental due diligence assessments across their (i) operations, (ii) subsidiaries and (iii) value chains.

Paul Scully:

The Government supports and encourages the current voluntary approach to due diligence by UK businesses as set out in international frameworks such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises.

Whilst the Government keeps this approach under review, we currently have no plans to require companies to conduct due diligence assessments for human rights and environmental protection on top of their existing corporate annual reporting on these issues.

■ Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022**Angela Rayner:**[\[27627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what consultation he has undertaken on the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

Paul Scully:

The Government carried out a consultation on revoking the ban on using agency workers to cover strikes in 2015. It asked what effect the removal would have on a wide variety of stakeholders, including workers, employment businesses, employers, employees on strike and about the impact on wider economy and society. It received a large number of substantive responses from a wide range of stakeholders, including employers, agencies and trade unions which have been carefully considered before deciding to proceed with removing Regulation 7 of the Conduct Regulations 2003.

■ Employment Tribunals Service

Dan Jarvis: [\[26770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 59782 on Employment Tribunals Service, when he plans to publish his Department's response to the report by the Law Commission entitled Employment Law Hearing Structures, published on 29 April 2020.

Paul Scully:

The full response to the Law Commission's recommendations will be available on the Law Commission website in due course.

■ Fertility and Miscarriage: Employment and Health Services

Feryal Clark: [\[24673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will strengthen healthcare and workplace support for women and partners affected by pregnancy loss and other fertility related issues.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises that pregnancy loss is upsetting and that parents affected will need healthcare and may need support at work.

The Department of Health and Social Care's plans to improve healthcare support for those affected by fertility issues will be set out in the forthcoming Women's Health Strategy.

Parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks may be entitled to Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay. Women who are not able to return to work following a miscarriage earlier in pregnancy may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay while off work. Many employers also offer 'Compassionate Leave', and we encourage employers to respond sensitively to each individual's specific needs.

■ Fuel Oil and Liquefied Natural Gas: Rural Areas

Virginia Crosbie: [\[26924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will introduce a temporary price cap on the price of (a) domestic heating oil and (b) liquified natural gas for those in rural areas not connected to the mains gas supply.

Greg Hands:

The Government has carefully considered the introduction of a price cap to help domestic fuel 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 and LPG markets are different and imposing a price cap below wholesale costs

would drive companies out of the market, reducing competition and possibly result in supply shortages.

■ Fuels: Prices

Chi Onwurah: [\[26766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 16933 on Fuels: Prices, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the difference in retail petrol prices between 2014 and 2022 that is the result of changes in (a) traded wholesale prices for the fuels and (b) exchange rates; and if he will publish those prices and exchange rates.

Greg Hands:

UK petrol and diesel prices since 2014 have been primarily driven by the underlying price in the global market of crude oil. These are also influenced by exchange rates and a range of other supply and demand factors specific to the wholesale markets for the fuels, including stock levels, logistics and distribution costs and seasonal demand variations.

BEIS publishes weekly national average pump prices online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-road-fuel-prices>.

BEIS does not publish wholesale prices nor UK exchange rates.

■ Hinkley Point B Power Station: Decommissioning

Charlotte Nichols: [\[24662\]](#)

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

Greg Hands:

Whilst there has been parliamentary and public interest in the potential for life extensions, the Department has no formal role in these decisions. The continued operation, or closure, of any UK nuclear power station is a decision for EDF (the stations' owner and operator) and the independent nuclear regulator, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (the ONR), based on safety and commercial considerations. The Department is in regular communication with EDF and the ONR.

■ Measurement

Chi Onwurah: [\[27596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with UKRI on the reintroduction of imperial measurements.

Paul Scully:

The Government is reviewing the current law on units of measurement and has recently launched its consultation, 'Choice on units of measurement: markings and sales'.

BEIS has not discussed this with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) but continues to gather views through this early-stage consultation.

■ **Natural Gas: Ynys Môn**

Virginia Crosbie: [\[27763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a grant for those on the Island of Anglesey who rely on domestic heating oil or liquified natural gas in order to connect them to the mains gas supply.

Greg Hands:

Meeting the UK's net zero target will require virtually all heat in buildings to be decarbonised. The Government is working with the Welsh Government (and the other devolved administrations) to address the challenges of decarbonising heating. This includes building the evidence to support a decision on the future use of the gas grid.

The Government is aware of the programme of local area energy planning underway in Wales, which will identify the changes needed to the local energy system to decarbonise heat and local transport, support strategic network planning and realise opportunities for local renewable energy production.

■ **Radioactive Waste: Small Modular Reactors**

Caroline Lucas: [\[24574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the volume of nuclear waste produced by small modular reactors; and what assessment he has made of the implications of that volume for waste management.

Greg Hands:

Developers of new nuclear power stations are required to undertake an Assessment of Disposability as part of the UK's nuclear regulatory and environmental permitting processes. The Assessment of Disposability is carried out by Radio Waste Management to demonstrate there is an effective disposal route for expected wastes from a new nuclear project before a final decision can be taken to proceed.

■ **Renewable Energy: Investment**

Virginia Crosbie: [\[26922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to increase investment in the development of (a) onshore and offshore wind, (b) tidal energy, (c) solar power, (d) hydrogen power and (e) other renewable energy sources.

Greg Hands:

The Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme is the Government's main mechanism for supporting renewable generation in Great Britain. The latest round is the largest yet and will support technologies including offshore wind, onshore wind, solar, tidal and

floating offshore wind. The next CfD round will be held in March 2023, and future rounds will run annually, rather than every two years, helping to drive deployment of renewable power.

The Government's policy levers for hydrogen, including the Hydrogen Business Model, are designed to unlock significant private sector investment to reach the 10GW by 2030 production ambition.

■ Renewables Obligation: Costs

Sarah Champion: [\[24599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the announcement in the Energy Security Strategy in April 2022 to consider increasing the reduction in the indirect cost due to the Renewables Obligation for energy intensive industries, when he plans to publish the consultation on the future of schemes to exempt these industries from the indirect costs of renewable policies in industrial electricity prices.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Newport East on 29th June 2022 to Question [24565](#).

■ Social Services: Recruitment

Stephen Kinnock: [\[27628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to tackle recruitment agencies that unlawfully charge recruitment fees for people seeking roles in the care sector.

Stephen Kinnock: [\[27630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of legally requiring care sector recruitment agencies to demonstrate that they are not charging recruitment fees as a pre-condition for obtaining their licence to operate.

Paul Scully:

The Employment Agencies Act 1973 and its associated Conduct Regulations apply to all recruitment agencies operating in Great Britain and are enforced by the Employment Agency Standards (EAS) Inspectorate. This state-enforced framework prohibits recruitment agencies operating in Great Britain from charging work-finding fees, so any agency in the care sector in Great Britain that charges work-finding fees is acting illegally. EAS investigates all relevant complaints. It takes a compliance-based approach initially to support businesses to correct breaches but does undertake robust enforcement action where necessary.

■ Telephone Services: Standards

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[27499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to institute financial penalties against firms which fail to answer customers' telephone calls within a specified acceptable period of time; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

High quality customer service makes commercial sense and the Government expects all businesses to treat consumers fairly. However, the Government does not seek to intervene in the detail of how businesses conduct their activities, which are essentially commercial matters. For free advice on consumer rights and how to make complaints, consumers may contact the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 (www.consumeradvice.org.uk/) or Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000 (www.consumeradvice.scot) for consumers living in Scotland.

■ Trade Union (Wales) Act 2017

Beth Winter: [\[26882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 June 2022 on Business Update, Official Report, HCWS137, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of the (a) Welsh Government, (b) Wales TUC, (c) CBI Wales and (d) Secretary of State for Wales on the Senedd's Trade Union (Wales) Act 2017.

Paul Scully:

While we continue to work with the Welsh Government in a number of areas, it has always been the case that employment and industrial relations law is a reserved matter for the UK Government.

It is right that we seek to apply trade union law equally and fairly across Britain to ensure that services, such as train lines, are run as effectively as possible.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Virginia Crosbie: [\[26921\]](#)

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

Greg Hands:

The Government remains firmly committed to the renewables industry across the UK, including in Wales. Future Contracts for Difference auctions will provide further opportunities for developers of low-carbon electricity projects in Wales to secure contracts and expand the amount of offshore wind capacity supported by the scheme in Wales.

One of the successful projects in the Crown Estate's Round 4 seabed leasing is located off the North-East of Anglesey.

Virginia Crosbie: [\[26923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with the Welsh Government on the development of floating offshore wind projects.

Greg Hands:

BEIS officials engage in regular discussions with Devolved Administrations, including the Welsh Government, on matters of mutual interest. The Celtic Sea constitutes a major development opportunity for the offshore wind sector and is set to create significant opportunities for development in Wales.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Civil Servants: Recruitment

Fleur Anderson: [\[26030\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment the Government has made of the impact of its plans to pause civil service fast-stream recruitment on (a) organisational effectiveness and (b) diversity in recruitment.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Fast Stream is a talent pipeline for government departments and professions. It is only right we pause bringing in candidates as departments set out how they might achieve the Prime Minister's commitment to return the Civil Service to the size it was in 2016.

Whilst we pause the Fast Stream for the 2023 intake, we will take the opportunity to further improve the Fast Stream offer. This reform will ensure that when the scheme reopens, it is focused on driving up specialist skills in the Civil Service, as well as improving the regional representation of the Fast Stream. In this sense, both organisational effectiveness and diversity recruitment can be enhanced.

We will also seek to maintain other approaches towards diversity and inclusion in recruitment - such as continuous improvement of our assessment and selection approaches. The Declaration on Government Reform set out our commitment to a skilled and capable Civil Service, our united Campus for government training and Curriculum framework will enable all Civil Servants to access quality, relevant training.

■ Civil Service Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Network

Jessica Morden: [\[25784\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government has plans to make (a) leadership and (b) administrative roles in the Civil Service Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Network paid positions.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Leadership (chair, co-chair, deputy chair of committee member) and administrative roles of the Civil Service Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Network are voluntary roles as part of an employee's corporate contribution and are not paid positions. There are currently no plans to make these roles paid positions.

■ Government Departments: Buildings

Rachel Hopkins: [\[23831\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the Property Sustainability Board's terms of reference.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[23832\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the Property Sustainability Board's meeting minutes from 1 January 2020 to 22 June 2022.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

I will place a copy of the terms of reference and meeting minutes in the library of the House.

■ Infected Blood Inquiry

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[27500\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the report by Sir Robert Francis QC on Compensation and Redress for the Victims of Infected Blood - Recommendations for a Framework, published in March 2022, if he will take steps to implement the recommendation in paragraph 9.136 of that report that arrangements should be made immediately through the existing support schemes for an interim lump sum payment of compensation to be made to every living infected person accepted by a support scheme as eligible for annual support payments.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the Rt Hon. member to the answer given to PQ [16932](#) on 20 June 2022.

■ Military Aid: Ukraine

John Healey: [\[26691\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 23221, on Ukraine: Military Aid, how many meetings of the National Security Council have taken place since April 2022; and how many he has attended since that date.

Michael Ellis:

The National Security Council is a committee of the Cabinet. It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

■ Public Appointments: Equality

Rachael Maskell: [\[28442\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to help ensure that people appointed to public bodies reflect the diversity of the UK.

Michael Ellis:

The Government is committed to making sure that these important opportunities are available to talented people across the UK. Work to support this includes a number of virtual and face-to-face events held across the UK and the phased rollout of a new digital system that will make it easier for anyone to apply for these roles. The Cabinet Office also publishes annual data on public appointments diversity. The latest figures, published on 21st October 2021, show that compared to the previous year there were more women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and people from outside London and the South East in these vital roles.

■ Veterans

Stuart Anderson: [\[24659\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to help support the (a) education, (b) housing and (c) health needs of veterans.

Stuart Anderson: [\[27732\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to support veterans with welfare needs including (a) housing, (b) health and (c) education.

Leo Docherty:

The Veterans' Strategy Action Plan sets out over 60 UK Government commitments with a combined value of over £70m to help support veterans and their families between 2022-2024. We are already making good progress with 24% of commitments already completed at the 6 month point.

We have changed the law to improve access to social housing, removing the local connection test, and awarding priority access to social housing for vulnerable veterans. We are improving the Enhanced Learning Credit Scheme, making sure veterans have access to the right training opportunities; and in reletting the Career Transition Partnership contract, we are taking the opportunity to improve and enhance the service. Over the next three years NHS England will be providing £18m more to improve access to Op COURAGE and the Veterans Trauma Network. Additionally, this year, we will administer the new £5m Veterans' Health Innovation Fund - supporting projects developing innovative treatments and initiatives to support veterans' health.

■ Zero Hours Contracts

Jon Trickett: [\[26701\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of workers on zero hour contracts in the UK.

Jon Trickett:

[\[26702\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent estimate he has made of the number of workers who are on zero-hours contracts in (a) Yorkshire and the Humber and (b) the Wakefield district.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

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

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Questions of 28 June is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_Response_to_PQ26701_PQ26702 (1).pdf]

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Archbishops Council

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[26688\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to Section 1(1) of the National Institutions Measure 1998 and the statement on page six of the Archbishops' Council Annual Report 2022 that the Council was established under the National Institutions Measure 1998 to provide focus for leadership and executive responsibility and a forum for strategic thinking and planning, whether the Church Commissioners have made an assessment of the authority of the Archbishops' Council in respect of the exercise of its executive functions.

Andrew Selous:

The Church Commissioners have not made such an assessment.

COP26

■ Food Supply: International Cooperation

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25823\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, if he will hold discussions with his international counterparts on the potential merits of prioritising discussion of food sustainability at COP27.

Alok Sharma:

To keep 1.5C within reach, we are engaging internationally to accelerate action on reducing agricultural carbon emissions while meeting the world's growing need for food. At COP26 we held the Policy Dialogue on Accelerating Transition to Sustainable Agriculture bringing together 34 countries to catalyse efforts to deliver the global transformation in agriculture and land use by sharing their experiences and opportunities to deliver transformation through public policies and innovation. Following these discussions, we launched the Policy Action Agenda for Transition to Sustainable Food and Agriculture, endorsed by 16 countries, to set pathways and

actions that countries can take to repurpose public policies and support to food and agriculture.

At COP27, it will be for Egypt to determine their agenda. In the lead up to this transition, we continue to work closely with Egypt as the incoming Presidency and meet regularly to discuss our priority work areas, this includes delivering on the commitments made in Glasgow and how they can be built upon for COP27.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Radicalism

John Healey: [\[27515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the (a) level of violent extremism in Afghanistan since the fall of Kabul in August 2021 and (b) change in the level of threat posed by extremists in that country to the UK.

James Heapey:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 23 May 2022 to Question 4479.

Attachments:

1. Afghanistan: Radicalism [UIN 4479.docx]

■ Agnes Wanjiru

John Healey: [\[26692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 17870, on Agnes Wanjiru, (a) how many requests to undertake investigative actions the Royal Military Police (RMP) have received from the Kenyan authorities and (b) how many investigative actions the RMP have undertaken in response to such requests.

Leo Docherty:

I refer back to previous answers that I have provided in relation to this case. Jurisdiction for the investigation lies with the Kenyan authorities. The Royal Military Police (RMP) are proactively engaged with the Kenyan Police Service (KPS) to support and assist their investigation and, where appropriate and requested to do so, undertake investigative actions on behalf of the KPS. A number of formal and informal discussions have taken place, however, to protect the sanctity of the investigation and the interest of justice, we will not comment in detail on activity.

■ Air Force: Training

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[25746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the expected through-life costs are of the new synthetic training platform for the Royal Air Force, also known as Gladiator.

Jeremy Quin:

The current estimate of whole-life costs, for the capability known as Gladiator, is approximately £490 million through to a planned out of service date in 2045.

■ Air Force: Unmanned Air Vehicles**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[25747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the public purse has been of Project Mosquito as of 27 June 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

The original contract for the Project MOSQUITO Technical Demonstrator with Spirit AeroSystems was for £30 million. Of this amount, £9.58 million is expected to be spent at the point the contract is curtailed, by mutual agreement, at the design phase. Substantial valuable learning for both the Ministry of Defence and industry partners has been accrued that will be applied to benefit future work. A Technology Development Project that can recognise the change in operational environment and act with confidence to choose the optimum moment to terminate, exemplifies a 'learn fast' approach and financially responsible project management of publicly funded activity.

John Healey:[\[26699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to procure a Lightweight Affordable Novel Combat Aircraft (LANCA) following the cancellation of Project Mosquito.

Jeremy Quin:

Project MOSQUITO was a Technology Demonstration Project within the broader Lightweight Affordable Novel Combat Aircraft (LANCA) Programme, designed to examine ways to achieve significant cost and time reductions in developing future uncrewed Combat Aircraft. As such, it was not a procurement programme. The learning accrued within the design phase of the project has a useful read across to other Research and Development projects as part of the wider LANCA and FCAS portfolio. Under the LANCA Programme, the RAF Rapid Capabilities Office will continue to pursue the RAF's plans to integrate uncrewed platforms into its future fleet. Future procurement decisions will be made in accordance with existing departmental capability planning processes.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[26717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of whether the conclusion of Project Mosquito will impact Carrier Enabled Power Projection.

Jeremy Quin:

Project MOSQUITO was a Technology Demonstration Project designed to examine ways to achieve cost and time reductions in developing future uncrewed Combat Aircraft. This decision to curtail the contract with Spirit AeroSystems at the design phase has no impact on broader future work, including Carrier Enabled Power Projection. The learning accrued within the design phase of the project has a useful

read across to other Research and Development projects as part of the wider LANCA and FCAS portfolio.

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Ammunition**

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[25771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost per round is for (a) high explosive rounds, (b) anti-personnel rounds and (c) anti-aircraft rounds for the AJAX 40mm cannon.

Jeremy Quin:

I am withholding this information as the cost of the ammunition for the AJAX cannon is commercially sensitive.

■ **Armed Forces Compensation Scheme**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[27546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 18825 on Armed Forces Compensation Scheme: Appeals, how much his Department has spent on the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme in each year since 2010.

Leo Docherty:

The expenditure under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) by financial year between 2010-11 and 2021-22 is presented below.

AFCS Expenditure ¹ , by financial year

1 April 2010 to 31 March 2022

| FINANCIAL YEAR | TOTAL COMPENSATION PAYABLE (£'000,000) |
|----------------|--|
| 2010-11 | 59.5 |
| 2011-12 | 141.5 |
| 2012-13 | 68.3 |
| 2013-14 | 90.6 |
| 2014-15 | 72.9 |
| 2015-16 | 80.7 |
| 2016-17 | 80.6 |
| 2017-18 | 87.8 |
| 2018-19 | 89.8 |
| 2019-20 | 90 |

| FINANCIAL YEAR | TOTAL COMPENSATION PAYABLE (£'000,000) |
|----------------|--|
| 2020-21 | 84.3 |
| 2021-22 | 104 |

Source: Veterans UK Finance Team 1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest £100,000. Therefore totals and sub-totals may not equal the sum of their parts. 2. 2021-22 accounts pending audit and may change in the future.

The information in this response is presented by financial year, up to 31 March 2022, in line with the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) National Statistics publication available on the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-financial-year-202122>

Please note, financial information is presented as accrued expenditure. Expected expenditure is recorded when a claim is submitted and then later revised if this claim is withdrawn or rejected. Expenditure figures may therefore differ to the amount of actual monies paid out in a given time period, as they may include pending cases that are due to be paid but have not yet been paid or pending claims that go on to be rejected at a later date.

■ Army: Apprentices

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[26709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Army personnel are currently enrolled on an apprenticeship scheme.

Leo Docherty:

The Army currently employs around 15,000 apprentices, with over 20,000 personnel successfully completing an apprenticeship from April 2018 to March 2022.

The Army has recently been recognised as the best apprenticeship employer in the country for 2022, which showcases the scale, reach, diversity, and quality of the apprenticeship programme, whilst reinforcing the variety of employment, available trades, and development opportunities for those seeking to join.

■ Army: Reorganisation

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[26710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 22 March 2021, Official Report, column 639, if he will publish further details of the Army's restructuring.

Leo Docherty:

In relation to the comments the hon. Member refers to, I would refer him to the further statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, on 25

November 2021, in which he announced details of Future Soldier, laying out the new structure of the Army.

Attachments:

1. Army Restructuring; Future Soldier [Army Restructuring Future Soldier.docx]

■ **AWACS: Procurement**

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[\[25769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made any decisions to purchase more E-7 Aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

There are currently no plans to purchase additional E-7 Wedgetail aircraft.

■ **Conflict Prevention: Climate Change**

John Healey:

[\[27514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to prevent climate conflict around the world.

Jeremy Quin:

The 2021 Integrated Review reasserts the Government's commitment to be a force for good in the world and outlines how the UK will continue to play a leading international role in conflict resolution and prevention and seeking multilateral solutions to climate change. A commitment that will be achieved by integrating foreign, security, defence and development policies (or the '3Ds' Development, Diplomacy and Defence).

The Ministry of Defence acknowledges climate change as a threat multiplier. It is already reshaping the global security landscape and amplifying many traditional security challenges whilst giving rise to new ones. Our response focuses on training across Defence, strengthening our understanding of threats and embedding analysis into strategy and capability decisions to enable planning for the changing environmental and security context.

In parallel, we are working across Government on the related diplomacy and development aspects of the Government's commitment and with international allies and partners to inform and strengthen our joint response.

Defence's analysis of the long-term future impacts of climate change signalled the need to build resilience, including through reducing our dependency on fossil fuels. As such, we are seeking to further drive down direct emissions, invest in renewables and embed energy efficiency measures, we must ensure we preserve our Operational Capabilities to remain effective and responsive in a climate changed world.

The Right Hon. Gentleman may also be interested in our Strategic approach to Climate Change which I published in March 2021 and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-climate-change-and-sustainability-strategic-approach>

■ Defence: Finance

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[26716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to raise defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2028.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the Right Hon. Gentleman to the statement made by the Prime Minister this afternoon.

John Healey: [\[27512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many letters of correspondence he has sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on defence spending since 1 February 2022.

Mr Ben Wallace:

I regularly communicate with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as other Cabinet colleagues, on a large range of policy issues relating to my responsibilities as Secretary of State for Defence.

■ Defence: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[25745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling parliamentarians to (a) discuss contracts with and (b) visit the facilities of defence companies currently contracted to his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

Parliamentarians can raise issues with industry relating to contracts placed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). However, the scope of such interaction is governed by the need to protect issues such as national security, commercial confidentiality and personal data, and is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Visits by Parliamentarians to facilities owned by suppliers contracted to the MOD are primarily a matter for the relevant company, but access to certain areas or discussions touching on certain subjects during the visit may be constrained by the security or confidentiality requirements incumbent on the company.

■ Estonia: Armed Forces

John Healey: [\[27513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK troops are deployed to Estonia as part of the UK's NATO contribution to the Enhanced Forward Presence as of 29 June 2022.

James Heappey:

As of 29 June 2022 there are 833 members of the UK Armed Forces deployed to Estonia as part of the UK's contribution to enhanced Forward Presence. Additionally, the UK has deployed a further 652 personnel to Estonia on a bilateral basis.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement

John Healey: [\[27511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he will announce the preferred bidder for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence is on track to receive the final manufacture tenders for the Fleet Solid Support ship project later this month. The selection of the Preferred Bidder will be announced in due course, prior to the award of a manufacture contract, which is expected to be within two years of competition launch in May 2021.

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[26936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to purchase 12 further P-8 aircraft for the Royal Air Force.

Jeremy Quin:

There are currently no plans to order further Poseidon MRA1 aircraft for the RAF.

■ Ministry of Defence: Carbon Emissions

Cherilyn Mackrory: [\[26005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to reduce carbon emissions.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to reducing its carbon emissions and fully contributing to the UK achieving its legal Commitment to be Net Zero by 2050. Indeed, MOD has halved its carbon emissions since 2010.

We are seeking to further drive down direct emissions, invest in renewables and embed energy efficiency measures but we must also ensure we preserve our Operational Capabilities.

The Department's current progress on reducing emissions has been published in Annex D of MOD's Annual Report and Accounts published on Gov.uk.

MOD's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach sets our wider climate adaptation and resilience ambitions. Recent progress against the ambitions can be found in the Written Ministerial Statement (HLWS120) which I released to the House on 21 June 2022.

■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure**Chris Evans:** [\[27582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what percentage of purchases made by his Department via electronic purchasing cards were subject to assurance checks in 2021-22; and if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the level of those checks in reducing risk of misuse.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence has robust assurance measures in place in relation to transactions using electronic purchasing cards, as set out in Joint Service Publication (JSP) 332 - Low Value Purchasing (LVP). Each month cardholders must reconcile their transaction logs against bank statements received and inform LVP Managers immediately of any discrepancies. In addition, LVP Managers must conduct 100% cross-checks of all LVP transaction logs, bank statements and receipts provided by cardholders and ensure that documentation is submitted in a timely manner.

An appointed checking officer must also complete a locally agreed sample check (currently a minimum of 10%, but up to 100% depending on the size, complexity and assurance level of the accounts) of all transactions, including associated documentation. This is to ensure that all purchases made were appropriate and comply with MOD policy, that correct procedure has been followed and that audit trails are complete.

A revised version of JSP 332 is planned for publication later this year. This will provide an even greater level of assurance, through phasing in 100% sample checks by the Checking Officer.

Chris Evans: [\[27583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many electronic purchasing cards were held by people for the purposes of making purchases against his departmental budget as of 31 March 2022; and how many of those people were (a) civilian staff permanently employed by his core Department, (b) non-permanent civilian employees of his core Department, (c) ministers and special advisers and (d) members of the armed forces.

Jeremy Quin:

As of 30 June 2022, 11,920 electronic purchasing cards were held for the purposes of making purchases against the Ministry of Defence budget.

Comprehensive data on the roles of individual card holders is not readily accessible. However, all cards are issued to military, civilian, and contractor personnel in accordance with the regulations contained in Joint Service Publication 322 – Low Value Purchasing.

No electronic purchasing cards are held by Ministers or Special Advisors.

■ Typhoon Aircraft: Repairs and Maintenance

Dave Doogan:

[\[27731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how his Department calculates fatigue index for Typhoon aircraft; and at what accumulation of fatigue index are aircraft rendered unserviceable.

Jeremy Quin:

The Fatigue Index (FI) for the Royal Air Force's Typhoon aircraft is calculated using strain gauges fixed to 16 common locations on every airframe. It is correlated against a static test airframe to which loads have been applied to represent expected design usage. The total amount of fatigue damage applied to the test airframe is classed as 100 FI.

The values of fatigue for each of the monitored locations on the airframe are calculated by the aircraft software using proven and validated algorithms for each flight and expressed as a percentage of 100FI. A cumulative record is kept for each aircraft and flight. Individual aircraft will become unserviceable as they approach the safe-life (earliest FI value at which failure is predicted) proven by test for each location. Aircraft serviceability is continually monitored to ensure the capability of the fleet.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Public Expenditure

Emily Thornberry:

[\[27562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to publish her Department's expenditure over £500 using electronic purchasing cards for the financial year 2021-22.

Julia Lopez:

The Department uses electronic purchasing cards to reduce the administration costs of low value transactions and improve the efficiency of purchasing. The Department applies the following limitations to the use of electronic purchasing cards: maximum transaction value of £1,000 and a maximum spend of £5,000 per month, per card. As of 30 June 2022, the Department has 22 cards in use.

Electronic purchasing cards are contracted through Crown Commercial Services Framework, Payment Solutions (RM3828) and are provided by Natwest.

Government policy requires all Government Departments to publish transactions over £500, through electronic purchasing cards, on a monthly basis. The Department has historically not published the required data and is working with Finance colleagues to improve the transparency of financial data. DCMS Commercial recognises the issue of non-compliance and is prioritising the publication of the required data by the end of July and will publish transactions on a monthly basis thereafter, in line with transparency policy.

Emily Thornberry:[\[27563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people held electronic purchasing cards that allowed them to make purchases against her Department's budget as of 31 March 2022.

Julia Lopez:

As of 31 March 2022, 23 Civil Servants held electronic purchasing cards, allowing them to make purchases against the Department's budget, subject to internal policy and approval.

Internet: Advertising**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[24550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Advertising Standards Authority on when they plan to publish an interim report on the Intermediary and Platform Principles pilot.

Julia Lopez:

The Advertising Standards Authority's Intermediary and Platform Principles pilot will run for 12 months from June 2022 – May 2023. From recent discussions, we understand that the ASA intends to publish an interim report, covering the first six months (June 2022 – November 2022) of the pilot before the end of 2022.

The ASA advises that the interim report will provide an independent, aggregated account of how the participating companies are performing against the Principles, highlighting examples of best practice and identifying areas for improvement. The ASA plans to publish a final report in the third quarter of 2023.

The ASA is the main regulator for advertising content and placement standards in the UK. As an independent, self-regulatory body, it is funded by a voluntary levy on advertising spend.

Nuisance Calls**Mr Steve Baker:**[\[27587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to combat unsolicited and nuisance calls.

Julia Lopez:

The Government is fully aware that unsolicited direct marketing calls, known as nuisance calls, can cause anxiety and distress, particularly for the most vulnerable people in our society.

Companies that send direct marketing communications are regulated by both the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR) and the data protection legislation (the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018). The PECR was designed to complement the data protection legislation and impose strict obligations on organisations that make direct marketing calls to individuals in the UK.

The legislation is regulated and enforced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Government's response to the consultation [Data: A New Direction](#) which proposed reforms to improve the UK's data protection regime, including potential changes to the PECR, was published on the 17th June 2022.

The Government plans to introduce new legislation to allow the ICO to take enforcement action against organisations on the basis of the number of communications (calls, texts and emails) that they generate rather than just on the number that are connected. It will also require public communications service and network providers to inform the ICO of suspicious traffic transiting their networks when they have reasonable suspicion; and increase fines for direct marketing companies that continue to break the rules. In the future, this will mean that ICO could levy fines of up to £17.5m or 4% of a businesses' global turnover for serious infringements of the Regulations, rather than the current maximum which is set at £500,000.

These measures will upgrade the PECR enforcement regime to make it more effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

■ **Television Licences: Older People**

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[26933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people aged over 75 in a) Luton South b) East of England and c) England have been identified as not paying the TV Licence fee since the end of the over-75s concession in August 2020.

Julia Lopez:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport does not hold this information. Under the Communications Act (2003), a fee for a television licence is payable to the BBC. The enforcement and administration for non-payment of the licence fee is the responsibility of the BBC as a body independent from the government.

EDUCATION

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

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[900849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that children from families in receipt of Universal Credit receive free school meals.

Will Quince:

Under the benefits-related criteria the department provides a free healthy meal to around 1.9 million children, ensuring they are well nourished and can concentrate, learn and achieve. We also spend around £600 million per year ensuring around 1.25

million infants enjoy a free, healthy and nutritious meal at lunchtime following the introduction of the Universal Infant Free School Meal policy in 2014.

Schools fund benefit-related free school meals (FSM) from their core funding which they receive through the schools block of the dedicated schools grant and is derived from the national funding formula. For 2022-23, the funding schools attract through the 'FSM factor' in the national funding formula (NFF) is increasing to £470 per eligible pupil. The per meal rate for Universal Infant Free School Meals was increased in 2022-2023 to £2.41.

Under this government, eligibility has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century, including the introduction of universal infant free school meals and further education FSM. The department has permanently extended eligibility to children from all groups with no recourse to public funds.

The number of pupils eligible for FSM has been increasing since 2018, when we introduced new eligibility criteria for Universal Credit families that was estimated to increase the number of free school meal pupils by 2022. Alongside this, we also introduced generous protections that meant no child would lose their free school meal eligibility as a result of this criteria change and throughout the rollout of Universal Credit.

We want to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their FSM, and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility. To support this:

- We provide an Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities.
- We have developed a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for free school meals.
- We also provide guidance to Jobcentre Plus advisers so that they can make Universal Credit recipients aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including free school meals.

■ Children: Disability

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[900855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate provision of social care services for children and young people with disabilities and their families.

Will Quince:

In the past three months we have published the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, and the Independent Review of Children's Social Care published its final report.

The SEND and AP Green Paper aims to ensure the right support is delivered in the right setting at the right time for children and young people with SEND. Our proposals

include the introduction of national standards for how needs are assessed, identified and met across education, health and care in order to drive greater national consistency

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

Local authorities have access to £54.1 billion core spending power in the 2022/23 financial year to deliver their services, including for children and young people, this is £3.7 billion more than in the 2021/22 financial year.

As part of this, the government has boosted the social care grant, increasing it by £636 million, and so bringing it to a total of around £2.35 billion in the 2022/23 financial year. Local authorities will have access to a one-off Services Grant in the 2022/23 financial year, which is worth over £800 million and can be used for all services, including children's social care.

The department is also making better respite care available for those who care for children with special educational needs and disabilities, with councils invited to bid for an extra £30 million for the next three years to set up more than 10,000 additional short break and respite placements for vulnerable children.

We will publish proposals to improve support for young people with disabilities and their families.

■ Department for Education: Consultants

Wendy Chamberlain:

[22552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much his Department spent on consultancy fees in the last five years.

Michelle Donelan:

Consultancy expenditure is published in the department's annual report and accounts, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dfe-annual-reports>. Although the audit is still ongoing, figures for the 2021/22 financial year are included. As a result, this value may be subject to change.

The figures below cover the entirety of the departmental group, including executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies, for the years specified:

- 2021/22: £6.8 million (unaudited)
- 2020/21: £8.7 million
- 2019/20: £12.7 million
- 2018/19: £13.1 million

- 2017/18: £14.6 million.

■ Department for Education: Speeches

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[22408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Ministerial speeches published on his Department's website, whether he has made a recent assessment of the accuracy of transcripts that are labelled as transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered, as opposed to check against delivery.

Michelle Donelan:

Wherever possible a speech transcript will be checked by a member of the department's communications team or other members of the private office staff who are attending the speaking event, or watching it if it is being broadcast.

This will then be published on the department's website as 'as delivered'. Where it is not possible for this verification to take place, the last cleared transcript is published with 'check against delivery'.

■ Further Education

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[27498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of recent representations submitted to his Department by the Association of Colleges on (a) pay differentials between schoolteachers and further education lecturers, (b) changes to workloads relating to potential grade inflation and changes to sixth-form student numbers resulting from exam cancellations and (c) the availability of shared funding for approved capital projects.

Alex Burghart:

Setting pay rates for lecturers in further education (FE) is the responsibility of colleges and the department plays no role in this process. However, we recognise that the department's funding does affect college finances and, therefore, pay decisions. We will make available an additional £1.6 billion for 16-19 education in the 2024/25 financial year compared with the 2021/22 financial year. This is in addition to the £291 million extra funding for 16-19 education in the 2021/22 financial year, and the £400 million that the department provided in the 2020/21 financial year. We will be investing nearly £52 million in the FE Workforce in the 2022/23 financial year, to continue to support the FE sector with the recruitment, retention, and development of teachers. This includes bursaries worth up to £26,000 each tax-free, which are available to support FE teacher training in priority subject areas for the 2022/23 academic year.

We recognise that arrangements for GCSEs during the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to a fall in student numbers for some providers and an increase for others. We increased the funding rates to colleges and other providers in the 2022/23 financial year, which will cushion the impact on allocations for institutions with falling student numbers.

We are aware of the challenges facing capital projects across different types of education providers. Many colleges who have approved bids for capital funding will also be contributing match funding towards their projects, and it is for colleges to manage their projects within the budget available. We will monitor progress across all college projects.

■ Higher Education: Admissions

Damien Moore:

[\[22519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will make an assessment of the adequacy of the UCAS application process for people who attended school outside the UK when they were aged between 11 and 16.

Michelle Donelan:

The government works closely with schools, colleges, awarding organisations and the higher education (HE) sector to ensure that students' interests are at the centre of decision-making, and to ensure that students have the time to carefully consider their options and make the best choices for their future.

As set out in the International Education Strategy, the government is committed to enhancing the international student experience, from application to employment. We work closely across government and the HE sector to achieve this.

Higher education (HE) providers are autonomous and independent institutions and are therefore responsible for their own admissions decisions. As such, HE providers are used to assessing a wide range of qualifications from domestic and international applicants to make fair admissions decisions.

UCAS is a charity, operating independently of the government. Prospective international and domestic applicants can find a range of information, advice and guidance on their website, and on the websites of their preferred providers.

The department is continuing to work with UCAS and sector bodies to improve transparency, reduce the use of unconditional offers, and reform the personal statement to improve fairness for domestic and international applicants of all backgrounds.

Damien Moore:

[\[22520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will take steps to ensure that UCAS applicants who have undertaken qualifications that are equivalent to GCSEs are not penalised in their applications.

Michelle Donelan:

The government works closely with schools, colleges, awarding organisations and the higher education (HE) sector to ensure that students' interests are at the centre of decision-making, and to ensure that students have the time to carefully consider their options and make the best choices for their future.

As set out in the International Education Strategy, the government is committed to enhancing the international student experience, from application to employment. We work closely across government and the HE sector to achieve this.

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■ Higher Education: Disadvantaged

Paula Barker:

[\[22585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has plans to guarantee places in higher education settings for disadvantaged students.

Michelle Donelan:

Access to higher education (HE) should be based on a student's attainment and their ability to succeed, rather than their background.

In November 2021, the department issued guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) to refocus the Access and Participation Regime. We asked them to create a system that supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring students can make the right choices, accessing and succeeding on high-quality courses which are valued by employers and lead to good graduate employment. We have appointed John Blake as Director for Fair Access and Participation at the OfS, and he will play a pivotal role in driving this work forward.

It is very important that providers focus on supporting students to see good outcomes, not just getting more disadvantaged students through the door, this will ensure that HE remains an engine of true social mobility. We know that prior attainment is a key determinant of successful participation in HE, and that is why we are asking universities to take on a more direct role in driving up the standards in schools.

The department also recently consulted on the design of a new National State Scholarship, worth up to £75 million, which will help the highest achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome barriers to attending and succeeding on the course that is right for them.

Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access a world-class education remains a top priority, and we expect universities to do all they can to help

disadvantaged students. This year, more students from disadvantaged backgrounds went to university than ever before.

■ Higher Education: Student Numbers

Mr Toby Perkins:

[22397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students started an undergraduate degree course at each higher education institution in England in each year since 2017; and what proportion of those students had left that course by (a) Christmas and (b) Easter of the first year.

Michelle Donelan:

Official Statistics on student retention are published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) as part of their UK Performance Indicators.

For the academic years 2014/15 to 2019/20, the following link:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators/non-continuation/table-t3> shows the number of undergraduate entrants[1] at each English higher education provider and their associated non-continuation rates.

These non-continuation rates are defined as the percentage of first year students who do not continue their studies after 12 months (full-time students) or 24 months (part-time students). Rates specific to leaving courses by (a) Christmas and (b) Easter are not published by HESA.

Whilst the department holds HESA Student data from which it could derive the information requested on how many students started an undergraduate degree course at each higher education institution since 2017, the information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

[1] Who did not leave within 50 days of commencing study.

■ Maritime Enterprise Working Group and UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce

Mr Kevan Jones:

[23728]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many members of the Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce were also members of the Maritime Enterprise Working Group.

Alex Burghart:

There are twenty-one members of the UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce, three of whom were also part of the Maritime Enterprise Working Group. The lead for the skills work of the Working Group from BMT MarRI-UK is a member of the Taskforce, as well as representatives from Babcock International Group and UKNEST who were also members of the Maritime Enterprise Working Group. This will ensure that the reports and conclusions of the Working Group will be considered in the work of the Taskforce.

There are other members on the Taskforce representing the same organisations that were represented on the Working Group such as BAE Systems, Cammell Laird and A&P Group, the Royal Navy and the University of Strathclyde. The Taskforce also

has members who represent organisations which were not part of the Working Group and so will bring different views and experience.

To ensure the Taskforce is connected to existing stakeholder groups working on shipbuilding, the Chair of the Taskforce will join the Maritime Skills Commission and the Shipbuilding Enterprise for Growth so that the work of these groups is aligned.

■ Overseas Students: Fees and Charges

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[24567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of overseas university students resident in the UK who have not paid full fees in each of the last three years; what recent assessment he has made of the impact of non-payment of full fees due to the effects of the covid-19 pandemic on (a) university finances, (b) overseas students being unable to complete their courses and (c) overseas students losing their migration status; and what recent steps he has taken to support overseas university students whose difficulty paying fees is related to the covid-19 pandemic.

Alex Burghart:

The setting and payment of fees is a matter for universities as autonomous institutions and therefore, the department does not hold data on the exact number of international students in the UK who have not paid full fees in each of the last three years.

The Office for Students (OfS) collects and analyses financial data from higher education (HE) providers in England to ensure they have an up to date understanding of the sustainability of the sector. We work closely with the OfS and recognise that although there is variation in the performance and strengths of individual institutions the overall financial position of the HE sector remains sound.

Where the OfS identifies concerns about the financial viability of an HE provider, they will implement enhanced monitoring of that provider.

Payment of tuition fees and course progression is a matter between a student and their sponsor (HE institution). If a sponsor decides to withdraw a student from a course for non-payment of fees, they are required to notify the UK Visas and Immigration which may subsequently result in the student's visa being cancelled

During the COVID-19 pandemic the department, alongside the government, worked hard to ensure that international students were supported throughout this difficult time, including visa concessions so that students who could not travel to the UK during the pandemic were not adversely impacted.

In addition, the department provided grant funding to the OfS for the 2021/22 financial year included an allocation of £5 million to HE providers in England in order to provide additional support for student hardship. This hardship funding could be accessed by international students and would be allocated by providers to where the need was greatest.

■ Overseas Students: Ukraine

Rachael Maskell:

[\[22473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help support Ukrainian refugees who started a university course in Ukraine to complete their studies in the UK.

Michelle Donelan:

The department is continuing to work closely with the education sector and across government to ensure that students are supported and have a range of options available to them during this difficult time.

We know that universities in Ukraine are striving to maintain the education of their students under extremely challenging conditions. We are therefore encouraging them to contact their education provider in Ukraine, to understand what support is available to them to study remotely. This may be particularly beneficial to students nearing the end of their course.

Students may also wish to explore their options with higher education (HE) providers in England. The department encourages them to engage in conversations with their preferred provider to understand the full range of options available specifically to them. I have urged institutions in England to consider students' circumstances sensitively and to show as much flexibility as possible when considering students' applications.

To support those who are granted leave under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the Ukraine Family Scheme or the Ukraine Extension Scheme, introduced by the Home Office, we have extended access to HE student support, home fee status, tuition fee caps, advanced learner loans and 19+ funding allocations. This ensures Ukrainians who have been affected by the war in Ukraine can access support on the same basis as those within other protection-based categories, such as refugees.

The Student Loans Company will also treat students who were living in England before leaving to study in Ukraine, and who join a course on return to the UK, as being temporary absent when assessing the requirement for three years' ordinary residence in the UK or Crown Dependencies prior to study. Students should contact Student Finance England, or other relevant funding bodies if individuals lived in one of the devolved administrations prior to study in Ukraine, for further details.

Additionally, the department is working closely with the Ukrainian Government and UK HE Sector to help facilitate Ukrainian HE entrance exams this summer for students from Ukraine.

The Office for Students has been delivering up to £4million of additional support to students from Ukraine whose financial means have been impacted by events in Ukraine.

■ Pupils: Refugees

Charlotte Nichols: [\[23442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have offered places to Ukrainian refugees in each local authority area.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department does not hold information on how many schools have offered places to Ukrainian refugees in each local authority.

We can share headline data on how many Ukrainian children are coming into the country and out of those how many children are being allocated school places. This data is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-placements-for-children-from-outside-of-the-uk/2022-may>.

■ Qualifications

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[26814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the independent assessors that were commissioned by his Department to evaluate qualifications that overlap with T-Levels in waves one and two (a) started and (b) concluded their work; and how many qualifications those assessors evaluated.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[26815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the guidance by his Department entitled Qualifications that overlap with T Levels, published on 11 May 2022, what the evidential basis is for his Department's assessment that 160 qualifications overlap with T-levels in waves one and two.

Alex Burghart:

There are over 2,000 qualifications available at level 3, and as part of first overlap process T Levels we asked independent assessors to look at over 700 of these as they are in similar subject areas to wave 1 and 2 T Levels.

Assessors were asked to assess qualifications against three tests:

- is it a technical qualification, in that it primarily aims to support entry to employment in a specific occupational area(s)?
- are the outcomes that must be attained by a person taking the qualification similar to those set out in a standard covered by a T Level?
- does the qualification aim to support entry to the same occupation(s) as a T Level?

Only qualifications which met all three tests in relation to a wave 1 and 2 T Level were included on the provisional list. Assessors considered evidence such as qualification specifications to determine whether these tests were met.

To ensure the rigour of this process recommendations were moderated internally and we published a provisional list of 160 qualification on 11 May. We have put in place

an appeals process if awarding organisations do not feel we have applied the criteria correctly, and awarding organisations have until 8 July 2022 to submit appeals.

The assessors commenced work in summer 2021 and their involvement in the wave 1 and 2 overlap process will conclude once the appeals process has been completed in September 2022.

■ Schools: Business Rates

Cat Smith:

[\[23324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment he has made of the levels of business rates paid by state schools and independent schools which have charitable status.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department has done no comparative assessment between the levels of business rates paid by state schools and independent schools which have charitable status.

Currently, 80% mandatory rates relief is applied to academies, voluntary aided schools, and foundation schools. The majority of special schools also receive full relief because they make provision for children with a disability. In addition, under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, local authorities are permitted to grant relief against the business rate liability to certain charitable and non-profit organisations. Local authorities are able to offer discretionary relief for local authority-maintained schools in their area.

Local authorities receive funding for business rates through the national funding formula, to meet the full costs of schools' business rates. This means the costs for local authority maintained schools' and academies' business rates are currently covered by the department. Therefore, there is no disadvantage to state funded schools from paying full rates, or advantage from receiving rates relief.

Charities can apply for charitable rate relief of up to 80% if a property is used for charitable purposes. Around half of independent schools are charities so enjoy at least 80% relief on business rates. The rest are private business and therefore do not benefit from such discounted business rates.

■ Students: Loans

Fleur Anderson:

[\[26873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his policy to increase the size of student loans in line with the rate of inflation.

Michelle Donelan:

The department is currently reviewing options for uprating maximum grants and loans for the 2023/24 academic year.

Maximum grants and loans for living costs were increased by 3.1% this academic year, and the department has announced that they will increase by a further 2.3% in the 2022/23 academic year.

In addition, we are freezing maximum tuition fees for the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. By the 2024/25 academic year, maximum fees will have been frozen for seven years.

The 2022/23 financial year guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) confirms universities will continue to be able to support students in hardship through the student premium. Ministers' Strategic Priorities Grant guidance letter to the OfS asks that the OfS looks to protect the student premium in cash terms for the 2022/23 financial year.

■ Teachers: Recruitment

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[23223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans to provide support to teaching assistants in transitioning to become fully qualified teachers.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[23224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of current routes into the teaching profession for teaching assistants without a university degree.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department is committed to supporting teaching assistants to become qualified teachers, including through providing accessible routes into the teaching profession.

Teaching assistants that have a degree can choose from various routes, including the School Direct (tuition fees) placement or School Direct (salaried places). Both routes carry the award of qualified teacher status (QTS) and some may lead to the award of a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE).

An alternative route into teaching is through an apprenticeship.

Currently, schools have access to a range of apprenticeship standards, including the level three teaching assistant apprenticeship and level six postgraduate teacher apprenticeship (PGTA). The level six PGTA is only available to those with a degree. The department is working with all interested parties to improve the PGTA for providers, employers, and candidates as part of its scheduled review.

There are a range of other routes into teaching, including PGCE or postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE) for those with an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification. Additionally, qualified teacher learning and skills status (QTLS) allows those without degrees to teach in schools, providing they meet the eligibility criteria. Those without a degree can also train to teach through an undergraduate degree. Unlike the apprenticeships and School Direct routes, these routes do not allow teaching assistants to train within a school they may already be employed in.

While teaching is a graduate profession, the department is working with interested parties to consider how teaching assistants and others working in schools can attain the relevant qualifications to become teachers.

■ T-levels

Chi Onwurah: [\[27599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his targets are for the number of t-level placements by subject available in academic years (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24 and (c) 2024-25.

Alex Burghart:

The industry placement is a mandatory component of the T Level and every student must complete a placement in order to complete their T Level. We currently do not, nor plan to, set targets on the number of T Level students and industry placements, in each academic year. This is a conscious decision as we want students to enrol on the T Level courses because they are the right choice for them to make the career progression they want. The quality of the qualification and the value to the student's future career are what will drive take-up of T Levels.

■ UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[23727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent progress his Department has made on the establishment of the Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce.

Alex Burghart:

As part of the National Shipbuilding Strategy refresh publication on the 10 March 2022, it was announced that the Department for Education would lead the establishment of the UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce.

The department has made good progress in establishing the Taskforce, in collaboration with the National Shipbuilding Office and colleagues from the devolved administrations. The Taskforce membership, announced in May, has UK wide representation, including both small and medium-sized enterprises and larger organisations, academia and trade representative bodies. Further details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-shipbuilding-skills-taskforce-membership-confirmed>.

The Taskforce will be Chaired by Honorary Captain Dr Paul Little, Principal and Chief Executive of City of Glasgow College. The first meeting and official launch of the Taskforce will be on 7 July.

■ Universities: Coronavirus and Ventilation

Matt Western: [\[22504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to issue guidance to universities on making adjustments and improvements to premises used for teaching and

accommodation to (a) improve ventilation and (b) reduce the risk of covid-19 transmission during the summer 2022 university vacation period.

Michelle Donelan:

The department has no plans to issue further guidance to the higher education (HE) sector with regards to COVID-19.

On 21 February 2022, the Prime Minister announced the Living with COVID-19 guidance which set out how England would move into a new phase of managing COVID-19. On 1 April 2022, the department published 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings'. This is non-statutory guidance which replaced previous guidance for education settings, including HE. This emergency planning and response guidance was produced to help all education, including HE, childcare, and children's social care settings respond to emergencies.

In April 2022, the UK Health Security Agency published a practical guide for staff on managing cases of infectious diseases in education and childcare settings. This included guidance on keeping occupied spaces well ventilated. There is additional guidance on ventilation in the workplace provided by the Health and Safety Executive, available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/ventilation/>.

The department remains grateful to the HE sector for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the great effort it makes to ensure staff and students remain protected.

■ **Universities: Greater London**

Munira Wilson:

[\[24660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of removing the London weighting element of the Strategic Priorities Grant on London universities in the context of rising inflation.

Munira Wilson:

[\[24661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to help support higher education institutions in London affected by the the removal of the London weighting element of the Strategic Priorities Grant in the context of rising inflation.

Michelle Donelan:

The Strategic Priorities Grant (SPG) is funding supplied by the government on an annual basis to support teaching and students in higher education (HE), including expensive to deliver subjects, such as science and engineering, students at risk of discontinuing their studies, and world-leading specialist providers.

We asked the Office for Students (OfS) to reform the SPG in the 2021/22 financial year. The removal of London weighting was required to enable the reprioritisation of this funding towards the provision of high-cost subjects that support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, STEM, and specific labour market needs. The London weighting previously accounted for a small proportion of London providers' income.

For example, £64 million was allocated through the London weighting in the 2020/21 academic year SPG, which was less than 1% of London providers estimated total income.

As set out in the guidance letter from my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education to the OfS in March we are investing an additional £750 million over the next three years to support high quality teaching and facilities including in science and engineering, subjects that support the NHS, and degree apprenticeships. Further information on this guidance letter can be found here:

https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/bb422aae-54fb-42c8-b5db-26e7ed48df80/strategic-priorities-grant-20220331_amend.pdf. This includes the largest increase in government funding for the HE sector to support students and teaching in over a decade. The recurrent SPG budget is £1,397 million for the 2022/23 financial year, which is 5% higher than last year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Daniel Zeichner:

[25876]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of making 40,000 visas available for seasonal workers on the labour needs of the agricultural sector.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra works with the agriculture sector and other government departments to understand labour supply and demand, including for both permanent and seasonal workforce requirements, and to ensure there is a long-term strategy for the farming workforce.

Following an announcement in the Food Strategy White Paper the extra 10,000 visas have now been released for the Seasonal Worker Visa Route (bringing the total to 40,000 visas for 2022) with 8,000 of these going to the horticulture sector and 2,000 to the poultry sector.

We will continue to monitor the labour needs of the agriculture sector and the impacts of these additional visas.

Daniel Zeichner:

[25882]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on promoting seasonal agricultural work to UK citizens.

Daniel Zeichner:

[25883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to promote seasonal agricultural work to UK citizens.

Victoria Prentis:

As we move to a high wage, high skilled economy, the Government is encouraging all sectors to adapt and make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers through offering training, career options, wage increases and to invest in increased automation technology. To support these efforts, Defra is working with industry and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to raise awareness of career opportunities within the food and farming sectors among UK workers. Defra continues to work closely with industry and other Government departments to understand labour supply and demand, including both permanent and seasonal workforce requirements, and to ensure there is a long-term strategy for the food and farming workforce.

DWP is supporting Defra to develop and deliver a long-term recruitment strategy that supports the domestic workforce into both seasonal and long-term roles in the agriculture sector working with Defra and key Trade Associations to develop a regional recruitment strategy that utilises DWP's jobcentre plus network, fosters strong local links between employers and Work Coaches, and gives jobseekers the skills and knowledge they need to enter the sector.

As a result, local Jobcentres are now directly connecting with employers in their area, DWP employer advisors understand the local labour market and can help businesses to design and word job vacancies, develop pre-employment training (specific to a job), recruit in new, and fair, ways (such as offering flexible working patterns) and access Jobcentre Plus office facilities for recruitment (where available).

All agriculture businesses are encouraged to advertise roles through DWP's Find A Job website, where they can upload and manage their vacancies. DWP do not charge for this service, and it is available across the United Kingdom. Agricultural businesses can also contact DWP's Employer Services Line for advice about recruiting for their business, by phoning 0800 169 0178 Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, who can put them in touch with local employer advisors for specific and practical advice.

■ Air Pollution: Greater London**Fleur Anderson:**[\[26874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to give City Hall more power over air quality policy in London.

Jo Churchill:

Responsibility for air quality in the capital is already devolved to the Mayor of London and as such, City Hall has a number of powers including:

- Oversight of London borough air quality action plans, including the power to issue guidance to which London boroughs must have regard when carrying out their air quality duties under the Environment Act 1995.
- The power to issue directions to require London boroughs to take action to address local air pollution as set out in section 85 of the Environment Act 1995.

Under the same legislation, local authorities in London are required to assess local air quality and to take action to reduce pollution if air quality objectives are not met. They must also report on their data and actions to the Mayor of London, to whom they are accountable.

■ **Air Pollution: Pollution Control**

Marsha De Cordova: [\[23402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has modelled the likelihood of reducing the average annual concentration of PM2.5 pollution to 10µg/m3 at any point between 2030 and 2040.

Jo Churchill:

We set out the information we considered when setting our PM2.5 Environment Act target in the evidence packs which can be found at:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-environment-policy/consultation-on-environmental-targets/>

■ **Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control**

Geraint Davies: [\[27502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will respond to the letters in the Veterinary Record written by Mr Langton and co-authors, on 1 April and 20 May, rebutting his Department's criticisms of their research entitled Analysis of the impact of badger culling on bovine tuberculosis in cattle in the high-risk area of England, 2009–2020, in a letter published on 18 March which cited incorrect data.

Jo Churchill:

The UK Chief Veterinary Officer ("CVO"), Dr Christine Middlemiss, and Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser ("CSA"), Professor Gideon Henderson, have made clear their views on Mr Langton's paper in their letter to the Veterinary Record of 18 March and in the correction published on 21 May, which had no impact on their original conclusions. I have nothing further to add on that topic.

■ **Dogs: Veterinary Services**

Dr Neil Hudson: [\[26915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of the reported increase in unregulated canine fertility clinics that are not operating under veterinary supervision.

Dr Neil Hudson: [\[26916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of increased reported acts of (a) canine blood sampling, (b) canine artificial insemination and (c) other veterinary surgery being carried out by laypersons and not veterinary surgeons.

Victoria Prentis:

The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 prohibits anyone who is not a veterinary surgeon registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) from undertaking any surgical procedure. Concerns about a person's legitimacy to practice should be reported to the RCVS as Regulator for the Act. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 requires owners or handlers of animals to protect them from harm and to provide for their welfare in line with good practice. A breach of these provisions may lead to imprisonment, a fine, or both.

The 2006 Act is backed up by the statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs which provides owners and keepers with general welfare information, including a specific section on how to protect them from pain, suffering, injury and disease. That section of the Code of Practice recommends owners seek veterinary advice before breeding their dogs and that owners should take all reasonable steps to ensure that they are able to provide the care required during pregnancy.

■ Droughts and Water Supply**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[27765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the UK's resilience to drought; and what steps he is taking to help (a) ensure that water companies (i) do not over-abtract from boreholes and (ii) repair infrastructure leaks and (b) encourage reductions in water waste.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency's National Framework for Water Resources, published in March 2020, sets out the strategic water needs for England up to 2050 and beyond, taking account of climate change and population growth. The Framework sets out how we will reduce demand, halve leakage rates, develop new supply infrastructure, move water to where it is needed, increase drought resilience of water supplies and abstract water sustainably, including from boreholes. Water companies are now preparing their statutory Water Resources Management Plans for consultations, late in 2022. The plans will show how water companies will deliver secure water supplies sustainably, over at least a 25 year period. The statutory plans are reviewed annually, to ensure they are maintained.

The proposed new legally binding target under the Environment Act 2021 aims to support the sustainable use of water further by reducing the public demand for water.

This will be enabled through the policies set out in the Written Ministerial Statement on reducing demand for water, including the introduction of mandatory water efficiency labelling and further work to reduce water use in new developments and retrofits.

■ Food Supply

Feryal Clark: [\[23807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure an adequate food supply in the context of potential shortages.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain which is well equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption. The recently published Government Food Strategy sets out a plan to transform our food system to ensure it is fit for the future. Responding to recent events, the Food Strategy puts food security at the heart of the Government's vision for the food sector. The strategy sets out ambitions to boost food production in key sectors with post-Brexit opportunities and create jobs, with a focus on skills and innovations to level-up across the country.

The UK's high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. We produce 60% of all the food we need, and 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year, and these figures have changed little over the last 20 years. In addition, the UK has nearly 100% sufficiency in poultry, carrots and swedes. UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

The UK Government has well established ways of working with the industry and with the Devolved Administrations to 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 capability, levers and expertise to respond to disruption lie with industry. They have highly resilient supply chains, and this was proven in the initial COVID-19 response. The Government's role is to support and enable an industry-led response.

■ Game: UK Trade with EU

Sir Bill Wiggin: [\[4498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there is a quarantine period required for gamebird hatching eggs arriving in the UK from France.

Sir Bill Wiggin: [\[4499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there is a quarantine period required for day-old gamebird chicks arriving in the UK from France.

Sir Bill Wiggin: [\[4500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether European Commission Directive 798/2008 CBHC032E requires the 90-day quarantine of gamebird hatching eggs exported (a) from UK into the EU or (b) vice versa.

Sir Bill Wiggin: [\[4501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether European Union Directive 798/2008 CBHC032E requires the 90-day quarantine of gamebird day-old chicks exported (a) from the UK to the EU or (b) vice versa.

Sir Bill Wiggin: [\[4502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made any legislative changes to the UK's obligations under European Commission Directive 798/2008 GBHC032E.

Jo Churchill:

The quarantine requirements for gamebird hatching eggs are that they shall be kept for at least three weeks from the date of hatching in the hatchery or on the establishment(s) to which they have been sent after hatching.

Day-old chicks shall be kept on the establishment of destination from their date of arrival for a period of at least six weeks; or until the day of slaughter. The period may be reduced to three weeks, provided that appropriate sampling and testing have been carried out with favourable results.

Our legislation sets out that disease control restricted zones put in place for Avian Influenza outbreaks can only be lifted and exports restarted 90 days after effective cleansing and disinfection. This is retained EU legislation (regulation 798/2008) and applies to gamebird hatching eggs and gamebird day-old chicks. The same rules affect exports from GB to EU. Operability amendments have been made to Regulation 798/2008 under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. There have been no changes to animal health requirements.

We understand that any interruption to egg supplies will have a significant impact on our sectors during this challenging time which has seen widespread Avian Influenza outbreaks across the EU and here in Great Britain.

With our French counterparts we tried to find a solution to enable the trade of gamebird eggs, whilst maintaining the necessary standards of biosecurity. Unfortunately, due to a range of external factors, it has not been possible to put measures in place in time for this year's shooting season.

This will clearly have an impact on the shooting sector and we are exploring future measures that can be implemented to alleviate these pressures going forward.

Joint Unit for Waste Crime: Staff**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[27548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 18814 on Joint Unit for Waste Crime: Staff, what are the roles of the 14 staff who work at the Joint Unit on Waste Crime as on 29 June 2022.

Jo Churchill:

- 1 x Manager
- 1 x Senior Team leader
- 1 x Technical officer
- 8 x Environmental Crime Officers
- 1 x Digital researcher
- 1 x Communications and engagement officer
- 1 x HMRC intelligence officer

■ Livestock: Dogs**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[26920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the finding of the Livestock Worrying Police Working Group that in 89 per cent of attacks on livestock in North Wales the dog was unaccompanied, if he will take steps to help ensure that dogs are trained to avoid attacking sheep when they escape from (a) their owners and (b) leads.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the issue of livestock worrying very seriously, recognising the distress this can cause farmers and animals, as well as the financial implications. Those in charge of dogs are already responsible for ensuring that they are kept under control, and it is an offence under section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to allow any dog to be dangerously out of control in any place.

New measures to crack down on livestock worrying in England and Wales are to be brought in through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, which was introduced in Parliament on 8 June 2021. The new measures will enhance enforcement mechanisms available to the police and expand the scope of livestock species and locations covered by the law.

Dog owners are legally responsible for their dog's behaviour even when not accompanied. These reforms should provide dog owners with sharper incentives to ensure their dogs are trained well to behave acceptably in all circumstances. Owners who have concerns about controlling their dog's behaviour may take advice from their vet or a suitably qualified dog behaviourist or trainer. The Animal Behaviour and Training Council maintains national registers of appropriately qualified trainers and behaviourists. The Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs also details best practice methods of training.

In addition to the current legislative measures laid before Parliament, the Countryside Code will continue to be publicised to ensure constant messaging to the public and landowners.

■ Nature Conservation

Caroline Lucas:

[\[23261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to hold a public consultation on its response to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's 7th Quinquennial Review recommendations on species protection.

Rebecca Pow:

JNCC's seventh Quinquennial Review report, submitted to the Government on 19 April, provides the Secretary of State with independent scientific advice on proposed changes to Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. We will consider the recommendations carefully and the Government's proposed approach, including any plans for consultation, before aiming to publish JNCC's advice later this year. No decisions have yet been made.

■ Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[22405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many contraventions of illegal storage of waste have been identified in nitrate vulnerable zones in each of the last four years.

Rebecca Pow:

Both the Environment Agency (Nitrate Regulations) and Rural Payments Agency (Cross Compliance) regulate within Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ).

The Environment Agency (EA) has found 309 instances of non-compliance with NVZ regulations since November 2019 of which 93 were related to organic manure storage record keeping offences and 205 related to storage capacity or infrastructure standards. The current database started in late 2019 and it is not possible to extract older data within a reasonable timeframe for this response.

The Rural Payments Agency have identified 92 contraventions of storage requirements in NVZs over the last four years. Examples of breaches include poultry manure and/or other types of solid manure not being stored in either a vessel, impermeable surface, in a wooded building or in a temporary field heap; and a temporary field heap was not solid enough to be stacked in a freestanding heap and/or was producing free drainage from within the stacked material.

Our focus is to work with and support farmers to meet their obligations. That is why Defra has made additional budget available from 2021 for the EA to recruit an additional 50 inspection officers, increasing their capacity to deliver advice-led enforcement.

■ Nitrate Vulnerable Zones: Manure

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[22406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many prosecutions there have been for the illegal storage of manure waste in nitrate vulnerable zones in each of the last four years.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) issued 24 warning letters under the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) regulations between November 2019 and June 2022. During this period, the EA issued 1755 improvement actions relating to storage of organic manures. Since November 2019, the EA has separately prosecuted 25 farmers for causing pollution under agricultural regulations. Two of these prosecutions included offences under the NVZ regulations.

The EA takes a proactive advice-led approach to enforcement, working with farmers to bring them into compliance before taking formal enforcement action. The EA has found that most farmers take the opportunity to benefit from inspector advice, meaning formal action is often not required to deliver the desired outcomes. For example, the River Axe Regulatory Project, which aims to drive change on dairy farms, has resulted in an estimated £6-8 million investment in farm infrastructure improvements and an enhancement of 30km of watercourses that discharge to the local Special Area of Conservation.

■ Noise

Hilary Benn:

[\[27538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many noise (a) abatement notices and (b) warning notices have been issued in England in each of the last five years.

Hilary Benn:

[\[27539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people have been (a) issued with a fixed penalty notice for failing to comply with a noise nuisance warning notice and (b) prosecuted following a noise nuisance warning notice in England in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

Defra does not hold information on Noise Abatement Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices. This information is only held at local authority level.

■ Package Holidays: Animal Welfare

Giles Watling:

[\[23404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward legislation to stop holiday firms promoting experiences with Asian elephants to tourists.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 21 June to the hon. Member for Crawley, [PQ 19607](#).

■ Pets: EU Countries**Ruth Jones:**[\[23792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many meetings he has had in 2022 with his EU counterparts on making it easier for British citizens to travel to and within the EU with their pets.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra recognises the impact that changes to the EU pet travel rules applying to movements from GB are having on pet owners and assistance dog users. We are continuing to seek agreement from the European Commission on awarding Great Britain 'Part 1' listed status and recognising our tapeworm-free status. Achieving these would alleviate the most onerous pet travel rules for all travellers and we see no valid animal health reason for these not to be granted. We are carrying out further engagement with the EU to progress this.

■ Waste Disposal: Prosecutions**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[27551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 18812 on Joint Unit for Waste Crime, how many and what proportion of those associated arrests led to (a) prosecutions and (b) successful prosecutions.

Jo Churchill:

These arrests were carried out by other agencies for non-waste crime offences so this is not data held by the Joint Unit for Waste Crime.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Humanitarian Situation****Ruth Jones:**[\[24657\]](#)

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

James Cleverly:

Afghanistan continues to face a serious and worsening humanitarian crisis. It is affecting just under half of the population, with 18.9 million people facing acute food insecurity. Over 6 million people have been internally displaced, and millions of children are out of school. The recent earthquake in eastern Afghanistan on June 22 has exacerbated humanitarian needs.

On 11 January 2022, the UN launched an appeal for \$4.4 billion for 2022, the largest humanitarian appeal on record, reflecting the magnitude of the humanitarian challenge ahead. On 31 March 2022, the UK co-hosted a donor conference with the UN, Qatar and Germany and the UK committed £286 million for 2022/2023. The conference raised over \$2.4 billion for the UN's humanitarian appeal.

■ Ahmad Manasra

Layla Moran: [\[26842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to the Israeli Government on behalf of Ahmad Manasra.

Amanda Milling:

We call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention and raise this with the Israeli Ministry of Justice. I recently travelled to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) where I discussed a range of issues with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Roll.

■ Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[25772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps her Department has taken to help secure the release of (a) Aiden Aslin and (b) Shaun Pinner.

James Cleverly:

HMG condemns the reported sentencing of two British Nationals, Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner, held by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine. As repeated statements by the Government of Ukraine set out, they are soldiers in the Ukrainian Armed Forces and are therefore prisoners of war. They should be treated in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, including the Geneva Conventions. The UK Government is engaging with the Ukrainian authorities on this issue as a matter of urgency and is fully supportive of all their efforts to secure the prisoners' release.

■ Alaa Abdel Fattah

Mr David Jones: [\[25778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many written requests her Department has made to the Egyptian authorities for consular access to the British detainee Ala'a Abd el-Fattah.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government continues to raise Alaa Abdel Fatah's case with the highest levels of the Egyptian government and is working urgently to secure consular access

to ensure his welfare. We are concerned by reports that he is on a sustained hunger strike. We continue to be in regular contact with his family to provide support.

■ AUKUS

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the progress achieved with AUKUS counterparts on improving joint security.

James Cleverly:

Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security are indivisible: we need both. The AUKUS partnership is a strategic opportunity for global security and for stability in the Indo-Pacific. The Foreign Secretary discusses AUKUS with her Australian and American counterparts frequently and they remain fully committed to the partnership.

We have commenced work in the four original areas of advanced capabilities under AUKUS and, as announced by the Prime Minister, the then-Prime Minister of Australia, and the President of the United States in April in their statement on progress, are also scoping opportunities for trilateral cooperation in other areas.

■ Bangladesh and India: Floods

Sam Tarry:

[\[24698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support people in (a) Bangladesh and (b) India following the recent flooding of the Brahmaputra river.

Vicky Ford:

I am deeply saddened by the impacts of the recent flooding in India and Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the UK provided £195,000 to support the response during the first wave of flooding in May. We contributed a further £442,500 after the second wave of flooding in June. This funding continues to support the provision of cash assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, search and rescue operations, shelter management and provisional education materials. Since 2004, the Government of India has stated publicly it neither seeks nor accepts official international assistance from foreign governments for disaster relief.

■ Bangladesh: Floods

Sam Tarry:

[\[24696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterpart in Bangladesh on the floods from the river Brahmaputra in June 2022.

Vicky Ford:

Lord Ahmad, Minister for South Asia, discussed the impacts of the floods with the Bangladeshi Foreign Minister on 27 June. The flood response was also raised in a

recent meeting with the Bangladeshi Foreign Minister and COP26 President-Designate. We regularly engage at an official level on climate adaptation and resilience. Our £120m Bangladesh Climate and Environment Programme, announced at COP26, has a focus on resilience in climate vulnerable areas. The programme will support the scaling up of locally-led adaptation and help households to cope with climate impacts.

■ **British Nationals Abroad: Torture**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[24637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 157467 on British Nationals Abroad: Torture, what the findings were of her Department's most recent annual review of open torture cases reported to it by British citizens; and if he will publish a summary of that review's findings and trends in aggregate in the 2021 Human Rights and Democracy Report.

Amanda Milling:

At the most recent annual review, there were a total of 131 open cases where allegations of torture or mistreatment had been reported to consular staff. These cases include those reported in 2021 and those reported in previous years where these remain unresolved. The majority of allegations in these cases (75 of 131) involved reported torture or mistreatment that occurred during arrest or in police custody, although there is some regional variation.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[24638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 28 April 2022 to Question 157468 on British Nationals Abroad: Torture, if her Department will publish aggregate information on the outcomes of torture cases in its 2021 Human Rights and Democracy Report.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO records all information about allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (mistreatment) reported to us by British nationals, and the action taken in response to those allegations, within individual case files. The FCDO does not hold aggregate or centralised statistics on the outcome of torture and mistreatment cases.

■ **Cuba: Demonstrations**

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[25738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Cuban counterpart on the imprisonment of Luis Manuel Otero Alcantara and Maikel Osorbo Castillo Perez following recent protests in that country.

Vicky Ford:

We are clear that human rights must be respected by the Cuban Government; that all Cubans have the right to protest peacefully and that the threat of arrest and excessive sentencing must not be used as a tool to restrict freedom of expression or the right to assemble. The sentences handed down to Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara and Maykel Castillo are a clear violation of these principles.

In conjunction with the UK and other international partners, the British Embassy in Havana sought to attend the trial of Otero Alcántara and Castillo but were refused entry. The UK was one of the first countries to call for the Cuban people to be allowed to express their views freely and peacefully following the Cuban Government's response to demonstrations on 11 July and we continue to raise the detentions of protestors and excessive sentencing directly with the Cuban Government, both in London and Havana.

■ Developing Countries: Corruption**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[24566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on support for the prosecution of senior officers of UK companies who have been found guilty of corruption in (a) African and (b) other developing countries.

Vicky Ford:

Decisions on prosecutions, including those of any senior officers in UK companies, are made by UK law enforcement agencies such as the Serious Fraud Office and the Crown Prosecution Service and are not a matter for the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.

However, tackling corruption in Africa and other developing countries is a priority for the Secretary of State and the FCDO provides support to the National Crime Agency (NCA) to investigate corruption in the UK which has a connection to developing countries. This support includes funding for the International Corruption Unit at the NCA to investigate cases where corrupt individuals have laundered money in the UK which has been stolen from developing countries, or where UK companies or individuals have engaged in corruption in developing countries. The FCDO also supports the work of the International Anti-Corruption Co-ordination Centre at the NCA, which co-ordinates an international response to corruption cases affecting developing countries.

■ Developing Countries: LGBT+ People**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[\[24538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to her Department's International Development Strategy, what plans she has to work with local LGBT+ groups; and if she will reverse the reduction in funding for LGBT+ rights in low and middle-income countries as set out in the Global Resources 2019-2020

report on Government and Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to championing LGBT+ rights internationally and supporting those who defend them. Ministers and our overseas missions work closely with governments and civil society partners to advance LGBT+ equality, and promote the implementation of new laws and policies that better protect LGBT+ people from violence and discrimination.

Since 2018, the UK committed over £11 million in programmes to support the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights. On 24 June, the Prime Minister announced a further £2.7 million of UK funding to support LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders, and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth. This includes the vital work of organisations such as The Commonwealth Equality Network, Kaleidoscope Trust, and Human Dignity Trust.

David Mundell:

[\[24559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle the criminalisation of same-sex relationships in Commonwealth countries; whether her Department has made funding available to LGBT+ organisations which work to tackle that legislation in those countries in the last year; and if she will take steps to make the UK a leading funder of those organisations.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to championing LGBT+ rights internationally and supporting those who defend them. Ministers and our overseas missions work closely with partners to advance LGBT+ equality, and promote the implementation of new laws and policies that better protect LGBT+ people from violence and discrimination.

Since 2018, the UK committed over £11 million in programmes to support the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights. On 24 June, the Prime Minister announced a further £2.7 million of UK funding to support LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders, and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth.

Sarah Champion:

[\[24600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps her Department has taken to provide support to LGBT+ community groups in (a) low- and (b) middle-income countries who are seeking reform of discriminatory laws in those countries.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to championing LGBT+ rights internationally and supporting those who defend them. Ministers and our overseas missions work closely with partners to advance LGBT+ equality, and promote the implementation of new laws and policies that better protect LGBT+ people from violence and discrimination.

Since 2018, the UK committed over £11 million in programmes to support the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights. On 24 June, the Prime Minister

announced a further £2.7 million of UK funding to support LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders, and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth.

■ **Diplomatic Service: Pilot Schemes**

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[27497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of creating an augmentation force consisting of recently retired (a) diplomats and (b) other relevant officials to provide surge capacity in (i) Ukraine and (ii) other States facing emergencies; and if she will make it her policy to commission a pilot scheme to test the feasibility and practicability of that proposal.

Vicky Ford:

The FCDO has established capabilities that provide surge capacity. These include FCDO's humanitarian and civilian stabilisation roster. These capabilities provide rapidly deployable, specialist expertise, are open to all non-civil servants, including retirees, and ensure the UK Government is able to access UK expertise to deliver impact and value for money for the taxpayer.

■ **Finland and Sweden: NATO**

Sir Robert Buckland: [\[26756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what role the UK is playing in facilitating the applications of Sweden and Finland to NATO.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government has supported Finnish and Swedish applications for NATO membership and engaged regularly with both countries and NATO Allies to discuss the accession process. The Prime Minister spoke to President Erdogan of Turkey on 20 May and 21 June to emphasise that Finland and Sweden would be valuable additions to the Alliance. The UK welcomes the agreement between Turkey, Finland and Sweden, announced on 28 June, which paves the way for Finland and Sweden to join NATO. The UK also welcomes the formal invitation to both countries to join the Alliance, issued on 29 June. Their swift integration into NATO will make both countries safer, the Alliance stronger, and the Euro-Atlantic area more secure.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Consultants**

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[23415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much her Department spent on external consultants in each of the last five years.

James Cleverly:

FCDO consultancy spend in 2020-21 was £2.7 million. Total FCO plus DFID spend for years 2019-20, 2018-19, and 2017-18 was £3.0 million, £2.6 million and £1.3 million respectively. Consultancy spend for 2021-22 will be reported in the FCDO's annual report and accounts, which will be published shortly.

■ Gibraltar: Spain

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[25751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that holders of Gibraltar blue registration cards are not being denied entry into Spain.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports of Spain stopping some British nationals crossing the border from Gibraltar into Spain. The UK Government has raised this issue with Spanish authorities. We will continue to monitor the situation, and work with Spain to support British nationals wishing to cross the border, however the application of the Schengen Borders Code is ultimately a matter for Spain.

■ Greece: Turkey

Sir Robert Buckland:

[\[26755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what role the UK is playing in helping to resolve tensions between Greece and Turkey.

James Cleverly:

Greece and Turkey are close friends and allies of the UK. We encourage both countries to resolve issues through dialogue and we support measures aimed at de-escalation and reduction of tensions, including existing deconfliction mechanisms within NATO structures. The Prime Minister reiterated these messages in his engagements with both President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Mitsotakis at the NATO Summit in Madrid, and during calls on 21 June.

■ Human Rights: Democracy

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[24636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when her Department plans to publish its 2021 Human Rights and Democracy Report.

Vicky Ford:

We intend to publish the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's 2021 Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report before Parliament rises for the summer recess.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Sam Tarry:

[\[24699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will condemn (a) forced evictions of Palestinians and (b) demolitions of Palestinian houses in the Occupied Territories.

Sam Tarry:

[\[24700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will hold discussions with her Israeli counterpart on that Government's obligations under international law to stop forced (a) evictions and (b) demolitions in the Occupied Territories.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace. I met with Palestinian families affected by the ongoing demolition and eviction orders at Masafer Yatta during my recent visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and raised our concerns with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Roll on 22 June.

■ **Lithuania: Development Aid**

Sir Robert Buckland:

[\[26757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional support the UK is providing to Lithuania in the context of Russia's increasingly hostile stance towards that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK recently signed the UK-Lithuania Joint Declaration deepening our ties and marking the 100th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations. The UK is focussing our increased and largest ever contribution to NATO in the Baltic region, in alignment with our leadership of the Joint Expeditionary Force. NATO's new significantly strengthened military posture bolsters our Eastern Flank, ensuring that every inch of Allied territory is defended. The UK fully supports Lithuania's implementation of EU sanctions against Russia and commends Lithuania's robust stance in deterring aggressors worldwide.

■ **Melilla: Politics and Government**

Dan Carden:

[\[27716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her (a) Spanish and (b) Moroccan counterparts following the recent death of 23 migrants in Melilla.

James Cleverly:

Senior officials at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office have spoken to the relevant authorities in Spain and Morocco regarding the incident. We welcome the decision of both authorities to carry out investigations.

■ Montenegro: Russia

Jim Shannon:

[\[25853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with her Montenegrin counterpart on protecting that country from potential Russian aggression in that region.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary wrote to Montenegrin Foreign Minister Krivokapic this week, underlining that we stand together as NATO Allies with clear shared values underpinning our aligned positions across defence, security and foreign policy, in particular as we respond to Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

The Prime Minister and his Montenegrin counterpart in London last July agreed to continue to work closely together to counter Russia's malign activity. Last month, when the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for the Western Balkans, Sir Stuart Peach, met Prime Minister Abazovic and Foreign Minister Krivokapic in Montenegro, he emphasised continuing UK support in tackling Russian influence, including through strengthening cyber security and countering disinformation.

■ National Security Council

John Healey:

[\[26694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many meetings of the National Security Council she has attended since April 2022.

James Cleverly:

The National Security Council is a committee of the Cabinet. It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

■ Nigeria: Christianity

Carla Lockhart:

[\[26052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, in the context of the killing of church worshippers in the town of Owo, Ondo State on 5 June, what discussions she has had with the Nigerian authorities on steps they are taking to prevent further similar incidents in (a) the Christian-majority south and (b) other areas of Nigeria.

Vicky Ford:

Increasing insecurity across Nigeria is having a devastating impact on affected communities. I [the Minister for Africa] publicly condemned the attack on a church in Owo, Ondo State, stressing the importance of those responsible being brought to justice. All religious communities should be able to practise their faith without fear. It is clear that religious identity can be a factor in incidents of violence in Nigeria. Both Christian and Muslim communities have been victims of violence. The

root causes of violence are complex, and in the case of intercommunal violence, frequently relate to competition over resources, historical grievances and criminality.

I [the Minister for Africa] regularly discuss insecurity in Nigeria with the Nigerian authorities, and we are committed to working with Nigeria to help them respond. At the first dialogue of our Security and Defence partnership in February, we agreed to work together to respond to security challenges across the country, including serious and organised crime, kidnaps and terrorism. The UK Government will continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence, whilst also ensuring Freedom of Religion or Belief for all.

■ Nigeria: Politics and Government

Ruth Jones: [\[26003\]](#)

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

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government follows political developments in Nigeria closely and has regular engagement with the Nigerian Government, political parties, civil society and religious institutions to discuss a range of issues, including security, the economy, trade, the environment and human rights. Nigeria is currently preparing for the February 2023 general elections, in which Nigerians will elect a new President. Through diplomatic engagement, cooperation with international partners and programmatic work, we will support the Nigerian government to deliver a free, fair and credible electoral process that represents the will of the Nigerian people.

■ Nigeria: Violence

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[25786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the efficacy of UK Government support for Nigerian policing and security services over the last 12 months in (a) preventing killings, kidnappings, and robberies, (b) protecting religious figures and sites from targeted attacks (c) preventing the arming of civilians by state governments, and (d) preventing vigilantism and revenge attacks.

Vicky Ford:

I [Minister Ford] regularly raise rising insecurity and its impact on the Nigerian people with the Nigerian authorities. During my February visit, I discussed this issue with the Vice President, Foreign Minister and several State Governors. I [Minister Ford] also discussed insecurity with National Security Advisor General Monguno, at our Security and Defence Dialogue in February.

Through our Security and Defence Partnership with Nigeria, we are working together to respond to rising insecurity, including kidnappings, criminality, and intercommunal violence. Examples of our support over the past 12 months include: supporting the

training of approximately 1100 members of the Nigerian Army on prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; supporting the delivery of a Protection of Civilians course for 30 officers from the Nigerian Army; and provision of mentoring and capacity-building support to 40 officers from the Anti-Kidnap Coordination Unit. We have also launched a UK supported "Strengthening the Delivery of Peace and Security in Nigeria" initiative, to support dialogue and peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected areas of Northern and Southern Nigeria.

We will continue to encourage and support the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence.

■ Swaziland: Human Rights

Chi Onwurah:

[\[26764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the (a) Trade Union Congress of Swaziland's complaint against the Government of Eswatini for violating conventions 87 and 89, (b) death of Mr. Sabelo Dlamini, a worker taking part in a Trade Union protest and (c) other attacks on trade unionists reported in that complaint; and what recent assessment she has made of the extent to which Swaziland meets the human rights requirements of the Commonwealth.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[26765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade on the (a) reported recent human rights violations in the Kingdom of Swaziland and (b) potential implications of those reports for (i) trade, (ii) overseas development aid and (iii) other relationships with that country.

Vicky Ford:

Following the violent confrontations in 2021, the UK remains disappointed by the lack of progress towards meaningful dialogue in Eswatini to address the restrictions on democratic and civil rights. The High Commissioner raised our concerns with His Majesty King Mswati III and senior Ministers earlier this month, and explored ways in which the UK and other international partners could facilitate constructive engagement. The Prime Minister also raised the political situation with the King at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Rwanda.

The International Labour Organisation has recently facilitated a bipartite dialogue between representatives of employers and workers to address outstanding questions of labour rights and mistreatment. This has provided a platform for constructive exchange and the High Commission is supporting efforts for further inclusive exchanges with other stakeholders.

■ Transcaucasus: Land Mines**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[28413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make it her policy to allocate additional resources to the United Nations Development Programme to support land mine clearance in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

James Cleverly:

On 30 June the UK Government announced an additional £500,000 of funding to support mine action in and around the areas worse effected by land mine and unexploded ordnance in Armenia and Azerbaijan. This funding takes the total contribution to over £1 million since the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and will be used to provide vital training to ensure those in the region are equipped with skills to tackle land mine and unexploded ordnance effectively. At this point, the UK Government cannot commit to further funding.

■ Ukraine: Armed Forces**Jim Shannon:**[\[25857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to support the Ukrainian armed forces with ensuring the safe return of any Ukrainian service personnel captured by the Russian armed forces.

James Cleverly:

As the parties to the war, the Ukrainian and Russian Governments are responsible for the treatment, exchange and release of their respective service personnel. The Ukrainian Government has made clear that all service personnel of the Ukrainian Armed Forces captured by Russia or Russian proxies have the rights of Prisoners of War. Prisoners of War must be treated in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, and care must be taken not to undermine the relevant mechanisms for the exchange of Prisoners of War. The Government is supportive of Ukraine's efforts on prisoner exchanges, including British Nationals detained in non-government held areas of Ukraine.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards****Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[27508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information NHS hospital emergency departments in England provide to his Department on people who have waited for more than 12 hours following arrival in emergency departments.

Edward Argar:

NHS Digital collects information from National Health Service providers on the number of patients waiting more than 12 hours from arrival in emergency

departments on an annual basis. NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently considering arrangements for publishing additional data on waiting times of more than 12 hours from arrival.

■ **Ambulance Services: Staffordshire**

Kate Griffiths: [\[19705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle ambulance handover delays at Royal Stoke University Hospital.

Kate Griffiths: [\[19706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help reduce ambulance response times in East Staffordshire.

Kate Griffiths: [\[19707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of enlisting help from Staffordshire Fire Service to reduce delays in ambulance response times in East Staffordshire.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and Improvement (NHSEI) advises that University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) have a range of measures in place to improve handover delays at Royal Stoke Hospital. These include the safe cohorting of patients which releases other crews to respond to new calls, direct referral of patients to Same Day Emergency Care, and the placement of Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers to improve the flow of patients and reduce handover delays.

Work by the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) to improve response times in East Staffordshire includes the introduction of a Clinical Validation Team comprising advanced paramedics working in control rooms, work to increase the proportion of calls closed over the phone or on scene, and maximising the use of alternative pathways to emergency departments. These interventions help to free up ambulance resource to respond to incoming calls more quickly, improving response times. There are also a range of national measures in place, including continuous central monitoring and support from the National Ambulance Coordination Centre, and NHSEI has allocated £150 million of additional system funding for ambulance service pressures in 2022/23, supporting improvements to response times through additional call handler recruitment, retention, and other funding pressures.

No such assessment will be made. Emergency service co-responding is a matter for local emergency services.

■ **Breast Cancer: Bedfordshire**

Rachel Hopkins: [\[20335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase uptake of breast cancer screening in (a) Luton South constituency, (b)

Luton Borough Council area and (c) Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes clinical commissioning group.

Maria Caulfield:

In Luton, an additional 251 breast screening appointments are being provided in July 2022, with further appointments on Saturdays continuing in August where possible. In the next three months, the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Breast Screening Service will revert from open to timed invitations to increase uptake. In West Hertfordshire, a trial has been introduced to re-invite women who did not attend or book an appointment during the pandemic. Following evaluation of this trial, a decision will be made to determine whether to deploy this approach in the region. In addition, four new screening vans with access lifts are being introduced to encourage uptake in women with mobility issues.

■ **Breast Cancer: Health Services**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[25975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to help ensure that people who present with breast cancer symptoms are seen by a specialist within two weeks of referral.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[25977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that breast cancer patients begin their treatment within a maximum of 62 days of an urgent GP referral.

Maria Caulfield:

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' states that the number of patients waiting more than 62 days to start treatment from an urgent referral for cancer will return to pre-pandemic levels by March 2023. We are providing more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to support the recovery of elective services, including cancer treatment. This is in addition to the existing £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund.

This investment is also supporting the launch of community diagnostic centres which will deliver additional capacity for co-ordinated diagnostic checks, enabling faster diagnosis on a range of a clinical pathways, including cancer.

■ **Coronavirus and Influenza: Diagnosis**

Daisy Cooper: [\[9162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to facilitate wider uptake of rapid point-of-care diagnostics in primary care settings in respect of covid-19 and influenza.

Daisy Cooper: [\[9163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what measures his Department is putting in place to help support primary care settings to quickly and effectively access diagnostic testing platforms as part of their approach to managing respiratory infections.

Daisy Cooper: [\[9164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to financially support local health systems to achieve greater uptake of rapid point-of-care diagnostics ahead of the forthcoming winter season.

Daisy Cooper: [\[9168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Academy of Medical Sciences report, COVID-19: Preparing for the future, what steps his Department is taking to integrate multiplex testing that can distinguish between SARS-CoV-2 and influenza in primary and community care settings to help to reduce the transmission of both viruses.

Maria Caulfield:

Throughout the pandemic, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has made COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and lateral flow device (LFD) tests available for primary care, as clinically required. The UKHSA continues to provide LFD and PCR testing for individuals in high-risk settings, including in primary and community care.

Multiplex testing is available to primary and community care services through National Health Service laboratories, which accelerates access to diagnostics and enables effective management of respiratory infections. While the UKHSA keeps the deployment of multiplex testing in primary care settings under review, there are no current plans for its provision in primary care settings.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Darren Henry:** [\[26875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that vulnerable and elderly people are protected while covid-19 continues to circulate.

Rachael Maskell: [\[27662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether support will be available for people who are extremely clinically vulnerable in the event that covid-19 cases rise in autumn 2022.

Maggie Throup:

On 1 April 2022, the Government issued updated public health advice for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19. This set out measures for this patient group, including additional doses of COVID-19 vaccinations, eligibility for targeted antivirals and other therapeutics and

guidance on protective behaviours. Those aged over 65 years old with symptoms who test positive for COVID-19 are eligible for pulse oximetry at home, which can enable timely hospital treatment if required. This is also available to people under 65 years old who are at higher risk or where clinical judgement applies.

Those aged over 75 years old have been eligible for an additional booster vaccination in spring 2022, including people in care homes for older people and also those aged 12 years old and over with a weakened immune system. On 19 May 2022, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on an autumn booster programme, which states that a COVID-19 vaccine should be offered in autumn 2022 to residents in a care home for older adults and staff; frontline health and social care workers; all those aged 65 years old and over; and adults aged 16 to 64 years old in a clinical risk group. The JCVI continues to review additional COVID-19 vaccinations for other groups and definitions of clinical risk groups. Its final advice on eligibility for the autumn programme will be available in due course. The Government continues to assess the current situation and the risks posed by COVID-19.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[22336]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2022 to Question 14409 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, whether the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) differentiates between coroners' reports which find vaccination to be the cause of death and those which cite vaccination as only a possible contributing factor of death; and if he will take steps to ensure that the outcomes of considerations by MHRA of coroners' reports are published.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) does not differentiate between Yellow Card reports according to the findings of any associated coroners' reports it receives. All information received, including coroners' reports, is considered through its signal detection and assessment process.

The MHRA has no plans to publish the information requested as it is provided confidentially by individuals and could identify those affected. However, for Coroner's Regulation 28 reports to prevent future deaths received by the MHRA, its responses to coroners which outline the assessment of the safety concern raised and any proposed actions, are published online by the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary at the following link:

<https://www.judiciary.uk/subject/prevention-of-future-deaths/>

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[25760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the covid-19 spring booster vaccine is available for vulnerable people.

Maggie Throup:

In line with advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, the spring booster vaccination programme has been available since 21 March 2022 for those aged 75 years old and over, residents of care homes for older adults and those who are immunosuppressed. As of 22 June 2022, more than four million people in England have received a booster dose.

Vaccination appointments have been available through NHS.UK and 119. Doses have been administered in thousands of vaccination sites and locally, the National Health Service has offered vaccinations in care homes and mobile vaccination sites. NHS England issued approximately 250,000 reminders for those eligible for the spring vaccination programme before the end of June 2022.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Staff**

Angela Rayner:

[\[26774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 18920 on Department of Health and Social Care: Protective Clothing, how many staff employed by the civil service report to (a) the three full-time equivalent and (b) the one 0.5 full-time equivalent staff referred to.

Edward Argar:

There are no members of staff reporting to the three full-time equivalent staff. There are 14 members of staff reporting to the one 0.5 full-time equivalent member of staff.

Angela Rayner:

[\[26775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many officials in his Department are employed to oversee the storage of personal protective equipment overseas.

Edward Argar:

There are 1.5 full-time equivalent members of staff overseeing the storage of personal protective equipment overseas.

■ **Drugs: Regulation**

Chris Green:

[\[18937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency intends to publish guidance on a hybrid regulatory pathway for non-biological complex drugs.

Edward Argar:

All medicines are licenced in accordance with The Human Medicines Regulations 2012. The European Union's guidance adopted by the United Kingdom's medicines legislation remains applicable and addresses aspects relevant to types of non-biological complex drugs.

Due to the potential range of these products, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is not currently developing general guidance for complex non-biological products. Data requirements vary on a case-by-case basis and bespoke regulatory and scientific advice is available through the MHRA's innovation office or its scientific advice meetings. The MHRA also facilitates development and access to innovative medicines for specific public health needs via the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway.

■ Electronic Cigarettes: Health Hazards

Alexander Stafford: [\[26929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made about the potential negative health effects of smoking disposable e-cigarettes.

Alexander Stafford: [\[26930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people (a) in total, (b) under the age of 18 and (c) who have never smoked cigarettes that were hospitalised with symptoms stemming from the use of e-cigarettes in the last year.

Maggie Throup:

Although not risk free, e-cigarettes or vapes, including disposables, are less harmful than smoked tobacco. A Cochrane Review, 'Electronic cigarettes for smoking cessation', found that the rate of adverse events reported for vapes is similar to that of nicotine replacement therapy. This Review is available at the following link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD010216.pub6/full>

Through the current Tobacco Control Plan for England, the former Public Health England commissioned annual independent reports on vaping in England. The final report in this series will be published by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities shortly. The report will include systematic reviews of the respiratory, cardiovascular and cancer risks from vaping, in addition to reports on the risks from fires, explosions and poisonings.

Any suspected adverse drug reaction (ADR) occurring after using a vaping product is reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). From 22 September 2020 to 22 September 2021, the MHRA received 50 suspected ADR reports associated with vaping use, with one report concerning an individual under the age of 18 years old. There have been seven reports concerning those aged under 18 years old in the last four years.

■ Evusheld

Feryal Clark: [\[18094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the results of testing by the UKHSA on Evusheld's effectiveness against the Omicron variant will be published.

Maggie Throup:

AstraZeneca commissioned the UK Health Strategic Authority to undertake testing into the effectiveness on Evusheld against the Omicron variants. Initial data has been shared with AstraZeneca.

The Department is assessing of Evusheld, which includes requesting clinicians to advise on the most appropriate option for the National Health Service in line with available data, the public health situation and alongside other treatments available. As we are currently considering this advice, we are unable to confirm a specific timetable for the decision.

■ Evusheld: Testing

Andrew Gwynne: [\[21130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the additional testing of Evusheld has now been completed.

Maggie Throup:

AstraZeneca commissioned the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to undertake testing into the effectiveness of Evusheld against the Omicron variants. Initial data on testing against the BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron variants has been shared with AstraZeneca.

■ General Practitioners

Rachael Maskell: [\[26802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to ensure that patients who prefer to see the same GP for each visit are able to do so for (a) in person and (b) virtual consultations.

Maria Caulfield:

Patient can request to see a specific general practitioner (GP) for an appointment, including their named accountable GP. Practices must endeavour to comply with all reasonable requests made by patients to see a particular practitioner. Authorised family members also have the same rights to do so.

In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement's guidance states that a patient's input into consultation type should be sought and practices should respect preferences for face-to-face or remote consultation, unless there are good clinical reasons to the contrary.

■ Health Professions: Racial Discrimination

Chi Onwurah: [\[25851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recommendation in the British Medical Association's report entitled, Delivering Racial Equality in Medicine, what steps his Department is taking to help improve the complaints procedure for incidents of workplace racism in medical settings.

Chi Onwurah: [\[26763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to improve the complaints procedure for incidents of workplace racism in medical settings, as recommended in the British Medical Association's report entitled Delivering racial equality in medicine, published in June 2022.

Edward Argar:

Formal complaints procedures are conducted at individual National Health Service trust and provider level. Through the NHS People Plan, NHS England and NHS Improvement have launched a training programme for Freedom to Speak Up Guardians to improve understanding of inequality experienced by ethnic minority staff and to seek their views.

■ Health Services: Foreign Nationals

Kate Green: [\[R\] \[26760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the report on the Policy Assessment on the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations.

Kate Green: [\[26761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department's assessment of the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2020 includes consideration of those Regulations' impact on (a) all equalities groups and (b) the health access and outcomes of Black Asian and minority ethnic pregnant women and new mothers; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

There are currently no plans to publish a report relating to the internal policy assessment on these Regulations. The Department is considering the emerging evidence to ensure that the policy continues to protect National Health Service resources, while maintaining a humanitarian approach to the provision of healthcare. This assessment considers the effect on the most vulnerable migrants and overseas visitors, pregnant women and new mothers, as well as destitute migrants. It also focussed on ensuring that we continue to meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 with regards to individuals or groups with protected characteristics, including but not limited to race, disability, sex and gender and maternity.

■ Health: North West**Sir George Howarth:**[\[24544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to tackle health disparities in (a) the North West and (b) Merseyside in the Health Disparities White Paper.

Maggie Throup:

The forthcoming health disparities white paper will consider the factors which influence health inequalities, including in areas with poorer health outcomes. The specific content of the white paper will be available in due course.

■ Health: Screening**Rachael Maskell:**[\[26803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing regular checks to screen everyone over 40 years old for certain health conditions.

Maria Caulfield:

The existing NHS Health Check programme aims to prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cases of dementia and kidney disease among adults aged between 40 to 74 years old. NHS Health Checks are offered to eligible people every five years. National Health Service screening programmes for those aged over 40 years old aim to identify healthy people who may have an increased chance of a particular disease or condition.

Women are routinely offered breast screening from their 50th to 71st birthday and cervical screening from the age of 24.5 to 64 years old. Bowel cancer screening is routinely available to everyone aged 60 to 74 years old, with the NHS currently implementing this screening for those aged between 50 to 74 years old. There are also regular eye checks for people with diabetes from the age of 12 years old and over and men receive a one-off abdominal aortic aneurism screen at the time of their 65th birthday.

■ Learning Disability: Health Services**Rushanara Ali:**[\[24592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the Building the right support national plan.

Gillian Keegan:

We plan to publish the Building the right support action plan shortly. A publication date has not yet been confirmed.

■ Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust: Doctors and Nurses**Jon Trickett:** [\[26700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made for the number of (a) doctors and (b) nurses working in Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Edward Argar:

The latest available data in March 2022 shows there were 810 full-time equivalent (FTE) doctors and 1,700 FTE nurses working in the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

■ Monkeypox: Vaccination**Wes Streeting:** [\[25938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when NHS England will publish its guidance on monkeypox vaccinations.

Maggie Throup:

On 21 June 2022, the UK Health Security Agency published a specific vaccine strategy which recommends that gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men at higher risk of exposure to monkeypox should be offered the vaccine. Vaccines are also being offered to at risk healthcare workers.

On 23 June, NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance for the operational delivery of vaccination for monkeypox. NHS England's regional teams will work with systems and partners to establish locally appropriate services to offer pre-exposure vaccination to those at greatest risk.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[26718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many doses of Imvanex were administered in the last month.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive.

The UKHSA has purchased more than 20,000 doses of Imvanex. On 21 June 2022, the UKHSA recommended that gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men at higher risk of exposure to monkeypox should be offered the vaccine. Vaccines are also being offered to at-risk healthcare workers. Several thousand doses have been distributed, while remaining doses are retained centrally. The UKHSA has sufficient supply to meet current needs and is working with suppliers to procure additional doses if necessary.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[26719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many individuals who have been identified as being at a higher risk of exposure to monkeypox have been offered vaccines as of 28 June 2022.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive.

The UKHSA has purchased over 20,000 doses of the safe smallpox vaccine Imvanex. Vaccines are being offered to gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men at higher risk of exposure to monkeypox. This cohort is expected to be in the tens of thousands, with eligibility dependent on specific criteria and a clinician's assessment of a person's risk level. Risk criteria would include a recent history of multiple partners, participating in group sex, attending sex on premises venues or a proxy marker such as recent bacterial sexually transmitted infection within the past year. Several thousand doses have been distributed, while remaining doses are retained centrally. The UKHSA has sufficient supply to meet current needs and are working with suppliers to procure additional doses if necessary.

Andrew Gwynne:**[26720]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to give people who are at risk of contracting monkeypox access to the Modified Vaccinia Ankara – Bavarian Nordic smallpox vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

On 21 June 2022, the UK Health Security Agency published a vaccine strategy which recommends that gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men who are at higher risk of exposure to monkeypox should be offered a smallpox vaccine, Modified Vaccinia Ankara. The strategy is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/monkeypox-outbreak-vaccination-strategy>

Vaccines are also offered to at-risk healthcare and laboratory workers.

Andrew Gwynne:**[27555]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many individuals will be eligible for the Imvanex smallpox vaccine to protect against monkeypox infection.

Maggie Throup:

On 21 June 2022, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) published a targeted vaccine strategy which recommends that gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men at higher risk of exposure to monkeypox should be offered the vaccine, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/monkeypox-outbreak-vaccination-strategy>

The UKHSA anticipates that the number of people in this cohort will be in the tens of thousands. Vaccines are also being offered to healthcare workers at the highest risk of exposure, including those who care for patients with suspected or confirmed monkeypox in High Consequence Infectious Disease units and sexual health centres and staff regularly undertaking environmental decontamination. While post-exposure vaccination is also recommended in specific circumstances, these individuals will be identified and contacted directly.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[27556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his department plans on procuring additional doses of Imvanex.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has purchased more than 20,000 doses of Imvanex, with sufficient supply to meet current needs. However, the UKHSA is working with suppliers to procure additional doses should it be necessary.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[27557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to contact individuals who are eligible for the Imvanex smallpox vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

NHS England will provide further information on vaccination for eligible individuals in due course. On 21 June 2022, the UK Health Security Agency published a targeted vaccine strategy which recommends that gay and bisexual men and men who have sex with men at higher risk of exposure to monkeypox should be offered the vaccine outbreak. Vaccines are also being offered to at-risk healthcare workers.

■ NHS: Car Allowances

Seema Malhotra: [\[26771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of higher fuel costs on NHS staff using their own vehicles to travel to patients; and whether he plans to support NHS staff with any additional fuel costs.

Edward Argar:

The reimbursement of travel costs for community nurses and other National Health Service staff is addressed by the NHS Terms and Conditions, jointly agreed by employers and the NHS trades unions. The current rate for staff who use their vehicles to make journeys in the performance of their duties is 56 pence per mile, above the HM Revenue and Customs' approved mileage rate of 45 pence per mile. This rate reduces after 3,500 miles to 20 pence per mile. The NHS Terms and Conditions sets out the process for reviewing the rate of reimbursement every six months, including reviewing fluctuations in fuel prices.

The NHS Staff Council recently published a statement to facilitate local discussions on temporary options, which is available at the following link:

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

The statement includes a commitment for the NHS Staff Council to write to the Department to seek a remit to undertake and set out the scope for a possible review. We will respond in due course.

■ NHS: Private Sector

Jon Trickett: [\[26703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the total number of operations paid for by the National Health Service that were performed in private hospitals in (a) 2015 and (b) 2021.

Jon Trickett: [\[26704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the total number of patients who have received treatment funded by the National Health Service through private hospitals in (a) 2015 and (b) 2021.

Edward Argar:

No specific estimate has been made as this data is not collected in the format requested.

■ NHS: Retirement

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[26715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the NHS is taking to process the backlog of retirement applications of NHS workers, so that former NHS staff can access their retirement benefits as soon as possible.

Edward Argar:

The NHS Business Services Authority, which administers the NHS Pension Scheme, received an increase in retirement applications for April 2022 compared to the previous year. While the majority of applications were processed within the timeframes expected, some delays were experienced due to the need for complex manual calculations. The volume of applications has returned to the levels usually received, although as the majority of staff currently retiring have benefits in both the 1995/2008 and the 2015 schemes, more manual calculations are still required.

The NHS Business Services Authority has increased the number of staff available to undertake these calculations and issued guidance to scheme employers to ensure that members are informed of the progress of their application prior to the employer submitting their application. Where manual calculations are required, as the member has the option of receiving the smaller 2015 Scheme pension as a lump sum, the NHS Business Services Authority is limiting any financial impact by ensuring 1995/2008 Scheme benefits are paid immediately, while options for payment of 2015 Scheme benefits are discussed with the member. This ensures the payment of the majority of a member's benefits is not delayed.

■ NHS: Waiting Lists

Rachael Maskell: [\[26801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to areas of healthcare provision which have significant waiting lists for treatment, whether he is taking steps to (a) arrange for the provision of fast-track clinics and (b) ensure that people

receive the necessary tests and assessments to identify how urgently they require treatment.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[26804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing pilots of intense health interventions to help clear the treatment backlog in the NHS.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service is reviewing policies on waiting list management to prioritise patients with the most urgent conditions to receive rapid diagnosis and treatment and address any inequalities.

We have announced an additional £1.5 billion for the recovery of elective services, including developing surgical hubs and £2.3 billion to increase the volume of diagnostic activity and reduce patient waiting times. This aims to launch up to 160 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) in the next three years. Following successful pilots in London, further surgical hubs will be launched to increase surgical capacity. The expansion of CDCs will ensure approximately 37.9% additional capacity for magnetic resonance imaging, 44.7% for computerised tomography, 26.8% for ultrasound, 23.1% for echocardiography and 18.7% in endoscopy by March 2025, compared to pre-pandemic levels. Existing CDCs have delivered over one million additional checks to date.

■ Pharmacy: Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[26805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of empowering pharmacists to conduct wider health interventions.

Maria Caulfield:

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) 2019-2024 sets out the ambition for community pharmacy to be better integrated in the National Health Service, provide more clinical services and contribute to improving public health and prevention.

Under the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, staff in general practices and NHS 111 can refer patients to community pharmacies for advice and treatment of minor illnesses. The Blood Pressure Checks Service enables community pharmacists to identify undiagnosed cases of hypertension in the community and offer blood pressure checks. Under the Discharge Medicines Service, hospitals can refer patients recently discharged to a community pharmacist for support with their medication. All pharmacies are now also Healthy Living Pharmacies and have trained Health Champions on site who engage in local community outreach to improve health and reduce health inequalities. We are currently negotiating with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on the expanded and additional services to be introduced in the fourth year of the CPCF.

■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[26689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 16826, whether the reference numbers given to individual applications under the vaccine damage payments scheme are in the public domain; and by what means an hon. Member can obtain information about the progress of a constituent's case where the constituent has given specific authority for that information to be sought through the use of a Parliamentary question with the case being identified only by its reference number.

Maggie Throup:

Individual reference numbers are not in the public domain as these are classed as personal data from which a claimant could be identified. The NHS Business Services Authority is updating all claimants on progress. A claimant may receive further updates on their claim by contacting the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme at the NHS Business Services Authority.

A claimant may also provide a representative with the authority to act on their behalf and receive updates on their claim by providing written confirmation to the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme at the NHS Business Services Authority. This process ensures sensitive information is protected and remains confidential.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[26690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 22335 on Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme, in what format information is available on the number of claims which have been concluded which does not incur the risk that an individual claimant might be identified as a result.

Maggie Throup:

Weekly information on the number of concluded cases could risk claimants being identified as these numbers are low and when combined with other information which may be in the public domain or reasonably available.

As of 30 June, the NHS Business Services Authority has submitted 105 claims containing full medical records for assessment to Crawford and Company, with 12 claims now fully concluded.

HOME OFFICE

■ Anti-social Behaviour

Hilary Benn:

[\[27540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) civil injunctions, (b) criminal behaviour orders, (c) dispersal orders, (d) community protection notices and (e) orders for recovery of possession of dwelling houses were issued for anti-social behaviour in England in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides a range of flexible tools and powers to local agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour. Local areas decide how best to deploy these powers depending on the specific circumstances.

The Home Office does not collect information on civil injunctions, criminal behaviour orders, dispersal orders, community protection notices and orders for recovery of possession of dwelling houses, but this information will be held by individual police forces.

Asylum

Anne McLaughlin: [\[24609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion asylum seekers have been allocated an initial screening appointment as of 24 June 2022.

Anne McLaughlin: [\[24610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time it takes is between an asylum seeker applying for an initial screening interview and them receiving one.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 29 June 2022]: The Nationality and Borders Act (NABA) became law on 28 April 2022. This new, ground-breaking legislation replaces a decades old system. It will deter illegal entry into the UK, breaking the business model of people-smuggling networks, and speed up the removal of those with no right to be in the UK. This will free up the asylum system so we can better support those in genuine need of asylum through safe and legal routes.

At the same time, we are investing in a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives to speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the asylum system and decrease the number of people who are awaiting an interview or decision.

On the 24 June 2022, 466 had asylum screening appointments scheduled, which was 11.5% of those awaiting an appointment. Since 28 June 2022, the National Asylum Intake Unit will schedule 65% of appointments within 10 days of registering an asylum claim.

Asylum: Applications

Layla Moran: [\[26840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the annual cost to the public purse is of employing one person to process asylum claims; and what the total cost to the public purse is of processing one asylum claim.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office are unable to report what the annual cost to the public is of employing one person to process asylum claims and what the total cost to the public purse is of processing one asylum claim as this information is not held in a reportable format.

However the home office do routinely publish information on the total cost and breakdown of Asylum costs and productivity and can be found at Asy_04:

[Immigration and protection data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-and-protection-data-q1-2022)

These include the costs of managing asylum operations claim including costs associated with deciding a case (screening clients, interviews and issuing a decision), managing any related appeal, the cost of all asylum operations support (S4, S95 & S98), detention costs where detention has been used and enforcement costs (escorting and assisted voluntary returns). Also included are the costs of department staff and buildings and the proportionate costs of the Home Office building and managerial costs.

■ Asylum: Asylum: Applications**Sam Tarry:****[24692]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what was the average waiting time for asylum applicants to receive an interview in each of the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office is unable to state what the average waiting time is for an asylum interview in each of the last 12 months because this information is not held in a reportable format, not routinely published and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

However, the Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration, for main applicants only. This data can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics: List of tables - GOV.UK ([List of tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-list-of-tables)).

■ Asylum: Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre**Layla Moran:****[26841]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of the asylum seekers housed at Campsfield House had their claims approved in each of the last five years before its closure.

Kevin Foster:

The contract to run Campsfield House immigration removal centre ended in May 2019 and the Home Office decided not to extend or re-tender the contract at that time.

Prior to the centre's closure it was used to detain those facing deportation or removal from the UK. It was not used as asylum accommodation to house people seeking asylum.

■ Asylum: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry: [\[24705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the report by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration entitled An inspection of contingency asylum accommodation, published on 12 May 2022, what assessment she has made of the potential implications of the report for Northern Ireland; and whether her Department plans to implement the recommendations of the report in Northern Ireland.

Kevin Foster:

The department has reviewed the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report internally to understand the impacts of this for our teams and providers and their respective regions, and work on realising the recommendations put forth is already underway.

The recommendations are estate wide and the department will work to ensure they are followed throughout the entirety of the UK through the well-established assurance and project governance structures, alongside relevant recommendations from previous reports.

Stephen Farry: [\[24707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children asylum seekers placed in dispersal accommodation in Northern Ireland have (a) retained and (b) secured a new school placement since June 2021.

Stephen Farry: [\[24709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children asylum seekers have been assessed for special or additional educational needs in each of the last 12 months.

Stephen Farry: [\[24713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children asylum seekers were eligible for a school place, including pre-school education places, in the school year 2021-22 in Northern Ireland by age; and what proportion of those children have successfully taken up and attended school placements.

Kevin Foster:

Our accommodation provider Mears ensure accommodation for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland who would otherwise be destitute. Our accommodation provider cooperates closely with the NI Department for Communities and the Housing Executive.

School eligibility would be a matter for the NI Department of Education.

Stephen Farry: [\[24710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers in Northern Ireland have been registered with a GP in the last year by age group.

Stephen Farry: [\[24711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers in Northern Ireland have been seen by a health visitor in the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not hold this data as supported asylum seekers are under no obligation to inform us they have registered with a GP and health is a matter for the Devolved Administration in Northern Ireland.

Stephen Farry: [\[24715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ensure that asylum seekers in Northern Ireland who are (a) children, (b) seriously ill and (c) disabled are prioritised for (i) appropriate dispersal accommodation and (ii) access to services in the last 12 months.

Stephen Farry: [\[24716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the dispersal of asylum accommodation provision across Northern Ireland.

Stephen Farry: [\[24717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to address asylum seekers' complaints on contingency accommodation in Northern Ireland.

Stephen Farry: [\[24718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to address asylum seekers' complaints on food provided in contingency accommodation across the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office requires clear standards from our accommodation providers, who are expected to conduct regular checks across the asylum estate.

Asylum seekers who are (a) children, (b) seriously unwell and (c) disabled are priorities for moves to dispersal accommodation, but it is a contractual requirement all service users are accommodated in accommodation appropriate to their needs.

Service Delivery Managers speak daily with providers about operational delivery and performance. In response to the global pandemic, officials also have formal weekly meetings to ensure individuals are housed safely, services are delivered in line with their contractual obligations and with adherence to guidance from UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and where appropriate Department for Health & Social Care (DHSC) is followed.

Asylum seekers can also raise specific issues or concerns about their accommodation through the 24/7 Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) service operated via Migrant Help.

In addition to the provision of Advice and Guidance services described in the contracts, Migrant Help's role includes acting as the main contact point for all Service User complaints, reports of issues and requests for assistance. Service Users are able to contact Migrant Help 24/7 by telephone, webchat or email, and there are strict service level agreements in place to resolving contacts, dependent on issue type. With regards to complaints specifically, providers are contractually obligated to respond to Service User complaints within 5 working days of receipt. In the rare event that this timeframe is not honoured, or where a Service User is dissatisfied with the response received, the complaint is escalated to the Authority for comprehensive review and response. Where a complaint is upheld, the information is shared with the departments Service Delivery Managers for discussion at CMG with the providers to influence continuous improvement to the service provided. The complaints data is regularly monitored and analysed to identify trends in issues and feedback which can further enhance these conversations and maintain standards.

To further understand Service Users experience of the service, the department offers a series of customer surveys in collaboration with the ASC and AIRE providers. The surveys are 100% anonymous, available 24/7, and provide coverage of both Dispersal Accommodation and Initial Accommodation estates nationally, including all forms of contingency. The feedback is collated on a quarterly basis and used to inform improvement activity, with regular review of associated activity recorded and reviewed at the monthly CMG forums. The Department and our providers have been actively promoting the surveys across our service users to ensure awareness and drive response rates, and for Quarter 3 (March – May 2022) in excess of 8,000 responses were received for the ASC providers alone.

Within contingency accommodation, Service Users are provided with three culturally and nutritionally appropriate meals a day on a menu rotation, which typically includes a continental breakfast, lunch and evening meals, with a choice of a minimum of one hot and one cold selection, as well as a vegetarian option. Fresh fruit and other snacks are also made available to all throughout the day. Babies and small children are also provided with appropriate foodstuffs and additional provisions on demand. Appropriate options will be provided for any Service Users with special dietary, cultural or religious requirements and availability of these specialist provisions are covered within the contract requirements.

Northern Ireland does not form part of the asylum dispersal system currently, however my officials are working with the Northern Ireland Executive to identify how they can contribute to this UK wide challenge in terms of procuring sufficient accommodation.

■ Asylum: Temporary Accommodation**Stephen Farry:**[\[24704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 May 2022 to Question 2591 on Asylum: Temporary Accommodation and with reference to the correspondence of 13 April 2022 from her Department to local authorities on Full Dispersal, whether her Department has provided guidance to the Northern Ireland Executive on that matter; and if she will make it her policy to publish all guidance provided by her Department to the Northern Ireland Executive in the Library.

Kevin Foster:

The asylum accommodation system is under enormous pressure because of the significant and sustained increase in asylum intake over the last 12 months and the build-up of the population as a result of Covid-19 related measures.

On 13 April 2022 I announced the Home Office would move, with immediate effect, to a full dispersal model for the procurement of asylum accommodation in England, Scotland and Wales to allow us to move from hotels to less expensive and more suitable dispersed accommodation. The arrangements for asylum accommodation are different in Northern Ireland as Northern Ireland does not form part of the asylum dispersal system.

My officials are working with the Northern Ireland Executive to identify how they can contribute to this UK wide challenge. Officials met on 26 May 2022 to commence planning and have a follow up meeting scheduled for 28 June 2022 to discuss how Full Dispersal in Northern Ireland will work.

Relevant guidance will be published on GOV.UK to support local authorities under Full Asylum Dispersal.

Stephen Farry:[\[24706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the average length of stay of asylum seekers in contingency accommodation in Northern Ireland; and what steps she is taking to ensure that contingency accommodation is used for short-term stays only.

Stephen Farry:[\[24719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to (a) end the use of hotel buildings for contingency asylum accommodation and (b) procure additional and appropriate dispersal accommodation in Northern Ireland.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office monitors the length of stay in Initial Accommodation and Contingency Accommodation on a regular basis.

The asylum accommodation system is under enormous pressure because of the significant and sustained increase in asylum intake over the last 12 months and the build-up of the population as a result of Covid-19 related measures. This has resulted in over 25,000 asylum seekers being accommodated in temporary contingency

accommodation, such as hotels. This is not acceptable; it is not fair on the taxpayers, and it does not offer the right solution for communities or those seeking asylum; it must change.

I therefore wrote to all Local Authorities on 13 April 2022 to set out plans for Full Dispersal. This will reduce and then eliminate the use of hotels for asylum seekers by moving to a full dispersal model for asylum accommodation. This will mean expanding our existing approach of using private rental sector housing to all local authority areas across England, Scotland and Wales.

The arrangements for asylum accommodation are different in Northern Ireland as Northern Ireland does not form part of the asylum dispersal system.

My officials are working with the Northern Ireland Executive to identify how they can contribute to this UK wide challenge.

■ **Bicycles and Electric Scooters: Flats**

Tim Farron:

[\[25795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to include (a) guidance on and (b) specific reference to the storing and charging of e-bikes and e-scooters in the Government's planned update to Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats.

Kit Malthouse:

The Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats guide is currently being updated and we will shortly be launching a stakeholder engagement exercise seeking views on the revised version.

The guide includes a section on electrical hazards and specific reference to mobility scooters but there are no plans at present to include specific reference to the storing and charging of e-bikes and e-scooters. We would welcome views through the stakeholder engagement exercise on the content of the guide and any new or emerging issues that stakeholders would like to see included within it.

■ **Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre**

Layla Moran:

[\[27717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total cost to the public purse of the procurement process for the contract to manage Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre has been to date; and what estimate she has made of the total expected cost of that procurement process.

Tom Pursglove:

The information sought would only be available at disproportionate cost.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Pay

Beth Winter:

[\[26886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the impact of the two per cent pay offer made by fire and rescue services National Employers to the Fire Brigades Union on 27 June for the 2022-23 pay round on (a) industrial relations with firefighters and (b) firefighter recruitment and retention.

Kit Malthouse:

Firefighters' pay in England is the responsibility of the National Joint Council and Central Government has no role to play in this process.

The Home Office funds the National Fire Chiefs' Council's People Programme which supports the recruitment and retention of firefighters.

■ Hate Crime: Disability

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[26822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the trends in the level of disability hate crime in Wales in the last three years.

Rachel Maclean:

All forms of hate crime are completely unacceptable. We have a robust legislative framework to respond to hate crimes which target race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity, and the Hate Crime Action Plan has improved the response to all forms of hate crime, including disability hate crime.

Increases in police recorded hate crime are generally driven by improvements in crime recording and a better indication of what constitutes a hate crime. Recorded disability hate crime has increased in both Wales and England over the past three years.

This may be due to a genuine increase in these crimes, or due to police force improvements in their recording of offences and identification of what constitutes hate crime.

■ Members: Correspondence

Louise Haigh:

[\[25936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 20 June 2022 from the hon. Member for Sheffield Heeley, reference LH20974.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the Hon. Member's correspondence on 28 June 2022.

■ North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Rachael Maskell: [\[27646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with representatives of the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service in each of the last 12 months.

Kit Malthouse:

Home Office officials and Ministers are in regular contact with all fire and rescue authorities on a wide range of issues.

■ Passports: Applications

Sarah Olney: [\[26827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications are (a) outstanding and (b) remain unprocessed for more than ten weeks as of 28 June 2022.

Kevin Foster:

Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks when applying for their British passport as more than 5 million people delayed applying due to the pandemic.

Between March and May, 98.5% of UK applications processed were completed within ten weeks.

■ Police

Florence Eshalomi: [\[27767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which police forces in the UK are currently under special measures.

Kit Malthouse:

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) independently and continuously assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of every police force in England and Wales. Forces are escalated into an enhanced monitoring phase, 'Engage' on the basis of HMI concerns over their ability to address areas of significant and/or longstanding underperformance.

Forces in the engage phase of monitoring attend the Policing Performance Oversight Group (PPOG), comprising senior stakeholders from the College of Policing, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, National Police Chief's Council and the Home Office, to provide the constructive support and challenge needed to address those areas of underperformance which are a cause for concern.

Chief Constables of 'engaged' forces are expected to present a comprehensive improvement plan to PPOG, which meets regularly to consider the progress being made and to support the force to address the failings identified. Forces are moved

back into the 'Scan' phase of monitoring only when HMICFRS is satisfied that sufficient and sustained improvement has been made.

Out of 43 forces in England and Wales, there are currently six forces in 'engage': Cleveland, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, the Metropolitan Police Service, Staffordshire and Wiltshire.

■ Public Sector: Crimes of Violence

Alex Cunningham:

[\[27594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will publish an (a) economic and (b) equality impact assessment of section 156 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.

Kit Malthouse:

Section 156 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduces a statutory aggravating factor for assaults committed against those providing a public service, performing a public duty or providing a service to the public.

The public facing nature of the victim's role will therefore be considered an aggravating factor when it comes to sentencing for assault offences. This will send a very strong signal that assaults of this kind are totally unacceptable. This Government wants to ensure those who are serving the public can feel protected from abuse when working. The provision commenced on 28 June 2022.

The economic impact assessment for the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 will be published in due course. An equality impact assessment was published on introduction of the Bill. There are no plans to update the assessment.

■ Social Services: Recruitment

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[27629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of requiring all recruiting agencies in the care sector to register with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority in order to obtain a licence to operate.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government takes reports of illegal and unsafe employment practices, including in the social care sector, incredibly seriously. Enforcement bodies, including the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, will take full and robust enforcement action in such cases.

The direction for the three labour market enforcement bodies is set out by the Director of Labour Market Enforcement in her annual strategy. The strategy includes an assessment of the highest risk sectors, which enables the enforcement bodies to target their activity in areas of greatest concern. The Government is guided by the annual strategy and considers appropriate policy interventions for sectors identified at highest risk, such as expanding the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority's licensing scheme to the care sector and will keep this under review. It is imperative

that we have a strong evidence base in considering policies that will best protect vulnerable workers and drive-up standards. The Director of Labour Market Enforcement will continue to monitor sectors at risk.

Furthermore, the 2019 manifesto included a commitment for the Government to continue its campaigns to eradicate the scourge of modern slavery. We will continue our leadership in tackling modern slavery including labour exploitation.

■ **Sri Lanka: Keenie Meenie Services**

Claudia Webbe: [\[24702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Home Office, what progress has been made on the investigation of Keenie Meenie Services in relation to alleged war crimes in Sri Lanka.

Kit Malthouse:

It would not be appropriate to comment on ongoing investigations.

■ **TLScontact: Contracts**

Caroline Lucas: [\[24575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2022 to Question 14463 on Visas: Ukraine, if she will make an assessment of whether TLS has met the terms of the service level agreement (SLA) in the last 12 months; whether cases raised by hon. Members on (a) errors and (b) delays are recorded as breaches of the SLA; whether her Department has taken recent steps to help tackle delays in the processing of applications at TLS; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

This year, TLS' overall performance of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) is good, with the year average for the key Critical Service Levels (CSLs), appointment availability, turnaround times and biometric capture, all within SLA.

We hold Monthly Performance Calls with TLS to assess their performance in line with SLA within the contract. This will include any errors and delays that are highlighted during the monthly reporting cycle. When we are advised of any errors and delays, these are substantiated and recorded against the contractual SLAs.

If TLS are found to be in breach of the SLA, a financial service credit will apply and remedial action taken. As noted, TLS are currently meeting the key CSLs which may impact on delays, and we continue to work with them to ensure there are sufficient appointments and services available to customers

■ **UK Visas and Immigration: Correspondence**

John Penrose: [\[25792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when UK Visas and Immigration plans to reply to correspondence from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare of 3 and 30 May on behalf of constituent Charles Idowu.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 28 June 2022.

■ **UK Visas and Immigration: Staff**

Sam Tarry: [24686]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are employed in the UK Visas and Immigration MP's correspondence team.

Kevin Foster:

There are 106 people employed in UK Visas and Immigration's MPs correspondence team.

■ **Visas: Applications**

Sam Tarry: [24689]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many super priority visa service applications have exceeded her Department's target timeframe for a response.

Sam Tarry: [24690]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how long it takes on average for her Department to make a decision on an application for a super priority visa.

Kevin Foster:

Information on our immigration routes with service standards and whether they have been processed against these standards is available as part of our transparency data and can be found at: [Visas and Citizenship data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/data-requests/visas-and-citizenship-data-q1-2022)

■ **Visas: Ukraine**

Mr Laurence Robertson: [27509]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will open a help-line for individuals to use to check on the progress of their applications for visas for people coming to the UK from Ukraine; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

UKVI already have a dedicated Ukraine helpline in place to support enquiries for those applying under the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The helpline can provide information on eligibility and the application process, and in cases of concern can escalate to teams who can look at the full case history and establish any issues.

We are currently reviewing the options and feasibility around offering a status checking option, these considerations are currently ongoing.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Exports: Bolton South East**

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[23257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many businesses her Department has supported to increase exports in Bolton South East constituency since July 2016.

Mike Freer:

We are unable to publish a breakdown of the number of companies The Department for International Trade has helped by constituency. Export support for businesses in Bolton is provided through our Northern Powerhouse regional team. Of the £38m Internationalisation Fund, £16.5m is allocated to the Northern Powerhouse alone, with the target of providing co-investment to over 3,300 companies. We provide a range of support mechanisms, and for instance, this June, the Northern Powerhouse team brought an inward delegation of international buyers to the Global Offshore Wind Summit in Manchester, highlighting to the world the North's capability in this sector.

■ Iron and Steel

John Penrose: [\[27568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the oral contribution of the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare during the Ministerial Statement on Steel Safeguards on 29 June 2022, what advice she has received on whether the new steel safeguards decision is compliant with the Ministerial Code.

Michael Ellis:

I have been asked to reply on behalf of Her Majesty's Government.

From time to time, there will be challenging public policy decisions to be made, where there are issues in tension with another. It for Ministers to then decide what is in the public interest. Our democracy works on the basis that elected representatives make those tough decisions in the national interest, and are then accountable to Parliament and the British people. The Ministerial Code includes the (Nolan) Principles on Standards in Public Life, which are a guide to how Ministers should act.

After careful consideration, the Government has collectively concluded this approach is in the public interest, and meets all these Principles – in particular, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership. The Government has set out its approach openly to Parliament, the press and the public. We also note the cross-party support for the Government's actions.

JUSTICE

■ **Community Orders: Easington**

Grahame Morris:

[26738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what Community Payback projects have been completed in Easington constituency in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

Community Payback is a visible punishment which sees offenders undertake work that directly benefits the communities they have harmed.

Rigorous and constructive projects are delivered across England and Wales on a daily basis. Work carried out by offenders may include removing graffiti from public buildings, clearing wasteland, or decorating a community centre.

Local engagement is an integral part of Community Payback, and anyone can nominate a project in their local area via the Gov.uk website.

Prior to unification of the Probation Service in June 2021, Community Payback was delivered by Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and consequently we do not have access to an exhaustive list of projects delivered in each of the last five years.

However, the Durham Tees Valley CRC did deliver regular projects in partnership with Durham County Council in the Peterlee area, with Community Payback teams working four days a week to improve local open spaces.

Post-unification, the North East Probation region currently has regular projects running at the Castle Eden Walkway, Parkside Walkway, Woodhouse Park and South Hetton allotments.

Work undertaken at the projects listed above in Easington have included grounds maintenance, such as strimming, grass cutting, clearing overgrown vegetation to open up pathways and raising the canopy to remove overhanging branches, path edging and litter picking.

■ **Knives: Crime**

Andrew Rosindell:

[25759]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average custodial sentence length is for a prisoner convicted of a knife crime.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly 'Knife and Offensive Weapons Statistics' available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/knife-possession-sentencing-quarterly>.

Information on sentence lengths can be found within the main data tables, specifically, table 3 Information on repeat offenders can be found in tables 7 to 9 (inclusive).

■ Legal Opinion: Conflict of Interests

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[27552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will investigate the risk of a legal and best advice conflict of interest arising in cases where one party to a transaction both (a) chooses and (b) funds the legal advice of the counter-party; and if he will make a statement.

James Cartlidge:

Conflict of interest in the provision of legal advice is guided by professional ethics. The legal profession in England and Wales is independent of government, as is the legal regulatory structure, for which the Legal Services Board has oversight responsibility.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) is the approved regulator of solicitors in England and Wales. The SRA has a detailed Code of Conduct for solicitors including conflict of interest provisions which cover situations where a conflict of interest, or a serious risk of such a conflict arises, for example when a solicitor is acting for two or more clients. The Ministry of Justice therefore has no plans to investigate this issue.

■ Ministry of Justice: Ipswich

Tom Hunt:

[\[26861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's plan to open a new regional office in Ipswich, announced on 1 February 2022, when he expects that new office to open, and what estimate he has made of the number of jobs which that new office will create in Ipswich.

James Cartlidge:

We are currently planning to open a Justice Collaboration Centre in Ipswich in late summer this year. The MoJ will be moving roles away from London through a national talent location strategy which relies on roles becoming vacant to then be advertised nationally to one of our 7 hubs. This allows MoJ to attract the best talent regardless of their location.

Due to this strategy, it is difficult for MoJ to estimate the number of jobs that may be created in Ipswich; however, this does mean the opening of the regional office will create new opportunities for the people of Ipswich, and its locality, to access good quality civil service jobs in the MoJ.

■ Ministry of Justice: Public Expenditure

Emily Thornberry:

[\[27564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish his Department's expenditure over £500 using electronic purchasing cards for the financial year 2021-22.

James Cartlidge:

The Department's last published monthly transparency data for Government Procurement Card spending over £500 was for the months of October to December 2020, published on 20 September 2021.

Further data is currently going through the Department's formal clearance process. The Department plans to publish data for January to March 2021 within the next month. Further data will be published in quarterly data sets throughout 2022.

Emily Thornberry:[\[27565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people held electronic purchasing cards that allowed them to make purchases against his Department's budget as of 31 March 2022.

James Cartlidge:

As of 31 March 2022, there were 1,204 live Government Procurement Card accounts that could be used to make purchases against the MoJ Budget.

Prison Accommodation**Matt Vickers:**[\[23812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress his Department has made in creating new prison places.

Victoria Atkins:

We have already delivered over 3,100 additional prison places through a combination of refurbishments, installing temporary accommodation, repurposing the Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre back into a prison and the opening of HMP Five Wells earlier this year.

Prison Officers: Training**Ellie Reeves:**[\[24646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many hours a prison officer is permitted to spend on training each year.

Victoria Atkins:

There are no set training hours for prison officers however all HMPPS staff are able to access the online e-learning platform MyLearning which hosts a variety of training, which can be accessed at any time.

To become a fully trained prison officer, each learner must undertake a Level 3 Custody & Detention Apprenticeship, which is a total of 441 hours completed over the initial 16-18 month period.

All prison officers are able to undertake a variety of operational training as part of their continued professional development. Our e-learning platform MyLearning is available to all HMPPS employees and includes all essential learning.

■ Prisoners' Release: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[23363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 82217 on Prisoners' Release: Wales, how many prison leavers in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021 had an origin address in Wales, by prison establishment.

Victoria Atkins:

Please note that where the number released from an establishment was 5 or fewer, the specific figure has not been given, in order to avoid the risk of identifying individuals.

The numerical information provided has been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible error with data entry and processing.

The available information is shown in the table below.

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|----------------|------|------|
| Altcourse | 75 | ≤5 |
| Ashfield | 9 | |
| Askham Grange | ≤5 | |
| Belmarsh | ≤5 | |
| Berwyn | 538 | 116 |
| Birmingham | 7 | |
| Brinsford | ≤5 | |
| Bristol | 11 | ≤5 |
| Brixton | ≤5 | |
| Bronzefield | ≤5 | |
| Bullingdon | ≤5 | |
| Cardiff | 1032 | 169 |
| Channings Wood | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Chelmsford | ≤5 | |
| Coldingley | ≤5 | |
| Dartmoor | ≤5 | |
| Deerbolt | ≤5 | |

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------|------|------|
| Doncaster | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Dovegate | ≤5 | |
| Downview | 7 | |
| Drake Hall | 10 | ≤5 |
| Eastwood Park | 225 | 38 |
| Elmley | ≤5 | |
| Erlestoke | ≤5 | |
| Exeter | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Featherstone | ≤5 | |
| Feltham | ≤5 | |
| Ford | ≤5 | |
| Forest Bank | 6 | ≤5 |
| Foston Hall | ≤5 | |
| Garth | ≤5 | |
| Guys Marsh | ≤5 | |
| Haverigg | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Hewell | 11 | 6 |
| High Down | ≤5 | |
| Hindley | 10 | ≤5 |
| Hollesley Bay | ≤5 | |
| Holme House | ≤5 | |
| Hull | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Humber | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Huntercombe | 9 | ≤5 |
| Isis | | ≤5 |
| Kirkham | 27 | 7 |

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|-----------------------|------|------|
| Lancaster Farms | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Leeds | ≤5 | |
| Lewes | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Leyhill | 17 | ≤5 |
| Lincoln | ≤5 | |
| Lindholme | ≤5 | |
| Littlehey | | ≤5 |
| Liverpool | ≤5 | |
| Low Newton | ≤5 | |
| Lowdham Grange | ≤5 | |
| Maidstone | ≤5 | |
| Moorland | ≤5 | |
| Mount | ≤5 | |
| New Hall | ≤5 | |
| North Sea Camp | 7 | |
| Northumberland | ≤5 | |
| Nottingham | | ≤5 |
| Oakwood | 20 | ≤5 |
| Parc | 619 | 158 |
| Pentonville | 11 | |
| Peterborough | ≤5 | |
| Peterborough (female) | ≤5 | |
| Portland | 6 | ≤5 |
| Prescoed | 148 | 30 |
| Preston | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Ranby | ≤5 | ≤5 |

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|-----------------|------|------|
| Risley | 20 | ≤5 |
| Rochester | ≤5 | |
| Rye Hill | ≤5 | |
| Send | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Spring Hill | ≤5 | |
| Stafford | 22 | 6 |
| Stoke Heath | 28 | ≤5 |
| Styal | 54 | ≤5 |
| Sudbury | ≤5 | |
| Swansea | 670 | 93 |
| Swinfen Hall | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Thameside | ≤5 | |
| Thorn Cross | 13 | ≤5 |
| Usk | 66 | 15 |
| Verne | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Wandsworth | ≤5 | |
| Warren Hill | | ≤5 |
| Wayland | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Wealstun | ≤5 | |
| Werrington | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Wetherby | ≤5 | |
| Whatton | 7 | ≤5 |
| Winchester | ≤5 | |
| Woodhill | ≤5 | |
| Wormwood Scrubs | ≤5 | |
| Wymott | 10 | |

■ Probation: Qualifications

Ellie Reeves:

[\[24647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications there were to (a) the PQiP scheme and (b) vacancies for prison officers in the last 12 months.

Victoria Atkins:

Between 1 June 2021 and 31 May 2022 inclusive, 5,614 applications to the PQiP scheme were submitted and 78,890 applications to prison officer vacancies were submitted.

Notes:

1. This data comes from the Oleo Recruitment Database. Figures do not include recruitment campaigns managed by external companies.
2. Oleo is a live system so figures may be subject to change. Data regarding prison officer applications was extracted on 2 June 2022.
3. The total number of applications include both external and internal applicants.
4. The prison officer data only includes recruitment for Public Sector Prisons.
5. Youth Justice Worker applications are included in the count of prison officer applications.
6. The count of prison officer applications covers Bands 3-5.
7. The prison officer figure excludes applications to the "Unlocked Graduate Scheme" but includes applications to Operational Support Grade to prison officer / Youth Justice Worker fast track campaigns.

■ Sexual Offences: Victims

Matt Vickers:

[\[23813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to support victims of rape and sexual abuse.

Victoria Atkins:

This government is determined to make streets safer for women and girls. We have published a draft Victims Bill to ensure victims get the support they are entitled to and have increased the funding for victim and witness support services to £192 million by 2024/25 - more than quadruple the level in 2009/10 and an uplift of 92% on core budgets in 2020/21. We are extending the time limit for victims of domestic abuse to seek justice and have taken action to protect women from harassment when they are breastfeeding in a public place.

Last year, we published the End to End Rape Review report and action plan with our plan to transform the way the criminal justice system responds to rape. Since publication, we have made significant progress in delivering actions to change the system for the better. We are beginning to see positive increases in the number of referrals of adult rape cases being made from the police to the CPS, and the number

of charges as a result. Rape cases referred by the police to the CPS have increased in the last quarter of 2021 by 76% from the quarterly average in 2019, when the Rape Review was commissioned. Rape cases charged by the CPS in the last quarter of 2021 have also increased by 38% from the quarterly average in 2019. Rape convictions in 2021 were up by 67% on 2020. We will continue to use our cross-system governance structures to drive this change and take further actions where necessary.

We have identified 8 key levers to delivery changes across all aspects of the Criminal Justice System:

- o Establishing suspect-focused rape investigations – known as Operation Soteria – across five police forces, and will expand to 14 more by September, with a national rollout completed by June 2023.

- o Boosting the number of police officers, and specialist rape and sexual offences roles within the CPS, so that they have the capacity and capability to investigate rape cases more effectively. The CPS have committed to increasing their rape and serious sexual offences workforce by 194 – from 433 – by the end of March 2023.

- o Working with police forces to make sure that victims' mobile phones are only examined where necessary, and only retained for short periods of time where they are.

- o Improving the timeliness and proportionality of requests for material from third parties during investigations. The government has launched a consultation to gather more insight, evidence and data on current issues, and to work to ensure police and CPS requests for third party material are made appropriately, and the Attorney General has also published revised guidelines to better direct investigators and prosecutors only to access information relevant to a case.

- o Expanding pre-recorded cross-examination (Section 28) for victims of sexual violence and modern slavery in Crown Courts nationwide– with this vital measure now available in almost half of all Crown Courts (37 locations). The Government is committed to rolling it out nationwide by September

- o Expanding Crown Court capacity continues, with a £477 million investment over the next three years to reduce the Crown Court backlog and how long victims have to wait for trials.

- o Expanding support for victims. This includes creating a national 24/7 support line for victims of rape and sexual abuse, so that every victim can access support whenever and wherever they need it. And we are using additional ringfenced funding to increase the number of Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors (ISVAs and IDVAs) by 300, to over 1000 by 2024/25 - a 43 percent increase over the next three years.

- o Criminal Justice System delivery data dashboard: We are publishing the CJS delivery data dashboard quarterly for adult rape which brings together local data from across the system in one place for the first time, allowing us to increase

transparency, increase understanding of the justice system and support collaboration, especially at a local level.

Alongside our progress update last week, we announced a pilot of enhanced specialist sexual violence support in the Crown Court. This is aimed squarely at doing better by rape victims, giving them the support they need to stay engaged in the process and get the justice they deserve. We are committed to going further and pushing harder on our actions so that we can drive bigger impacts, deliver wider system change and crucially, deliver justice for victims of rape and sexual abuse.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Affordable Housing: Taxation

Andrew Lewer:

[\[24656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will commit to ensuring that all forms of affordable housing, including homes at Discount Market Sale, are granted exemption from the infrastructure levy proposed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

Stuart Andrew:

The Infrastructure Levy will be a mandatory, non-negotiable charge, set and collected locally, to largely replace the complex and discretionary section 106 regime and CIL charge.

The Government is committed to the delivery of on-site affordable housing through the Levy, and to delivering at least as much, if not more, affordable housing than at present. We will introduce through regulations a new 'right to require'. Local authorities will be able to require that a proportion of the Levy liability to be paid as in-kind, onsite affordable housing.

We do not intend to charge the Levy on affordable housing, and will consult on the details of our proposed approach. Exemptions and reductions with regards to the Levy will be set out through regulations.

■ Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council: Beach Huts

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[27505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 22339 on Beach Huts: Property Transfer and with reference to his Department's statutory guidance entitled Guidance on flexible use of capital receipts, published on 11 March 2016, whether Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council has submitted details of its planned flexible use of capital receipts in the financial year 2022-2023 as of 29 June 2022.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government issued the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts direction on 4 April that allows local authorities to use the proceeds of asset sales to fund projects for

transformation and efficiency. This extends the flexibility that has been in place since 2016. A new condition was introduced that requires local authorities to send specified details of their planned use of the flexibility to DLUHC, in advance of its use. This is to make sure there is transparency and allows government to effectively monitor the use of the flexibility. Local authorities must comply with all conditions of the direction in order to use the flexibility.

■ Building Safety Fund

Dame Meg Hillier: [\[26721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to reopen the Building Safety Fund for applications in 2022.

Stuart Andrew:

The Government is providing £5.1 billion, including £4.5 billion through the Building Safety Fund, to address the fire safety risks caused by unsafe cladding on high-rise residential buildings. This will be used where the original developer and/or the building owner are not funding the works. We will be opening the next phase of the Building Safety Fund at the earliest opportunity.

■ Buildings: Fire Prevention

James Murray: [\[23440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy is on whether the (a) developer, (b) contractors hired during construction, (c) leaseholders and (d) other associated parties are responsible for remediating historic fire safety issues on affected buildings.

Stuart Andrew:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]: The Government is clear that those responsible for historical building safety defects must pay to put them right.

The Government has delivered a wide-ranging industry agreement with 47 major residential property developers that they will remediate all buildings above 11 metres in height that they had a role in developing or refurbishing in the past 30 years. These developers have also pledged to refund money paid out by existing Government remediation schemes to fix buildings that they originally developed and will not apply for further funding. Where the developer cannot be traced or fails to agree to cover the costs, cladding remediation will be met by Government grant funding.

The Building Safety Act 2022 contains new powers to ensure that those responsible for building safety defects can be held to account. The Act retrospectively extends the limitation period under section 1 of the Defective Premises Act 1972 to 30 years; this provides a route to cost recovery from a wide range of parties, including contractors, developers and architects, where shoddy workmanship and corner cutting have caused buildings to be unsafe. In addition, other new powers in the Act ensure that construction product manufacturers can be held to account for their failures.

The Building Safety Act brings forward legal protections for leaseholders from historical building safety costs. The Act legally protects qualifying leaseholders (those living in their own home or with up to three UK properties in total) from all costs relating to the remediation of unsafe cladding and contains robust and far-reaching protections from non-cladding costs, including those relating to interim measures such as waking watches. Where those directly responsible (e.g. developers) cannot be held to account, building owners and landlords will now be the first port of call to pay for historical safety defects, not leaseholders.

■ EU Grants and Loans and UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[24560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what comparative assessment he has made of the amount of funding allocated to communities under the Shared Prosperity Fund and the preceding EU structural funds.

Neil O'Brien:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a successor to some EU Structural Funds. Our allocations ensure a real-terms match of EU structural funds in every nation and region of the UK.

The allocation methodology for the UKSPF was developed in accordance with the following core principles, in line with commitments made at the last Spending Review.

We have set out a methodology note which provides more detail on this:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-allocations-methodology>.

■ Levelling Up Fund: Greater London

Sam Tarry: [\[24693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will take steps to ensure that deprived areas of London are able to receive funding through the Levelling Up Fund.

Neil O'Brien:

The second round of the Fund will continue to use the Index of Priority Places to target funding at areas across the UK which are most in need.

In the first round of the Fund, six successful projects were funded in London, and were allocated a total of £65 million. We will welcome bids from eligible applicants across the UK including London boroughs with remaining bid allocations in the second round of the Fund.

■ Members: Correspondence**Nick Gibb:** [\[24531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the email correspondence of 10 March 2022 from the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton on the reclassification of rental properties.

Kemi Badenoch:

A response was issued to my Rt Hon Friend on 27 June.

■ Right to Buy Scheme: Housing Associations**Lisa Nandy:** [\[26753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2022 to Question 16928 on Right to Buy Scheme, what assessment he has made of the potential effectiveness of the extension of the Right to Buy scheme to housing associations in the context of the funding arrangements intended for that scheme; and when he plans to publish the full details of the scheme.

Stuart Andrew:

The Right to Buy has helped nearly two million council tenants to become homeowners since 1980, and we want to give housing association tenants the same opportunity. We want the scheme to work effectively for tenants and housing associations, and we will be working closely with the housing association sector as we develop the scheme.

The scheme will be funded from within the overall envelope of Government spending. We will announce further details in due course.

■ Smoking**Sir George Howarth:** [\[24546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on reducing smoking rates in areas of high usage.

Neil O'Brien:

Ministers and officials from my department have regular discussions with counterparts in DHSC on a range of issues. As has been the case under successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed.

■ Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council: Energy**Navendu Mishra:** [\[27751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 17152 on Energy: Costs, how much and what proportion of the additional £3.7 billion made available in the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022-23 was allocated to Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23 makes available an additional £3.7 billion to councils, including funding for adult social care reform.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's Core Spending Power grew from £240.0 million in 2021/22 to £260.3 million in 2022/23, a change of up to £20.3 million.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Cybersecurity: Northern Ireland****Carla Lockhart:**[\[26054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the commitment set out in the New Decade, New Approach document published in January 2020, what progress has been made in promoting Northern Ireland as a global cyber security hub.

Conor Burns:

This Government is committed to promoting Northern Ireland as a global cyber security hub, and to helping achieve the New Decade, New Approach target of 5,000 cyber security professionals working in Northern Ireland by 2030. Cyber is a growing sector in Northern Ireland, home to 4% of the UK's cyber security workforce despite representing 2.8% of the UK population.

To this end, the Government provided Invest NI with £8 million to expand their overseas presence, through the New Deal for Northern Ireland, to attract investment and further promote Northern Ireland's cybersecurity excellence on a global stage.

The Government has also invested £15 million from the New Deal fund in the Skill Up initiative which includes courses focused on cyber security to develop a pipeline of cyber professionals. Cyber security is a sector we are also supporting through the City and Growth Deals programme, with projects such as the Global Innovation Institute forming part of the Belfast Regional City Deal.

■ Overseas Trade: Northern Ireland**Carla Lockhart:**[\[26056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the commitments set out in the New Decade, New Approach document published in January 2020, what progress has been made in (a) supporting the delivery of the Northern Ireland International Trade plan, (b) establishing a new Trade Advisory Board, (c) the appointment of Northern Ireland Trade Ambassadors and (d) developing a Trade Accelerator Plan and a "Made in NI" campaign.

Conor Burns:

The Government is committed to supporting Northern Ireland businesses to trade. Through the New Deal we have invested £8 million to expand Invest NI's presence overseas.

We are pleased that businesses in Northern Ireland are reaching out to access the specialist support offered by the DIT hub in Northern Ireland, which includes access to the Export Academy, to help businesses trade globally. This new hub will be responsible for driving forward much of these trade commitments, with support from my department. This will include development of a trade and investment plan, including scoping a Trade Accelerator proposal, working in conjunction with Northern Ireland Executive departments, Invest NI and the business community. Work is already underway to recruit DIT Export Champions for Northern Ireland, and DIT are promoting Northern Ireland products through their new “Made in the UK, Sold to the World” campaign.

■ War Memorials Trust: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart: [\[26055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the commitment set out in the New Decade, New Approach document published in January 2020, what steps have been taken to ensure that the work of the War Memorials Trust is better promoted and understood in Northern Ireland.

Conor Burns:

Officials have been engaging with the Department of Communities, which is responsible for Northern Ireland’s Historic Environment, in order to ensure that our proposed programme of work with the War Memorial Trust complements the Department’s strategic approach, and does not undermine the existing policies on built heritage in Northern Ireland.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests

Caroline Lucas: [\[26732\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 23263 on Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests, how many times he sought advice from the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests on matters relating to the national interest since 23 July 2019.

Boris Johnson:

As I noted in my previous answer to the hon. Member (PQ 23263), the Terms of Reference state that the provision of such advice is confidential.

The Independent Adviser publishes an annual report which summarises their work over the year.

TRANSPORT**■ Bus Services and Rapid Transit Systems: Finance**

Sam Tarry: [\[24678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to extend additional covid-19 bus and light rail funding after October 2022.

Sam Tarry: [\[24681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact on service provision of ending the additional £150 million additional covid-19 funding to bus and light rail services after October 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government has provided over £2 billion of support through emergency and recovery grants to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on bus and light rail services. A further £184 million in funding has been provided to continue supporting the sector following the Covid-19 pandemic until October 2022 to give services the maximum amount of time to recover.

The Government has also provided over £2.5 billion in new funding to support improvements to bus services and are on track to meet the commitment of £3 billion invested in buses in this Parliament. This includes over £1 billion in new funding for bus transformation deals to deliver London-style fares, infrastructure, and service improvements. It is expected that the local authorities who have been awarded indicative funding allocations to deliver their Bus Service Improvement Plans as announced in April should receive final allocations in October to coincide with the end of recovery funding.

■ Bus Services: Passengers

Sam Tarry: [\[24682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of trends in bus passenger volumes in England.

Sam Tarry: [\[24683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of trends in coach passenger volumes in England.

Sam Tarry: [\[24684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage passenger levels to (a) return to and (b) exceed pre-pandemic levels on buses.

Sam Tarry: [\[24685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage passenger levels to (a) return to and (b) exceed pre-pandemic levels on coaches.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government recognises the importance of promoting the return of passengers to public transport following the pandemic and is engaging regularly with the bus and coach sector to assess how it can best support the sector's recovery from the pandemic.

Data for the week commencing 13th June suggests that bus passenger volumes in Great Britain outside London were at around 80% of levels seen in the third week of January 2020 (the pre-Covid reference week).

Passenger volumes for buses in London were also at around 80% of pre-Covid levels. Both of these figures have been relatively stable over the last 6 months, but have increased since the equivalent period in 2021, when passenger volumes were around 60-65% of pre-Covid levels. The full data series going back to March 2020 can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>.

The Department does not routinely collect data on coach passenger volumes but the Department's National Travel Survey contains information about trends in public transport usage. This includes trends in bus use in London, other local bus use outside London, and non-local bus usage (a proxy for coach usage). The latest data from the survey can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>.

The Government provided around £2bn to support the bus sector during the pandemic. The Government is committed to delivering improvements to bus services around the country and is meeting its commitments set out in the National Bus Strategy, one of which includes supporting the sector to proactively promote the use of buses.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Gill Furniss:****[26825]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much Government funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles has been allocated (a) directly and (b) indirectly via local authorities to electric vehicle charge point operators for the roll out and operation of electric vehicle charge points since January 2020.

Trudy Harrison:

The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) does not fund chargepoint operators directly for public chargepoints. The only scheme that has allocated funding for public chargepoints via Local Authorities since January 2020, is the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) – that supports authorities deliver chargepoints for residents without off-street parking.

In the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years, OZEV has allocated over £32m to local authorities through ORCS – which will in turn be made available to chargepoint operators to help deploy chargepoints in the authorities' areas.

OZEV also provides grant funding to install private chargepoints via the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme and Workplace Charging Scheme. The chargepoints installed under these schemes are owned and maintained by the grant recipients, who are private individuals or businesses. The customers are the ultimate recipients of the grant funding.

The private sector has a critical role to play in providing convenient, affordable and reliable charging for all. We are already seeing a proliferation of public chargepoints at supermarkets, gyms and tourist attractions, installed without Government support.

Gill Furniss:

[\[26826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, (a) which electric vehicle charge point operators have received central Government funding via the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles since January 2020 and (b) how much funding each such electric vehicle charge point operator has received in that period.

Trudy Harrison:

The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) does not fund chargepoint operators directly for public chargepoints. Rather, OZEV funds Local Authorities who in turn will procure and appoint chargepoint operators. The only scheme that has allocated funding for public chargepoints via Local Authorities since January 2020, is the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) – that supports authorities deliver chargepoints for residents without off-street parking.

In the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years, OZEV has allocated over £32m to local authorities through ORCS – which will in turn be made available to chargepoint operators to help deploy chargepoints in the authorities' areas.

OZEV also provides grant funding to install private chargepoints via the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme and Workplace Charging Scheme. The chargepoints installed under these schemes are owned and maintained by the grant recipients, who are private individuals or businesses. The customers are the ultimate recipients of the grant funding.

The private sector has a critical role to play in providing convenient, affordable and reliable charging for all. We are already seeing a proliferation of public chargepoints at supermarkets, gyms and tourist attractions, installed without Government support.

Sarah Olney:

[\[26828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an estimate of the number of residential properties in London that have access to a private driveway or garage that could potentially facilitate electric vehicle charging.

Trudy Harrison:

The English Housing survey estimates that around 40% of dwellings in London and the South East do not have access to off-street parking. Government funding and free-to-access support is available to the London Boroughs and all UK local authorities to rollout on-street charging solutions to help meet the needs of those without off-street parking.

Sarah Olney: [26829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the number of electric vehicle owners in London without access to a private charging point.

Trudy Harrison:

We are aware that the majority of current electric vehicle (EV) owners across the UK have access to off-street parking and private home charging. In research conducted in 2021 on EV drivers, 94% of EV drivers surveyed who lived in London had access to charging at home. However, these results are approximate and should be treated with caution as the sample size for London was small, at just over 150 respondents.

Source: Electric Vehicle Driver Data, Table 109

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electric-vehicle-drivers-attitudes-and-behaviours>

Sarah Olney: [26830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the International Council on Clean Transportation's working paper entitled Quantifying the electric vehicle charging infrastructure gap in the UK.

Trudy Harrison:

We welcome the International Council on Clean Transportation's paper on electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the UK and note its recommendations for the UK vehicle charging network out to 2030 and beyond. The UK is a global front-runner in supporting provision of charging infrastructure along with private sector investment. Our vision is to have one of the best infrastructure networks in the world for electric vehicles, and we want chargepoints to be accessible, affordable and secure.

The recently published UK electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure strategy sets out our plans to accelerate the rollout of a world-class charging network and to make EV charging cheaper and more convenient than refuelling at a petrol station. Of the £2.5 billion of Government funding committed to the EV transition since 2020, over £1.6 billion will be used to support charging infrastructure.

We know that the majority of EV drivers charge at home and we expect this trend to continue. However, we must ensure public chargepoints are in place to support those without off-street parking and to enable long distance journeys. We expect at least ten times more public chargepoints to be installed across the UK by the end of the decade, bringing the number to around 300,000 by 2030.

■ Heathrow Airport

Christian Matheson: [25892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of an increase in regulated per passenger charges at Heathrow airport for the H7 period on the UK's international connectivity.

Christian Matheson: [25893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Authority on the regulated price regime for London Heathrow Airport in its next regulated price period.

Christian Matheson: [25894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the economic impact of increasing the regulated per passenger charges at London Heathrow airport for the H7 period by (a) 50 and (b) 100 per cent.

Robert Courts:

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the economic regulator of Heathrow under the Civil Aviation Act 2012, independent of government. The CAA published its consultation on Final Proposals for the H7 price control period (2022-26) on 28 June on 2022. The consultation will run for six weeks, closing on 9 August. A final decision is expected in the Autumn.

The CAA has proposed a cap on the per passenger charge that is on average £24.50 (2020 prices). The charge will start higher and reduce each year as passenger numbers recover.

The CAA's Final Proposals have been further developed from its Initial Proposals in October 2021, since when it has: engaged extensively with stakeholders including the airport and its airlines and assessed their consultation responses; updated its evidence base; commissioned further independent expert advice; and updated its own analysis.

International connectivity is vital for connecting people and businesses, facilitating tourism and trade, with Heathrow as the UK's only hub airport a fundamental part of that; and no one wants to see prices at Heathrow Airport rise any more than is necessary. Ultimately though, decisions on routes and fares remain a commercial matter for the airlines.

■ High Speed 2 Line: Cheshire**Mike Amesbury:** [26843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many jobs will be created by HS2 in (a) Northwich, (b) Cheshire and (c) the North of England.

Andrew Stephenson:

Labour market forecasts can be found in the 'HS2 labour and skills demand and supply forecasting and analysis' published in July 2021.

https://assets.hs2.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/HS2_LSF-report_clean_V2-0508.pdf

Whilst we cannot provide geographical specific forecasts, section 2.7 (page 36 - 45) details the labour forecast for building Phase 2bWL, which will all be based in the

North West. It estimates there will be a peak workforce of 17,500 in 2029/30, with the workforce sustained at over 14,000 between 2027/28 and 2029/30.

The forecasts for Phase 2a are also given in the table on page 21.

■ **Maritime and Coastguard Agency: Business Plans**

Grahame Morris: [\[26740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the budget for the UK Shipping Concierge service is in the 2022-23 financial year.

Robert Courts:

The approved budget for the UK Shipping Concierge service for the 2022-23 financial year is £1,008,438.76.

■ **National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers: Industrial Action**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[26834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much budget his Department has allocated for absorbing risk associated with lost revenue as a result of the recent industrial action by members of the RMT Union.

Wendy Morton:

There is no budget allocated by my Department for absorbing risk associated with lost revenue as a result of the recent industrial action by members of the RMT Union.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[26835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many times he or officials in his Department met representatives of (a) Network Rail and (b) train operating companies to discuss the RMT Union's industrial disputes since 25 April 2022; and on what dates those meetings took place.

Wendy Morton:

Ministers and/or officials have been discussing the dispute with industry representatives on an almost daily basis.

■ **Network Rail and Train Operating Companies: Redundancy Pay**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[27715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what budget his Department has allocated for funding redundancy payments at (a) Network Rail and (b) Train Operating Companies.

Wendy Morton:

The department has not allocated any specific budget for funding redundancy payments to Network Rail or Train Operating Companies.

■ P&O Ferries: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**Grahame Morris:** [\[26742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the return of furlough funding paid to P&O Ferries Limited in 2020.

Robert Courts:

This government has repeatedly called for P&O Ferries to repay its furlough funding, and we have emphasised this at every opportunity. Given we have made our position clear, it is now for P&O Ferries to repay the furlough funds and to reverse its outrageous decision to dismiss 800 loyal and hardworking staff if it intends to win back public trust, and the trust of government.

■ P&O Ferries: Tonnage Tax**Grahame Morris:** [\[27578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on removing P&O Ferries' (a) Cypriot, (b) Bahamas and (c) Bermudan registered vessels from the tonnage tax regime.

Robert Courts:

The department is working closely with partners across government in our response to P&O Ferries' actions. The Tonnage Tax register is owned by HMRC and any action to be taken in respect of companies on that register is a matter for that department alone.

■ Passenger Ships: Coronavirus**Royston Smith:** [\[26807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to help the cruise industry recover following the covid-19 pandemic.

Robert Courts:

COVID-19 had a devastating impact on the cruise industry. I am pleased that during this time the relationship between government and industry has gone from strength to strength as we have worked together to ensure a safe and sustainable return of cruises.

The cruise industry is vital to UK coastal communities. According to Maritime UK, the sector contributed a total of £9.4bn to the UK economy and supported 82,000 jobs in 2017.

Following a successful restart of both domestic and international cruises, my Department continues to work closely with the cruise industry to ensure that we understand the challenges they face and any barriers to growth.

Government is committed to the wider recovery of the maritime sector and recognises that cruise is a key part of this recovery, particularly in our coastal

communities. Government recently published the Maritime Recovery Route map, setting out the short and medium-term actions that government and industry together will take to help the sector recover from the impacts of the pandemic, whilst turbocharging delivery of Maritime 2050.

We are developing a governance system to monitor the delivery of Maritime 2050's recommendations and ensure that stakeholders across government and industry are involved in setting key priorities for delivery.

■ **Protective Clothing: Storage**

Angela Rayner: [\[26776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many officials in his Department are employed to oversee the storage of personal protective equipment (a) in the UK and (b) overseas.

Andrew Stephenson:

The DfT Health and Safety teams do not oversee the storage of Personal Protective Equipment. If individuals require Personal Protective Equipment as part of their role then their line managers will provide Personal Protective Equipment to them through the Procurement team and contract in place with the clothing provider. This is the same model for Personal Protective Equipment used by all of the Departmental Agencies and arms-length bodies.

■ **Rail Delivery Group: Contracts**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese: [\[26836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the National Rail Contracts place a limit on increases to executive pay and bonuses of the (a) train operator and (b) owning company.

Wendy Morton:

Copies of the National Rail Contracts are published on the Public Register of Rail Passenger Contracts. Workforce-related matters are covered, in particular, in Chapter 2.2 of each NRC.

■ **Railways: Contracts**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese: [\[27714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Passenger Service Contracts will place a cap on increases to executive pay and bonuses of the (a) the train operator and (b) owning company.

Wendy Morton:

The PSCs remain under development.

■ Railways: Midlands**Ben Bradley:** [\[25994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of reinstating a rail link between Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham on (a) economic opportunities and (b) levelling up in those areas.

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: [\[25995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will release Outline Business Case funding to enable Network Rail and Midlands Connect to progress the Coventry-Leicester-Nottingham rail improvement scheme.

Wendy Morton:

Although unable to discuss individual projects at this time, the Government is now focusing our investment on rail infrastructure in the Midlands and the North. This will help deliver on the Government's ambition to grow and level up the economy and provide equality of opportunity.

We remain committed to publishing the RNEP 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: Passengers**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[26833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of likely trends in the number of national rail passengers for the following (a) six and (b) 12 months.

Wendy Morton:

In line with our published guidance, the Department has developed a number of scenarios of possible long-term rail demand to reflect uncertainty including how passengers respond post-covid-19 as well as economic forecasts. The Department continues to consider a wide range of evidence for our project appraisals and policy decisions and seeks to use the most up to date inputs to aid in these decisions.

■ Railways: Tickets

Sam Tarry:

[\[24679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on delivering contactless pay-as-you-go ticketing commuter networks in the (a) Midlands and (b) north of England.

Trudy Harrison:

Recognising the ambition in the National Bus Strategy, Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail and Levelling Up White Paper, we are working to understand the costs, benefits and feasibility of improvements to local public transport ticketing, across local transport markets in England, including those in the Midlands and the North. We have asked representatives from the bus and technology sectors, as well as local authorities to develop an Outline Business Case for investments to support multi-operator bus ticketing. We are also working with the bus industry to expand the provision of contactless pay-as-you-go (PAYG) payment with provision for fares capping.

The Government has committed to expanding contactless PAYG ticketing on rail outside the South East to around 700 stations in regional and urban areas, including around 400 stations in the North. We will announce further details in due course.

■ Shipping: Carbon Emissions

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[27501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the paper by the Tyndall Centre at the University of Manchester entitled Decarbonising Shipping, published in June 2022, if he will make it his policy to set interim 2030 targets for its (a) domestic and (b) international shipping emissions.

Robert Courts:

The Department for Transport has committed to publishing a consultation on the 'Course to Zero' for the domestic maritime sector. This consultation will seek views and evidence on the optimal pathway to net zero emissions in 2050, including where there is scope to accelerate decarbonisation across various domestic maritime sub-sectors. Following the outcome of this consultation, we will establish indicative decarbonisation targets for the domestic maritime sector, from 2030 onwards.

Internationally, the UK is committed to acting through the International Maritime Organization's Initial Strategy on Reduction of Green House Gas Emissions from ships, which includes a target of at least a 40% improvement in carbon intensity of ships by 2030. The UK continues to have a leading role at the IMO, building consensus to raise the ambition of the Initial GHG Strategy ahead of its revision in 2023 and to ensure it, and any interim targets, are consistent with a 1.5°C degree pathway.

■ Shipping: Minimum Wage

Grahame Morris:

[\[26741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent bi-lateral discussions with his counterparts in (a) France, (b) Belgium, (c) Ireland, (d) Spain, (e) Denmark and (f) Germany on minimum wage shipping corridors from UK ports.

Robert Courts:

The Secretary of State has written to his counterparts in France, Belgium, Ireland, Spain, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway to explore the development of bilateral minimum wage corridors between our respective nations.

Alongside these letters, the Secretary of State and/or officials have already had bilateral discussions with the governments of France, Belgium, Spain and Germany about seafarer protections and welfare.

■ Shipping: Reviews

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[25896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to take steps to apply lessons learned from his Department's review of the maritime sector following the actions of P&O Ferries to air transport.

Robert Courts:

Following P&O Ferries' disgraceful actions, the Secretary of State announced a nine-point plan to improve seafarers protections. Legislation will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time allows that intends to ensure that seafarers working on vessels that regularly use UK ports are paid at least an equivalent rate to the UK National Minimum Wage, irrespective of the nationality or the seafarer or flag of the vessel.

On 30 June, the Secretary of State set out the 22 measures the Government is taking to support the aviation industry, including to help recruit and train staff, ensure the delivery of a realistic summer schedule, minimise disruption, and support passengers when delays and cancellations are unavoidable. The Government recognised that while the issues was one for industry to solve, a series of targeted measures could support their efforts.

■ Tonnage Tax: Registration

Grahame Morris:

[\[26739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of qualifying ships in the Tonnage Tax scheme are registered on the (a) Cypriot, (b) Bahamas, (c) Isle of Man, (d) Bermuda, (e) Maltese, (f) Liberian and (g) Marshall Islands shipping registers as on 28 June 2022.

Robert Courts:

The Department maintains a year on year record of qualifying vessels operated by the companies in Tonnage Tax. This is based on returns supplied by those companies at the beginning of each training year in October. The returns for the

2021/22 training year produce a total number of 690 vessels. The figures for the requested ship registers are as follows:

Cyprus: 11

Bahamas: 46

Isle of Man: 44

Bermuda: 8

Malta: 46

Liberia: 120

Marshall Islands: 53

■ **Train Operating Companies: Industrial Disputes**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[26832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the dispute handling plans agreed with train operating companies.

Wendy Morton:

Publishing the Dispute Handling Policy would undermine the rail industry negotiating position during disputes.

■ **Transport: Carbon Emissions**

Anthony Browne: [\[26878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of a gateway test for carbon emissions to ensure that future transport schemes, with only rare exceptions, contribute to a reduction in emissions as opposed to a negligible or insignificant increase in emissions when compared with the national carbon budget.

Trudy Harrison:

Transport schemes are assessed against a wide range of impacts as part of developing business cases. These assessments include carbon and other environmental impacts, and our underpinning models and methodologies are regularly enhanced and updated to take into account the latest data and evidence.

■ **Travel: Business**

Stephen Hammond: [\[R\] \[25793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help increase the public's confidence in domestic and international travel for business in the context of recent disruption in the railway and aviation sectors.

Wendy Morton:

The Department and the rail industry worked together ahead of planned industrial action to ensure plans were in place to minimise disruption. This allowed freight and

passenger services to remain operational where possible and included working with other Government Departments on mitigations for impacts on critical supply chains.

A Statutory Instrument has now been laid, under the terms of which businesses will be able supply workers to replace striking workers. This will also allow trained staff with transferrable skills to move around the industry to cover for striking staff to keep the railways running. We are working at pace to see how any potential legislative change could be delivered, including looking at the introduction of Minimum Service Level legislation, which would provide a mechanism for a minimum level of train service during those times periods of strike action.

On 30 June, the Secretary of State set out 22 measures the Government is taking to support the aviation industry, including to help recruit and train staff, ensure the delivery of a realistic summer schedule, minimise disruption, and support passengers when delays and cancellations are unavoidable.

We have eased the burden on background checks carried out by the industry through changing the law to allow certain training to be undertaken while background checks are completed. We have helped speed up recruitment times by allowing HMRC employment history letters to be used as a suitable form of reference check. We are working with industry to ensure they give passengers the best support and will be launching a new Aviation Passenger Charter, a one-stop guide to help passengers understand their rights, responsibilities and what they can reasonably expect of the aviation industry when flying.

TREASURY

■ Care Workers: Car Allowances

Fay Jones:

[\[27746\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will review the level of the mileage allowance relief granted to care workers.

Helen Whately:

The Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rates aim to reflect running costs including fuel, servicing and depreciation.

Most domiciliary care staff are employed by private providers who decide their mileage reimbursement rate. Employers, including those of care staff, are not required to use AMAPs. Instead, they can agree to reimburse the actual cost incurred, where individuals can provide evidence of the expenditure, without an Income Tax or National Insurance charge arising.

If an employee is paid less than the approved amount, they are entitled to claim tax relief (Mileage Allowance Relief) on the shortfall. The maximum MAR claim is set to the same level as the AMAP rates.

As with all taxes and allowances, the Government keeps AMAP rates under review and any changes are considered by the Chancellor.

■ Cooperatives and Mutual Societies: Finance

Rachael Maskell: [\[27653\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential merits of increasing annual funding to develop the co-operative and mutuals sector.

Rachael Maskell: [\[27654\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to encourage (a) Local Enterprise Partnerships, (b) universities and (c) local authorities to invest in co-operative and mutual incubators and accelerators to grow that sector.

John Glen:

The Chancellor and I meet with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on a regular basis to discuss a range of issues. The Government sees co-operatives as a vital part of the UK economy, delivering services that their members and local communities need.

The Government recognises that incubators and accelerators play a crucial role in helping businesses. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and universities can support their local area through creating an environment to encourage co-operatives and mutuals to start and grow. Through the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government expects LEPs to continue to embed a strong, independent local business voice into decision-making fora, and to develop local economic strategies based on business intelligence about their area. This could include co-operative and mutual incubators and accelerators, as appropriate to the local context. As LEPs transition to new arrangements, we want to ensure that businesses, including mutuals and cooperatives, continue to be able to access the support, insights, and representation that LEPs provide, and to ensure that an independent business and stakeholder voice continues to play its vital role supporting growth in all parts of England.

The 2022-23 Local Government Finance Settlement is un-ringfenced to ensure local authorities can prioritise funding based on their own understanding of the needs of their local communities. As democratically elected organisations, local authorities are responsible for managing their budgets and making spending decisions that reflect their priorities, which may include mutuals.

The Government is committed to increasing innovation and, in turn, jobs, growth and prosperity to all parts of the UK. The UK Innovation Strategy, published in July 2021, sets out the Government's vision to make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035. To support delivery on the four pillars of the Strategy, BEIS is increasing funding for core Innovate UK programmes by 66% to £1.1 billion in 2024-2025. This will further help connect UK companies, such as co-operatives and mutuals, to the capital, skills and connections needed to innovate and grow.

■ Credit**Sir Charles Walker:** [\[27553\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the total value of transactions in the UK debt market where the legal advice has been provided under Sponsor Designation by the borrower to the lender over the last 10 years; what assessment his Department has made of the potential risk that Sponsor Designation of legal advice poses to the debt market; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Charles Walker: [\[27554\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has raised concerns about the use of Sponsor Designated legal advice in the UK debt market with the (a) Financial Conduct Authority and (b) Solicitors Regulation Authority during the last five years; and if he will make statement.

John Glen:

The UK is well known internationally as a hub for high quality capital markets backed by strong and effective regulation. The Treasury is committed to ensuring the proper functioning of capital markets, including working with the Financial Conduct Authority to monitor any potential risks to UK markets.

The Treasury is not aware of any concerns that Sponsor Designation of legal advice poses a risk to UK debt markets, and as such has not raised this matter with the Financial Conduct Authority or the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

■ Electric Vehicles: Excise Duties**Alberto Costa:** [\[25907\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of newly converted electric vehicles having zero-rated road tax.

Helen Whately:

The Government are aware of the small market for EV conversions. Vehicles originally designed to run on electricity currently attract a nil rate of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED), but this is not necessarily the case for vehicles converted from internal combustion engine (ICE) to electric vehicle (EV). Vehicles first registered after 1 March 2001 which are converted to electric are not able to have their VED treatment changed.

The Government is strongly committed to the safety of UK road users. Therefore, in considering any changes to the VED treatment of converted vehicles, it must make sure that it does not indirectly encourage unsafe practices. The variety of conversion options, carried out with differing degrees of technical expertise, gives rise to complex safety and operational challenges.

However, as with all taxes, HMT and DfT will work closely to keep this policy under review as the market continues to develop.

Motorists should check the resultant tax liabilities of their vehicle before agreeing to undertake a conversion from ICE to EV.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Taxation**

Stephen Hammond:

[\[26731\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to announce the Benefit-in-Kind tax rates that will be applicable for 2025-26 for electric vehicles.

Helen Whately:

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

■ **Financial Services: Forests**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[26859\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the report of Global Witness entitled Cash Cow, published on 23 June 2022, what steps his Department plans to take to prevent UK financiers from providing support to companies associated with deforestation.

John Glen:

The Government has taken ambitious action to green the financial system. The UK was the first country in the world to commit to fully mandatory disclosures aligned with the Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). These rules have now been introduced by the FCA, BEIS and DWP.

The Government is also supporting the work of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) which will provide a framework for corporates and financial institutions to report and act on nature-related risks, including deforestation. TNFD will build, consult on and test its framework, which it aims to launch in 2023. As part of its response to the Dasgupta Review, the Government committed up to £3m additional support to the development of the TNFD framework.

■ **Fuels: Taxation**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25818\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will reduce the amount of taxation levied on fuels.

Helen Whately:

At Spring Statement 2022 in response to fuel prices reaching record levels, the government announced a temporary 12-month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre.

This is the largest cash-terms cut across all fuel duty rates at once, ever, and is only the second time in 20 years that main rates of petrol and diesel have been cut. This

cut represents savings for households and businesses worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23.

All taxes, including fuel duty, remain under review.

■ Fuels: Wales

Virginia Crosbie:

[27764]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits to consumers of extending the Rural Fuel Duty Relief scheme to (a) Ynys Môn constituency and (b) other rural parts of Wales.

Helen Whately:

The Rural Fuel Duty Relief gives support to petrol and diesel users by compensating fuel retailers in some rural areas. The criteria for the scheme are set out in a public notice that can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-duty-relief-scheme-notice-2001>.

At Spring Statement 2022 in response to fuel prices reaching record levels, the government announced a temporary 12-month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre. This is the largest cash-terms cut across all fuel duty rates at once, ever, and is only the second time in 20 years that main rates of petrol and diesel have been cut. This cut represents savings for households and businesses worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23.

The government has no current plans to revise Rural Fuel Duty Relief, but keeps all taxes under review.

■ Government Departments: Audit

Rachael Maskell:

[27658]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) criteria and (b) processes determine whether a matter is internally audited by Government or independently scrutinised by an independent body in relation to appraising the functions of Government.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The remit of and approach to internal audit in central government is set by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which are mandated by HM Treasury. The PSIAS (which are themselves based on the International Professional Practices Framework for internal auditors in the profession more broadly) set the remit of internal audit essentially as covering the adequacy and effectiveness risk management, control and governance matters. The precise areas covered in the internal audit programme at each government entity is a matter for agreement with the relevant accounting officer and typically focus on key risk areas and major management processes. The role of internal audit in government is underpinned by the Corporate Governance Code of Good Practice and Managing Public Money.

The basis for determining matters to be independently scrutinised varies from case to case. Probably most notably the role of the National Audit Office focuses largely on

financial reporting and value for money. The planning, conduct and reporting of that work is independent of government and underpinned by separate legislation and professional standards. Numerous other independent bodies focus on specific sectors or functions and have different remits accordingly.

■ **Joint Unit for Waste Crime: Staff**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[27547\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 18815 on Joint Unit for Waste Crime and with reference to the report by the National Audit Office entitled Investigation into government's actions to combat waste crime in England, published on 27 April 2022, HC 1149, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of permanently deploying staff from HMRC to the Joint Unit for Waste Crime.

Lucy Frazer:

There continues to be very close collaboration with the Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC), including the current HMRC resource deployment. Whilst JUWC is focused on the overall challenge of combatting waste crime, tax compliance plays an important role, and HMRC will continue to evaluate the contribution it makes to the Environment Agency.

■ **Mortgages: Interest Rates**

Chris Evans: [\[27580\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to cap standard variable mortgage rates for inactive lenders to protect people who cannot move their mortgages.

Chris Evans: [\[27581\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Financial Conduct Authority's Mortgage Prisoner Review published on 29 November 2021, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of that report.

John Glen:

In November 2021, I laid before Parliament a review on the issue of mortgage prisoners conducted by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This review found that there are 47,000 mortgage prisoners who might benefit from switching to a new mortgage deal but are considered too high risk to do so, despite being up to date with payments.

The review makes clear that the reasons mortgage prisoners are unable to switch are complex and varied, including a high proportion of interest-only mortgage borrowers with no clear repayment plan and pre-financial crisis legacy issues such as borrowers self-certifying their income on their loan applications. A comprehensive understanding of the circumstances of mortgage prisoners is therefore crucial in progressing work and the FCA's review provides the key insight necessary to facilitate this. Following this and previous interventions to help borrowers switch, the Government is working

with industry to determine if any further solutions that can be found to help mortgage prisoners.

This further work must consider the practicality of solutions and their effects on the wider mortgage market, including the resilience of firms and fairness to other borrowers. A cap on the Standard Variable Rates (SVRs) charged by inactive firms would be an unprecedented market intervention and would undermine the principle of risk-based pricing which underlies the mortgage market. It would entail risks to the financial stability of firms which would be unable to vary their rates in line with their costs of funding and would be deeply unfair to borrowers in the wider mortgage market who pay similar rates to mortgage prisoners. It is worth noting that the SVRs charged by inactive firms are in line with those paid by borrowers in the active market.

The Government continues to examine what further practical and proportionate solutions existing to help mortgage prisoners which do not pose unacceptable financial stability risks or are unfair to other borrowers in the mortgage market.

■ **Multinational Companies: Tax Avoidance**

Emma Hardy: [\[25982\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the impact of profit shifting by multinational enterprises on the tax gap.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC does not make a separate estimate of the amount of made of the impact of profit shifting by multinational enterprises on the tax gap.

Some forms of base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) are included in the Corporation Tax gap where they represent tax loss that HMRC can address under UK law. The tax gap does not include BEPS arrangements that cannot be addressed under UK law.

The Corporation Tax gap is estimated to be 9.0 per cent of the overall Corporation Tax total theoretical liability in the tax year 2020-21, which equates to £5.6 billion.

■ **National Security Council**

John Healey: [\[26693\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many meetings of the National Security Council he has attended since April 2022.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The National Security Council is a committee of the Cabinet. It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

■ National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers

Sam Tarry: [\[24697\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he last met a representative of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers in person.

Helen Whately:

Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published as part of the Department's transparency data. The Chancellor has not had any meetings with representatives of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers within the last reporting period for ministerial meetings (1 October to 31 December 2021).

■ New Businesses: Investment

Rachael Maskell: [\[27651\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on increasing the level of annual investment in business incubators.

Rachael Maskell: [\[27652\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on increasing annual investment in business accelerators.

Helen Whately:

The Chancellor meets with BEIS Secretary of State on a regular basis, to discuss a variety of issues. Business incubators and accelerators play a crucial role in helping entrepreneurs start and grow their business. This builds on several government programmes to support business including supporting access to finance through British Business programmes like Start-Up Loans and Regional Funds, Help to Grow: Management and Help to Grow: Digital, and Innovate UK's work – helping business to grow whilst levelling-up productivity across the UK.

■ Research and Development Tax Credit

Emma Hardy: [\[25981\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC includes estimates of fraud and error in Research and Development tax credit claims in its calculation of the tax gap.

Lucy Frazer:

Estimates of error and fraud relating to Corporation Tax research and development tax credit claims are out of the scope of HMRC's 'Measuring tax gaps publications', which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/measuring-tax-gaps>. The tax gap estimates only cover the taxes administered by HMRC and excludes payments made by HMRC, including research and development tax credits.

Estimates of error and fraud in research and development tax credit claims are published in HMRC's Annual Report and Accounts, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrcs-annual-report-and-accounts>. In 2020-21, the estimated level of error and fraud in research and development tax credits claims was 3.6 per cent (£336 million) of the estimated cost of the reliefs (£9.3 billion). The estimated level of error and fraud is 5.5 per cent (£303 million) in the small and medium enterprises scheme and 0.9 per cent (£33 million) in the research and development expenditure credit scheme.

■ Tax Evasion

Emma Hardy:

[\[25983\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the impact of tax fraud on the tax gap.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC does not make a separate estimate of the amount of the impact of tax fraud within the tax gap.

HMRC defines fraud as any deliberate omission, concealment, or misinterpretation of information, or the false or deceptive presentation of information or circumstances in order to gain a tax advantage.

Tax fraud covers a wide range of illegal activity, including:

- deliberately submitting false tax returns
- falsely claiming repayments or reliefs
- hiding income, gains or wealth offshore
- smuggling taxable goods

Some of this is carried out by dishonest individuals, but organised criminals also deliberately target the tax system for financial gain.

The tax gap includes the following illustrative estimates by customer behaviour for the tax year 2020-21.

| BEHAVIOR | VALUE | SHARE OF TAX GAP |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------------|
| Failure to take reasonable care | £6.1bn | 19% |
| Criminal attacks | £5.2bn | 16% |
| Non-payment | £4.9bn | 15% |
| Evasion | £4.8bn | 15% |
| Legal interpretation | £3.7bn | 12% |
| Hidden economy | £3.2bn | 10% |
| Error | £3.0bn | 9% |

| BEHAVIOR | VALUE | SHARE OF TAX GAP |
|-----------|--------|------------------|
| Avoidance | £1.2bn | 4% |

■ Treasury: Consultants

Sarah Olney:

[\[27695\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department has spent on consultancy fees in each of the last five years.

Helen Whately:

HM Treasury's spend on consultancy is published and available for viewing within the Annual Report and Accounts. HMT is yet to lay its accounts for 2021-22, but these are due to be published prior to the summer recess. We have included the links to the published Annual Report and Accounts for each of the available years in question within the table below.

| FINANCIAL YEAR | PUBLICATION LINK | PAGE REFERENCE |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| 2017-18 | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/724104/2017-18_Final_HMT_ARA__web_.pdf | Page 84 |
| 2018-19 | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019 | Page 88 |
| 2019-20 | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020 | Page 104 |
| 2020-21 | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021 | Page 101 |

WALES

■ Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022

Beth Winter:

[\[26883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 June 2022 on Business Update, Official Report, HCWS137, whether he had discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential impact of The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022 on employment relations in Wales.

Beth Winter:

[\[26884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with reference to the Written Statement of 23 June 2022 on Business Update, Official Report, HCWS137, whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Government on the potential impact of The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022 on employment relations in Wales.

Simon Hart:

I have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Welsh Ministers on a wide range of issues. As previously stated in 2017, the UK Government intends to legislate to remove the Trade Union (Wales) Act 2017 through primary legislation when Parliamentary time allows.

The repeal of Regulation 7, which will apply across all sectors, is designed to minimise the negative and unfair impact of strikes on the British public by ensuring that businesses and services can continue operating. Strikes in public services, such as education, can often mean parents have to stay at home with their children rather than go to work. Strikes in the rail sector stop commuters getting to work.

Removing Regulation 7 does not put in place any new barriers on an individual's right to take part in lawful industrial action. Employment businesses will not be required to supply agency workers to businesses, rather the change that we are making simply provides the freedom to do so, should they wish to.

While we continue to work with the Welsh Government in a number of areas, employment and industrial relations law is a reserved matter for the UK Government. It is right that we seek to apply trade union law equally and fairly across Britain to ensure that services, such as train lines, are run as effectively as possible.

■ Trade Union (Wales) Act 2017

Jo Stevens:

[\[27645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential impact of the Written Statement of 23 June 2022 on Business Update, Official Report, HCWS137, on Senedd Cymru's Trade Union (Wales) Act 2017.

Simon Hart:

I have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on a wide range of issues.

The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022 have no direct impact on the Trade Union (Wales) Act 2017.

Employment and industrial relations law is however a reserved matter. As previously stated in 2017, the UK Government intends to legislate to remove the Trade Union (Wales) Act 2017 through primary legislation when Parliamentary time allows, to ensure trade union legislation applies equally across Great Britain.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Public Sector: Equality

Kate Green:

[\[24586\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she plans to bring a commencement order for Section 1 Public Sector Duty on Socio-economic Inequalities of the Equality Act 2010; and if she will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has no plans to commence Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 in England. We have made clear on numerous occasions that this duty would be ineffectual. As merely a “due regard” duty, it requires no specific action from the public body concerned, and risks becoming a tick-box exercise, complied with to minimise the risk of litigation rather than to promote real change in society. The duty is also wrongly focussed on equalising socio-economic outcomes rather than opportunities.

The Government’s preferred approach is to progress specific policies and practical actions that will deliver real change. Our agenda set out in the White Paper ‘Levelling Up the United Kingdom’ is key to this and we are promoting social mobility and tackling inequality through a range of initiatives – for example in education, through reforms to the welfare system, by giving greater developmental devolution in England and rebalancing the economy through schemes such as the Towns Fund.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carer's Allowance

Kate Green:

[\[25849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of carers received Carer's Allowance but do not live with the person they care for in (i) England, (ii) Wales, (iii) Scotland and (iv) Northern Ireland in the most recent period for which data is available.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 30 June 2022]: The data held by analysts is anonymised, and therefore does not show the address of the Carer’s Allowance recipient or the disabled person they care for. Therefore, we are unable to provide the figures to answer this part of the question.

The following table shows the latest available statistics in Great Britain at November 2021, of the number of Carer’s Allowance recipients. These figures are broken down further for England, Wales and Scotland.

| | GREAT BRITAIN | ENGLAND | WALES | SCOTLAND |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------|--------|----------|
| Carer's Allowance recipients | 921,320 | 783,800 | 56,450 | 80,380 |

Source: DWP Stat-Xplore – November 2021

Notes

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. We do not hold information on the number of carers not in receipt of a carer's benefit.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Chris Stephens:

[\[26786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her Department's planned timetable is for all Personal Independence Payment applicants to have the choice of a recorded assessment.

Chloe Smith:

The option for a claimant to request an audio recording of their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) telephone or face-to-face assessment is already available, and we are working closely with providers to add the functionality to video assessments. In addition to this, from January 2022, claimants can make their own recordings on a device of their choosing if they do not wish for the assessment to be recorded on their behalf.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[26855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the proportion of decisions on Personal Independence Payment awards that were reversed as a result of mandatory reconsideration in the past year; and if she will make an assessment of the principal reasons for the reversal of those decisions.

Chloe Smith:

The proportions of decisions on Personal Independence Payments that were reversed as a result of mandatory reconsideration in the past year is available on Stat-Xplore: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>. In particular, see the 'PIP MR Clearances' table and the column "New Decision – Award Changed" for reversed decisions. To calculate the proportions, divide the values in this column by the total values of all decisions in the time period of interest.

The principal reasons for reversal are not collated centrally.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Standards

Chris Stephens: [\[26788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the (a) shortest, (b) median and (c) longest waiting times are among Personal Independence Payment applicants who are awaiting an assessment as of 28 June 2022.

Chloe Smith:

Time waiting for assessment is defined as the time from the date an application was referred to the provider from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to the date the assessment was completed and referred back to DWP. Where claimants are outstanding, the assessment is not yet complete.

Shortest waiting times:

Shortest waiting times relate to Special rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) cases where claimants have a terminal diagnosis.

As of May 2022 (the latest available data), the average time for an SRTI case to be returned to DWP after referral to a provider (i.e., assessment is complete) was 1.61 working days.

Median waiting times:

Median waiting times for each stage of the claimant process can be found in [published stats](#).

Median time waiting for an assessment as of April 2022 (the latest available data) was 12 weeks for new claims and 11 weeks for reassessments.

Longest waiting time:

Latest data from 20 June 2022 shows the oldest case was referred in July 2021.

Chris Stephens: [\[26789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people were awaiting an assessment for Personal Independence Payment in each of the last 12 months for which data are available.

Chloe Smith:

The total number of claimants that were awaiting an assessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), in each of the last 12 months, is provided in the table below.

| MONTH | PEOPLE AWAITING ASSESSMENT |
|--------|----------------------------|
| Jun-21 | 220,840 |
| Jul-21 | 235,790 |
| Aug-21 | 266,650 |
| Sep-21 | 279,600 |

| MONTH | PEOPLE AWAITING ASSESSMENT |
|--------|----------------------------|
| Oct-21 | 295,570 |
| Nov-21 | 294,750 |
| Dec-21 | 311,870 |
| Jan-22 | 313,420 |
| Feb-22 | 312,480 |
| Mar-22 | 311,390 |
| Apr-22 | 317,220 |
| May-22 | 312,470 |

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

All of the above data is derived from contractual management information produced by the assessment providers.

Please note: the above data is derived from unpublished management information which is collected for internal departmental use only and has not been quality assured to Official Statistics Publication standards.

■ Social Security Benefits

Sir Stephen Timms: [\[27503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she last reviewed the benefit cap.

David Rutley:

There is a statutory duty to review the levels every Parliament. The last time the Benefit cap was reviewed was November 2016.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[26854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department is taking steps to (a) collect and (b) evaluate evidence in order to understand the reasons for successful Mandatory Reconsiderations.

Chloe Smith:

The reasons for successful Mandatory Reconsiderations are not collated centrally.

Whilst evaluation does take place at a local level on a case by case basis, and we will continue to build on this, the Department's overarching focus at the MR stage is on ensuring that each application is thoroughly reviewed, including as necessary

contacting the claimant, so that it achieves its goal of making the right decision at the earliest opportunity.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[26856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, who has responsibility for holding data relating to mandatory reconsideration of benefit decisions.

Chloe Smith:

Various divisions within the Department hold responsibility for the recording, use, and management of these data items.

■ Social Security Benefits: Carers

Kate Green: [\[25845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of carers received both (a) the carer element of Universal Credit and (b) Carer's Allowance in (i) England, (ii) Wales, (iii) Scotland and (iv) Northern Ireland in the most recent period for which data is available.

Kate Green: [\[25846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of carers received both (a) Pension Credit and (b) Carer Addition in (i) England, (ii) Wales, (iii) Scotland and (iv) Northern Ireland in the most recent period for which data is available.

Kate Green: [\[25847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of carers received both Universal Credit and Carer's Allowance but not the carer element of Universal Credit in (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland in the most recent period for which data is available.

Kate Green: [\[25848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of carers received both the (a) Carer's Allowance and (b) Carer Premium in (i) England, (ii) Wales, (iii) Scotland and (iv) Northern Ireland in the most recent period for which data is available.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 30 June 2022]: The following table shows the latest available statistics in Great Britain at November 2021, of the number of Carer's Allowance recipients who are also in receipt of the:

- Carer premium via Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support and Housing Benefit;
- Carer addition via Pension Credit;
- Carer element via Universal Credit.

These figures are broken down further for England, Wales and Scotland.

| | GREAT BRITAIN | ENGLAND | WALES | SCOTLAND |
|---|----------------------|---------|--------|----------|
| Carer's Allowance recipients | 921,320 | 783,800 | 56,450 | 80,380 |
| Carer's Allowance recipients also in receipt of: | | | | |
| Universal Credit (receiving carer element) | 248,570 | 212,180 | 14,040 | 22,330 |
| Universal Credit (not receiving carer element) | 34,770 | 29,900 | 1,930 | 2,940 |
| Jobseeker's Allowance carer premium | 700 | 600 | 0 | 100 |
| Income Support carer premium | 155,680 | 131,200 | 9,540 | 14,940 |
| Pension Credit carer addition | 3,280 | 3,000 | 120 | 170 |
| Housing Benefit carer premium | 92,530 | 79,720 | 5,950 | 6,860 |

Source: DWP Quarterly Statistical Enquiry 5% data, 100% DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) and DWP Single Housing Benefit Extract (November 2021)

Notes

1. Figures for Universal Credit (UC), Income Support (IS), Pension Credit (PC) and Housing Benefit (HB) are rounded to the nearest 10 and Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) is rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. JSA figures have been updated using 5% proportions against 100% Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) totals.
3. The figures shown will be a subset of the total numbers in receipt of each carer premium / addition / element, as it's possible for carers to receive these without also being in receipt of Carer's Allowance.
4. We do not hold information on the number of carers not in receipt of a carer's benefit.

The information requested is not readily available for Employment and Support Allowance claimants, or Carer's Allowance claimants who are partners of those receiving Income Support or Pension Credit. To provide this additional information would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

Chris Stephens: [\[26787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her Department's timetable is for running another pilot of non-financial penalties in place of benefit sanctions.

Mims Davies:

We have no plans to run another pilot at this time.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Romford**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many recipients of (a) Universal Credit and (b) Personal Independence Payment reside in Romford constituency as of 27 June 2022.

Chloe Smith:

Monthly statistics on the number of people who are on (a) Universal Credit (UC) and (b) Personal Independence Payment (PIP), by Westminster parliamentary constituency, can be found at:

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

■ **State Retirement Pensions: USA**

Rachael Maskell: [\[25923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether there is a specific process for working between the US and UK in order to have US accrued benefits recognised by the State Pension Scheme.

Guy Opperman:

When a customer makes their claim to UK State Pension and advises that they have worked in the USA the International Pension Centre will take the necessary steps to obtain USA insurance records and calculate the best payable rate of State Pension for the customer using both UK and USA insurance.

To qualify for a full UK State Pension a customer must have at least 35-years of paid or credited UK National Insurance contributions.

To qualify for any UK State Pension a customer must meet the Minimum Qualifying Period of 10-years of paid or credited National Insurance contributions. Satisfying the Qualifying Period enables a customer to receive 1/35 of the full UK State Pension for every year of contributions on their National Insurance record.

When a customer does not meet the Minimum Qualifying Period and has worked and paid insurance in the USA we can use these records to help satisfy the 10 year Minimum Qualify Period. However, it is important to understand the payable rate of their UK State Pension will only be calculated based on the number of years of contributions on their UK National Insurance record.

The UK has a Reciprocal Agreement with the USA which allows for insurance paid in the USA to be considered when establishing a customer's entitlement to the UK State Pension.

■ Unemployment: Young People

Neil Coyle:

[\[27632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the impact of her Department's policies to help people under 25 get into work on levels of youth unemployment in the most recent period for which data is available.

Mims Davies:

The Department launched the Plan for Jobs as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes DWP's Youth Offer and the Kickstart Scheme which are targeted at supporting young people aged under 25 to find employment.

The DWP Youth Offer provides intensive Work Coach support to young people aged 16 to 24 on Universal Credit and in the Intensive Work Search group. It includes the Youth Employment Programme, Youth Employability Coaches for young people with complex needs and additional barriers, and over 150 Youth Hubs across England, Scotland, and Wales.

Since the Kickstart Scheme's launch in September 2020 over 163,000 Kickstart jobs have been started by young people. We know that young people have been hardest hit by the economic impact of the pandemic and are delighted that employers up and down the country have made over 235,000 jobs available for them to apply to. The final Kickstart job starts took place on 31st March 2022 and the last jobs will come to an end on 30th September 2022.

The Department has a range of evaluation activities in train to assess the impact these policies on young people, in particular in relation to the department's evaluation of the Plan for Jobs, including the DWP Youth Offer and the Kickstart Scheme.

Official Labour Market Statistics are produced by the ONS. The latest data (Feb-April '22) shows that 455,000 young people are unemployed, this is a decrease of 7,000 on the previous quarter and a decrease of 59,000 compared to pre-pandemic levels (Dec-Feb '20).

■ Universal Credit

Sir Stephen Timms:

[\[24534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee of the Change Director General and Senior

Responsible Owner for universal credit, on 24 November 2021, Q34, HC728, how many cases of the 90,000 estimated as not correct have been identified through re-verification as not correct; and in how many of those cases has mandatory reconsideration been applied for.

David Rutley:

In March 2020 the Department introduced a temporary verification easement to Universal Credit claims to support people during the height of the pandemic. This easement meant the Department successfully paid an additional 2.4 million claims during the early months of the pandemic.

We reported last year on how we were reviewing cases paid under these temporary verification easements, known as “Trust and Protect”, and were re-applying these specific checks. The number of cases where evidence has been reviewed under this process has now risen from the figure of 900,000 previously reported to 1.1 million.

Of that number, 125,000 cases have been found to have an element of incorrectness that has affected the original entitlement decision. Decisions made as a result of this exercise have generated c14,500 (12%) Mandatory Reconsideration requests. (This data is based on internal and emerging internal management information and therefore has not been subject to the same degree of scrutiny and quality assurance as an official statistic.)

The learning from this work is informing the new Targeted Case Review exercise announced in the ‘Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System’ plan (published May 2022) which will review over 2 million UC claims over the next 5 years.

■ **Universal Credit: Veterans**

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[27713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2022 to Question 11814, on Universal Credit: Veterans, if she will publish data on veterans in receipt of Universal Credit broken down into categories, including age and gender.

David Rutley:

We are currently looking at options to develop and publish statistics on armed forces personnel on UC, including breakdowns by claim characteristics.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Developing Countries: LGBT+ People

David Mundell:

[\[24559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle the criminalisation of same-sex relationships in Commonwealth countries; whether her Department has made funding available to LGBT+ organisations which work to tackle that legislation in those countries in the last year; and if she will take steps to make the UK a leading funder of those organisations.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Vicky Ford:

~~The UK is committed to championing LGBT+ rights internationally and supporting those who defend them. Ministers and our overseas missions work closely with partners to advance LGBT+ equality, and promote the implementation of new laws and policies that better protect LGBT+ people from violence and discrimination.~~

~~Since 2018, the UK committed over £11 million in programmes to support the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights. On 24 June, the Prime Minister announced a further £2.7 million of UK funding to support LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders, and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth.~~

As Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, the UK committed over £11 million in programmes to support the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights across the Commonwealth, including through partners such as The Commonwealth Equality Network, Human Dignity Trust and Kaleidoscope Trust.

Since CHOGM 2018, UK funding has facilitated the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to eight Commonwealth countries seeking to repeal or reform legislation that discriminates on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation or gender identity. This is extremely sensitive work, often conducted discreetly due to political, social and cultural sensitivities.

On 24 June, the Prime Minister announced £2.7 million of new UK funding to support the vital work of LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders. We will continue to work closely with like-minded countries and civil society organisations to defend the human rights of LGBT+ people, and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth.

JUSTICE

■ Prisoners' Release: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[13795\]](#)

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

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 14 June 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Victoria Atkins:

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

Please note that where the number released from an establishment was 5 or fewer, the specific figure has not been given, in order to avoid the risk of identifying individuals.

The numerical information provided has been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible error with data entry and processing.

The available information is shown in the table below.

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------|------|------|
| Altcourse | 75 | ≤5 |
| Ashfield | 9 | |
| Askham Grange | ≤5 | |
| Belmarsh | ≤5 | |
| Berwyn | 538 | 116 |
| Birmingham | 7 | |
| Brinsford | ≤5 | |
| Bristol | 11 | ≤5 |
| Brixton | ≤5 | |

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|----------------|------|------|
| Bronzefield | ≤5 | |
| Bullingdon | ≤5 | |
| Cardiff | 1032 | 169 |
| Channings Wood | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Chelmsford | ≤5 | |
| Coldingley | ≤5 | |
| Dartmoor | ≤5 | |
| Deerbolt | ≤5 | |
| Doncaster | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Dovegate | ≤5 | |
| Downview | 7 | |
| Drake Hall | 10 | ≤5 |
| Eastwood Park | 225 | 38 |
| Elmley | ≤5 | |
| Erlestoke | ≤5 | |
| Exeter | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Featherstone | ≤5 | |
| Feltham | ≤5 | |
| Ford | ≤5 | |
| Forest Bank | 6 | ≤5 |
| Foston Hall | ≤5 | |
| Garth | ≤5 | |
| Guys Marsh | ≤5 | |
| Haverigg | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Hewell | 11 | 6 |
| High Down | ≤5 | |

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Hindley | 10 | ≤5 |
| Hollesley Bay | ≤5 | |
| Holme House | ≤5 | |
| Hull | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Humber | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Huntercombe | 9 | ≤5 |
| Isis | | ≤5 |
| Kirkham | 27 | 7 |
| Lancaster Farms | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Leeds | ≤5 | |
| Lewes | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Leyhill | 17 | ≤5 |
| Lincoln | ≤5 | |
| Lindholme | ≤5 | |
| Littlehey | | ≤5 |
| Liverpool | ≤5 | |
| Low Newton | ≤5 | |
| Lowdham Grange | ≤5 | |
| Maidstone | ≤5 | |
| Moorland | ≤5 | |
| Mount | ≤5 | |
| New Hall | ≤5 | |
| North Sea Camp | 7 | |
| Northumberland | ≤5 | |
| Nottingham | | ≤5 |
| Oakwood | 20 | ≤5 |

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Parc | 619 | 158 |
| Pentonville | 11 | |
| Peterborough | ≤5 | |
| Peterborough (female) | ≤5 | |
| Portland | 6 | ≤5 |
| Prescoed | 148 | 30 |
| Preston | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Ranby | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Risley | 20 | ≤5 |
| Rochester | ≤5 | |
| Rye Hill | ≤5 | |
| Send | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Spring Hill | ≤5 | |
| Stafford | 22 | 6 |
| Stoke Heath | 28 | ≤5 |
| Styal | 54 | ≤5 |
| Sudbury | ≤5 | |
| Swansea | 670 | 93 |
| Swinfen Hall | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Thameside | ≤5 | |
| Thorn Cross | 13 | ≤5 |
| Usk | 66 | 15 |
| Verne | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Wandsworth | ≤5 | |
| Warren Hill | | ≤5 |
| Wayland | ≤5 | ≤5 |

| PRISON NAME | 2020 | 2021 |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Wealstun | ≤5 | |
| Werrington | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| Wetherby | ≤5 | |
| Whatton | 7 | ≤5 |
| Winchester | ≤5 | |
| Woodhill | ≤5 | |
| Wormwood Scrubs | ≤5 | |
| Wymott | 10 | |

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Second Post-Implementation Review of the Network and Information Systems Regulations 2018**

Minister for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure (Julia Lopez): [\[HCWS173\]](#)

Today I am publishing the statutory [post-implementation review of the Network and Information Systems Regulations 2018](#) on the Government's website. This is the second review of the Regulations since their implementation.

The Regulations came into force in May 2018. The objective of the Regulations is to improve the security of network and information systems which are critical to the provision of essential services and digital services which, if disrupted, could cause significant economic and social harm to people, businesses, and critical national infrastructure.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport has assessed the impact, costs and benefits of the Regulations, how effective the Regulations have been in achieving the original objectives, and whether those objectives remain appropriate for the UK four years on.

The review is clear that the Regulations have acted as an accelerator for improvements to the security of regulated organisations. Regulated organisations have shown an increase in the prioritisation of cyber security at senior level, increased investment in cyber security from boards, the introduction or improvement of cyber security policies, improved incident response management, and a greater awareness of aggregate risks.

The review concludes that the Regulations are an effective tool to drive good cyber security behaviours. As such, it recommends that the Government retain the Regulations to continue to incentivise organisations in scope to make security improvements.

The report also makes recommendations for changes to strengthen and future-proof the regulatory framework, so that it can adapt effectively to the rapidly evolving landscape. These changes were included in my department's public consultation on proposals for cyber security-related legislation in January this year. The outcomes of this consultation will be published later this year.

The next statutory Post-Implementation Review of the Regulations will be carried out in the next five years.

EDUCATION

■ Early Years Update

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families (Will Quince): **[\[HCWS175\]](#)**

This government is committed to ensuring that families can access high quality and flexible childcare and early education that helps children to learn in their earliest years, provides enriching experiences around school hours and supports families and the economy by enabling parents to work.

With the cost of living rising, we want as many families as possible to benefit from the childcare support they are entitled to, saving them money, and helping to give children the best start in life.

This government has extended access to early education and childcare to millions of children and parents over the past decade. We invest a significant amount of funding in early education and childcare, including over £3.5 billion in each of the past three years on early education entitlements for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

We have also introduced tax-free childcare, which provides working parents with support of up to £2,000 a year to help with childcare costs for children under 12, or £4,000 for disabled children under 17, and Universal Credit, where parents can claim back up to 85% of eligible childcare costs, compared to 70% under tax credits.

The government has today announced plans to improve the cost, choice and availability of childcare that will benefit families and give childcare providers more flexibility and autonomy to make decisions about their settings and needs of children.

We will support more people to become childminders, which are generally the most affordable and flexible form of childcare, by:

- Reducing the upfront costs of becoming a childminder via financial support
- Allowing childminders to spend more of their time working from a greater range of locations.
- Clarifying flexibilities in childminders' ratios when looking after their own children, or siblings of other children.
- Working with Ofsted to reduce inspection for childminders.
- Publishing a slimmed down, childminder specific Early Years Foundation Stage framework.
- Encouraging the growth of Childminder Agencies– stimulating competition and driving down costs while providing parents with more options for care.

We will also streamline the Ofsted registration process for providers. More providers registering would mean that parents have a wider choice of providers on which to use these schemes, to pay for childcare that supports their working lives.

With safety and quality at the heart, as a first step, today I am also confirming the publication of two consultations:

Childcare ratios and supervision while eating consultation

We are consulting on proposed [changes to the current statutory minimum early years staff:child ratios](#) in England for 2-year-olds from 1:4 to 1:5; and clarifying flexibilities in childminders' ratios when looking after their own children, or siblings of other children.

These proposals hand greater flexibility and autonomy to providers to exercise professional judgement in their staffing decisions, according to the needs of their children. This change would bring minimum requirements into line with those in Scotland.

As we continue this journey, there will be opportunities to explore further reform to statutory staffing requirements, and this document invites early views on some potential additional options.

We are also consulting on supervision requirements while children are eating, to ensure the safety of every child across early years settings. Engagement with early years providers to date suggests that for many settings, adequate supervision while eating is already understood to mean that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff. We believe that an explicit requirement in the Early Years Foundation Stage will reinforce this practice and ensure the safety of children in early years settings.

The Early Years National Funding Formula and Maintained Nursery School funding consultation

We are consulting on [Updates to the funding formulae](#) for the two-year-old and three- and four-year-old early education entitlements in England, the scope of which will also include the distribution of supplementary funding for maintained nursery schools.

We are proposing to update and adjust the funding formulae used to distribute the Government's investment in the early years entitlements - which deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare for eligible two, three and four-year-olds for 38 weeks a year - fairly and transparently to local authorities across England.

Many of the datasets which underpin these formulae, and which we use to reflect geographical cost variation, are not up to date. It is important that they remain current, to ensure the funding system can be fair, effective and responsive to changing levels of need across different areas, with targeted investment towards those areas where it will do the most good. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we are therefore planning to update the formulae for the 2023-24 financial year and intend to continue to do so annually thereafter. We are also consulting on proposals to mainstream the early years elements of the teachers' pay grant and the teachers' pension employer contribution grant from 2023-24, bringing early years in line with schools and high needs.

The proposed update will result in some changes to local authority funding levels given costs and levels of need in certain areas will have changed relative to others. As such, we are also consulting on applying new year-to-year protections to local authority funding rates, to help local markets to manage changes better. The 2021 Spending Review

settlement allows us to offer protections which means all local authorities will see an increase in the hourly rate that the government provides for 2023-24.

We are also consulting on proposals to reform maintained nursery school supplementary funding. Maintained nursery schools make a valuable contribution to improving the lives of some of our most disadvantaged children. As we have confirmed continuation of maintained nursery school supplementary funding throughout the Spending Review period, it is now right to examine the way in which this funding is distributed to LAs. We are therefore proposing to invest an additional £10 million into maintained nursery school supplementary funding from 2023-24 and are consulting on proposals to create a fairer distribution of the funding across all LAs with maintained nursery schools.

Taken together, our current and proposed reforms not only reflect the government's commitment to supporting as many families as possible with access to high quality, affordable childcare, but also provide the foundation for taking a renewed look into the childcare system.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Independent Report on the implementation of the Bishop of Truro's recommendations

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Elizabeth Truss): [\[HCWS174\]](#)

At the beginning of 2019, former Foreign Secretary The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, asked the Bishop of Truro to review what more the then FCO could do to address the persecution of Christians. The Bishop published a report in July 2019 setting out the gravity of the issue, as well as practical recommendations for an enhanced FCO response to the plight of persecuted Christians and people persecuted for holding other religions, beliefs, or no religious belief at all.

Recognising that the persecution of people for their religion or belief is unacceptable and a significant international problem, the Government committed to implementing the recommendations of the Bishop's review. His final recommendation was that an independent assessment of our progress in doing so should be carried out three years after the original report. I am pleased to publish that assessment today. We welcome and accept this expert review on progress and in line with the findings, accept their assessment for the need to continue to work to promote and strengthen Freedom of Religion or Belief as a fundamental human right for all. We thank the reviewers for their important work. A copy of the report will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

I have seen first-hand how much work has gone in across the organisation to delivering the review recommendations. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has worked closely with the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Fiona Bruce MP, to promote freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) internationally and to oversee progress on implementing the review recommendations. The independent assessment concludes that the majority of the recommendations are either at an advanced stage of delivery or in the

process of being delivered, whilst noting that there is still more to do. The reviewers have also recognised where there have been constraints to delivery or an alternative approach has been taken.

I am encouraged by what has been achieved in recent years, in the face of many global challenges. We have led international efforts to increase collaboration to support those who are persecuted for what they believe. In March 2021, Lord Ahmad hosted a meeting at the UN Security Council to raise awareness of persecution of religious minorities in conflict zones. We used our G7 Presidency to secure language on FoRB in the G7 communique for the first time, galvanising support for those suffering discrimination and persecution. The FoRB Special Envoy holds the Chair of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance this year, demonstrating UK global leadership on FoRB. We have sent a clear message that the international community will not turn a blind eye to serious and systematic violations of human rights through our Global Human Rights sanctions regime. Religion for International Engagement training is now available to all civil servants to enhance their understanding of the role of religion and belief in a wide variety of contexts, in order to deliver the UK's international objectives more effectively.

Building on this work, we will continue to ensure that the changes we have made are embedded and to look for opportunities to make FoRB central to the FCDO's wider human rights work. We will do this, working alongside others, to deliver real change for the good, protecting and promoting everyone's right to freedom of religion or belief.

Our work on this important human rights issue will never be complete, and we will continue to champion global efforts on FoRB. As part of that, on 5-6 July this year, the UK will host an international ministerial conference on freedom of religion or belief. We look forward to welcoming partner countries and stakeholders from around the world to London.

Attachments:

1. FoRB report - Bishop of Truro [Independent Report on the implementation of the Bishop of Truro's recommendations.pdf]

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Building Regulations

Minister of State for Equalities, Local Government, Faith and Communities (Kemi Badenoch): [\[HCWS172\]](#)

Toilets, both in municipal and private sector locations, are an important facility for members of the public, in particular, women, those with children, older people and disabled people.

The Government has taken a number of steps recently to support the increase provision of 'Changing Places' toilets for disabled people for whom standard accessible toilets are not suitable. Last year, the Government introduced 100% business rates relief for public toilets in England and Wales.

In October 2020, Government published a review: *Toilet provision for men and women: call for evidence*. This stemmed from evidence that shows that increasing numbers of publicly accessible toilets are being converted into ‘gender neutral’ facilities, causing problems for women and older people in particular.

‘Gender neutral’ facilities mean men and women share the same space for waiting and hand wash facilities; these should be contrasted with dedicated, self-contained ‘unisex’ toilets which maintain privacy for the single user (also known as ‘universal toilets’).

Such ‘gender neutral’ toilets place women at a significant disadvantage. While men can then use both cubicles and urinals, women can only use the former. The net effect is actually to reduce toilet provision for women. Women also need safe spaces given their particular biological, health and sanitary needs (for example, women who are menstruating, pregnant or at menopause, may need to use the toilet more often). Women are also likely to feel less comfortable using mixed sex facilities.

The review also asked for views on increasing the ratio of female toilets. Male toilets typically allow for a quicker transition of customers due to the use of urinals, yet insufficient female toilets are provided for a comparative number of cubicles to allow the same number of users to be served. This is not to disadvantage any sex – but greater ratios of female cubicles would help avoid queues inside and outside toilets.

The Government is also aware of broader concerns that women’s biological differences are being ‘erased’ in public life. It is important that women’s biological needs are respected and taken into account in the provision of facilities such as toilets.

A high volume of responses were received to the call for evidence, all of which have been read and analysed.

The call for evidence analysis has been carefully considered, and research has been commissioned by my Department on the design of toilet facilities. Following on from this, in Autumn 2022, the Department will launch a technical consultation on formal changes to the building regulations and approved guidance, informed by the call for evidence responses.

The Government is minded to take the following approach to rules and guidance in England, subject to further consultation and assessment of equality impacts:

| POLICY GOAL | CHANGE TO THE BUILDING REGULATIONS AND APPROVED GUIDANCE |
|--|--|
| to amend building regulations and guidance to ensure separate toilets for men and women continues to be provided guidance to encourage the provision of a unisex toilet, where space allows | implementing a threshold approach i.e. above a certain number of toilet cubicles, require the provision of toilets for a range of users including separate male and female toilets, unisex toilets/ universal toilets, baby change, disabled persons toilets, and changing places toilets. |

where unisex toilets are provided, that privacy is ensured

to set out the design of a unisex self-contained/ universal toilet cubicle with a sink which is designed to maximise privacy (informed by research underway and the call for evidence analysis).

to announce the intent for greater provision of toilets to reduce queuing

we will work with the British Standards Institution to develop the evidence base with a view thereafter to them updating their relevant codes of practice.

The technical review will ensure that the specific requirements of disabled users remain salient, and that access to and provision of toilets for disabled people will not be undermined by wider improvements to toilet provision more generally. The Department will be considering already commissioned research on the design of both disabled persons' toilets and Changing Places toilets as part of this review.

Better customer toilet provision in commercial environments may encourage people to visit the premises. The Government will be undertaking a full Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Such changes to building rules will also complement existing statutory provisions in education law for schools to provide sex-specific (or self-contained unisex) toilets for children.

We would also encourage Government bodies to consider how such principles can be adopted now in its own buildings, prior to formal changes in building regulations.

The Government believes the proposals that we are minded to adopt will have positive equality outcomes for women, older people, pregnant women, those with babies, people who come under the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, and disabled people.

This common sense approach on protecting and improving toilet provision will ensure dignity, privacy, tolerance and respect for all, and further the cause of equality and inclusion by recognising the different needs of everyone in society.

TREASURY

■ Depositing Framework Documents in the House Libraries

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr Simon Clarke):

[\[HCWS176\]](#)

Framework documents constitute a core constitutional document of Arm's Length Bodies, and it is imperative that Accounting Officers, Board members and senior officials are familiar with them, ensure they are kept up to date and use them as guide to govern the collaborative relationship between the Arm's Length Body, the Sponsor Department and the rest of Government. It is also important for the purposes of scrutiny that Parliament is familiar with these documents, and has ready access to them as they are agreed and updated.

It has long been a requirement under the rules as set out in *Managing Public Money* for framework documents to be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. In order for the Libraries to receive documents for deposit a ministerial commitment to deposit must be made in the House. To facilitate transparency and ease the process of ensuring these important governance documents are made available to Parliament I am making a commitment on behalf of government that all framework documents of all central government arm's length bodies and public corporations shall be placed in the Library. This commitment should allow departments to meet their obligations to Parliament more easily and promptly.

I have also asked the Treasury Officer of Accounts to write to all Accounting Officers to ensure that all existing framework documents have been properly deposited. The public will continue to be able to access these documents via gov.uk or the relevant body's website.

In addition to framework documents transparency is served by Parliament having the opportunity to scrutinise the summaries of Accounting Officer assessments of major projects. I also make a commitment on behalf of government that copies of summary accounting officer assessments for projects on the Government Major Projects Portfolio should be deposited in the Library of the House of Commons in line with existing HMT guidance.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Contingencies Fund Advance for Cost of Living Payments

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery (David Rutley):
[\[HCWS171\]](#)

The Department for Work and Pensions has obtained approval for an advance from the Contingencies Fund of £2,477,600,000. This will enable the department to administer the first Cost of Living Payments from 14 July, before the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill, which includes these measures, gains Royal Assent.

The amount covered by the advance is for the first Cost of Living Payment to eligible means tested claimants, worth £326, provided for by the Social Security (Additional Payments) Act.

The payments will deliver immediate support to around 8 million low-income families at a time of increased costs of living.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £ 2,477,600,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in the Main Estimate for the Department for Work and Pensions. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £ 2,477,600,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The advance will be repaid at the earliest opportunity following Royal Assent of the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill.