

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:41 P.M., 06 July 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	5	■ Armed Forces: Recruitment	10
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	5	■ Armed Forces: Separated People	11
■ Carbon Emissions: Technology	5	■ Army: Data Protection	12
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Public Expenditure	5	■ Defence: Procurement	12
■ Energy: Prices	5	■ Ministry of Defence: Consultants	12
■ Fracking	6	■ Ministry of Defence: Official Hospitality	13
■ Horizon Europe	7	■ Typhoon Aircraft	13
■ Nuclear Power	7	■ Ukraine: Military Aid	13
■ Offshore Industry: Government Assistance	7	DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	14
■ Park Homes: Energy Bills Rebate	8	■ Algae: North Sea	14
■ Research and Scientists: Ukraine	8	■ Holiday Accommodation	14
■ Research: Finance	8	■ Holiday Accommodation: Regulation	15
■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans	9	■ Internet: Censorship	15
DEFENCE	9	■ Internet: Proof of Identity	16
■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	9	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	16
■ Armed Forces: Children	9	■ Marine Animals: North Sea	16
■ Armed Forces: Food	10	■ Puffins: Conservation	16
		FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	17
		■ Brazil: Forests	17

■ China: Russia	17	■ UK Visas and Immigration: Standards	33
■ Development Aid	18	■ Vetting: Gender Recognition	33
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Official Hospitality	18	■ Visas: Applications	34
■ Hashem Abedi and Salman Abedi	19	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	34
■ Iraq: Kurds	19	■ Export Credit Guarantees	34
■ Private Infrastructure Development Group	20	■ Exports: Military Aircraft	35
■ Sri Lanka: Economic Situation	20	JUSTICE	35
■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict	21	■ Courts	35
■ Ukraine: Cereals	22	■ Ministry of Justice: Consultants	36
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	22	■ Ministry of Justice: Official Hospitality	36
■ Abortion: Analgesics	22	■ Rape: Prosecutions	36
■ Cancer: Health Services	23	■ Rape: Victim Support Schemes	37
■ Dental Services and Dentistry	23	■ Rented Housing: Legal Advice	38
■ Food: Sales	24	■ Youth Custody: Travellers	38
■ Free School Meals and Healthy Start Scheme	24	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	39
■ General Practitioners	25	■ Building Regulations: Insulation	39
■ Immunology: Public Health	26	■ Local Government: Energy and Inflation	39
■ Oral Tobacco: Health Hazards	26	■ Parish and Town Councils	40
■ Oral Tobacco: Regulation	26	■ Park Homes: Fees and Charges	40
■ Polio: Greater London	27	SCOTLAND	40
■ Radioligand Therapy	27	■ Scotland Office: Consultants	40
HOME OFFICE	28	■ Scotland Office: Official Hospitality	41
■ Asylum	28	TRANSPORT	41
■ Climate Change: Immigration	28	■ Aviation: Carbon Emissions	41
■ Economic Crime	29	■ Bus Services: Disability	42
■ Electronic Funds Transfer: Fraud	29	■ Department for Transport: Consultants	42
■ Refugees: Afghanistan	32		
■ Terrorism: Havering	33		

■ Department for Transport: EU Law	43	■ Revenue and Customs: Repayments	52
■ Department for Transport: Hospitality Industry	43	■ Tax Avoidance	52
■ Driving Tests	43	WALES	53
■ Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes	44	■ British Constitution: Reform	53
■ Electric Vehicles	44	■ Levelling Up Fund: Wales	54
■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	45	■ Police: Wales	54
■ Great British Railways	45	■ UK Trade with EU	54
■ Great British Railways: Location	46	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	54
■ Leamside Line	46	■ Conversion Therapy	54
■ Leamside Line: Domestic Visits	47	WORK AND PENSIONS	55
■ National Policy Statements	47	■ Housing Benefit: Cost of Living	55
■ Network Rail: Finance	47	■ Pension Credit: Rural Areas	56
■ Public Transport: Tickets	48	■ Universal Credit	56
■ Railway Network: Suffolk	48	■ Universal Credit: Costs	58
■ Railway Stations: Disability	48	■ Universal Credit: Disability	58
■ Railways: Anniversaries	49	■ Universal Credit: Families	59
■ Restoring Your Railway Fund	49	■ Universal Credit: Standards	59
■ Restoring Your Railway Fund: Greater London	49	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	60
■ Transport: North East	50	BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	60
■ Tyres: Marine Environment	50	■ Business: Telephone Services	60
■ Tyres: Standards	51	■ Energy: Prices	60
TREASURY	51	WORK AND PENSIONS	61
■ Alcoholic Drinks: Export Controls	51	■ Social Security Benefits	61
■ Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Northern Ireland	51	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	62
■ Members: Correspondence	52	BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	62
		■ Energy Update	62
		DEFENCE	65
		■ Atomic Weapons Establishment Pension Scheme	65

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	66	TRANSPORT	70
■ Linking the Foreign Interference Offence to the Online Safety Bill	66	■ Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport	70
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	69	WORK AND PENSIONS	71
■ Sweden and Finland NATO Accession	69	■ Expanded Delivery of the Government's Mid-Life MOT Offer	71

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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Carbon Emissions: Technology

Matt Vickers: [\[26907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the development of new low-carbon technologies in the UK.

Greg Hands:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 25th May 2022 to Question [3766](#).

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Public Expenditure

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[28912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, further to the statement on Twitter by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on 30 June 2022 that his Department had contributed to military aid for Ukraine by surrendering climate finance and foreign aid underspends, what the value of those underspends is; and which (a) areas by budget heading and (b) financial years those underspends are from.

George Freeman:

Around £100m from the BEIS International Climate Finance budget in 2022-23 has been identified to be handed back to HM Treasury.

■ Energy: Prices

Kate Griffiths: [\[26862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that energy companies are able to offer competitive prices for (a) commercial and (b) residential premises.

Greg Hands:

Contractual terms offered to businesses are a commercial matter for energy suppliers. The Government encourages businesses to shop around to find the best deal. For domestic customers, the energy price cap will continue to ensure energy prices are limited.

Kate Griffiths: [\[26863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure a competitive market for domestic energy users.

Kate Griffiths: [\[26864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of levels of competition in the UK energy market.

Greg Hands:

The Government continues to believe that competition is the best driver of value and innovation in the energy market. However, there has been less scope for competition in the supply market during this period of high and volatile wholesale gas and electricity prices.

The Government wants a retail energy market that is both resilient and competitive, with companies able to invest in innovation and offer products and services that support decarbonisation. The Government is considering what reforms are needed to retail market regulation and will set out its plans ahead of the next price cap period

■ Fracking

Catherine West: [\[28900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of provisions in the Energy (Oil and Gas) Profits Levy Bill allowing exemptions for companies that invest in the exploration of new fossil fuel resources on fracking operations.

Greg Hands:

In 2019, the Government confirmed that the pause on the exploration of shale gas reserves in England would remain in place unless and until further evidence was provided that shale gas extraction could be carried out safely. Any exploration or development of shale gas would need to meet rigorous safety and environmental protections both above ground and sub-surface.

In April, the Government commissioned the British Geological Survey to undertake a review of the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction. This review has now been completed and the Government is considering their detailed and technical report. This report will be published in due course. The Government's policy remains unchanged.

Catherine West: [\[28901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy not to approve future fracking projects.

Greg Hands:

In 2019, the Government confirmed that the pause on the exploration of shale gas reserves in England would remain in place unless and until further evidence was provided that shale gas extraction could be carried out safely. Any exploration or development of shale gas would need to meet rigorous safety and environmental protections both above ground and sub-surface.

In April, the Government commissioned the British Geological Survey to undertake a review of the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction. This review has now been completed and the Government is considering their detailed and technical report. This report will be published in due course. The Government's policy remains unchanged.

■ Horizon Europe

Matt Vickers: [\[26912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress he has made on formalising the UK's association with Horizon Europe.

George Freeman:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central on 27 April 2022 to Question [156445](#).

■ Nuclear Power

Matt Vickers: [\[26908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the (a) development and (b) delivery of (i) new and (ii) advanced nuclear power in the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Government intends to take one project to Final Investment Decision (FID) this Parliament and future projects in the next Parliament, subject to value for money and relevant approvals.

The Government will set up Great British Nuclear later this year, which will help projects through every stage of the development process and develop a resilient pipeline of new builds. The Government is working with industry to scope its functions and has appointed Simon Bowen as industry advisory on the scoping of the organisation.

The Future Nuclear Enabling Fund was launched in May 2022, which will provide targeted support to address barriers to entry to the nuclear market.

■ Offshore Industry: Government Assistance

Matt Vickers: [\[26910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the UK's oil and gas sector.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 25 May 2022 to Question [3769](#).

■ Park Homes: Energy Bills Rebate**Mark Garnier:** [\[26750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to help ensure that people in caravan parks who are connected to utilities through the park owners will be able to receive the £400 payment through the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

Greg Hands:

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

■ Research and Scientists: Ukraine**Matt Vickers:** [\[26913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to support Ukrainian scientists and researchers in the UK.

George Freeman:

The UK stands in solidarity with Ukraine, and we are assisting those who have been displaced and disrupted by this illegal invasion, including researchers and scientists.

We have announced the Researchers at Risk Fellowship Programme, which will support Ukrainian researchers fleeing the conflict, as well as those already in the UK who are unable to return home. The 'Researchers at Risk' programme, which launched in March 2022, was initially allocated £3m and a further £9.8 million of funding was announced on 28 June. With this funding more than 130 Ukrainian academics will be brought to, and supported in, the UK.

■ Research: Finance**Matt Vickers:** [\[26911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to increase R&D spending in the UK.

George Freeman:

The Government is providing the fastest ever sustained uplift in R&D funding, reaching £20 billion per annum by the end of the SR period – £5 billion more than 2021/22 with HM Treasury committed to £22bn in 2026/7 as part of our commitment to the target of UK economy-wide R&D investment reaching 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

In order to achieve 2.4% by 2027, we are mapping out the current private and public R&D investment by sector and modelling options for securing the necessary private sector investment, using a combination of policy tools across the R&D ecosystem – from innovation accelerators to the catapults, catalyst funds, and a range of fiscal incentives including R&D tax credits, the patient capital review, scale up capital taskforce, pension fund reforms and post-Brexit regulatory reform.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Matt Vickers:

[\[26909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to (a) increase the volume of energy generated by offshore wind and (b) support the development of offshore wind technology in the UK.

Greg Hands:

Electricity generated from offshore wind has increased from just under 1% of total electricity generated in 2010 to over 11% in 2021.

In April 2022, the Government released the British Energy Security Strategy, where it set out a new ambition for offshore wind: from 40 GW by 2030, including 1GW of floating wind, to an ambition of 50GW, with up to 5GW from floating wind.

The Government is providing £160 million to support new, large scale floating wind ports and manufacturing; and £31 million for development of innovative floating wind technologies.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[27545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 18825 on Armed Forces Compensation Scheme: Appeals, how many staff work on the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme as of 29 June 2022.

Leo Docherty:

The total Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number of staff that work only on Armed Forces Compensation Scheme claims and appeals as of 29 June 2022 is 45.88.

These staff are supported by 20.16 FTE Administrative Officer and Administrative Assistant grade staff undertaking administrative support roles across both AFCS and the War Pension Scheme.

■ Armed Forces: Children

Luke Pollard:

[\[28485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of children who will benefit from the expansion of the Wraparound Childcare Scheme.

Leo Docherty:

Defence recognises the integral role of its Service personnel in meeting Defence outputs. It also acknowledges the importance of a robust childcare support system in enabling the mobility, recruitment and retention of a capable workforce of motivated personnel. A good childcare support system also benefits the social, emotional and educational development of Service children and young people.

The Wraparound Childcare (WAC) scheme is designed to help Service personnel with dependent primary school aged children by funding their WAC in order to mitigate the potential disruption that Service life can sometimes cause. The scheme will assist those who are most likely to be impacted by issues of mobility and deployment and is open to all UK based Armed Forces families where the Service person has either an assignment order to a UK based unit or is serving overseas unaccompanied (involuntarily) with the family resident in the UK.

Within the first year of a full UK rollout of the WAC scheme it is estimated that up to twenty thousand children could benefit from the scheme.

■ **Armed Forces: Food**

Luke Pollard: [\[28481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how long the freeze on the daily food charge for armed forces personnel will last for.

Luke Pollard: [\[28482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how long the one per cent cap on the armed forces accommodation will last for.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence anticipates that the current freeze on the daily food charge will apply for financial year 2022-23. The Department will seek to ensure standards in food quality and quantity are maintained whilst working with our Industry Partners to explore delivery options during this period of unprecedented food cost inflation. Decisions on the daily food charge beyond this date will be made nearer the appropriate time.

Accommodation charges are reviewed annually by the Armed Forces Pay Review Board and the decision to cap the increase to service provided accommodation at 1% will apply for financial year 2022-23. Decisions on accommodation charges beyond this date will be based on the evidence presented in the next pay round.

■ **Armed Forces: Recruitment**

Luke Pollard: [\[28486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications the armed forces have received from women in each of the last ten years.

Luke Pollard: [\[28487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications the armed forces have received from men in each of the last ten years.

Leo Docherty:

The requested information is provided in the attached spreadsheets.

Attachments:

1. Applications by Gender [Copy of 20220701 - Applications by Gender (1).xlsx]

■ **Armed Forces: Separated People**

Emma Hardy:

[\[26837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of support available to families and partners of members of the armed forces upon the breakdown of their relationship.

Leo Docherty:

As stated in the newly published UK Armed Forces Families Strategy, we are committed to supporting all types of family across the Armed Forces community.

The Strategy and associated action plan have been developed from a robust evidence base and are the result of wide stakeholder engagement. The need to promote inclusivity and encourage an increasingly diverse Armed Forces is a central tenet of the Strategy, and supporting families going through relationship breakdown is explicitly referenced.

Every relationship breakdown is different but when the couple have reached the decision to notify their unit of a permanent separation, the serving person, as the licence holder for the Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and the partner with the entitlement to service provided accommodation, is obligated to inform the Loss of Entitlement Team who will issue the 93-day Notice To Vacate (NTV). The policies we have in place are focused on supporting non-serving partners' transition to the next phase of their life and, where the service person also stands to lose their entitlement to families' accommodation, supporting them to move into Single Living Accommodation (SLA).

This is often a very stressful time for both partners and of course, if relevant, children who are impacted by the relationship breakdown. In recognition of this, a Proportionality Exercise is conducted at the same time as the NTV is issued to determine if there are factors to warrant occupation beyond the 93-day period which will include schooling, medical or welfare needs. During this initial 93 days the non-serving partner is not liable for accommodation charges as these remain with the licence holder and the Loss of Entitlement Team will work with our welfare agencies to look at available options.

Emergency housing is provided by Defence's Cotswold Centre for those returning from overseas or experiencing Domestic Abuse, along with contact houses for service personnel to have custody and time with their children in a safe and suitable environment.

Joint Service Publication (JSP) 100, Defence Holistic Transition policy, supports referral or self-referrals of partners and spouses of Service personnel to Defence Transition Services (DTS) which delivers a full range of transition support, providing tailored information and guidance. DTS can help with issues and provide support and guidance on subjects including health, accommodation, relocation, finance, training, education, and employment. Those who are supported by DTS would be referred to a Local Authority if there was a risk of homelessness.

The Ministry of Defence also works with the charitable sector at the community level to identify those in need of relationship support, improving awareness of existing provision and signposting to services. In addition, work is ongoing to promote understanding of Armed Forces life in the Family Courts system.

■ **Army: Data Protection**

John Healey: [\[29873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any personnel information was accessed during the data breach of the Army's social media accounts on 3 July 2022.

Leo Docherty:

No personnel information was accessed as a result of the Army's Twitter and Youtube accounts being compromised.

■ **Defence: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[26935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether existing Invitation to Negotiate arrangements in the contracts awarded by his Department purport to prohibit contracting organisations from engaging with parliamentary select committees.

Jeremy Quin:

It is Ministry of Defence policy to use standard contract conditions to prevent the unauthorised disclosure of information for a variety of reasons, including protection of national security, commercial confidentiality and personal data, and for there to be obligations on confidentiality in our invitations to tender. However, there is nothing in the standard commercial policy or processes that prohibits contracting organisations from engaging with parliamentary select committees.

If a committee requested information, the disclosure of which might be prohibited under contractual arrangements, this would require careful consideration on a case-by-case basis.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Consultants**

Sarah Olney: [\[27698\]](#)

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

Jeremy Quin:

The Department maintains a central record of overall Consultancy expenditure.

The value for all Consultancy, by financial year, since 2016 are as follows:

FY2020-21 £109.668 million

FY2019-20 £98.080 million

FY2018-19 £116.914 million

FY2017-18 £49.955 million

FY2016-17 £60.500 million

■ Ministry of Defence: Official Hospitality

Jon Trickett:

[\[27531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department spent on hospitality in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Leo Docherty:

The figures provided for Entertainment and Hospitality for both financial year 2020-21 and 2021-22 are as follows. Figures for financial year 2022-23 figures will be available once the accounts have been finalised.

2020-21 - £1.533 million

2019-20 - £ 3.366 million

■ Typhoon Aircraft

John Healey:

[\[26696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Typhoon jets have been in service each year since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

The attached table contains the requested information from published sources (the National Statistic publication 'Military Formations, Vessels and Aircraft' from 2010-2014 and the National Statistic publication 'UK armed forces equipment and formations' for 2016-2021). No number was published for 2015.

Attachments:

1. Typhoon Jets in Service [PQ26696 table (1).pdf]

■ Ukraine: Military Aid

John Healey:

[\[26697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, where the training of Ukrainian soldiers arriving in the UK is planned to take place.

James Heapey:

The written statement (HCWS182), released by the Secretary of State for Defence on 5 July 2022 on our continued support to Ukraine, confirmed Ukrainian soldiers will be trained at military sites in the North East, South West and South East of England.

Attachments:

1. Continued Support to Ukraine [HCWS182 - Continued Support to Ukraine.docx]

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Algae: North Sea****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[27558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has requested that the Natural History Museum to collect from specific incidences of algal blooms in the North Sea as part of its AlgaeVision database in (a) September 2021, (b) October 2021, (c) February 2022 and (d) April 2022.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS-sponsored museums operate at arm's length from the Government. The specifics of projects are therefore operational matters for museums to decide independently.

The Natural History Museum has not been asked by the Government to collect any samples of algal blooms in the North Sea, nor would they have the required equipment to do so.

DCMS understands that the AlgaeVision project is a database and virtual collection of images of freshwater and terrestrial algae collected in Britain and Ireland. The project's aim is to digitise the current algae species already in the Natural History Museum's algae collection. Identifying the cause of crustacean deaths is outside the scope of the museum's work and would be better directed to one of the marine monitoring research groups within the UK, such as the Scottish Association for Marine Science.

■ Holiday Accommodation**Rachael Maskell:**[\[27650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to monitor the impact of short term holiday lets on (a) the availability of property for residential use, (b) property prices and (c) levels of noise and nuisance in local communities; and what factors she uses to monitor those impacts.

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.

■ **Holiday Accommodation: Regulation**

Rachael Maskell:

[26800]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the impact on each sector of the differences between the regulatory regimes which apply to (a) the B&B and Guest House sector and (b) the short term holiday let sector.

Nigel Huddleston:

We committed to consult on a possible Short Term Accommodation Registration Scheme in England in June 2021's [Tourism Recovery Plan](#).

Due to the lack of robust data, firstly we want to build an evidence base about the short term tourist accommodation sector. The sharing economy has brought many benefits to the tourism sector and wider economy, as well as creating an additional income stream for homeowners.

On 29 June we published a call for evidence, seeking views and data on the size and shape of the market, as well as the positive and negative impacts of short term lets. This information will enable us to develop proportionate, evidence-based policy options for future consultation

This call for evidence is open to everyone and will run for 12 weeks until 21 September. We then intend to consult on specific policy options later in 2022.

■ **Internet: Censorship**

John Howell:

[25809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 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 The control of online communication: a threat to media pluralism, freedom of information and human dignity.

Chris Philp:

The Government is committed to being one of the safest countries to be online and we recognise the wider international debates taking place to address online safety. This includes the work of the Council of Europe, in particular the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, noting that recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course for appropriate review.

The UK continues efforts to tackle online harm through our Online Safety Bill, and to do so in a way that defends freedom of expression and pluralism online, protecting

people's rights to participate in society and engage in robust debate online. We remain committed to a pluralistic media landscape, where people can access information from a range of sources in order to form their opinions.

■ **Internet: Proof of Identity**

Mr Steve Baker: [\[25841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of provisions in the Online Safety Bill relating to user ID verification requirements on legitimate uses of online anonymity.

Chris Philp:

The user identity verification duty in the Online Safety Bill will give users more control over who they interact with online. It only applies to high risk, high reach services. Users who do not want to verify themselves will not have to do so. This ensures that legitimate uses of anonymity are not restricted.

Ofcom will issue guidance to assist providers in complying with the user verification duty. Ofcom will be required to consult individuals who represent the interests of vulnerable adult users in the development of its guidance.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Marine Animals: North Sea**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[27559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has received increased reports of malnourished marine mammals along the North Sea coast since July 2022.

Rebecca Pow:

Causes of death of stranded marine mammals are monitored and investigated through the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP) and Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme (SMASS).

We have not received any reports which suggest an increase in malnourished marine mammals since July 2021. Strandings will continue to be monitored and investigated through the CSIP and SMASS. Annual reports are published and available publicly.

■ **Puffins: Conservation**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of National Trust Jersey and Birds on the Edge's initiative to reintroduce puffins to breeding sites in Jersey; and whether his Department has taken recent steps to support the conservation of puffins in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

As Jersey is a Crown Dependency, it would not be appropriate for the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to assess initiatives in Jersey.

The UK's seabirds, including puffins, are an important part of our natural heritage, and the government is committed to protecting them. Defra is working with Natural England to develop a comprehensive English Seabird Conservation Strategy (ESCS). This strategy will provide an assessment of the vulnerability of seabird species in light of the pressures they are facing and propose a comprehensive set of actions to address them. We are aiming to publish a final ESCS in spring 2023.

We are also working to minimise and, where possible, eliminate the accidental bycatch of seabirds in fishing gear. Defra and the Devolved Administrations are working to finalise the UK Bycatch Mitigation Initiative, which will be published shortly.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE■ **Brazil: Forests****Daisy Cooper:**[\[26860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has held discussions with her Brazilian counterpart on the UK's deforestation footprint in that country, and in particular on the production and export of cattle and cattle products to the United Kingdom.

Vicky Ford:

At COP26, Brazil committed to eliminating illegal deforestation by 2028 as well as an 18 metre hectare target for forest restoration by 2030. During my [Minister Ford] visit to Brazil on 12-14 March, I stressed the importance of Brazil implementing these commitments quickly. COP President Alok Sharma did the same during his visit in the same month.

UK ministers and officials regularly engage with the Government, businesses and communities in Brazil on a range of environmental issues including sustainable agriculture, low-carbon growth and tackling deforestation. Our support for sustainable development in Brazil is well known and consistent. In addition, the world-leading due diligence provisions in the UK Environment Act 2021 will help address illegal deforestation across UK supply chains.

We remain committed to working with the Governments of all countries in whose territory the Amazon stands to address these issues.

■ **China: Russia****Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[27667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make it her policy to impose secondary sanctions on Chinese firms who are

believed to have violated sanctions on Russia by providing military equipment or other support.

Vicky Ford:

In lockstep with our allies, we have introduced the largest and most severe economic sanctions that Russia has ever faced, to help cripple Putin's war machine. We have now sanctioned over 1000 individuals and over 100 entities since Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

HMG takes reports or allegations of breaches or evasion of sanctions very seriously. The FCDO works closely with the relevant cross government enforcement bodies to ensure the robust implementation of sanctions.

The UK continues to engage with China at all levels in Beijing, London and at the UN to make it clear that the world is watching what China chooses to say and do - whether their actions contribute to peace and stability, or it chooses to fuel aggression.

■ **Development Aid**

Stephen Farry:

[\[26918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what financial commitment she plans to make to the 7th replenishment of the Global Fund.

Amanda Milling:

The Global Fund is a high performing organisation that, with partners, has saved 44 million lives to date. The UK is proud to be the organisations third largest donor historically, investing £4.1 billion since 2002. As set out in the International Development Strategy (IDS), global health will remain a top priority. The UK has not yet determined our pledge to the Global Fund's 7th replenishment. We are currently reviewing the Global Fund's 7th replenishment investment case in line with delivering the IDS. The Global Fund remains a key partner to the UK in the shared fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Official Hospitality**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[28879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason no transparency data has been published for her Department's monthly spending over £25,000 beyond the end of September 2021, as of the end of June 2022.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[28880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason no transparency data has been published for her Department's monthly spending over £500 using electronic purchasing cards beyond the end of October 2021, as of the end of June 2022.

Emily Thornberry: [\[28881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason no transparency data has been published by her Department for ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings beyond the end of September 2021, as of the end of June 2022.

Emily Thornberry: [\[28882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason no transparency data has been published by her Department for special advisers gifts, hospitality and meetings beyond the end of September 2021, as of the end of June 2022.

Vicky Ford:

All FCDO transparency and freedom of information releases are published on Gov.uk. FCDO is committed to transparency and is working to ensure we are up to date with these publications.

■ **Hashem Abedi and Salman Abedi****Kenny MacAskill:** [\[22566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what information her Department holds on whether Salman and Hashem Abedi were debriefed following their evacuation from Libya by the Royal Navy in August 2014.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office does not comment on matters of national security.

The first volume of the Chair's findings of the Manchester Arena Inquiry was published in June 2021, with volumes 2 and 3 scheduled for publication later in 2022. Further information can be found on the Inquiry's website: manchesterarenainquiry.org.uk

■ **Iraq: Kurds****Alicia Kearns:** [\[R\] \[26879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the strength of the bilateral relationship between the UK and the Kurdistan region in Iraq; and if she will make a statement.

Amanda Milling:

We have a close and strategic relationship with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq. The Kurdistan Regional Government is a close ally in the fight against Daesh and we continue to cooperate closely on security and wider issues. UK Ministerial engagement is strong. The President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, visited the UK in September 2021. In April 2022, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Masrour Barzani, visited the UK. Both met the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, amongst others.

Alicia Kearns: **[R]** [\[26880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the relationship between the Federal Government in Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Amanda Milling:

We continue to work with both Baghdad and Erbil, and encourage both sides to work towards resolving their differences in line with the Iraqi constitution. We want to see a strong and successful Kurdistan region within a thriving and multicultural Iraq.

■ Private Infrastructure Development Group

Sarah Champion: [\[26772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding her Department disbursed through the Private Infrastructure Development Group from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The FCDO has disbursed a total of £297,678,27 to the Private Infrastructure Development Group in the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2022.

Sarah Champion: [\[26773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding her Department plans to allocate through the Private Infrastructure Development Group in each of the next three financial years.

Vicky Ford:

Subject to final agreements being put in place, the FCDO currently anticipates making available to the Private Infrastructure Development Group funding of £61,000,000 (sixty one million, pounds sterling) for the financial year 2022/2023. Funding decisions for financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 are being considered as part of broader Official Development Assistance (ODA) resource allocation discussions.

■ Sri Lanka: Economic Situation

Fleur Anderson: [\[26026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to work with the international community to alleviate poverty caused by the Sri Lankan economic crisis.

Vicky Ford:

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

The UK contributes to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Operation in Sri Lanka. The DREF is supporting the Sri Lanka Red Cross with an allocation of CHF691,002 in response to shortages and civil unrest. The World Bank, of which the UK is a major donor, has announced over US\$400 million of assistance to provide economic and health sector support.

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

■ **Ukraine: Armed Conflict**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[28404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 21 June and 29 June 2022 to Questions 16876 and 24563, on Ukraine: British Nationals Abroad, whether the Memorandum of Understanding between her Department, the National Police Chiefs Council and the Chief Coroner of England and Wales currently applies to the deaths of British citizens killed in the Russian war on Ukraine as (a) civilian casualties and (b) combatants.

James Cleverly:

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of September 2020 applies when a British national dies as a result of murder, manslaughter or infanticide overseas and for which jurisdiction for the investigation is likely to remain with the authorities in that country. In these circumstances, a coronial investigation in England and Wales will only take place if the body is repatriated, reported to the coroner, and the death is violent, unnatural, or of unknown cause.

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office has a role in supporting bereaved families - including families of civilians or combatants who die in Ukraine - and providing information about customs, procedures and support services. Any deaths overseas (including those of combatants) that are not being investigated as a potential homicide fall outside the scope of this MoU. However, the signatories seek to apply the principles set out within it to offer support to bereaved families of combatants where possible.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[28405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2022 to Question 24564, on Armed Conflict: Ukraine, whether she has made an assessment of the Ukrainian authorities' capacity to (a) collect antemortem records of missing or at risk UK citizens in Ukraine and (b) identify deceased UK citizens in Ukraine during the Russian war on that country.

James Cleverly:

We continue to liaise with Ukrainian authorities to support effective identification and collection of evidence of atrocity crimes. It remains for the Ukrainian authorities to maintain any necessary records of those missing or at risk in Ukraine and to identify British nationals that pass away on Ukrainian territory.

Emily Thornberry:[\[28406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2022 to Question 24564, on Armed Conflict: Ukraine, on what occasions (a) she and (b) Ministers in her Department have discussed the (i) collection of antemortem records of missing or at risk UK citizens in Ukraine and (ii) identification of deceased UK citizens in that country with Ukrainian ministers or officials.

James Cleverly:

Ministers are in contact with their Ukrainian counterparts to discuss how best we can support. However, it remains for the Ukrainian authorities to maintain any necessary records of those missing or at risk in Ukraine and to identify British nationals that pass away on Ukrainian territory.

■ Ukraine: Cereals**John Howell:**[\[25807\]](#)

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 Consequences of the blockade of the Black Sea.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government is working with the international community to hold Russia to account over its blockade of the Black Sea. The UK strongly supports UN efforts to unlock the export of Ukrainian grain and find practical ways to open up commercial shipping routes. We are also working with the EU to increase the volume of grain exported by rail. We will continue to fund humanitarian aid and economic support for those that need it most, protecting them from the fallout of Russian aggression. We recognise the work of the Council of Europe and in particular Parliamentary Assembly to the Council of Europe, and note that recommendations will go to the Committee of Ministers in due course.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Abortion: Analgesics****Scott Benton:**[\[13261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the implications for its policies of (a) the recommendation by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' in the 2010 working party

report, Fetal Awareness: Review of Research and Recommendations for Practice, that the fetus does not require analgesia for interventions occurring before 24 weeks of gestation and that evidence that analgesia confers any benefit on the fetus at any gestation is lacking and (b) research published by the British Medical Journal of Medical Ethics in 2020 on Reconsidering fetal pain, supporting the possibility of fetal pain before 24 weeks.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made as the Department does not set clinical practice.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists is currently reviewing its report 'Fetal Awareness: Review and Recommendations for Practice'. The College has established a review group to consider the latest evidence on fetal pain and fetal awareness which is expected to report on its findings by the end of 2022.

■ **Cancer: Health Services**

Damien Moore:

[\[23397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of treatment capacity within NHS cancer services to tackle the cancer backlog.

Maria Caulfield:

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' sets out how the National Health Service will increase elective services, including cancer treatment, over the next three years. We are allocating more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund to increase elective activity. We will also deliver nine million additional treatments and diagnostic procedures in the next three years and approximately 30% more elective activity by 2024/25, compared to pre-pandemic levels.

In 2022/23, Health Education England (HEE) is investing an additional £50 million to increase the cancer and diagnostics workforce. The Department has commissioned HEE to review long-term workforce demand and supply and NHS England will develop a long-term workforce strategy, including supply projections. The forthcoming 10 Year Cancer Plan will also ensure that the appropriate workforce is in place.

■ **Dental Services and Dentistry**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[21157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) recruit NHS dentists, (b) reduce the NHS dentistry appointment backlog and (c) standardise international dentistry qualifications.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 23 June 2022]: In its 'Advancing Dental Care Review', Health Education made recommendations to address recruitment and retention into the National Health Service. These recommendations are being implemented through the Dental Education Reform Programme. NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked practices to deliver 100% of contracted units of dental activity and 100% of units of orthodontic activity to safely improve access for patients safely. We allocated an additional £50 million for NHS dentistry for the final quarter of 2021/22 to provide urgent care to patients and address the backlog. NHS England is also consulting the British Dental Association and other stakeholders on a range of improvements to the current contract which aim at increasing access for patients and reward dentists fairly for complex work.

The General Dental Council (GDC) the independent regulator responsible for assessing the skills, knowledge and experience of healthcare professionals seeking to join its register who qualified outside of the United Kingdom to ensure that standards of practice are met. The Department recently consulted on legislative changes which will provide the GDC with greater flexibility on alternative routes to registration for international applicants. Officials are analysing the responses received with the intention of publishing the Government's response later this year. The GDC will then determine how best to utilise this increased flexibility.

Food: Sales**Beth Winter:**[\[26885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to statistics published by the Office for National Statistics on 24 June 2022, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of the fall in food store sales of 1.6 per cent in May 2022 on public (a) health and (b) nutrition.

Maggie Throup:

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities monitors the available data on population diets and nutrient intakes, including through the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS). Questions on food insecurity have been included in the NDNS since April 2022. The Food Standards Agency also reviews food insecurity and other consumer-related behaviours, through its Food and You survey.

However, the impact of increasing food prices and falls in food sales on population health and nutrition will not be known for some time, while sufficient data is collected and analysed.

Free School Meals and Healthy Start Scheme**Caroline Lucas:**[\[24572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 13088 on Free School Meals and Healthy Start Scheme, for what

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

Maggie Throup:

The eligibility criteria for the Healthy Start scheme are kept under continuous review. There are no current plans to extend the eligibility criteria for the scheme by one year to cover children under the age of five. The Department is not considering other measures as it is currently prioritising the roll-out of the digitised Healthy Start service.

■ **General Practitioners**

Feryal Clark:

[\[27753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of full time equivalent GPs working in England in each of the last three years.

Maria Caulfield:

The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) doctors in general practice in England in each of the last three years.

MARCH 2022	35,988
March 2021	35,315
March 2020	34,359

Notes:

1. FTE refers to the proportion of full-time contracted hours that the post holder is contracted to work. 1 would indicate they work a full set of hours (37.5), 0.5 that they worked half time. In GPs in Training Grade contracts 1 FTE equals 40 hours. The FTEs have been converted to the standard measure of 1 FTE = 37.5 hours for consistency.
2. Figures shown do not include staff working in prisons, army bases, educational establishments, specialist care centres, including drug rehabilitation centres, walk-in centres and other alternative settings outside of traditional general practice, such as urgent treatment centres and minor injury units.
3. Data includes estimates for practices which did not provide fully valid staff records.
4. Full Estimation: Estimates are made for both headcount and FTE for those practices which did not provide any valid data for one or more of the four staff groups (or in the case of practices providing no valid Direct Patient Care (DPC) data, DPC estimates are made for those practices also failing to provide valid data for at least one other staff group). The absence of data for a staff group could be due to poor data quality or no submitted data. For these practices, clinical commissioning group-level estimations are made.

5. **Partial Estimation:** In some cases, practices provide valid records about their staff but do not include information about their working hours. In these cases, we retain the record and calculate estimates for their working hours and full-time equivalence based upon the national averages for the job role. These figures are referred to as 'partial estimates', and the scale of these estimates varies by staff group.

■ **Immunology: Public Health**

Alexander Stafford: [\[13290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to use immunology to tackle (a) cancer and (b) other major public health challenges.

Daisy Cooper: [\[14631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to use immunology to tackle (a) cancer and (b) other major public health challenges.

Maria Caulfield:

The 'Life Sciences Vision' aims to support the development of immunotherapies for cancer. In addition, the Vision's cancer and vaccines healthcare missions will support research to understand the potential of immunology and its response to a range of diseases.

■ **Oral Tobacco: Health Hazards**

Alexander Stafford: [\[26927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the planned timetable is for publication of the Committee on Toxicity of Food, Consumer Products and the Environment's position on the toxicological risks associated with oral nicotine pouches.

Maggie Throup:

The Committee on Toxicity of Food, Consumer Products and the Environment will consider its draft statement at its July 2022 meeting. It is estimated that a final statement will be available by autumn 2022.

■ **Oral Tobacco: Regulation**

Alexander Stafford: [\[26928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to include a commitment to regulate oral nicotine pouches in either the (a) health disparities white paper or (b) updated Tobacco Control Plan for England.

Maggie Throup:

Nicotine pouches are regulated under The General Product Safety Regulations 2005. During the Post Implementation Review of The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016, we received submissions to further regulate these products under

this framework. We will keep this under review in the development of the forthcoming health disparities white paper and Tobacco Control Plan.

■ Polio: Greater London

Catherine West: [\[27690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of potential implications of the recent detection of the poliovirus in London sewage; and what assessment he has made of the potential risk of people contracting the virus.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is investigating poliovirus detected in sewage samples collected from the London Beckton Sewage Treatment Works between February and June 2022. Evidence suggests that it is likely there has been some transmission between closely linked individuals in North and East London and type 2 poliovirus is being shed in their faeces. However, the virus has only been detected in sewage samples and no associated cases of paralysis have been reported. The last case of wild polio contracted in the United Kingdom was confirmed in 1984 and the UK was declared polio-free in 2003. The risk to the public is extremely low. Vaccine-derived poliovirus has the potential to spread, particularly in communities where vaccine uptake is lower. On rare occasions it can cause paralysis in people who are not fully vaccinated.

The UKHSA and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is expanding the wastewater surveillance to assess the extent of transmission and identify local areas for targeted action. An alert has been issued to health professionals to ensure that suspected cases are rapidly investigated and reported. The UKHSA is raising awareness of the need for the public to receive routine vaccinations and the National Health Service is contacting parents of children in London aged under five years old who have not received a polio vaccination.

■ Radioligand Therapy

Alex Norris: [\[23788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 18021 on Radioligand Therapy, what assessment he has made of the ability of NHS regional teams to assess providers' ability to deliver against required standards for radioligand therapy commissioning in the absence of agreed national standards.

Alex Norris: [\[23789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 18021 on Radioligand Therapy, if he will hold discussions with NHS leaders on steps that will be taken to help ensure that patient access to radioligand therapy is not delayed in the event that the system's capacity is not ready following any future NICE recommendations.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 28 June 2022]: No specific assessment has been made. Where treatments are approved via the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) technology appraisals, NHS England and NHS Improvement seek to ensure appropriate access for patients which reflects NICE's recommendations within the license of the treatment. Regional teams receive advice and guidance from NHS England and NHS Improvement's specialised commissioning team.

While no specific discussions are planned, NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise the potential of NICE-approved radioligand therapies and are appointing a new National Specialty Advisor for Nuclear Medicine to ensure these opportunities are realised.

HOME OFFICE■ **Asylum****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[27631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many civil servants delivered the training and mentoring programme for new Decision Makers; and whether those civil servants would otherwise have been processing asylum cases themselves as of 29 June.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: The Home Office has rolling recruitment campaigns to ensure the number of civil servants delivering the training and mentoring programme for new decision makers are maintained at appropriate levels.

Those civil servants who deliver training and mentoring are separate to those processing asylum cases and would not be expected to process asylum cases themselves.

■ **Climate Change: Immigration****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[25827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of climate change on migration to the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The UK recognises the need to better understand the complex links between migration, climate change and environmental degradation to inform our policy and action. All Government departments include climate change impact as part of their policy development and analysis where relevant.

Initial analysis is climate change does not cause the direct migration of large groups of people to the UK but instead works in combination with other drivers, influencing individuals' decisions to migrate and with its main impact being felt through increased pressure on existing trends.

■ Economic Crime

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on reducing economic crime.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: The detail of discussions with Cabinet peers are held in confidence. I would, however, like to reassure you that tackling economic crime is a priority for me, and the Home Secretary and I continue to work closely across Government, and with industry, including via our Economic Crime Strategic Board, to address the harm caused by economic crime to the UK.

In partnership with Treasury colleagues, we are working with the public and private sectors to develop the second Economic Crime Plan. This will set out our collective response for the future to reduce the scale of economic crime. We are also developing an ambitious 10 Year Fraud Strategy. We intend to publish these later this year.

■ Electronic Funds Transfer: Fraud

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[25884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether officials in her Department have provided guidance to the National Police Chiefs Council on reducing authorised push payment fraud.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: Tackling fraud requires a unified and co-ordinated response from government, law enforcement and the private sector. The Government is working with industry, including the banking and tech sectors to ensure that victims are protected from these crimes in the first place and are not left out of pocket due to Authorised Push Payment (APP) frauds.

Since 2016, the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) and the payments industry have worked together to both prevent payments fraud, and to develop better mechanisms for reimbursing victims of APP fraud. This has included introducing the voluntary [Contingent Reimbursement Model \(CRM\) Code](#) in 2019. Under the Code, signatory payment service providers voluntarily reimburse APP victims. The government recognised and welcomed these developments. However, reimbursement to victims of APP scams remains inconsistent. In the Queens Speech, government announced its intention to enable PSR regulatory action by amending Regulation 90 of the Payment Services Regulations, to clarify that the PSR may use its existing regulatory powers to require mandatory reimbursement in cases of APP scams in designated payment systems.

Data on the number of offences by location is not currently recorded by fraud type. However, UK Finance publish figures on the number of incidents of APP fraud for the UK each year. In 2020 UK Finance recorded 149,946 incidents of APP fraud (up 22%

on 2019). Currently data is not held for the number of victims this relates to, and there may be victims who are targeted more than once. Additionally, please note UK Finance figures are for the UK and include personal and non-personal account reports.

The Home Office has not provided guidance to the National Police Chiefs Council on reducing authorised push payment fraud. Reducing this kind of fraud is a complex issue, which involves a number of different sectors to work together. That is why, the Home Office relaunched the Joint Fraud Taskforce in Oct 2021. The Joint Fraud Taskforce is a partnership between the private sector, Government and law enforcement to tackle fraud collectively and to focus on issues that have been considered too difficult for a single organisation to manage alone and to drive action to design out Fraud.

Ruth Cadbury:

[25885]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people affected by authorised push payment fraud committed in (a) the London Borough of Hounslow, (b) London and (c) England in the latest period for which figures are available.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: Tackling fraud requires a unified and co-ordinated response from government, law enforcement and the private sector. The Government is working with industry, including the banking and tech sectors to ensure that victims are protected from these crimes in the first place and are not left out of pocket due to Authorised Push Payment (APP) frauds.

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Ruth Cadbury:

[\[25886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what data her Department holds on the number of victims of authorised push payment frauds.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: Tackling fraud requires a unified and co-ordinated response from government, law enforcement and the private sector. The Government is working with industry, including the banking and tech sectors to ensure that victims are protected from these crimes in the first place and are not left out of pocket due to Authorised Push Payment (APP) frauds.

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considered too difficult for a single organisation to manage alone and to drive action to design out Fraud.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Sir Robert Buckland:

[\[26759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government is taking steps to support female judges, journalists and human rights activists remaining in Afghanistan who are not eligible for Pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

On 13 June, we announced the opening of the second and third pathways of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, after the first pathway opened in early January. In the first year of pathway three, the government will consider only eligible at-risk British Council, GardaWorld contractors and Chevening Alumni for resettlement.

Beyond the first year of pathway three, the government will work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk. Further detail will be set out in due course.

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[27541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of including Afghan journalists previously employed by the BBC in the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme for British Council staff and contractors.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: To qualify for relocation under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), Afghan nationals must have worked in exposed, meaningful or enabling roles in ways which made a material difference to the delivery of the UK mission in Afghanistan (e.g. linguistic services to UK Armed Forces). Eligibility for the scheme has been extended several times since it launched in April 2021 and there are no plans to extend it further.

Approximately 100 Afghan journalists have been evacuated and brought to safety since Operation Pitting, in August 2021.

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will provide up to 20,000 women, children, and others at risk with a safe and legal route to resettle in the UK.

Under Pathway three of ACRS in the first year, the government is honouring its commitment to resettlement by offering places for up to 1,500 eligible individuals from the following groups: British Council contractors, Gardaworld contractors or Chevening alumni.

Beyond the first year of the third pathway, the government will work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk.

■ Terrorism: Havering

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people residing in (a) Romford and (b) the London Borough of Havering are on the UK Terrorist watchlist as of 27 June 2022.

Damian Hinds:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: It has been the policy of successive Governments neither to confirm nor deny matters relating to the activities of the security and intelligence services.

The UK holds a watchlist of adverse information and intelligence drawn from a variety of sources, including the police. The system is used by Home Office staff for the purposes of national security and the detection and prevention of crime.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Standards

Stuart Anderson: [\[26845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to ensure all enquiries to UK Visa and Immigration are actioned and dealt with in a timely manner.

Kevin Foster:

For all visa application queries the public should call the Home Office customer helpline. The Home Office service standard is to answer 80% of calls within 30seconds.

Last week we answered 77% within 30 seconds with an average wait time of 1 minutes 9 seconds.

We continue to work with our service provider to regularly review their performance to ensure service standards are maintained. We are working with our service provider to increase the number of staff operating the customer helpline. It is envisaged this will enable the service standard to be met in the coming weeks.

■ Vetting: Gender Recognition

Tim Loughton: [\[26679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the policy justification is for permitting a confidential DBS checking service for transgender applicants which does not disclose details of sex; and if she will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) services require that applicants disclose all previous names and addresses so that they can process an application correctly and return accurate results.

The DBS provides a confidential service for transgender applicants in order to help protect their identity, via a dedicated 'Sensitive' application team. This process allows

applicants to disclose previous gender/name information only to DBS so that the previous names are checked, but are not disclosed on the completed certificate unless criminal record information exists in that name.

■ Visas: Applications

Martyn Day: [26812]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the average time taken by her Department to process applications under the family visa route; and if she will make a statement.

Martyn Day: [26813]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the standard of service that customers are receiving from UK Visas and Immigration; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

Average processing times do not form part of any current transparency data for family applications.

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

The Home Office has been currently prioritising Ukraine Visa Schemes applications in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We are communicating directly with customers to explain that applications for study, work and family visas have been taking longer to process at this time.

Current average processing times:

Standard visitor visas - 6 weeks

Student visas - 3 weeks

Work visas - 6 weeks.

The service standard for overseas Marriage and Family applications has been extended from 60 days to 120 days.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Export Credit Guarantees

Emily Thornberry: [28876]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to UK Export Finance: jobs supported analysis 2020-21, published on 22 June 2021, how many of the estimated (a) 107,000 jobs supported in the UK in 2020-21 and (b) 72,000 jobs supported in the UK in 2021-22 by UK Export Finance were attributable to the provision of Export Development Guarantees.

Mike Freer:

Using the methodology explained in detail on GOV.uk, the number of jobs estimated to have been supported by UK Export Finance through general working capital schemes (which comprises General Export Facility and Export Development Guarantee products) for the years 2020/21 and 2021/22 were 76,000 and 40,000 respectively.

Further information on the methodology applied can be found online at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-export-finance-jobs-supported-2020-to-2021/uk-export-finance-jobs-supported-analysis-2020-21 and www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-export-finance-economic-impacts-of-our-support-2021-22/uk-export-finance-economic-impacts-of-our-support-2021-22.

Exports: Military Aircraft**Sir Mark Hendrick:****[25740]**

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

Mike Freer:

I refer the Hon. Member for Preston to the answer given by my Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Defence Procurement on 1 July 2022, UIN: [25739](#).

JUSTICE**Courts****Matt Vickers:****[23811]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to modernise the courts system.

James Cartlidge:

We are investing £1.3bn to transform the justice system, introducing 21st Century technology and online services to increase access to justice, improve efficiency and modernise the courts.

We have already delivered eight digital services, allowing people to apply online for cases in immigration and asylum, divorce, probate, civil money claims, benefit decision appeals in the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal, and local authority child welfare applications in the Family Court. We are also rolling out a new digital system in the criminal courts which gives all parties involved in criminal cases access to case information and enabling magistrates' courts to handle minor offences in a quicker and easier way.

Having supported the rapid deployment of video-enabled court and tribunal hearings building on the early work of the programme, we are releasing a bespoke video

hearings service, enabling fully remote and hybrid hearings to take place across all jurisdictions. Parties to cases and lawyers are able to attend hearings remotely where appropriate, saving time, effort and cost.

Reform is on track to complete in 2023 and will deliver further digitisation of services before closure. This will include delivering services for adoption, the Employment Tribunal, and other tribunals covering case types including special educational needs and mental health.

The digital reforms and simplified services are removing simple cases from court, cutting down unnecessary paperwork and helping some of the most vulnerable people facing difficult situations get justice as quickly as possible. This is also critical to enabling us to recover workloads in courts and tribunals which are still experiencing impacts from the pandemic.

■ Ministry of Justice: Consultants

Sarah Olney: [\[27704\]](#)

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

James Cartlidge:

I refer the honourable member to the answers given to PQ 11689 on 8th June 2022 and PQ 18922 on 20th June 2022.

■ Ministry of Justice: Official Hospitality

Jon Trickett: [\[27532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department spent on hospitality in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

James Cartlidge:

The cost breakdown of hospitality spend for MoJ is set out in the table below.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Hospitality	£48,865.22	£3,126.91	£20,648.07

Catering for both internal and external meetings is subject to MoJ spending controls and requires approval at Deputy Director level or above. Spend of this nature will only be approved where there is a clear value for money case.

■ Rape: Prosecutions

Rachael Maskell: [\[26795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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, if he will take steps to strengthen the understanding of consent and evidencing the absence of consent in rape cases.

James Cartlidge:

As part of the Rape Review action plan, the Law Commission is conducting an independent review of the law, guidance and practice relating to the trial process in prosecutions of sexual offences, including rape, with one aim being to better support understanding of consent and misconceptions about sexual harm. As part of this project, the Law Commission will also consider how law and guidance can counter jurors' misconceptions about sexual harm ("rape myths") in relation to the credibility, behaviour and experience of complainants and defendants.

We await the results of the Law Commission's review, and will carefully consider how the findings can contribute towards this government's ambition to improve the treatment of victims, boost successful rape prosecutions, whilst also ensuring that defendants receive a fair trial.

In the meantime, to help address the attitudes and behaviours that can underpin these violent crimes, this Spring the government launched 'Enough': a new nationwide communications campaign which aims to challenge perpetrators and the harmful attitudes that exist within wider society, educate young people about healthy relationships and ensure victims can access support.

■ Rape: Victim Support Schemes**Rachael Maskell:**[\[26797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to bring forward additional support services for survivors of rape.

James Cartlidge:

Rape and sexual violence are devastating crimes that can have life-long impacts on victims and survivors. Following the publication of the End to End Rape Review Action Plan last year, this Government has committed to ensuring that every victim of rape and sexual assault will have access to quality support, appropriate to their needs, when they need it. We have increased the funding for victim and witness support services to £192 million by 2024/25. This represents an uplift of 92% on core budgets in 2020/21. We are using additional ringfenced funding to increase the number of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) by 300 to over 1000 by 2024/25 - a 43% increase on the number of ISVAs and IDVAs over the next three years.

This Government provides core funding through the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund to over 75 support services run by independent organisations across England and Wales. Funding has been extended until March 2023 whilst we undertake targeted research with rape victim-survivors to better understand their support needs, both within and outside the criminal justice system, to inform the recommissioning of these services.

In addition, this Government is establishing a remote, national 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Service. This will be a free support service to all victims and survivors aged 16 and over across England and Wales, operating 24 hours a day, 365 days

per year. Support will be available through website, webchat, online resources, and telephone helpline.

To support victims at the court stage, this Government has also announced a pilot of enhanced specialist sexual violence support in the Crown Court. The pilot will run in three Crown Court centres – Snaresbrook in London, Leeds, and Newcastle – which we have chosen because of the high volume of sexual offences cases they are tackling. These court centres will be enabled with the technology to allow victims to give pre-recorded evidence, so they are not retraumatised by giving evidence in a live trial, with court staff who have received trauma-informed training available.

■ Rented Housing: Legal Advice

Tulip Siddiq: [\[27687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to provide tenants in the (a) private rented and (b) social rented sector with free legal advice on issues with their accommodation.

James Cartlidge:

We are expanding the scope of legal aid to ensure that free early legal advice for those at risk of losing their home is available on a wider range of issues than is currently the case. We are also launching an early legal advice pilot this summer to test the impact of early social welfare advice on resolving problems quicker, including problems with accommodation that could escalate into more serious issues such as repossession.

■ Youth Custody: Travellers

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[26747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) Gypsy, (b) Roma and (c) Traveller children are in the youth secure estate as on 28 June 2022.

James Cartlidge:

Data on the ethnic makeup of the youth estate population is published annually as part of the Youth justice statistics series and monthly as part of the Youth Custody Report. These publications, however, do not include details of traveller categories. There are no current plans to alter the ethnic groups for these publications. The broad categories included in the information released are in line with current guidance from the Race Disparity Unit of the Cabinet Office.

As of 28 June 2022, there were 16 children and young people in custody who self-designated as either white, other ethnic group, any other or white, Gypsy or Irish Traveller.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ Building Regulations: Insulation****Rachel Hopkins:**[\[26934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will amend building regulations relating to external wall insulation to prevent the excessive use of sand and cement render for the final finish if doing so would conceal original and aesthetically pleasing brick facades; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

The Building Regulations set minimum standards for the performance of external wall insulation, including safety and energy efficiency. These are functional standards which do not prescribe the particular materials to be used to meet the requirements.

Permitted development regulations allow the installation of solid wall insulation without a planning application, providing that the materials used in any exterior work are of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing house. Whether similar appearance is achieved is a matter for local planning authorities. Where permitted development rights do not apply, an application for planning permission will need to be made to the local planning authority.

Listed building consent is required for works of alteration to a listed building where those works would affect its special architectural or historic character.

■ Local Government: Energy and Inflation**Catherine West:**[\[26824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the Local Government Association's analysis of the impact of inflation and energy prices on councils, published on 28 June 2022.

Mike Amesbury:[\[26844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to Local Government Association analysis of 28 June 2022 which found that rising energy prices, rising inflation, and National Living Wage pressures are set to add £3.6 billion in unforeseen extra cost pressures onto council budgets in 2024-25, what assessment his Department has made of the effects of that matter on (a) council budgets and (b) the ability of local authorities to maintain public services that are helping communities recover from the pandemic and residents cope through cost of living rises; and what steps his Department is taking to (i) tackle cost pressure on councils and (ii) maintain public services.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Local Government Finance Settlement makes available £54.1 billion in 2022/23 for local government in England, an increase of up to £3.7 billion on 2021/22.

Inflation forecasts are higher than they were when the settlement was announced. How that interacts with the finances of local government is not straightforward, as not all areas of expenditure will be sensitive to inflation and local authorities may have multi-year contracts, cushioning them from this year's inflationary increases.

■ **Parish and Town Councils**

Daniel Zeichner: [\[27638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the number of inquorate parish councils as of 29 June 2022.

Kemi Badenoch:

The department has made no assessment of inquorate parish councils as of 29 June 2022. Local authorities under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972, have the power to make an Order appointing temporary members to a parish council where, due to the number of vacancies, the council cannot function until other councillors are elected and take up office. This is to ensure that a parish council can continue to operate without becoming inquorate.

■ **Park Homes: Fees and Charges**

Daisy Cooper: [\[28921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 30 May 2022 to Question 7971 on Park Homes: Fees and Charges, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to change the annual index of park home pitch fees from the Retail Price Index to the Consumer Price Index before the summer recess.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is fully committed to changing the inflationary index for pitch fee reviews, from the Retail Prices Index (RPI) to the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). We will introduce the required legislation as soon as the parliamentary timetable allows.

SCOTLAND

■ **Scotland Office: Consultants**

Sarah Olney: [\[27707\]](#)

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

Mr Alister Jack:

This Department has incurred no costs on consultancy fees in any of the last five years.

■ Scotland Office: Official Hospitality

Jon Trickett: [\[27534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department spent on hospitality in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Mr Alister Jack:

My Department's spend on hospitality in financial years ending 2020, 2021 and 2022 is detailed below:

YEAR	AMOUNT
2019-20	£22,142.34
2020-21	nil
2021-22	£7,847.00

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Carbon Emissions

Clive Lewis: [\[28896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications of the Climate Change Committee's recommendations in their report published on 29 June 2022, for the Jet Zero Strategy.

Robert Courts:

We will consider recommendations from the Climate Change Committee's June 2022 progress report in further detail as we finalise and implement our Jet Zero Strategy.

Ministers and officials regularly meet with members of the CCC and considered recommendations from their June 2021 progress report in the development of the Jet Zero Consultation which was published in July 2021 and considered all available evidence for the development of the Jet Zero Strategy, which we are aiming to publish later this year.

As a responsible government, we recognise that we will need to keep our strategy under review and therefore, intend to regularly assess the progress of aviation's emissions reductions and update our strategy where necessary through five-year reviews .

Our ambition is to decarbonise aviation in a way that preserves the benefits of air travel.

■ Bus Services: Disability

Mr Toby Perkins: [\[28886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on the introduction of audio-visual announcements on bus services in (a) Derbyshire and (b) the UK.

Trudy Harrison:

We remain committed to making Accessible Information Regulations to require operators of local services in Great Britain to provide onboard audible and visible next stop and route and direction information to support disabled passengers.

We intend to lay Accessible Information Regulations by the end of 2022 and to publish guidance for operators to support them to comply.

These Regulations will apply across Great Britain, including in Derbyshire. Bus policy in Northern Ireland is generally a devolved matter.

Additionally, Derbyshire County Council has been allocated indicative funding of up to £47 million to deliver on their Bus Service Improvement Plan. This will be based on their submission and implementation of an Enhanced Partnership that delivers a package of improvements to bus services.

■ Department for Transport: Consultants

Sarah Olney: [\[27699\]](#)

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

Andrew Stephenson:

The following table provides the total published spend on consultants for the core Department and its executive agencies, covering financial years 2016-17 to 2020-21:

FINANCIAL YEAR	EXPENDITURE (£M)
2016-17	50.1
2017-18	52.5
2018-19	1
2019-20	77.5
2020-21	89.1

We are in the process of producing the Department's Annual Report which will be published in July, this will include our audited consultancy spend for 2021-22.

■ Department for Transport: EU Law

Layla Moran: [\[27724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of (a) the number of officials in his 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.

Andrew Stephenson:

DfT worked with the Cabinet Office from February to June 2022 to create the Retained EU Law (REUL) dashboard. International Directorate in DfT coordinated this work with the support of policy leads from across the Department and its Agencies. All expenditure was costed within the business-as-usual budgets and there has been no additional non-pay cost to the public purse by creating the dashboard.

■ Department for Transport: Hospitality Industry

Jon Trickett: [\[27525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department spent on hospitality in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Andrew Stephenson:

The following table provides the total spend on hospitality for the core Department, covering financial years 2019-20 to 2021-22:

FINANCIAL YEAR	EXPENDITURE (£'000)
2019-20	26
2020-21	14
2021-22	6

■ Driving Tests

Sarah Olney: [\[28910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving test centres are due to close over the next two years in each nation of the UK.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is committed to providing its customers with the best service possible. The DVSA continually reviews its estate to identify any test centres that could be closed, and services relocated to a nearby site.

The decision to close a test centre is made if the demand for testing can be absorbed at an existing nearby centre without reducing test capacity, cancelling tests or impacting on the DVSA's recovery plan to reduce waiting times caused by the pandemic.

■ Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes

Gill Furniss: [\[28907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to extend rental e-scooter trials beyond November 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government has decided to allow current e-scooter trials, which are live in 30 areas across England, to be extended. The existing trials will continue to run until 30 November and participating local authorities will then have the option to end their local trial or extend it to 31 May 2024. Extensions will be restricted to existing trial areas only and will allow us to gather further evidence where gaps are identified, building on the findings of the current evaluation. We hope that all areas will want to continue, but there is no compulsion.

■ Electric Vehicles

Rachael Maskell: [\[28448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to encourage a modal shift to micromobility vehicles such as (a) e-scooters and (b) e-bikes.

Rachael Maskell: [\[28449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to offer free local hire of micromobility vehicles such as (a) e-scooters and (b) e-bikes for trial periods.

Trudy Harrison:

As part of our evaluation of the national e-scooter trials, we have been gathering information about modal shift and new journeys that have been enabled. This evidence will inform decisions about future policy for e-scooters and wider micromobility. We aim to publish the findings report from the evaluation later this year. Earlier this year we launched the national e-cycle support scheme to accelerate the uptake of e-cycles.

E-scooter trials, which are live in 30 areas across England, are run by local authorities who have held their own procurement exercises to appoint e-scooter operators to provide rental services. Charges for these services are agreed in each trial area between the local authority and the operator(s). Beyond trials, final decisions on the regulation of micromobility, including their hire, have yet to be made. A number of local authorities have used DfT funding to test approaches to providing e-cycles to those with the highest need, including those that cannot benefit from the cycle to work scheme.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Sarah Olney:

[\[28468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the (a) number of and (b) percentage increase in public electric vehicle chargers in London that would be required to help support a target of (i) 50 and (ii) 70 per cent of new vehicle purchases being electric in 2030.

Trudy Harrison:

In March the Government published its electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure strategy setting out our vision and commitments to make electric vehicle charging cheaper and more convenient than refuelling at a petrol station.

In the strategy we laid out our expectation that at least ten times more public chargepoints to be installed across the UK by the end of the decade, bringing the number to around 300,000 by 2030. To support our vision, we will invest £1.6 billion in accelerating the roll-out of charging infrastructure.

Government has not set targets for chargepoint provision per region because the exact number and type of chargepoints will be highly dependent on local circumstances and the range and technology of future electric vehicles. Local authorities have a key role to play as they are best places to consider local needs. We will require all local transport authorities in England to develop their own chargepoint strategies, subject to consultation.

The Mayor of London and Transport for London have produced their own EV Infrastructure Strategy for 2030 which was updated in December 2021. This estimates that London will need around 40,000 to 60,000 charge points by 2030, of which up to 4,000 will be rapid. This is based on there being between one and 1.4 million EVs in London, which is between 34 per cent and 49 per cent of London's total car and van fleet.

Of the £1.6 billion, at least £500 million will support local chargepoint provision to ensure that the transition to electric vehicles takes place in every part of the country, the local electric vehicle infrastructure fund (LEVI) will provide approximately £400 million of capital and £50 million of resource funding to support local authorities to work with industry and transform the availability of charging for drivers without off-street parking. Local authorities in London will be eligible to apply for this funding.

■ Great British Railways

Rachael Maskell:

[\[28451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of Great British Railways on levels of rail patronage.

Wendy Morton:

In the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, published May 2021, we set out our plans for a more passenger focused railway that will attract passengers back to rail. Once established, Great British Railways (GBR) will provide strong unified leadership

across the rail network cutting back complexity and ensuring the focus is on delivering for passengers and freight customers. GBR will have a new relationship with the private sector through new Passenger Service Contracts, designed to incentivise train operators to provide punctual and reliable services for passengers.

■ Great British Railways: Location

Rachael Maskell: [\[28440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will announce the shortlist for the headquarters of Great British Railways before the 2022 summer recess.

Wendy Morton:

Yes. Today (5 July 2022), the shortlist of towns and cities for the Great British Railways headquarters has been revealed. Birmingham, Crewe, Derby, Doncaster, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and York will compete for the honour of being crowned the home of Britain's railways, following an expressions of interest stage that drew applications from 42 towns and cities across Great Britain.

A consultative public vote will run for six weeks until 15 August and a decision on the final location will be made later this year.

Rachael Maskell: [\[28441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to review the process for selecting the headquarters of Great British Railways in the context of the time taken to announce the shortlisted locations; and if he will publish a new timetable for that selection process.

Wendy Morton:

A shortlist of the most suitable locations for the headquarters of Great British Railways was announced on the 5 July 2022. Alongside this, an online consultative public vote on the shortlisted locations was launched and will be active for six weeks until 15 August 2022. The Secretary of State will confirm the successful location later this year.

■ Leamside Line

Bridget Phillipson: [\[27584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential economic merits for the (a) North East and (b) UK of reopening the Leamside line.

Wendy Morton:

The Government considers that the re-opening of the Leamside Line is best considered by North East partners as part of a future city region settlement, which remains under negotiation.

I expect to receive a locally-led business case in the Autumn, at which time my officials will consider the potential economic benefits of re-opening

■ **Leamside Line: Domestic Visits**

Bridget Phillipson: [\[28415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will (a) visit the Leamside line and (b) hold discussions with the hon. Member for Houghton and Sunderland South on the potential merits of reopening that line.

Wendy Morton:

While the future city region settlement remains under negotiation, I cannot comment further on this matter.

■ **National Policy Statements**

Anthony Browne: [\[26877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to (a) commence and (b) publish the review of the national policy statement for national networks.

Trudy Harrison:

The Secretary of State for Transport announced in July 2021 that the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NNNPS) would be reviewed, and that review has commenced. The Secretary of State intends to publish a draft of a revised NNNPS for consultation soon.

■ **Network Rail: Finance**

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[30049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2022 to Question 11723 on Network Rail: Finance, what assessment he has made of the potential impact on passenger safety of decisions relating to the Control Period 7 budget for Network Rail.

Wendy Morton:

The budget for Control Period 7 is set through the Periodic Review Process, which culminates in the publication of the High-Level Output Specification (HLOS) and Statement of Funds Available (SoFA), which Government is required to produce by 28th October. These documents are developed following close discussion with Network Rail and the Office of Rail and Road to ensure all potential impacts are assessed, including on safety, which remains a top priority.

■ Public Transport: Tickets**Rachael Maskell:** [\[28450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to introduce a low cost (a) weekly and (b) monthly ticket for (i) city and (ii) regional travel to help achieve modal shift in the use of transport.

Wendy Morton:

- Passengers can already make use of weekly and monthly season tickets that offer discounts to those travelling on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis. We have also recently introduced flexible season tickets for those who are travelling two or three days a week.
- Many local authorities also offer multi-modal travel schemes for their cities and region.
- Any changes or concessions made to rail fares policy must consider not only the effect on a certain individual or group but must also be balanced against the financial impact on fare payers in general and the public purse.
- Our National Bus Strategy sets out what we want to see on fares, including low flat fares (or maximum fares and daily price caps) to be the norm within cities and towns.

■ Railway Network: Suffolk**Dr Dan Poulter:** [\[29999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timetable is for the completion of upgrade works to Haughley Junction in Suffolk.

Wendy Morton:

I will shortly set out our plans for rail enhancements across England and Wales, including Haughley Junction, in the updated Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP).

■ Railway Stations: Disability**Abena Oppong-Asare:** [\[30193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the nomination process for the next round of the Access for All programme will open.

Wendy Morton:

Nominations for the next round of Access for All (AfA) funding were formally commissioned on 17 June with a deadline of 16 September. Any station in Great Britain without an accessible route into the station and to all platforms will be a potential candidate.

■ Railways: Anniversaries

Peter Gibson: [\[27741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to celebrate the bicentenary of the passenger Railway in 2025.

Peter Gibson: [\[27743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans her Department has to support and encourage celebrations of the bicentenary of the passenger railways in 2025.

Wendy Morton:

Railways are a product of Britain's rich history of engineering innovation and the 200-year anniversary is a nationally important moment to mark and celebrate. The DfT will work with the whole industry to make this a special event for workers and passengers alike.

■ Restoring Your Railway Fund

Ruth Cadbury: [\[27639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many bids were made as part of the Accelerating Existing Proposals category within the Restoring Your Railway Fund; and if he will publish a list of those bids.

Wendy Morton:

The £500m Restoring Your Railway Fund is supporting over 45 promising schemes with the potential to level up areas and reconnect communities. We reopened the Dartmoor Line in November 2021. On 18 June 2022 we announced £15m of further development funding for nine schemes and published a Programme Update with an overview of all schemes, including Advanced Proposals and those which were part of the announcement.

■ Restoring Your Railway Fund: Greater London

Ruth Cadbury: [\[27640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the Brentford to Southall rail scheme bid submitted to the Restoring Your Railway Fund.

Wendy Morton:

The Brentford–Southall rail scheme bid was assessed as an Advanced Proposal as part of the Restoring Your Railway programme. I wrote to you, the co-sponsoring MP and the promoter with the outcome and feedback ahead of the announcement made on 18 June 2022.

■ Transport: North East**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[27585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on (a) a potential City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement in the North East and (b) an assessment of the potential merits of reopening the Leamside line.

Wendy Morton:

The Government considers that the re-opening of the Leamside Line is best considered by North East partners as part of a future city region settlement. This settlement remains under negotiation and my Department is working closely with the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities as part of this process.

I expect to receive a locally-led business case in the Autumn, at which time my officials will consider the potential benefits of re-opening the Line.

■ Tyres: Marine Environment**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[26707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on (a) the impact of tyre wear on and (b) steps the Government is taking to reduce levels of microplastics in the ocean.

Trudy Harrison:

The development of regulations to limit emissions from tyre wear depends on the development of an internationally recognised test procedure for measuring them. This issue is being examined by the UN ECE Particle Measurement Programme (PMP), which includes DfT officials, other international governments, and the automotive industry. DfT is one of the founders of PMP and has played a leading role since its inception.

To support the work of the PMP group, DfT commissioned a 3-year research project in February 2021 aimed at understanding better the measurement techniques, material properties and control parameters of non-exhaust emissions from road vehicles, which include tyre wear emissions. DfT and Defra officials collaborated in the development of the research programme and will collaborate further on the outcomes of the project, which will inform policy and legislation aiming at reducing these emissions on a domestic and international level.

Furthermore, Government is continuing to invest through Innovate UK grants in emerging technologies which reduce emissions from tyre wear.

■ Tyres: Standards

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[26708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to ban tyres that are over ten years old from being used on roads.

Trudy Harrison:

In February 2021 the Government's amendments to the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 came into force to prohibit the use of tyres aged 10-years or more from use on the front axles of heavy goods vehicles and buses. Additionally, regulations also require the date of manufacture to be marked and legible on the sidewall of the tyre to ensure the age of the tyre is known.

While this policy is expected to deliver road safety benefits for larger vehicles, on the basis of the DfT consultation in 2020 on banning ages tyres, there was insufficient evidence to justify a restriction on older tyres for all vehicle categories, but we will keep this position under review.

TREASURY

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Export Controls

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[26743\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to help reduce the amount of forms that producers and distributors of alcohol products need to compete for HMRC when exporting goods overseas.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government has produced a range of resources to help exporters, including alcohol exporters. This includes guidance, videos, webinars, and the Export Support Service.

The 2025 UK Border strategy sets out the Government's vision for the UK border to be the most effective in the world. It aims to make it as straightforward as possible for businesses to comply with customs requirements, including export processes, whilst keeping the UK safe and protecting our fiscal interests.

We are embracing innovation and technology. This includes investing £180 million to build a UK Single Trade Window which will streamline how traders share information with Government.

■ Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Northern Ireland

Jim Shannon:

[\[27613\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will allocate additional funds through the Barnett Credentials to Northern Ireland to help local health departments in that country support women and girls with (a) endometriosis and (b) polycystic ovary syndrome.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Barnett formula provides the devolved administrations with a population share of changes in comparable spending by UK Government departments, as set out in the Statement of Funding Policy.

Barnett consequentials are not ringfenced for specific policy areas. Responsibility for health and social care is devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive. It is for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their funding across their devolved responsibilities.

The 2021 Spending Review settlements were the largest since devolution. The Northern Ireland Executive is receiving an average of £1.6 billion per year through the Barnett formula on top of its £13.4 billion annual baseline.

Over the Spending Review 2021 period the UK Government is providing the Northern Ireland Executive with 21% more funding per person than equivalent UK Government spending in the rest of the UK.

Members: Correspondence

Robert Largan: [\[28938\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he will respond to the correspondence of 11 May 2022 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL38613.

Mr Simon Clarke:

I responded to the Honourable Member's correspondence on 4 July 2022.

Revenue and Customs: Repayments

Martyn Day: [\[26810\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average time taken is for HMRC to process refunds in the latest period for which data is available; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

There are many different routes that customers can take to ask HMRC for a refund, and many different types of refunds that can be asked for. It is therefore not possible to provide an answer to this question.

Tax Avoidance

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[28898\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2022 to Question 14571 on Tax Avoidance, what proportion of the individuals who have enquiries open have received correspondence from HMRC in the last 12 months, either to open the enquiry or to update them on their position.

Lucy Frazer:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that was given on 13 June 2022 to UIN 14571. All taxpayers with open enquiries should have received correspondence from HMRC in the last 12 months, either to open the enquiry or to update them on their position.

HMRC wants to help taxpayers get out of tax avoidance schemes as soon as possible.

Liz Saville Roberts:[\[28899\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Loan Charge and tax years that are subject to an open enquiry, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a time limit by which all open enquiries must be concluded.

Lucy Frazer:

The Loan Charge was introduced to ensure fairness for all taxpayers, including those who did not use Disguised Remuneration schemes. A time limit on the conclusion of Loan Charge related cases would not be fair or practical.

HMRC is delivering a comprehensive compliance programme to support relevant taxpayers to settle their Loan Charge liabilities. The progression of this work is dependent, in part, on the cooperation of those taxpayers.

When HMRC takes formal action, such as issuing a closure notice, determination or assessment, some taxpayers may want to appeal a HMRC decision or exercise their right to litigate which could take to time resolve.

Taxpayers have a right to apply to the First Tier Tribunal for an enquiry to be closed. One of the grounds for making such an application is if there has been an excessive delay during which a taxpayer has not received any communication from HMRC.

HMRC will continue working with taxpayers to help them get their tax right and get out of avoidance as soon as possible.

WALES**■ British Constitution: Reform****Martyn Day:**[\[900881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he has had recent discussions with devolved Administrations on potential constitutional reform.

Simon Hart:

I have not had any discussions with the Welsh Government on constitutional reform. Nor have I had any discussions on constitutional reform with businesses, charities, stakeholders, voters, or investors. As we recover from the pandemic and devote ourselves to helping with Ukraine this is the last thing any sane person thinks is a priority.

■ Levelling Up Fund: Wales

Stephen Crabb:

[\[900879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the implementation of the Levelling Up Fund in Wales.

David T C Davies:

I have regular discussions with colleagues across Government to ensure the Levelling Up Fund benefits communities across Wales.

Here at the Wales Office, my colleagues and I have been delighted that Wales has received 7% of the total UK funding for round one. This means that Wales will see an investment of £120 million on projects spread across the length and breadth of Wales.

■ Police: Wales

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[900880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy on Welsh police forces.

David T C Davies:

Skills Policy is a devolved matter and therefore I would strongly encourage Welsh Government to reconsider its own Apprenticeship Framework to ensure the Welsh forces are not disadvantaged. The UK Government however recognises this issue and therefore this year have allocated £2.4 million to Welsh forces to address this matter.

■ UK Trade with EU

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[900877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the effect of leaving the EU single market and customs union on the economies of devolved nations.

David T C Davies:

We have left the EU Single Market and Customs Union. The matter is settled.

The whole of the United Kingdom has the best of both worlds, demonstrated by firstly the continued access to the EU market but more importantly, the ability to freely enter into Free Trade Agreements with countries across the world.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Conversion Therapy

Caroline Lucas:

[\[28410\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 16907, whether she has held discussions about her legislative proposals on

conversion therapy with representatives of (a) the NHS and (b) other signatories of the March 2022 Memorandum of Understanding on conversion therapy in the UK; if she will make it her policy to ban all forms of conversion therapy; and if she will make a statement.

Mike Freer:

My officials and I have met with stakeholders from across the spectrum when developing our approach to banning conversion practices to ensure that our proposals are effective and well understood. This includes meetings with victims of conversion practices, stakeholders from medical backgrounds including signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding, as well as representatives from a range of faiths and charities, and parliamentarians.

As soon as parliamentary time allows, we will introduce a Bill to ban conversion practices based on sexual orientation, while undertaking further work in relation to transgender conversion practices and delivering a comprehensive victim support service for all those affected or at risk.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Housing Benefit: Cost of Living

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[26876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make housing benefit claimants eligible for the £650 cost of living payment.

David Rutley:

Housing Benefit is not an income replacement means tested benefit. It is also administered directly from Local Authorities, often directly to a landlord.

However, the vast majority of Housing Benefit claimants will be eligible for the £650 Cost of Living Payment through a separate means tested benefit entitlement. Pensioners on Housing Benefit will also be entitled to the increased winter fuel payment of £300 per household.

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 part of the Government's wider £15 billion package of support and sits alongside:

- the £400 of support for energy bills that the Government is providing through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme, doubling the £200 of support announced earlier this year and making the whole £400 a non-repayable grant.

- new support, people on low incomes but not means-tested benefits may also benefit from previously announced measures to help people tackle the cost of living, including frozen 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:

[Cost of living support factsheet: 26 May 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/factsheets/cost-of-living-support-factsheet-26-may-2022)

■ Pension Credit: Rural Areas

Cherilyn Mackrory: **[28489]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to increase pension credit uptake in rural areas.

Guy Opperman:

We have undertaken a range of actions to raise awareness of Pension Credit and increase take-up across the whole of the country. On 21 March I wrote to the editors of all regional newspapers across England, Scotland and Wales calling on readers to check if they could be eligible and make a claim.

On 3 April DWP launched a comprehensive Pension Credit take-up campaign. We have been promoting Pension Credit in a variety of ways – including print advertising and promotion in the national press, across social media, via internet search engines and on screens in Post Offices and GP surgeries across Great Britain. I also wrote to all MPs, urging them to support the campaign at a constituency level as MPs are well placed to promote Pension Credit locally. Our digital toolkit has been updated with information and resources, as well as leaflets and posters which advice organisations, charities and other stakeholders working across local communities can use to help promote Pension Credit.

Most recently, on 15 June DWP held another Pension Credit day of action with broadcasters, regional and national newspapers and other partners encouraged to reach out to pensioners, as well their family and friends, through their channels.

■ Universal Credit

Wendy Chamberlain: **[26846]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of people who have migrated to Universal Credit as a result of a change of circumstances without transitional protection.

David Rutley:

We do not centrally collate the number of claimants that have made a claim for Universal Credit as a result of a change in circumstances. Data relating to Universal Credit at national, regional and constituency level is published at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>. Guidance for users is available at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[26849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people who will receive a reduced benefit award after migrating to Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

Parliament has committed to providing transitional financial protection for those who are moved onto Universal Credit through the managed migration process. This means those eligible households with a lower calculated award in Universal Credit than their legacy benefits awards will see no difference in their entitlement at the point they are moved to Universal Credit, provided there is no change in their circumstances during the migration process. Relevant figures are included in the Department for Work and Pension's policy paper, 'Completing the Move to Universal Credit.'

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[26852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what protections her Department has put in place for people undergoing managed migration to Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

Our overarching analysis shows that at the benefit point of migration, the vast majority of claimants will either be better off, or at the very least retain the same entitlement, thanks to transitional protection. Transitional Protection ensures that eligible claimants do not have a lower entitlement, to Universal Credit than their legacy benefit entitlement at the point they move to Universal Credit.

Claimants moving to Universal Credit will also receive a two-week run on of Jobseeker's Allowance (income based), Employment and Support Allowance (income related), Income Support and Housing Benefit before they receive their first payment of Universal Credit.

Ms Karen Buck: [\[28378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2022 to Question 16820 on Universal Credit, if she will place a copy of the Social Security Advisory Committee's formal reference report on a framework of oversight, reporting and scrutiny for implementation of the draft Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) Amendment Regulations 2022 in the Library.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: The Social Security Advisory Committee's report dated 26 May 2022 on the Draft Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) Amendment Regulations 2022, is available in the House of Commons Library and was published online on Welcome to GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) alongside the Secretary of State's response.

■ Universal Credit: Costs**Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[26848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of migrating people to Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

UC provides significant improvements and efficiencies compared to the legacy systems it replaces. The Programmes Full Life Costs, forecast the running costs of UC at £13,547m compared to projected equivalent Legacy running costs of £15,400m. This presents a net saving of £1,853m over the 10-year period which runs from 2017/18 to 2026/27.

■ Universal Credit: Disability**Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[26847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department offers additional support to people with complex disabilities through the migration process to Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

We recently restarted work to design and deliver a service for claimants to move to Universal Credit. The first phase is Discovery with controlled small volumes; during this phase we will work with small numbers of claimants to learn how best to ensure a smooth transition to Universal Credit and identify what support claimants need to make their claim to Universal Credit.

A variety of support is currently in place for those issued with migration notices, including for individuals with health conditions and disabilities. Our current support consists of:

- A dedicated phonenumber.
- Further guidance on Welcome to GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Specially trained staff in JCP's and service centres who can identify local tailored support; and
- Independent support through the Help to Claim service.

As we progress through the discovery phase, we are keen to understand what additional support is required for people to make their claim to Universal Credit. The Department also holds regular engagement sessions with a broad range of external stakeholders, including in the health and disability sector in order to seek their feedback and input into the process.

■ Universal Credit: Families

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[26851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the impact of automatic deductions from Universal Credit on families' financial wellbeing.

David Rutley:

Deductions from Universal Credit are made to protect claimants who have priority debts, ensure social obligations are met and recover taxpayer money. We have to strike the right balance between ensuring those protections are in place and allowing claimants to retain as much of their award as possible for day-to-day needs.

The standard deductions cap has been reduced three times – from 40% to 30% to 25%. This has helped hundreds of thousands of UC claimants to retain more of their award. Reducing the standard cap below 25% would reduce the range of debts a claimants could address, and risk vital obligations (such as Child Maintenance payments) not being made at all.

Claimants can contact DWP Debt management if they are experiencing financial hardship, to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment or a temporary suspension, depending on their financial circumstances.

■ Universal Credit: Standards

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[26853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what safeguards her Department has put in place to minimise errors during the Universal Credit migration process.

David Rutley:

We have begun to move small, controlled volumes through the managed migration process, starting with 500 legacy benefit claimants in Bolton and Medway. Optimising our support for claimants in moving to Universal Credit will be a critical part of the managed migration process. The department will work closely with our stakeholder groups throughout this work to monitor and understand what support is required and what works bests for claimants.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ 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.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 5 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

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/<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>) or Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000 (www.consumeradvice.scot) for consumers living in Scotland.

■ Energy: Prices

Kate Griffiths: [\[26863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure a competitive market for domestic energy users.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 6 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Greg Hands:

The Government continues to believe that competition is the best driver of value and innovation in the energy market. However, there has been less scope for competition in the supply market during this period of high and volatile wholesale gas and electricity prices.

The Government wants a retail energy market that is both resilient and competitive, with companies able to invest in innovation and offer products and services that support decarbonisation. The Government is considering what reforms are needed to retail market regulation and will set out its plans ahead of the next price cap period .

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Social Security Benefits

Sir Stephen Timms:

[\[27503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she last reviewed the benefit cap.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

There is a statutory duty to review the levels every **5 years** ~~Parliament~~. The last time the Benefit cap was reviewed was November 2016.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Energy Update

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng):

[\[HCWS185\]](#)

As the world has emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic, global demand for energy has risen significantly – this has been exacerbated by Putin’s malign invasion of Ukraine. As a result, the wholesale price of gas has reached historically high levels.

That is why we are taking measures to support families

- We are acting now with a £37 billion package of financial support this year. Millions of the most vulnerable households will also receive £1,200 of one-off support in total this year.
- Making changes to the National Insurance Contribution threshold which take effect from today, with a typical employee saving over £330 a year.
- Cutting bills by investing in energy efficiency. We are also making huge progress on the energy efficiency of UK homes making them more comfortable and affordable to run, backed by £6 billion of funding over this Parliament. In 2008, 9% of UK homes had an Energy Performance Certificate of C or above – it is now 46%.

But secure, clean and affordable energy for the long term depends on the transformation of our energy system. This means more home-grown energy from more diverse sources which reduce our dependency on imported fossil fuels and our exposure to volatile and high prices in international markets. And we will reform our energy markets so consumers benefit from lower cost, home-grown renewables and other low carbon technologies. Our agenda will catalyse investment, reversing lost decades of under-investment, and boosting jobs and new industries in a world-leading, low-carbon economy.

That is why we are bringing forward a landmark Energy Security Bill. This Bill will deliver a **cleaner, more affordable and more secure energy system** for the long term. It builds on the ambitious commitments in the [Prime Minister’s Ten Point Plan](#) and the [British Energy Security Strategy](#) to invest in homegrown energy and maintain the diversity and resilience of the UK’s energy supply.

We will do this by:

Leveraging private investment in clean technologies and building a homegrown energy system.

Over the last decade the UK has built one of the most diverse energy systems in the world but previous governments have historically failed to make these investments which has left us in the current situation. The Bill will deliver key commitments from the British Energy Security Strategy, Prime Minister’s Ten Point Plan and Net Zero Strategy to drive

an unprecedented £100 billion of private sector investment by 2030 into new British industries and supporting around 480,000 clean jobs by the end of the decade.

- Accelerate the growth of low carbon technologies. We will introduce state of the art business models for carbon capture usage and storage (CCUS) and hydrogen, attracting private investment by providing long-term revenue certainty. Together with the measures on CO2 transport and storage, this will put the country on a path to seize market share and grow the economy.
- Enable the set up and scale up of the first of a kind CO2 transport and storage networks. The Bill will establish the economic regulation and licensing framework to ensure successful deployment.
- Taking further steps to explore the role for hydrogen to heat our homes and workplaces. We will enable the delivery of a large village hydrogen heating trial by 2025, providing crucial evidence to inform strategic decisions in 2026 on the role of hydrogen in heat decarbonisation.
- Scale up heat pump manufacturing and installation, and a new white goods industry in the UK. We will establish a market-based mechanism for the low-carbon heat industry to step up investment and lower the cost of electric heat pumps, through economies of scale and innovation.
- Take the next big leap on the technology of the future with fusion regulation. We will make the UK the first country to legislate for fusion, providing clarity on the regulatory regime for fusion energy facilities.

Reforming our energy system to protect consumers from unfair pricing.

The last piece of primary energy legislation of this scale was the Energy Act 2013. Almost ten years later we need to ensure that this Bill accounts for the current global context.

- Enabling the extension of the energy price cap, protecting families. The energy price cap is the best safety net for 22 million households, preventing suppliers from overcharging consumers. The Bill will enable the extension of the price cap beyond 2023.
- Enhancing our network security with a new system operator, which will boost energy resilience. We will establish a Future System Operator, an independent body with responsibilities in both the electricity and gas systems, ensuring efficient energy planning, enhancing energy security, minimising cost to consumers and promoting innovation.
- Creating more competition in our electricity networks to deliver bill savings. We will enable competition in onshore electricity networks, delivering up to £1 billion savings for projects tendered over the next ten years.
- Protect consumers from increasing network prices in the event of energy network company mergers. We will enable the Competition and Markets Authority to review any relevant energy network company mergers under the Energy Network Special

Merger Regime. We estimate this could save energy consumers up to £420 million over ten years.

- Protecting consumers from cyber threats with new protections for smart appliances. We are taking powers to deliver appropriate protections for consumers and the grid by placing requirements on energy smart appliances.
- Helping consumers manage their energy use and cut their bills to help with the cost of living. We are continuing to drive industry progress on the smart meter rollout which is set to deliver a £6 billion net benefit to society.
- Enabling innovation and gearing our system toward net zero. We will reform energy codes, overhauling the way that the technical and commercial rules of the energy system are governed.
- Reducing the number of cabling, landing points, and substations. We will introduce multi-purpose interconnectors as a licensable activity, we are providing certainty to investors and developers, enabling them to make decisions regarding future multi-purpose interconnector projects.
- Removing obstacles to innovative batteries and pumped hydro storage. We will facilitate the deployment of electricity storage, such as batteries and pumped hydro storage, by clarifying it as a distinct subset of electricity generation.
- Creating a more equal and fair energy market. We will enable the Government to establish a buy-out mechanism under the ECO scheme for suppliers.
- Ensure families living on heat networks are better protected. By appointing Ofgem as the new regulator for heat networks in Great Britain, we will ensure consumers get a fair price and a reliable supply of heat.
- Kick-starting the development of heat networks. By enabling heat network zoning in England, we will overcome barriers to deployment by identifying areas where they provide the lowest cost solution to heating buildings.
- Taking back control of powers given to the EU on the energy performance of buildings. The Bill will provide a replacement power to enable the UK Government to amend the EU-derived Energy Performance of Buildings regime going forward.

Ensuring the safety, security and resilience of the UK's energy system.

The responsible operation of the UK energy system is crucial for our safety and security. That is why the Bill will bring forward measures relating to core fuel resilience, nuclear and the offshore oil and gas sectors.

- Protect our fuel resilience from malicious action. We will bring forward measures for downstream oil security (oil terminals, filling stations etc) to prevent fuel supply disruption, such as from industrial action, malicious protest and for reasons of national security.
- Boost British nuclear by removing barriers to investment. The British Energy Security Strategy is clear that nuclear is an important part of the UK's energy mix.

The Bill will remove potential barriers to future investment by enhancing our nuclear third party liability regime.

- Prepare for our nuclear future and clean up the past. The Bill will also facilitate the safe, and cost-effective clean-up of the UK's nuclear sites, ensuring the UK is a responsible nuclear state by clarifying that a geological disposal facility located deep below the seabed will be licensed.
- Making our oil and gas sector fit for the future to ensure high standards. Our oil and gas sector will continue to play an important role in ensuring security of supply. This Bill will enable existing legislation to be updated ensuring that the offshore oil and gas environmental regulatory regime maintains high standards in respect to habitats protection and pollution response.
- Ensure responsible ownership of our UK assets. The Bill will ensure that the UK's oil and gas and carbon storage infrastructure remains in the hands of companies with the best ability to operate it.
- Protecting taxpayers by maximising cost recovery. In line with the polluter pays principle, the Government will be able to more fully recover the costs associated with regulating offshore oil and gas decommissioning activities from the industry.
- Simplifying regulatory frameworks. This Bill will bring forward the final delicensing and re-use of nuclear sites. It will allow more proportionate clean-up of these sites, resulting in estimated savings of around £490 million (NPV) over the first 20 years, with similar savings up to 2080.
- Strengthen the Civil Nuclear Police's powers to help keep Britain safe. This Bill will introduce legislation to enable the Civil Nuclear Constabulary to utilise their expertise in deterrence and armed response to support the security of other critical infrastructure sites.

DEFENCE

■ Atomic Weapons Establishment Pension Scheme

Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin):

[\[HCWS187\]](#)

My right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary (Ben Wallace MP) has today Laid a Departmental Minute to advise that the Ministry of Defence is creating a new contingent liability associated with the provision of a Crown Guarantee to the Trustees of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.

The Departmental Minute describes the contingent liability that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) will hold. The contingent liability will become effective from 21 July 2022.

AWE has been sponsored and wholly owned by the MOD as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) since 1 July 2021. AWE produces the UK nuclear warhead which underpins our independent nuclear deterrent.

AWE operates two pension schemes, one of which is the AWE Defined Benefit Pension Scheme (the “Scheme”) overseen by independent Trustees (the “Trustees”).

The MOD has agreed with HMT that it will provide a Guarantee to the Scheme Trustees, with the intention of securing that the Scheme’s assets will be sufficient to meet its liabilities. This will ensure that the Scheme members can have confidence that their accrued benefits under the Scheme will be paid when eligible.

The contingent liability will continue for the duration of the Scheme (until such time that all members and their entitled dependants are deceased) and will crystallise only in circumstances where the Scheme is terminated early and/or AWE is liquidated, becomes insolvent or cannot or does not make the contributions payable in respect of the Scheme as they fall due. The MOD will note a liability of £150 million over 20 years in its accounts. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal Supply procedure.

In granting the Guarantee, MOD and HMT have collectively agreed in principle, subject to applicable regulations and law, to bring the Scheme’s assets and liabilities into central government control in line with the government’s principles for balance sheet management, whilst maintaining members’ existing benefits. Agreement to proceed on this basis would be subject to a detailed feasibility study being concluded in advance, including identifying the accounting and budgeting implications on the MOD, as well as any pension law compliance and value for money considerations. This study will be carried out in consultation with AWE and the Trustees.

Attachments:

1. Departmental Minute [20220705 DEPARTMENTAL MINUTE - AWE DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION SCHEME.pdf]

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Linking the Foreign Interference Offence to the Online Safety Bill**

Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy (Chris Philp):

[\[HCWS186\]](#)

This is a joint statement with the Home Office.

Some states seek to further their strategic interests by going beyond overt political influence towards more covert influencing activity. These ‘interference’ activities are typically not conducted transparently and are outside the norms of diplomacy. Some hostile actors from foreign states use covert and malign political interference activities to undermine the UK’s interests, such as using disinformation to manipulate our political debate or weaken the integrity of our democratic institutions.

The UK has a strong record of responding robustly to state threats, in collaboration with our international partners. Alongside our existing operational response and the current disinformation provisions in the Online Safety Bill, the Government has also introduced the National Security Bill to Parliament. This Bill brings together vital new measures to protect the British public, modernise counter-espionage laws and address the evolving

threat to our national security, including by introducing a new foreign interference offence which will capture a number of state-sponsored disinformation efforts.

This offence will target malign activity carried out for, on behalf of, or with the intention to benefit, a foreign power. This includes foreign interference intended to manipulate public discourse, discredit the political system, and undermine the safety or interests of the UK, with state-sponsored disinformation being a prime technique for attempting this kind of interference.

While the National Security Bill will seek to disrupt and deter foreign actors engaging in disinformation campaigns against the UK, it is important that our information environment is also protected from those who would seek to interfere in UK society by exploiting social media platforms and manipulating online spaces towards the objectives of state actors. That is why the Government is going further to address concerns about the threat posed by state-sponsored disinformation by linking the offence of foreign interference in the National Security Bill to duties in the Online Safety Bill. The Security Minister, Damian Hinds MP, has tabled an amendment to the National Security Bill which, if passed, will designate the offence of foreign interference as a “priority offence” in Schedule 7 to the Online Safety Bill.

This amendment will mean that online platforms need to act against foreign interference in line with their safety duties on illegal content, where it meets all three limbs of the foreign interference offence. These are as follows:

- a person engages in conduct for, on behalf of, or with intent to benefit a foreign power;
- the conduct is intended to interfere in the exercise of rights, manipulate the way people use public services or participate in political and legal processes in the UK, or prejudice the UK’s safety or interests;
- the conduct constitutes an offence, involves coercion of any kind, or involves making a misrepresentation i.e. is a representation that a reasonable person would consider false or misleading. This includes information which is true but presented in a way which is misleading.

These three tests will capture state-sponsored disinformation that is of most concern: covert attempts by foreign state actors to manipulate our information environment to interfere in UK society and undermine our democratic, political and legal processes. For example, material spread by foreign state entities via fake accounts pretending to be real UK users to influence discussions about the future of the Union. Other examples of online content and activity that would be covered by the new offence, and for which platforms in scope of the Bill would have illegal content duties, could include:

- Russian attempts to use disinformation to interfere in future UK elections.
- Attempts by state actors to use disinformation to manipulate the legal processes of the UK, such as court proceedings.
- The use of false profiles by state actors to spread hacked information online to undermine UK democratic institutions.

This amendment will force companies to take action on a wider range of state-sponsored disinformation and state-linked platform manipulation than they would have to under the Online Safety Bill as it is currently drafted. Should the amendment pass, the offence will be listed as a priority offence, meaning companies will be required proactively to put in place proportionate systems and processes to prevent individuals from encountering content that amounts to this offence, minimising the length of time it is on their service and removing any illegal content on user-to-user services once they become aware of it. They will also need to consider how their design, functionality and algorithms might impact these efforts.

In the context of the foreign interference offence, this could include measures to ensure that platform manipulation (such as misleading users about the ownership of an account, or artificially coordinated messaging campaigns) is more difficult, thus mitigating the risk of platform manipulation and disinformation more broadly. We have seen a number of successful efforts by service providers to disrupt state-linked disinformation and hostile influence operations relating to Ukraine on their platforms. We see this amendment building on platforms' existing work to ensure systems and processes are in place so that these safeguards can be applied more widely and consistently when it comes to online interference aimed at the UK.

Like other offences in scope of the Bill, companies would have to assess whether content amounts to foreign interference. Assessment of foreign interference activity could include judgements based on patterns of behaviours and tactics used, and contextual judgments about the intended effect of the content, which may be aided by relevant knowledge of the political and geopolitical context. In particular, we would expect platforms to consider whether repeated and persistent conduct from particular users or accounts might meet the offence. To help platforms in carrying out this duty, companies will also be able to draw on Ofcom's codes of practice and any supplementary guidance.

Our approach is a proportionate and effective way to address the threat posed by state-sponsored disinformation whilst still protecting freedom of expression in the UK. Both Ofcom and in-scope companies will have duties relating to freedom of expression, for which they can be held to account. There are already journalistic protections in the Online Safety Bill which address concerns about media freedom. News publishers' content on their own sites is not in scope of the Bill and recognised news publishers' content shared on these platforms will also be exempt from companies' safety duties. There will also be duties on Category 1 companies to protect journalistic content and content of democratic importance.

It is incumbent on us to safeguard our democracy and society from manipulation by state actors online while also retaining the rightful protections for freedom of expression and media freedoms. The proportionate approach I have set out here tackles the most concerning state-sponsored disinformation activity while striking a balance with freedom of expression.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Sweden and Finland NATO Accession**

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Elizabeth Truss): [\[HCWS188\]](#)

On 18 May 2022 Finland and Sweden submitted formal applications to join NATO. This is a historic moment. Finland and Sweden are NATO's closest partners.

They share our principles and values, including liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. They share the Alliance's unwavering commitment to international security and the agreements on which it is based including the UN Charter and Helsinki Final Act.

They both have years of experience training and operating with Allies, and have made significant contributions to NATO-led operations and missions. Their decision to seek NATO membership follows extensive and democratic consultations in those countries.

The government is committed to strengthening security and defence at home and overseas. A strong NATO is at the heart of our ability to deter and defend against state adversaries.

With Russia conducting an illegal and barbaric war in mainland Europe, it is unsurprising that countries that already work closely with NATO would consider applying to join the alliance and to benefit from its collective security guarantees. We must ensure that Finland and Sweden are integrated into NATO as quickly as possible.

Therefore, in accordance with section 22 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRAG) I wish to inform the House that I believe the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of the Republic of Finland and the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of the Kingdom of Sweden (together the "Protocols") should be ratified without the requirements of section 20 CRAG having been met.

We need to demonstrate to two of our closest European security partners the importance we attach to our relationship with them and our whole-hearted support for their decision to join NATO.

It is imperative that Allies bring Sweden and Finland under NATO's Article 5 umbrella as swiftly as possible. Both countries' decision puts them at risk of a potentially aggressive Russian response. Russia has already made several threatening comments in the public domain regarding the possibility of Swedish and Finnish membership of NATO.

Using this process will ensure the UK's part is concluded swiftly and use our example to encourage other Allies to think radically about how quickly they can respectively ratify Sweden and Finland's accession. All thirty Allies need to ratify the protocols before Finland and Sweden can join the Alliance. I have been pushing my Allied colleagues hard to complete the ratification process as soon as possible. It is important that the UK does everything we can to do likewise.

We believe there is broad-cross party support for Sweden and Finland joining NATO. This process will enable us to ratify Swedish and Finnish accession before the summer recess.

This Government is committed to both the principle and practice of parliamentary scrutiny of the UK's treaties. However, due to the unprecedented international security circumstances in which Finland and Sweden have made their sovereign decision to apply for NATO membership, it is important to expedite their integration into NATO as quickly as possible for their safety and for the collective strength and security of the Alliance.

I confirm that the Protocols have been laid today in Parliament under Command Paper numbers CP. 730 and CP.731.

The United Kingdom looks forward to formally welcoming our longstanding allies Sweden and Finland into NATO and standing with them side by side in defence of freedom and democracy.

TRANSPORT

■ Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport

Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy - July 2022 (Trudy Harrison): [\[HCWS184\]](#)

In 2017, the government published the first ever statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS1), which covered the period between 2016 and 2021.

The first Report to Parliament on the delivery of the strategy and on the progress made towards meeting its objectives was published in February 2020. Much has changed since then, including the publication of Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking in summer 2020, and the new commitment to £2 billion of additional funding over this Parliament – the largest amount of dedicated spending ever committed to increasing walking and cycling in England. To date we have created Active Travel England, led by Chris Boardman, and are providing local authorities with funding to deliver 134 first-rate schemes to develop new footways, cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings across England.

Today, I am publishing the second statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2), which covers the period between 2021 and 2025. The strategy includes new and updated objectives including - doubling cycling, increasing levels of walking across the community, and walking to school; whilst also setting out the funding in place to achieve these. It includes the projection that a total of nearly £4 billion will be invested in walking and cycling over the CWIS2 period – delivering new and improved walking and cycling routes across England and behaviour change programmes.

Alongside this, I am laying before Parliament the second Report to Parliament on the progress made in delivering CWIS1. This shows that good progress was made in delivering the 26 actions outlined in CWIS1, including the delivery of the Cycle Ambition Cities programme and a range of behaviour change programmes. It also highlights that more than twice as much funding was invested into walking and cycling schemes over the CWIS1 period than was originally anticipated when CWIS1 was published in 2017. It also outlines the progress we have made on other measures, including those set out in the Gear Change plan. Both CWIS2 and the Report to Parliament are publicly accessible

online through the GOV.UK website. A copy of CWIS2 will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Expanded Delivery of the Government's Mid-Life MOT Offer

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy Opperman): [\[HCWS183\]](#)

The Mid-Life MOT is a policy intervention designed to assist participants' wealth, work and wellbeing. It provides access to tailored information to allow older people to return to or remain in work.

Through the face-to-face programme the Mid-Life MOT will provide a holistic assessment of an individual's health, by making sure they are able to access the necessary services, skills, by helping older people access upskilling and retraining opportunities, and finance, by empowering individuals to take control of their retirement planning.

In the winter 2021 budget, the DWP secured more than £5m to develop and deliver more extensive pilots and development of the Mid-Life MOT. This follows private sector success led by the likes of Aviva, and the developing of an online version and 10 Local Enterprise Partnership small pilots in 2021. I believe the Mid-Life MOT will improve participants' wealth, work and wellbeing.

The DWP has been committed to growing the Mid-Life MOT since its introduction in 2019. In 2021, ten Local Enterprise Partnerships received grants of up to £40k to develop and deliver local Mid-life MOTs in partnership with local business. In these tests, the Local Enterprise Partnerships worked with MOT content delivery partners, voluntary organisations, and community-based organisations to deliver support on health, skills and finances tailored to the needs of each region.

We will build on this work to develop and deliver Mid-life MOTs for people aged 45-55 across three new workstreams. This forms part of the wider Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 announcement to develop a new, enhanced offer for older people to ensure they receive the support they need to return to or remain in work:

- The Department will develop and enhance the Government's digital MOT offering. We are working in partnership with the Money and Pensions Service to deliver an online digital Mid-life MOT over the course of the Spending Review period. This is match funded by both organisations and building on previous online iterations.
- We will deliver Mid-life MOTs through our UK network of Job Centre Plus offices, utilising the expertise and networks of our 50 PLUS Champions to help older jobseekers address barriers to work associated with common challenges related to health, skills, and finance. Delivery in JobCentres will start in the summer and run across Great Britain.

- The Department has launched a market engagement exercise to identify providers for a holistic, face-to-face Mid-life MOT programme delivered through employers and direct to employees in three pilot areas (the North East of England; Cornwall & Devon; and East Anglia). Providers will be identified via a commercial tender process. More information can be obtained by emailing 50PLUS.Choices@dwp.gov.uk.

These new measures are part of DWP's £22 million package to help over 50s find new careers and earn more money, including by boosting time with Work Coaches and bringing in specialist support.

This increased support will be furthered by 37 50PLUS Champions covering every district across England, Wales and Scotland who will work with local employers to help them fully utilise the talent of older workers.