

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:12 P.M., 07 July 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Biofuels: Boilers

Martyn Day:

[\[28456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will undertake a review of the cost of wood pellets used to fuel biomass boilers in the context of the recent rise in the cost of living.

Greg Hands:

The Government is keeping energy bills under constant review. The Government recently announced a £400 grant to help households with their energy bills this winter, plus an additional £650 to help low income households, £150 for those on disability benefits, and a £300 payment for recipients of Winter Fuel Payments, as part of a £15 billion support package to tackle the increased cost of living. This brings the total cost of living support to £37 billion this year.

■ Business: Standing Charges

Sara Britcliffe:

[\[27754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of standing charges on (a) small- and (b) medium-sized businesses.

Greg Hands:

The standing charge is a fixed charge that suppliers pass on to their customers to cover the cost of providing a live supply. If the standing charge were removed, these costs would be added to the unit price of energy. Otherwise, suppliers would not be able to recover the legitimate costs of serving customers. The standing charge is passed on to consumers as a flat rate per day, rather than as a percentage charge (based on how much energy they use). The setting of the standing charge is a commercial matter for individual suppliers.

■ Conditions of Employment

Matt Vickers:

[\[26914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to enhance workers' rights.

Paul Scully:

Over the past year, we have proven our steadfast commitment to supporting workers across the UK, including raising the national living wage to its highest rate yet, to help with the cost of living.

We remain committed to bringing forward reforms which build on our strong, flexible and dynamic labour market, giving businesses the confidence to create jobs and invest in their workforce and giving workers more choice over how they work.

Numerous Private Members Bills have been introduced on the matter of employment rights, as a result of the PMB ballot in the Common and we are working closely with these members on their proposals.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: EU Law

Layla Moran:

[\[27718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 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.

Paul Scully:

There has been no additional non-pay cost to the public purse by creating the dashboard for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The creation of the dashboard was led by the Cabinet Office, who commissioned Government Departments to find REUL within their legislation and compile an authoritative account of where REUL sits on the UK statute book.

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

■ Diesel: Russia

Dr Ben Spencer:

[\[27748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the level of the reduction in imports of diesel from Russia since that country's invasion of Ukraine; and what assessment he has made of the feasibility of ending all imports of diesel from Russia.

Greg Hands:

In the three months to May 2022, imports of Russian diesel have dropped to 8% of supply compared to 26% in the same period last year.

The Government is on course to phase out imports of Russian oil and oil products, including diesel, by 31 December 2022. UK demand for diesel is met by a combination of domestic production and imports from a diverse range of reliable suppliers beyond Russia including the Netherlands, Belgium, and Sweden. The Government is working with industry and international partners to boost existing imports from them and ensure alternative supplies.

■ Energy Charter Treaty

Hywel Williams:

[29911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of whether the updated Energy Charter Treaty, as agreed by the Energy Charter Conference on 24 June, is compatible with international climate goals; what steps he is taking to encourage other states to sign up to the fossil fuel carve out agreed by the EU and UK when the new treaty is signed in November; and if he will take steps to further amend the timeline for the fossil fuel carve out in order to speed up the withdrawal of (a) protection for all new fossil-fuel investments and (b) all existing fossil fuel investments.

Greg Hands:

The modernised Treaty recognises the urgent need to address climate change and align with the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. It also removes the Treaty's protection for new fossil fuel investments in the UK. The Government welcomes the flexible approach in the modernised Treaty, which allows individual Parties to phase out investment protections for fossil fuels in their own territories in line with respective decarbonisation plans. The Government does not plan to seek to amend the timeline for the fossil fuel carve out, which aligns with the UK's commitment to reach net zero by 2050.

■ Energy: Costs

Patricia Gibson:

[30050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department has made on ensuring that people who do not have a personal account with an energy provider, including those (a) living in park homes and (b) who live in managed independent living retirement accommodation, receive support with energy costs on the same basis as other households.

Greg Hands:

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

■ Energy: Meters

Drew Hendry:

[30053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will hold discussions with representatives of Ofgem on ensuring that energy providers (a) implement a timely solution for customers with Total Heating Total Control meters prior to those meters becoming non-functional, (b) do not implement a solution that impacts customers financially and (c) communicate solutions that are due to be implemented to their customers as a matter of priority.

Greg Hands:

Smart meters are replacing traditional gas and electricity meters as part of a national infrastructure upgrade that will make our energy system more efficient and flexible. The smart metering system has been designed to enable a wide range of tariffs,

including for heating, independently of the Radio Teleswitch Service which Total Heat Total Control tariffs rely on, and which is expected to be switched off in March 2023. The Government understands that some suppliers are already contacting their customers directly to discuss the available meter options available.

■ **Forests: Sustainable Development**

Kerry McCarthy:

[29946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to remove unsustainable legal deforestation from UK supply chains, as recommended by the Climate Change Committee in its most recent Progress Report to Parliament.

Greg Hands:

The UK Government is tackling unsustainable legal deforestation through two key initiatives:

1. The UK and Indonesia co-chair the Forest Agricultural and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue, working with 28 major producer and consumer governments of forest risk commodities to deliver a [roadmap for action](#), to protect forests and other ecosystems whilst promoting sustainable trade.

The UK and US are convening 13 of the world's largest agri-commodity trader companies who have committed to [developing a roadmap](#) for COP27. This roadmap focuses on accelerated supply chain action, to reduce emissions from land use change, and working with key stakeholders to address the root causes of deforestation.

■ **Fuels: Excise Duties**

Jim Shannon:

[27606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that petrol station operators do not illegally benefit from the Government's proposed cuts to fuel duty.

Paul Scully:

The Government has asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to conduct a review of the retail fuel market, to explore whether it has adversely affected consumer interests. The Government has asked for an initial report from the CMA by 7 July. As part of this, the Government has asked for the CMA's advice on the extent to which competition has resulted in the fuel duty cut announced in the Spring Statement being passed on to consumers. The Government is also ready to support CMA if it uses its powers to act against petrol stations if there is evidence that they are infringing competition or consumer law.

■ Heat Pumps: Noise**Fay Jones:** [\[27745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to help tackle noise pollution generated by heat pumps.

Greg Hands:

The UK has strict standards governing noise emissions from heat pumps. Any heat pump must be installed in compliance with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme Planning Standard MCS-020 which considers noise emissions.

■ Measurement**Chi Onwurah:** [\[27597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of reintroducing imperial measurements on levels of future R&D investment in the UK.

Paul Scully:

The Government has launched its consultation 'Choice on units of measurement: markings and sales'. The consultation seeks further views on the potential impact of any changes to the law and an impact assessment will be carried out in due course.

■ Morrisons**Jim Shannon:** [\[27608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of a potential decision by the owner of Morrisons' to sell its (a) fisheries, (b) warehouses and (c) food manufacturing plants.

Paul Scully:

The Government cannot comment on commercial decisions made by individual retailers.

■ National Security and Investment Act 2021**Mr Steve Baker:** [\[27590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including the Gambling Commission's decisions on control of assets, in so far as those decisions may affect national security, within the scope of the National Security and Investment Act 2021.

Paul Scully:

The National Security and Investment Act 2021 enables the Government to scrutinise and – if necessary – intervene in qualifying acquisitions which may raise national security risks. We will not hesitate to use these powers where our national security is at risk.

■ Parental Leave: Fathers

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[26783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral evidence from the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility to the Women and Equalities Committee on 22 November 2017, HC 358, when he expects take-up of Shared Parental Leave to reach (a) 10 per cent, (b) 20 per cent and (c) 25 per cent of eligible fathers.

Paul Scully:

The evaluation of the Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Pay scheme remains important for the Government, and we will publish our report in due course. This will include an up-to-date estimate of take-up.

■ Small Businesses: Recruitment

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[26712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to support small and medium businesses to recruit and retain suitably qualified employees.

Paul Scully:

Throughout the pandemic the Government provided historic levels of support to the economy – a total of £370 billion. At the heart of this was the Plan for Jobs programme – a comprehensive and ambitious plan to help people back into work and develop the skills they need to thrive.

The Plan for Jobs supported people throughout the pandemic and continues to do so as we see sustained economic improvement with unemployment returning to pre-pandemic levels. Accompanied with this recovery were record levels of vacancies and as a result, the Government launched the new Way to Work campaign in January 2022 to focus on supporting unemployed and work-ready claimants into work quickly.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Official Hospitality

Jon Trickett:

[\[27518\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much his Department spent on hospitality in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Michael Ellis:

The Department records hospitality and catering expenditure combined. Expenditure includes catering for events with external guests as well as expense claims made by staff.

| YEAR | SPEND (£) |
|------|------------|
| 2020 | 388,319.38 |
| 2021 | 323,462.06 |
| 2022 | 199,313.24 |

Expenditure in 2022 is from 1st January 2022 to 30 June 2022.

■ Parliamentary Scrutiny

Rachael Maskell: [\[27659\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he takes to measure the performance of Government against its (a) manifesto commitments, (b) proposed legislative programme and (c) other proposed programmes of work.

Michael Ellis:

The Government regularly tracks and reviews the delivery of its commitments and legislative programme.

■ Prime Minister: Official Hospitality

Jon Trickett: [\[28382\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Prime Minister spent on hospitality in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Michael Ellis:

Departments publish details of ministers' gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings on a quarterly basis. Cabinet Office returns include official hospitality provided by the Prime Minister, official No10 receptions and official hospitality at Chequers. More information can be found on GOV.UK.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations

John Healey: [\[29870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many investigations have (a) been launched, (b) completed and (c) led to prosecutions by Service Police and the Service Prosecuting Authority into allegations against British personnel in Afghanistan since the closure of Operation Northmoor.

Leo Docherty:

Since the closure of Operation Northmoor, a total of 52 investigations have been launched by the Service Police into allegations against British personnel in Afghanistan. All 52 investigations have been completed, none of which have led to prosecutions by the Service Prosecuting Authority.

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Protective Clothing**

John Healey:

[\[29876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2022 to Question 18785 on Ajax Vehicles: Protective Clothing, when he plans to write to the Rt hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne on the Armoured Fighting Vehicle Headset programme.

Jeremy Quin:

I have now provided a written response to the Rt Hon. Gentleman, a copy of which I have placed in the Library of the House.

■ **Ammunition: Costs**

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[\[29935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the armed forces is of a round of munition of (a) M31A1 rockets, (b) 5.56mm and (c) 7.76mm.

Jeremy Quin:

I am withholding the unit costs for the M31A1 rocket and 5.56mm round as their disclosure may prejudice commercial interests. The 7.76mm round is currently not in service and therefore not procured for use by the UK Armed Forces.

■ **Armed Forces: Bullying and Harassment**

Luke Pollard:

[\[28480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of calls to the Bullying and Harassment Independent Reporting Helpline came from female staff in each year since the launch of that service.

Leo Docherty:

The Bullying harassment and discrimination helpline was established in September 2020 in response to a recommendation in the Wigston Review into inappropriate behaviours. Callers can remain anonymous and may choose not to disclose their personal details. Since its launch it has taken the following calls:

1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021: 140 calls were from females, representing 32% of total calls; 175 calls were from males, representing 40% of total calls; and 122 calls did not disclose, representing 28% of calls

1 September 2021 - 30 April 2022: 58 calls were from females, representing 26% of total calls; 71 calls were from males, representing 32% of total calls; and 94 calls did not disclose, representing 42% of calls

■ **Armed Forces: Recruitment**

Luke Pollard:

[\[28478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the ethnicity intake target is for the (a) UK Regular Forces and (b) FR20 Volunteer Reserve by 2030.

Luke Pollard:

[\[28479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the ethnicity target is for the number of (a) officers, (b) Lieutenant Colonels and above and (c) Majors and below in the Regular Forces by 2030.

Leo Docherty:

Whilst Defence does not work to specific intake targets for ethnicity, we are committed to achieving a more diverse workforce and have embarked on a range of activities to increase the number of ethnic minority and female recruits into the Armed Forces. Whilst the representation of ethnic minority personnel joining the Armed Forces is improving, we recognise that progress in terms of the representative rates of our people - both military and civilian - has been too slow. It is clear there is still much further to go and we are working hard to fulfil the key objective in our 2018-2030 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to eliminate discrimination and improve diversity throughout Defence:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2018-to-2030-a-force-for-inclusion>

Section 2.2.4, Supporting Commitments for Goal 2, sets out Defence's ambition to improve our ethnic diversity.

■ **Army: Twitter**

Luke Pollard:

[\[30127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he has taken to protect the Army's Twitter account following that account being hacked.

Leo Docherty:

Following the compromise of the Army's Twitter account on 3 July, a cyber security investigation is in progress. The Army is working with Twitter to take remedial action where required.

■ **Cybersecurity: Contracts**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[31045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent progress his Department has made on (a) implementing and (b) setting a contract award date for the CRENIC programme.

Jeremy Quin:

Progress on the CRENIC programme is ongoing and I expect contract award to appoint a Systems Integrator to be announced later in 2022.

■ **HMS Echo: Decommissioning**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[29928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has for the disposal of HMS Echo.

Jeremy Quin:

Disposal plans for HMS ECHO are under consideration. A final decision has not yet been made.

Members: Correspondence**John Healey:**[\[29868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to respond to the letters of 11 January and 22 June 2022 from the hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne regarding the ARAP scheme.

Mr Ben Wallace:

I will be responding to the right hon. Member's correspondence shortly.

Merlin Helicopters: Early Warning Systems**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[29918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much it costs to train (a) a pilot, (b) an air observer and (c) other types of aircrew for Crowsnest.

Jeremy Quin:

Once qualified on the Merlin aircraft, the cost to train an observer in the CROWSNEST role is £333,400 and a Pilot is £59,300. There are no aircrewmembers.

Ministry of Defence: Social Media**Luke Pollard:**[\[30128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure the strength of his Department's social media passwords in the context of the recent hacking of the Army's Twitter account.

Luke Pollard:[\[30129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he has taken to strengthen the security of the social media accounts of (a) the Navy, (b) the Royal Marines, (b) the Air Force and (d) other defence organisations following the hacking of the Army's YouTube and Twitter accounts.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is currently investigating the compromise of the Army social media accounts. It is not currently possible to determine the cause of the breach, and whether it might be related to the password.

The password policy required of all authorised users of social media accounts conforms to the Government Security Group guidance on Managing Social Media Securely. This refers to the National Cyber Security Centre's guidance on Social Media: Protecting What You Publish.

This guidance gives advice that keeps passwords secure, controlled and changed in a manner which ensures they are known only to those who need to gain access to

the relevant account. The guidance also stipulates that a recovery process must be put in place; the efficacy of this is demonstrated by the swift manner in which the Army accounts were recovered and brought back under the control of authorised users.

In addition, there is guidance available internally for MOD personnel, which forms part of the Cyber Confident campaign run by the MOD's Cyber Defence and Risk Directorate (CyDR). All users of official social media within Defence are being contacted by CyDR to ensure current and ongoing compliance with this comprehensive guidance.

■ **Poland: Challenger Tanks**

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[29934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Challenger 2 tanks his Department plans to send to Poland.

Jeremy Quin:

The UK has deployed 14 Challenger 2 tanks to Poland.

■ **Stonehouse Barracks**

Luke Pollard: [\[28483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans the Government has to invest in RM Stonehouse Barracks over the next five years.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 1 March 2022, to Question 126803.

Attachments:

1. Stonehouse Barracks [UIN 126803.docx]

■ **Stonehouse Barracks: Repairs and Maintenance**

Luke Pollard: [\[28484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many callouts have been made to RM Stonehouse Barracks for maintenance issues on (a) roofing, (b) heating, (c) electrics and (d) pest control in the last year.

Jeremy Quin:

The table below shows the number of callouts made to RM Stonehouse Barracks by the MOD's contractor VIVO, from 1 February 2022 to 30 June 2022.

| MAINTENANCE ISSUE | NO OF CALLOUTS |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Roofing | 21 |
| Heating | 18 |

| MAINTENANCE ISSUE | NO OF CALLOUTS |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Electrics | 157 |
| Pest Control | 7 |

Prior to February 2022, Amey were responsible for maintenance of the Defence Estate and the requested information is not held by the MOD.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Arts: EU Countries

Alex Sobel:

[900948]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to enable UK creative artists to tour freely across the EU.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are committed to supporting the creative sector to adapt to new arrangements with the EU. Ministers attended the Touring Working Group in June to hear directly from the sector.

Nearly all Member States offer visa and work permit free routes for creatives. This includes Spain and Greece, who changed their position following extensive engagement from the government and industry.

The Government is also implementing 'dual registration' to support specialist concert hauliers, taking effect this summer.

■ Bingo

Alex Norris:

[30120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many times the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy has visited bingo halls since his appointment.

Nigel Huddleston:

During his appointment as Minister for Technology and the Digital Economy, Chris Philp MP did not visit any bingo halls. As part of the Review of the Gambling Act 2005, he carefully considered evidence submitted by the bingo industry and held a roundtable discussion, which included the Bingo Association and industry representatives, on 24 November 2021. Officials from the department also visited a bingo hall in Stevenage in November 2021.

■ Charities: Lotteries**Tonia Antoniazzi:****[28913]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to support charity lottery fundraising.

Nigel Huddleston:

Society lotteries are a vital fundraising tool for many charities, community groups, sports clubs and other non-commercial organisations, and I am very appreciative of the role they play in supporting such a wide range of sectors. Large society lotteries raised a record £367 million for good causes between April 2019 and March 2020. Society lotteries are regulated under a different framework to the National Lottery and are exempt from paying Lottery Duty.

Reforms to society lotteries came into effect in July 2020, including significant increases in the sales limits, raising the limit for a single draw from £4 million to £5 million and the annual sales limit from £10 million to £50 million. I am pleased that since these changes we have started to see more lottery proceeds going to good causes, as the aim of these reforms was to enable both society lotteries and the National Lottery - often seen as complementary sources of income - to thrive.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Pay**Abena Oppong-Asare:****[30188]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many (a) direct employees, (b) contractors and (c) agency workers who work in her Department and relevant agencies and public bodies receive a wage below that of the (i) UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London and (ii) London Living Wage inside of Greater London, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Nigel Huddleston:

This government is committed to paying people a decent living wage, which is being addressed through the statutory National Living Wage. In April 2022, the National Living Wage increased to £9.50 per hour. By 2024, the government has committed that the National Living Wage will reach 66% of median UK earnings.

No DCMS Civil Servants are paid below the UK Real Living Wage.

No DCMS Civil Servants contracted to a London office are paid below the London Living Wage.

There are 33 Public Bodies sponsored by DCMS, who are required to adhere to Civil Service pay guidance, of these four have a relatively small number of staff - between 4 and 149, who are paid below the UK Real Living Wage/London Living Wage. They are however paid the National Living Wage.

■ Internet: Competition

Mr Steve Baker: [\[25839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of provisions in the Online Safety Bill on competition between internet services.

Mr Steve Baker: [\[25840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of provisions in the Online Safety Bill on innovation of internet services.

Nigel Huddleston:

An assessment of the potential impacts of the provisions set out on the Online Safety Bill on both competition between in-scope internet services and on innovation of in-scope services has been undertaken and was published in the Online Safety Bill impact assessment on 17 March 2022.

DCMS will also publish draft legislation to address the far-reaching power of the biggest tech firms as part of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Bill. The new pro-competition regime will address the underlying causes of substantial market power, creating a more competitive and vibrant digital economy.

■ Outdoor Recreation: Government Assistance

David Simmonds: [\[900949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to support local outdoor activity centres.

Nigel Huddleston:

This Government encourages everyone, no matter their age, to be as active as they can. We recognise that outdoor activity centres provide opportunities to all members of society to be active.

Outdoor Activity Centres were supported through the pandemic by government assistance such as the furlough scheme.

The Government has a range of programmes including the National Citizen Service and the £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund whose delivery partners include outdoor activity centres.

■ Rescue Services: Fuels

Mr Richard Holden: [\[30185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of providing support with fuel costs to (a) mountain rescue teams, (b) the RNLI and (c) other voluntary organisations and their volunteers who provide vital public services as charities.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise this is a worrying time for many organisations, including charities, that are facing pressures due to the significant increases in global gas prices.

In the Chancellor's Spring Statement, the government announced a temporary 12 month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre. This is the biggest cut, in cash terms, that has ever been applied across all fuel duty rates at once.

We will continue to monitor the impact of fuel costs on volunteers and voluntary sector organisations. More information on volunteers' pay and expenses is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Sewage****Stephen Morgan:**[\[19676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2021 to Question 87705, on Agriculture: Sewage, when his Department plans to publish the public consultation to effect the changes laid out in the sludge strategy, including the effectiveness of regulation of farmers' use of sludge.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is currently assessing the strategy's impact on both the water and agricultural industry, and targeted outcomes. The outcomes of this assessment will determine how it will proceed, and when a consultation may be held.

■ Package Holidays: Animal Welfare**John McNally:**[\[28428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to her Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 17967 on Package Holidays: Animal Welfare, what discussions she has had with (a) the travel industry and (b) other stakeholder organisations on introducing a ban on the domestic (i) advertising and (ii) sale of wild animal experiences abroad.

Alex Cunningham:[\[30010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 17967, whether he has held discussions with travel industry and other stakeholder organisations on the potential merits of a ban on the domestic (a) advertising and (b) sale of wild animal experiences abroad.

Victoria Prentis:

Ministers and officials have been engaging with industry groups and interested stakeholders - and continue to do so - on many of the measures set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare, including reforms relating to not advertising or offering for sale, here, activities involving unacceptable practices abroad.

The Government considers that reputable and responsible tour operators here should not be advertising or offering attractions, activities, or experiences abroad that involve the unacceptable treatment of animals. The Association of British Travel Agents has published guidelines and lists activities which have been classified as unacceptable.

In addition, the Advertising Standards Association regulates online advertising in the UK and has issued advice about featuring animals in marketing communications.

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive: Organic Food

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[26778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the organic food sector on the Sustainable Farming Incentive's organic standard.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to a co-design process throughout the development of the Sustainable Farming Incentive for all proposed standards. Individual standards are being created and refined through development and practitioner groups which bring in knowledge from industry experts, farmers and other wider technical expertise in line with our wider delivery plans and timescales.

The Government recognise the benefits that organic farming can offer to the wider environment and in December 2021 confirmed that an organic standard is currently being considered as part of the development of the Sustainable Farming Incentive, with an indicative roll out date of 2025. As the Farming Minister, I met with representatives of the organic sector in November 2021 to discuss the Government's intention to include this organic standard. In addition, the Secretary of State recently attended Groundswell, the regenerative agriculture show, where he gave a speech on the launch of the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme as well as taking part in two question and answer panel sessions.

Defra will engage with organic stakeholder representatives as part of the development of the organic standard. Open dialogue and cross-sector collation of information will continue to help to shape its future direction. We will only release standards into the live service when we are confident in their design and our ability to successfully deliver the service.

■ Waste Management

Catherine West:

[\[28466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the updated Resources and Waste Strategy; and if he will include a further assessment of residual waste treatment capacity needs in that strategy.

Victoria Prentis:

We are currently carrying out an evaluation of the Resources and Waste Strategy, which will inform our future policies. There will be a progress update published later this year.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE■ **Afghanistan: British Nationals Abroad****Imran Hussain:**[\[20262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help support the Afghan relatives of British citizens who are under threat in that country.

Vicky Ford:

Since the end of Op PITTING, the UK has supported over 4,600 individuals to leave Afghanistan, including British Nationals and their families and other eligible Afghans. We continue to work to ensure that the families of British nationals with entry clearance and those eligible for resettlement through the Afghanistan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), are able to come to the UK. The UK is providing £286 million of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in 2022/23 and, together with our international allies, we are working to hold the Taliban to their commitments on human rights and safe passage for those wishing to leave the country. We continue to advise against travel to Afghanistan and cannot provide consular services in person in country as our Embassy is closed but have consular teams available in neighbouring countries.

■ **China****Catherine West:**[\[30087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people in her Department have been (a) deployed to China (b) working on China policy in each year since 2010.

Amanda Milling:

A significant and increasing number of FCDO roles both at Headquarters and across the global network, involve an element of China policy. This shift in focus and resource has been underway for a number of years. In 2020/21 the FCDO dedicated an additional £3million to increase our capability on China, including a significantly expanded China Department. In 2022/23, the FCDO is establishing additional China-facing roles in London and the network to provide analysis, reporting and policy delivery.

■ **China: Dogs****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[30184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has raised concerns on the breeding, shipping, killing and eating of dogs in China with the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government is committed to raising standards of animal welfare at home and abroad. The consumption of dog meat is legal in many countries, including China,

and there are no international norms, laws or agreements governing this. We believe that it is necessary to work with Governments around the world to gain agreement on animal welfare standards, and to phase out cruel and inhumane practices. We have raised our concerns regarding the consumption of dog meat in China with the Chinese authorities, including recently with the Chinese Embassy in London, and will continue to raise this and other animal welfare issues.

■ **China: Human Rights**

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:

[30217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will undertake a full review of UK aid funding to determine whether any such funding is being used to support organisations guilty of human rights violations in the People's Republic of China.

Amanda Milling:

Her Majesty's Government (HMG) have robust processes in place to ensure that all projects funded by UK aid meet our human rights obligations and values. This includes publicly available HMG guidance that sets out the human rights risks that must be considered prior to providing any justice or security sector assistance.

We are aware of concerns raised by a recent report from Freedom from Torture regarding a British Council partnership with London Policing College (LPC). This project was part of a regional programme that included efforts to reduce human rights violations and other malpractice through better policing. This project did not involve the Xinjiang Policing College or any other public security entities in Xinjiang, and no funds were distributed to any overseas institutions.

■ **Development Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[30093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much underspend there has been in (a) climate finance and (b) other Official Development Assistance in financial year 2022; and if she will publish a detailed breakdown of that underspend.

Vicky Ford:

In financial year 2021/22 the FCDO met its ambition to deliver more than £941 million of activities that count towards the UK's flagship £11.6 billion International Climate target as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement laid on 21 April 2021 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/uk-official-development-assistance-oda-allocations-2021-to-2022-written-ministerial-statement>). The UK Government remains committed to the remainder of this pledge.

Final UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) figures for 2021 will be published in Autumn 2022 in 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2021'.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

Emily Thornberry: [\[28878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many electronic purchasing cards were held by individuals to make purchases against her departmental budget as of 31 March 2022.

Vicky Ford:

As of 31 March 2022, 4,446 procurement cards were held by individuals to make purchases against the FCDO's departmental budget.

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

James Murray: [\[30168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many (a) direct employees, (b) contractors and (c) agency workers who work in her Department and relevant agencies and public bodies receive a wage below that of the (i) UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London and (ii) London Living Wage inside of Greater London, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Amanda Milling:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office can confirm that no direct employee is paid an hourly rate less than that determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Records for contractors and agency workers are not held centrally. To produce this data would incur disproportionate cost.

Details of hourly rates of pay, for directly employed staff, contractors and agency workers in our Agencies and Public Bodies is not held centrally. To obtain and produce this data would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **Gaza: Humanitarian Situation**

Andy McDonald: [\[30026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help tackle the impact of the humanitarian situation in Gaza on children.

Andy McDonald: [\[30027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Israeli counterpart on ending the blockade of Gaza in compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009).

Amanda Milling:

I [Minister Milling] recently visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) where I saw first-hand the challenges of the prolonged conflict and the impact of the occupation. I reiterated UK support for a two-state solution and the need to

improve conditions for ordinary Palestinians in my meetings with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Roll, and with the Palestinian leadership, including Prime Minister Shtayyeh. The UK continues to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children.

■ Indo-Pacific Region

Catherine West:

[\[30086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many of her Department's personnel have been deployed to the Indo-Pacific region in each year since 2010.

Amanda Milling:

| REFERENCE DATE | TOTAL INDO PACIFIC DEPLOYED HEADCOUNT |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| March 2014 | 500-519 |
| March 2015 | 480-499 |
| March 2016 | 400-419 |
| March 2017 | 380-399 |
| March 2018 | 400-419 |
| March 2019 | 440-459 |
| March 2020 | 460-479 |
| March 2021 | 380-399 |
| March 2022 | 380-399 |

■ Indo-pacific Region: Diplomatic Service

Catherine West:

[\[30084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department plans to increase the UK's (a) diplomatic presence and (b) economic support and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is committed to increasing engagement and economic and security partnerships in the Indo-Pacific. Since 2019 we have opened three new High Commissions in Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga.

As part of our Indo-Pacific tilt, the UK has secured free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand and aims to conclude the majority of talks on a free trade agreement with India by the end of October. We are in the final stage of accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. We are negotiating a joint Plan of Action with Association of Southeast Asian Nations for the next 5 years, and through British Investment Partnerships, we are promoting clean reliable investment into infrastructure in the region. We aim to commit up to £500 million over the 2022-26 period for climate finance in the Indo-Pacific. We have launched AUKUS, and have enhanced our bilateral relationships including through the UK-India 2030 Roadmap and the UK-Indonesia Partnership Roadmap.

■ Indo-pacific Region: EU External Relations

Catherine West:

[\[30085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what specific discussions she has had with European counterparts on future European engagement with countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Amanda Milling:

At the G7, European partners supported the \$600 billion Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, building on UK proposals at the Carbis Bay Summit in 2021, which will enable significant infrastructure engagement with Indo-Pacific partners. The Foreign Secretary met Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and the US at the G7 Summit, where they discussed global security, including China. The Foreign Secretary met European Foreign Ministers who are members of NATO at the NATO Summit, where they discussed China and met with Indo-Pacific NATO partner countries (Australia, Japan, New Zealand, ROK). UK senior officials attended the High-Level Dialogue on the Indo-Pacific in Prague on 13/14 June, joined by partners from across Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

■ Iraq: Kurds

Henry Smith:

[\[27576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department taking to help encourage the resolution of disputes between the federal government in Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government; and if she will make a statement.

Amanda Milling:

The UK supports a strong relationship between the Kurdistan Regional Government and Federal Government of Iraq and continues to encourage cooperation to resolve outstanding issues. We want to see a strong and successful Kurdistan region within a thriving and multicultural Iraq.

Mary Glendon:

[30019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what information her Department holds on potential responsibility for missile attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in March, April and May 2022; and if she will make a statement.

Mary Glendon:

[30020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps her Department has taken to help deter missile attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq; and if she will make a statement.

Amanda Milling:

The UK publicly condemned the senseless attack by Iran on Erbil on March 12, and separately condemns the April and May attacks on oil refineries in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The UK continues to closely coordinate with Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to de-escalate tensions in the region. This includes through the visit of the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government Masrour Barzani to London in April, when I [Minister Milling] met with him, as did the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary.

■ Myanmar: Politics and Government

Ruth Jones:

[30140]

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

Amanda Milling:

The coup has plunged Myanmar into a deep political and humanitarian crisis and exacerbated conflict. Over 2000 people have been killed by the military regime, over 690,000 people have been displaced by military operations and 14.4 million people are now in need of humanitarian assistance. We consistently raise these issues with counterparts, including at the UN, G7 and ASEAN, to try and bring an end to the crisis. For example, on the anniversary of the coup on 1 February, we coordinated a joint Foreign Minister-level statement calling for de-escalation and a return to democracy, and on 27 March we coordinated a statement, signed by 47 countries, on working together to prevent the flow of arms to Myanmar.

■ Ukraine: Military Aid

John Healey:

[29869]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 23221, how many meetings of the National Security Council she has attended since April 2022.

Amanda Milling:

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

■ Xinjiang: Human Rights

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:

[\[30216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of her Department's compliance with its guidance to UK companies, issued in January 2011, to safeguard UK businesses and public bodies from any involvement or links with violations of human rights in the context of US sanctions on the Xinjiang Police College.

Amanda Milling:

Her Majesty's Government (HMG) have robust processes in place to ensure that all projects funded by UK aid meet our human rights obligations and values. This includes publicly available HMG guidance that sets out the human rights risks that must be considered prior to providing any justice or security sector assistance.

We are aware of concerns raised by a recent report from Freedom from Torture regarding a British Council partnership with London Policing College (LPC). This project was part of a regional programme that included efforts to reduce human rights violations and other malpractice through better policing. This project did not involve the Xinjiang Policing College or any other public security entities in Xinjiang, and no funds were distributed to any overseas institutions.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Breast Cancer and Diabetes

Jim Shannon:

[\[23296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the risk of developing breast cancer for people with type one diabetes.

Maria Caulfield:

Those with type 1 diabetes are at no further risk of developing breast cancer than the general population.

■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[30186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of removing guidance on mask wearing in care homes for all staff and patients and making mask-wearing discretionary for the individual or staff member.

Gillian Keegan:

In adult social care, the guidance continues to recommend that all staff and visitors wear masks to provide protection for residents from COVID-19. The guidance provides scope for mask removal to be considered as part of a risk assessment if the usage is particularly challenging for the resident. Further personal protective equipment may also be recommended to carry out specific tasks. The wearing of face

masks by care home residents has never been recommended. The Department continues to work with the UK Health Security Agency to review the relevant guidance to ensure it reflects safe and proportionate infection prevention and control principles.

■ Carers: Respite Care

Catherine West:

[14573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to create more (a) respite and (b) care services for unpaid carers to allow them take regular breaks from their caring duties.

Gillian Keegan:

The white paper 'People at the Heart of Care' states that we will invest up to £25 million to improve the services provided to unpaid carers, which could include respite, breaks, peer group and wellbeing support.

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a duty to provide services which meet the needs of the local population, including carers. Funding for respite and short breaks for carers is included in the Better Care Fund. The BCF Framework for 2022/23 will be published shortly and will request that local BCF partnerships set out how funding is being used to support unpaid carers. In addition, we have written to local authorities to reiterate the importance of day services and respite for carers and to encourage authorities to access the funding available.

■ Coronavirus: Care Homes

Rachael Maskell:

[861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice he received from the Government's Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser on the risk of covid-19 infections as a result of transferring patients from hospitals to care homes in March 2020.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 16 May 2022]: This information is not held in the format requested.

During the pandemic, Ministers received scientific and clinical advice from a variety of sources, in addition to advice from the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) Sir Patrick Vallance and the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Professor Sir Chris Whitty. This included advice informed by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), jointly chaired by the CSA and CMO. SAGE is comprised of scientific experts from a range of disciplines and considered the following evidence which informed this policy:

The 'SPI-M-O: Consensus view on behavioural and social interventions, 16 March 2020' is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spi-m-o-consensus-view-on-behavioural-and-social-interventions-16-march-2020>

The minutes of the 'Sixteenth SAGE meeting on Wuhan Coronavirus (Covid-19), 16th March 2020' is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1068118/S0384_Sixteenth_SAGE_meeting_on_Wuhan_Coronavirus.pdf

Imperial College London's 'Report 9 - Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce COVID-19 mortality and healthcare demand' is available at the following link:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/mrc-global-infectious-disease-analysis/covid-19/report-9-impact-of-npis-on-covid-19/>

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell:

[27664]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure clear, continuous communication with the public on covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

'COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19', published in February 2022, set out how we have transitioned towards guidance and encouraging responsible behaviours, while targeting protection towards those individuals most at risk from the virus. Updated guidance for the public was published in April 2022 on reducing the risk of catching and spreading respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Public health principles were also published to reduce the spread of respiratory infections in the workplace.

The National Health Service and the UK Health Security Agency continue to promote safe behaviours and vaccination to the public via the media, social media and with local communities through Directors of Public Health. The autumn booster vaccination campaign and details of eligible groups will be confirmed and communicated in due course.

Charlotte Nichols:

[27749]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce levels of covid-19 infections.

Maggie Throup:

Following the publication of 'COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19', our guidance has transitioned to encouraging responsible behaviours, while targeting protection towards those most at risk from the virus.

The COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme and the availability of antiviral treatments has ensured a reduced risk of severe illness or hospitalisation. While self-isolation is no longer required and testing no longer recommended for those not at high risk, public health advice for anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 or their household contacts recommends avoiding contact with other people where possible,

as with any other infectious disease. The Government continues to keep this response under review to ensure it remains effective and proportionate.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to continue to enable access to covid-19 testing for people working in health and care settings over autumn 2022.

Maggie Throup:

Symptomatic testing in high-risk health and care settings will continue for certain groups where infection can spread rapidly among people who may be at higher risk of serious illness. Additionally, during periods of high prevalence, asymptomatic testing will continue in high-risk settings.

The Government continues to review this response to ensure it remains effective and proportionate. We will monitor prevalence and other factors which will determine whether asymptomatic testing is required in high-risk settings in autumn 2022.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to commence a nation-wide covid-19 booster vaccine programme in autumn 2022.

Maggie Throup:

On 19 May 2022, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published its interim advice on an autumn COVID-19 vaccination booster programme. This stated that a COVID-19 vaccine should be offered in autumn 2022 to residents in a care home for older adults and staff; frontline health and social care workers; all those 65 years old and over; and adults aged 16 to 64 years old in a clinical risk group. The JCVI is considering the vaccination of other groups and the definitions of clinical risk groups. The JCVI's final advice on eligibility for the autumn programme is expected in due course.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all eligible children are vaccinated against covid-19; and whether he is preparing a school covid-19 vaccination programme for 2022-23.

Maggie Throup:

In December 2021, all School Aged Immunisation Service providers in England were asked to deliver in-school COVID-19 vaccinations to 12 to 15 year olds in the 2022 spring term. In addition to in-school provision, local vaccination sites have been made available with longer appointment times which can accommodate the needs of children and families. Invitations have been issued with information on appointments and vaccination sites available through the National Booking Service. While no

further national schools-based programme is currently planned, children and their parents or carers will be encouraged to access vaccination through community vaccination services.

■ **Dentistry: Hendon**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people who are registered with an NHS dentist in Hendon constituency.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally as dental patients are not registered to a particular practice. A dental practice can accept a patient for a course of treatment and there are no geographical restrictions on which dental practice a patient may attend.

■ **Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services**

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[29994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that doctors are adequately trained to (a) identify and (b) treat people with an eating disorder.

Gillian Keegan:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Coventry South (Zarah Sultana MP) on 27 June 2022 to Question [21300](#).

■ **Fluoride: Drinking Water**

Rachael Maskell: [\[17027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on the fluoridation of water and what plans he has to introduce water fluoridation schemes.

Maria Caulfield:

While there have been no recent discussions, the Department works with other Government departments on water fluoridation. Any confirmed plans by the Department to expand water fluoridation would be subject to funding being agreed and public consultation.

■ **Gender Recognition: Surgery**

Wera Hobhouse: [\[27711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact on patients of the suspension of phalloplasty on the NHS.

Maria Caulfield:

A contract with the New Victoria Hospital in London is now in place to provide phalloplasty for the National Health Service. In addition, the NHS aims to establish additional capacity through other providers and we are working with the NHS expand these services.

James Daly:[\[27762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on making pectus surgery available as a treatment on the NHS.

Gillian Keegan:

There are a range of surgical and non-surgical treatments available through the National Health Service in England to manage pectus deformity and individuals may be referred to a thoracic surgical clinic for advice. Treatment options are determined by an assessment of the type of pectus deformity, degree of deformity, simple versus mixed deformity and whether the deformity is isolated or part of a syndrome. In most cases, while surgery can correct the chest wall deformity, surgical intervention does not take place. The majority of people experience only mild physical or psychological symptoms associated with having a pectus deformity. In these cases, non-surgical options include posture, exercise programmes, bracing and psychological support.

Health Education: Children and Young People**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[27683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage children and young people to adopt a healthy lifestyle and diet.

Maggie Throup:

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' Better Health Start for Life campaign encourages and supports parents-to-be and families with babies and young children to develop parenting skills and healthy habits in the first 1,001 days. Its Better Health Families campaign also aims to help families with children aged four to 11 years old in England to eat a healthier diet and encourages physical activity. These campaigns are supported by apps and resources to motivate and encourage behaviour change.

Heart Diseases: Medical Treatments**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[29953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the research in the British Medical Journal by Stickels (et al.) entitled Aortic stenosis post-Covid-19: a mathematical model on waiting lists and mortality, published on 16 June 2022, if his Department will increase the provision of transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI) for patients with aortic stenosis.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England is currently finalising a revised commissioning position for the provision of transcatheter aortic valve implantation and surgical aortic valve replacement for symptomatic severe aortic stenosis in adults.

Heart Diseases: Transplant Surgery**Jim Shannon:**[\[27611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of people suffering from leaking heart valves who require complete heart replacement in order to manage their condition.

Maria Caulfield:

Less than 0.1% of patients in England suffering from leaking heart valves subsequently require a heart transplant. The vast majority of patients are able to manage their condition with drug therapy or are treated by conventional cardiac surgery to repair or replace heart valves.

Hormone Replacement Therapy: Prescriptions**Carolyn Harris:**[\[11760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women received Hormone Replacement Therapy prescriptions for (a) utrogestan, (b) body-identical oestrogen patches and gels, (c) non-body-identical oestrogen, (d) non-body identical progestogens and (d) the testosterone products (i) testogel, (ii) testim and (iii) tostran in each of the last ten years by Parliamentary constituency or the lowest available administrative level if that data is not available.

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not held in the format requested.

The attached table shows items dispensed in the community at clinical commissioning group level in England from 2015/16 to 2021/22.

Attachments:

1. TABLE [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE PQ11760 Data.xlsx]

Hospitals: Devon**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[27506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in NHS hospitals in Dorset had been waiting for discharge for more than seven days after their hospital care had been completed on the most recent date for which that information is available.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: As of 30 June 2022, 275 patients in National Health Service hospitals in Dorset had waited for discharge for more than seven days following the completion of hospital care.

■ Loneliness: Autism

Kate Griffiths:

[\[28493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the policy paper entitled Emerging Together: the Tackling Loneliness Network Action Plan, published on 8 May 2021, what recent steps his Department has taken to help support adults with autism who experience loneliness.

Gillian Keegan:

In November 2021, the Government established a Loneliness Engagement Fund to engage with those most affected by loneliness in England during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Autistic Society received £30,000 to develop resources to address loneliness for autistic people and undertake a social media campaign.

In May 2022, approximately £5 million was awarded to 12 organisations in England to inform understanding of how transport can assist those experiencing loneliness. The National Autistic Society received over £250,000 to offer training to transport providers, ensuring that staff have an increased understanding of autism and removing barriers for autistic people on public transport and enable social connections.

■ Long Covid: Health Services

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[29954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to release a NHS Long COVID plan for 2022-23; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England expects to publish a plan to address the long term effects of COVID-19 infection for 2022/23 shortly.

■ Macular Degeneration: Health Services

Jim Shannon:

[\[27603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department provides to people suffering from advanced dry age-related macular degeneration.

Gillian Keegan:

Local authorities are required to undertake a needs assessment for any individual who appears to have a need for care and support. If a person is assessed as having eligible care and support needs, the local authority has a legal duty to meet these needs and design a support plan on how these needs will be met, subject to a financial assessment.

Specialists and eye clinic liaison officer can also provide personalised support, in particular for patients newly diagnosed with sight loss, such as rehabilitation services. Further practical support may be provided through a referral to a low vision clinic.

■ Macular Degeneration: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon:

[\[27604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the (a) development of novel treatments for geographic atrophy and (b) early adoption of new treatments proven to delay the progression of that disease.

Maria Caulfield:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is currently supporting clinical trials for a number of medicines relating to geographic atrophy and will review the quality, safety and efficacy of these products should the manufacturers apply for licences.

The early adoption of new treatments, including for patients with geographic atrophy, is being supported by the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway, which is enabling the rapid review and approval of promising new medicines. The recently launched Innovative Medicines Fund will also allow patients to benefit from early access to such treatments.

■ Mental Health Services

Jess Phillips:

[\[30032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he has provided to ensure best practices of emotional and psychological support delivery can be shared across NHS England services.

Gillian Keegan:

A new Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) dataset is being implemented to enable NHS England to monitor existing integrated pathways and support local areas and share best practice. NHS England has also published guidance developed with the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines (NICE) to share best practice on implementing the IAPT long term conditions pathway. This expansion of IAPT will ensure that more people can receive emotional and psychological support in line with NICE's guidance.

We are also expanding integrated community models to allow at least 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illness each year to have greater choice and control over their care and are supported to live well in their communities.

■ NHS: Dental Services

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[29864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to NHS Dental Care Services (a) in general and (b) for families with children; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

Dental patients are not registered to a particular practice outside a course of treatment. A practice can accept a patient for a course of treatment and there are no geographical restrictions on which dental practice a patient may attend. An additional £50 million for National Health Service dentistry was provided for the final quarter of 2021/22 to provide urgent care to patients. The appointments were targeted to patients in most need of urgent dental treatment, including vulnerable groups and families with children.

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, including children and vulnerable patients. As well as general dental services, specialist community dental services which treat particularly vulnerable people, including children, have also benefited from additional funding. The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with stakeholders, including the British Dental Association, on improvements to the NHS dental system. This aims to increase patient access, reduce health inequalities and make the NHS a more attractive place to work for dentists.

■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Licensing**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[27550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2022 to Question 18823 on Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Licensing, when he expects the public consultation on the future licensing scheme to commence.

Maria Caulfield:

Officials are currently considering how a licensing scheme for non-surgical cosmetic procedures could be implemented. This includes a potential timetable for a public consultation to inform the development of the scheme.

■ Nutrition: Cost of Living**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[27685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the accessibility of healthy food to families who are struggling with the cost of living crisis.

Maggie Throup:

The Government recently announced a new £15 billion support package to help families with the cost of living, bringing the total support for households this year to £37 billion. This includes £1.5 billion to help with the cost of household essentials, such as food. The three Healthy Food Schemes, Healthy Start, the Nursery Milk Scheme and the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme provide nutritional assistance to more than three million children.

■ Palliative Care: Children

Stephanie Peacock: [\[23370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the level of funding support for hospices and end of life care for children.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[23371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what specific support his Department provides to charities providing end of life care for children.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 28 June 2022]: No recent assessment has been made as the majority of hospices are independent charities which receive some statutory funding from integrated care boards (ICBs). ICBs are responsible for commissioning appropriate palliative and end of life care (PEoLC) services for children based on the needs of the local population.

NHS England has committed to increase its investment in local children's PEoLC services, including hospices. NHS England has matched the investment made by clinical commissioning groups for children's PEoLC, providing more than £7 million since 2020/21. This is in addition to £21 million being invested through the Children's Hospice Grant by March 2023, to provide care closer to home. NHS England is also reviewing current models of care, commissioning pathways and financial formulas to ensure the sector supports children, young people, their families and loved ones. We will continue to engage with the sector to understand the issues it faces.

■ Paxlovid

Andrew Gwynne: [\[29956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the 2.75 million courses of nirmatrelvir+ritonavir (Paxlovid) procured by the Government will reach their expiry date in the next (a) three months, (b) six months and (c) nine months.

Maggie Throup:

Nirmatrelvir+ritonavir was granted a conditional marketing authorisation on 31 December 2021 and received an initial shelf life of 12 months from manufacture. Of nirmatrelvir+ritonavir received, none will expire in the next three months, 400,000 courses will expire in the next six months and 1,075,000 courses will expire in the next nine months. The Department continues to consider options for extending the shelf-life of COVID-19 antiviral treatments which have been received and not yet used.

■ Pharmacy: Rents

Feryal Clark:

[\[27752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the NHS Property Service on the impact of increasing rents on community pharmacies.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department has held discussions with NHS Property Services regarding specific instances where rent reviews are due at pharmacies located in health centres it operates and owns. When undertaking such rent reviews, NHS Property Services uses a standard valuation approach for calculating the proposed level of rental charges to ensure it recovers the costs of operating these premises, which are then negotiated and agreed with the pharmacies concerned on a case-by-case basis. The Department is working with NHS Property Services to ensure that the application of this approach is fair and transparent.

■ School Milk

Kate Osborne:

[\[26869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the planned changes to the claims process for the Nursery Milk Scheme from 1 August 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the administrative impact on education settings of those changes.

Kate Osborne:

[\[26870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the planned changes to the Nursery Milk Scheme claims process from 1 August 2022, what discussions his Department had with (a) milk suppliers and (b) education settings before announcing those changes?

Kate Osborne:

[\[26871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to undertake an assessment of the impact of changes to the Nursery Milk Scheme's proposed claims process on the uptake of milk by eligible children.

Maggie Throup:

The Nursery Milk Scheme allows registered childcare settings to reclaim the cost of providing one-third of a pint of milk per day to children under the age of five years old who attend the setting for at least two hours per day. The planned changes will require childcare settings to provide evidence to demonstrate that the claims made are correct, to reduce the risk of fraud and error.

No discussions with milk suppliers have been held concerning these changes. However, the Nursery Milk Reimbursement Unit conducted a survey of 3,790 childcare settings in November 2019 on the impact of the planned changes. The survey included responses from settings which use a milk agent, purchase milk via a local authority and purchase milk itself. The survey invited respondents to estimate

how long it would take to upload attendance records and to provide general feedback on the reimbursement process. These responses indicated that 56% of settings estimate less than 10 minutes per claim to meet the new requirements and 34% provided an estimate of between 10 and 30 minutes per claim. The Department considered these findings prior to announcing the proposed changes.

No information is collected on the general use and uptake of milk by childcare settings and we have no plans to make such an assessment. However, information is collected on the number of claims submitted to and paid by the Nursery Milk Scheme. This information is regularly monitored and will be used to review the operation of these changes.

■ Self Harm and Suicide

Rachael Maskell:

[\[25928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral statement of 27 June 2020 on Draft Mental Health Bill, what plans he has for the proposed 10-year suicide prevention strategy to recognise a link between self-harm and suicide; and what steps he plans to take to tackle the prevalence and frequency of self-harm.

Gillian Keegan:

We will engage with those working to prevent suicide to understand the priorities for the new suicide prevention plan. While self-harming can present a risk of suicide, this does not determine that an individual may wish to take their own life. Approximately, half of those who died by suicide had a history of self-harm in their lifetime.

In 2017, we expanded the scope of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy to include self-harm. In addition, we have provided funding for the Multicentre Study of Self-harm in England to analyse trends in self-harming. We are allocating £57 million by 2023/24 to support local suicide prevention plans and bereavement services. We have ensured that suicide prevention funding for local areas includes addressing self-harm.

■ Smoking: Disadvantaged

Sir George Howarth:

[\[27542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of living in an area of high deprivation on a person's likelihood of smoking; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

There is a strong association between deprivation and smoking prevalence and individuals are more likely to smoke if they are living in an area of high deprivation.

■ Social Services: Recruitment

Kate Osamor:

[\[27676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of the No Recourse to Public Funds policy on the recruitment and retention of social care workers.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific assessment has been made. However, the Migration Advisory Committee recently made recommendations to the Government on overseas recruitment of care workers. The Government is considering these recommendations and will respond in due course.

■ Steroid Drugs: Prescriptions

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[15243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make recurrent oral corticosteroids prescriptions from primary care a trigger for referral to secondary or tertiary care for asthma patients.

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[15244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to encourage primary care clinicians to monitor potential over-prescribing of oral corticosteroids.

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[15245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what alternatives to oral corticosteroids treatment are available for asthma and COPD patients.

Jim Shannon:

[\[15260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the cost of (a) caring for and (b) treating adverse events in patients prescribed frequent or maintenance prescriptions of oral corticosteroids.

Jim Shannon:

[\[15263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to issue guidance on reducing the use of oral corticosteroids in treating asthma and COPD.

Gillian Keegan:

While the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guideline 'Asthma: diagnosis, monitoring and chronic asthma management' does not specifically make recommendations on oral corticosteroids, NICE is working with the British Thoracic Society and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network to produce United Kingdom-wide guidance to update and replace this guideline. Evidence on pharmacological management, including the use of oral corticosteroids, will be reviewed during this process.

The 2022/23 Quality and Outcomes Framework incentivises general practitioners to assess asthma control through a questionnaire, which records of the number of exacerbations, an assessment of inhaler technique and a written personalised action plan, to monitor potential over-prescribing. The Impact and Investment Fund currently contains two indicators which aim to improve the care of people with asthma, including recognising Primary Care Networks which reduce in the percentage of patients receiving six or more Short-Acting Beta Agonists (SABAs) prescriptions per year.

NICE's guidelines for asthma and its guideline 'Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in over 16s: diagnosis and management' recommend oral corticosteroids and alternatives. For adults with asthma, these include SABAs, leukotriene receptor antagonists and long-acting beta2 agonists. For chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), NICE recommends smoking cessation, SABAs and short-acting muscarinic antagonists, Theophylline tablets, oral mucolytic therapy, oral anti-oxidant therapy, oral anti-tussive therapy, oral prophylactic antibiotic therapy, long-term oxygen therapy, ambulatory oxygen therapy, short-burst oxygen therapy, non-invasive ventilation and pulmonary rehabilitation. NICE has also published technology appraisal guidance on biologics for those with severe asthma, such as Omalizumab for treating severe persistent allergic asthma.

No specific assessment has been made of the cost of caring for and treating adverse events in patients prescribed frequent or maintenance prescriptions of oral corticosteroids. However, in developing its guidelines, NICE has recommended a number of medicines for patients with severe asthma, such as mepolizumab, which considered the costs and benefits relating to a potential reduction in the use of corticosteroids.

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Severe Asthma Collaborative is developing capacity in severe asthma centres to streamline patient pathways to biologic therapies and reduce variation in prescribing and patient management. A toolkit has been produced to support clinical teams.

The Royal College of General Practitioners' guidance on long term condition recovery asks clinicians to consider all high-risk patients with COPD and asthma who have not received a review for more than 12 months and have been prescribed either three or more SABAs in the last 12 months; those aged five years old and over not on the asthma or COPD register who have received two or more courses of oral steroids in 12 months; and those on the asthma or COPD register to be prioritised for review.

■ Strokes: Contraceptives

Jim Shannon:

[27609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential risk of ischemic strokes associated with contraceptive pills for women.

Maria Caulfield:

While an increased risk of stroke with combined hormonal contraceptive pills has been recognised for more than 25 years, progestogen-only contraceptives are not associated with a risk of stroke. Clinical advice and product information for combined hormonal contraceptive pills recommend avoiding use in women with risk factors for stroke.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has monitored the risk of stroke with combined hormonal contraceptive pills as new data has emerged, with its most recent reviews undertaken in 2016 and in 2021.

■ Suicide**Rachael Maskell:**[\[25925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral statement of 27 June 2022 on Draft Mental Health Bill, what plans he has to include an analysis on the causation of suicides in the 10-year suicide prevention plan.

Rachael Maskell:[\[25927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral statement of 27 June 2020 on Draft Mental Health Bill, what plans he has for the 10-year suicide prevention strategy to identify solutions to the social determinates of poor mental health.

Gillian Keegan:

We launched a call for evidence, which is open until 7 July, to inform the development of the 10-year, cross-Government plan for mental health and wellbeing in England. The call for evidence sought views on the prevention of mental ill-health to acute mental health care, which will contribute to preventing suicide.

We will also engage with those working in the suicide prevention sector to inform a new suicide prevention plan, which will update the 2012 strategy and complement the 10-year plan. This engagement will include consideration of the evidence base for the causes of suicide and the associated social determinates to identify actions to reduce suicide rates.

■ Tourette's Syndrome: Medical Treatments**Kim Leadbeater:**[\[28515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the representatives of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) on the (a) formulation and (b) publication of NICE guidelines for the treatment of Tourette's Syndrome.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department has discussed the potential development of a guideline on Tourette's syndrome with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Clinical guideline topics are formally referred to NICE by NHS England and

take into account factors such as available evidence and clinical need. While no specific request to develop a specific guideline has been made, NICE is currently considering doing so.

■ **Travel: Quarantine**

Neale Hanvey: [\[20323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the total outstanding amount owed in managed quarantine service charges for (a) 2020-21 and (b) 2021-22.

Maggie Throup:

As of 1 March 2022, the Department was owed £3 million from 2020/21 and £71 million from 2021/22 from unpaid stays in the managed quarantine service or for tests purchased from Corporate Travel Management. This includes amounts owed by individuals on repayment plans due to financial hardship. All appropriate debts have been passed to the Department's debt recovery partner for collection.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Animal Experiments: Horses**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[30157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals in Great Britain for 2021, published on 4 July 2022, of the 55 horses and other equids used for the first time, how many procedures were conducted on each animal.

Tom Pursglove:

The number of procedures carried out in a year does not equal the number of animals that have been used in procedures that year. This is because some animals may be used more than once i.e. 're-used', in certain circumstances. These instances are counted as separate, additional, procedures. As a result, the number of procedures is usually slightly higher than the number of animals used. We do not hold data on how many times an animal has been re-used in procedures.

■ **Antisocial Behaviour**

Stuart Anderson: [\[28488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014 at tackling anti-social behaviour.

Kit Malthouse:

It is important that local authorities have the powers they need to tackle all local issues quickly and effectively. That is why we introduced a range of flexible tools and

powers to tackle anti-social behaviour through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The powers in the 2014 Act are deliberately local in nature and it is for local authorities to determine how best to respond to each individual case. The powers support appropriate action to resolve anti-social behaviour, including through setting restrictions or positive requirements on individuals.

The Home Office published [statutory guidance](#) to support local areas to make effective use of these powers to emphasise the importance of focusing on the impact of anti-social behaviour on victims and further to support local authorities to make effective use of these powers. This guidance was updated in June 2022 to ensure a victim-centered approach to tackling ASB.

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

■ Anti-social Behaviour: Wakefield

Simon Lightwood:

[27773]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the police response to reports of antisocial behaviour in Wakefield constituency.

Kit Malthouse:

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

We provided the police, local authorities, and other local agencies with a range of tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to ASB through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

However, it is for local areas to decide how best to deploy these powers depending on the specific circumstances. They are best placed to understand what is driving the behaviour in question, the impact that it is having, and to determine the most appropriate response.

It is for Chief Constables and PCCs, as operational leaders and elected local representatives, to decide how best to respond to local crime priorities and to help ensure that the police have the resources they need, we have given them the biggest funding increase in a decade and are recruiting 20,000 additional officers by March 2023, which provides extra resource to protect the public and keep us safe.

Home Office statutory guidance was updated in June 2022. It supports for local areas to make effective use of the anti-social behaviour powers. The guidance highlights the importance of multi-agency approaches (this is not limited to use of powers).

■ Asylum: Employment

Catherine West: [\[30083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time taken is for her Department to respond following the submission by an asylum seeker of a request for permission to work.

Kevin Foster:

Casework systems do not allow us to report on the number of permission to work requests received or the number subsequently granted permission. Obtaining these figures would require manually searching through cases amounting to disproportionate time and cost.

Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL).

■ Asylum: Rwanda

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[28506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the compatibility of her policy to transfer asylum seekers to Rwanda under the UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership with the UK's obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government has assessed that the Migration and Economic Development Partnership between the UK and Rwanda fully complies with all national and international law, including the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[28507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that asylum seekers transferred to Rwanda are (a) subject to a (i) fair and (ii) efficient asylum process and (b) protected from refoulement.

Tom Pursglove:

Section 9.1.1 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UK and Rwanda, for the provision of a Migration and Economic Development Partnership, states that Rwanda will process asylum claims in accordance with the Refugee Convention, Rwandan immigration laws and international and Rwandan standards, including under international and Rwandan human rights law. Individuals will be provided with access to interpreters and legal assistance as required.

The MoU also states that relocated individuals will be protected from refoulement.

In addition, a Monitoring Committee is being established to ensure that the provisions of the MoU are being implemented as expected.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[28508]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason the UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership was designed to operate through a Memorandum of Understanding rather than an agreement that is binding in international law.

Tom Pursglove:

The UK has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership arrangement and to address the shared challenge of illegal migration. An MoU is a common mechanism for establishing an arrangement or partnership between countries.

The MoU was negotiated with close care and attention to ensure that assurances were in place to ensure the partnership operated appropriately, with a strong regard to the welfare of those it concerns, and in line with both parties' international obligations. While not legally binding in international law, the terms of the MoU – including the monitoring arrangements – give the assurances we need that the arrangement will be operated in line with our international obligations and in a manner which ensures the safety of those relocated.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[28509]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason the name of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda refers to migration when the scheme relates to asylum seekers.

Tom Pursglove:

The Migration and Economic Development Partnership will see those travelling to the UK through illegal, dangerous and unnecessary methods and whose asylum claims are inadmissible to the UK's asylum system, considered for relocation to Rwanda, where they will have their asylum claim processed.

The partnership recognises the need for international co-operation and partnership on migration and Rwanda will host both asylum seekers and migrants and offer them legal pathways to settle there.

For those granted protection in Rwanda, individuals will be supported to build a safe and prosperous new life. Those whose claims for protection are rejected will either be offered the chance to stay in Rwanda and be granted alternative immigration status, or return to their home country.

Anyone who wishes to settle in Rwanda will have their needs met. Rwanda will create a safe environment for migrants to start a new life, with education, employment and accommodation.

■ Domestic Abuse

Peter Gibson:

[27734]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Minister for Safeguarding has had recent discussions with representatives of (a) banks and (b) UK Finance on tackling financial abuse by perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Tom Pursglove:

Tackling domestic abuse is a key commitment for this Government, and tackling financial and economic abuse is integral to this. That is why we introduced our landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (the 2021 Act) alongside a comprehensive action plan of non-legislative measures.

In recognition of the devastating impact economic abuse can have on victims' lives, for the first time in history, it is now recognised in law as part of the statutory definition of domestic abuse, within the 2021 Act. The Act, supported by statutory guidance, will further assist frontline services and agencies in identifying and responding to economic abuse.

We work closely with, and fund organisations that, seek to promote awareness of, and improve the response to economic abuse, including the organisation Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA). Since 2018, we have provided £567,000 of funding to SEA which has supported the vital work of the Financial Support Line and their financial services industry initiative for banks and building societies to better support victim and survivors of domestic abuse.

On 30 March, we went even further and published our Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan. The plan will seek to transform the whole of society's response and sets out four key areas to improve the response to domestic abuse; Prioritising Prevention, Supporting Victims, Pursuing Perpetrators and creating a Stronger System. The plan invests over £230 million of new funding, with over £140 million to support victims. The plan also commits £200,000 of funding to further support improving the response to economic abuse and provide vital economic safety for victims and survivors.

We recognise the financial sector has a key role to play in tackling economic abuse and we work closely with UK Finance to continue raising awareness and understanding amongst financial firms. To hear a range of views on how the public and private sector can continue working together to strengthen our response to economic abuse, in February, the Home Office held an economic abuse roundtable with key stakeholders from the voluntary and financial sectors.

We are committed to ensuring victims of economic abuse receive the support they need and we continue working closely with the financial sector to improve the response to all forms of abuse.

■ Domestic Abuse: Older People

Sarah Champion:

[27623]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that (a) Hourglass and (b) other domestic abuse charities for older victims receive adequate funding.

Tom Pursglove:

Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority for this Government. We want to continue building on our landmark Domestic Abuse Act to further strengthen support available for all victims of domestic abuse, including the most vulnerable in society, and tackle perpetrators of these abhorrent crimes.

We know that domestic abuse affects a wide and disparate group and that a “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate to support all victims. Whilst anyone can suffer from domestic abuse, for older victims, abuse may be more hidden and disguised, or compounded by other age-related factors such as mental or physical ill health.

We also understand the importance of specialist and ‘by and for’ services (specialist services that are designed and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve) in providing the tailored support that victims and survivors of domestic abuse need. We work closely with, and fund, organisations providing this vital support, including the charity Hourglass.

In 2021/22, the Home Office provided Hourglass over £200,000 to support their work in enhancing their helpline, providing casework support, and training specialist IDVAs. For 2022/23, we have provided pro-rata funding for an extended 8 months.

In March this year we went even further and published our Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan. The plan invests over £230 million of new funding to tackle domestic abuse, with over £140 million to support victims. This includes over £47 million in ringfenced funding for victims’ services.

Our Domestic Abuse Plan commits to, where possible, offering multi-year awards to fund organisations supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse. This means that smaller organisations, including ‘by and for’ services, can offer a stable service to victims and survivors. The VAWG National Statement of Expectations, and Commissioning Toolkit, which we published alongside the plan, will also provide support to commissioners to help them increase provision of ‘by and for’ and specialist services.

We will be running an open commercial competition in the coming months for ‘by and for’ and specialist services, including those providing services for older victims. As part of the competition, we will undertake market engagement allowing interested organisations to discuss and input into the competition prior to bidding.

■ Fire and Rescue Services

Rachael Maskell: [\[27647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of what constitutes a safe fire engine-to-population ratio with (a) a fire station with 24-hour cover, (b) day-time firefighter cover with a retained-only night service and (c) retained-only cover.

Kit Malthouse:

No. These are operational matters for local fire and rescue leaders to assess based on an understanding of their local risk.

■ Home Office: EU Law

Layla Moran: [\[27728\]](#)

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

Kit Malthouse:

There were a number of officials who provided information relating to their policy areas to identify retained EU legislation for inclusion in the Retained EU Law Dashboard. This was an iterative process over a number of months. In Full Time Equivalent terms this staffing resource would equate to 0.5 FTE.

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

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

■ Home Office: Media

Emily Thornberry: [\[29970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2022 to Question 21137, whether any other agreements have been in place besides Media Buying framework agreement RM6003 to cover her Department's payments to Omnicom Media Group of £67,050,917.55 under the expense area Ad Production between April 2019 and May 2022.

Emily Thornberry: [\[29971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2022 to Question 21137, whether any other agreements were in place besides Media Buying framework agreement RM6003, to cover her Department's payments to

Omnicom Media Group of (a) £2,062,859.85 under the expense area Marketing and Media between March 2019 and March 2021 and (b) £200,886.62 under the expense area Multimedia between March and June 2019.

Tom Pursglove:

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

■ **Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership**

Stephen Farry:

[24703]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the role of the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership in promoting partnership between her Department and the devolved Administrations.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: The Home Office works closely with multiple partners in Northern Ireland to ensure appropriate provision of services for asylum seekers, which includes the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership. We remain committed to the relationship with our partners in all devolved administrations and the benefits Strategic Migration Partnerships offer in supporting the implementation of government priorities on asylum.

■ **Police: Ellesmere Port and Neston**

Justin Madders:

[28890]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers were based permanently in Ellesmere Port and Neston constituency in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the size of the police workforce in England and Wales on a biannual basis in the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, available here: [Police workforce England and Wales statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005761/open-data-table-police-workforce-280721.ods)

These data are collected by Police Force Area only, and lower levels of geography, such as Parliamentary Constituencies or Metropolitan Boroughs are not collected. Data on the number of police officers in Cheshire Police, on both a full-time equivalent (FTE) and a headcount basis, as at 31 March each year since 2007 are available in the Open Data Tables that accompany the release here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005761/open-data-table-police-workforce-280721.ods

The next release of 'Police workforce, England and Wales', which will cover the situation as at March 2022, is scheduled for release on Wednesday 27th July.

While the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin remains the key measure of the size of the police workforce, throughout the duration of the Police

Officer Uplift Programme, the Home Office also publishes a quarterly update on the number of officers (headcount only) in England and Wales by Police Force Area. The latest release contains provisional headcount figures for 31 March 2022, which are available here: Police Officer uplift statistics - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

■ Threat to Life Notices

Steve Reed:

[30025]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2022 to Question 25867 on Threat to Life Notices, whether her Department holds figures on the cost to police forces of issuing Osman warnings in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not collect or hold figures on the cost to police force of issuing Osman warnings.

■ Visas: Applications

Grahame Morris:

[30000]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 18876 on Visas: Applications, what further steps he is taking to reduce administrative errors with reference to visa application GWF06412451 in the context of that visa notification subsequently being incorrectly sent to Abu Dhabi rather than Islamabad Visa Application Centre; and if he will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The teams handling employment visas consider tens of thousands of applications per week. The vast majority of these are considered and reach the correct outcome.

Administration errors are rare and when any errors are flagged to the department they are resolved quickly.

We are committed to reviewing working practices to ensure errors are minimised and addressed as quickly as possible once highlighted.

We do not publicly comment on individual cases.

■ Visas: Research

Chi Onwurah:

[30018]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 13706 on Visas: Research, how many visiting academics conducting international research commissioned by UK universities have been subject to delays in gaining short-term work visas since February 2022; and what assessment she made of the potential impact of those delays on UK research.

Kevin Foster:

The Government recognises the importance of enabling visiting academics to undertake research in the UK.

The Home Office does not publish data on the individual delays by route, in this case, for Academic Visitors. It does publish data of its performance against its service level agreement, which can be found on the GOV.UK webpage: [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-transparency-data)

UKVI understands the impact of delays to customers therefore resources are focussed on reducing the current processing times and will continue to prioritise urgent compelling or compassionate cases across all workstreams.

UKVI encourages all customers to apply in good time ahead of intended travel dates, and customers can also make use of UKVI's optional priority visa services for visit visas in certain locations.

The Department is also continuing to invest in a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives which will speed up and simplify decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and decrease the number of people who are awaiting an interview or decision.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Trade Agreements: Free Trade

Ruth Cadbury: [\[26780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the proportion of the UK's external trade with countries with which the UK has a free trade agreement.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[26781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress her Department has made on achieving its aim of covering 80 per cent of the UK's external trade by trading with countries with which the UK has entered into a free trade agreement.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: To date the UK Government has secured trade agreements with 71 countries plus the EU, partners that accounted for 63.2% (£808bn) of UK bilateral trade in 2021. This includes agreements with Australia and New Zealand as well as the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which goes beyond continuity. We are continuing to work at pace to deliver our comprehensive free trade agreement programme. Recent developments include launching negotiations with Mexico and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Additionally, in June we concluded the fourth round of negotiations with India, as well as the second round of negotiations with Canada.

JUSTICE■ **Civil Proceedings: Candidates**

Theresa Villiers: [\[29951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to take steps to help prevent the use of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation by candidates in elections.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government will imminently publish its response to the Call for Evidence, which launched earlier this year. This will form the basis for targeted reforms at the earliest opportunity to prevent and deter SLAPPs in any context for which they represent a challenge to the public interest.

■ **Community Orders**

Steve Reed: [\[28888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2022 to Question 25871 on Community Orders, how many hours of Community Payback is yet to be delivered in each (a) region of (i) England and (ii) Wales and (b) probation service area in the latest period for which figures are available.

Kit Malthouse:

The below table provides a breakdown of the number of hours on the Community Payback caseload by Probation region as of 27/06/22.

It outlines the number of hours handed down by the courts (including recently sentenced hours) which still need to be worked.

This Government is committed to ensuring that offenders work all of their sentenced hours, subject to judicial decision.

We are boosting the number of hours offenders spend doing tough Community Payback, such as cleaning up public places, by nearly two thirds – from five million to eight million hours a year.

| PROBATION AREA | CASELOAD OF COMMUNITY PAYBACK HOURS |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| East Midlands Region | 374,615.8 |
| Derby City | 21,928.1 |
| Derbyshire | 34,234.6 |
| Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland | 75,605.6 |
| Lincolnshire East and West | 15,007.0 |
| Nottingham City | 35,591.2 |
| Nottinghamshire | 34,131.6 |

| PROBATION AREA | CASELOAD OF COMMUNITY PAYBACK HOURS |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Other East Midlands Region | 158,117.8 |
| East of England | 513,991.2 |
| Bedfordshire | 36,741.5 |
| Cambridgeshire and Peterborough | 43,474.3 |
| Essex North | 110,644.2 |
| Essex South | 91,922.3 |
| Hertfordshire | 36,568.8 |
| Norfolk | 63,515.4 |
| Northamptonshire | 66,600.7 |
| Suffolk | 63,303.0 |
| Other East of England | 1,221.0 |
| Greater Manchester | 345,023.9 |
| Bolton | 27,752.0 |
| Bury and Rochdale | 35,672.8 |
| Manchester North | 40,585.8 |
| Manchester South | 31,889.0 |
| Oldham | 25,090.9 |
| Salford | 22,014.8 |
| Stockport and Trafford | 31,438.0 |
| Tameside | 22,011.4 |
| Wigan | 24,482.7 |
| Other Greater Manchester | 84,086.6 |
| Kent Surrey Sussex Region | 360,166.8 |
| Brighton and East Sussex | 58,613.7 |
| East Kent | 67,102.1 |
| Surrey | 60,347.2 |

| PROBATION AREA | CASELOAD OF COMMUNITY PAYBACK HOURS |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| West Kent | 119,825.7 |
| West Sussex | 52,913.1 |
| Other Kent Surrey Sussex Region | 1,365.0 |
| London | 849,204.5 |
| Barking and Dagenham and Havering | 51,914.4 |
| Brent | 34,225.1 |
| Camden, Islington | 30,109.5 |
| Croydon | 31,883.7 |
| Ealing and Hillingdon | 31,754.2 |
| Enfield and Haringey | 45,730.7 |
| Greenwich and Bexley | 39,660.6 |
| Hackney and City | 29,639.2 |
| Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster | 32,480.9 |
| Harrow and Barnet | 31,241.9 |
| Kingston, Richmond and Hounslow | 32,074.2 |
| Lambeth | 23,328.0 |
| Lewisham and Bromley | 46,789.7 |
| Newham | 44,479.2 |
| Redbridge and Waltham Forest | 51,924.6 |
| Southwark | 23,016.5 |
| Tower Hamlets | 37,316.6 |
| Wandsworth, Merton and Sutton | 36,975.2 |
| Other London | 194,660.5 |
| North East Region | 200,402.0 |
| County Durham and Darlington | 19,739.1 |
| Gateshead and South Tyneside | 25,418.2 |

| PROBATION AREA | CASELOAD OF COMMUNITY PAYBACK HOURS |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Newcastle Upon Tyne | 15,074.0 |
| North Tyneside and Northumberland | 29,707.0 |
| Redcar, Cleveland and Middlesbrough | 19,154.6 |
| Stockton and Hartlepool | 16,397.1 |
| Sunderland | 15,017.1 |
| Other North East Region | 59,895.0 |
| North West Region | 510,398.6 |
| Blackburn and Darwen | 9,884.5 |
| Central Lancashire | 29,460.6 |
| Cheshire East | 28,540.1 |
| Cheshire West | 28,792.8 |
| Cumbria | 31,000.5 |
| East Lancashire | 23,942.1 |
| Halton and Warrington | 29,306.8 |
| Knowsley and St Helens | 26,413.9 |
| Liverpool North | 34,095.5 |
| Liverpool South | 34,535.0 |
| North West Lancashire | 39,715.8 |
| Sefton | 22,513.4 |
| Wirral | 37,475.1 |
| Other North West Region | 134,722.5 |
| South Central | 351,656.0 |
| Buckinghamshire and M Keynes | 48,551.6 |
| East Berkshire | 33,317.7 |
| Hampshire North and East | 52,774.2 |
| Oxfordshire | 23,929.4 |

| PROBATION AREA | CASELOAD OF COMMUNITY PAYBACK HOURS |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Portsmouth and IoW | 26,117.5 |
| Southampton, Eastleigh and New Forest | 34,784.8 |
| West Berkshire | 37,259.3 |
| Other South Central | 94,921.6 |
| South West | 404,434.6 |
| Bath and North Somerset | 19,903.4 |
| Bristol and South Gloucestershire | 103,488.5 |
| Cornwall and Isles of Scilly | 18,229.2 |
| Devon and Torbay | 32,491.9 |
| Dorset | 73,086.3 |
| Gloucestershire | 34,267.2 |
| Plymouth | 27,462.6 |
| Somerset | 38,190.9 |
| Swindon and Wiltshire | 56,374.5 |
| Other South West | 940.0 |
| Wales | 304,529.4 |
| Cardiff and Vale | 66,898.9 |
| Cwm Taf Morgannwg | 45,412.0 |
| Dyfed Powys | 38,891.4 |
| Gwent | 36,714.0 |
| North Wales | 85,236.0 |
| Swansea, Neath Port-Talbot | 28,893.7 |
| Other Wales | 2,483.5 |
| West Midlands Region | 403,012.7 |
| Birmingham Central and South | 54,245.5 |
| Birmingham North, East and Solihull | 45,832.5 |

| PROBATION AREA | CASELOAD OF COMMUNITY PAYBACK HOURS |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Coventry | 46,190.4 |
| Dudley and Sandwell | 19,188.1 |
| Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford | 15,311.3 |
| Staffordshire and Stoke | 52,068.8 |
| Walsall and Wolverhampton | 33,985.5 |
| Warwickshire | 29,432.8 |
| Worcestershire | 16,994.1 |
| Other West Midlands Region | 89,763.8 |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 688,056.9 |
| Barnsley and Rotherham | 48,170.6 |
| Bradford and Calderdale | 168,798.6 |
| Doncaster | 34,181.4 |
| Hull and East Riding | 60,515.0 |
| Kirklees | 65,751.8 |
| Leeds | 128,704.2 |
| North and North East Lincs | 27,857.2 |
| North Yorkshire | 44,007.4 |
| Sheffield | 44,698.1 |
| Wakefield | 49,025.5 |
| York | 15,075.6 |
| Other Yorkshire and The Humber | 1,271.7 |
| Grand Total | 5,305,492.4 |

Data as at 27/06/2022. It is worth noting that some recording of hours sentenced or worked takes place retrospectively and therefore won't be included in this data.

Data is sourced from nDelius and while this data has been assured as much as practical, as with any large administrative dataset, the data should not be assumed to be accurate to the last value presented.

Cases held in an 'Other' Delivery Unit include cases held by a Region-wide Community Payback function, cases held in the region's enforcement function, or cases pending allocation to a Probation Delivery Unit.

■ Employment Tribunals Service

Dan Jarvis: [\[30022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications Employment Tribunals allowed to be submitted out of time in each of the last 10 years.

Tom Pursglove:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service does not centrally record the number of out of time applications that are accepted.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Finance

Tulip Siddiq: [\[27686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government is taking steps to increase funding for the legal aid sector.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[27688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the impact of extending fixed recoverable costs on the legal aid sector.

Tom Pursglove:

Last year, the Government spent around £1.7bn on legal aid. We are also injecting more than £10 million of increased funding a year into housing legal aid through our reforms to the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme. We keep the impact of the extension of fixed recoverable costs on legal aid under close review and have temporarily paused the extension to legally aided housing possession cases, to allow time for improvements to provision to be implemented.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [\[29977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to respond to the query of 7 April 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, ref ZA59082, regarding the funeral industry.

Tom Pursglove:

I would like to thank the Hon Member for West Lancashire for her continued engagement with my Department on issues regarding the funeral sector.

I would like to assure the Hon Member that I will respond to her query in full imminently.

■ Ministry of Justice: Pay

Jon Trickett:

[28399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the wage ratio was between the highest paid member of staff in his Department and the lowest in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Tom Pursglove:

The information requested for 2020 and 2021 is available on page 100 here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1041825/moj-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-21-accessible-version.pdf.

The wage ratio for 2021/22 is not yet available, but is expected to be published in Q4 2022.

■ Office of the Public Guardian: Complaints

Helen Morgan:

[30212]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the complaints process for members of the public corresponding with the Office of the Public Guardian.

Tom Pursglove:

OPG manage customer complaints through a tiered complaints process. Complaints are initially handled by the business area responsible, which is the 'first tier'. If a customer is unhappy with the response, the complaint can be escalated to the 'second tier' complaints team. At this stage the complaint, and its handling, is reviewed by the Public Guardian or a member of the senior leadership team on their behalf. If a customer is not satisfied with the response to their complaint, they can ask an MP to refer their complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman for an independent review.

The target for responding to complaints is 10 working days. OPG is currently experiencing backlogs in processing LPAs and the corresponding increase in correspondence has had an impact on OPG's ability to respond to complaints within the target. OPG understands the importance of customers receiving timely responses to complaints. In order to improve the service that is provided, OPG has recruited more staff to process LPAs and to respond to complaints, which is already having a positive impact on the length of time customers wait to receive a response.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: EU Law

Layla Moran:

[27723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 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.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities does not hold this information.

■ **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: MG OMD**

Emily Thornberry: [29968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether all payments over £250 made by his Department to Manning Gottlieb OMD between November 2018 and May 2022 and categorised under Level 2 of the Public Sector Procurement Expenditure Survey as (a) Advertising and (b) Communication Services took place under the Media Buying framework agreement RM6003.

Eddie Hughes:

All services supplied during that time were under Media Buying Framework RM6003.

■ **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Pay**

Jon Trickett: [28391]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the pay ratio was between the highest paid member of staff in his Department and the lowest in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

Pay ratio information is published in the remuneration report of the Annual Accounts publication for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Both 2020 and 2021 have been published and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dclg-annual-reports-and-accounts>.

The 2022 Annual Accounts will be published in due course.

■ **Derelict Land: Regeneration**

David Warburton: [30090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to develop brownfield sites.

David Warburton: [30091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to encourage housebuilders to develop brownfield sites.

Eddie Hughes:

This Government strongly encourages the re-use of brownfield land and has introduced a range of measures to support brownfield development and encourage housebuilders to develop brownfield sites.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements. We have introduced a number of planning measures including uplifting local housing need in the top 20 most populated cities to make the most of brownfield land and existing infrastructure and successfully requiring every local authority to publish a register of local brownfield land suitable for housing.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill sets out planning measures that will support regeneration by enabling more effective use of land, improving land value capture and supporting infrastructure delivery. Reforms, including clarification on the use of compulsory purchase, will make it easier to assemble brownfield land ready for development, whilst locally led Development Corporations will have planning powers to support regeneration and brownfield development. The measures will also create more consistency and certainty in planning decisions, simplifying the system so housebuilders can deliver.

Finally, the Department and Homes England regularly engage with urban areas to support delivery of homes on brownfield. We are putting significant investment into brownfield redevelopment through, for example, the £4.3 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund and £550 million Brownfield Housing Fund to support brownfield development and enable housebuilders to develop brownfield sites, with £1.8 billion in new funding announced at the Spending Review.

■ **First Time Buyers: Finance**

Jim Shannon:

[27612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what financial support his Department is providing to first-time house buyers.

Eddie Hughes:

This Government is committed to helping to make the dream of homeownership a reality. Since spring 2010, over 774,000 households have been helped to purchase a home through Government-backed schemes including Help to Buy and Right to Buy. The Government operates a range of relevant schemes which make home ownership more affordable.

More detail on all of these schemes and others including Right to Buy and discounted sales is available on the Government's home ownership website at: www.ownyourhome.gov.uk. The website also contains details of eligibility requirements so that people can identify the scheme most appropriate to their needs.

■ **Food: Advertising**

Tulip Siddiq:

[27684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has plans to ban junk food advertising near schools, nurseries and children's centres.

Eddie Hughes:

The health of our nation's children is of great importance to this Government. The Government will be publishing a Health Disparities White Paper, aiming to break the link between people's backgrounds and their prospects for a healthy life. The specific policy content of the White Paper will be set out in due course.

The display of advertisements is controlled under the advertisement consent regime by local planning authorities. However, it is the effect on amenity and public safety rather than the content of the adverts themselves which is subject to planning control.

Members: Correspondence**Crispin Blunt:**[\[29851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to reply to the letter from the Hon. Member for Reigate dated 5 May 2022 on planning enforcement on traveller encampments.

Eddie Hughes:

A response was issued to my Hon Friend on 25 May. A copy of the letter will be resent by email.

Mr John Baron:[\[29909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to correspondence dated 24 January, 22 February, 29 March, 10 May and 15 May 2022 from the hon Member for Basildon and Billericay, relating to a constituent, ref: JB36006.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government recognises the great importance of the effective and timely handling of correspondence, and the important points raised by my Hon Friend on behalf of his constituent. A Minister will respond to his correspondence shortly.

Regional Planning and Development**Rachael Maskell:**[\[27655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the length of time it will take to achieve his levelling up objectives and resolve regional disparities across the UK.

Eddie Hughes:

The White Paper is clear that addressing regional disparities must be a long-term project across central and local government, the private sector and civil society that extends beyond political and business cycles. This is a deep-seated and inter-generational issue, and the Levelling Up White Paper is our plan for reversing this country's striking geographical inequalities and improving people's lives across the United Kingdom.

The White Paper sets out 12 ambitious missions to 2030 (living standards, R&D, transport, digital connectivity, education, skills, health, wellbeing, pride in place,

housing, crime, local leadership). These set out how government will drive tangible improvements in the things that matter to people and places over the course of this decade, underpinned by an ambitious policy programme that aims to have short, medium, and longer term impacts. Government will report on progress against these missions annually, and we will underpin this requirement in legislation.

■ **Regional Planning and Development: Environment Protection**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including mission targets on (a) natural capital, (b) the environment and (c) climate change in his levelling up objectives.

Eddie Hughes:

Natural capital, the environment and climate change are highly important for economic growth and well-being, both nationally and sub-nationally. There are well-developed policy strategies for protecting and enhancing natural capital, at the regional, national and international levels, already in place. This includes environmental targets, a key commitment in our Environment Act 2021, which will help deliver the Government's vision of leaving the environment in a better state than it was found, and the UK Government's commitment to decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet our net zero target by 2050.

■ **Right to Buy Scheme**

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[27712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he is taking steps to ensure that each home sold under the Right to Buy scheme extension is replaced by equivalent social housing.

Eddie Hughes:

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

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

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

■ **Water: North East**

Peter Gibson:

[\[27738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what support his Department is providing to (a) Darlington Borough Council and (b) local authorities in the North East to assist with the (i) timely and (ii) cost effective resolution of the Nutrient Neutrality instructions issued by Natural England in March 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

We are aware meeting the requirements of the Habitats Regulations is impacting on development in some areas and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) continue to work across government to identify the range of solutions in the short, medium and long term. There is a package of support in place to enable local authorities affected by nutrient pollution to meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. This includes tools to help local authorities understand nutrient neutrality, ongoing practical support and £100,000 of DLUHC funding available for each Habitats Site catchment to enable affected areas to respond to the challenges of nutrient pollution in a partnership approach. This will enable affected areas to hire catchment nutrients officers to respond to the challenges of nutrient pollution in a partnership approach.

The Government is working with the water industry and regulators to ensure that considerable investment is directed at reducing nutrient pollution from wastewater. From 2020 to 2025, water companies are investing £2.5 billion in measures that reduce nutrient pollution. We are also taking action to support farmers to go further to reduce agricultural pollution and deliver for nature.

NORTHERN IRELAND■ **Northern Ireland Office: Consultants**

Sarah Olney: [\[27706\]](#)

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

Conor Burns:

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave on 27 June 2022 (UIN 23420) to the hon Member for North East Fife.

Since this answer was provided, we have published our 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts. The amount spent on consultancy for 2021-22 was £304,400.

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Official Hospitality**

Jon Trickett: [\[27533\]](#)

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

Conor Burns:

The amount spent on hospitality by the Northern Ireland Office is as follows:

2019-20 - £258,327

2020-21 - £33,458

2021-22 - £62,872

■ Northern Ireland Office: Pay**Jon Trickett:****[28400]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the wage ratio was between the highest paid member of staff in his Department and the lowest in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Conor Burns:

The wage ratio between the highest paid member of staff and the lowest in the Northern Ireland Office was:

(a) 9.8:1 in 2020

(b) 8.0:1 in 2021; and

(c) 7.6:1 in 2022.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Venture Capital****Chi Onwurah:****[30011]**

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to his oral contribution of 22 June 2022, Official Report, col 840, that there is record venture capital investment in this country, which has now overtaken China as a venue for venture capital investment, what (a) data and (b) sources he is citing.

Chi Onwurah:**[30012]**

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to his oral contribution of 15 June 2022, Official Report, col 281, that in the first five months of this year this country has attracted £16 billion of investment in its tech sector, helped by the 130 per cent super deduction for business investment from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) the evidential basis is for his remarks, (b) the sources are for the figures cited and (c) proportion of the £16 billion was eligible for the super deduction.

Boris Johnson:

I refer the Hon. Member to the Official Report, 6 July 2022, col. 11MC.

The source was the Dealroom Tech Health Check which is available at <https://dealroom.co/blog/uk-tech-health-check-london-tech-week-2022>.

This Government has been creating the right tax environment to promote investment and innovation. That is why we introduced the 130% super-deduction for capital investment and increased the Annual Investment Allowance from £200,000 to £1 million. We also have specific tax reliefs aimed at encouraging Venture Capital and early-stage investment, such as the Enterprise Investment Scheme and the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme.

SCOTLAND**■ Scotland Office: Contracts**

Jon Trickett: [\[29892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many contracts that are worth (a) between £1 million and £3 million and (b) over £3 million their (i) Department and (ii) Department's agencies and non-departmental public bodies (A) have agreed since 2010 and (B) are due to agree within the next 12 months; how much their Department has spent on monitoring each contract in each year since 2010; and how many officials have been working on that monitoring in each year since 2010.

Mr Alister Jack:

My Department has not agreed any contacts worth (a) between £1 million and £3 million and (b) over £3 million for the (i) Department or (ii) Department's agencies and non-departmental public bodies since 2010 or is due to agree any contract within the next 12 months.

■ Scotland Office: Pay

Jon Trickett: [\[28401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what the wage ratio was between the highest paid member of staff in his Department and the lowest in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Mr Alister Jack:

Information on wage ratios between the highest paid member of staff in my Department and the lowest is available in the department's annual report and accounts in the remuneration and staff report section for 2020 and 2021. Information for 2022 will be available once the annual report and accounts are laid in parliament next week.

TRANSPORT**■ A66: Cycling**

Peter Gibson: [\[27740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether officials in his Department have had discussions with (a) Highways England, (b) Darlington Borough Council and (c) North Yorkshire Council on improving safe access for cyclists on the A66 at Blackwell Bridge and Roundabout.

Trudy Harrison:

National Highways recognises that improvements are needed in this area to provide safer access for cyclists. In November 2021 cycle route warning signs were installed on both A66 approaches to the Blackwell roundabout. In addition, a scheme is currently being developed to install an off-carriageway pedestrian/cycle route

between the Blackwell minor road and the road to Stapleton and a new crossing point over the A66 at the Blackwell roundabout.

National Highways has been engaging with North Yorkshire County Council and Darlington Borough council throughout the development of this scheme and anticipate delivery in 2024.

■ Airlines

Jim Shannon:

[27614]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with airlines on mitigating (a) staff shortages and (b) flight cancellations.

Robert Courts:

We have been extensively engaging with industry at both ministerial and official level since the beginning of the year. Further to this engagement, and following disruption at airports during the June half term, the Secretary of State and I chaired a meeting with airports, airlines and ground handlers in order to understand the specific issues they were facing over half term and the actions they were taking to result these.

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

During these meetings we have been clear, that the volume of late notice cancellations are unacceptable and airlines must have realistic schedules they can deliver.

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

On 30 June, the Secretary of State announced a 22-point plan, which sets out the measures the Government is taking to support the aviation industry, including to help recruit and train staff, ensure the delivery of a realistic summer schedule, minimise disruption, and support passengers when delays and cancellations are unavoidable. The Government recognised that while the issues was one for industry to solve, a series of targeted measures could support their efforts.

■ Airports: Disability

Drew Hendry:

[\[30052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Civil Aviation Authority on airport assistance for disabled passengers in the context of passengers requiring assistance while airside.

Robert Courts:

We have a legal accessibility framework to ensure disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility are provided assistance and we have been clear on the standards we expect from the aviation industry in terms of support for disabled and less mobile passengers, as we want all forms of transport to be accessible for everyone. We continue to have regular discussions with the CAA, including through the Ministerial weekly strategic risk group to ensure that airports and airlines are meeting the needs of disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility.

■ Aviation

Clive Lewis:

[\[28458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of the recommendation on managing aviation demand on page 350 of the Climate Change Committee's June 2022 progress report.

Clive Lewis:

[\[28459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has received representations from the Climate Change Committee on the viability and likelihood of success of the decarbonisation pathways in the Jet Zero Strategy.

Robert Courts:

In July 2021, we published the Jet Zero Consultation which set out our vision for the aviation sector to reach net zero by 2050. The approach set out in the consultation focused on the rapid development of technologies in a way that maintains the benefits of air travel and maximises the opportunities that decarbonisation can bring for the UK.

We published a further technical consultation in March 2022, and our analysis in both consultations showed that the sector can achieve Jet Zero without the Government needing to intervene directly to limit aviation growth, with scenarios that can achieve our net zero targets by focusing on new fuels and technology, with knock-on economic and social benefits.

We are carefully considering responses to both consultations in the development of the final 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 forthcoming Jet Zero Strategy under review and therefore we intend to assess progress on the sector's emission reduction pathway and update our strategy where necessary through five-year reviews

Ministers and officials from the Department for Transport meet regularly with members of the Climate Change Committee, and we will consider recommendations from their June 2022 progress report in further detail in the coming months.

■ **Bus Services: Wakefield**

Simon Lightwood:

[\[27771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much money from the public purse has been paid to Arriva (a) to deliver bus services in Wakefield, (b) from the COVID-19 bus service support grant and (c) from the Bus Recovery Grant since 1 January 2019.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government has made available nearly £2 billion of support to date, through emergency and recovery grants, to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic for bus services. This includes a further £150 million to continue to provide COVID recovery support until October to give services the maximum amount of time to recover. We are unable to provide the amounts provided to individual operators under these schemes as this information is commercially sensitive. West Yorkshire Combined Authority received over £8 million in recovery funding through these schemes.

The Government also spends over £200 million every year through the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to operators directly to keep fares down and make more bus routes viable. Arriva Yorkshire North Ltd, Arriva Yorkshire Ltd and Arriva Yorkshire West Ltd have received over £43 million in BSOG funding since 2010-11 to deliver services in Yorkshire, including Wakefield. The Government provides a further £42 million annually through the Bus Service Operators Grant to Local Authorities so that they can subsidise socially necessary bus services. West Yorkshire Combined Authority receives over £2 million of this funding annually.

■ **Crew: Working Hours**

Ian Mearns:

[\[30002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to (a) prepare a scoping exercise and (b) enhance the effectiveness of provisions on fatigue and seafarers' hours of work and rest in line with the approval of outputs at the 105th Session of the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organisation.

Robert Courts:

The United Kingdom co-sponsored a paper presented at the Maritime Safety Committee in April 2022 which proposed initiating a scoping exercise and enhancement of the effectiveness of provisions on seafarers' hours of work and rest hours and fatigue. The UK has since met with the World Maritime University to discuss its contents with a view to supporting progress on these work items for consideration at the International Maritime Organization's eighth session of the Human element, Training and Watchkeeping Sub-Committee.

Ian Mearns:[\[30003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward proposals to tackle seafarer fatigue in the ferry sector at the 106th Session of the International Maritime Organisation's Maritime Safety Committee in London from 31 October to 4 November 2022.

Ian Mearns:[\[30004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to promote the nine-point plan in response to P&O Ferries that was announced on 30 March 2022 at formal meetings of the (a) International Labour Organisation and (b) International Maritime Organisation.

Robert Courts:

As part of the seafarer protections nine-point plan, the government is working with industry and social partners to create a framework to advance employment and welfare protections for seafarers.

The government promoted measures to improve seafarer welfare at the International Labour Organization's recent Fourth Meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC). The UK supported eight amendments to the MLC, including measures to improve seafarers' access to the internet, to ensure that appropriately-sized personal protective equipment is available to support women seafarers, to clarify that drinking water should be provided free of charge, and to require that food aboard is of an appropriate quality and nutritional value.

We are continuing to highlight our ambitious seafarer protections nine-point plan and the wider objectives of Maritime 2050 to international partners both bilaterally and at the multilateral level at every opportunity (including at the IMO and ILO), as we work towards a step change in seafarer protections and welfare at the global level.

■ Department for Transport: Pay

Jon Trickett:[\[28393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the pay ratio was between the highest paid member of staff in his Department and the lowest in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Andrew Stephenson:

The highest and lowest value staff remuneration is declared in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts Remuneration Reports for 2020 and 2021. The values for 2022 will be published in the upcoming 2022 report.

James Murray:[\[30165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) direct employees, (b) contractors and (c) agency workers who work in his Department and relevant agencies and public bodies receive a wage below that of the (i) UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London and (ii) London Living Wage inside of Greater London, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Andrew Stephenson:

DfT pay staff in line with the statutory National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage.

As separate employers, information on DfT's Arm's Length Bodies is not held centrally, although all adhere to the statutory National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage.

Information for contractors and agency workers is not readily available and can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Erith Station: Disability**Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[30192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had discussions with representatives of Southeastern Railway on the potential merits of step free access at Erith station.

Wendy Morton:

I have recently launched the next round of nominations for the Access for All programme. All stations in Great Britain without step-free access will be a potential candidate. I would encourage the Hon Member for Erith And Thamesmead to engage with Southeastern to demonstrate that Erith station is a priority.

■ Parking and Ride Schemes: Fees and Charges**Rachael Maskell:**[\[28452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to pilot free (a) parking and (b) transport to and from park and ride schemes to assess whether this (i) drives local economic activity and (ii) a modal shift in transport use.

Trudy Harrison:

As set out in the National Bus Strategy published last year, the Government wants to see an expansion of park and ride sites in local areas. We have asked Local Transport Authorities to consider parking proposals in their Bus Service Improvement Plans, to improve bus services and encourage modal shift to public transport. Details of how park and ride schemes operate are a matter for the local authorities and bus operators concerned.

■ Pedicabs**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[30151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department has in place for rickshaw drivers; and whether he has plans to increase that support.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:[\[30152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to bring forward legislative proposals for the regulation of rickshaw drivers.

Trudy Harrison:

In England, outside of London, local authorities can regulate pedicabs as hackney carriages under existing legislation. The Government has committed to bringing forward measures that would enable TfL to regulate pedicabs in London through the upcoming Transport Bill. Should this Bill become law, it would be for TfL to determine the details of how any regulations would operate.

■ **Rolling Stock****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[29991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many trains ran on the rail network with fewer carriages than timetabled, in each of the last six months, for which data is available.

Wendy Morton:

The number of trains operated on the rail network with less capacity than contractually required, for those operators for which data is available, is shown below:

RAIL PERIOD

| 12/12/21 - 8/1/22 | 9/1/22 - 5/2/22 | 6/2/22 - 5/3/22 | 6/3/22 - 31/3/22 | 1/4/22 - 30/4/22 | 1/5/22 - 28/5/22 |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1,090 | 685 | 754 | 471 | 682 | 572 |

Mr Virendra Sharma:[\[29992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many trains ran on the rail network in each of the last six months, for which data is available, with fewer carriages than timetabled for each Train Operating Company.

Wendy Morton:

The number of services operated by each operator with less capacity than contractually required, for those operators for which data is available, is shown below:

TRAIN

| OPERATOR | RAIL PERIOD | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 12/12/21 - 8/1/22 | 9/1/22 - 5/2/22 | 6/2/22 - 5/3/22 | 6/3/22 - 31/3/22 | 1/4/22 - 30/4/22 | 1/5/22 - 28/5/22 |
| Abellio Greater Anglia (Peak) | 5 | 0 | 18 | 7 | 10 | N/A |
| c2c (Peak) | 83 | 51 | 10 | 11 | 4 | 16 |
| Chiltern Railway (All | 81 | 61 | 92 | 29 | 43 | 47 |

| TRAIN OPERATOR | RAIL PERIOD | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Day, Sun - Sat) | | | | | | |
| CrossCountry 97 (All Day, Mon - Fri) | | 98 | 89 | 74 | 93 | 85 |
| First TransPennine Express (All Day, Sun - Sat) | 110 | 74 | 94 | 107 | 115 | 99 |
| Govia Thameslink Railway (Peak) | 121 | 199 | 225 | 87 | 78 | 62 |
| LNER (All Day, Sun - Sat) | 7 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Northern Trains (Peak) | 41 | 37 | 47 | 55 | 101 | 131 |
| Southeastern (Peak) | 14 | 18 | 14 | 5 | 8 | 7 |
| South Western Railway (All Day, Sun - Sat) | 404 | 73 | 66 | 27 | 68 | 41 |
| West Midlands Trains (All Day, Sun - Sat) | 127 | 71 | 93 | 68 | 161 | 81 |

■ Shipping: Safety

Ian Mearns:

[30001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the outcomes of the 105th Session of the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organisation held in London on 20-29 April 2022.

Robert Courts:

The UK continues to play an active role within the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and treats matters related to maritime safety with the utmost importance. As with all meetings of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), the Ministers remains sighted of the full agenda spanning a wide variety of policy areas which for the 105th Session included ship construction standards, maritime autonomous surface ships, maritime security and piracy, and the provision of satellites which transmit Marine Safety Information.

The Department continues to monitor the outcomes of all IMO Committees and how these affect domestic policy matters. In this instance, those of the 105th Session of the Maritime Safety Committee and how these affect domestic policy matters.

TREASURY

■ Audiobooks: VAT Zero Rating

Peter Gibson:

[27742]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will introduce a zero rating of VAT for all audiobooks.

Lucy Frazer:

At March Budget 2020 the Government announced the introduction of a zero rate of VAT on certain e-publications (including e-books) to support literacy and reading in all its forms and make it clear that e-books, e-newspapers, e-magazines, and academic e-journals are entitled to the same VAT treatment as their physical counterparts.

The extension of the zero rate of VAT to e-publications was introduced to provide consistency of approach between certain physical and digital publications.

Audiobooks are already taxed consistently at the standard rate in both physical and digital formats.

The Government keeps all taxes under review, including VAT, but there are no current plans to extend the VAT zero rate to audiobooks.

■ Car Allowances

Kenny MacAskil:

[28923]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 31 March 2022 to Question 148399, on Car Allowances, and in the context of the recent increase in fuel

prices, whether he has plans to (a) review and (b) change the mileage rate authorised by HMRC.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAP) rates aim to reflect the running costs of a car including fuel, servicing and depreciation.

Employers are not required to use the AMAP rates. Instead, they can agree to reimburse the actual cost incurred. Where individuals can provide evidence of the expenditure, no Income Tax or National Insurance charge arises.

The Government keeps all taxes, including AMAP rates under review. Any changes are considered by the Chancellor.

■ **Corporation Tax**

Bob Stewart:

[\[28409\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the OECD's global minimum corporation tax proposals on costs for UK businesses.

Lucy Frazer:

The OECD's Two Pillar Solution to the process of digitalisation represents a major reform of the international tax framework and will help to ensure multinational businesses pay their fair share, with the right companies paying the right amount of tax in the right place.

Both Pillars 1 and 2 will be subject to the standard tax policymaking process, with their impacts formally assessed through the OBR forecast process.

■ **Credit: Legal Opinion**

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[29950\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answers of 4 July 2022 to Questions 27553 and 27554 on Credit and with reference to Sponsor Designated legal advice, whether his Department, when issuing its debt, provides for its legal advice to be funded by the counter-parties buying that debt.

Mr Simon Clarke:

HM Treasury, when issuing debt through the UK Debt Management Office, does not provide for its legal advice to be funded by the counterparties buying that debt. Each party selects and pays for its own legal advisers as it deems appropriate.

■ **Debt Respite Scheme**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[28909\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Mental Health Breathing Space Scheme, how many people (a) have accessed that scheme in each year to 30 June 2022 and (b) are estimated to access that scheme in the next 12 months.

Lucy Frazer:

The Insolvency Service publishes official statistics on the breathing space scheme as part of its Monthly Insolvency Statistics series, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monthly-insolvency-statistics>.

In the period from 4 May 2021 (when the scheme started) to 31 May 2022, there were 1,123 mental health breathing space registrations.

Data for June 2022 will be published in mid-July.

HM Treasury has not produced up-to-date estimates for the number of mental health breathing space registrations expected in the next 12 months.

■ Employees' Contributions and Pay: Wakefield**Simon Lightwood:****[27769]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in Wakefield constituency were (a) paying National Insurance contributions and (b) earning under £25,000 per year on 29 June 2022.

Lucy Frazer:

In 2022-23 there are projected to be 2.2 million individuals paying individual National Insurance Contributions (Class 1, 2 or 4) and 3.0 million individuals with earnings under £25,000 in Yorkshire and the Humber, which includes the Parliamentary Constituency of Wakefield.

These estimates are based on the 2019-20 Survey of Personal Incomes, projected using economic assumptions consistent with the Office for Budget Responsibility's March 2022 Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

HM Treasury does not publish this information at constituency level.

■ Financial Services: Environment Protection**Geraint Davies:****[29853]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department has made on developing the UK's Green Taxonomy; and when he plans to publish those proposals.

Geraint Davies:**[29854]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the context of the EU's exclusion of energy-from-waste incineration projects from its green finance taxonomy, whether he plans for energy-from-waste incineration projects to be in or out of the scope of the UK's Green Taxonomy.

Mr Simon Clarke:

In the coming months, the Government will be launching a consultation on the Technical Screening Criteria which underpin the Taxonomy. I encourage any interested parties to engage with that consultation.

After the consultation has concluded, the Government will make a final decision on which activities will be included in the taxonomy and the criteria they will need to meet.

■ Income Tax

Christine Jardine:

[30118]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a constituency-level breakdown of HMRC's Income Tax liabilities statistics: tax year 2019 to 2020 to tax year 2022 to 2023, containing the number of taxpayers in each income tax bracket since 2019.

Christine Jardine:

[30119]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a constituency-level breakdown of HMRC's Income Tax liabilities statistics: tax year 2019 to 2020 to tax year 2022 to 2023, containing the number of taxpayers aged 65 and over since 2019.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC's Personal income by tax year statistics contains constituency-level breakdown of taxpayer numbers for 2019-20, the latest available outturn can be found in Table 3.15 here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1066946/Table_3.15_1920.ods.

Further breakdowns of this information are not readily available and cannot be provided within the time available.

HMRC's Income Tax liabilities statistics publish a high-level regional breakdown containing the number of taxpayers in each Income Tax bracket and numbers over 65, these can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086257/Table_2.2.ods.

For projection years, HM Treasury does not publish this information at constituency level.

■ Legal Profession: Sanctions

Andy Slaughter:

[28871]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications have been made by (a) barristers, (b) solicitors and (c) others for licences to permit payments by sanctioned entities to be made for legal advice or representation in the last 12 months.

Lucy Frazer:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) in HM Treasury is responsible for financial sanctions enforcement. OFSI may issue a licence to enable the payment of reasonable fees and/or expenses for the provision of legal services. OFSI is unable to provide the information requested as it does not collate information on legal expenses licence applications in this format and it would involve disproportionate costs to gather.

OFSI publishes an Annual Review containing information on the breakdown of legal expenses licences issued during the preceding financial year. The 2020-21 Annual Review can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1025562/OFSI_Annual_Review_2021.pdf. Data for the 2021-22 financial year is expected to be published in the Autumn.

Andy Slaughter: [28872]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of applications for licences to permit payments by sanctioned entities to be made for legal advice or representation have been (a) granted, (b) rejected and (c) not yet dealt with.

Lucy Frazer:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) in HM Treasury is responsible for financial sanctions enforcement. OFSI may issue a licence to enable the payment of reasonable fees and/or expenses for the provision of legal services.

From June 2021 to June 2022 OFSI issued 29 licences for the payment of legal fees. OFSI is unable to provide all of the information requested as it does not collate information on legal expenses licence applications in this format and it would involve disproportionate costs to gather.

OFSI publishes an Annual Review containing information on the breakdown of legal expenses licences issued during the preceding financial year. The 2020-21 Annual Review can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1025562/OFSI_Annual_Review_2021.pdf. Data for the 2021-22 financial year is expected to be published in the Autumn.

Andy Slaughter: [28873]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of applications for licences to permit payments by sanctioned entities for legal advice or representation relate to licences to permit payment for advice on the lawfulness of sanctions.

Lucy Frazer:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) in HM Treasury is responsible for financial sanctions enforcement. OFSI may issue a licence to enable the payment of reasonable fees and/or expenses for the provision of legal services. OFSI is unable to provide the information requested as it does not collate information on legal expenses licence applications in this format and it would involve disproportionate costs to gather.

Andy Slaughter: [28874]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) criteria and (b) process, including timescales, are for the determination of applications for licences to permit payment for legal advice and representation.

Lucy Frazer:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) in HM Treasury is responsible for financial sanctions enforcement. OFSI may issue a licence to enable the payment of reasonable fees and/or expenses for the provision of legal services. It is for the applicant to demonstrate to OFSI that the legal fees and disbursements are reasonable. All licence applications are carefully assessed against the criteria set out in the relevant Regulations.

OFSI has received a significant increase in the number of legal expenses licence applications since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Information requirements for legal expenses licences can be found on Page 28 of OFSI's general guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1062452/General_Guidance_-_UK_Financial_Sanctions.pdf.

■ Married People: Taxation**Julie Elliott:****[28887]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the difference in tax paid by (a) married and (b) unmarried couples in each category of taxation where marital status is relevant in the most recent 12 months for which data is available.

Lucy Frazer:

The Marriage Allowance was introduced in April 2015 to recognise the importance of marriage and civil partnerships in the tax system. The estimated tax relief given to couples through the Marriage Allowance in 2020-21 was £580 million.

Personal Taxation is usually assessed on individuals' incomes rather than couples or households. As a result, HMRC do not hold administrative data on which to underpin an assessment of the difference in tax paid by married and unmarried couples.

The cost of the Marriage Allowance, and other reliefs, are set out in HMRC's tax relief statistics publication, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/minor-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs/estimated-cost-of-tax-reliefs-statistics>.

■ Military Aid: Ukraine**Preet Kaur Gill:****[30092]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide a breakdown of the departmental allocations, including funding from devolved nations, to the £1 billion commitment for military support to Ukraine announced by the Government on 30 June 2022.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The UK is at the forefront of efforts to provide diplomatic, economic, humanitarian and defensive support to Ukraine, and is something we should all be proud of. We have already provided billions of pounds to support Ukrainian efforts, and as long as the war goes on, we must continue to show global leadership in supporting President Zelensky and the Ukrainian people.

The UK is providing £1bn in additional support to enhance and sustain Ukraine's resistance to the Russian invasion. This new funding has come from contributions from UK government departments and the devolved administrations' existing budgets. Most departments committed around 1.5% of their 2022-23 capital budget. The Welsh Government contributed £30m and the Scottish Government contributed £65m. Following discussions with the Northern Ireland Finance Minister, and in the absence of an Executive, the Barnett formula will be applied in the usual way for the Northern Ireland Executive.

These contributions will be formally processed at Supplementary Estimates, where revised departmental budgets will be published by HM Treasury in the usual way.

■ **Minimum Wage: Uprating**

Charlotte Nichols:

[28503]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to increase the minimum wage in line with inflation.

Lucy Frazer:

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) rates are set from the independent and expert advice of the Low Pay Commission (LPC). The LPC has representatives from business, employee, and academic communities, and each year produces recommendations to the Government on the NLW and NMW rates.

The Government has accepted the LPC's recommendations on the rates in full and on 1 April 2022, increased the NLW by 6.6 per cent to £9.50 an hour for workers aged 23 plus. This helps to keep the Government on track to meet our target, which will help make significant progress on ending low pay by 2024-25.

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

■ **NHS: Taxation**

Fabian Hamilton:

[29898]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that additional tax payments as a result of pension growth are not disproportionately impacting NHS staff.

Lucy Frazer:

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

99 per cent of pension savers make annual contributions below £40,000, the level of standard annual allowance which has applied from 2014-15. To ensure that defined benefit scheme members are not unduly affected by the annual allowance (for example if their pension rights increase after a promotion), the Government allows up

to three years of unused annual allowance to be carried forward. The Government also increased the two thresholds above which the tapered annual allowance applies were each raised by £90,000 in April 2020.

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

The reforms to the annual allowance and lifetime allowance made since 2010 are expected to save £6 billion per year, and allow pension savers to build significant retirement savings tax free, while also ensuring that the highest earning pension savers do not receive a disproportionate benefit from pensions tax relief.

■ **Red Diesel: Excise Duties**

Duncan Baker:

[\[28502\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing fuel duty paid on red diesel.

Mr Simon Clarke:

At Spring Statement 2022 in response to fuel prices reaching record levels, the government announced a temporary 12-month cut to the full rate of duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre and an equivalent percentage cut on the rates for rebated fuels. Overall, this is the largest cash-terms cut across all fuel duty rates at once, ever, and is only the second time in 20 years that main rates of petrol and diesel have been cut. This cut represents savings for households and businesses, including those that use red diesel, worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23.

All taxes, including fuel duty, remain under review and any changes are considered and announced by the Chancellor.

■ **Treasury: Official Hospitality**

Jon Trickett:

[\[27529\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department spent on hospitality in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Mr Simon Clarke:

HM Treasury spend on hospitality for the calendar years are below

| YEAR | SPEND (£) |
|------|-------------|
| 2020 | £340,317.83 |
| 2021 | £39,128.81 |

| YEAR | SPEND (£) |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 2022 *(Jan-May) | £192,180.81 |

■ Treasury: Pay

Jon Trickett: [28396]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the pay ratio was between the highest paid member of staff in his Department and the lowest in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Annual Report and Accounts further details senior staff salaries -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004021/HMT_ARA_web_.pdf

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Children: Maintenance

Mr Laurence Robertson: [29865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason there is a difference in the age of a dependent child between the (a) Child Maintenance Service and (b) Student Loans Company; and if she will make a statement.

David Rutley:

For Child Maintenance purposes a qualifying child must be aged under 16 or under 20 and in full-time, non-advanced education or approved training. This definition aligns with eligibility for Child Benefit for consistency.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Pay

James Murray: [30166]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) direct employees, (b) contractors and (c) agency workers who work in her Department and relevant agencies and public bodies receive a wage below that of the (i) UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London and (ii) London Living Wage inside of Greater London, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

David Rutley:

- As of 07/07/2022, the total number of direct employees, contractors and agency workers in the Department for Work and Pensions earning below the Real Living Wage rate of £9.90 per hour was 0 and for the London Living Wage rate of £11.05 per hour was 0.
- As of 07/07/2022, the total number of direct employees, contractors and agency workers in the Money and Pensions Service earning below the Real Living Wage

rate of £9.90 per hour was 0 and for the London Living Wage rate of £11.05 per hour was 0.

- As of 07/07/2022, the total number of direct employees, contractors and agency workers in the Pensions Ombudsman earning below the Real Living Wage rate of £9.90 per hour was 0 and for the London Living Wage rate of £11.05 per hour was 0.
- As of 07/07/2022, the total number of direct employees, contractors and agency workers in the Health and Safety Executive earning below the Real Living Wage rate of £9.90 per hour was 0 and for the London Living Wage rate of £11.05 per hour was 0.
- As of 07/07/2022, the total number of direct employees, contractors and agency workers in The Pensions Regulator earning below the Real Living Wage rate of £9.90 per hour was 23 and for the London Living Wage rate of £11.05 per hour was 0.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[28374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2022 to Question 6683 and of 13 June 2022 to Question 16823 on Local Housing Allowance, if she will place a copy of the data tracking average shortfalls between Local Housing Allowance rates and tenant's actual rents by (a) Government Office Region, (b) Broad Rental Market Area and (c) number of bedrooms in the Library.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: A copy of the data requested has been placed in the House of Commons' Library. This data includes average monthly shortfalls for households in receipt of Housing Benefit or the Universal Credit Housing Element for the latest month where data is available, which for both is February 2022.

■ Migrants: Cost of Living

Kate Osamor:

[\[27675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that families subject to the No Recourse to Public Funds condition receive adequate support in the context of the rise in the cost of living.

David Rutley:

Access to DWP benefits flows from an individual's immigration status. DWP has no powers to award public funds benefits to an individual whose Home Office immigration status specifies no recourse to public funds (NRPF) including Universal Credit. Those on certain visa routes, including the family and human rights routes, can apply, for free, to have their NRPF condition lifted by making a 'change of condition' application if they are destitute or at risk of destitution, if the welfare of their child is at risk due to their low income, or where there are other exceptional financial circumstances.

Those with an immigration status with a NRPFs condition can access contributions-based benefits and the State Pension providing they meet the eligibility criteria; in addition, they can also access Local Authority support.

Local Authorities can provide a safety net of support to an individual, regardless of their immigration status, if there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example if there are community care needs, they have serious health problems or there is a risk to a child's wellbeing. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 imposes a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of "children in need" in their area. Support provided to a child by local authorities under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 is not dependent on the immigration status of the child or their parent(s). In addition, individuals with no recourse to public funds can also benefit from the Household Support Fund and may be able to receive support in limited circumstances, as determined by Local Authorities. See the link with further [guidance](#) on this.

Advice on alternative support available for those who are not eligible for Universal Credit can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/other-financial-support>

■ Pensions: Yemen

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[29993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will take steps to reinstate the pensions of Yemeni workers that worked in Britain and who have had their pensions stopped.

David Rutley:

The Department is working closely with the banking sector to reinstate State Pension payments for Yemeni workers that worked in Britain and who have had their pensions stopped due to the banking issues in Yemen. Reinstatement of State Pension payment will be dependant on individual personal circumstances.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Kate Osamor: [\[27677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many appeals relating to (a) Employment Support Allowance, (b) Personal Independence Payments and (c) Universal Credit lapsed in each month from January 2010 to July 2022.

Chloe Smith:

A lapsed appeal is where DWP changed the decision (in the customer's favour) after an appeal was lodged but before it was heard at a tribunal hearing.

The information requested for Employment and Support Allowance is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The information on the number of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) appeals lapsed between the earliest month October 2013 and the latest available month March 2022 is given below:

| APPEAL CLEARANCE MONTH | NUMBER OF PIP APPEALS LAPSED |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| October 2013 | 0 |
| November 2013 | 0 |
| December 2013 | 10 |
| January 2014 | 10 |
| February 2014 | 20 |
| March 2014 | 30 |
| April 2014 | 50 |
| May 2014 | 50 |
| June 2014 | 50 |
| July 2014 | 60 |
| August 2014 | 50 |
| September 2014 | 70 |
| October 2014 | 100 |
| November 2014 | 200 |
| December 2014 | 210 |
| January 2015 | 250 |
| February 2015 | 270 |
| March 2015 | 370 |
| April 2015 | 370 |
| May 2015 | 380 |
| June 2015 | 430 |
| July 2015 | 320 |
| August 2015 | 210 |
| September 2015 | 240 |
| October 2015 | 240 |
| November 2015 | 290 |

| APPEAL CLEARANCE MONTH | NUMBER OF PIP APPEALS LAPSED |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| December 2015 | 250 |
| January 2016 | 270 |
| February 2016 | 260 |
| March 2016 | 220 |
| April 2016 | 300 |
| May 2016 | 380 |
| June 2016 | 360 |
| July 2016 | 350 |
| August 2016 | 410 |
| September 2016 | 410 |
| October 2016 | 470 |
| November 2016 | 570 |
| December 2016 | 510 |
| January 2017 | 850 |
| February 2017 | 750 |
| March 2017 | 930 |
| April 2017 | 760 |
| May 2017 | 820 |
| June 2017 | 840 |
| July 2017 | 810 |
| August 2017 | 890 |
| September 2017 | 810 |
| October 2017 | 810 |
| November 2017 | 910 |
| December 2017 | 790 |
| January 2018 | 1190 |

| APPEAL CLEARANCE MONTH | NUMBER OF PIP APPEALS LAPSED |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| February 2018 | 1190 |
| March 2018 | 920 |
| April 2018 | 750 |
| May 2018 | 930 |
| June 2018 | 940 |
| July 2018 | 1230 |
| August 2018 | 1320 |
| September 2018 | 1460 |
| October 2018 | 1560 |
| November 2018 | 1580 |
| December 2018 | 1180 |
| January 2019 | 1830 |
| February 2019 | 1590 |
| March 2019 | 2120 |
| April 2019 | 2340 |
| May 2019 | 3510 |
| June 2019 | 3150 |
| July 2019 | 2640 |
| August 2019 | 2510 |
| September 2019 | 1890 |
| October 2019 | 1780 |
| November 2019 | 2450 |
| December 2019 | 1870 |
| January 2020 | 2840 |
| February 2020 | 2640 |
| March 2020 | 2310 |

| APPEAL CLEARANCE MONTH | NUMBER OF PIP APPEALS LAPSED |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| April 2020 | 2110 |
| May 2020 | 1880 |
| June 2020 | 1980 |
| July 2020 | 2350 |
| August 2020 | 2270 |
| September 2020 | 3020 |
| October 2020 | 3070 |
| November 2020 | 3700 |
| December 2020 | 2110 |
| January 2021 | 2370 |
| February 2021 | 2090 |
| March 2021 | 2570 |
| April 2021 | 2260 |
| May 2021 | 1720 |
| June 2021 | 1340 |
| July 2021 | 1350 |
| August 2021 | 1390 |
| September 2021 | 1900 |
| October 2021 | 1570 |
| November 2021 | 1230 |
| December 2021 | 1220 |
| January 2022 | 1690 |
| February 2022 | 1590 |
| March 2022 | 1930 |

Data has been rounded to the nearest 10. Totals are for Great Britain.

PIP appeals data has been taken from the DWP PIP computer system's management information. Therefore, this data may differ from that held by Her

Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service for various reasons such as delays in data recording and other methodological differences in collating and preparing statistics.

The information on the number of Universal Credit (UC) appeals lapsed between the earliest month available of April 2016 and the most recent month available March 2022 is given below:

| APPEAL CLEARANCE MONTH | NUMBER OF UC APPEALS LAPSED |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| April 2016 | 60 |
| May 2016 | 20 |
| June 2016 | 20 |
| July 2016 | 20 |
| August 2016 | 40 |
| September 2016 | 40 |
| October 2016 | 30 |
| November 2016 | 10 |
| December 2016 | 20 |
| January 2017 | 10 |
| February 2017 | 20 |
| March 2017 | 50 |
| April 2017 | 40 |
| May 2017 | 30 |
| June 2017 | 60 |
| July 2017 | 40 |
| August 2017 | 30 |
| September 2017 | 30 |
| October 2017 | 50 |
| November 2017 | 50 |
| December 2017 | 40 |
| January 2018 | 60 |
| February 2018 | 90 |

| APPEAL CLEARANCE MONTH | NUMBER OF UC APPEALS LAPSED |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| March 2018 | 50 |
| April 2018 | 30 |
| May 2018 | 20 |
| June 2018 | 30 |
| July 2018 | 20 |
| August 2018 | 40 |
| September 2018 | 30 |
| October 2018 | 20 |
| November 2018 | 20 |
| December 2018 | 10 |
| January 2019 | 30 |
| February 2019 | 10 |
| March 2019 | 10 |
| April 2019 | 10 |
| May 2019 | 30 |
| June 2019 | 100 |
| July 2019 | 130 |
| August 2019 | 190 |
| September 2019 | 390 |
| October 2019 | 520 |
| November 2019 | 520 |
| December 2019 | 480 |
| January 2020 | 610 |
| February 2020 | 410 |
| March 2020 | 230 |
| April 2020 | 200 |

| APPEAL CLEARANCE MONTH | NUMBER OF UC APPEALS LAPSED |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| May 2020 | 270 |
| June 2020 | 310 |
| July 2020 | 430 |
| August 2020 | 370 |
| September 2020 | 260 |
| October 2020 | 230 |
| November 2020 | 190 |
| December 2020 | 150 |
| January 2021 | 240 |
| February 2021 | 300 |
| March 2021 | 320 |
| April 2021 | 200 |
| May 2021 | 170 |
| June 2021 | 210 |
| July 2021 | 170 |
| August 2021 | 180 |
| September 2021 | 210 |
| October 2021 | 180 |
| November 2021 | 210 |
| December 2021 | 200 |
| January 2022 | 230 |
| February 2022 | 190 |
| March 2022 | 260 |

Data has been rounded to the nearest 10. Totals are for Great Britain.

UC data has been taken from on the Decision Makers and Case recorder dataset (DMACR). Therefore, this data may differ from that held by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service for various reasons such as delays in data recording and other

methodological differences in collating and preparing statistics. A significant analytical investment has already been made into understanding and assuring the UC data from this source.

■ Social Security Benefits: Standards

Kate Osamor:

[\[27680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that (a) Employment and Support Allowance, (b) Personal Independence Payments and (c) Universal Credit health assessments are carried out accurately and to the highest standards.

Chloe Smith:

The department is absolutely committed to ensuring claimants receive high quality, objective and accurate assessments, as part of the suite of evidence the department uses to decide entitlement. There are a range of regular governance and monthly performance meetings to support delivery of the contracts to ensure that where action is required, it can be focused and targeted.

We have a strong and collaborative relationship with all health assessment providers and work closely with them to further improve the quality of assessments, including clinical coaching, feedback, and support available to health professionals. Providers share training materials between themselves to encourage best practice, standardise processes and improve the claimant experience. They also regularly engage with medical experts, charities, and relevant stakeholders to strengthen, maintain, and update their training programmes.

The department is developing a Health and Disability White Paper, which will include health and disability benefit reform proposals, and improvements to the customer journey, enabling people to live independently and move into work where possible.

■ Universal Credit

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[28379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the discussion at the Universal Credit Programme Board on 22 October 2019 and agreement that a report would be brought back in February 2020 to update on the progress of implementing the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit's report on the experiences of vulnerable claimants on Universal Credit, which (a) official and (b) team held responsibility for that work following the decision to close the Complex Needs Steering Group.

David Rutley:

The Universal Credit Complex Needs Steering group was stood down in 2019 and replaced by a new governance structure which was led by the newly formed Customer Experience Directorate to ensure greater coherence, support and more efficient decision making within the Programme and the Department.

Sir Stephen Timms:

[29856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Universal Credit claims have been identified as not correct through the reverification exercise to date; and, of those, how many claimants have applied for mandatory reconsideration.

David Rutley:

In March 2020 the Department introduced a temporary verification easement to Universal Credit claims to support people during the height of the pandemic. This easement meant the Department successfully paid an additional 2.4 million claims during the early months of the pandemic.

We reported last year on how we were reviewing cases paid under these temporary verification easements, known as "Trust and Protect", and were re-applying these specific checks. The number of cases where evidence has been reviewed under this process has now risen from the figure of 900,000 previously reported to 1.1 million.

Of that number, 125,000 cases have been found to have an element of incorrectness that has affected the original entitlement decision. Decisions made as a result of this exercise have generated c14,500 (12%) Mandatory Reconsideration requests. (This data is based on internal and emerging internal management information and therefore has not been subject to the same degree of scrutiny and quality assurance as an official statistic.)

The learning from this work is informing the new Targeted Case Review exercise announced in the 'Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System' plan (published May 2022) which will review over 2 million UC claims over the next 5 years.

■ Universal Credit: Cost of Living

John McNally:

[27644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to allow those in the process of transferring from legacy benefits to Universal Credit to also receive the cost of living support package.

David Rutley:

Universal Credit claimants entitled to at least 1p during assessment periods ending between 26 April 2022 to 25 May 2022 will be eligible for the £326 Cost of Living Payment.

Those entitled to a payment of income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support on any day in the period 26 April 2022 to 25 May 2022 will be eligible for the first Cost of Living payment.

Finally, tax credit customers who have received a payment, or an annual award of at least £26, of tax credits for any day in the period 26 April 2022 to 25 May 2022 are eligible for the first Cost of Living payment.

This ensures that any legacy benefit customer who met the above qualifying criteria and transferred to Universal Credit during the qualifying period would receive a Cost-of-Living payment through their passporting legacy benefit.

■ Universal Credit: Crawley**Henry Smith:****[27575]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of Universal Credit claimants who will receive a cost of living payment in Crawley constituency.

David Rutley:

Universal Credit claimants who were entitled to at least 1p during assessment periods that ended between 26 April 2022 to 25 May 2022 will be eligible for the £326 Cost of Living Payment.

Statistics on the number of households that had an assessment period which covered the monthly count date and received a Universal Credit payment are available by Westminster parliamentary constituency at:

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

The latest statistics show the number of households with Universal Credit in payment on 10th February 2022.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

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

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

DEFENCE

■ Ajax Vehicles: Protective Clothing

John Healey:

[15179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has begun the process of searching for new ear protective equipment for use with Ajax vehicles.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 14 June 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Jeremy Quin:

As outlined in my written statement to the House on 19 May 2022 (HCWS42), the cautious parameters set by the Safety Panel within which the Ajax user validation trials are to be conducted included the temporary use of Crewgard **Mk2** headsets to allow the modifications proposed by General Dynamics to be trialled. The longer-term solution is being taken forward through the Armoured Fighting Vehicle (**AFV**) headset project, through which the first headsets are being procured and expected to enter service later this year. **In the meantime, an Urgent Capability Requirement is being progressed for new headsets to support the in-service AFV fleets.**

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Energy Infrastructure Planning Projects

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS195\]](#)

This Statement concerns an application for development consent made under the Planning Act 2008 by NNB Generation Company (SZC) Limited for the construction and operation of a nuclear power station near Leiston in Suffolk.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make a decision on an application within three months of the receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) of the Act to set a new deadline. Where a new deadline is set, the Secretary of State must make a Statement to Parliament to announce it. The current statutory deadline for the decision on the Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station application is 8 July 2022.

I have decided to set a new deadline of no later than 20 July 2022 for deciding this application. This is to ensure there is sufficient time to allow the Secretary of State to consider the proposal.

The decision to set the new deadline for this application is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

■ Energy Update

Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Greg Hands): [\[HCWS190\]](#)

Today marks a significant milestone for the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR), and the British Energy Security Strategy, with the publication of the first major deliverable – the Holistic Network Design, developed by National Grid Electricity System Operator. The full Holistic Network Design and supporting documents and maps can be found at: <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/future-energy/the-pathway-2030-holistic-network-design>.

The UK Government launched the OTNR in 2020 to improve the delivery of transmission connections for offshore wind. Considering the increasingly ambitious targets for offshore wind deployment, the current approach of delivering individual links for each wind farm is no longer fit for purpose and will not deliver the best outcomes for consumers, the environment or local communities.

More recently, the British Energy Security Strategy set out bold plans to scale up and accelerate affordable, clean and secure energy made in Britain, for Britain, so we can enjoy greater energy self-sufficiency with cheaper bills. This included an ambition for 50GW of offshore wind by 2030.

Holistic Network Design: Developing the GB network in a timely way is vital. Without it we will waste a significant volume of cheap, green electricity. This will require more network infrastructure than today, both onshore and offshore, but through an upfront, strategic approach to network planning we will ensure that new network infrastructure is minimised, and where it cannot be avoided, it is brought forward in the most appropriate place.

The first step to this new innovative approach is the Holistic Network Design, which has been published today (07 July) by National Grid ESO. The HND represents a significant shift in how network infrastructure is planned. It is a first of a kind strategic network design for the upgraded and new onshore and offshore network infrastructure needed to connect 18 offshore wind farms. This will provide the network infrastructure needed to meet our ambition of delivering 50GW of offshore wind by 2030.

The Holistic Network Design, for the first time balances economic factors with consideration of environmental and community impacts. It sets out the need for this infrastructure, not a detailed project plan. No decisions have yet been taken on the route for the network, or how best to do this. All projects that come forward as a result of the HND will be subject to the relevant democratic planning processes. These will ensure local stakeholders get their say on developments and impacts are mitigated as far as possible.

Pathfinder projects Alongside improving strategic network planning for 2030 and beyond, we are also facilitating innovation for well-advanced projects connecting ahead of 2030. Today, four initial Pathfinder Projects are being announced – in Norfolk, Aberdeen and South Yorkshire. These projects have voluntarily opted in to utilise changes made under the OTNR to increase network coordination and maximise the benefits for consumers, communities, and the environment. NGESO will continue working with developers to progress these projects.

Five projects off the coast of East Anglia have today confirmed their commitment to exploring coordinated network designs, with a view to identifying future Pathfinder projects. Further information on these announcements can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/offshore-transmission-network-review>.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Launch of the Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA)

Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg):

[\[HCWS192\]](#)

The Government has announced in the Spring Statement that it will create a Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA) to fight public sector fraud.

The PSFA will focus on performance and outcomes, building expert-led services to support government departments and public bodies to combat fraud. It will bring increased scrutiny across the system.

The government had planned for the PSFA to be launched in July 2022, with a statement to the House. The planned statement will be made, but at a later date.

The PSFA will be part of wider spending by the government of over £750 million to combat fraud. Once launched, it will replace the existing Centre of the Counter Fraud Function.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Online Safety Bill - Update for Report Stage

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):
[\[HCWS193\]](#)

Today the Government is committing to a series of changes to strengthen the Online Safety Bill further, and deliver our manifesto commitment of making the UK the safest place in the world to be online. This groundbreaking legislation will make technology companies accountable to an independent regulator to keep their users safe, while enshrining safeguards for freedom of expression online.

The Government has tabled amendments to make a series of changes to the Bill. This includes:

- Temporary “must carry” requirements for platforms to carry recognised news publisher content until an appeal on removal or moderation has taken place.
- Changes to the illegal safety duties, to include the risk that a service is used for the commission or facilitation of an offence, better to address concerns about cross-platform harms and breadcrumbing.
- Providing further powers to enable Ofcom to require companies to take additional steps to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse online.
- Strengthening the harmful and false communications offences, by including a partial exemption for holders of certain licences to ensure licence holders are not able to undermine the offence or avoid prosecution for harmful behaviour.
- Changes to make clearer that category one service providers can decide to allow harmful content on their service if they choose to.

In addition, many people are rightly concerned about the threat that state-sponsored disinformation poses to UK society and democracy. The Government has tabled an amendment that builds a ‘bridge’ between the National Security Bill and the Online Safety Bill. This amendment to the National Security Bill will designate the offence of Foreign Interference as a “priority offence” in Schedule 7 to the Online Safety Bill. This will capture the kind of state-sponsored disinformation that is of most concern: covert attempts by foreign state actors to manipulate our information environment in order to interfere in UK society and undermine our democratic, political and legal processes.

Following careful consideration and consultation with stakeholders and parliamentarians, the Government commits to implement the following changes, bringing forward amendments in the Lords where necessary:

Small but high-risk services:

Emerging risky services list

The tech sector is fast-moving and companies can rapidly expand. The Government recognises concerns that this pace of change will make it more challenging for Ofcom to keep the register of high-risk, high-reach (Category 1 services) up-to-date. To address this, the Government will introduce a new duty on Ofcom to identify and publish a list of companies that are close to the Category 1 thresholds. This will ensure that Ofcom proactively identifies emerging risky companies, and is ready to assess and add these companies to the Category 1 register without delay.

This new requirement on Ofcom will be combined with Ofcom's existing duties continually to assess regulated services and to add them to the register of categories if they meet the relevant threshold conditions. This will ensure the regime remains agile and able to adapt to emerging threats, as well as ensuring Ofcom can develop a detailed understanding of new risks.

Deferred power to apply the adult safety duties to small but high-risk services

We also recognise the concerns which have been raised around smaller platforms which allow or encourage suicide, antisemitic, incel, and racist content on their services and will continue with cross-government work on such issues. These platforms will already be subject to the illegal safety duties, ensuring that they put in place effective measures to prevent the most harmful content being shared on their services.

The current provisions in the Bill relating to legal content that poses a risk of harm to adult users acknowledges that the reach of such content as well as the functionality of the service, such as algorithmic promotion of harmful content, will affect the risk it poses to users.

Further research is necessary to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to expand the duties on small but risky platforms. We will therefore be conferring a deferred power on the Secretary of State to create a new category of small but high-risk services which will be subject to the duties relating to adults' risk assessment and adult safety. This change will mean those smaller but high-risk services will be held to account for the transparent and consistent enforcement of their own terms and conditions. The services included in this new category would be identified through a similar process as for Category 1 services in the Bill, but without a requirement relating to the number of users of the service. The Secretary of State will also be able to consider other relevant factors in addition to the risk of harm to avoid inadvertently bringing small services into scope where this would not be proportionate to the risk presented.

To ensure the Secretary of State has the necessary evidence to inform the decision whether to make this change, we will require Ofcom to produce a report with evidence of the prevalence of, and risk associated with, priority harmful content on non-Category 1

services. The Secretary of State will be required to consider that report when taking the decision on whether to commence the power.

It is vital that the Online Safety Bill remains targeted and proportionate and does not impose any undue burdens on business. We will only apply the adult's risk assessment and adult safety duties to services in this new category, rather than the full range of Category 1 duties.

Definition of "recognised news publisher":

We are committed to protecting media freedom and the invaluable role of a free press in our society and democracy. We are clear that online safety regulation must protect the vital role of the press in our society. This is why we have provided protections for recognised news publisher content and journalistic content. News publishers' websites are not in scope of online safety regulation. The legislation also contains safeguards for news publisher content and wider journalistic content when it is shared on in-scope social media platforms, including a right of appeal for journalists when their content is removed. At Report stage, we will strengthen protections, including to ensure that recognised news publishers' content remains online while an appeal takes place. However, we are clear that sanctioned news outlets such as RT must not benefit from these protections. As such, we intend to amend the criteria for determining which entities qualify as recognised news publishers in the Lords explicitly to exclude entities that are subject to sanctions.

Epilepsy trolling:

Flashing images sent online deliberately to people with epilepsy can result in significant harm. The Government has listened to parliamentarians and stakeholders about the impact and consequences of this awful behaviour. We welcome the Law Commission's recommended new criminal offence and can confirm that the Government will legislate for a new offence of epilepsy trolling through this Bill at the earliest possible stage. We had hoped to introduce a Government amendment at Report stage but it is essential to create an offence that is legally robust and enforceable so that those perpetrating this disgraceful behaviour will face the appropriate criminal sanctions. We therefore commit to table amendments to create this offence in the Lords..

Secretary of State's power of direction on codes of practice:

We recognise the concerns raised that the Bill allows too great a degree of executive control. These have focused in particular on the power for the Secretary of State to require Ofcom to modify a draft of a code of practice for reasons of public policy. We remain committed to ensuring that Ofcom maintains its regulatory independence, which is vital to the success of the framework. With this in mind, we have built a number of safeguards into the use of the Secretary of State's powers, to ensure they are consistent with our intention of having an independent regulator, and are only used in limited circumstances with appropriate scrutiny.

We will make two substantive changes to this power: firstly, we will make it clear that this power would only be used 'in exceptional circumstances'; and secondly, we will replace the 'public policy' wording with a more clearly defined list of reasons for which the

Secretary of State could issue a direction. This list will comprise national security, public safety, public health, the UK's international relations and obligations, economic policy and burden to business.

We are grateful for the continued engagement and scrutiny of the Bill as it moves through its Parliamentary stages. These changes ensure that the Bill remains sustainable, workable, and proportionate, and will create a significant step-change in the experience people have online.

Publishing risk assessment summaries:

We recognise the need for companies to be as transparent as possible when it comes to the level of risk in the design and operation of their services. This needs to be balanced with ensuring confidential information is protected, whilst maintaining the Bill's risk-based and proportionate approach. The Bill already requires in-scope services to carry out risk assessments, keep them up-to-date and update them before making a significant change to the design or operation of their service. Ofcom will also require major platforms to publish annual transparency reports - summaries of risk assessments could be included in this, however, we recognise calls to ensure this is more robustly enforced.

We therefore intend to require the highest risk companies to publish a summary of their illegal and child safety risk assessments, with a further requirement that the same categories of company submit these risk assessments in full to Ofcom. This should ensure greater transparency from the highest risk companies, whilst making it easier for Ofcom to supervise compliance with the risk assessment duty.

■ Online Safety Update

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):
[\[HCWS194\]](#)

The Online Safety Bill will deliver vital protections for children, ensure there are no safe spaces for criminals online and protect and promote free speech.

All services in scope of the Bill must tackle criminal activity online, and all services likely to be accessed by children will have duties to protect them from harmful content. The major platforms will have additional responsibilities to set out clearly what content harmful to adults they allow on their service, and to enforce their own policies consistently. Nothing in the Bill requires services to remove legal content from their platform and users will continue to be able to hold robust discussions of controversial issues, including those which might cause offence, online.

The Bill sets a threshold for harmful content, which brings into scope content of a kind which presents a material risk of significant harm to an appreciable number of children or adults in the UK. Disagreement online will not meet the threshold of harm in the Bill, including on issues of scientific debate.

A key feature of the online safety regulatory framework will be the designation of priority harmful content for children and adults. Services in scope of the Bill which are likely to be accessed by children will be required to prevent them from encountering 'primary priority

content that is harmful to children', and to protect children in age groups at risk of harm from 'priority content that is harmful to children'.

The largest and most high risk, Category 1, services will also need to be clear in their terms of service how 'priority content that is harmful to adults' is addressed by the service. Services will be able to set their own tolerance for legal content for adult users. Category 1 services will need to assess the risk of priority harmful content to adults, set out clearly in terms of service how such content is treated and enforce their terms of service consistently. This could include specifying that the content will be removed or deprioritised in news feeds, but could also include the platform stating that such content is allowed freely or that it will be recommended or promoted to other users. In addition, all services will need to have regard to freedom of expression when implementing their safety duties.

Final details of the types of content covered by the three categories (primary priority content for children, priority harmful content for children and priority harmful content for adults) will be designated in secondary legislation following consultation with Ofcom. This will ensure the types of designated content are based on the most recent evidence and emerging harms can be added quickly, future-proofing the legislation. However, the government recognises the interest from parliamentarians and stakeholders in the identity of priority harmful content. To provide more detail on the harms that we intend to designate, the government is publishing a proposed list of the types of content that it expects to be listed as primary priority and priority harmful content for children and priority harmful content for adults.

The government considers that the types of content on the indicative list meet the threshold for priority harmful content set out in the Bill. This threshold is important to ensure that the online safety framework focuses on content and activity which poses the most significant risk of harm to UK users online. It is important for the framework to distinguish in this way between strongly felt debate on the one hand, and unacceptable acts of abuse, intimidation and violence on the other. British democracy has always been robust and oppositional. Free speech within the law can involve the expression of views that some may find offensive, but a line is crossed when disagreement mutates into abuse or harassment, which refuses to tolerate other opinions and seeks to deprive others from exercising their free speech and freedom of association.

This may not be an exhaustive list of the content which will be designated as priority harmful content under the Bill. We will continue to engage extensively with stakeholders, parliamentarians and Ofcom, including on some of the most harmful content online, ahead of designating the details of the three categories of priority harmful content in secondary legislation.

Indicative list of priority harmful content

Adults:

Priority content (Category 1 services need to address in their terms and conditions):

- Online abuse and harassment. Mere disagreement with another's point of view would not reach the threshold of harmful content, and so would not be covered by this.
- Circulation of real or manufactured intimate images without the subject's consent
- Content promoting self-harm
- Content promoting eating disorders
- Legal suicide content
- Harmful health content that is demonstrably false, such as urging people to drink bleach to cure cancer. It also includes some health and vaccine misinformation and disinformation, but is not intended to capture genuine debate.

Children:

Primary priority content (children must be prevented from encountering altogether):

- Pornography
- Content promoting self-harm (with some content which may be designated as priority content, e.g. content focused on recovery from self-harm)
- Content promoting eating disorders (with some content which may be designated as priority content, e.g. content focused on recovery from an eating disorder)
- Legal suicide content (with some content which may be designated as priority content, e.g. content focused on recovery)

Priority content (companies need to ensure content is age appropriate for their child users):

- Online abuse, cyberbullying and harassment
- Harmful health content (including health and vaccine misinformation and disinformation)
- Content depicting or encouraging violence

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Social Care Update

Minister of State (Minister for Care and Mental Health) (Gillian Keegan):

[\[HCWS189\]](#)

The government is implementing a comprehensive reform programme of adult social care with £5.4 billion investment over three years, building on measures in the Health and Care Act. This includes £3.6 billion to reform the social care charging system and enable all local authorities to move towards paying providers a fair cost of care.

Today the Department of Health and Social Care has published updated operational guidance on implementing the cap on care costs, alongside the government response to

the consultation on this draft guidance. This guidance seeks to support all local authorities in their preparations for implementing our reforms from October 2023.

These changes will end the lottery of unpredictable care costs through the introduction of a £86,000 cap on personal care costs, as well as a more generous means test, raising the upper capital limit from £23,350 to £100,000, and the lower capital limit from £14,250 to £20,000.

The Government's consultation on the statutory guidance to implement charging reform ran from 4 March until 31 March 2022 and sought views on how a cap on care costs would operate in practice. The consultation received 161 responses, indicating broad support of the policy principles and the aims of our reforms. The feedback suggested that sections of the guidance needed further development to ensure they are clear and workable. We have therefore worked with local authorities and the wider adult social care sector to clarify and expand the guidance in line with this feedback.

The guidance updates the existing care and support statutory guidance (CASS) and covers the following areas:

- Cap on care costs (including detail on: daily living costs; what counts towards the cap; the metering process; requesting that the local authority meets self-funders' needs and cross-border issues);
- Independent personal budgets (including detail on: the principles of establishing an independent personal budget; verification of the purchase of care; dispute resolution; and moving from an independent personal budget to a personal budget);
- Care accounts (including detail on: what should be included in a care account; care account statements; retention of care accounts; and portability of care accounts).

We have also amended the guidance in response to feedback on the implementation of one specific aspect of our reforms, the extension of Section 18(3) of the Care Act 2014.

As announced in Building Back Better, from October 2023 we will extend the right for self-funding individuals to have their eligible care needs met by their local authority, such that they can access care at, generally lower, local authority rates. This is aimed at improving fairness and accessibility, as well as supporting the operation of the cap, which is based on how much local authorities pay for care. We will do this by extending the application of Section 18(3) of the Care Act 2014.

The consultation sought views on how best to ensure smooth implementation of this change. Respondents pointed towards a need to mitigate the initial impacts of Section 18(3) and a common theme in responses from local authorities was concern about the workability of full implementation from October 2023. They were also concerned about the potential impact on those awaiting care and support, should a large number of people with existing care arrangements already in place approach their local authority to arrange their care at this point in time.

The guidance published today therefore clarifies our intention to stage the extension of Section 18(3) over 18 months, so that people entering residential care from October 2023 are initially eligible. Additionally, anybody already living in residential care will be eligible from April 2025 at the latest, and earlier if the market can sustain full rollout. This will be kept under regular review. Section 18(3) already applies to individuals who are receiving care outside of a residential care setting.

Section 18(3) does not affect an individual's ability to use the cap on care costs; all care users will be able to meter towards the cap on care costs from October 2023. Rather, Section 18(3) helps individuals ensure that they pay no more than the metering rate when meeting their eligible needs; the metering rate is based on the fees commissioned by local authorities, and these cannot always be secured by individuals arranging their own care. This means that individuals using section 18(3) from October 2023 onwards need not pay more than £86,000 on getting the personal care they need; their local authority will arrange their care and they will meter towards the cap based on the amount they spend. Everyone who funds their own care will be able to ask their local authority to meet their needs from April 2025 at the latest. People with assets of less than £100,000 do not need to use Section 18(3); they will be able to ask their local authority to meet their needs from October 2023, as a result of the extended and more generous means test.

This staged approach to introduction will allow individuals funding their own care to benefit from local authorities' expertise in commissioning as quickly as possible, while allowing local authorities and social care providers to plan for this change and avoid unnecessary disruption to service provision.

Today's publication is a further milestone on the government's journey to reform adult social care, creating a system that is fit for the future and of which we can all be proud.

TREASURY

■ Fiscal Risks and Sustainability Report 2022

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr Simon Clarke):

[\[HCWS191\]](#)

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has published its Fiscal Risks and Sustainability report (FRS) today. This report fulfils the OBR's obligation to examine and report on the sustainability of, and the risks, to the public finances, in accordance with the Charter for Budget Responsibility. The UK continues to be a leading example in fiscal transparency and risk management.

The FRS has been laid before Parliament today and copies are available in the Vote Office and Printed Paper Office. The government will respond formally to the FRS 2022 at a subsequent fiscal event.

The UK has experienced several significant shocks over the last decade, including the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and a spike in global energy prices.

The government has taken a balanced approach, ensuring that it continues to support people and the economy in the face of global pressures and uncertainty with temporary, timely and targeted support, while reducing debt over the medium-term. The government's support for cost of living has now totalled over £37 billion this year, with the OBR noting in today's report the government spent as much " *as it did supporting the economy through the financial crisis* ".

The government is also committed to building a stronger economy for future generations and the OBR today has revised up long-run productivity growth because of the government's plans to deliver the over £600bn in gross public sector investment over the next 5 years, reaching the highest sustained levels of public sector net investment as a proportion of GDP since the late 1970s.

In the long-run, the OBR's projections show that demographic change, other cost pressures and the transition to net zero will put present significant challenges to the public finances. The OBR note the actions the government has taken to strengthen the public finances and reduce debt levels over the medium-term, but significant pressures remain. The report also highlights the UK still faces threats in the near-term. The public finances remain sensitive to inflation and interest rates, with the outlook for energy prices being uncertain and pronounced by heightened geopolitical tensions. The government must therefore continue to bring down the level of debt and rebuild fiscal space so we can safeguard the economy against future challenges and respond as future risks materialise.