



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 5 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:40 P.M., 05 July 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ National Security Council

John Healey: [\[26698\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many meetings of the National Security Council she has attended since April 2022.

Alex Chalk:

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.

■ Rape: Prosecutions

Rachael Maskell: [\[26796\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State in response to the Urgent Question of 28 June 2022 on prosecution of incidences of rape, what steps he plans to take to enable more survivors of rape to bring forward a prosecution in the event that the CPS determines the case to be one of the survivors word against the perpetrators.

Alex Chalk:

This Government is determined to improve support for victims and increase the number of rape cases going to court.

Earlier this year the CPS published their Rape Strategy update confirming their aim to significantly increase year on year the number of rape cases going to court. In each of their RASSO Units their specially trained prosecutors will always look to charge when the Code for Crown Prosecutors is met.

The CPS are also undertaking extensive work to enhance support for rape victims including a 'digital walk through' outlining for victims the process of a criminal trial.

Rachael Maskell: [\[27649\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps he plans to take to increase the (a) prosecution and (b) conviction rates from reported cases of rape.

Alex Chalk:

This Government is determined to increase the number of rape prosecutions and convictions.

The CPS is undertaking extensive work to drive up and improve prosecutions through their Joint National RASSO Action Plan with the police, the Rape Strategy, and the Operation Soteria Pathfinders, which are testing methods for best practice in six CPS Areas.

Since this work commenced there has been a steady increase in the number of rape charges, prosecutions and convictions, quarter on quarter.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Anode

Cherilyn Mackrory: [\[26007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) his Department has engaged with global anode producers and (b) the Government has plans for anode production in the UK.

Lee Rowley:

The Department routinely engages with producers of strategically important components for electric vehicles, including anodes and other battery materials. In 2020, the Government announced £500m to establish an Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF), to support the development of an internationally competitive electric vehicle supply chain, including anode production in the UK.

As part of the Net Zero Strategy, in October 2021, Government announced a further £350m to be delivered through the ATF over the next three years to ensure that the UK maximises the benefits from the transition to a zero emission vehicle future and support tens of thousands of high-quality green jobs across the UK.

■ Business: Telephone Services

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[26057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing legal protections for consumers facing excessive call hold times when contacting businesses' customer services.

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.

■ **Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022**

Imran Hussain: [\[27642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what impact assessment the Government has carried out for 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 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. In addition, these regulations are subject to the affirmative procedure. Parliament will have the opportunity to debate them before they are made and provide further feedback for the Government to consider, including on their impact.

■ **Cosmetics: Safety**

Emily Thornberry: [\[25780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the review of retained EU law, whether his Department intends to review the lists of (a) prohibited substances, (b) restricted substances, (c) colorants, (d) preservatives, and (e) UV-filters set out in Annexes II-VI of the Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 on cosmetic products.

Paul Scully:

In order to ensure products are safe and that our regulations operate effectively, the Government keeps all aspects of the Cosmetic Regulations under review. Based on expert scientific advice, Government has recently laid legislation amending Annexes II, III and V, resulting in either a restriction in the permitted level, or prohibition of, specific chemicals used in cosmetic products.

The Product Safety Review is examining the wider framework, covering all aspects of retained EU law relating to product safety. Following a Call for Evidence last year, Government will publish a consultation document later this year.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Batteries**

Cherilyn Mackrory: [\[26006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government has taken to help secure the necessary battery metals needed for the electric vehicle sector.

Cherilyn Mackrory: [\[26008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, what

steps his Department is taking to help deliver the strategy to increase domestic extraction and production of critical minerals.

Lee Rowley:

The Government will publish a UK Critical Minerals Strategy in 2022. This will include steps to create an enabling environment for the domestic extraction, processing and recycling of critical minerals. It can also support the production of key components, like batteries.

Funding, such as the Automotive Transformation Fund, National Security Strategic Investment Fund, UK Infrastructure Bank, UK Export Finance, and the National Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Research programme, can support investments at various points along the critical minerals value chain in specific sectors, like the automotive industry. For example, Cornish Lithium has received support via the Getting Building Fund (2020) and Automotive Transformation Fund (2021). British Lithium has received grant funding from Innovate UK (2020) and the Sustainable Innovation Fund (2021).

■ **Energy Supply: Park Homes**

Kirsten Oswald:

[28427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2022 to Question 14454 on Energy Supply: Park Homes, what avenues the Government is exploring to help provide support to those people; and if he will make a statement before the Summer recess.

Greg Hands:

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

■ **Energy: Billing**

Martyn Day:

[25937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives from energy firms on limits on payments billed via direct debit to help ensure credit balances do not become excessive.

Greg Hands:

BEIS Ministers regularly meet with stakeholders, including energy suppliers, to discuss a range of energy retail market issues. Energy suppliers should not be increasing their customers' direct debits by more than is necessary. The Government welcomes Ofgem's announcement of strict supervision of direct debits and credit balances.

Ofgem published a consultation 20 June on strengthening the existing requirements for licenced energy suppliers to set domestic consumers' fixed direct debits according to the best and most current information available to them. The consultation can be viewed online at: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/statutory-consultation-strengthening-fixed-direct-debit-rules>.

■ Energy: Meters**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[25865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives of energy companies on the use of smart meters that have ceased to operate in smart mode and are underestimating future energy bills.

Greg Hands:

Smart meters, which are temporarily operating in traditional mode continue to accurately record energy consumption. With manual meter readings provided to the energy supplier, customers will continue to receive accurate bills.

Energy suppliers are required by their licence conditions to take all reasonable steps to ensure their customers' smart meters are fully functional, which includes providing automatic meter readings. The Government works closely with energy suppliers and other industry parties, so that that households across Great Britain can realise the benefits of smart meters.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[28462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of rural broadband connectivity on smart meter uptake.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[28463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support the Government is providing to rural areas to (a) encourage the adoption of smart meters and (b) increase broadband connectivity.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[28464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the (a) Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and (b) Welsh Government on the rollout of rural broadband to encourage smart meter use.

Greg Hands:

The national smart metering system in Great Britain is not reliant on broadband for connectivity. The Data Communications Company operates the national communications network for smart metering, which is separate from the internet and uses a variety of technologies, including cellular mobile technology, wireless mesh radio and long-range radio. This dedicated, secure network ensures that only authorised parties, such as energy suppliers, can communicate with meters.

The Government wants to ensure that households and small businesses across Great Britain can benefit from smart metering and has required energy suppliers to establish Smart Energy GB, which is responsible for coordinated consumer engagement activities and working alongside energy suppliers to support consumer uptake.

■ Fuel Oil

Karl McCartney:

[\[26748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral contribution of the hon. Member for Lincoln at Treasury questions on 28 June 2022, if he will make an estimate of (a) how many and what proportion of people use heating oil and (b) the volume of heating oil which is sold in (i) Greater London, (ii) inner London, (iii) Lincoln and (iv) Scotland in the most recent period for which data is available.

Greg Hands:

In England, as reported in the [English Housing Survey](#), 799,000 dwellings (3 per cent) used oil central heating as their main heating system in 2019. In Scotland, as reported in the [Scottish House Condition Survey](#), 129,000 households (5 per cent) used oil as their primary heating fuel in 2019. Data for Greater London, Inner London and Lincoln are not available.

Data on domestic petroleum consumption by Local Authority (including those authorities within Inner and Outer London, Lincoln and Scotland) is published annually in [subnational total final energy consumption](#). The data available refers to domestic petroleum consumption as a whole, heating oil is not identified separately.

■ Hydrogen Fuelling Stations: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart:

[\[26050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many licences have been issued by OFGEM in Northern Ireland for hydrogen fuelling stations for transport.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem is the gas and electricity regulator for Great Britain. It does not have powers to issue licences for hydrogen fuelling stations in Northern Ireland.

Licensing of hydrogen fuel stations could be a matter for the Northern Ireland Utilities Regulator or the Transport Regulation Unit of the Department for Infrastructure.

■ Industrial Disputes

John McDonnell:

[\[25726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with (a) employers, (b) employment agencies, and (c) trade unions over plans to remove regulation 7 of the Conduct Regulations 2003.

Paul Scully:

The Government carried out a consultation on revoking the ban on using agency workers to cover strikes in 2015. The consultation 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.

■ Insulation: Housing

Navendu Mishra: [\[26038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to take steps to enable cavity wall insulation suppliers to award compensation to relevant households under the Government's cavity wall insulation scheme.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises that there have been cases of cavity wall insulation being installed in unsuitable homes or being installed poorly.

All CWI installed under current government schemes must be completed by TrustMark registered businesses, adhering to the latest PAS 2030/2035 standards. TrustMark offers a [step-by-step process](#) in case of issues, including escalation to Alternative Dispute Resolution and the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman. If the installer is no longer in business the guarantee provider must step in.

Where an installer is not TrustMark registered, the Government has published [guidance](#) setting out steps for consumers who suspect they have faulty CWI installed.

■ Liability of Trade Unions in Proceedings in Tort (Increase of Limits On Damages) Order 2022

Imran Hussain: [\[27643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what impact assessment he has carried out for the Liability of Trade Unions in Proceedings in Tort (Increase of Limits on Damages) Order 2022.

Paul Scully:

We do not consider that a full impact assessment is necessary as the impacts will be minimal. There will be negligible familiarisation costs for unions and businesses. The impact of raising the limits on damages does not apply to unions that comply with statutory industrial action balloting and other statutory requirements. The impact of raising the limits would therefore only apply to those non-compliant unions that carry out or endorse unofficial strike action.

■ Lithium: Cornwall

Cherilyn Mackrory: [\[26009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has had any discussions with relevant stakeholders on the potential role of Cornwall as a lithium hub for the UK.

Lee Rowley:

As part of development of the Critical Minerals Strategy, and working alongside the Department of International Trade, BEIS has identified the important role Cornwall can play in lithium extraction for the UK.

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have visited Cornish Lithium and British Lithium, who are looking to expand activities around lithium within Cornwall.

Cornish Lithium received investment for the construction of Europe's first geothermal lithium recovery pilot plant at a location near Redruth, through the Government's Getting Building Fund.

British Lithium Ltd, based in St Austell, is one of the first companies in the world to progress commercial extraction of lithium carbonate from the mica in granite. They have been awarded more than £2.9m from the Government's Sustainable Innovation Fund.

■ Parental Leave**Kirsten Oswald:**[\[25899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the contribution by the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets to the Westminster Hall debate on Parental Leave and Pay on 22 March 2022, Official Report, cols 98-102 WH, when he will bring forward proposals to extend redundancy protection to those applying for adoption leave and shared parental leave.

Paul Scully:

The Government has committed to extending redundancy protections during pregnancy and after maternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

We will introduce these measures when Parliamentary time allows.

Kirsten Oswald:[\[25900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of new mothers who started on statutory paid maternity leave used the Shared Parental Leave scheme to transfer some of their leave to the child's father during fiscal years (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2021-22.

Paul Scully:

Information provided by employers to HMRC show the number of individuals in receipt of Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP). This provides a broad indication of Shared Parental Leave take-up but excludes anyone taking unpaid Shared Parental Leave.

Table 1: Individuals in receipt of ShPP, 2019/20 and 2021/22

FINANCIAL YEAR	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
2019-20	2,600	9,900	12,600
2021-22	3,200	9,800	13,000

1. Data uses HMRC Real Time Information which is subject to revision.
2. Figures count individuals irrespective of when the payment started. Some individuals will be counted across two years.
3. Figures do not include those who take unpaid SPL.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[25901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2021 to Question 32423 on Parental Leave, when he plans to publish the findings of the surveys and consultation conducted as part of the evaluation of Shared Parental Leave and Pay.

Paul Scully:

As part of the evaluation, we commissioned large, representative surveys of parents and employees which asked about a range of parental leave and pay entitlements as well as their experience of Shared Parental Leave specifically. We also consulted on high-level options for reforming parental leave and pay.

We are currently considering this information and will publish our findings in due course.

■ **Petrol: Prices**

Tracey Crouch: [\[25817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing regulation of petrol prices, in the same way that household energy prices are regulated.

Greg Hands:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Strangford on 17 June to Question [14492](#).

■ **Research, Development and Innovation Organisational Landscape Independent Review**

Chi Onwurah: [\[28418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the planned timetable is for completion of the Review of the Research, Development and Innovation Organisational Landscape being conducted by Sir Paul Nurse; and if he will publish that report in full when it is presented to his Department.

George Freeman:

In leading his independent Review of the Research, Development and Innovation Organisational Landscape, Sir Paul Nurse has undertaken a detailed evidence gathering process, including gathering input from hundreds of organisations in the UK's RDI landscape. Work is underway to consider and finalise the Review's recommendations, which will be presented to my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy prior to publication.

Storms: Power Failures**David Duguid:**[\[25966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to implement resilience recommendations 3 and 4 within the Storm Arwen electricity distribution disruption review, published on 9 June 2022.

Greg Hands:

The Energy Emergencies Executive Committee (E3C), of which the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is a member, is responsible for implementing actions set out in the Storm Arwen Review Final Report. This follows successful practice following previous reviews with cooperation with industry partners, as appropriate.

Oversight by officials of BEIS will be achieved through a newly established Storm Arwen Implementation Steering Group to ensure timely and effective delivery of these actions.

World Economic Forum**Sir John Hayes:**[\[25728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is engaged in any partnerships with the World Economic Forum.

Paul Scully:

Since November 2020, BEIS has been a member of the [Global Futures Council on Agile Governance](#), focusing on the development of government regulatory practices to help drive economic growth.

In May this year, the UK became a government partner in the [First Movers Coalition](#). This is an initiative launched by the United States with the WEF and is a coalition of more than 35 international companies committed to harness their purchasing power and supply chains to create early markets for innovative clean energy technologies.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Official Visits: Ukraine**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[26819\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total costs were of the Prime Minister's trip to Ukraine in June 2022; and which Department met those costs.

Michael Ellis:

Details of the Prime Minister's overseas travel are published quarterly and will be made available on GOV.UK in due course. As per the Ministerial Code, when Ministers travel on official business, their travel expenses should be borne by the departmental vote.

■ **Regional Planning and Development: Contracts**

Rachael Maskell: [\[28434\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether it is his policy that the Procurement Bill will help ensure that the auditing of contracts let as part of his levelling up agenda is (a) transparent and (b) accessible to the public.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Procurement Bill will deliver a step change in transparency and openness, with notices mandated for direct awards and publication requirements extended from planning to termination, including contract performance.

A single central platform for contract data will give everyone wider access to procurement information, strengthening the new Procurement Review Unit's ability to investigate concerns around both awards and transparency.

■ **World Economic Forum**

Sir John Hayes: [\[25729\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the extent of the Government's co-operation or alignment is with the World Economic Forum.

Sir John Hayes: [\[25730\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Government departments are formally working with the World Economic Forum.

Michael Ellis:

Government officials have worked with the World Economic Forum on a range of policy areas including trade facilitation, ocean plastics, and digital issues. Two UK Ministers, Lord Grimstone and the COP26 President, also attended the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos in May 2022. The Cabinet Office does not hold a centralised database of all formal contact with the World Economic Forum.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Christianity: Oppression

Jim Shannon:

[\[27615\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what discussions the Church Commissioners have had with Christians Against Poverty on protecting Christians from persecution.

Andrew Selous:

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a UK-based debt advice charity independent of the Church of England. Staff of the National Church Institutions have held discussions with CAP but these have not been on the protection of Christians from persecution.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

[\[28431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2022 to Question 19629 on Afghanistan: Refugees, how many (a) full-time and (b) part-time staff employed by his Department (i) in the UK and (ii) overseas are assigned to dealing with outstanding Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications as of 30 June 2022.

James Heapey:

As of 30 June 2022, there were a total of 91 personnel assigned to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme, broken down as follows:

- a) There are 85 full-time staff working on the ARAP scheme.
 - i. 71 are in the UK
 - ii. 14 are overseas
- b) There are six part-time staff working on the ARAP scheme.
 - i. six are in the UK
 - ii. 0 are overseas

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

We anticipate new routes opening with the support of partners on the region that will allow us to accelerate the flow of ARAP personnel leaving Afghanistan. In anticipation of this, additional staffing resource will be allocated to the team to allow decisions to continue to be made at the pace egress routes allow.

■ China: Russia**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[25765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the potential risks posed by Chinese military technology exports to Russia.

James Heappey:

There is a recognised risk of China providing Russia with military technology and components for use in military systems, particularly in light of recently increased sanctions on Russia's defence industry. The Department continues to monitor developments on this issue.

■ Estonia: Armed Forces**John Healey:** [\[28380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the extra 1,000 UK troops for Estonia announced by the Government at the 2022 NATO Madrid Summit will include reservists.

John Healey: [\[28381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of the extra 1,000 troops for Estonia announced by the Government at the 2022 NATO Madrid Summit will be made up of reservists.

James Heappey:

At the NATO Madrid summit the UK offered a number of contributions to NATO's strengthened defence posture. We did not announce an extra 1,000 troops for Estonia, rather that we will allocate the balance of a full combat brigade held at high readiness for rapid reinforcement across Estonia and the Baltic region, as required by SACEUR. Reservists make an important contribution to our operational force generation mechanism and will make up a critical element of any deployment. Due to the rotational nature of forces held at high readiness, the exact number will change with each rotation. Additionally, the UK is making a substantial contribution to the Alliance's New Force Model. We are significantly increasing the availability of UK forces to NATO so it can plan for all eventualities; this will include almost all of our Maritime forces, extra Fighter Air Squadrons and an increased number of Land Brigade-sized units. These forces will be comprised of both Regulars and Reservists, but the exact composition is yet to be determined.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband: Prices****Chris Elmore:** [\[27692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how the Government defines a low-income household in the context of financial support for broadband costs.

Chris Elmore: [\[27693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has a fixed time frame for the implementation of the cost of living proposals on tackling rising broadband costs.

Chris Elmore: [\[27694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the number of households that will be in receipt of her proposals to tackle the cost of living by providing support for broadband.

Chris Elmore: [\[28467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her announcement of 27 June 2022 on the telecoms industry's agreement to a new cost-of-living plan, what data she used to determine that social tariffs are available across 99 per cent of the UK.

Julia Lopez:

On Monday 27 June, 2022, leaders of the UK's major fixed broadband, landline and mobile operators agreed with the government a set of [commitments](#) designed to support households through the global rise in the cost-of-living.

Social tariffs are available to those claiming Universal Credit, and a number of providers also accept those in receipt of other means-tested benefits. The commitments also offer help to any household struggling with their bills. [Ofcom's Affordability](#) report from February 2022 showed that one in five UK households have an affordability issue with their communication service (landline, broadband, mobile and Pay TV), and we hope that the commitments we reached with industry will help all households who may be struggling with their costs during this difficult time.

We anticipate a period of transition as staff are trained and processes put in place, but the measures agreed with industry are available now, so people should feel confident in contacting their operator if they require assistance. The Government has also committed to work with providers to assist them raise awareness of social tariffs. To support the sector, the government is also developing eligibility checking software which will allow a faster, more efficient application process. We expect these workstrands to conclude over the summer.

Social Tariffs are available from BT, Virgin Media O2, Sky, Now Broadband, Vodafone, Hyperoptic, Country Connect, Broadband for the Rural North, G Networks, Air Broadband, and KCOM - the government has determined that social tariffs are available in 99% of the UK.

Cricket: Ethnic Groups**Navendu Mishra:** [\[26040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate her Department has made of the number of ethnic minority cricket officials in (a) England and (b) Wales.

Nigel Huddleston:

The national governing body for cricket, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) assesses trends in representation in the sport. This includes the level of representation of African, Caribbean and Asian coaches, umpires and match officials. The Department does not have these figures.

The ECB have acknowledged there remains an under-representation of Black or South Asian heritage officials despite an increase in the proportion of umpires from ethnically diverse backgrounds on the National Panel last year. Following an independent Officiating Review in 2021, the ECB have committed to four ambitions focusing on equity of opportunity, inspiring the next generation, developing a diverse network that reflects society and promoting a culture of inclusivity and fairness.

We welcome the ECB's promise to take meaningful action, including the creation of a diverse Officiating Oversight Panel, which met in October 2021, to challenge and question all decisions relating to selection, appointments, practices and processes across the department. They have also developed a targeted coaching and mentoring programme that focuses on supporting aspiring umpires from diverse backgrounds.

The updated Code for Sports Governance requires sports organisations that receive significant public funding, including the ECB, to agree a diversity and inclusion action plan with Sport England and/or UK Sport, which will be published and updated annually. The Government and our arm's length bodies will continue to monitor and liaise with the cricket authorities on improving diversity and inclusion at all levels.

■ Cultural Heritage: Conservation**Jim Shannon:**[\[25862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government takes to help preserve and protect historical artefacts around the world.

Nigel Huddleston:

The UK is a world leader in international cultural heritage protection and has taken concrete steps to protect cultural heritage around the world, including launching the Cultural Protection Fund, a partnership between the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the British Council, in 2016, ratifying the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols in 2017, and establishing the Ministry of Defence's Cultural Property Protection Unit in 2017. The Government continues to fund protection efforts through the Cultural Protection Fund and works closely with domestic and international partners to protect cultural heritage at risk from conflict, instability and climate change around the world.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Consultants**Sarah Olney:** [\[27702\]](#)

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

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28th June 2022 to Question [UIN 22551](#).

■ England and Wales Cricket Board**Navendu Mishra:** [\[26036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2022 to Question 19721 on Cricket: Racial Discrimination, how much funding the Government has allocated to the England and Wales Cricket Board in the financial years (a) 2018-2019, (b) 2019-2020, (c) 2020-2021, (d) 2021-2022 and (e) so far in 2022-2023.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government does not provide direct funding to the England and Wales Cricket Board. All funding of sport National Governing Bodies is delivered by our Arm's Length Bodies. In this case that is Sport England.

Since 2018 Sport England have allocated £7,899,140 to the England and Wales Cricket Board: £1.49 million in 2018/19; £1 million in 2019/20; £3,206,640 in 2020/21; and £2,202,500 in 2021/22. Figures for 2022-23 have not yet been published.

■ Football Governance Fan-led Review**Valerie Vaz:** [\[27591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government will publish its proposals in response to the Fan-Led review of Football Governance.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has published its response to the recommendations made by the Independent Fan Led Review of Football Governance. This was in April 2022.

The Government accepts or supports all of the ten strategic recommendations which set out the government's planned reform of football. The Queen's Speech confirmed our commitment to an independent regulator for English football and we will bring forward proposals in this Parliamentary session. A White Paper will be published in the summer that will set out the details on the implementation of our football governance reforms. We are working at pace to deliver these measures that will bring sustainable reform that ensures current and future fans continue to enjoy our national game.

■ Gambling: Investment

Tulip Siddiq: [\[24642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to provide redress for consumers that have experienced investment losses due to (a) the collapse of BetIndex, the operators of Football Index, and (b) other regulatory failures.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[24643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of offering non-financial redress to people affected by the collapse of BetIndex, the operators of Football Index.

Chris Philp:

The Government appreciates the significant impact that the collapse of the novel gambling product Football Index had on former customers. We recognise the frustration and anger that this situation has caused and the hardship that some people have suffered as a result. However, there is no compensation scheme for losses caused by a gambling firm ceasing to operate and the government does not think it would be appropriate to use public funds for these purposes. We are not aware of requests for non-financial redress or what form that might take.

■ Holiday Accommodation

Rachael Maskell: [\[28435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the prevalence of short term holiday lets.

Rachael Maskell: [\[28436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the impact of unregulated holiday lets on the regulated accommodation sector.

Rachael Maskell: [\[28437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to give local authorities (a) powers and (b) flexibility to determine (i) whether and (ii) where short-term holiday let accommodation can be within their locality.

Rachael Maskell: [\[28438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will consult with local authorities most affected by short-term holiday lets, including York, as part of her Department's review into short-term tourist accommodation.

Rachael Maskell: [\[28439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had discussions with her Scottish counterpart on the Licensing Order and Control Area

Amendment Regulations relating to short-term holiday lets that came into force in Scotland on 1 March 2022.

Nigel Huddleston:

The sharing economy has brought many benefits to the tourism sector and wider economy, as well as creating an additional income stream for homeowners. However, we recognise that the increase in short-term letting has also prompted some concerns. These include the impact on the housing market and local communities, and a sense that new entrants in the market are not being held to the same health and safety standards as, for example, hotels and B&Bs.

The Government committed in the Tourism Recovery Plan published in June last year to consult on a possible Short Term Accommodation Registration Scheme in England. A call for evidence as the first stage of that consultation process was published on 29 June and runs until 21 September.

We want to hear from a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, in order to build a much-needed evidence base on these issues and enable us to develop proportionate policy responses. We ideally want to strike a balance between the benefits of the sharing economy and the concerns of the impacts on some communities, alongside ensuring consistency in quality among the range of different tourism accommodation providers.

■ **Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Advertising**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of effect of including certain forms of advertisements for non-surgical cosmetic procedures as content under Section 54 of the Online Safety Bill.

Chris Philp:

The Online Safety Bill has been designed to tackle user generated content. Some advertising which takes the form of organic, user generated content is in scope of the Bill. Companies in scope will have to prevent the proliferation of illegal content and ensure that children who use their services are not exposed to harmful or inappropriate content.

The Online Advertising Programme recently closed its consultation and will look at the entire advertising ecosystem in relation to harms caused by paid-for online advertising.

■ **Sports: Colour Vision Deficiency**

Andrew Bridgen: [\[25864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions officials in her Department have had with representatives of sports governing bodies on awareness of colour blindness and steps to differentiate team colours.

Nigel Huddleston:

My department has not had any recent discussions with representatives of sports governing bodies on awareness of colour blindness and steps to differentiate team colours. However, I welcome the English Football League's (EFL) recent decision to allow clubs to wear away kits at home games next season in order to aid colour-blind people in differentiating teams. This will benefit players, staff, officials and spectators.

The Government recognises there are barriers which exist and prevent some people from taking part and we want to continue to do all that we can to tackle these. We will continue to work with our arms length bodies, Sport England and UK Sport, and sector partners to encourage sport bodies to make sport more accessible to spectators, participants and the workforce.

EDUCATION■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Kate Green:****[900850]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the steps his Department has taken to help children's education recover from the impact of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Robin Walker:

Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 disruption on the attainment and progress of all students is a key research priority for the government. That is why we invested in research into academic progress over the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years with Renaissance Learning and the Education Policy Institute. The latest findings from this research, published 28 March, include data from the first half of the 2021-22 autumn term. The findings from this research have been published on gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-progress-in-the-2020-to-2022-academic-years>

Our latest evidence suggests recovery is happening, with primary pupils recovering around 0.1 months in reading and 0.9 months in maths since Summer 2021, and recovering 1.5 months in reading and 1.7 months in maths since Spring 2021, with pupils now only 0.8 months and 1.9 months behind in reading and maths respectively.

This is equivalent to recovering around two thirds of progress lost due to the pandemic in primary reading and around half of progress lost in primary maths since Spring 2021.

Progress for secondary pupils in key stage 3 remains a concern, with pupils now on average around 2.4 months behind in reading, having seen losses since Summer 2021.

We are making some progress in closing gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, additional gaps created by the COVID-19 pandemic appear to have

reduced in primary maths and secondary reading since Summer 2021. However, the gap for primary reading appears to have grown.

In line with this evidence, we have announced £1 billion to extend the recovery premium over the next two academic years. This will enable schools to provide additional support for the most disadvantaged, and will be weighted more towards secondary pupils to reflect evidence showing greater learning loss for older pupils, who also have less time left in education. This is part of the nearly £5 billion of funding we have announced for an ambitious, multi-year education recovery plan to support young people to catch up on missed learning.

Recovery funding is already making a difference. By May 2022 1.5 million courses had been started by children across England through the National Tutoring Programme, and £950 million of direct funding through the catch up and recovery premia, was helping schools to deliver evidence-based interventions based on pupil needs. In light of the success of this year's school-led tutoring route through the National Tutoring Programme, next year we will allocate all tutoring funding directly to schools, simplifying the system and giving schools the freedom to decide how best to provide tutoring for their pupils.

In addition to this, the Schools White Paper, 'Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child', sets out how our education system will deliver recovery, not just through our specific recovery investments, but through a wider programme of ambitious reforms that truly level up outcomes and ensure we build back better from the pandemic.

The Parent Pledge in the Schools White Paper will also make the government's vision clear that any child who falls behind in English or maths will receive the right evidence-based targeted support to get them back on track.

■ Apprentices: Coronavirus and Ventilation

Julie Elliott:

[\[26768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will issue revised guidance to apprenticeship providers in respect of adjustments they can make over the summer to (a) improve ventilation in workplaces where apprenticeships are provided and (b) reduce the risks of covid-19 transmission in those premises.

Alex Burghart:

Comprehensive advice on how to improve ventilation is available from the UK Health and Safety Agency and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The law says employers, including apprenticeship providers, must make sure there is an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace. This has not changed during the pandemic. HSE provides more information on this at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/ventilation/>.

From 1 April 2022 the government has withdrawn most pieces of specific COVID-19 guidance for education and childcare settings, although public health and emergency planning guidance for education and childcare settings is still available.

If settings suspect an outbreak of respiratory infection, which could include COVID-19, they should review and reinforce the baseline infection prevention and control measures they already have in place.

■ **BTEC Qualifications: Finance**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[26818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of guaranteeing funding for BTEC qualifications for the current parliamentary session.

Alex Burghart:

The year delay to the qualifications review which was announced by my right Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education in November 2021 means that no qualifications, including BTECs, will have their funding approval removed because they overlap with T Levels before 1 August 2024.

We will continue to fund applied general style qualifications including BTECs as part of mixed programmes where there is a clear need for them, and they meet new quality and other criteria. Students will also be able to study qualifications such as BTECs as their full programme of study where there is no A level or T Level. These qualifications will continue to play an important role for 16 to 19 year olds and adults as they do now.

■ **Children: Day Care**

Helen Hayes: [\[25945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of increasing childcare ratios on levels of childcare staff (a) recruitment and (b) retention.

Will Quince:

In the summer, the department will be consulting on moving to the Scottish ratios for two-year-olds, from a ratio of 1:4 (one adult to four children) to 1:5 (one adult to five children). Alongside this, the department is also considering how we can provide greater flexibility within ratios for childminders.

Our priority continues to be to provide safe, high quality early years provision for our youngest children, and throughout this consultation process we will engage fully with the sector and parents and carers on this proposed change.

Responses from this consultation will help to build the evidence base, including on the impact that changing childcare ratios may have on staff recruitment and retention.

■ **Class Sizes: Burton**

Kate Griffiths: [\[26024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an estimate of the average class size in primary schools in Burton in (a) January 2019 and (b) January 2022.

Kate Griffiths:**[26025]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an estimate of the average class size in secondary schools in Burton in (a) January 2019 and (b) January 2022.

Mr Robin Walker:

The average class size in Burton in January 2019 and January 2022 are as follows:

SCHOOL	YEAR	AVERAGE SIZE (BY PUPIL)
Primary	January 2019	26.7
Primary	January 2022	26.9
Secondary	January 2019	22.2
Secondary	January 2022	22.5

Data on class size is available at school level within the schools, pupils and their characteristics national statistics publication available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

This data contains the parliamentary constituency of each school which can then be aggregated to parliamentary constituency level.

■ English Language: Education

Rachael Maskell:**[22475]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help UK (a) universities and (b) colleges provide free English language tuition to Ukrainian refugees.

Michelle Donelan:

Ukrainians aged 19 and over and their family members settled under the Home Office Ukraine schemes in the UK can access training to gain the skills they need to move on with their lives. This includes immediate eligibility for provision funded through the Adult Education Budget, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and level 3 free courses for jobs offer.

Ukrainians aged 19 and above will be able to access adult education, including ESOL, by contacting their local authority or further education college directly. The college will be able to confirm what courses are available and when.

Additionally, the Open University has published a range of helpful resources for Ukrainian nationals arriving in the UK to learn English. More information can be found at: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/supporting-ukrainians>.

The Office for Students has been delivering up to £4 million of additional support, as instructed by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, to higher education (HE) providers in England to assist students from Ukraine whose financial means have been impacted by events in Ukraine.

The department is also working in close partnership with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education to facilitate entrance exams for Ukrainian nationals arriving in the UK who wish to continue their HE education in Ukrainian at their Ukrainian universities, remotely.

Ukrainians aged 16 to 19 living in the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme, and under Homes for Ukraine scheme are eligible to enrol as a student in a 16-19 provider, including colleges. Providers may ask to see evidence of their eligibility. 16-19 study programmes can include ESOL courses or other English tuition, depending on the needs of the individual student.

■ Foster Care

Rachael Maskell: [\[25919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase the number of foster carers (a) nationally and (b) in areas where there is a shortage of foster carers.

Will Quince:

Local authorities have a duty to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within their area that meet the needs of their looked after children in their area.

The department recognises the urgency of action in placement sufficiency, and we will prioritise working with local authorities to recruit more foster carers. This will include pathfinder local recruitment campaigns that build towards a national programme, to help ensure children have access to the right placements at the right time. As the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommends, the department will focus on providing more support throughout the application process to improve the conversion rate from expressions of interest to approved foster carers.

The department has already invested in Fosterline Plus, which offers one-to-one support for prospective foster families.

■ Foster Care: Care Leavers

Rachael Maskell: [\[25920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the value of the payments available for staying put arrangements.

Will Quince:

Since the introduction of the Staying Put duty in 2014, the government has provided £174 million of funding to support local implementation and is committed to continuing to invest £99.8 million over the next three years.

Each local authorities allocation is determined by the proportion of eligible children they have relative to the national total. The formula uses the department's data on the number of young people in foster care immediately before their 18th birthday to

identify the percentage of eligible young people in each local authority and this percentage is then applied to the total national funding available.

Up until the 2019/20 financial year, the funding was based on an assumption that 25% of eligible care leavers would Stay Put, which is the proportion of care leavers who Stayed Put in the pilots, which ran before the legal duty was introduced.

In the 2019/20 financial year the latest data showed that across the 18 to 20 age range around 35% of care leavers were Staying Put. This meant that actual take up was 40% higher than the original assumption. As a result, the department increased funding in the 2020/21 financial year by 40% (£9.5 million) to address this. We will keep Staying Put funding under review during the next spending review period.

■ **Foster Care: Mental Health Services**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[25921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department provides additional support to foster carers who are supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma.

Will Quince:

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 clearly set out the requirement that such advice, information, support, and training is made available from the fostering service provider to their foster carers as appears necessary in the interests of the children they are caring for. This is supported by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, which includes a specific requirement that foster carers should have training in appropriate safer-care practice, including skills to care for children who have been abused (Standard 4.6).

Specific training is arranged by fostering service providers, as local fostering service providers benefit from the flexibility to meet local need.

All fostering service providers are expected to support their carers to meet the training, support and development standards (TSD) for foster care following their approval. Standard 5 of the TSD standards requires foster carers to understand the development of children and young people, including the impact of trauma. The TSD standards require that foster carers can provide evidence to show they understand the impact of trauma on children's ability to form attachments, their behaviour, and their ability to cope with transitions.

■ **Further Education: Coronavirus and Ventilation**

Julie Elliott:

[\[26767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to issue guidance to further education colleges on making adjustments and improvements to premises used for teaching and other purposes to (a) improve ventilation and (b) reduce the risk of covid-19 transmission.

Alex Burghart:

We have provided CO₂ monitors to state-funded education settings, including early years, schools and further education providers, backed by £25 million in government funding.

The monitors enable staff to identify areas where ventilation needs to be improved and provide reassurance that existing ventilation measures are working, helping balance the need for good ventilation with keeping rooms warm.

The law says employers, including education and childcare settings, must make sure there is an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace. This has not changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Health and Safety Executive provides more information on this at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/ventilation/>.

From 1 April 2022 the government has withdrawn most pieces of specific COVID-19 guidance for education and childcare settings, although public health and emergency planning guidance for education and childcare settings is still available.

If settings suspect an outbreak of respiratory infection, which could include COVID-19, they should review and reinforce the baseline infection prevention and control measures they already have in place.

■ National Curriculum Tests**Sarah Olney:****[25963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that SATs do not have a negative impact on the emotional wellbeing of primary school students.

Mr Robin Walker:

Assessment is a crucial part of a child's schooling and fundamental in a high-performing education system. At primary school, statutory assessments are an essential part of ensuring that all pupils master the basics of reading, writing and maths to prepare them for secondary school. Assessment data also enables parents, schools and the department to understand the impact of lost time in education and recovery initiatives.

Schools should encourage pupils to work hard and achieve well, but the department does not recommend that they devote excessive preparation time to assessments, and certainly not at the expense of pupils' mental health and wellbeing. We trust schools to administer assessments in the appropriate way.

Research conducted by UCL Institute of Education, published in 2021, found that there was 'little evidence to changes in [pupil] wellbeing around the time of key stage 2 tests, or that children in England become happier - either in general or about school - once these tests are over'.

Nevertheless, the department knows that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people and will have an impact

in the longer-term. Mental health and wellbeing are a priority for the government, and we remain committed to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. In May 2021, the department announced an investment of over £17 million of mental health funding to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. This includes £9.5 million dedicated to training senior mental health leads in over 8,000 schools and colleges, with an additional £3 million announced this year to extend this training to even more schools and colleges. The training will equip leads with the skills and knowledge to develop a culture and ethos that promotes positive mental health wellbeing, as well as how to make the best use of local resources to support children and young people experiencing issues such as anxiety.

The department has also recently brought together all its sources of advice for schools and colleges into a single site on GOV.UK, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff and school leaders. The site is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>.

■ **National Implementation Board: Public Appointments**

Damien Moore:

[22513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what (a) process and (b) criteria he will use to determine the membership of the National Implementation Board of experts for the Care Review.

Will Quince:

On 23 May 2022, the Independent Review of Children's Social Care published its final recommendations. On the same day, the government set out the actions it is taking to improve children's social care and committed to publishing a detailed and ambitious implementation strategy later this year.

The National Implementation Board will include people with experience of leading transformational change and those with their own experience of the care system. The department will set out more details about the board in due course.

We are now carefully assessing the Review's recommendations with all relevant government departments, including HM Treasury. Once we have agreed the broad shape of our reform programme, we will need to consider any cost implications.

■ **Students: Mental Health Services**

Cherilyn Mackrory:

[22535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional mental health support for university students on placement years.

Michelle Donelan:

Higher education (HE) providers are autonomous bodies, independent from government, and have a responsibility to ensure students are well supported during their studies, so they can fully participate in their university experience and achieve outcomes to progress to quality employment. HE providers are not only experts in their student population, but are also best placed to identify the needs of their students, including students undertaking placements as part of their studies.

The mental health and wellbeing of young people is a priority for the government. We continue to work closely with the higher education (HE) sector to promote and fund effective practice. Through strategic guidance to the Office for Students (OfS), we asked that it distributes £15 million of funding in FY the 2022/23 financial year to give additional support for transitions from school/college to university, and through targeting funding to support partnership working with NHS services to provide pathways of care for students. The OfS funded Student Space, which provides a dedicated online platform for students providing vital mental health and wellbeing, and resources and is leading work to establish and share 'what works' across the sector.

The University Mental Health Charter, led by Student Minds and backed by the government, brings together universities to drive up standards of practice in mental health provision across the HE sector. The Charter identifies support for students on placements as a principle of good practice, encouraging HE providers to ensure targeted support for students on placement and on professional programmes, who may require more in-depth preparation and specific interventions. I have made clear my ambition for all HE providers to sign up to the Charter programme within 5 years.

Preventing suicide and self-harm in our student population continues to be a key concern, including through supporting the suicide safer universities framework led by Universities UK (UUK) and Papyrus. UUK have worked with stakeholders to develop a checklist which ensures better coordination of support between HE providers and placement providers, including mental health quality assurance of placements. This is due to be published in late July.

The OfS will allocate up to £3 million of funding towards developing stronger partnership working with NHS services. Alongside my hon Friend, the member for Chichester, I chaired a summit in June to launch this work and ensure that the department and the Department of Health and Social Care work together to achieve this common goal.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Dr Neil Hudson:****[900907]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to progress legislative proposals on pet theft.

Victoria Prentis:

The theft of a much-loved pet causes emotional trauma and impacts pet owners and families. The Government launched a Pet Theft Taskforce in May 2021 in response to concerns about a perceived increase in pet theft during COVID restrictions.

The Pet Theft Taskforce concluded that a new offence of pet abduction would best address concerns that the criminal law is only currently capable of treating the theft of a pet as a theft of property; and also, to recognise the potential impact on their welfare when they are taken by strangers.

The offence as currently drafted in the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill focuses on dogs, with enabling powers. The inclusion of the enabling powers means that the Secretary of State will be able to extend the offence to other species of companion animal in the future by making regulations.

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill completed its Commons Committee Stage in November. A carryover motion was passed by the House on 25 April 2022. The Bill will continue its passage as soon as parliamentary time allows.

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Daniel Zeichner:[\[27633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 26 April to question 9907, what estimate he has made of the value of payments in excess (a) £100,000 (b) £200,000 (c) £250,000 (d) £500,000 in Basic Payments in (i) 2022, (ii) 2023, (iii) 2024, (iv) 2025, (v) 2026 and (vi) 2027.

Victoria Prentis:

We have estimated the value of payments based on 2021 but have adjusted by an additional 15% Progressive reduction each year.

	2022	2023	2024
between £100,000 and £200,000	£148,141,196	£91,463,336	£49,116,903
between £200,000 and £250,000	£23,729,115	£14,170,641	£6,210,273
between £250,000 and £500,000	£31,611,515	£16,378,597	£11,097,775
greater than £500,000	£18,686,508	£13,096,347	£5,456,333

These estimates take account of the progressive reductions that we intend to apply to the payments, as announced in our Agricultural Transition Plan in 2020.

We have not provided estimates for years 2025 to 2027 as the Government has not yet announced the progressive reductions which will be applied to Direct Payments in those years as we continue to phase the payments out.

Money saved by Direct Payment reductions will be directly re-invested into English agriculture through our new schemes. These include our new environmental land management schemes as well as grants to enable farmers to invest in equipment, technology, and infrastructure. These will improve efficiency and productivity while also benefiting the climate and environment.

■ Agriculture: Sustainable Development

Fleur Anderson:

[26028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the following sustainable farming techniques in the UK:

(a) agroecological farming methods, (b) crop rotation and (c) microbial protein meat substitutes.

Victoria Prentis:

(a) The objective behind the new Sustainable Farming Incentive is to support healthy soils and successful food production. That is why we are starting with two soil health standards this year. The SFI supports the choices that individual farmers make. Farmers can pick and choose the bits that work for their own holding and get paid for what works. In recent years we have seen an explosion of interest in regenerative farming practices such as mob grazing, the use of herbal leys, companion crops in arable fields to help manage pests and diseases and the use of cover crops and green manures like phacelia and nitrogen fixing legumes to reduce fertiliser input costs. The soil standards are just the first step. We are working on new standards for hedges, management of nutrients and Integrated Pest Management in 2023, and agroforestry in 2024.

(b) It is not Government policy to determine which cereals or other crops farmers should prioritise to include in their rotation. In 2021 we permanently removed Basic Payment Scheme 'greening measures' on crop diversification and ecological focus areas, meaning when farmers are making crop planting decisions, they are free to react to market signals.

Defra is keen to support farmers in their decision-making. We recently commissioned a research project which will look to identify underutilised, underdeveloped and novel crops with potential to be grown successfully in the UK within diversified cropping systems.

(c) Micro-organisms are used in the development of some alternative protein sources and can also be used as tools to develop novel or high protein products and substitutes. As stated in the Government's Food Strategy, Defra supports these innovative techniques by conducting farming and food science research and by

creating and contributing to funding programmes open to industry. We will also work with the Food Standards Agency to develop dedicated guidance materials for approval of new alternative protein products while reviewing our novel food regulations.

■ **Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill**

Fleur Anderson: [\[26031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that the Kept Animals Bill is passed into law as soon as possible.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was reintroduced to the House of Commons following the Queen's Speech and will progress to Report stage as soon as parliamentary time allows. There is strong support for the Bill on all sides of the House and we are keen to ensure that its provisions get onto the statute book as soon as possible.

Fleur Anderson: [\[26032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the effectiveness of provisions the Kept Animals Bill on preventing puppy smuggling.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was reintroduced following the Queen's speech and will progress to Report stage as soon as parliamentary time allows. The Bill allows us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain. This includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation.

In August 2021, the Government launched an eight-week consultation on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain. This included proposals to ban the commercial and non-commercial movement into Great Britain of puppies under the age of six months. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary response in due course. This will allow us to take onboard the views of the public and interested groups on puppy smuggling and low welfare imports in order to shape our future policy.

■ **Avian Influenza: Disease Control**

Caroline Lucas: [\[25816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will issue clear guidance for members of the public on steps to take in the event that they suspect a wild bird is sick with avian flu.

Jo Churchill:

Advice to the public on avian influenza in wild birds is published on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#public>.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency carries out year-round avian influenza surveillance of dead wild birds submitted via public reports and warden patrols across Great Britain on behalf of Defra, the Welsh Government and the Scottish Government. The public are encouraged to report findings of three or more dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or gulls or birds of prey, or five or more dead birds of any species, to the Defra helpline (03459 335577).

Our advice to the public is not to touch or pick up any dead or visibly sick birds that they find. Sick or injured birds should be reported in England and Wales to the RSPCA (0300 1234 999) and in Scotland to the SSPCA (0300 999 999) where an in-situ assessment and further course of action will be taken, including euthanasia and disposal if appropriate.

■ Avian Influenza: East Sussex**Caroline Lucas:****[25815]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to mitigate the effects of bird flu in (a) Brighton and Hove and (b) East Sussex.

Jo Churchill:

Effective animal disease control is one of Defra's key priorities. Defra's approach is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#). Following the confirmation of avian influenza in poultry at a premises near Bexhill-on-Sea, Rother, East Sussex and in other captive birds at a premises near Guestling Green, Rother, East Sussex, disease control zones were put in place surrounding the premises. To limit the risk of further spread of the disease, all birds on the infected premises have been humanely culled and preliminary cleansing and disinfection at premises undertaken by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Restrictions on the movement of birds and things associated with their keeping apply to other premises within the disease control zones where either poultry or other captive birds are kept. The disease control zones will remain in force until all disease control and surveillance activities are successfully completed within the zones.

In addition, an [Avian Influenza Prevention Zone \(AIPZ\)](#) remains in force across Great Britain. This means it is a legal requirement for all bird keepers (whether they have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) to follow strict biosecurity measures in order to limit the spread of and eradicate the disease.

Great Britain faces a seasonal risk of avian influenza incursion associated with migratory wild birds which can then spread to other local sedentary wild bird species and/or other kept birds. The APHA carries out year-round avian influenza surveillance of dead wild birds submitted via public reports and warden patrols across Great Britain on behalf of Defra, the Welsh Government and the Scottish Government. A number of herring gulls and greylag geese submitted to the surveillance programme

from the Brighton and Hove and East Sussex areas have tested positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 during the 2021/2022 avian influenza outbreak.

Defra together with APHA and Natural England are working closely with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and other NGOs including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the British Trust for Ornithology to monitor the effect of avian influenza on wild bird species of conservation concern.

■ **Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control**

Daniel Zeichner: [\[27635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the impact the badger cull on levels of bovine tuberculosis among cattle.

Jo Churchill:

The badger cull has led to a significant reduction in bovine TB as demonstrated by the publication of independent academic research. TB levels are monitored in all cull areas annually, and more in depth epidemiological analysis conducted by Downs et al (2019)[1], has shown that the incidence of TB breakdowns in cattle herds in the first cull areas of Somerset and Gloucestershire has fallen substantially, by 37% and 66% respectively, relative to matched un-culled (comparison) areas.

[1] <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-49957-6>

■ **Electronic Cigarettes: Recycling**

Alexander Stafford: [\[26931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of facilities in the UK that safely recycle disposable electronic cigarettes.

Jo Churchill:

77 Approved Authorised Treatment Facilities (AATFs) are approved under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations for the treatment of Small Mixed WEEE which would include electronic cigarettes. It is a matter for the operator to decide what specific categories of equipment they choose to treat under the terms of their approval.

Alexander Stafford: [\[26932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the proportion of disposable electronic cigarettes that are properly recycled in the latest period for which data is available.

Jo Churchill:

Neither Defra nor the Environment Agency collect data on the proportion of disposable electronic cigarettes that are recycled.

■ Gardens: Plastics

Fleur Anderson: [\[26033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government has made an environmental impact assessment of the use of plastic grass in (a) residential and (b) commercial settings.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has not made an ecological assessment of the impact of the use of plastic grass in residential or commercial settings. We do however recognise that, in itself, artificial grass has no value for wildlife. Its installation can have negative impacts on soil health, biodiversity and drainage for flood prevention or alleviation if installed in place of natural earth or more positive measures such as planting flowers or trees or providing natural water features.

■ Microplastics: Health Hazards

Catherine West: [\[25953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of recent research examining the presence of microplastic pollution in the lungs of living people.

Jo Churchill:

In 2021, the UK Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) published an overarching statement on potential risks from exposure to microplastics (<https://cot.food.gov.uk/M-statementsandpositionpapers#microplastics>). The COT made a number of proposals for research priorities to aid risk assessment of microplastics, and concluded that "based on the available data, it is not yet possible to perform a complete assessment for the potential risks from exposure to micro and nanoplastics via the oral and inhalation routes".

Subsequently, COT has published a sub-statement focusing on the oral route and a sub-statement on the inhalation route is in preparation.

The Government is taking decisive action to fight plastic waste including minimum charges on single-use items; a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers; and ensuring producers cover the costs of collecting and managing plastic packaging waste.

As set out in the recently published [2022-2023 UK REACH Work Programme](#), we are reviewing intentionally added microplastics and the risks they pose to human health and the environment. The results will help to inform the Government's approach to managing any risks whether through UK REACH or other routes.

■ Public Footpaths: Greater London

Chi Onwurah: [\[28419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Thames Path National Trail features alternate routes along both banks of the Thames in London; and whether it is possible for a National Trail to have alternate or dual routes.

Rebecca Pow:

The Thames Path provides a route on both the north and south banks of the river in Central London in order to facilitate the viewing or visiting attractions along the Thames Embankment. Such 'braided' routes may be created where there is of particular recreational benefit or where landscapes or features of interest which otherwise may be missed or, on Trails open to horse riders and cyclists, where the preferred route is unsuitable for, or unavailable to them.

■ Tree Felling: Soil

Rachael Maskell: [\[25933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of felling trees on water retention in soil; and if he will make it his policy to make such an assessment when the felling of trees is being considered.

Rachael Maskell: [\[25934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of felling trees on soil health; and what steps he is taking to mitigate that impact.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) sets out the Government's approach to sustainable forest management and this includes ensuring woodland creation and management, including tree felling, has no unacceptable impact on elements of the environment, including water and soil. The UKFS can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-forestry-standard

Forestry policy and practice is also supported by research including the Forest Hydrology Research Programme run by Forest Research. This includes assessing the effectiveness of best management practices at protecting the freshwater environment. Defra funds and engages with scientific research to inform its approach including projects investigating the impact trees have on soil properties and water.

■ Tree Planting

Rachael Maskell: [\[25931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the England Trees Action Plan 2021 to 2024, what progress he has made towards achieving his ambitions relating to tree planting; and what his latest assessment is of whether he will meet targets for tree planting and canopy cover.

Rebecca Pow:

On 16 June, the Forestry Commission published their [Key Performance Indicators](#) and Forest Research published the latest [National Statistics on woodland](#). The statistics show that tree planting and woodland creation in England increased to 2,700 hectares within and outside of woodland in England in 2021/22. We are currently on track to meet our tree planting commitments; however, we do understand that there is more to do to stay on our ambitious trajectory.

Rachael Maskell:[\[25932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to replace a tree with canopy cover equivalence rather than just a tree when trees are felled as part of development and infrastructure projects; and what recent estimate he has made of the change in canopy cover as a result of those projects.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Act 2021 requires new developments and infrastructure projects to achieve at least a 10% measurable biodiversity net gain ensuring that nature, including woodlands, will be retained and enhanced in the built environment. Through Biodiversity Net Gain, we will see additional protections for important habitats such as native woodlands.

Our proposed statutory targets, set through the powers of the Environment Act, include one for trees and woodland. The consultation on these proposals closed on 27 June 2022 and we are now reflecting on the responses. We propose a target to increase England's woodland cover and tree canopy cover outside woodland from 14.5% to 17.5% by 2050. This metric would account for canopy loss as well as tree planting. The delivery of this target will be supported by the actions we are taking now through the England Trees Action Plan.

We also want to ensure our ancient woodlands are adequately protected, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

As committed in the England Trees Action plan, the revised NPPF 2021 strengthens the protection of trees and promotes urban tree planting by stating that trees should be incorporated in new developments; all new streets should be tree lined; newly planted trees should be maintained, and trees should be retained wherever possible.

■ Tyres: Manufacturing Industries**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[26705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of requiring changes to tyre manufacturing processes on the levels of toxic particles in the environment.

Jo Churchill:

The Department for Transport commissioned a three-year research project in February 2021, which aims to understand better the measurement techniques, material properties and control parameters of tyre wear emissions. The project will also assess how the composition of tyres affects the emission of pollutants from tyre wear, with the aim of informing any policy or legislation that may be required to reduce these emissions.

Industrial emissions from tyre manufacturing are controlled through the Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) 2016 and are categorised as either “Part A2” or “Part B” installations. Local Authorities regulate these sites in accordance with the regulations and current guidance in England. This regulatory framework requires industrial facilities to have an environmental permit and they cannot exceed limits on allowable emissions. These regulatory standards may be updated in future to help further reduce emissions from industry.

Water: Sewage**Catherine West:**[\[25952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the water industry on reducing the discharge of sewage into rivers, seas and lakes.

Rebecca Pow:

I have repeatedly made it clear to the water industry that the current number of sewage discharges is unacceptable and we are going further and faster than any other government to protect and enhance the health of our rivers and seas. We are the first government to set the expectation via the Strategic Policy Statement to Ofwat that the water industry must show significant reductions in the frequency and volume of those discharges. I regularly meet individual companies on their overall performance and make clear that reducing sewage discharges is a Government priority.

More widely, the Government is also working closely with the water industry as part of the Storm Overflows Taskforce in the development of the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan, which will represent the largest investment in reducing storm sewage discharges in history.

Wetlands: Urban Areas**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[25979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the environmental contribution of urban wetlands.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises the benefits of urban wetlands and has various policies and funding available to support them. This includes our current review of the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) which,

if implemented, will introduce standards for new sustainable drainage systems. They use features such as wetlands to absorb rainwater, reducing the risk of surface water flooding, improving water quality, biodiversity, and amenity benefits.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Afghanistan: Humanitarian Aid**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to provide humanitarian support to the Afghan people.

James Cleverly:

Afghanistan continues to face a serious and worsening humanitarian crisis. The Foreign Secretary has committed a further £286 million for Afghanistan which reflects the UK's enduring commitment to the people of Afghanistan and follows the full dispersal of our £286 million commitment in 2021/22 to humanitarian partners. Our aid is vital and will provide life-saving support to the most vulnerable, especially women and girls and minority groups. We are also funding child protection support and supporting access to gender-based violence services. The Foreign Secretary has committed to prioritising funding for women and girls.

■ **African Union: Foreign Relations**

Ruth Jones:

[\[26002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she last met the Chair of the African Union.

Vicky Ford:

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission was a virtual guest at the G7 Foreign & Development Ministers meeting held in Liverpool in December 2021. Prior to that, the Foreign Secretary's predecessor met the Chairperson at the Africa Investment Summit in London in January 2020. During my visit to Senegal last November, I discussed priorities for Senegal's AU presidency with the Senegalese Minister of Foreign Affairs. I had a further meeting with the Minister in June 2022 at the Summit of the Americas. The Prime Minister also met Senegalese President Macky Sall at the G7 in June 2022.

■ **African Union: G20**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[26730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what her policy is on admitting the office of Chairperson of the African Union as a member of the G20 intergovernmental forum.

Vicky Ford:

The membership of the G20 is ultimately a decision for the G20 as a group. The UK welcomes and values the participation of the African Union and other permanent guests at the G20 forum and will continue to support their involvement in the future.

■ Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner

Feryal Clark: [\[28510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she has taken to support the families of Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner following their prosecution by Russian forces in the Donetsk region.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government condemns the reported sentencing of two British Nationals, Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner, held by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine. We are in regular, ongoing contact with the families of both men to provide support and advice at this difficult time - as we are with the families of other British Nationals detained by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine. The UK Government will continue to work with the Ukrainian authorities on all these cases as a matter of urgency and is fully supportive of all their efforts to secure the prisoners' release.

Feryal Clark: [\[28511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to the Russian authorities on the prosecution of Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government continues to work with the Ukrainian authorities on the cases of British Nationals held by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine and is fully supportive of their efforts to secure the release of Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner. We have raised concerns with the Russian authorities about British detainees and reminded them of their obligations under International Humanitarian Law, including that detainees should not be exploited for political purposes. We continue to do everything we can to support these men and their families, alongside other British Nationals detained by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine.

■ Cayman Islands

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to (a) work with and (b) support the Government of the Cayman Islands in achieving the goals set out in its 2022-2024 Strategic Policy Statement.

Amanda Milling:

The UK continues to support the Overseas Territories, including the Cayman Islands, to build vibrant and sustainable economies and deliver on their strategic priorities. The FCDO has engaged with the Cayman Islands on the Strategic Policy Statement

since its inception in 2021, and continues to engage with them on economic matters, including through the UK-Cayman Framework for Fiscal Responsibility. The FCDO is supporting the Cayman Islands to achieve key policy priorities, as set out in the Strategic Policy Statement, including through funding by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. Between 2020-21, the programme funded projects in five key areas in the Cayman Islands covering Governance, Justice, Border Security, the Environment/Climate Change and Covid-19 support. The UK Government also continues to support environmental priorities with a range of projects in the Cayman Islands including coral reef protection, disaster resilience, seabed mapping and a climate change risk assessment, as well as supporting healthcare and wellbeing priorities with activities to strengthen laboratory and public health capability, and to examine and address gaps in mental health services.

■ Conflict Resolution

John Howell:

[\[25804\]](#)

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 debate which took place at the Council of Europe on 22 June 2022 entitled Justice and security for women in peace reconciliation.

James Cleverly:

The UK has played a leading role in taking forward justice and security for women in peace reconciliation through our diplomatic, defence and development efforts, by formulating detailed National Action Plans (NAP) and through the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI). The UK's fifth Women, Peace and Security NAP is currently being developed and will launch in the end of 2022. Violence Against Women and Girls can dramatically increase in scale and severity during conflict and crisis and we recognise the Council of Europe, in particular the role of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, for their work in this sphere. We note that the recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course.

■ Developing Countries: Food Supply

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[25788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Prime Minister's pledges of new support for countries on the food security frontline, published on 24 June 2022, what proportion of the £133 million for research and development partnerships will be allocated to partnerships focused on food security for pastoralist communities.

Amanda Milling:

Science and innovation underpin our delivery of food security goals. The £133 million for research and innovation recently pledged strengthens the UK response to the current global food crisis to develop and implement cutting-edge technologies to improve food security. Around £8 million will be allocated to programmes that work with agri-pastoralist communities, in particular in the Sahel. These programmes will

deliver research and innovation that can enable: the development of sustainable, climate resilient livestock systems; improve livestock productivity and health; and empower women working in the agri-pastoralist system.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[25789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the news story on gov.uk, PM pledges new support for countries on the food security frontline, published on 24 June 2022, which World Food Programme emergency response efforts will be funded from the £130 million commitment; how much funding each World Food Programme emergency will receive; and over what timescale that funding will be transferred.

James Cleverly:

The UK is a major humanitarian donor, and we are continuing the commitment set out in the Strategy for International Development to spend approximately £1 billion per year on life-saving humanitarian assistance.

The majority of the £130 million funding for the World Food Programme (WFP) directly supports their vital efforts to provide emergency food aid in some of the most food insecure countries in the world, in particular Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, as well as Sudan and Nigeria amongst others. These include Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, Chad, Mali, Mozambique, Uganda and Lebanon. This funding is being disbursed in the course of 2022.

A proportion of the £130 million will be provided as unearmarked funding, not allocated to a specific region or crisis, giving WFP the maximum financial flexibility to direct funds where they are most needed and enhance their capacity to take early action to avert the risk of famine.

■ Developing Countries: Humanitarian Aid

Sarah Champion:

[\[25866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress the Government has made on its commitments made in the G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact in the last 12 months.

James Cleverly:

The Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact was agreed during the UK's G7 Presidency and we have provided our share of the \$7 billion in humanitarian assistance to the countries one step from famine in 2021. We have allocated a further £3 billion for humanitarian response over the next three years. We continue to deliver on our policy commitments in the Compact. For example, in 2021 we partnered with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Germany to co-host the High-Level Event on Anticipatory Action, securing further commitments from the 75 participating Member States to scale up the humanitarian system's ability to act early to get ahead of crises before the worst impacts are felt. In addition, we secured a commitment from the World Bank to double its Early Response Financing to \$1 billion to address emerging food security crises.

■ Developing Countries: Malaria**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[25978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent progress the Government has made on eradicating malaria.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is committed to tackling malaria, which is closely linked to our ambition to end preventable deaths of mothers, babies and new-borns. We are concerned by the impact that COVID-19 has had on efforts against malaria, with last year's World Malaria Report recording the first significant increase in malaria deaths in over two decades - up by 69000 - and an increase in the number of malaria cases by 14 million. The majority of our malaria investments are through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria; the UK remains a strong supporter of the Global Fund, having donated £4.1 billion to date. We are reviewing the Global Fund's investment case for the 7th replenishment and deciding our precise contribution in line with delivering the new International Development Strategy. To work towards ending the epidemic of malaria, we also invest in research to develop new tools to prevent, diagnose and treat malaria and support countries to strengthen their health systems. This has included funding the world's first antimalarial drug for children, which is estimated to have saved over one million lives.

■ Development Aid: Malnutrition**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[25790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the news story on gov.uk, PM pledges new support for countries on the food security frontline, published on 24 June 2022, how many children at risk of wasting she expects to be protected from wasting by (a) the £2 million for the Nutrition Match Fund contribution and (b) other UK Government development assistance contributions in 2022.

Amanda Milling:

The UK's recent £2 million contribution to the Nutrition Match Fund and the additional funds it has leveraged will treat an estimated 40,000 severely wasted children in 2022. The Prime Minister has urgently called for others to step up and contribute to the Nutrition Match Fund.

Many more children will be reached by the UK's wider partnership with UNICEF which aims to strengthen systems for preventing and treating child wasting in 9 African and Asian countries and other programmes, which are supporting the roll out of lifesaving nutrition services - including treatment for acute malnutrition. One example is the FCDO's Sahel Humanitarian Emergency Response Programme, which aims to reach 56,891 children by December 2022.

■ Ethiopia: Sudan**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[25785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support de-escalation of the Al-Fashaga dispute between Sudan and Ethiopia.

Vicky Ford:

We raised our concerns at recent violence in the Al-Fashaga region with authorities in Addis Ababa and Khartoum on 28 June, making clear that a peaceful solution is needed. We will continue to raise these concerns, to press both sides to de-escalate and to engage in talks to resolve the longstanding disputes over the area.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: EU Law**Layla Moran:**[\[27727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate she has made of (a) the number of officials in her Department involved in recording retained EU legislation for the purposes of the Retained EU Law Dashboard in the latest period for which figures are available and (b) the cost to the public purse of recording that information.

James Cleverly:

Approximately 10 - 15 FCDO officials from across the department were involved in the process of recording information on retained EU legislation held by the department for the purposes of the Retained EU Law (REUL) Dashboard.

There has been no additional non-pay cost to the public purse by creating the dashboard.

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

■ Israel: Iran**Jim Shannon:**[\[25860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to support Israel with security from potential aggression from Iran.

Amanda Milling:

Our commitment to Israel's security is unwavering. Israel is an important strategic partner for the UK and we collaborate closely on issues of defence and security. This includes regular discussions at the highest levels on the threat posed by destabilising Iranian activity across the region. The Foreign Secretary most recently raised this issue during a call with Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid on 22 June.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Cat Smith: [\[25906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Minister for Asia and the Middle East raised the matter of the blockade of Gaza with the Israeli Government on her visit to Israel on 22 June 2022.

Amanda Milling:

I recently visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) where I saw first-hand the challenges of the prolonged conflict and the impact of the occupation. I reiterated UK support for a two-state solution and the need to improve conditions for ordinary Palestinians in my meetings with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Roll, and with the Palestinian leadership, including Prime Minister Shtayyeh and Foreign Minister Malki. The UK continues to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery.

■ Kyrgyzstan: Politics and Government

John Howell: [\[25808\]](#)

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 debate which took place at the Council of Europe on 23 June 2022 entitled Review of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic.

James Cleverly:

The Government is committed to championing democracy and human rights in Kyrgyzstan, and we welcome the partnership of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe with the Kyrgyz Parliament. I (Minister Cleverly) recognise the crucial work of the Council of Europe, and in particular the value of PACE experience in this sphere, noting that its recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course for review.

■ Migrants: Children

John Howell: [\[25803\]](#)

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 debate which took place at the Council of Europe on 22 June 2022 entitled Protection and alternative care for unaccompanied and separated migrant and refugee children.

James Cleverly:

The UK is firmly committed to supporting children and children without parental care in conflict settings through our development work. At the multilateral level, we continue to press for the inclusion of child protection provisions in UN peacekeeping mandate renewals and resolutions, including for children without parental care. We recognise the Council of Europe, and in particular, the role of Parliamentary

Assembly of the Council of Europe for their work in this sphere, noting the recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course.

■ **Nicaragua: Human Rights**

Carla Lockhart: [\[26053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with the Nicaraguan Government in relation to freedom of religious expression and human rights.

Vicky Ford:

We have raised our concerns on the deteriorating human rights situation with Nicaraguan Government representatives in London, in Managua, at multilateral fora and publicly through a series of statements, including expressing concern about the harassment of the Church and its representatives. On 16 June the UK's Human Rights Ambassador, Rita French, delivered a statement on behalf of the UK during the Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on Nicaragua. The UK will continue to work closely with partners to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Nicaragua.

■ **Russia: Sanctions**

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[28453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will (a) impose an asset freeze against the Central Bank of Russia, (b) take steps to confiscate frozen assets and (c) issue a licence from the Treasury's Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation to enable the release of confiscated assets in order to support Ukraine in rectifying the damage to that country caused by the Russian invasion.

James Cleverly:

We do not speculate on future sanctions. In conjunction with our partners, we have already blocked access to £275 billion of the Russian Central Bank's foreign currency reserves. We are considering all options on assets that have been seized and whether they can contribute towards to the reconstruction of Ukraine. Where assets are subject to an asset freeze, their release may be permitted through a licence from the Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI). OFSI can only issue licences where there are specific and relevant licensing grounds enabling them to do so, and where the conditions in those grounds have been met in the relevant sanctions regulations. OFSI also has powers to issue general licences under such conditions as HM Treasury deems appropriate.

■ **Russia: Ukraine**

John Howell: [\[25802\]](#)

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 debate which

took place at the Council of Europe on 22 June 2022 entitled Humanitarian consequences and internal and external migration in connection with the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government condemns Russia's unprovoked and premeditated invasion of Ukraine and we recognise the important work of the Council of Europe, and in particular the role of Parliamentary Assembly, for their swift action to expel Russia. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has left nearly 16 million people in need of humanitarian assistance within Ukraine, with around 32% of the population displaced either internally or externally. The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to Ukraine and the region. We have allocated £220 million of humanitarian assistance to the crisis, with a focus on protecting and supporting the most vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls. We note that recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course.

■ **Ukraine: Aviation**

John Howell:

[\[25806\]](#)

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 debate which took place at the Council of Europe on 23 June 2022 entitled Ensuring accountability for the downing of flight MH17.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government is clear that Russia should fully cooperate with all the investigations relating to the downing of flight MH17, and we welcome the work of the Council of Europe (CoE) and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The UK Government supports the work of the Joint Investigation Team and the Dutch criminal trial in their efforts to deliver justice for the victims of this avoidable tragedy and answers for the families and friends of the victims, and to ensure those responsible are held to account for this appalling crime. The families of the 10 British victims remain foremost in our thoughts. We note that recommendations will go to the CoE Committee of Ministers in due course for appropriate review.

■ **Ukraine: Development Aid**

Jim Shannon:

[\[27616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take steps with the Secretary of State for defence to increase the (a) amount of support provided to Ukraine and (b) number of sanctions imposed on Russia.

James Cleverly:

Alongside our allies, we are united in support for Ukraine, and continue to provide economic and defensive support. On 30 June the UK announced a further £1 billion of military support which includes weapons, equipment and training to Ukraine, bringing the total since the outbreak of war to £2.3 billion. We do not speculate on

future designations, or on cross-government discussions on potential targets. We have now sanctioned over 1000 individuals, and over 100 businesses since Putin's invasion of Ukraine. This includes oligarchs worth £117 billion. We have also implemented freezes on 18 of Russia's major banks with global assets worth £940 billion, and in conjunction with our partners we have frozen over 60% of Russian Central Bank reserves, worth £275 billion. We will continue to put more pressure on Putin's regime, including through further sanctions designations along with the humanitarian, economic and military support we are providing to Ukraine.

■ Vaccination

John McDonnell:

[\[25724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensuring the equitable distribution of second-generation vaccines across the world.

Amanda Milling:

The UK has played a leading role in supporting global access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines from the outset of the pandemic. The UK is one of the largest donors to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) committing £548 million. Our funding has supported COVAX AMC to deliver over 1.3 billion doses to 87 developing countries. The UK is working with partners, such as COVAX and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), to ensure affordable and effective second generation vaccines will be available as required in low and middle-income countries so the world can respond rapidly to a new variant of concern, or other public health threat. In March, the UK hosted the Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit, raising over £1.2 billion - including £160 million from the UK - to develop variant-proof coronavirus vaccines and to develop vaccines against future health threats in 100 days.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[28426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 6 September 2021 to Question 38295 on Accident and Emergency Departments, whether integrated care boards' (ICB) core responsibilities will have been expanded to ensure that each ICB is responsible for everyone in its area who needs emergency care as of 1 July 2022.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service (Integrated Care Boards: Exceptions to Core Responsibility) Regulations 2022” imposes additional responsibilities on an integrated care board (ICB) for certain specified persons. The instrument sets out circumstances where an ICB would have additional responsibility for commissioning health services

for certain individuals, in addition to the persons where it has core responsibility. The circumstances include commissioning emergency ambulance services or accident and emergency services for any person present within the ICBs' area.

■ **Ambulance Services: South West**

David Warburton: [\[25954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for NHS ambulances in the South West.

Edward Argar:

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) have introduced measures to ensure that ambulance crews can respond to incoming calls. This includes a remote clinical triage team, the direct referral of patients to same day emergency care departments and the placement of Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers to improve the flow of patients and reduce handover delays. SWASFT is also undertaking recruitment activity to ensure sufficient resources are available to meet demand.

■ **Arthritis: Joint Replacements**

David Warburton: [\[25960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) reduce joint replacement waiting times within the NHS for people with arthritis and (b) improve support for people with arthritis who are waiting for joint replacement surgery.

Gillian Keegan:

We are prioritising joint replacement surgery through the High Volume Low Complexity programme, which focuses on improving clinical pathways and quality of care. The programme adopts best clinical and operational practice and aims to establish fast-track surgical hubs for high volume elective procedures such as hip and knee joint replacements, reducing waiting times in the process. Additional capacity for surgery is also being made available through a £1.5 billion investment in elective services, such as new surgical hubs and increased bed capacity, including for joint replacement surgery.

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care', aims to simplify National Health Service pathways for patients and their carers. The pathway improvement programme will focus the most common types of care, including musculoskeletal (MSK) services. NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently working with Versus Arthritis on the development of new MSK pathways and of the MSK strategy. This pain management, personalised care and supporting patients waiting and preparing for surgery. Through collaboration with the British Orthopaedic Association, the British Society for Rheumatology, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance and Versus Arthritis, NHS England and NHS Improvement have developed self-management resources for patients.

■ Asthma

Jim Shannon: [\[25855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of pollen counts during summer 2022 on people with asthma.

Gillian Keegan:

No assessment has been made.

■ Brain Cancer: Diagnosis

Alex Sobel: [\[28476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that the 10-Year Cancer Plan includes proxy measures for staging data of brain cancer so that it can be included and measured in the early diagnosis target and ambition.

Maria Caulfield:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Solihull (Julian Knight MP) on 10 June 2022 to Question [13750](#).

■ Brain Cancer: Nurses

Alex Sobel: [\[28477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the 10-Year Cancer Plan commits to providing access to a clinical nurse specialist for all brain tumour patients.

Maria Caulfield:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Solihull (Julian Knight MP) on 10 June 2022 to Question [13751](#).

■ Breast Cancer: Screening

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[25976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to increase the uptake of breast cancer screening.

Maria Caulfield:

National Health Service breast screening providers are using text message reminders for appointments and contacting women who have missed appointments or have not accepted the screening invitation. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also launched national media campaigns to raise awareness on the symptoms of cancer.

NHS regional commissioners are currently working with Cancer Alliances and cancer charities to develop regional improvement plans, including for breast screening. This includes lessons learned from the COVID-19 vaccination programme in achieving a high uptake among disadvantaged communities.

■ Cancer: Health Services**Alex Sobel:** [\[28475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that the 10-Year Cancer Plan includes specific targets on the less survivable cancers, including brain cancer, to ensure that progress is made on survival rates for those cancers.

Maria Caulfield:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Solihull (Julian Knight MP) on 13 June 2022 to Question [13749](#).

■ Cataracts: Surgery**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[25832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time for a cataract operation is in the North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group area.

Edward Argar:

This information is not collected in the format requested.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Alex Cunningham:** [\[28416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of coordination between NHS 119 and local pharmacies on the delivery of the covid-19 spring booster vaccination.

Alex Cunningham: [\[28417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on when pharmacies in the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council area will receive vaccine supplies for the covid-19 spring booster vaccination.

Maggie Throup:

No formal assessment has been made. However, NHS 119 can make appointments for individuals to be vaccinated, including at community pharmacies. Community pharmacies wishing to provide COVID-19 vaccinations between 1 September 2022 and 31 March 2023 should submit an expression of interest to NHS England, including those in Stockton-on-Tees. The application process commenced on 30 June.

■ Dental Services: South West**David Warburton:** [\[25955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to NHS dentistry services in the South West.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with Health Education England and Bristol and Peninsula Dental schools through the South West Dental Reform programme to address the challenges facing National Health Service dentistry in the region. An additional £50 million was provided for NHS dentistry for the final quarter of 2021/22 to provide urgent care for patients. Of this, £4,726,000 was made available to the South West region. From July 2022, NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked all practices to return to pre-pandemic levels of activity, including in the South West region, to improve access.

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with stakeholders, including the British Dental Association, on improvements to the NHS dental system and negotiations are currently underway on initial measures. This aims to improve access to NHS dentistry nationally, including in the South West.

■ Dentistry: Hendon**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[25828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of NHS dental practitioners in Hendon constituency.

Maria Caulfield:

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

■ Epilepsy: Cannabis**David Warburton:**[\[25959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made to establish clinical trials to test the safety and efficacy of unlicensed cannabis-based products for the medical treatment of children with epilepsy.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) is developing a programme for two randomised controlled trials into epilepsy in adults and children. The trials will commence as soon as possible and the results will be published once the trials have completed and the findings have been peer reviewed. The NIHR encourages high quality proposals for research in this area as a priority and supports researchers to develop applications.

■ Food: Advertising**Fleur Anderson:**[\[26029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's timeframe is for implementing its commitment to ban junk food advertising online and before 9pm.

Maggie Throup:

Restrictions on the advertising of products high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS) on television before 9pm and paid for advertising online will be introduced on 1 January 2024. This will supplement existing restrictions on HFSS advertising during children's and other programming which appeals to children.

Jo Gideon:[\[26044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the speed of the implementation of restrictions on advertising of unhealthy foods.

Maggie Throup:

We have announced a delay to the implementation of the introduction of further restrictions on advertising of high fat, salt or sugar products on TV and paid for advertising online. This is due to the delay in the Health and Care Act 2022 receiving Royal Assent and the recognition that the industry needs more time to prepare for the restrictions. However, the advertising restrictions have now been introduced with a delay in implementation. This will ensure we can address the long-term challenge of obesity, while recognising the unprecedented global economic situation and ensuring the effective implementation of these restrictions.

■ General Practitioners: Hendon**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[25830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people who are not registered with a GP surgery in Hendon constituency.

Maria Caulfield:

No recent estimate has been made as the information requested is not collected centrally.

■ General Practitioners: South West**David Warburton:**[\[25956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to face-to-face GP appointments in the South West.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement's guidance states that general practitioner practices must provide face to face appointments, alongside remote consultations. Patients' input into consultation type should be sought and practices should respect preferences for face-to-face care, unless there are good clinical reasons to the contrary. In May 2022, in the South West National Health Service region 64% of appointments, excluding COVID-19 vaccinations, were conducted face-to-face, compared to 59% in May 2021.

We have made £520 million available to improve access and expand general practice capacity during the pandemic. This is in addition to at least £1.5 billion announced in 2020 to create an additional 50 million general practice appointments by 2024 by increasing and diversifying the workforce.

■ Health: Equality

Sir George Howarth: [\[25741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the white paper on health disparities will include policy proposals to help tackle regional disparities in (a) obesity, (b) smoking and (c) alcohol consumption.

Maggie Throup:

The health disparities white paper will review the factors which influence people's health, including preventable risks and among population groups and localities which experience poorer health outcomes. The specific policy content of the white paper will be available in due course.

■ Hospices: Children

Peter Dowd: [\[26782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to direct NHS England to maintain the Children's Hospice Grant beyond the 2023-24 financial year.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: We have no plans to do so. NHS England manages its budget and determines the best use of its financial settlement to deliver its objectives. The Children's Hospice Grant provides funding directly from NHS England to hospices, which is reviewed through the annual grant application process. The NHS Long Term Plan states that NHS England is increasing its contribution to the Children's Hospice Grant by up to £25 million a year by 2023/24. Funding arrangements beyond 2023/24 have not yet been agreed.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[28472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when hospices will be informed whether the central NHS England Grant for children's hospices will continue as a ringfenced funding stream beyond 2023-24.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England determines the best use of its financial settlement to deliver services. The Children's Hospice Grant provides funding directly to hospices from NHS England, reviewed through the annual grant application process. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to increase the contribution to the Children's Hospice Grant by up to £25 million a year by 2023/24. Funding arrangements beyond 2023/24 have not yet been agreed.

■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control**Jim Shannon:** [\[25859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of using no-touch surface technology in buildings to combat the risk of future pandemics.

Maggie Throup:

No recent assessment has been made.

■ Learning Disability: Mental Health and Loneliness**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[25787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle (a) mental ill-health and (b) loneliness affecting people with a learning disability following the covid-19 pandemic; and what assessment his Department has made of the extent to which access to day services for people with learning disabilities has changed since the publication of the Government's COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan in March 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

In 2021/22, we provided an additional £500 million to expand mental health services and target groups whose mental health have been most affected by the pandemic. Of this funding, £31 million was allocated to support learning disability and autism services, address the diagnostic backlog as a result of the pandemic and support interventions to prevent children and young people with learning disability, autism or both escalating into crisis.

More than £34 million of the £750 million provided to the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector was allocated to measures to reduce loneliness. In addition, £1.6 million was provided to charities supporting autistic people and people with a learning disability for activities such as virtual peer support and helpline capacity. No specific assessment on access to day services for people with learning disabilities has been made.

■ Long Covid: Health Services**Jim Shannon:** [\[25854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to help people access treatment for long covid.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England has invested £224 million to support the assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of people with post-COVID-19 syndrome, including £90 million in 2022/23. There are over 90 specialist services to support adults, children and young people with the long-term effects of COVID-19 to direct them to appropriate care pathways. We have invested over £50 million in research projects for post-COVID-19 syndrome to improve our understanding and treatment of the condition.

Jim Shannon: [\[25856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of the treatment requirements of patients with long covid on the provision of healthcare services.

Maria Caulfield:

While no formal assessment has been made, NHS England monitors provision of Post-COVID-19 syndrome services to ensure that patient needs are met.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Penrose: [\[25791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letters of 28 April and 30 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare on behalf of his constituent, Mr Gareth Avery, regarding care home fees.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 30 June 2022.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[11792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have died while (a) detained under the Mental Health Act and (b) in a mental health setting as a voluntary patient who were (i) patients held in NHS settings and (ii) NHS patients held in settings run by private providers in each year from 2016 to 2022.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 8 June 2022]: We are unable to provide the information requested due to the low numbers involved in each year which could lead to the identification of individuals. However, information notified to the Department by NHS England and NHS Improvement shows that there were 21 deaths of children and young people in inpatient settings in National Health Service organisations between 2015/16 and 2021/22 and seven in independent healthcare organisations. This information does not record whether those individuals were detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 or in the care of a mental health setting as a voluntary patient.

When the Department is informed by NHS England of any such death, the Care Quality Commission is immediately notified, which reviews the information and determines its regulatory response. The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health is also notified, which records all cases of inpatient deaths among adults and children and young people. These cases are routinely analysed and the Inquiry makes recommendations on preventative measures.

Fleur Anderson: [\[13829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have died while (a) detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 or (b) in the care of a mental health

setting as a voluntary patient in (i) NHS and (ii) private settings in each year between 2016 and 2022.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 13 June 2022]: We are unable to provide the information requested due to the low numbers involved in each year which could lead to the identification of individuals. However, information notified to the Department by NHS England shows that there were 21 deaths of children and young people in inpatient Tier 4 children and adolescent mental health service settings in National Health Service organisations between 2015/16 and 2021/22 and 7 in independent healthcare organisations. This information does not record whether those individuals were detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 or in the care of a mental health setting as a voluntary patient.

As soon as the Department is informed by NHS England of any such death, we immediately notify the Care Quality Commission, which reviews the information and determines its regulatory response. We also notify the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health, which records all cases of inpatient deaths amongst adults and children and young people and routinely analyses them to establish the position nationally and make recommendations on what needs to be done to prevent further deaths.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[21301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have died while (a) detained under the Mental Health Act and (b) in the care of a mental health setting as a voluntary patient in each year from 2016 to 2022.

Gillian Keegan:

We are unable to provide the information requested due to the low numbers involved in each year which could lead to the identification of individuals. However, information notified to the Department by NHS England and NHS Improvement shows that there were 21 deaths of children and young people in inpatient settings in National Health Service organisations between 2015/16 and 2021/22 and seven in independent healthcare organisations. This information does not record whether those individuals were detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 or in the care of a mental health setting as a voluntary patient.

When the Department is informed by NHS England of any such death, the Care Quality Commission is immediately notified, which reviews the information and determines its regulatory response. The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health is also notified, which records all cases of inpatient deaths among adults and children and young people. These cases are routinely analysed and the Inquiry makes recommendations on preventative measures

■ Migraines

Feryal Clark:

[19740]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of running a public awareness campaign to (a) improve public understanding of the range of migraine symptoms and (b) reduce the stigma associated with migraines, in collaboration with The Migraine Trust and local health systems.

Gillian Keegan:

While there are no current plans for a specific public awareness campaign, NHS England has developed a RightCare toolkit with stakeholders to improve care for migraine. The toolkit offers practical advice and guidance, including the identification of local clinical champions to promote a consistent and universal awareness and understanding of primary headache disorders, such as migraine. The toolkit highlights the importance of raising awareness and understanding locally within the National Health Service and with employers. In addition, NHS.UK provides further information on migraine, including symptoms, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/migraine/>

We continue to work with stakeholders, such as the Migraine Trust, to understand the public's awareness of these symptoms and any stigma associated with migraine.

■ Monkeypox: Disease Control

Jim Shannon:

[25858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help prevent the spread of monkeypox in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has published guidance to raise awareness of the outbreak, advise the public on symptoms and how to access the appropriate treatment options. The UKHSA has procured over 20,000 doses of the smallpox vaccine Imvanex, which is offered to identified close contacts of those diagnosed with monkeypox to reduce the risk of symptomatic infection and severe illness. On 21 June 2022, the UKHSA published a 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.

■ Neurology: Health Professions

Fabian Hamilton:

[18796]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase the number of specialist practitioners researching and treating Tourette's Syndrome and other neurological disorders.

Gillian Keegan:

Patients with Tourette's syndrome can require support from a range of professionals, including clinical psychologists and neurologists. Health Education England is increasing the number of trained clinical psychologists through a 60% expansion in the clinical psychology training intake in the last two years. The number of postgraduate neurology training posts in England will also be increased by 10 from August 2022.

While there are no specific plans to increase the number of specialist practitioners researching Tourette's syndrome, the National Institute for Health and Care Research and UK Research and Innovation welcome funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including Tourette's syndrome. All applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition. We continue to engage with stakeholders regarding Tourette's syndrome and I recently met with the charity Tourette's Action.

■ NHS Covid Pass

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in his Department are employed in the delivery lead of the NHS Covid Pass as of 27 June 2022; and what plans his Department has to wind down employee numbers in that area.

Maggie Throup:

The NHS COVID Pass Programme was established in March 2021 and as of 27 June 2022 employed 35 Civil Servants. Seven are permanent Departmental employees with others on loan from other Government departments or employed on a fixed term basis. The NHS Covid Pass Programme is due to close by 31 March 2023 and transition options for the service are currently under assessment.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his planned timescale is for the winding down of the area in his Department that is responsible for the delivery lead of NHS Covid Pass.

Maggie Throup:

The NHS COVID Pass Programme is due to close by 31 March 2023 and transition options for the service are currently being assessed. The programme provides delivery, service and policy to ensure the UK meets international travel requirements including for travel to the European Union, which plans to operate the EU Digital COVID Certificate until June 2023.

■ Platinum Jubilee 2022: Medals

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[27507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many emergency service personnel engaged in providing charitable helicopter emergency services are eligible for

the Platinum Jubilee Medal; and when the eligibility criteria were changed to include them.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: In consultation with National Health Service ambulance trusts in England, we confirmed earlier this year that emergency service personnel engaged in providing helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) and who met the eligibility criteria for the Platinum Jubilee Medal could receive an award, irrespective of whether they have an employment contract with an NHS organisation. Emergency service personnel who respond to 999 calls and potentially placing themselves in danger are eligible for the Medal. An estimated 630 HEMS staff of both NHS and charitable employment status were eligible.

■ **Prescription Drugs: Internet**

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[\[25766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to prevent the selling of prescription drugs online without requiring a prescription; and if she will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

Existing regulatory controls govern the retail sale and supply of medicines. The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 prohibit the sale or supply of prescription only medicines (POMs), unless in accordance with a prescription given by an appropriate practitioner and dispensed through registered pharmacy premises, by or under the supervision of a pharmacist. 'Appropriate practitioners' include doctors, dentists and independent nurse or pharmacist prescribers.

Websites offering to supply POMs without a relevant prescription are in breach of the United Kingdom's legal requirements and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency will investigate and take appropriate action, including criminal investigation and prosecution.

■ **Respiratory System: Viral Diseases**

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[R\] \[25842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the UK Health Security Agency only reports on SARS-CoV-2, influenza, and RSV in its weekly reports.

Maggie Throup:

COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are monitored due to the potential public health, transmission patterns and infection to causing overt disease. Surveillance in England of other respiratory viruses including rhinovirus, adenovirus, parainfluenza and human metapneumovirus is also published in the weekly flu and COVID-19 surveillance report. Other infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and hepatitis C are monitored appropriate to the nature of the transmission and how the disease manifests.

■ Social Security Benefits: Up-rating

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[22391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to take steps to (a) ensure that the Minimum Income Guarantee will be considered for up-rating for 2023-24 and (b) hold discussions with Cabinet on assessing the potential merits of that up-rating as part future welfare payments up-rating. colleagues to ensure that it is considered for up-rating alongside other welfare payments.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 29 June 2022]: The Minimum Income Guarantee is reviewed annually, with the next review due in January 2023 and published in the Local Authority Circular. While there are no current plans for specific discussions with Cabinet colleagues, we continue to work with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that any decision on up-rating the social care allowances is informed by the up-rating of other welfare payments.

■ Suicide

Rachael Maskell: [\[25926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral statement of 27 June 2020 on Draft Mental Health Bill, if he will take steps to ensure that the 10-year suicide prevention plan focuses on children and young people.

Gillian Keegan:

We will engage with those providing support on suicide prevention, including organisations which support children and young people's mental health, in determining the priorities for the new suicide prevention plan. This will consider the evidence base for those most at risk of suicide and tackling suicide rates in different age groups, including children and young people.

Rachael Maskell: [\[25929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his suicide prevention strategy will cover the correlation between alcohol and other substance misuse and suicide.

Gillian Keegan:

The new national suicide prevention plan will consider the evidence linked to suicide, including social risk factors such as alcohol and substance misuse.

■ Suicide: Neurodiversity

Rachael Maskell: [\[25930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his suicide prevention strategy will examine a potential link between neurodiversity and suicide; and what steps he plans to take to help prevent suicides linked to neurodiversity.

Gillian Keegan:

We will engage with those in the suicide prevention sector on the priorities for the suicide prevention plan.

We are investing £70 million to improve community support for autistic people and people with a learning disability, including the capability and availability of crisis support. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Plan allocated £500 million in 2021/22 to address the impact of the pandemic on mental health, including for autistic people. We also provided £3.5 million in 2021/22 to assist local systems to identify autistic children and young people on waiting lists who may be at risk of crisis. From March 2022, we are extending the Learning from Lives and Deaths – People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People programme to understand how we can improve suicide prevention.

■ Surgery**David Warburton:**[\[25957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of surgical hubs in aiding the recovery of elective services following the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

NHS England is currently assessing the impact of surgical hubs, including with evidence published in the Getting it Right First Time guidance on elective hubs in April 2022.

■ Tobacco**Ben Bradley:**[\[25993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 3 August 2020 to Question 72841 on Tobacco: Marketing and the US Food and Drug Administration's Modified Risk Granted Order reference MR0000192, published on 11 March 2022, if he will (a) make it his policy to commission independent research into heated tobacco products as recommended in the Khan review: making smoking obsolete, published on 9 June 2022 and (b) introduce a new regulatory framework for those products.

Maggie Throup:

The next Vaping in England report, commissioned by the former Public Health England and produced by Kings College London, includes a chapter on heated tobacco products. This will be published in summer 2020.

Plans for future research will be set out in the forthcoming white paper on health disparities and the Tobacco Control Plan, which will be published later this year. There are no current plans to introduce new regulatory framework for these products.

■ Vaccination: Disinformation**John Howell:**[\[25810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the debate which took place at the Council of Europe on 24 June 2022 entitled Fighting vaccine-preventable diseases through quality services and anti-vaccine myth-busting.

Maggie Throup:

While no formal assessment has been made, the cross-Whitehall Counter Disinformation Unit works with social media platforms to understand and counter the extent of misinformation and promote accurate information from trusted sources.

HOME OFFICE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Dan Carden:**[\[900903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to protect the victims of cuckooing through the criminal justice system.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is determined to crack down on the county lines gangs who exploit our children and have a devastating impact on our communities. That is why, through the ten-year Drugs Strategy, we are investing up to £145m over three years in our successful County Lines Programme. Since November 2019 police activity funded by the County Lines Programme has closed over 2,400 lines, made over 8,000 arrests, and engaged over 9,500 individuals through safeguarding interventions.

Also, through the County Lines Programme, the Home Office funds the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre (NCLCC) who have identified and are sharing best practice on 'cuckooing'. Examples include working with local authorities and housing associations to raise awareness, to disrupt this malicious crime and signpost vulnerable victims to support.

■ Anti-social Behaviour and Crime**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[25768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of (a) youth crime and (b) anti-social behaviour in (i) Bournemouth East and (ii) England in the last three years; and what steps she is taking to help tackle those crimes.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour (ASB). We know the serious impact that persistent ASB can have on both individuals and communities.

The Government introduced a range of flexible tools and powers for local agencies, including police forces, local authorities, and landlords, to tackle anti-social behaviour through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 ('the 2014 Act'). Local areas decide how best to deploy these powers depending on the specific circumstances.

Home Office statutory guidance, which was updated in June 2022, supports all local agencies in using the powers from the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and in taking the multi-agency approach that is needed to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour in a way that takes account of the needs of the victim and the wider community.

Last year the Beating Crime Plan laid out the Government's plan for tackling crime and ASB and committed to working with local agencies and partners to drive down ASB using the full range of powers and tools in the '2014 Act'.

The Home Office announced in March this year that ASB would be one of the primary crime and issue types being targeted in the fourth and fifth rounds of the Safer Streets Fund. This is a total of £150m over two rounds which aims to support local areas in preventing and tackling neighbourhood crimes, ASB and violence against women and girls.

The Levelling-up Fund (LUF), which is a total of £4.8billion, will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. Crime and ASB forms part of the LUF prospectus, which means that local areas will be able to include reduction of crime and ASB within their bids for funding. The Minister for Crime, Policing and Probation wrote out to all Police and Crime Commissioner's in April 2022 encouraging them to work closely with local authorities on their bids to incorporate crime and ASB reducing elements.

The ONS publish data on trends of anti-social behaviour incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales at Police Force Area (PFA) level annually and the latest figures can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables>

Data is not held centrally at Parliamentary Constituency level.

For ten years, the Youth Endowment Fund has invested £200million in early intervention and support initiatives to support young people at risk of involvement in serious violence. Violence Reduction Units divert young people away from crime, they reached 26,000 in their second year of funding.

Trends on juvenile offenders is held by the Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board and statistics on young people (aged 10 to 17) receiving cautions and convictions at court are published on a quarterly basis and the latest statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2021>

■ Asylum: Children

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[27626]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to reports from the charities Love146 UK and Care4Calais that some children seeking asylum without identification have been classified as adults and are at risk of transfer to Rwanda, how many asylum seekers claiming to be children have been determined to be adults following age assessments since 1 January 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: Immigration officers operating at the border perform a difficult but vital function in preventing abuse of the immigration system and protecting genuine children from the safeguarding risks associated with allowing adults to access safe spaces which are properly reserved for children.

The UK Supreme Court recently considered and fully endorsed the lawfulness of the ‘significantly over 18’ policy for initial age assessments conducted at the border by immigration officers in the case of *BF Eritrea UKSC 2019/0147*.

Furthermore, the initial age assessment process represents only the first stage of a broader age assessment procedure. It has been designed to allow those who wish to maintain their claim to be a child to seek assessment by a local authority. It is long established Home Office policy to give significant weight to a local authority age assessment.

The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the ‘[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)’. Data on the number of age disputes and outcomes are published in table Asy_D05 of the [asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#). Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the ‘Notes’ page of the workbook. The latest data covers up to March 2022.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the ‘[Research and statistics calendar](#)’.

The published statistics for age disputes indicate there were 428 disputes raised on the basis of physical appearance and demeanour in the first quarter of 2022. Of the 255 disputes resolved in the same period, 126 cases were resolved with an outcome the person was an adult and 129 concluded the person was a child.

The statistics do not distinguish between those who have been assessed to be significantly over 18 and others who have been age disputed but referred directly to a local authority for further assessment. Detail of the volume of age dispute cases for the following quarter will be made available in future planned statistical publications.

Anyone who is the subject of an age dispute will be excluded from inadmissibility procedures as a matter of policy, where either the individual is undergoing assessment by a local authority, where there are ongoing legal proceedings on the

subject of age or where the Home Office accepts a subsequent assessment by a local authority that the individual is a child.

■ Asylum: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry: [\[24708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have been placed in dispersal accommodation in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months.

Stephen Farry: [\[24712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children asylum seekers have been placed in contingency accommodation in Northern Ireland in each of the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support> (opens in a new tab) Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 26 May 2022.

The next quarterly figures are due to be released in August 2022. The Home Office does not publish a *breakdown of these statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers accommodated in dispersal accommodation for the first time in each quarter in each of the last two years, by local authority*. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Stephen Farry: [\[24714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on an asylum seeker (a) strategy and (b) action plan for Northern Ireland.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: 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 held a follow up meeting on 28 June 2022 to discuss how to implement the Full Dispersal grant funding in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland have representation on the Home Office Local Government Chief Executive Group (HOLGCEX), which brings together senior representation from across the UK to discuss plans in relation to the implementation of the full dispersal model.

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

■ Asylum: Rwanda

Sarah Olney: [\[26831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the value for money of the Migration and Economic Development partnership with Rwanda.

Tom Pursglove:

On 13 April 2022 the Permanent Secretary and Accounting Officer of the Home Office, Matthew Rycroft, provided an assessment of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership between the UK and Rwanda to the Home Secretary.

Regarding value for money, the Accounting Officer recognised that ‘there are potentially significant savings to be realised from deterring people entering the UK illegally’ but concluded there was not currently sufficient evidence to be certain about the assumed deterrent effect. As such, the Home Secretary issued a Ministerial Direction to enable the policy to proceed.

This does not mean that the partnership will not have the appropriate deterrent effect; just as a new and untested policy there was not sufficient evidence at that point for him to conclude that it will.

■ Bicycles: Theft

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of bicycles stolen in each police region in the last 12 months.

Kit Malthouse:

The number of bicycle theft offences reported to and recorded by the police in England and Wales, in the year ending December 2021, broken down by region, is presented in the table below.

REGION	NUMBER OF BICYCLE THEFT OFFENCES
North East	2,557
North West	7,058

REGION	NUMBER OF BICYCLE THEFT OFFENCES
Yorkshire and the Humber	5,325
East Midlands	5,136
West Midlands	4,103
East of England	7,549
London	21,115
South East	10,588
South West	5,165
Wales	2,173
British Transport Police	3,624
England and Wales	74,393

Statistics on the number of bicycle theft offences recorded by each police force in England and Wales are published on a quarterly basis on the Home Office website at:

[Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/data-and-data-sets/police-recorded-crime-and-outcomes-open-data-tables)

■ Biometric Residence Permits

Wendy Chamberlain: **[28516]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what service standard has been set for processing biometric residence permit applications; what proportion of applications were processed within that timeframe; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that applications are processed within that timeframe.

Kevin Foster:

We aim to deliver a BRP within 7 working days of the immigration decision.

BRPs are produced at the secure delivery facility (Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA)) within 48 hours of the decision being made and are collected by our secure delivery partner the same day. Our secure delivery partner (FedEx) aims to attempt to deliver the BRPs within 48 hours of receipt of the BRPs. This equates to a minimum of 5 working days from date of decision to delivery of the BRP.

In May, DVLA produced all BRPs within 48 hours of the production request, with 100% being produced within 24 hours. In May FedEx attempted to deliver 99.75% of BRPs within 48 hours.

■ Crime: Rural Areas**Dr Neil Hudson:****[26917]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle rural crime (a) in Cumbria and (b) across England.

Kit Malthouse:

Our manifesto committed us to use police resources to tackle rural crime. As well as recruiting 20,000 additional police officers, we are also taking steps to address issues that we know affect rural communities. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act empowers and equips the police and courts with the powers they need to combat hare coursing. The Government is also providing funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit. As at 31 March 2022, Cumbria Police has recruited 117 additional uplift officers against a combined year 1 and 2 allocation of 101 officers. The force has been allocated 68 additional uplift officers in the final year of Uplift. The deployment of these officers is an operational decision for Chief Constables.

■ Hate Crime: Disability**Mr Tobias Ellwood:****[25773]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to deal with disability hate crimes.

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.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme**Wendy Chamberlain:****[28491]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what advice her Department has issued to employers on employing Ukrainians who have entered the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme but have not yet received the Biometric Residence Permit; and what steps she is taking to ensure that Ukrainians are able to undertake employment during that period.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office published updated guidance for employers on 12 April setting out how Ukrainian nationals issued permission to enter under the Ukraine schemes, including the Homes for Ukraine scheme, can evidence their right to work.

Further information is available on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide>

Where necessary, employers may contact the Home Office Employer Checking Service to verify right to work.

■ Immigration Controls: Biometrics

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of immigration checks into the UK are conducted through electronic passport gates.

Kevin Foster:

Border Force does not hold the data in an easily accessible format on the proportion of immigration checks conducted through electronic passport gates, but the gates conduct the same immigration checks as the systems used by the officers on the manned desks.

However, the Home Office published data on the clearance of passengers at the border in the [Border Force transparency data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). 85% of inbound passenger volumes based on nationality eligibility can use eGates.

■ Knives: Crime

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish data on the number of knife crimes in (a) Romford constituency and (b) the London Borough of Havering in the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects information on the number of offences involving the use of a knife or a sharp instrument recorded by the police in England and Wales at the Police Force Area level. These data can be found in the quarterly Office for National Statistics quarterly releases 'Crime in England and Wales'.

The latest figures can be found at:

[Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

■ Members: Correspondence

David Linden: [\[28474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of 9 May 2022, resent by email on 13 June 2022 and 15 June 2022, from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL11881.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the Hon. Member's correspondence on 4 July 2022

■ Muslim Brotherhood

Ian Paisley: [\[24587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the status of the Muslim brotherhood is in the UK as of 23 June 2022.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: The Government keeps under review the views promoted and activities undertaken by the Muslim Brotherhood's associates in the UK in accordance with the five commitments included in the former Prime Minister's statement to Parliament.

The Government will consider any new evidence on the Muslim Brotherhood's activities against the UK's legal thresholds, including whether they meet the test for proscription under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Ian Paisley: [\[24588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she (a) has made a recent assessment and (b) plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of proscribing the Muslim brotherhood.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters, including whether an organisation is under consideration for proscription.

The Government keeps the list of proscribed organisations under review.

■ National Security Council

John Healey: [\[26695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings of the National Security Council she has attended since April 2022.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: 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.

■ Passports: Applications

David Warburton: [\[25958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 7920 on Passports: Applications, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of further options to ensure that people receive their passports in a timely manner.

Kevin Foster:

Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks to get their passport. Across March, April, and May 2022, 98.5% of applications from the UK were completed within this published processing time of up to ten weeks.

Her Majesty's Passport Office has added 850 staff since April 2021. This has helped to ensure that more passport applications are being processed than ever before, with the processing of approximately three million applications being completed between March and May.

Processing capacity will increase further, with an additional 350 staff arriving within the summer.

Grahame Morris:[\[27577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the additional revenue the Government has received as a result of people upgrading passport applications in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: Upgrades to urgent services are only required where an applicant needs a passport sooner than ten weeks. For the small percentage of customers whose applications take longer than ten weeks, there is an expedited service at no additional cost to help ensure that they receive their passport ahead of their travel.

HMPO does not hold income data by service type. All HMPO income is disclosed in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts which are published annually ahead of summer recess, links for the past 2 years are here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020>

■ Pets: Theft**Tom Hunt:**[\[26023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number of pet thefts in the last 12 months compared to the 12 months prior.

Kit Malthouse:

Information on the scale of pet theft was gathered as part of the recent Pet Theft Taskforce and evidence included data from 33 police forces in England and Wales on trends in reported dog thefts from 2015 to 2020 and is available here:

[Pet theft taskforce report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Pet Theft Taskforce estimated that around 2,000 dog thefts were reported to the police each year (2019 and 2020) in England and Wales. The Pet Theft Taskforce recommended exploring options which would lead to improving the consistency of

recording and collection data on pet thefts by all police forces across England and Wales and government across the entirety of the criminal justice system.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for acquisitive crime has written to all forces asking them to ensure details about stolen dogs are recorded consistently. Operation Opal (the NPCC's national intelligence unit focused on serious organised acquisitive crime) has suggested that forces across England and Wales are seeing a fall in the number of these crimes, and we are pressing for a further update on the data.

The Government is acting on the recommendations of the Task Force which includes introducing a new dog abduction offence which has been added by the Government to the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, bolstering the raft of measures it already includes to further protect pets, livestock and kept wild animals.

■ **Police: First Aid**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[25756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the effectiveness of bleed-control kits in the London Borough of Havering; and whether her Department has plans to roll out those kits nationwide.

Kit Malthouse:

The use of bleed control kits is determined at the local level. The Government does not provide specific funding for bleed control kits.

We do however provide an annual funding settlement for the police, allocated using the police funding formula.

On 2 February 2022, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £16.9 billion in 2022/23, an increase of up to £1.1 billion when compared to 2021/22.

In 2022/23, the Metropolitan Police Service will receive up to £3241.6 million; an increase of up to £169.3 million when compared to 2021/22. It is for Chief Constables, directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Mayors with PCC functions to make operational decisions including how to allocate resources based on their local knowledge and experience.

The Government has also made £130m available this financial year (22/23) to tackle serious violence, including murder and knife crime. This includes £12,691,400 for the London Violence Reduction Unit.

■ **Police: Havering**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[25757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the financial contribution is of the London Borough of Havering to the Metropolitan Police; and how much is assigned from the London Metropolitan Police to the London Borough of Havering.

Kit Malthouse:

The average (Band D) council tax charge in the Borough of Havering is £1970.97, of which £277 is allocated to the Metropolitan Police. The Government does not collect data on the total amount collected from each borough or how those funds are allocated, as this is a matter for the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police.

Total funding for the Metropolitan Police in 2022-23 will be over £3 billion, of which around £849 million will come from council tax precept.

Refugees: Ukraine**Gareth Thomas:**[\[24536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to allow Ukrainian refugees who travelled to the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme following the Russian invasion to transfer to the Homes for Ukraine scheme so they can access a wider range of support from local authorities; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: The Ukraine Family Scheme was set up to ensure family members were able to reunite with family fleeing Ukraine ahead of the development of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. It is based on family visa routes which existed before the Ukraine conflict, where public services are funded out of council budgets and the same principle is applied here. The UK-based family member is expected to provide support and accommodation for those coming to join them, who in turn benefit from the wider integration advantages in joining an existing family network.

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

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

Homes for Ukraine on the other hand is a unique scheme set up specifically to support those escaping the conflict in Ukraine who are not able to rely on UK based family support. The Government is providing additional funding to local authorities which includes resource to enable them to carry out sponsorship-specific functions such as safeguarding checks and property checks, administering payments, as well as providing support such as English language training to help their integration into communities.

We continue to keep the UK Government's support under review and will adapt and develop the visa routes in place to ensure they keep pace with the situation in Ukraine and the needs of those who have sought sanctuary here.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Standards

Sam Tarry: [\[24687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's timeframe is for making a decision on cases referred to UK Visas and Immigration Chief Casework Unit.

Sam Tarry: [\[24688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the decision making (a) methodology and (b) criteria are for cases referred to the UK Visas and Immigration Chief Casework Unit.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: The Service Level Agreement (SLA) for individual cases referred to the Chief Caseworker Unit is 14 days.

The Chief Caseworker Unit's purpose is to put the customer at the centre of what we do. The unit receives referrals that seek additional support in their decision making. The unit will help overcome barriers to effective decision making, using discretionary and ethical consideration as appropriate. The centralised position of the unit can identify potential cross cutting issues and so will act as an interface with partners/policy and operational areas to develop longer term and sustainable solutions.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many migrants who have arrived via the English Channel in a boat without prior permission are being accommodated through public funds in (a) Romford, (b) Havering and (c) the UK as of 27 June 2022.

Tom Pursglove:

For clarity, the Home Office does not accommodate or support illegal migrants but does have a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered.

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found in table Asy_D11 of the [asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#). Data are published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 26 May 2022.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relate to the year ending March 2022. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

■ Violence Reduction Units

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Violence Reduction Units.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government funds independent yearly evaluations into the Violence Reduction Unit programme. The recently published 20/21 VRU Evaluation ([Violence reduction unit year ending March 2021 evaluation report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)) has shown positive early signs of the programme's impact, estimating that the combination of VRU and targeted enforcement activity has prevented approximately 49,000 violent offences over their first two years of activity compared to unfunded areas (41,377 violence without injury offences and 7,636 violence with injury offences). Relative to the amount of serious violence funding over the same period, this represents an estimated return of £3.16 for every £1 invested in serious violence.

We will continue to monitor trends in violence closely and conduct yearly independent evaluations into the VRU programme to assess the programme's impact.

■ Visas: Afghanistan

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[26711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 23234, under which scheme 100 Afghan journalists been relocated to the UK; and what type of visas they have been granted.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: 100 Afghan journalists have been brought to safety during and after OP Pitting under the ACRS through pathway one.

They were granted Leave Outside the Rules (LOTR) for 6 months and will be granted Indefinite Leave to Remain under the scheme.

■ Visas: Applications

Sam Tarry:

[\[24691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time was for her Department to make decisions on applications for family visas (a) made on the basis of the applicant's private life and (b) in total in each of the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: Our data base does not differentiate between the different routes within the family provisions of the immigration Rules.

If a customer is currently applying on private life grounds, there are no service standard processing times for these applications. However, we are informing customers on the UKVI website, on average, the wait time for a decision for such applications is currently 11 months. Please see the link to the UKVI website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-inside-the-uk#switch-to-or-extend-a-family-visa>

The Home Office is working to reduce this timeframe.

■ Visas: Ukraine

Dave Doogan: [\[27730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what contractual obligations will apply to people who have made a successful application under the Ukraine Extension Scheme and who were previously in the UK on the seasonal worker visa in relation to any contract previously negotiated by a labour provider.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: Customers granted leave under the Ukraine Extension Scheme are normally granted for a period of 36 months and are able to access work, study and public funds. They are not restricted in the work they can undertake from an immigration point of view.

Employment contracts between an employee and employer are not something the Home Office would be involved in under the Ukraine Extension Scheme.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreements: Indiana

Ruth Cadbury: [\[21213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make an assessment of the potential impact on the UK economy in pounds sterling of the Memorandum of Understanding on economic cooperation and trade relations between the US state of Indiana and the UK over the next 12 months.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[21214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential impact on the UK's GDP of the Memorandum of Understanding on economic cooperation and trade relations between the US state of Indiana and the UK.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 23 June 2022]: The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UK and Indiana builds on the strong existing relationship we have with an economy worth around £306bn, and is the first such MOU to be signed with an individual US state.

This MOU will help us to bolster the over £1 billion worth of goods Indiana already buys from the UK by providing a framework to address market access barriers and increase opportunities for UK and Indiana businesses to invest and create jobs in a variety of sectors such as aerospace, pharmaceuticals, and automotives. These sectors were worth a combined £36bn to the UK economy in 2021.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Gareth Thomas:

[\[24535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish representations she has received on the level of protection for personal information in digital trade between the UK and Australia following publication of the UK-Australia and UK-New Zealand trade deals; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

A summary of responses to our consultations on our Australia and New Zealand trade negotiations can be found on the government's website.

Transfers of personal data to Australia and New Zealand must continue to satisfy the UK's high standards of data protection. The deals enshrine a requirement to maintain domestic legislation to protect data. Australia and New Zealand must also publish information on how they protect data, and how UK citizens can enforce their data rights. The UK continues to champion data protection with all Free Trade Agreement partners in line with our published Digital Trade Objectives.

JUSTICE

■ Council of Europe

John Howell:

[\[25811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his position is on the UK's continued membership of the Council of Europe through its membership of the European Court of Human Rights.

James Cartlidge:

The United Kingdom is committed to remaining a state party to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Council of Europe.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Antisemitism

John Howell:

[\[25801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the debate that took place at the Council of Europe in the week beginning 20 June 2022 entitled Preventing and combating antisemitism in Europe.

Kemi Badenoch:

Antisemitism has no place in our society, which is why we became the first country to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism and continue to encourage other bodies to do so. We also continue to

support the independent adviser on Antisemitism, Lord Mann, to provide expert advice to Government on contemporary Antisemitism, and how best to tackle it.

Online abuse of any kind, including antisemitic abuse, is unacceptable. We want the internet to be a safe space for all users - we are clear that what is unacceptable offline should be unacceptable online. A new regulatory framework will mean that companies will be held to account for tackling illegal activity and content, such as hate crime, harassment and cyber-stalking, as well as that which may not be illegal but is nonetheless highly damaging to individuals and society. This Government is providing £14 million this year, and has provided over £65 million to date, for the Protective Security Grant to provide protective security measures at all Jewish state, free and independent schools, colleges, nurseries, and some other Jewish community sites, including a number of synagogues.

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Marketing

Lisa Nandy: [\[26751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much his Department has spent on rebranding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government since 19 September 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

The information requested will be published on Gov.uk in due course as part of the department's transparency data.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dluhc-departmental-spending-over-250>

■ Empty Property

Hilary Benn: [\[28402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Empty Dwelling Management Orders at enabling local authorities to bring empty properties back into use; and whether he plans to introduce new ways of enabling local authorities to achieve that goal.

Stuart Andrew:

It is for local housing authorities to decide when to use their powers to deal with empty properties, and they have the flexibility to focus on locally determined priorities and allocate their resources accordingly.

The Government is taking action to encourage empty homes back into use. In certain circumstances, local authorities can exercise powers to take over the management of long-term empty homes in order to bring them back into use in the private rented sector. Local authorities can apply for an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) when a property has been empty for more than two years, subject to the production of evidence that the property has been causing a nuisance to the community and evidence of community support for their proposal.

Similarly, Compulsory Purchase Orders can be used by local authorities to acquire empty properties where the authority can demonstrate that the acquisition would be in the public interest.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will give councils the power to apply the 100% premium on properties left empty after a year, rather than the current two years. The premium will provide local leaders with additional flexibility to help address the impacts of empty homes and improve the sustainability of local services where they consider that appropriate.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Children

Tulip Siddiq: [\[25949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Housing and Communities, whether the changes announced on 22 June to the Homes for Ukraine scheme will preclude children with no connection to the UK.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[25950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Written Statement of 22 June 2022 on Homes for Ukraine: Update, Official Report, HCWS123, how his Department defines personally known to the parents; and whether a sponsor who has spoken extensively with the parents over a previous sponsorship application for another member of the family would qualify.

Eddie Hughes:

It is expected that the sponsors of unaccompanied eligible minors should personally know the parent(s) or legal guardian of the child and that relationship should date from before the start of the conflict on 24 February 2022, except in exceptional circumstances. Further guidance will be published in due course.

■ Housing: Romford

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will hold discussions with the Mayor of London on the reasons for which Romford is deemed an Opportunity Area within the London Plan and therefore required to accommodate an additional 5,000 new homes.

Stuart Andrew:

The identification and justification for Opportunity Areas in the London Plan is a matter for the Mayor, and for the independent examiners who consider the draft proposals which it contains. It is, though, important that London does as much as it can to address its housing requirements.

■ Leasehold: Ground Rent**Justin Madders:** [\[25902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 9085 on Leasehold: Reform, how many and what proportion of leaseholders have had an (a) increase, (b) decrease and (c) no change in their ground rent costs in each of the last three years.

Eddie Hughes:

We do not hold information on how many and what proportion of leaseholders have had an increase, decrease or no change in their ground rent in the last three years. The department conducted an Impact Assessment for the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022, which included data on the number of properties in England and Wales that may charge ground rent, and may have doubling review clauses. The Impact Assessment is available on the UK Parliament website: <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2864/publications>.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan**Stuart C McDonald:** [\[25889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his policy is on funding any potential shortfall in rent in the event that Afghans resettled under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme are placed in properties where the rent is higher than the Local Housing Allowance rate.

Eddie Hughes:

A £25.5 million Housing Costs Fund is available to local authorities to help meet the costs of housing for larger families being resettled through the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), and for those who arrived in the UK before 31 August 2021 via the evacuation from Afghanistan and are being resettled through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), or are British Nationals being provided with resettlement support. The additional housing support is being provided to enable local authorities to come forward with offers of accommodation to larger families as soon as possible. For example, it can be used to provide a top-up payment, where it is needed to meet the gap between market rent and the Local Housing Allowance, or to help meet shortfalls which impact on a family's ability to cover their rent.

■ Refugees: Ukraine**Ms Nusrat Ghani:** [\[28429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many Ukrainian refugees have arrived in each council district in the South East in the last six months.

Ms Nusrat Ghani: [28430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many Ukrainian refugees (a) have already and (b) are expected to arrive in Wealden constituency.

Eddie Hughes:

The most up to date data on arrivals through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority> .

Ms Nusrat Ghani: [28432]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what additional resources the Government is providing to Wealden District Council which is hosting the highest number of Ukrainian arrivals in East Sussex.

Eddie Hughes:

We are working closely with local authorities to identify support needs through multiple channels including Ministerial roundtables attended by local government representatives, official led working group meetings, and ongoing engagement with local authority Chief Executives and senior representatives. The most up to date guidance for local authorities can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils>.

If the Hon Member has specific concerns I am happy to arrange for her to meet with the Minister for Refugees to discuss this further. I understand the Minister for Refugees has plans to visit the Hon Member's constituency shortly.

■ Regional Planning and Development: Local Government

Rachael Maskell: [23342]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the capacity of local authorities to deliver his levelling up agenda.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government is committed to supporting local authorities to deliver on the objectives of all the levelling up funds. In developing funding programmes, my department has already carried out extensive engagement with local authorities to understand their needs, and provided a wealth of resources to help them deliver local growth policies.

Rachael Maskell: [23343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of resources that local authorities require to oversee levelling-up policies at a local council level; and if he will provide Metro Mayors with additional resources to oversee those policies.

Neil O'Brien:

Local devolution is at the heart of plans to level up and strengthen communities. The department has carried out extensive engagement with local authorities and provides a wealth of resources to help them deliver levelling up policies. This includes paying capacity funding and providing bespoke support to deliver capital programmes like the Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund.

■ Second Homes: Council Tax**Daisy Cooper:**[\[26020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the policy paper, Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information, published on 11 May 2022, how many local authorities have indicated to his Department that they would welcome the power to increase council tax liability by up to 100 per cent on second homes.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has recognised the impact that large numbers of second homes can have on the sustainability and viability of local communities. The council tax premium on second homes will be discretionary, and it will be for local authorities to decide whether to apply such a premium.

Daisy Cooper:[\[26021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the policy paper, Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information, published on 11 May 2022, whether it is his intention to allow councils to increase tax liability for second homes by up to 100 per cent, where the owners divide their time between their main home and their second home approximately 50 per cent at each.

Kemi Badenoch:

Councils are responsible for determining whether a property is a sole or main residence, or a second home. The powers contained in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill do not specify an occupancy threshold for application of the premium.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Carbon Emissions****Henry Smith:**[\[26735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects to publish his (a) response to and (b) strategy resulting from his consultation on Jet zero: our strategy for net zero aviation.

Henry Smith: [\[26736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on his net zero strategy for aviation following his consultation on Jet zero: our strategy for net zero aviation.

Henry Smith: [\[26737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to mandate sustainable aviation fuels as part of his planned net-zero aviation strategy.

Robert Courts:

The Jet Zero Consultation closed on September 2021 and we received over 1400 responses. This was followed by a short, further technical consultation, which closed on April and received over 100 responses. We are carefully considering responses to both consultations, alongside the very latest technological developments and wider government policy, in the development of the final Jet Zero Strategy, which we are aiming to publish later this year. A summary of responses and the Government response to those consultations will be published alongside the Jet Zero Strategy.

We also published the Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) mandate consultation in July 2021, which set out our intention to mandate SAF supply in the UK from 2025. In March 2022, we published a summary of responses to the consultation and will be publishing the Government response shortly, which alongside the Jet Zero Strategy, will set out the Government's position on the introduction of a SAF mandate.

■ Department for Transport: National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers

Sarah Olney: [\[28471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the (a) number and (b) dates of meetings between Ministers in his Department and officials at the RMT union since 13 June 2022.

Wendy Morton:

Ministers and officials regularly meet with the RMT on a variety of matters.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Ruth Jones: [\[25999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the backlog in processing applications for driving and vehicle licensing on motorists in Newport West.

Trudy Harrison:

Information on the number of applications awaiting processing for driving and vehicle licensing is not held by Parliamentary constituency or region. The quickest and easiest way to transact with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is by using its extensive suite of online services. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their documents within a few days.

However, many people choose or have to make a paper application and the DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail each day. There are no delays in vehicles and non-medical driving licence paper applications, which are being processed within normal turnaround times. Applications where the driver has a medical condition that must be investigated before a licence can be issued will take longer but delays in this area are also reducing and will return to pre-pandemic levels by September.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[26015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate she has made of the average time taken by her Department to respond to casework enquiries sent by hon. Members to the DVLA.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[26016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what target his Department has for the time taken to reply to casework enquiries sent by hon. Members to the DVLA.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[26017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the timeliness of his Department's responses to casework enquires sent by hon. Members to the DVLA.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) aims to answer correspondence from hon. Members within eight working days.

The DVLA has allocated extra resource to the teams that deal with these enquiries, and this is showing a continued improving picture. In May 2022, the DVLA answered 60.1 per cent of correspondence from hon. Members within eight working days. The DVLA also offers hon. Members a dedicated phone line which often negates the need for written correspondence.

■ Driving Tests

Sarah Olney: [\[28469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving test centres there were in each UK nation in (a) 2010, (b) 2015, (c) 2020 and (d) as of 30 June 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

The table below shows the number of driving test centres (DTC) in Great Britain from where the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) delivered practical driver and riding tests.

	2015	2020	AS OF 30 JUNE 2022
England	277	258	250
Scotland	96	85	86

	2015	2020	AS OF 30 JUNE 2022
Wales	28	25	24
Great Britain total	401	368	360

In 2010, practical driver and riding tests were delivered by the DVSA's predecessor, the Driving Standards Agency. The DVSA does not retain records of DTCs dating back to 2010 in line with its retention policies.

The DVSA does not hold data relating to DTCs in Northern Ireland. Practical driver and rider testing is delivered by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA).

■ Driving Tests: Llanelli

Dame Nia Griffith: [\[26725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people in Llanelli awaiting a practical driving test at Llanelli Driving Test Centre in Llanerch.

Dame Nia Griffith: [\[26726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the average waiting time for a test at Llanelli Driving Test Centre.

Dame Nia Griffith: [\[26727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of driving test examiners in Llanelli.

Dame Nia Griffith: [\[26728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving test examiners work at Llanelli Driving Test Centre as on 28 June 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

As of 28 June 2022, there are 606 car practical driving tests booked at Llanelli driving test centre (DTC).

As of 27 June 2022, the average weekly waiting time for a car practical driving test at Llanelli DTC is 3 weeks. The national average weekly waiting time for car tests is 15.1 weeks.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency is committed to increasing the availability of practical driving tests at Llanelli DTC by recruiting more driving examiners (DE). The latest recruitment campaign closed on 20 June and applications are being reviewed. Currently, three DEs conduct driving tests at Llanelli DTC.

To be safe and competent, learner drivers need a broad range of driving experience in different areas and on different roads. A full driving licence allows a driver to use any roads, not just those they are familiar with. Candidates can choose to also take

their test at the following nearby DTCs, both of which have waiting times below the national average and offer out of hours testing:

- Carmarthen - 3 week wait as of 27 June 2022
- Swansea - 8 week wait as of 27 June 2022

■ Driving Tests: Waiting Lists

John Lamont:

[\[25967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will make an estimate of (a) the number of people waiting for and (b) the average waiting time to take a category B driving test at (a) Duns, (b) Hawick, (c) Galashiels, (d) Kelso, (e) Peebles and (f) Berwick-upon-Tweed driving test centres.

Trudy Harrison:

The table below shows the number of car (category B) tests that are booked at the following driving test centres (DTC).

	DUNS DTC	HAWICK DTC	GALASHIELS DTC	KELSO DTC	PEEBLES DTC	BERWICK UPON TWEED DTC
Number of car (category B) tests booked	40	118	499	91	100	212
Average waiting time in weeks for a car (category B) test	24	17	24	6	16	9
Driving test centre type	Remote	Remote	Permanent	Remote	Remote	Remote

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[26821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to take further steps to increase the number of electric vehicle charging points.

Trudy Harrison:

In March we published Taking Charge, our ambitious strategy for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure which aims to make charging an EV easier, simpler, cheaper and more convenient than refuelling a petrol or diesel car wherever you live.

We have already changed building regulations to require chargepoint infrastructure in new homes and residential buildings. In the coming months we will be taking forward the other measures outlined in the strategy. This includes the new £450 million Local EV Infrastructure Fund which will support local authorities, working with industry, to deliver chargepoints for drivers without off-street parking. We will also be reforming our Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme to focus on renters, leaseholders and those living in flats and expanding our workplace charging scheme.

■ Gatwick Airport: Standards

Jim Shannon:

[\[25863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of Gatwick airport on recent staff shortages and flight cancellations affecting that airport.

Robert Courts:

We have been extensively engaging with industry at both ministerial and official level since the beginning of the year.

We have asked the industry to develop schedules they can realistically deliver over the summer and welcome Gatwick's announcement on 17 June to temporarily cap capacity in July and August. This move will provide certainty to passengers.

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

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

During these meetings we have been clear, that the volume of late notice cancellations are unacceptable and airlines must have realistic schedules they can deliver.

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

On 30 June, the Secretary of State announced a 22-point plan, which sets out the 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.

■ **P&O Ferries: Crew**

Royston Smith: [\[26809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2022 to Question 6742 on P&O Ferries: Crew, what progress his Department has made on the investigation into reports that some people formerly employed by P&O Ferries have not been able to retrieve their personal belongings from the premises of their former employer.

Robert Courts:

The Maritime & Coastguard Agency is monitoring the return of belongings to dismissed P&O Ferries crew members –. P&O Ferries states that as of 26 May over 600 crew had received their belongings, and 90 had faced issues with their return. The company has advised that its team is now concluding the process of returning belongings. The MCA is in regular contact with P&O Ferries about this matter and I have also written to P&O personally to raise this as an issue of importance. The MCA encourages any affected seafarers who are yet to have items returned to contact it at exams@mcga.gov.uk with a list of the belongings that are outstanding so it can seek to facilitate the swift resolution of these cases.

■ **P&O Ferries: Redundancy**

Royston Smith: [\[26808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on Government support for the P&O Ferries staff who were made redundant on 17 March 2022.

Robert Courts:

The Secretary of State and the Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Security have had numerous discussions with colleagues across Government to ensure that the staff made redundant by P&O Ferries are fully supported. Cross-Government working continues to be essential in ensuring successful delivery of our seafarer protections nine-point plan, which aims to improve seafarer pay and welfare and to ensure that the actions taken by P&O Ferries cannot happen again.

■ **Regional Airports**

Peter Gibson: [\[27736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of Heathrow Airport on improving regional connectivity (a) in respect of Teesside Airport and (b) throughout the UK.

Robert Courts:

The withdrawal of the Teesside to Heathrow route was a commercial decision, as the UK aviation market operates predominantly in the private sector. Airports invest in

their infrastructure to attract passengers and airlines, while airlines are well placed to deliver services to their customers by responding to demand for different routes.

I encourage all parties to continue discussions to seek viable and sustainable solutions to regional connectivity.

■ **Speed Limits: Fixed Penalties**

James Wild:

[\[26872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that people receiving a fixed penalty notice for speeding do not need to submit their driving licence to be endorsed.

Trudy Harrison:

Provisions to remove the requirements to surrender a driving licence from fixed penalty, conditional offer and court processes for road traffic offences are included in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (PCSCA).

The Act received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 and the relevant provisions will commence via regulations later this year. The police, court services and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency are making the necessary changes to systems and processes to accommodate the change in the law.

TREASURY

■ **Company Cars: Taxation**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[26820\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of publishing company car tax rates on battery electric cars beyond the the 2024-2025 tax year.

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 Conduct Authority: Standards**

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[28500\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Financial Conduct Authority at improving its customer service standards.

John Glen:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is operationally independent from the Government. Therefore, questions about operational matters are for the independent FCA.

This question has therefore been passed to the FCA who will respond directly to the honourable member by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ Hospitality Industry: VAT

Stephen Farry: [\[26919\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of reducing the 20 per cent VAT rate for for the hospitality sector in the context of increased energy and food costs.

Lucy Frazer:

The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced on 15 July 2020 to support the cash flow and viability of around 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors. This relief ended on the 31 March 2022.

The Government has been clear that the reduced rate of VAT for hospitality and tourism was a temporary measure designed to support the sectors that have been severely affected by COVID-19. It was appropriate that, as restrictions were lifted, and demand for goods and services in these sectors increased, the temporary tax reliefs were first reduced, and then removed, in order to rebuild and strengthen the public finances. While we keep all taxes under review, there are no plans to reintroduce a reduced rate of VAT from tourism and hospitality.

■ Renewable Energy: Taxation

Wera Hobhouse: [\[25965\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of a windfall tax on renewable energy generators on investment in renewable energy generation in the UK.

Lucy Frazer:

Within the Economy Update on 26th May, the Chancellor announced the Government is urgently evaluating the scale of extraordinary profits in the electricity generation sector and the appropriate next steps. As part of this process, Government officials are currently engaging with industry stakeholders.

The Government recognises that any measures, tax or otherwise, need to be proportionate and avoid creating undue distortion or impacts on investment in UK electricity generation.

■ Revenue and Customs: Standards

Martyn Day: [\[26811\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the standard of service that customers are receiving from HMRC; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

As Financial Secretary to the Treasury, I meet with HMRC officials on a regular basis to discuss progress.

Monthly performance details are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-monthly-performance-reports#reporting-year-2021-to-2022>. Quarterly performance updates are published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-quarterly-performance-updates#reporting-year-2021-to-2022>.

Final performance figures for the financial year 2021-22 will be published in the department's Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) in July 2022. The Quarter 4 2021-22 performance publication and March 2022 monthly publication will be published at the same time as the ARA.

■ Safe Hands Plans: Insolvency**Jon Trickett:**[\[28383\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that customers of Safe Hand Funeral Plans are (a) compensated and (b) transferred to new funeral plans from approved funeral providers.

John Glen:

In January 2021, the government legislated to bring all pre-paid funeral plan providers and intermediaries within the regulatory remit of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) from 29 July 2022. This will ensure that, for the first time, consumers are protected by compulsory and robust regulation. To address broader risks posed by providers not obtaining authorisation, on 21 April the government made a supplementary statutory instrument which will make it easier for regulated funeral plan providers to take on the customers of providers that are exiting the market. This will protect consumers – particularly during the transition to regulation – by ensuring that more funeral plan holders benefit from continued plan coverage.

Safe Hands Plans went into administration in March 2022. The government understands that this will be concerning for customers of Safe Hands and continues to monitor the implementation of regulation in this sector closely.

Dignity's recent commitment to provide ongoing support to Safe Hands' customers until November 2022 is welcome. This will ensure that any planholders who pass away during this time will receive a funeral without any additional charge.

While the FCA does not yet regulate funeral plan providers, it is supporting the administrators and the wider industry as they look to find a longer-term solution for Safe Hands' customers.

It is unfortunate but unavoidable that bringing a previously unregulated sector into regulation – whatever form that may take – creates a possibility that some providers are not able to meet the threshold for authorisation. However, a well-regulated market

should promote effective competition and drive better outcomes for consumers in the long-term.

Where a provider is unable to obtain FCA authorisation because of underlying issues, it is important to understand that this is not an issue created by bringing the sector into regulation. Rather, bringing the sector into regulation exposes these unsustainable business models and prevents these problems from getting worse.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equal Pay

Rachael Maskell: [\[28444\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what progress she has made on tackling (a) gender, (b) ethnicity and (c) disabled persons pay gaps.

Kemi Badenoch:

The national gender pay gap has fallen significantly under this government - and by approximately a quarter in the last decade. In 2017, we introduced regulations requiring large employers to publish the differences in average salaries and bonuses for men and women every year. The regulations have helped to motivate employers, and focus attention on improving equality in the workplace.

On ethnicity pay gaps; in ' [Inclusive Britain](#) ', we accepted the recommendation to publish guidance for employers to support a voluntary approach to ethnicity pay reporting. Work on this is already underway and we are ensuring that it reflects what we have learned from gender pay gap reporting.

With regard to the disability pay gap, we recognise that one of the greatest challenges is opening up opportunity in the workplace. We recently consulted on Disability Workforce Reporting. This focused on reporting on disability, as opposed to pay gaps, for large employers; and explored both voluntary and mandated workplace transparency.

■ Social Mobility Commission: Public Appointments

Emily Thornberry: [\[25779\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will publish details of the fourteen individuals and organisations appointed as expert advisers on the Social Mobility Commission's Policy and Evidence Advisory Panel under the terms of procurement process reference SMC-2122-35.

Kemi Badenoch:

The tender exercise for Expert Advisers on the Social Mobility Commission's Policy and Evidence Advisory Panel has concluded. The outcome can be found on the Contracts Finder website:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/notice/aa001085-f74f-4840-a39f-c93c3d1be71a?origin=SearchResults&p=1>.

We are unable to publish the names of private individuals contracted at this stage for reasons of data protection. While individual names have been redacted, seven of the Policy & Evidence Advisory Panel members applied through their respective organisations or companies and these details are available on the Contracts Finder website cited above.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme

Lilian Greenwood: [\[28414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2022 to Question 155573 on Access to Work Programme, how many applications to her Department's Access to Work Scheme are outstanding as of 29 June 2022; and what steps her Department taking to tackle those outstanding applications.

Chloe Smith:

The Department's Access to Work Scheme had 23,805 applications outstanding as of 29 June 2022.

Please note that the data supplied is derived from unpublished management information, which was collected for internal Departmental use only, and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Access to Work (AtW) are currently receiving an increased level of applications for support and are working through all applications to ensure that they are progressed as soon as possible, as well as recruiting new team members to increase capacity.

For applications where a customer is due to begin a job in the next 4 weeks (whether employed or self-employed), their case will be prioritised, and contact made as soon as possible. For renewal applications for on-going support, these are also being prioritised and in the majority of cases, support approved using a new streamlined process.

All other Case Managers are deployed to work on the oldest outstanding cases and overtime working for AtW staff is also being used.

■ Children: Maintenance

Carla Lockhart: [\[26048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what sources of information are available to the Child Maintenance Service to help them ascertain whether a child or adult, who is the subject of a case, and who is registered in full time education is actually attending and participating in the course in a meaningful way.

Guy Opperman:

There is no requirement in law for the Child maintenance Service to gather data on children attending full time education or training.

Carla Lockhart:[\[26049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, under what circumstances officials in Child Maintenance Service may refuse to meet, either in person or online, a parent who is seeking to resolve issues in their case.

Guy Opperman:

Customers of the service can contact officials online, by telephone or in writing and in cases where customers have concerns, a complaints process including independent review is available and clearly signposted in written and online communications.

The Child Maintenance service undertakes work face to face meetings only in certain prescribed circumstances where there is a legal requirement to do so for instance certain judicial proceedings and interviews under caution.

■ Cost of Living: Government Assistance**Daisy Cooper:**[\[26018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the eligibility for Cost of Living Payments for people on Low Income Benefits, if she will make it her policy to include receipt of Housing Benefit in the eligibility criteria for the award of £650 payments.

David Rutley:

The Government is rightly targeting the £650 Cost of Living Payment support at low-income households in receipt of qualifying means tested benefits.

Housing Benefit is not a means tested benefit. It is also administered directly from Local Authorities, often directly to a landlord. Payments to those receiving only Housing Benefit could not therefore be delivered in a quick, accurate and straightforward manner.

The majority of Housing Benefit claimants also receive a qualifying means tested benefit and will be eligible for the £650 Cost of Living Payment. Pensioners will also be entitled to the increased Winter Fuel Payment of £300 per household. Individuals in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit will also be entitled to the £150 disability Cost of Living Payment.

For those that are not eligible for the means-tested Cost of Living Payment, or for families that still need additional support; the Government is providing an additional £500 million to help households bringing total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, this will take the form of an extension to the Household Support Fund backed by £421m and is administered by Local Authorities. Devolved administrations will receive £79 million through the Barnett formula.

These payments are only part of the Government's package of support and sits alongside:

- the £400 of support for energy bills through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

- the freeze in fuel duty, raising the NICs threshold, £150 council tax rebates and the further rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 an hour from April 2022.

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

[Overall government support for the cost of living: factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/factsheets/overall-government-support-for-the-cost-of-living)

Daisy Cooper:

[26019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the eligibility for Cost of Living Payments, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a discretionary scheme for people who are (a) on low incomes and (b) in receipt of legacy benefits that are not included in the existing eligibility criteria.

David Rutley:

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. That is why the government is providing over £15bn in further support, targeted at on those with greatest need. This package is in addition to the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year.

As part of this, Government is providing an additional £500 million from October to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, a further £421 million is being provided to extend the Household Support Fund, a discretionary scheme run by Upper Tier Local Authorities, from October 2022 – March 2023. Guidance and individual local authority indicative allocations for this extension will be announced in due course. This guidance will ensure that support is targeted towards those most in need of support including those not eligible for the Cost-of-Living Payments set out on 26 May 2022. The devolved administrations will receive £79 million through the Barnett formula.

Local Authorities have already received their allocations for the existing £421m Household Support Fund covering April – September 2022, alongside the grant determination and guidance. The allocations for Local Authorities for this period can be found [here](#). Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how and when this funding is used within the scope set out in the grant determination and guidance, based on their assessment of local need.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: EU Law**

Layla Moran:

[27725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of (a) the number of officials in her Department involved in recording retained EU legislation for the purposes of the Retained EU Law Dashboard in the latest period for which figures are available and (b) the cost to the public purse of recording that information.

Chloe Smith:

No additional full time staffing resource was required for the completion of this exercise which forms part of the overall project to list Retained EU Law held by this

Department. Three officials worked on the exercise in addition to their other duties over a period of four months which in turn fed into the compilation of the dashboard.

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

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

■ **Disability: Energy and Fuels**

Steve McCabe:

[\[25727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in the context of rising fuel and electricity prices, if she will make further targeted financial support available for people with physical disabilities who are reliant on adapted mobility support including (a) adapted cars and (b) electric wheelchairs.

David Rutley:

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living, that is why it is providing over £37 billion of support this year. This includes the £650 Cost of Living Payment which is designed to target support at low-income households on means-tested benefits. In addition, 6 million eligible disabled people will receive a one-off, disability Cost of Living Payment of £150. And pensioner households will receive a separate one-off payment of £300 (through and as an addition to the Winter Fuel Payment).

People who receive the higher rate mobility component for Disability Living Allowance, the enhanced rate of the mobility component for Personal Independence Payment, Armed Forces Independence Payment or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement can exchange part or all of their mobility component for a leased car, wheelchair or powered chair/scooter through the Motability scheme regardless of their income.

A Motability lease provides a 'worry-free package' including servicing, repairs, breakdown assistance and comprehensive insurance. A National Audit Report on Motability in 2018 also found that leasing a car through Motability was on average 44% cheaper than comparable leasing products in the wider market"

We keep all our policies under continuous review as we have shown throughout the pandemic and in response to the current cost of living pressures.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Cost of Living

Tim Loughton:

[\[26680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to extend the criteria for the £650 cost of living payment to all people in receipt of Contributory Employment and Support Allowance.

David Rutley:

The Government is rightly targeting the £650 Cost of Living Payment support at low-income households in receipt of qualifying means tested benefits.

Contributory Employment and Support Allowance is not a means tested income replacement benefit. Many People in receipt of contributory Employment Support Allowance receive a means tested benefit, therefore they will be eligible for the £650 Cost of Living Payment. As of November 2021, around 400,000 claimants received both income and contributory Employment and Support Allowance, and around 100,000 claimants received Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit.

In addition, individuals may be able eligible for the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment if they are in receipt of a qualifying disability benefits.

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

[Overall government support for the cost of living: factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

People in receipt of Contributory Employment Support Allowance can also benefit from the support being provided for by the Government. This includes £400 of support for energy bills through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme and an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, £421m will be used to further extend the Household Support Fund (October 2022 – March 2023). Guidance and individual local authority indicative allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

Further measures to help people with the cost-of-living challenges including frozen fuel duty, raising the NICs threshold, the £150 council tax rebates and the further rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 an hour from April 2022.

Alan Brown:

[\[28433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance contributions do not qualify for the £650 cost of living payment; and if she will make a statement.

David Rutley:

The Government is rightly targeting the £650 Cost of Living Payment support at low-income households in receipt of qualifying means tested benefits.

Contributory Employment and Support Allowance is not a means tested income replacement benefit. Non-means tested benefits are not eligible benefits, but low-income recipients can claim an eligible means tested benefit alongside them. Many of

those in receipt of contributory Employment Support Allowance are also in receipt of a means tested benefit. For example, as of November 2021 there were around 400,000 claimants getting both income and contributory Employment and Support Allowance, and around 100,000 claimants getting Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit.

In addition, individuals may be able eligible for the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment if they are in receipt of a qualifying disability benefits.

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

[Overall government support for the cost of living: factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/factsheets/overall-government-support-for-the-cost-of-living)

People in receipt of Contributory Employment Support Allowance can also benefit from the support being provided for by the Government. This includes £400 of support for energy bills through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme and an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, £421m will be used to further extend the Household Support Fund (October 2022 – March 2023). Guidance and individual local authority indicative allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

Further measures to help people with the cost of living challenges including frozen fuel duty, raising the NICs threshold, the £150 council tax rebates and the further rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 an hour from April 2022.

■ Household Support Fund: Barnet

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on allocating the Household Support Fund to the London Borough of Barnet.

David Rutley:

Local Authorities have received their allocations from the current £421m Household Support Fund for April – September 2022, alongside the grant determination and guidance. The allocations for Local Authorities for this period can be found [here](#). The allocation for Barnet is £2,455,182.90. Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how and when this funding is used within the scope set out in the grant determination and guidance, based on their assessment of local need.

From October 2022, Government is providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England £421m will be used to further extend the Household Support Fund (October 2022 – March 2023). Guidance and individual local authority indicative allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

■ Mortgages: Housing Benefit

Lisa Nandy:

[\[26754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2022 to Question 16929 on Mortgages: Housing Benefit, if he will make an estimate of the potential number of people that would benefit each year from the Government's proposed policy of allowing housing benefit to be used towards the cost of a mortgage; and what the evidential basis is for the assertion that this policy removes a barrier that currently prevents thousands of families from buying their own home.

David Rutley:

There are 5 million in receipt of housing support. The number of people who will benefit will depend on people's personal circumstances and their choices.

Owning a home is a real aspiration for many and this policy supports that. The total bill for Housing Support stands at about £30 billion each year, and unless we take action, the Office for Budget Responsibility predict it could rise to around £50 billion by 2050. None of these huge sums are being put towards helping people to have the chance to buy their own homes. We want to change that, support home ownership and put taxpayer's money to better use. We will look to change welfare rules so those who receive housing support will be given a new choice: to use their benefit towards mortgage payments for a new mortgage instead of simply on rent.

By making these changes to welfare we are moving homeownership to within reach of hard-working benefit recipients so they can make their own choices about whether to plan for home ownership in future.

■ Pension Credit

Mark Eastwood:

[\[28929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of her Department's Pension Credit Day of Action.

Guy Opperman:

Pension Credit applications and take up have improved dramatically following the Pension Credit awareness campaign in April, and the Pension Credit Day of Action on 15 June; this involved work with broadcasters, media, newspapers and other stakeholder partners who were encouraged to reach out to pensioners to promote Pension Credit through their channels.

Although not all claims can be directly attributed to the campaign, early indications are that the day of action has been highly effective. Our internal management information suggests there have been over 10,000 Pension Credit claims made during the week of the media day – an increase of 275% compared to the same week in 2021, which itself was an enhanced week due to the 2021 Pension Credit Action Day.

The impact of these claim volumes on numbers of successful awards and on Pension Credit take up will take longer to establish given the usual cycle involved in producing

those statistics. However, the campaign is ongoing including a particular focus on getting the private sector to drive forward efforts to enhance claims, and specific effort to reach out to communities who have traditionally not claimed Pension Credit. That work is very much ongoing.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Mark Eastwood:

[\[26035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments have been carried out (a) face-to-face, (b) remotely and (c) on paper in each year since the tendering of provider-based PIP contracts were agreed; and what performance metrics in those contracts have been met by those providers in that contract period.

Chloe Smith:

The number and proportion of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments that have been carried out (a) face to face, (b) remotely, including telephone and video, and c) paper based, can be found in the tables below.

Please note:

- All volumes have been rounded to the nearest 10
- Proportions are based on actual values and may not add up due to rounding
- Clearances volumes relating to remote channels and face-to-face after March 2020 are calculated from weekly MI and are representative of performance. 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

Provider performance is measured across a range of service level agreements setting out the department's expectations for service delivery. These include quality, performance delivery targets and customer experience.

For the years 2013 - 2022, the number of assessments per channel are:

YEAR	REMOTE	PAPER-BASED	FACE-TO-FACE
Jun-13 to Dec-13	0	12,890	24,950
2014	0	103,680	295,170
2015	0	148,220	534,230
2016	0	182,050	786,080
2017	0	160,620	871,000

YEAR	REMOTE	PAPER-BASED	FACE-TO-FACE
2018	0	136,050	818,820
2019	0	154,050	776,080
2020	441,390	139,040	153,180
2021	611,530	125,130	22,380
Jan-22 to Apr-22	236,180	53,330	14,720

With channel proportion as:

YEAR	REMOTE	PAPER-BASED	FACE-TO-FACE
Jun-13 to Dec-13	0.0%	34.1%	65.9%
2014	0.0%	26.0%	74.0%
2015	0.0%	21.7%	78.3%
2016	0.0%	18.8%	81.2%
2017	0.0%	15.6%	84.4%
2018	0.0%	14.2%	85.8%
2019	0.0%	16.6%	83.4%
2020	60.2%	19.0%	20.9%
2021	80.6%	16.5%	2.9%
Jan-22 to Apr-22	77.6%	17.5%	4.8%

For more information, monthly performance measures against targets can be found in the attached PDF document.

Attachments:

1. 26035 attachment [26035 attachment.pdf]

■ **Social Security Benefits**

John McNally:

[\[26784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to allow a person to move back to legacy benefits from Universal Credit where that person decided to move from legacy benefits to Universal Credit owing to staff in her Department incorrectly advising that they would receive a higher payment on Universal Credit; and if

she will make an estimate of how many people have been misdirected by her Department in that way in each of the last three years.

David Rutley:

DWP staff should not advise claimants what to do in terms of whether to submit a claim to benefit, nor if a claimant would be 'better off' moving to Universal Credit or remaining on legacy benefits. However, staff will signpost claimants to information available via the Understanding UC website and independent benefit calculators for further information.

The replacement of six legacy benefits by UC is a large and complex undertaking, introduced in a controlled and phased manner. It is therefore as a matter of fundamental policy design that once a claimant makes a claim for Universal Credit their existing legacy benefits will come to an end; this includes Tax Credits.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disability**

Sam Tarry:

[\[24701\]](#)

To ask the the Secretary of State of Work and Pensions, if she will she commit to further reform of disability benefits assessments to ensure that disabled and seriously unwell people receive the benefits they need to live on and cover the additional costs of their disability or condition.

Chloe Smith:

We continue to look at our benefit processes and procedures to ensure the claimant experience is what disabled people and people with health conditions rightly expect and deserve.

Detailed proposals will be brought forward in a White Paper later this year. This will set out how we can better enable people to start, stay and succeed in work and live more independently and outline the changes to the benefits system to better address reform to the assessment process.

Disabled people will receive a Disability cost of living payment of £150 and over 8 million households on means tested benefits will receive a payment of £650 this year.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Fraud**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[25753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have been convicted for benefit fraud in (a) Romford, (b) the London Borough of Havering and (c) the UK in each of the last five years.

David Rutley:

DWP does not hold the requested information broken down to local geographical level.

Across England, Scotland and Wales, the number of convictions for benefit fraud over the last 5 full financial years is as follows*:

- 2017/18 – 4,800
- 2018/19 – 2,700
- 2019/20 – 1,900
- 2020/21 – 500
- 2021/22 – 600

*Figures – which are rounded to the nearest 100 – are based on internal management information and therefore have not been subject to the same degree of scrutiny and quality assurance as an official statistic

In 2017, the department increased the prosecution threshold from £2000 to £5,000. However, any case over £3000 is routed to DWP Investigations team.

This meant most could generate better returns for the taxpayer by allowing trained investigators to focus on serious fraud. However, we reserve the right to refer any case for prosecution. Compliance Officers continue to conduct robust and challenging interviews in all other scenarios and all debt is recoverable.

In addition, the department diverted resources to tackle Advances Fraud in 2019, which is demonstrated by a corresponding increase in Administrative Penalties.

Figures for the last 2 years reflect the re-deployment of staff to help meet the unprecedented demand for financial support during Covid and the social distancing measures put in place, which constrained our ability to carry out face to face Interviews Under Caution.

We continue to recruit Investigators and now have Covid compliant interview facilities in place, which means we expect to see a significant upturn in prosecution numbers over the next 2 years.

■ Social Security Benefits: Injuries and Death

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[27621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many internal process reviews her Department has (a) started and (b) completed on incidences of (i) death or (ii) serious harm between (A) July 2019 and June 2020, (B) July 2020 and June 2021 and (C) July 2021 and June 2022.

Chloe Smith:

The attached table shows the Internal Process Reviews (IPR) information requested:

	JULY 2019 TO JUNE 2020	JULY 2020 TO JUNE 2021	JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022
IPR Started - Death	43	59	38

	JULY 2019 TO JUNE 2020	JULY 2020 TO JUNE 2021	JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022
IPR Started - Serious Harm	3	19	17
IPR Completed - Death	39	40	41
IPR Completed - Serious Harm	3	12	16

* Death includes the categories death, alleged suicide and confirmed suicide.

** Serious Harm includes the categories self-harm, serious harm, attempted suicide and 'other'.

■ Social Security Benefits: Suicide

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[26850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department takes to mitigate against and prevent death by suicide linked to benefit claims.

Chloe Smith:

The Department has a detailed mental health training package which includes modules on supporting customers at risk, for all customer facing staff, providing colleagues with learning that they can then apply in different scenarios.

Comprehensive staff guidance is available on how to support customers who express thoughts of self-harm and suicide. Where this is identified, staff follow a six-point plan that helps them take the right action at the right time; this could include alerting the emergency services where appropriate.

The Department is constantly learning, and work is ongoing to strengthen guidance and training as part of continuous improvement activities, ensuring colleagues have the necessary tools and confidence to support these customers.

DWP does not have a statutory safeguarding duty, but we recognise the positive impact that a joined-up approach can have on customers with safeguarding concerns. The Department has appointed more than 30 Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders across Great Britain. They proactively engage with external organisations and if our customers are experiencing crises or are at risk of abuse or harm, assist them in getting the help they need.

■ Social Security Benefits: Tribunals

Kate Osamor: [\[27678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2022 to Question 17999 on Social Security Benefits: Tribunals, what was the average additional time given to decision makers to proactively contact claimants where they think additional evidence may support a claim in the last 12 months.

Chloe Smith:

Decision makers are not given a time limit for making a call where they think additional evidence may support the claim. The call will last as long as is needed to ensure that the claimant's dispute is fully understood and they have had the opportunity to explain why they disagree with the decision and provide any further information.

Kate Osamor: [\[27679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2022 to Question 17999 on Social Security Benefits: Tribunals, if she will publish any guidance that was provided to decision makers on the new approach to decision making.

Chloe Smith:

The new approach was explained to decision makers via a series of local training events which built on existing guidance in the Advice for Decision Makers (ADM) and Decision Makers Guide (DMG) – "Principles of Decision Making and Evidence":

[DMG Chapter 01: Principles of Decision Making and Evidence
\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1084744/adma1.pdf)

ADM:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1084744/adma1.pdf

Kate Osamor: [\[27681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to her Answer of 22 June 2022 to Question 17999, for what reason a tribunal might access new written evidence at a hearing that her Department was unable to access during the decision-making process.

Chloe Smith:

Our decision-making processes help to ensure that all relevant evidence is gathered as early as possible in the claim journey. Decision Makers are given additional time to proactively contact claimants if they think additional evidence can support the claim. However, there may be circumstances, for example a change in the claimant's condition, which result in new written evidence becoming available at the hearing stage.

Kate Osamor: [\[27682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2022 to Question 17999 on Social Security Benefits: Tribunals, if she will make an

assessment of the reasons for which tribunals draw different conclusions to her Department on cases based on the same written and oral evidence.

Kate Osamor: [\[28461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to her Answer of 14 June 2022 to Question 17999 on Social Security Benefits: Tribunals, and with reference to the findings of Tribunal Statistics Quarterly: January to March 2022, published on 9 June 2022, for what reason the majority of (a) Employment Support Allowance, (b) Personal Independence Payment and (c) Universal Credit tribunals draw different conclusions to her Department's decision makers based on the same written and oral evidence.

Chloe Smith:

Tribunals are independent of the Department and may draw a different conclusion based on the same evidence.

We seek to learn from tribunal outcomes and are continually improving our processes.

■ Universal Credit

Ms Karen Buck: [\[28376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what date changes to the Draft Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) (Managed Migration) Amendments Regulations 2018 to introduce a (a) 10,000 cap on the number of claimants who could go through the Managed Migration pilot and (b) requirement to report back to Parliament were authorised.

Ms Karen Buck: [\[28377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which cross-departmental committee gave final Government approval to the amendments to the Draft Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) (Managed Migration) Amendments regulations 2018 which introduced a 10,000 cap on the number of claimants going through the Managed Migration pilot and requirement to report back to Parliament.

David Rutley:

Secretary of State gave approval to make these regulations on 11th January 2019. As with all government statutory instruments, final approval to lay regulations were approved by the relevant cabinet sub-committees.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[28424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the guidance her Department has issued to case managers working on applications for advance payments of Universal Credit; how often advances were provided to people in each of the last 12 months; and for what reasons those advances were provided.

David Rutley:

Universal Credit guidance is deposited in the House of Commons library twice a year, the latest published guidance was deposited on 26 April 2022 and can be found [here](#).

■ Universal Credit: Veterans**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[28473\]](#)

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 the data the Government is collecting on how many veterans are in receipt of Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

We are currently looking at options to develop and publish statistics on armed forces personnel on UC, including breakdowns by claim characteristics.

■ Universal Credit: Work Capability Assessment**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[28375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has responded to the letter of 8 April 2022 from the Deputy Director of Regulation setting out the Office for Statistics Regulation's concerns about the failure to publish statistics on the number of Universal Credit claimants undergoing a Work Capability Assessment and the outcomes; and if she will place a copy of the response in the Library.

Chloe Smith:

I can confirm that the letter from the Deputy Director of Regulation, of the Office for Statistics Regulation has been received, and a response will be issued in due course. Once received, the Office for Statistics Regulation will publish the response on their website here: <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence-list/>

■ Way to Work Scheme: Hendon**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[25821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have moved off Universal Credit and into work as a result of the Way to Work campaign in Hendon constituency.

Mims Davies:

We are unable to provide the number of movements into work in the Hendon parliamentary constituency as to produce this would incur disproportionate cost.

Whilst we cannot provide data at a constituency level, we can provide this data at a Jobcentre Plus (JCP) district geographical area. Hendon constituency falls within North London JCP district, we have therefore provided the movements into work for that took place within that area during the campaign. These will include movements that took place in other constituencies that fall within the same JCP district.

We estimate that so far 17,100 unemployed Universal Credit claimants in the North London Jobcentre Plus District have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31 January and 26 June 2022.

This cumulative figure is composed of our into work measure to the end of May (14,770) and our internal management information up to 26 June (2,340). This figure

includes claimants with a sanction in place that moved into work during the period of the campaign (760). This does not include movements into work from JSA claimants as they cannot be broken down to Jobcentre Plus District level. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Due to rounding, sum of figures may not match declared total.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics but is provided in the interests of transparency and timeliness.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ Continued Support to Ukraine

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS182\]](#)

Today, I am pleased to update the House with further details on the UK-led training programme of Ukrainian armed forces announced by the Prime Minister on his recent visit to Kyiv.

In response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the UK Government is providing £2.3 billion of military aid to Ukraine. Included in this is a commitment to spearhead an innovative programme which aims to train up to 10,000 new Ukrainian recruits in the UK.

The first rotation of Ukrainian soldiers has recently arrived in the UK. Training will take place on military training areas across the North East, South West and South East regions. The training will be conducted by elements from 11 Security Force Assistance Brigade.

These Ukrainian soldiers will undertake courses based on the UK's basic soldier training. This includes weapons training, battlefield first aid, fieldcraft, patrol tactics and training on the Law of Armed Conflict. Each course will last several weeks. I have informed Honourable Members whose constituencies include the bases being used for this training programme about local arrangements.

Our ambition is to increase the scale and frequency of these courses, in line with Ukrainian requirements. We are also discussing with international partners options to broaden involvement in the training programme, working constructively with countries prepared to support either by contributing trainers or providing equipment.

We expect the training package to evolve over time. I will keep Parliament informed of the outcomes of these initial courses and any plans to increase the programme's scale or scope.

This activity is a priority for the Ministry of Defence as part of the UK's unwavering efforts to bolster the capability of the Ukrainian armed forces and demonstrates continued UK leadership in responding to Russia's war of aggression. I can reassure the House that the Ministry of Defence has received strong support from across Government for the non-military provisions required to support such a significant training programme.

While the training activity is being made public, some details will be kept confidential for security purposes.

EDUCATION

■ Departmental Update

The Minister of State for School Standards (Mr Robin Walker): [\[HCWS179\]](#)

Today I have laid before the House a Departmental Minute giving notice of a contingent liability for the issuing of an indemnity in respect to the formation of the Curriculum Arm's Length Body.

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

The Government has announced that Oak National Academy will be converted into a new Arm's Length Body to the Department for Education – focused on supporting teachers to plan and deliver an excellent curriculum and building on Oak's success. Oak National Academy was created in April 2020 as a sector-led, national response to support schools in educating pupils remotely during the pandemic. It is incubated by the Reach Foundation charity and part funded by Government grants.

The proposed indemnity is for £10 million and would cover the Reach Foundation, which is a charitable organisation, against liabilities, claims, costs, and obligations that are made in relation to the transfer for free of assets, licences, and undertakings of Oak National Academy to the Curriculum Arm's Length Body, including the TUPE transfer of staff.

It is usual to allow a period of fourteen sitting days prior to accepting a contingent liability, to provide honourable Members an opportunity to raise any objections. I regret that on this occasion pressing requirements to transfer the assets to the ALB before 1 September, together with the dissolution of Parliament, have meant that it has not been possible to provide the full fourteen sitting days prior to taking on the contingent liability.

Her Majesty's Treasury has approved the contingent liability in principle.

A copy of the Departmental Minute will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Education Update

The Minister of State for School Standards (Mr Robin Walker): [\[HCWS178\]](#)

The [Key Stage 2 \(KS2\) national statistics released today](#) show that the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in all three subjects of reading, writing and maths at age 11 was 59% in 2022. This is lower than it was before the pandemic: 65% of pupils met the standard in all three subjects in 2019. While this is disappointing, it was expected due to the impact of the pandemic. The Government recognises, and values, the work that teachers up and down the country are putting into education recovery, but also understands that there is more work to do.

We welcome the increase in reading attainment from 73% in 2019 to 74% in 2022, despite the disruption of Covid, which is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of our teachers, pupils and parents. Indeed, these figures build on the research we

commissioned from Renaissance Learning, published in March 2022, that showed faster recovery in English reading than in maths. Reading is, of course, fundamental: we cannot knock down barriers for children if we do not teach them to read well. Attainment in maths and in writing, however, are disappointing, but not unexpected: in 2022 71% of pupils met the expected in maths, compared to 79% in 2019, while in writing, 69% of pupils met the expected standard, down from 78% in 2019.

Today's statistics summarise KS2 attainment at national level and, of course, we want to understand the detail beneath these figures. There will be a further statistical release on 6 September setting out breakdowns of the KS2 results, including by region, local authority area and pupil characteristics such as disadvantage. It is, of course, likely that some pupils, and some areas of the country, will have been impacted more than others due to the pandemic.

It is vital that we have a clear understanding of the impact of the disruption caused by COVID-19 on the attainment and progress of all pupils, to support schools in their work on education recovery. That is why we decided to go ahead with primary assessments this year, without adaptations, so that we can have a consistent measure of attainment before and after the pandemic. This will enable us to be open and transparent about the impact of the pandemic on attainment at system level. As we announced in July 2021, we will not be publishing school level KS2 data this year in performance tables because we did not make adaptations to the tests and assessments or the standards. We will share school level data in the autumn with schools, academy trusts and local authorities to inform school improvement and support school leaders. We will ensure clear messages are placed alongside any data shared to advise caution in its interpretation.

The statistics published today underline the importance of our focus on recovery. Recovery funding is already making a difference, but we recognise that there is more still to do.

That is why we have committed nearly £5 billion to fund a comprehensive recovery package. By May 2022, 1.5 million courses had been started by children across England through the National Tutoring Programme; and £950m of direct funding through the catch up and recovery premia, was helping schools to deliver evidence-based interventions based on pupil needs. In light of the success of this year's school-led tutoring route through the National Tutoring Programme, next year we will allocate all tutoring funding directly to schools, simplifying the system and giving schools the freedom to decide how best to provide tutoring for their pupils.

As well as specific recovery investments, The Schools White Paper, Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child", published on 28 March sets out how our education system will deliver recovery through a wider programme of ambitious reforms that truly level up outcomes and ensure we build back better from the pandemic.

On maths in particular, we continue to support and enhance the teaching of maths through our network of 40 school-led Maths Hubs, which are helping local schools improve the quality of their mathematics teaching based on best practice. We have also established the £100 million Teaching for Mastery programme, which is bringing mastery

teaching to 11,000 schools across England by 2023. This teaching style focusses on depth of understanding and is based on best practice from East-Asian jurisdictions that perform highly in international mathematics tests. Drawing on this approach, we have also published non-statutory guidance to support teachers to prioritise and sequence the maths curriculum in a way that aims to help pupils understand and progress in mathematics.

On English, we continue to support the teaching of early reading through our network of 34 English Hubs, established in 2018. The English Hubs programme is dedicated to improving the teaching of early reading, with a focus on supporting children making the slowest progress. In July 2021 we also published *The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy*, non-statutory guidance for teachers and school leaders, aimed at improving the teaching of the foundations of reading in primary schools by defining best practice. We will build on this by publishing part 2 of the Reading Framework next year, to provide evidence-based non-statutory guidance on teaching reading for years 2-9.

The ability to read fluently is also important when developing pupils' writing skills. We are heartened that the data released today has shown an increase in reading attainment despite the disruption of Covid, but we know there is more to do to ensure this translates into an improvement in writing attainment. In September 2022, we will launch the NPQ in Leading Literacy, which will support school literacy leaders to have a secure understanding of the importance of literacy and recognise the influence it has on pupils' future academic achievement, wellbeing and success in life. It will support leaders to develop expertise in the teaching of reading and writing and enable them to share their expertise effectively to improve literacy outcomes for every child.

We have also invested £10m in core skills in English and maths for the 2021/22 academic year, as part of the Accelerator Fund, which included funding for the English and Maths Hubs programmes to help pupils secure the key knowledge and understanding they need to progress – and which may have been missed due to Covid-19 disruption.

The Parent Pledge in the Schools White Paper will also make the government's vision clear that any child who falls behind in English or maths will receive the right evidence-based targeted support to get them back on track.

Underpinning all of these initiatives is the need to help children and young people recover from the impact of the pandemic and to achieve their full potential. The Government remains fully committed to achieving this aim.

HOME OFFICE

■ Publication of the Final Report of the Jermaine Baker Inquiry

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):

[\[HCWS181\]](#)

On 12 February 2020, I announced the establishment of an independent Inquiry, under the Inquiries Act 2005, to investigate the circumstances involved in the death of Jermaine Baker during a Metropolitan Police Service operation on 11 December 2015.

Today, the Chair of the Inquiry, His Honour Clement Goldstone QC published the Inquiry's final report. As set out in the Inquiries Act 2005 the report has also been laid before Parliament.

My department will consider any findings and any recommendations in due course. I hope this report will provide answers and closure for the Baker family.

TRANSPORT

■ Transport Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps): [\[HCWS177\]](#)

Today, 5 July 2022, I am announcing the shortlist of the most suitable potential locations for the national headquarters of Great British Railways (GBR), which will go forward to a consultative public vote to be held online and by post.

The confirmed list of shortlisted towns and cities is:

- Birmingham
- Crewe
- Derby
- Doncaster
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- York

I announced on 4 October 2021 that a competition would be run to identify the headquarters for GBR, to be located outside of London. This was launched on 5 February 2022 and was overseen by the GBR Transition Team (GBRTT). Prospective local authorities were asked to submit a short Expression of Interest to GBRTT by Wednesday 16 March.

GBRTT received 42 applications and has analysed their suitability against the published set of criteria for the national headquarters. The selection criteria are:

- Alignment to Levelling Up principles
- Connected and easy to get to
- Opportunities for GBR
- Value for money
- Railway heritage and links to the network
- Public support

GBRTT will launch a public vote today that will give the public the opportunity to express their views. The vote is consultative and will be used to test public support for each shortlisted location, allowing the people that the railway serves the chance to have their say.

Ministers will then make a final decision on the headquarters' location based on all information gathered and against the above criteria, with a final decision expected later in the year.

The new national GBR headquarters will be supported by a number of new regional headquarters across the country, putting decision-making and investment at the heart of communities that use those railways day to day.

The government is committed to levelling up, delivering jobs and investment beyond the capital. The national headquarters will be at the heart of the rail network and provide strategic direction for the running of GBR. Based outside of London, it will bring a number of high-skilled jobs to the winning location.

TREASURY

■ Finance Bill 2022-23: L-Day Update

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Lucy Frazer):

[\[HCWS180\]](#)

The Government will introduce the Finance Bill following the next Budget.

In line with the approach to tax policy making set out in the government's documents '*Tax Policy Making: a new approach*', published in 2010, and '*The new Budget timetable and the tax policy making process*', published in 2017, the Government is committed, where possible, to publishing most tax legislation in draft for technical consultation before the legislation is laid before Parliament.

The Government will publish draft clauses for the next Finance Bill, which will largely cover pre-announced policy changes, on 20 July along with accompanying explanatory notes, tax information and impact notes, responses to consultations and other supporting documents. All publications will be available on the gov.uk website.