



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 12 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 12 July 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	7	■ Hydrochar	15
ATTORNEY GENERAL	7	■ Hydrogen	15
■ Aiding and Abetting	7	■ Natural Gas: Imports	15
■ Attorney General: Contracts	8	■ Renewable Energy	16
■ Attorney General: Pay	8	CABINET OFFICE	16
■ Criminal Proceedings: Disclosure of Information	8	■ 10 Downing Street: Press Conferences	16
■ Crown Prosecution Service: Stockton South	8	■ Business: EU Law	17
■ Domestic Abuse: Prosecutions	9	■ Cabinet Office: Contracts	17
■ Fraud: Prosecutions	9	■ Cabinet Office: ICT	17
■ National Security Council	10	■ Cabinet Office: Procurement	18
■ Prosecutions: Disclosure of Information	10	■ Cabinet Office: Staff	18
■ Rape: Prosecutions	11	■ Cammell Laird: Strikes	19
■ Sentencing	11	■ Civil Servants	19
■ Serious Fraud Office: Prosecutions	11	■ Civil Service: Apprentices	19
■ Slavery	12	■ Coronavirus: Surveys	19
■ Terrorism: Prosecutions	12	■ Definitive PSA: Contracts	20
■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict	13	■ Foreign Investment in UK	20
■ War Crimes: Russia	13	■ Fraud	21
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	15	■ Government Departments: Public Expenditure	21
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	15	■ Military Aid: Ukraine	21
		■ Ministers: Redundancy Pay	22
		■ Ministers: Resignations	22
		■ Prime Minister: Contracts	23

■ Prime Minister: Travel	23	■ Earl Mountbatten of Burma: Disclosure of Information	35
■ Small Businesses	23	■ Sportsgrounds: Disability	36
■ Unemployment: Travellers	24	■ Swimming Pools	36
■ Veterans	24	■ Television Licences: Pensioners	37
COP26	25	■ Voluntary Work: Young People	37
■ Carbon Emissions: USA	25	■ Youth Organisations: Kirklees	38
DEFENCE	25	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	38
■ Afghanistan: Refugees	25	■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers	38
■ Armed Forces	26	■ Agriculture: Subsidies	40
■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement	27	■ Bivalve Molluscs: North Yorkshire and Tees Valley	41
■ Army: Social Media	27	■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control	41
■ F-35 Aircraft: Weapons	27	■ Convention on Biological Diversity	42
■ Helicopters: Procurement	28	■ Disinfectants: Shortages	42
■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Weapons	28	■ Environment: Standards	43
■ Merlin Helicopters: Early Warning Systems	28	■ Fly-tipping	43
■ Military Aircraft and Trident Missiles: Procurement	29	■ Food Supply: Greenhouse Gas Emissions	44
■ Ministry of Defence: Contracts	30	■ Food: Prices	44
■ Ministry of Defence: Legal Costs	31	■ Forests: Commodities	46
■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure	31	■ Livestock: Animal Housing	47
■ Ranger Regiment: Training	32	■ Marine Animals: North East	47
■ Ukraine: Military Aid	32	■ Members: Correspondence	48
■ Unmanned Air Vehicles	32	■ Nature Conservation: EU Law	48
■ Unmanned Air Vehicles: Procurement	33	■ Phytophthora Pluvialis: Disease Control	48
■ Watchkeeper WK450	33	■ Sustainable Farming Incentive	49
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	34	■ Sustainable Farming Incentive: Organic Food	49
■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Contracts	34	■ Veterinary Services	50

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	51	■ Russia: Prisoners of War	61
■ Afghanistan and Taliban: Females	51	■ South Africa: Carbon Emissions	61
■ Afghanistan: Embassies	51	■ Sri Lanka: Economic Situation	62
■ Africa: Energy Charter Treaty	51	■ Sudan: Politics and Government	63
■ Angola: Politics and Government	52	■ Togo	63
■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners	52	■ USA: Trade	64
■ Botswana: Freedom of Expression	52	■ Zimbabwe: Politics and Government	64
■ Botswana: Politics and Government	53	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	64
■ Developing Countries: LGBT+ People	53	■ Ambulance Services	64
■ Development Aid	53	■ Breast Cancer: Screening	64
■ East Africa: Non- Governmental Organisations	54	■ Cancer: Children	65
■ Food Poverty: Females	54	■ Cancer: Health Services	65
■ Foreign Policy	55	■ Care Homes: Costs	66
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Official Hospitality	55	■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	66
■ Gabon: Human Rights	56	■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments	66
■ Gaza: Development Aid	56	■ Dementia: Health Services	67
■ India: Press Freedom	57	■ Dementia: Speech and Language Therapy	67
■ Israel: Palestinians	58	■ Dental Health	68
■ Jim Fitton	58	■ Dental Services: Darlington	68
■ Libya: Terrorism	59	■ Dental Services: West Sussex	68
■ Nigeria: Religious Freedom	59	■ Dialysis Machines	69
■ Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference	59	■ Diseases	69
■ Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment	60	■ Disinfectants	70
■ Refugees: Afghanistan	60	■ Disinfectants: Shortages	70
■ Russia: Freezing of Assets	61	■ Epidermolysis Bullosa: Clinical Trails	70
		■ Evusheld	71
		■ Food: Labelling	71
		■ Gender Recognition: Health Services	72

■ Health: Equality	72	■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes	83
■ Heart Diseases and Kidney Diseases	72	■ Home Office: Contracts	84
■ Heart Diseases: Health Services	73	■ Immigration: EU Nationals	84
■ HIV Infection	73	■ Members: Correspondence	85
■ HIV Infection: Screening	74	■ Refugees: Afghanistan	86
■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Costs	74	■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence	87
■ Hospitals: Discharges	75	■ Spiking	88
■ Mental Health Services	75	■ Spiking: Music Festivals	88
■ Mental Health: Disadvantaged	76	HOUSE OF COMMONS	
■ Mental Health: Racial Discrimination	76	COMMISSION	89
■ Mental Health: Travellers	77	■ Members' Interests	89
■ Mental Illness	77	■ Members: Conduct	89
■ Musculoskeletal Disorders: Medical Treatments	77	■ Parliament: Educational Visits	90
■ NHS: Databases	78	JUSTICE	90
■ NHS: Software	79	■ Bail: Advisory Services	90
■ Pain: Drugs	79	■ Criminal Proceedings: Ethnic Groups	92
■ Pharmacy: Labour Turnover and Recruitment	79	■ Crown Court: Publications	92
■ Prader-Willi Syndrome: North West	80	■ Magistrates' Courts: Databases	93
■ Public Health: Equality	80	■ Prison and Probation Service: Ethnic Groups	93
■ Radiotherapy	80	■ Prisoners	94
■ Tirzepatide	81	■ Prisoners: Ethnic Groups	94
■ Travellers: NHS	81	■ Prisoners: Terrorism	95
HOME OFFICE	81	■ Prisons: Drugs	96
■ Asylum	81	■ Prosecutions	96
■ Asylum: Napier Barracks	82	■ Rights of Accused	97
■ Asylum: Rwanda	82	■ The Mount Prison	97
■ Domestic Abuse	83	■ War Crimes: Criminal Investigation	98

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	98	■ P&O Ferries: Contracts	106
■ Antisemitism	98	■ Railways: Passengers	106
■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Contracts	98	■ Speed Limits	107
■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme	99	TREASURY	108
■ Leasehold: Reform	99	■ Business Rates Review	108
■ Local Government: Devolution	100	■ Cash Dispensing	108
NORTHERN IRELAND	100	■ Children: Day Care	109
■ Northern Ireland Office: Contracts	100	■ Cost of Living: Visual Impairment	110
■ Northern Ireland Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	101	■ Credit	111
■ Northern Ireland Office: Legal Costs	101	■ Revenue and Customs: Correspondence	111
PRIME MINISTER	102	■ Treasury: Contracts	112
■ Chequers	102	■ Treasury: Pay	112
■ Lord Lebedev	102	WALES	113
SCOTLAND	102	■ Buildings: Wales	113
■ Scotland Office: Contracts	102	■ Passports: Wales	113
TRANSPORT	103	■ Regional Planning and Development: Wales	114
■ Air Routes: Pakistan	103	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	114
■ Aviation: Costs	103	■ Companies: Databases	114
■ Bus Services: Finance	104	■ Equal Pay	115
■ Department for Transport: Contracts	104	■ LGBTQ+ People	115
■ Dover Port: Undocumented Migrants	104	■ Social Mobility Commission: Public Appointments	116
■ High Speed 2 Line: Old Saltleians RFC	105	■ STEM Subjects: Equality and Social Mobility	116
■ Local Government: Motor Vehicles	105	■ Travellers: Cost of Living	117
■ Manston Airport: Undocumented Migrants	106	WORK AND PENSIONS	117
		■ Carer's Allowance	117
		■ Department for Work and Pensions: Contracts	118
		■ Employment: Poverty	119
		■ Household Support Fund	119

■ Lung Diseases: Health and Safety	120	■ State Retirement Pensions: Cost of Living	126
■ Pension Credit	121	■ State Retirement Pensions: Females	127
■ Pension Credit: Romford	121	■ Universal Credit: Northern Ireland	127
■ Pensioners: Energy	122	■ Universal Credit: Veterans	127
■ Personal Pensions	122	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	129
■ Poverty	123	EDUCATION	129
■ Poverty: Travellers	124	■ Capital Update	129
■ Silica: Health and Safety	124	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	130
■ Silicosis	126	■ Health Update	130
■ Sodium Hypochlorite: Health and Safety	126		

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Aiding and Abetting

Steve Reed:

[\[31852\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether the Crown Prosecution Service has taken steps to (a) revise its guidance on joint enterprise and (b) consider its approach to gang prosecutions.

Edward Timpson:

The CPS publishes guidance on various matters relating to its criminal prosecutions, which is

available for the public to view on the CPS website.^[1] CPS guidance is reviewed and updated periodically, especially when there is a significant change in law or policy.

(a) The CPS has published guidance on the application of the joint enterprise doctrine since 2012. The 2012 guidance, titled *Joint Enterprise charging decisions: Principal, secondary and inchoate liability*, was published following a public consultation.

The guidance was revised in 2018, to reflect a significant change in the law brought about by the Supreme Court's decision in *R v Jogee*. The revisions were informed by another public consultation and the title of the guidance was changed to *Secondary Liability: charging decisions on principals and accessories*, to reflect the terminology used by the Court.

The guidance was revised further in 2019, following a stakeholder consultation. The main revision related to guidance in respect of children and persons with learning disabilities, autism and mental health issues.

(b) The CPS guidance 'Decision making in 'gang' related offences' is regularly reviewed and was last updated in November 2021. The guidance urges caution about the use of the word 'gang', explaining how it can properly be deployed in a prosecution, where substantiated by the evidence and relevant to a matter in issue in the proceedings. In drafting the guidance, the CPS assessed the potential effect of using 'gang' in proceedings and identified that the term is used in legislation and by criminal justice partners.

The guidance clearly sets out that, given the negative connotations of the term 'gang', prosecutors should not refer to a group as a 'gang' in proceedings unless there is evidence to support the assertion. However, prosecutors must also ensure that where there is admissible evidence of gang membership, the case is put on a basis that reflects the often very serious gravity of the offending.

[1] <https://www.cps.gov.uk/prosecution-guidance>

■ Attorney General: Contracts**Jon Trickett:** [\[31001\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the total value has been of contracts held by their Department with (a) G4S, (b) Serco and (c) Capita in each year since 2020.

Edward Timpson:

In the period in question The Attorney General's Office has had no contracts with any of the listed firms.

■ Attorney General: Pay**Jon Trickett:** [\[28384\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the wage ratio was between the highest paid member of staff in her Department and the lowest in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Edward Timpson:

The Attorney General's Office wage ratio is as follows (a) 1:6.10 (b) 1:4.45 (c) 1:6.05.

As a small ministerial department with a limited number of staff disclosing salary figures would make staff potentially at risk of being identified.

■ Criminal Proceedings: Disclosure of Information**Matt Vickers:** [\[27756\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent steps she has taken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of disclosure.

Edward Timpson:

In May, we published the review of disclosure and amended the Disclosure Guidelines to deliver improvements for police, prosecutors and victims of crime.

The new Guidelines feature an annex on data protection which will ease the burden on police handling digital material, leaving them more time for front line duties and investigating crime.

Updated principles on accessing third party material have strengthened privacy protections for victims and mandate officers to have clear, written reasons in place before accessing any material such as therapy notes.

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Stockton South**Matt Vickers:** [\[27760\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment she has made of the performance of the Crown Prosecution Service in Stockton South constituency.

Edward Timpson:

The Stockton South constituency falls under the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) North East Area. HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) published a report on the performance of CPS North East in October 2021.

Overall, the inspection showed that the Area generally makes the right charging decisions and selects the right charges, properly reflecting the criminality and giving the court adequate sentencing powers.

The Area adds value by the appropriate use of applications to strengthen the evidence in RASSO cases and, to a lesser extent, Crown Court cases. The handling of sensitive unused and third-party material is of a high standard, adding value to the prosecution's compliance with disclosure duties.

Added value was also demonstrated at sentencing when the prosecution in most instances (and in all casework types) sought the right orders to protect victims, witnesses, and the public.

Although inspectors highlighted where improvements could be made, there were aspects of strength across the Area, which reflects the determination of the CPS to drive improvements.

■ Domestic Abuse: Prosecutions

Matt Vickers: [\[27757\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she has taken to increase the number of prosecutions relating to domestic violence.

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[31102\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she has taken to increase the number of prosecutions for domestic violence.

Edward Timpson:

Tackling domestic abuse is an important priority for this government. Over 10,900 suspects were charged with DA offences in the last quarter with a conviction rate of over 75% and in the last 5 years, the number of coercive and controlling behaviour cases has increased from 5 to 1,403.

We have continued focus on tackling this heinous crime by introducing non-fatal strangulation offence as part of our landmark Domestic Abuse Act. Those who strangle their partners in an attempt to control or induce fear will face up to 5 years behind bars.

■ Fraud: Prosecutions

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[31101\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of steps taken by the Serious Fraud Office to increase the number of cases it prosecutes.

Edward Timpson:

In its role as a specialist law enforcement agency tackling the top level of serious or complex fraud, bribery and corruption, the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is prosecuting eight cases within the 2022-23 financial year. These involve more than 20 individuals, charged with criminality worth over £550m.

Given this specialist role, as well as the scale and complexity of the cases it takes on, the focus of the SFO is less on increasing the number of cases it takes on, but rather increasing its capacity through the use of technology, reducing manual errors and delivering this year's trials effectively.

Driving this, the SFO received a funding uplift in the 2021 Spending Review which included £4.4m over three years to invest in technology. This will complement the wider work that it is doing to reduce case lengths and ensure the tools it uses to investigate and prosecute fraudsters match the evolving methods used by these criminals.

■ National Security Council

John Healey: [\[31000\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 26698 and with reference to the Answer given by the Secretary of State for Defence on 27 June 2022 to Question 23221, if she will set out how many meetings of the National Security Council she has attended since April 2022.

Edward Timpson:

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

■ Prosecutions: Disclosure of Information

Steve Reed: [\[31854\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if she will publish the data her Department holds on the number of cases in the last 12 months where all identifying information is redacted from case information passed to the Crown Prosecution Service by the police to allow race-blind decisions.

Edward Timpson:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has delivered all but one of the CPS recommendations in the Lammy review into 'Black and Ethnic Minority Representation in the Criminal Justice System'.

The Lammy Review recommended that the CPS introduce 'race-blind' charging decisions, whereby identifiers of ethnicity are removed from material considered by the police when reaching a charging decision. The CPS rejected this recommendation as it was operationally not feasible. They instead committed to publishing data on ethnicity and charging decisions to monitor disproportionality as part of quarterly performance data.

The data for Q4 2021-22 will be published on the CPS website on 21 July 2022.

■ Rape: Prosecutions

Matt Vickers: [\[27758\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking to increase prosecution rates for rape.

Edward Timpson:

We are united in our combined efforts across government to improve performance for victims and increase the number of successful rape cases that go through our courts.

Since we published our Rape Review action plan there has been a steady increase in the number of rape charges, prosecutions and convictions, quarter on quarter.

Prosecutions for rape offences were 29% higher in 2021 than 2019.

In 2021, 900 offenders were convicted for rape offences, 67% higher than 2020 and 27% higher than 2019.

■ Sentencing

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[27579\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme.

Edward Timpson:

The Unduly Lenient Scheme allows the Law Officers to refer sentences passed for the most serious criminal offences to the Court of Appeal for review. The Court of Appeal has the power to increase a sentence on referral in the rare cases where the sentencing judge has fallen into gross error and imposed a sentence which is outside the reasonable range. This is an important mechanism in our criminal justice system to ensure that such sentences are commensurate with the seriousness of the offending and give the victims of crime confidence that justice will be served.

In the course of this year the Law Officers have successfully referred sentences for a variety of offences including controlling and coercive behaviour, rape of a child, rape, kidnapping and robbery. Earlier this year, the Attorney General successfully argued in person before the Court of Appeal that the sentence imposed on Stephen Gibbs for the attempted murder of his ex-partner was unduly lenient. The Court of Appeal increased his sentence from 13 years' imprisonment with a licence extension of 5 years to 20 years and 7 months' imprisonment with a licence extension of 5 years.

■ Serious Fraud Office: Prosecutions

Matt Vickers: [\[27755\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of steps taken by the Serious Fraud Office to increase the number of cases it prosecutes.

Edward Timpson:

In its role as a specialist law enforcement agency tackling the top level of serious or complex fraud, bribery and corruption, the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is prosecuting

seven cases this calendar year. Across these cases, 20 defendants will face trial for criminality collectively exceeding £500m in value.

Given this specialist role, as well as the scale and complexity of the cases it takes on, the focus of the SFO is less on increasing the number of cases it takes on, but rather increasing its capacity through the use of technology, reducing manual errors and delivering this year's trials effectively.

Driving this, the SFO received a funding uplift in the 2021 Spending Review which included £4.4m over three years to invest in technology. This will complement the wider work that it is doing to reduce case lengths and ensure the tools it uses to investigate and prosecute fraudsters match the evolving methods used by these criminals.

■ Slavery

Steve Reed:

[\[31853\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether the Crown Prosecution Service has taken steps to examine how Modern Slavery legislation can be further used to (a) protect the public and (b) prevent the exploitation of vulnerable young men and women.

Edward Timpson:

I am pleased to report that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has had considerable success in using Modern Slavery legislation to increase prosecutions of modern slavery cases involving the criminal and sexual exploitation of vulnerable young people.

Prosecutors work closely with law enforcement and give early investigative stage in all cases of modern slavery to build robust cases with the aim of lessening or removing the need to rely solely upon the evidence of vulnerable victims. The CPS will try to build victimless prosecutions where possible and has obtained convictions without reliance on the victim's evidence.

The CPS will also, where possible, apply for Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders (STPOs) on conviction of a defendant. This enhances the court's ability to place restrictions on individuals, ensuring that even after they have served their sentence any future risk of similar criminality is effectively managed. In cases involving unconvicted defendants, the CPS will also work with law enforcement agencies to obtain Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders (STROs) where there is a risk of harm to potential victims or to the public.

■ Terrorism: Prosecutions

Matt Vickers:

[\[27759\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Crown Prosecution Service in prosecuting terrorism offences.

Edward Timpson:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) works closely with the police to help deliver the Government's counter-terrorism strategy to ensure we have the best possible response to the threat from all forms of terrorism.

Within the CPS, the Counter-Terrorism Division is responsible for prosecuting terrorism cases investigated by the police in England and Wales. The Division is made up of highly specialised prosecutors, including thematic experts, and has a strong record of bringing successful prosecutions in terrorism cases.

Prosecutors engage with the police at a very early stage of investigations to provide advice and to help build strong cases, and to assist in identifying criminal justice opportunities to disrupt terrorist-related activity, using terrorism and non-terrorism legislation as appropriate.

Recent terrorism statistics published by the Home Office confirm that in the year ending 31 March 2022, 90% of people tried for terrorism-related offences were convicted.

Ukraine: Armed Conflict**Emily Thornberry:**[\[28407\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2022 to Question 24564, on Armed Conflict: Ukraine, on what occasions (a) she and (b) the Solicitor General have discussed the (i) collection of antemortem records of missing or at risk UK citizens in Ukraine and (ii) identification of deceased UK citizens in that country with the Ukrainian Prosecutor General or her ministers or officials.

Edward Timpson:

The Government continues to liaise on various channels with the Ukrainian authorities to support effective identification and collection of evidence of atrocity crimes. It remains for the Ukrainian authorities to maintain any necessary records of those missing or at risk in Ukraine and to identify British nationals that pass away on Ukrainian territory. This particular subject has not arisen in direct discussions that the Law Officers have held as part of the ongoing dialogue with the Ukrainian Prosecutor General.

War Crimes: Russia**Matt Vickers:**[\[27761\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps the Government is taking to support the Ukrainian Government with (a) investigations and (b) prosecutions of possible Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

Edward Timpson:

The Government is appalled by the atrocities being committed in Ukraine by Russian forces, including the targeting of civilians, mass graves, and rape and sexual violence being used as weapons of war. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine, at the forefront of international efforts to ensure there is no impunity.

The Attorney General has an ongoing and fruitful dialogue with Ukrainian Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova (PG), having signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with her to underline UK support for her Office's work investigating and prosecuting crimes committed in the course of the conflict and visited the Prosecutor General in Ukraine. The Attorney and former Solicitor General hosted the PG for a two-day visit in London at the end of May. The Attorney has also appointed Sir Howard Morrison QC, one of the UK's leading war crimes lawyers, to support her directly on her domestic investigations.

The Attorney convened a meeting of the Quintet of Attorneys General from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, with Prosecutor General Venediktova. Following this meeting, we published a joint statement which makes clear our countries' support for Ukraine's domestic war crimes investigations and prosecutions, and our commitment to work together with the Prosecutor General and her Office to ensure every perpetrator faces justice.

The preservation and collection of evidence is vital. The UK, together with the United States and EU, has launched the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group (ACA) to directly support the War Crimes Units of the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine (OPG) in its investigation and prosecution of conflict-related crimes. The ACA seeks to streamline coordination and communication efforts to ensure best practices, avoid duplication of efforts, and encourage the expeditious deployment of financial resources and skilled personnel to respond to the needs of the OPG as the legally constituted authority in Ukraine responsible for dealing with the prosecution of war crimes on its own territory. This shows the Government's clear commitment to supporting Ukraine in its investigations.

The Metropolitan Police has also set up an online reporting tool for witnesses, including refugees, to submit evidence.

The UK also led the largest group referral made by States Parties to the International Criminal Court (ICC's) Rome Statute to refer the atrocities in Ukraine to ICC. The ICC Prosecutor, Karim Khan QC, has jurisdiction to prosecute perpetrators for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We have offered the ICC a comprehensive package of financial and technical support to ensure that leaders under President Putin and those in the field can be held to account for any war crimes in Ukraine.

We will continue to work with Ukraine, partners and international mechanisms in their investigations and to collect and preserve evidence of war crimes in Ukraine. Those responsible will be held to account.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Theresa Villiers: [\[901030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the impact of global energy prices on household energy costs.

Greg Hands:

The Government is committed to helping consumers with the cost of living, particularly high energy prices. Therefore, we are implementing a scheme to provide £400 to help domestic electricity customers with energy bills over the coming winter, in addition to measures specifically targeted to help vulnerable consumers.

■ **Hydrochar**

Julian Sturdy: [\[30007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support the roll-out across the UK of new technology that converts sewage into hydrochar; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential applications of hydrochar in decarbonising the UK economy.

Julian Sturdy: [\[30008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to facilitate the use of hydrochar to generate low-carbon electricity.

Greg Hands:

The forthcoming Biomass Strategy, due to be published later this year, will further detail the Government's position on future biomass use and policies needed to support biomass across the economy. It is the Government's intention to ensure that biomass is only used where it complies with its net zero and wider environmental goals.

■ **Hydrogen**

Daisy Cooper: [\[30153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the hydrogen sector development action plan.

Greg Hands:

The Government aims to publish a Sector Development Action Plan by the end of Summer 2022.

■ **Natural Gas: Imports**

Daisy Cooper: [\[30154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much foreign currency was spent on importing gas between November 2021 and March 2022.

Greg Hands:

The Government does not directly contract for gas. Gas is bought and sold by commercial players. The Government does not have access to data on individual gas market trades. This includes currency used in commercial transactions by gas importers.

Renewable Energy**Tim Farron:**[\[29988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential role of community energy in reducing household energy bills.

Tim Farron:[\[29989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to promote community energy.

Greg Hands:

The Government encourages community energy groups to work closely with local authorities to support the development of UK-wide growth funding schemes. The Government is working with the sector to deliver a programme which will support local authorities develop community-led energy groups and projects. The Government has provided £10m funding to community energy groups through the Rural Community Energy Fund.

The Government has not made a formal assessment of the role of community energy in reducing household energy bills.

CABINET OFFICE**10 Downing Street: Press Conferences****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[31238\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Government spent on lawyers contesting the case put forward by deaf viewers that Downing Street press conferences should include a British Sign Language interpreter; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

The Government has been committed to supporting disabled people through every stage of the pandemic, including D/deaf BSL signers. BSL interpretation was available for No.10 press conferences via the BBC News channel (available on Freeview) and iPlayer. The BBC made their video feed for the BSL interpreter available to all other broadcasters and for use on No10 social channels. For the rare occasions when the BBC chooses not to have BSL, an agreement was reached for RedBee Media to provide an interpreter service to No. 10 for use on government social media channels.

The court ruled that the Government's policy of using on-screen BSL interpreters was lawful during the pandemic.

More broadly, the Government has actively supported the British Sign Language Act 2022 to build a more inclusive and accessible society.

Cabinet Office spend on external legal services is available on GOV.UK.

■ Business: EU Law

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[29941\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to review and amend retained EU law to help reduce costs for businesses and consumers.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Government is carrying out a major cross-government drive to reform, repeal and replace outdated retained EU law, that will aim to cut £1 billion of red tape for UK businesses, ease regulatory burdens and contribute to the Government's mission to unite and level up the country.

We are also reforming our regulatory framework to ensure we only regulate where absolutely necessary and where it is likely to be the most impactful intervention.

■ Cabinet Office: Contracts

Jon Trickett: [\[29878\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, 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 Jacob Rees-Mogg:

Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on [Contracts Finder](#).

Contracts that are due to be agreed are on the Cabinet Office Commercial Pipeline. The next version of this is due to be published at the end of July 2022.

The amount 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 is not held centrally and can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Cabinet Office: ICT

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[31096\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to increase opportunities in cyber technology.

Michael Ellis:

The National Cyber Strategy sets out how the government will foster the growth of an already strong cyber sector in the UK. New government-funded programmes like Cyber Runway and the cyber accelerator, 'NCSC for Startups' are supporting entrepreneurs and businesses across the UK to turn their ideas into commercial successes.

■ Cabinet Office: Procurement**Emily Thornberry:**[\[29975\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what products were purchased by his Department from (a) B-Loony Ltd on 3 May 2022 for a cost of £1,188.00, (b) Workwear Express Ltd on 19 April 2022 for a cost of £1,485, (c) Total Merchandise Ltd on 8 April 2022 for a cost of £2,314.67 and (d) One Stop Badges Ltd on 8 and 15 March 2022 for a combined cost of £3,252.00.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

Purchases questioned were made using the Department's Electronic Purchasing Card Solution (ePCS), which is our preferred method for low value expenditure.

The requested items were purchased for:

1. Branded sashes for staff delivering Civil Service Live.
2. Branded workwear to aid the ready identification of secretariat staff during emergency responses and exercises.
3. Merchandise for distribution to members of the Government Geography Profession,
4. Branded badges for staff delivering COP26.

■ Cabinet Office: Staff**Emily Thornberry:**[\[29976\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many members of (a) his Department's and (b) 10 Downing Street staff have received training from the (i) Active Bystander Training Company and (ii) Plain English Campaign in the 12 months up to the end of June 2022; and what grades those staff were at the time of receiving that training.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

This information is not held centrally.

Cabinet Office has a comprehensive corporate learning and development offer designed to give staff the knowledge and skills required for a modern civil service. Courses offered by the (a) Active Bystander Training Company and (b) Plain English Campaign are not part of the formal corporate learning and development offer provided by Cabinet Office. Over the past 12 months Business Units within the department may have independently procured these training offers.

I can however confirm that neither of these training offers have been run in 10 Downing Street over the past 12 months.

■ Cammell Laird: Strikes

Gareth Thomas: [\[32467\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department holds documents on the 1984 Camell Laird dispute; and whether he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

The Cabinet Office does not hold any documents on the 1984 Cammell Laird dispute. Records created in 1984 have been transferred to The National Archives as required by the Public Records Act 1958.

■ Civil Servants

Andy Slaughter: [\[32501\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many applications were submitted to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments by civil servants on the prospective roles they intended to take after leaving positions in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

Michael Ellis:

22 applications were submitted to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments by civil servants in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022

■ Civil Service: Apprentices

Matt Vickers: [\[30202\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to increase apprenticeship opportunities in the Civil Service.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Departments are working towards having 5% of headcount being apprentices by 2025 as set out by the CS apprenticeship strategy. Apprenticeships will be integrated into skills and capability plans and other people strategies. We will provide entry and progression routes within a range of careers and professions for new and existing staff.

■ Coronavirus: Surveys

Andrew Gwynne: [\[29957\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he has taken to ensure that changes to the methodology of the Covid-19 infection survey will not impact the (a) validity and (b) scope of the results.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[29958\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reason the Covid-19 infection survey is ending door-to-door testing.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[29959\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of the digitisation of the Covid-19 Infection Survey on the level of responses.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[29960\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to help mitigate potential bias in the Covid-19 infection survey following its digitisation.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

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

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Questions of 4 July is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_response_to_PQs_29957_29958_29959_29960 (1).pdf]

■ Definitive PSA: Contracts

Grahame Morris: [\[32520\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will take steps to ensure that the private security firm, Definitive PSA, contracted by P&O Ferries to remove UK seafarers from ferries docked in the UK on 17 March 2022 does not benefit from publicly funded contracts.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The grounds for exclusion of bidders from public procurement procedures are set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and allows for the exclusion of suppliers from bidding for procurements where they have been convicted of, or there is evidence of, bribery, fraud, money laundering and tax evasion.

Procurement Policy Note 04/21 provided supplementary guidance in relation to applying exclusions and managing conflicts of interest. It is for individual contracting authorities to consider whether suppliers must or may be excluded from each procurement.

The Procurement Bill, introduced to Parliament on 11 May, broadens and strengthens the exclusion grounds. We are increasing the time period within which misconduct can lead to exclusion from 3 years to 5; bringing subsidiary companies into scope of exclusion; and making the rules clearer so that contracting authorities can undertake exclusions with more confidence.

■ Foreign Investment in UK

Matt Vickers: [\[30200\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Great campaign in encouraging investment in the UK.

Nigel Adams:

GREAT's global promotion of the UK for over 10 years has been highly effective. In the last year alone, GREAT has attracted over £50m of foreign direct investment and helped generate over £400m through international promotion of the UK education sector. Finally, there is a further £600m of export, investment and tourism returns that are currently being assessed.

■ **Fraud**

Matt Vickers: [\[30199\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to protect the public purse by reducing fraud.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Government takes fraud seriously. HM Government has announced the establishment of the Public Sector Fraud Authority, once launched, will ensure increased scrutiny of counter-fraud performance and build broader and deeper expert services for public bodies, including the use of data analytics, intelligence and risk services.

■ **Government Departments: Public Expenditure**

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[29939\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress his Department has made on reducing the cost of Government projects to help ensure value for money in public spending.

Matt Vickers: [\[30195\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress his Department has made on reducing the cost of Government projects to help ensure value for money in public spending.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority provides expert advice and independent assurance on the Government's Major Project Portfolio (GMPP). Working with HM Treasury, who are responsible for Value for Money, they develop robust project cost estimates and build capacity and capability to deliver effectively. The 2022 IPA Annual Report will set out progress made on the GMPP.

■ **Military Aid: Ukraine**

John Healey: [\[30992\]](#)

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

Michael Ellis:

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

■ Ministers: Redundancy Pay

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[32609\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the total cost to the public purse of exit payments to resigning government ministers since 5 July 2022; and if he will provide a breakdown of those payments.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Ministerial and other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991 sets out the detail and circumstances under which former Ministers are eligible for a severance payment. Any Minister, regardless of the length of time they have served in post, who is below the age of 65 and who has not been otherwise reappointed to a Ministerial position within 3 weeks of their last day of service, is eligible for a severance payment of 25% of their annual claimed salary at the time at which they ceased to hold office.

The above position will apply to the former Secretary of State for Education as it would for any other Minister that has left office. Departments routinely publish the details of any loss of office payments made to former Ministers within their Annual Report & Accounts.

■ Ministers: Resignations

Florence Eshalomi: [\[32638\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the Prime Minister's response to the resignation letter from the former Minister for Children and Families, the hon. Member for Colchester, dated 6 July 2022.

Florence Eshalomi: [\[32639\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the Prime Minister's response to the resignation letter from the former Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice and Minister for Afghan Resettlement, the hon. Member for Louth and Horncastle, dated 6 July 2022.

Florence Eshalomi: [\[32640\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the Prime Minister's response to the resignation letter from the former Minister for Safeguarding, the hon. Member for Louth and Horncastle, dated 6 July 2022.

Florence Eshalomi: [\[32641\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the Prime Minister's response to the resignation letter from the former Secretary of State for Education, the right hon. Member for Chippenham, dated 7 July 2022.

Michael Ellis:

These will be published in due course; copies will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ Prime Minister: Contracts

Jon Trickett: [\[29895\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many contracts that are worth (a) between £1 million and £3 million and (b) over £3 million the (i) Prime Minister's Office and (ii) the Prime Minister's Office agencies and non-departmental public bodies (A) have agreed since 2010 and (B) are due to agree within the next 12 months; how much the Prime Minister's Office 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 Jacob Rees-Mogg:

Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on [Contracts Finder](#).

For management and staffing purposes the Prime Minister's Office is an integral part of the Cabinet Office. There are no contracts exclusive to No10 that are due within the next 12 months over £1m.

■ Prime Minister: Travel

Richard Foord: [\[30215\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many times the Prime Minister has used the VIP RAF Voyager or equivalent aircraft to fly internally in the UK since 1 January 2022; and what the (a) locations of departure and arrival were and (b) cost was for each of those journeys.

Michael Ellis:

Information on air travel for 2021-22 will be published alongside the audited Cabinet Office annual report and accounts.

■ Small Businesses

Matt Vickers: [\[30196\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to help strengthen public sector procurement rules for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

We have introduced a Procurement Bill into Parliament which will enable us to create a simpler and significantly more transparent system that will further open up public procurement to small businesses so that they can compete for and win more public contracts.

Bidding companies will only have to submit their core credentials once, onto a single digital platform, making it easier, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, to bid for any public contract.

Along with this, we will ensure new entrants to the market can be added frequently and easily to open frameworks.

■ Unemployment: Travellers

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29961\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent estimate he has made of the rates of economic inactivity within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the UK.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29967\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the rates of economic inactivity within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the UK.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

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

A response to the Rt hon. Member's Parliamentary Questions of 4 July is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_response_to_PQs_29961_29967 (1).pdf]

Kirsten Oswald: [\[30044\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the rates of economic inactivity within Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities in the UK.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

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

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 4 July is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_response_to_PQ30044 (1).pdf]

■ Veterans

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[29938\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress his Department has made on implementing the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan.

Matt Vickers: [\[30194\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress his Department has made on implementing the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan.

Johnny Mercer:

Since the Veterans Strategy Action Plan was published in January, we have delivered 24% of the over 60 cross-government commitments.

Recent achievements delivered through the Strategy Action Plan include;

- Provision of £150k in grant funding to charities to aid the development of best practice to ensure that veteran charities are inclusive and promote accessibility to female veterans

- Appointment of the first Veterans Commissioner for Wales, Colonel James Phillips
- Completion of a scoping study looking into the design of a service offering the digital verification of veteran status, with a further investment of £1m provided to develop this project further
- Continued support to phase 4 of the King's Centre for Military Health Research longitudinal study through over £1.2m in funding being provided over the next two years. This study looked at the health and wellbeing of UK Armed Forces Personnel and for the first time, this will also look at topics including social mobility, taking the insights beyond health and wellbeing.

COP26

■ Carbon Emissions: USA

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[32500\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the ability of the US to meet its climate commitments in the context of recent decisions by the US Supreme Court relating to planet-heating omissions.

Alok Sharma:

The COP President regularly discusses the climate commitments made by the US and others with his counterpart US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate (SPEC), John Kerry, and has done so since the beginning of the UK's COP26 Presidency.

Most recently, the COP President met with SPEC Kerry on Saturday 9 July to discuss a range of climate change issues, including the recent ruling of the US Supreme Court in relation to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey:

[\[29871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel in his Department are assigned to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy team as of 4 July 2022.

James Heappey:

As of 4 July 2022, there were a total of 96 Ministry of Defence personnel assigned to delivering the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

John Healey:

[\[29872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 14 June 2022 to Question 15182, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications have been (a) received and (b) processed by his Department in June 2022.

James Heappey:

In June 2022, 1,730 ARAP applications were received, many of which are duplicates. Approximately 400 decisions were issued. Decisions continue to be made at the pace required to match the capacity of our egress routes. Recent progress on opening new routes require a faster pace of decision making; we are resourcing the team to be able to do so.

■ Armed Forces**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[29937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Command Paper, Defence in a competitive age, published in March 2021, whether it remains his policy to reduce the armed forces to 72,500 by 2025; and what estimate he has made of the annual cost savings of that policy.

James Heappey:

There are currently no plans to reverse the decision to reduce the number of regular Army personnel to 73,000 by 2025.

The Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper made clear that we must focus on Defence capability rather than troop numbers in response to changing threats and priorities. The British Army will be more integrated and active, with a whole force of over 100,000 regulars and reservists, to address the current and future threats from across the globe.

Whilst the regular Army reorganises to its new structure of 73,000, naturally this will result in workforce cost savings. This reduction has been estimated to present £3.9 billion in savings over the 10 years following the financial year 2021-22. It should however be recognised more broadly that the department is seeing record investment, providing £41.3 billion to Army support and equipment.

Jamie Stone:[\[30097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Command Paper, Defence in a competitive age, published in March 2021, whether it remains his policy to reduce the armed forces to 72,500 by 2025.

James Heappey:

There are currently no plans to reverse the decision to reduce the number of regular Army personnel to 73,000 by 2025.

The Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper made clear that we must focus on Defence capability rather than troop numbers in response to changing threats and priorities. The British Army will be more integrated and active, with a whole force of over 100,000 regulars and reservists, to address the current and future threats from across the globe.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[31049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of procuring a wider variety of Boxer armoured vehicle modules with turreted options similar to those employed by Lithuania and Australia.

Jeremy Quin:

The Army is conducting further ongoing operational analysis, lethality and survivability studies, which includes examining turreted options. As I wrote to my right hon. Friend recently, potential uplifts including new variants are being explored on a longer term and more strategic basis with allies and industry in line with the land industrial strategy. Any potential future upgrades would of course be threat informed and in line with how the Army will fight under Future Soldier.

■ Army: Social Media

John Healey: [\[31721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether an investigation is underway into how the British Army's social media accounts were breached.

Leo Docherty:

All incidents of this nature are reported to the Ministry of Defence's Joint Security Coordination Centre (JSyCC) and an investigation carried out. The findings are provided to JSyCC to assure the completeness of the investigation and to allow for the promulgation of lessons learned.

An investigation, which is following this process, is underway with respect to the compromise of the British Army's Twitter and YouTube accounts. This is being supported by the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Crime Agency.

■ F-35 Aircraft: Weapons

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what weapons systems is the UK F-35B certified to carry.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what weapon systems will the UK F-35B carry.

Jeremy Quin:

Currently the UK F-35B Lightning is cleared to employ the Paveway IV Precision Guided Munition, the Advanced Medium Range Air to Air Missile (AMRAAM) and the Advanced Short Range Air to Air Missile (ASRAAM).

Future Capability uplifts will introduce the Spear Capability 3 Air to Surface weapon and the Meteor Air to Air Missile.

■ Helicopters: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[31031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the status is of the Future Medium Lift Helicopter programme as of 5 July 2022; and how that programme aligns with the Next Generation Rotorcraft Capability Project.

Jeremy Quin:

Competition for the New Medium Helicopter (NMH) is ongoing. The Contract Notice and Dynamic Pre-Qualification Questionnaire were released on 18 May 22. For reasons of commercial sensitivity it would not be appropriate to comment further at this time.

The UK is fully engaged with the NATO Next Generation Rotorcraft Capability (NGRC) project in order to develop options for potential replacements for our current and planned fleets of Medium helicopters. NATO NGRC is anticipated to enter service from circa 2035. NGRC may be a potential candidate to replace the Merlin helicopter as it reaches its planned Out of Service Date (OSD) of 2040 and also the NMH once its OSD has been established.

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Weapons**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[31764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what weapon systems are certified for use on the P-8.

Jeremy Quin:

The Mk 54 Lightweight Torpedo is cleared for use on the Poseidon MRA1.

■ Merlin Helicopters: Early Warning Systems**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[29912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Merlin Crowsnest helicopter will achieve full operating capability.

Jeremy Quin:

CROWSNEST achieved its In Service Date in February 2021 and deployed on the Queen Elizabeth aircraft carriers in 2021 and 2022. The capability is being introduced incrementally to operations as soon as available.

A review is nearing completion to determine a re-baselined initial operating capability and full operating capability due to historical delays and based on recently improved industry delivery.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[29914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many hours the Crowsnest system has flown (a) in financial year 2019-20 (b) in financial year 2020-21 and (c) to date.

Jeremy Quin:

The CROWSNEST System flew 41 hours in financial year (FY) 2019-20 and 214 hours in FY 2020-21. It has flown a total of 1,290 hours to date.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[29915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average cost per hour is for Crowsnest.

Jeremy Quin:

The cost per flying hour for the Merlin CROWSNEST equipment for 2022-23 is approximately £8,500, based on the cost of the support contract and planned flying hours.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[31029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the expected out-of-service date is for the Merlin Crowsnest helicopter.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the answer I provided on 13 January 2022 in answer to Question 98222.

Attachments:

1. Merlin Helicopters; Early Warning System [98222 - Merlin Helicopters Early Warning Systems.docx]

■ Military Aircraft and Trident Missiles: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[32492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department's contracts for (a) F-35B Lightning II, (b) AH-64E Apache Guardian, (c) E-7 Wedgetail, (d) CH-47 Chinook, (e) Trident missiles and (f) Protector UAV are denominated in US dollars.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[32493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether payments to contractors for (a) F-35B Lightning II, (b) AH-64E Apache Guardian, (c) E-7 Wedgetail, (d) CH-47 Chinook, (e) Trident missiles and (f) Protector UAV are made in US dollars.

Jeremy Quin:

The position in respect of these programmes is as follows:

F-35B Lightning: The F-35 programme is managed through a US Government F-35 Joint Program Office (JPO) based in the USA. The F-35 JPO places all of its contracts under US law and US federal acquisition rules and regulations. Consequently, all of the JPO's contracts are denominated in US dollars and the UK makes its payments to the JPO in US dollars. The F-35 JPO places the F-35 contracts with the F-35 industry/suppliers and makes the contractual payments to the F-35 industry/suppliers on behalf of the F-35 Partner Nations.

AH-64E Apache: The aircraft procurement and initial support is through a Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case with the US government and UK has no direct contract with

the manufacturer. The FMS case and payments are denominated in US Dollars. The Long Term Training and Support Service to provide support to the fleet is through a contract with Boeing UK. The contract and payments are dual denominated in Pound Sterling and US Dollars according to each specified line-item.

E-7 Wedgetail: The acquisition contract is denominated in Pound Sterling, US Dollars and Australian Dollars. Payments to the contractor are made in the currency denominated in the contract.

CH-47 Chinook: The majority of contracts supporting the current fleet are priced in Pound Sterling. Boeing, as the Design Organisation of the Chinook Aircraft, and US based sub-contractors, do attract US Dollars payments and therefore some of the contracts are dual denominated. Payments are therefore made in both Pound Sterling and US Dollars in accordance with the terms of the contract. Separately, the Chinook Capability Sustainment Programme, which is the acquisition of 14 new Extended Range (H-47(ER)) aircraft via a FMS arrangement with the US Government, is priced and payments are made, in US Dollars.

Trident Missiles: The supply of the Trident Weapon System is managed through a government-to-government arrangement under the Polaris Sales Agreement (as amended for Trident in 1982) and payments are made to the US Department of Defense in US Dollars. Related in-service support contracts with UK companies are paid in Pound Sterling.

Protector UAV: Protector is being acquired through a combination of Direct Commercial Sales contracts with General Atomics - Aeronautical Systems Inc. and FMS. The contracts are denominated, and payments are made, in US Dollars.

■ Ministry of Defence: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[\[29890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

Jeremy Quin:

Since 2010, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has placed around 2,700 contracts between £1 million and £3 million and around 3,600 contracts over £3 million. These figures include Defence Equipment and Support, and the Submarine Delivery Agency.

Further information, including contracts which are due to be agreed in the next 12 months, the cost and number of officials to monitor contracts since 2010 and those held by other MOD agencies and public bodies, is not held centrally.

The MOD published its first Acquisition Pipeline on 13 June 2022, which is a forward look of future potential procurement activity. This publication can be found on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-acquisition-pipeline>.

■ Ministry of Defence: Legal Costs

Jon Trickett: [\[31736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much their Department and its associated agencies spent on legal disputes in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Leo Docherty:

This information you request is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. However, information on legal expenses for external consultants can be found here;

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F1056190%2Fdepartmental_resources_2021.ods&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

£10 million was spent in 2021, and £9 million in 2020 but this does not cover all expenses on legal disputes.

■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure

John Healey: [\[32470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021, published on 20 January 2022, which cancelled project led to a cost of £2,284,000; and what technical difficulties were associated with that project.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence placed a commercial contract to design and manufacture a potential counter Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) capability. The project proved technically demanding and was subsequently cancelled following a Design Review in March 2019 after the equipment failed to meet the user requirements.

This expenditure occurred during the development phase of a commercial contract. The Department is content that the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) did all they could to achieve the capability. The Department is also content that, in the circumstances the decision to cancel the contract and avoid further expenditure was correct.

John Healey: [\[32471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Ministry of Defence annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021, published on 20 January 2022, what the

intended purpose was of the overseas personnel support; and for what reason it was listed as a fruitless payment with a cost of £10,596,000.

Jeremy Quin:

The item referenced was actually a loss under the category of Claim Waived or Abandoned rather than a Fruitless Payment. The specific details of this case cannot be released for security purposes and other sensitivities given the involvement of other governments.

■ **Ranger Regiment: Training**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the training course for the Ranger Regiment has been written.

Leo Docherty:

The training course for the Ranger Regiment has been written and training has commenced. The content will be refined and improved as the Ranger capability develops.

■ **Ukraine: Military Aid**

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[29936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will publish a full list of all military equipment donated to Ukraine since 24 February 2022.

James Heapey:

An updated overview of military equipment donated to Ukraine since 24 February 2022 will be published by the Ministry of Defence shortly. For operational security reasons we are unable to publish the full extent of the information asked for.

■ **Unmanned Air Vehicles**

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[29943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of kinetic drones in the armed forces.

Jeremy Quin:

Sixteen Protector aircraft have now been ordered from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and are expected to enter service with the RAF by mid-2024, doubling the capability currently provided by Reaper. Protector's Certified Ground Control Stations, will be located at RAF Waddington operating the aircraft remotely, enabling greater flexibility and timely responses for worldwide deployments.

Under the LANCA Programme, the RAF Rapid Capabilities Office will continue to pursue the RAF's plans to integrate uncrewed platforms into its future fleet. Future procurement decisions will be made in accordance with existing departmental capability planning processes.

The Ukraine Innovation Fund has also generated a number of interesting future prospects which the MOD will also closely review.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent progress he has made on the protector programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The Protector programme is on track to achieve Initial Operating Capability in 2024.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the value of the protector programme supply chain in the UK.

Jeremy Quin:

With 12 industry partners across the United Kingdom, the Protector programme is bringing together world-leading technology and service providers to work with GA-ASI, supporting over 200 UK jobs with £400 million being reinvested into UK industry.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the protector drone will be able to interoperate with the (a) Poseidon P-8 and (b) Wedgetail E-7.

Jeremy Quin:

The combination of Protector, Poseidon P-8 and Wedgetail E-7 will provide the RAF with a multi-layered range of diverse and complementary airborne Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities at the leading edge of technology to meet the challenges and threats of the future.

■ Watchkeeper WK450

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[29920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the Total Departmental Expenditure Limit is for Watchkeeper.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[29921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the original Total Departmental Expenditure Limit was, established on the award of the initial contract, for Watchkeeper.

Jeremy Quin:

The current Total Departmental Expenditure Limit for Watchkeeper is £1096.5 million.

This includes:

Demonstration, Manufacture & Initial Support (DMIS) - £927 million

In Service Support (ISS) £147.6 million

Full Mission Simulator (FMS) - £21.9 million

The original approvals for award of the Watchkeeper DMIS contract in 2005 was £847 million. This was supported subsequently by approval of £131.2 million for a five year ISS contract and £21.9 million for FMS.

Mr Kevan Jones: [29923]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) Resource and (b) Capital Departmental Expenditure Limits have been spent to date for Watchkeeper.

Jeremy Quin:

Spend to date figures to 31 May 2022 are:

Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL) – total of £105 million

Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) – total of £931.8 million made up of:

Demonstration, Manufacture & Initial Support (DMIS) - £913 million

In Service Support (ISS) - £1.6 million

Full Mission Simulator (FMS) - £17.2 million

Mr Kevan Jones: [29923]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when did Watchkeeper achieve (a) initial and (b) full operational capability; and how did those dates differ from the original baseline schedule.

Jeremy Quin:

Watchkeeper reached Initial Operating Capacity (IOC) in 2014 and Full Operating Capacity (FOC) in 2018.

The Maingate Business Case of 2005 had initially scheduled IOC in 2010 and FOC in 2013.

Mr Kevan Jones: [29924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Watchkeeper platforms are available.

Jeremy Quin:

Details of the number of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in the UK Armed Forces are published on an annual basis on the government's website. The most recent publication can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2021>. For reasons of operational sensitivity we do not release figures on the current availability of any platform.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Contracts

Jon Trickett: [29880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 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.

Matt Warman:

Details of government contracts are published on [Contracts Finder](#) above £10,000, for the core Department, and above £25,000, for the wider public sector. As Contracts Finder was implemented from 2016, not all records before this time are held centrally.

The Department's commercial pipeline is also publicly available on the [GOV.UK](#).

The management of contracts held by the Department is devolved to individual Business Units and undertaken by identified Contract Managers within policy or operational teams, with the responsibility for monitoring contract performance resting with the Senior Responsible Officer. The contract management role is typically undertaken by policy or operational staff as part of their existing roles and therefore costs are not distinguishable. Specialist commercial oversight, training and support is provided by the DCMS Commercial function where necessary and as applicable, depending on the level of risk, complexity and value.

Jon Trickett:

[\[31004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the total value has been of contracts held by their Department with (a) G4S, (b) Serco and (c) Capita in each year since 2020.

Matt Warman:

Since 1 January 2020, the Department has not held any contracts with Serco, G4S or Capita. To note, the Department publishes details of all contracts, with a value over £10,000, on [Contracts Finder](#).

■ **Earl Mountbatten of Burma: Disclosure of Information**

Dan Carden:

[\[32613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with representatives of Southampton University on releasing the correspondence between Jawaharlal Nehru and Lady Mountbatten for open public access.

Matt Warman:

The correspondence between Lady Mountbatten and Jawaharlal Nehru is held in a private collection. The papers are not owned by the University of Southampton nor are they public records. We have, therefore, had no discussions with the University on releasing the correspondence for open public access.

■ Sportsgrounds: Disability

Nadia Whittome: [\[30206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of wheelchair accessibility in sports grounds; and whether her Department has plans to improve disabled access to sports facilities.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government recognises there are barriers which exist and prevent some people from participating in sport and physical activity, including access to sports grounds and facilities. We want to remain at the forefront of equality and continue to do all that we can to tackle these.

We work closely with our arm's length bodies, Sport England and UK Sport, and sector partners to encourage sport bodies to make sport and facilities more accessible. Sport England is developing a new plan called 'Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities' that will be published this year.

The Government expects all sports and all clubs to take the necessary action to fulfil their legal obligation under the Equality Act of 2010 to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people are not placed at a substantial disadvantage when accessing sports venues. With the support of Level Playing Field, the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) developed the Accessible Stadia document and Accessible Stadia Supplementary Guidance as a benchmark of good practice for new and existing sports grounds. It offers practical, clear solutions that will help deliver high-quality grounds with facilities and services that are accessible, inclusive and welcoming for all.

■ Swimming Pools

Dan Carden: [\[31217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is taking steps to help support public swimming pools transition to renewable energy.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the importance of ensuring public access to leisure facilities, including swimming pools, which are great spaces for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. We are committed to supporting these facilities to transition to renewable energy sources.

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme provides grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures. The scheme supports the aim of reducing emissions from public sector buildings by 75% by 2037, as set out in the Heat and Buildings Strategy and the Net Zero Strategy in October 2021.

Leisure centres are eligible for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. For example last year, during Phase 3a, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council was awarded £1,728,500 to decarbonise the swimming pool at Todmorden Sports Centre.

The next application window to the scheme, Phase 3b, is planned to open in September, with the guidance published beforehand.

Sport England are also able to provide guidance on sustainable design formats for leisure centres. The recent redevelopment of St Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre in Exeter provides one such example.

■ **Television Licences: Pensioners**

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[31106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to help low-income pensioners claim their free TV licence.

Matt Warman:

On 23 June my department laid a statutory instrument to amend the Television Licences Act 2000, that will ease the administrative burden put on eligible over-75s when applying for a free licence.

Under the new plans the BBC will be able to automatically verify whether a person applying for a free TV Licence is on Pension Credit with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It will mean in most cases the 7,000 people who apply to TV Licensing for a free licence per month will simply need to apply online or over the phone without any need to supply additional paperwork.

The changes to the application process are expected to come into effect next year.

■ **Voluntary Work: Young People**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[31163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the role of the National Citizens Service in enabling young people in urban areas to explore the rural environment.

Nigel Huddleston:

NCS Trust works closely with partners to offer valuable outdoor experiences to young people as well as emphasise the importance of interacting with the rural environment and using natural resources in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Out of the 79 venues booked for this year's National Citizen Service (NCS) summer residential programmes, only 8 are in urban locations - meaning that most participants will be based in accommodation in a rural location.

Moreover, all NCS programmes, even the few with accommodation in urban settings, include two days of adventurous activities based in natural environments where participants get to experience outdoor activities, away from home.

■ Youth Organisations: Kirklees**Kim Leadbeater:****[30208]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason youth organisations in Kirklees have been unable to access the Youth Investment Fund; and what central funding is available to support facilities for organisations assisting young people aged 11-18 in Kirklees.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government recognises the vital role that youth services and activities play in improving the life chances and wellbeing of young people. The Government has committed to a National Youth Guarantee: that by 2025, every young person will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and opportunities to volunteer. This will be supported by a three year £560 million investment in youth services, reflecting young people's priorities and addressing the inconsistencies in national youth spending, with a firm focus on levelling up. The Youth Investment Fund is a geographically targeted fund levelling up access to youth services in those areas that need it the most. Ministerial decisions on eligibility criteria were taken on the basis of high quality, robust and publicly available data, details of which are available on the gov.uk website [here](#). Kirklees did not meet the eligibility criteria for the Youth Investment Fund. However, through the National Youth Guarantee DCMS will fund a range of youth programmes across England, such as the National Citizen Service (NCS) and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, as well as volunteering programmes through the #iwill Fund and tackling uniformed youth waiting lists, all of which the young people of Kirklees can benefit from.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers****Daniel Zeichner:****[25879]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential financial effect of current trends in the supply of seasonal workers on agricultural businesses.

Daniel Zeichner:**[25880]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of current trends in the supply of seasonal workers on domestic food production.

Victoria Prentis:

Overall, the UK's food supply is highly resilient, and the food industry is well versed in dealing with scenarios that can affect food supply. Defra will continue to closely monitor the supply of labour to UK agriculture throughout the year, keeping labour market data under very careful scrutiny to monitor any pressure in these sectors.

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

The Food Strategy White Paper also addresses the challenges faced by the food and farming sector, including a commitment to deliver an independent review to tackle labour shortages in the food supply chain, considering the roles of automation, domestic labour and migration routes.

Defra is working with industry and the Department for Work and Pensions to raise awareness among UK workers of career opportunities within the food and farming sectors. Defra will also bring forward further proposals in due course on ways to support the sector, as well as progressing recommendations from the Automation Review.

Defra is also working closely with the Home Office to ensure that the requirements for these sectors are understood across government.

Luke Pollard:

[30130]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many enforcement actions his Department has taken against breaches of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme as of 4 July 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra does not take enforcement action against breaches of the Seasonal Workers visa scheme and does not hold any details of the number of such breaches. Enforcement action is undertaken by the Home Office or the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA).

The operators of the Seasonal Worker Scheme are licensed by the GLAA who will ensure that all workers are placed with farms who adhere to all relevant legislation. Should a scheme operator lose their GLAA licencing at any point, their sponsor licence will be revoked with immediate effect.

A key objective of the Seasonal Workers Scheme is to ensure that migrant workers are protected against modern slavery and other labour abuses, including the charging of recruitment fees and ensuring effective enforcement of UK employment laws. The safety and wellbeing of workers is considered paramount.

The GLAA is undertaking work in partnership to prevent exploitation of workers. For example, the GLAA and Seasonal Worker Scheme operators are jointly developing an informative video, specifically addressing issues related to recruitment fees. The video is due to be launched in the coming weeks. The GLAA is also developing specific guidance aimed for overseas businesses which will also be published shortly. Finally, the GLAA is working with UK embassies to engage more closely with in-country government agencies and ensure local laws and regulations are always met.

Luke Pollard: [\[30131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of seasonal agricultural workers who are paying agencies or companies an introductory fee for arranging employment on UK farms.

Victoria Prentis:

As part of Defra's Request for Information (RFI) process for the selection of the Seasonal Workers Scheme operators, the participants must confirm that they will not place any additional charges on participating migrants, beyond the administration of the Extended Pilot, and that they (and their agents) will not charge work-finding fees.

The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) assess overseas labour providers when they apply for a licence to be a part of the Seasonal Workers Scheme. Charging recruitment fees would be a breach of the licensing standards. Any labour provider found to be in breach of the licensing standards is not provided with a licence or would have their licence revoked. To date, no licence holder part of the Seasonal Workers Scheme has been found to be in breach of the standards related to recruitment fees.

Luke Pollard: [\[30132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to publish the 2020-21 review of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme by the end of 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government keeps the performance of the Seasonal Worker route under ongoing review. We currently have no plans to publish performance information for the period covering the 2020-21 season.

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Daniel Zeichner: [\[24607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding his Department paid to farmers in (a) direct payments, (b) Countryside Stewardship funding, (c) Environmental Stewardship Scheme funding, (d) other payments and (e) in total in the financial years (i) 2020-21 and (ii) 2021-22.

Victoria Prentis:

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

Direct payments in England are made through the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). Payments under BPS, as well as Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship, are based on the calendar year. The figures provided relate to payments released within the specified financial years irrespective of the scheme year to which individual payments are related. They only cover payments that are provided to farmers by the Rural Payment Agency.

TOTAL FUNDING	2020-21 FINANCIAL YEAR	2021-22 FINANCIAL YEAR
Direct Payments (BPS)	£1,832,933,680	£1,649,698,145
Countryside Stewardship	£190,633,860	£275,940,285
Environmental Stewardship	£148,607,064	£151,436,091
Other Payments	£75,390,708	£75,406,300
Total	£2,247,565,312	£2,152,480,821

We will present and publish a retrospective view of the financial assistance provided through all of our schemes under the Agriculture Act 2020 by 1 October each year, covering the previous financial year as required under the Agriculture Act 2020. We have committed that the total level of investment will be at around £2.4bn a year across the parliament.

■ **Bivalve Molluscs: North Yorkshire and Tees Valley**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[27561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the environmental impact of the mass stranding of razor clams along Teesside and North Yorkshire beaches in May and June 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

An investigation was carried out seeking causes of a mass mortality incident of crabs and lobsters off the north-east coast of England between October and December 2021. Local reports of smaller, recent incidents, including stranding of razor clams, are being jointly monitored by agencies at the coast and research is ongoing to understand the impacts on the stocks.

■ **Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control**

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[31859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much the Government has spent on (a) bovine TB cattle vaccination programme and (b) all other bovine TB-related work.

Steve Double:

As set out in the Government's response to the Godfray Review in March 2020, Defra invested over £40 million in research and development (R&D) into cattle bTB vaccines and associated tests to Detect Infected among Vaccinated Animals (DIVA tests) since 1998. Ongoing Defra-funded R&D aimed at securing UK marketing authorisations for CattleBCG vaccine and DST-F (the DIVA skin test) is budgeted at around £15 million.

Defra net expenditure on TB eradication in England since 2013 was set out in the answer to PQ [19626](#) on 23 June 2022. For the financial years from 2016/17, the figures in the previous answer do not include the substantial, but separately costed, expenditure made by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and its predecessor bodies. That includes expenditure on contracted out TB testing as well as the work of APHA's various veterinary, scientific and administrative teams and associated operating and overhead costs. We estimate that the total costs to the taxpayer for bovine TB-related work in England have remained at around £100m a year for each of the last 10 financial years.

■ **Convention on Biological Diversity**

Alex Sobel:

[\[31225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to attend the Convention for Biological Diversity, known as COP15, in person in Montreal in December 2022.

Steve Double:

The UK is committed to playing a leading role at CBD COP15 this year to secure agreement to ambitious global action over the next decade. Lord Goldsmith will head the UK delegation, and attendance by myself and other UK Government Ministers will be confirmed in due course.

■ **Disinfectants: Shortages**

Dame Angela Eagle:

[\[32480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of shortages in production of sodium hypochlorite on water supplies; and what steps he is taking to help alleviate that impact.

Steve Double:

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

Maintaining the strategic supply of chemicals to the water sector is a priority for government and industry. Chemicals are critical to water treatment processes for both the provision of safe drinking water and wastewater services to protect the environment.

We work continuously with the water sector to understand chemical supply issues and manage the strategic risks of interruption to drinking water supplies and wastewater. This includes frequent contact with the water sector, both specific companies and with Water UK, an industry representative body. We also frequently engage with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy who lead on chemicals sector supply chains.

The routine supply of sodium hypochlorite is a commercial matter for industry. We are monitoring the strategic supply of sodium hypochlorite to water companies, and we

frequently encourage diverse and resilient supply chains. We will continue to do so to protect drinking water and wastewater services.

■ Environment: Standards

Geraint Davies:

[\[30982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the data that needs to become available to enable publication of the remaining 16 indicators under the Outcome Indicator Framework; what his Department's planned timetable is for publishing those remaining indicators; and whether his Department plans to prioritise publication of some indicators over others.

Steve Double:

The most recent 2022 update report of the Outcome Indicator Framework has successfully grown to include data for 50 of the 66 indicators. The Government is continuing to work with diverse technical experts towards 2024 as an intended endpoint to make data available for all indicators currently included in the framework.

Indicators are not being prioritised individually for preferential development. All indicators are being developed in parallel and data are published as soon as they have reached sufficient maturity of development. The framework is voluntarily compliant with the official UK Code of Practice for Statistics so that end users can be confident that all published indicators have public value, are of high quality and are trustworthy.

In 2024, the Outcome Indicator Framework will be reviewed, in keeping with the original commitment to do so at least every five years. This will provide a valuable opportunity to ensure the framework continues to be relevant and is well placed to provide the best and most cost-effective ways of assessing progress.

■ Fly-tipping

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[31902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on steps being taken to (a) prevent fly-tipping and (b) remove fly-tipped waste.

Steve Double:

Defra ministers and officials regularly talk to local authorities, including around issues relating to fly-tipping. Defra chairs the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group (NFTPG), which include local authorities, to share best practice on tackling fly-tipping. We are currently developing a fly-tipping toolkit and the first part has recently been published on the NFTPG website. The NFTPG has also previously produced guides on preventing fly-tipping and roles and responsibilities.

This year we are providing capital funding of £450,000 through our fly-tipping intervention grant to enable several councils to implement a range of measures to tackle fly-tipping. We intend to run a second round later this year.

■ Food Supply: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[29862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to research by the University of Sydney, published in the Natural scientific journal on 20 June 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the validity of the finding that a fifth of all food-related greenhouse gas emissions come from transporting edible products.

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[29863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to research by the University of Sydney, published in the Natural scientific journal on 20 June 2022, if he will take steps in response to that research that found a fifth of all food-related greenhouse gas emissions come from transporting edible products.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government's recently published Net Zero Strategy sets out our plans to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions. This includes a range of policies and actions to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions (including methane) from within the food system from farm to fork.

For example, ruminant livestock are the leading cause of food methane emissions, but feed additives with methane inhibiting properties have the potential to reduce emissions, especially from housed cattle. Whilst this is an emerging technology, the Government is actively investigating the promising role these products may have in delivering emissions savings in the medium term.

More broadly the Government will support the agricultural sector to decarbonise through the schemes set out in the Agricultural Transition Plan, which aims to support farmers to adopt low greenhouse gas emission farming practices and increase the carbon stored on their farms, helping to improve business productivity and profitability gains.

The Government also supports the work of the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), whose Courtauld 2030 voluntary agreement includes a target to reduce GHG emissions across the food supply chain. Periodic estimates of UK household food waste levels are undertaken by WRAP with government funding with the next estimate reporting year being 2022/23.

■ Food: Prices

Sam Tarry: [\[24694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of research by Kantar, published on 20 June 2022, that the average annual grocery bill in the UK will potentially rise by £380 this year.

Victoria Prentis:

We are concerned by the rising pressures on household incomes and are monitoring them closely. We continue to monitor food prices using the ONS inflation figures. Year-on-year food price inflation rose to 8.7% in May, up from 6.7% in April. Defra analysis, based upon ONS data, shows that every one percent increase in food price inflation increases the average, annual food bill of the UK household by £33. ONS recently released data tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items. This could be seen as another useful piece of evidence, though as recognised by ONS is highly experimental. It shows that 17 of the 30 items examined saw prices increasing below food inflation or falling, while 13 of the 30 items increased faster than the official inflation measure for food.

Defra is taking action to maintain an efficient food supply chain by mitigating against any potential burdens or friction which could otherwise drive-up consumer food prices. For example, we have introduced labelling flexibility to reduce additional cost burdens resulting from the availability of sunflower oil. We have also taken action to address current fertiliser issues including: changing statutory guidance to the Environment Agency on how they should implement the "Farming Rules for Water" to provide clarity to farmers on how they can use slurry and other manures during autumn and winter to meet agronomic needs; increasing grant funding to help farmers and growers boost research and development; and delaying changes to the use of urea by at least a year. The Government has also announced that Direct Payments in England will be paid in two instalments each year for the remainder of the agricultural transition period to help farmers with their cashflow.

The food strategy, published on 13 June, is clear that whilst we strive to transform the food system in the long-term and unlock the benefits of healthier and more sustainable diets, we will, at all phases of policy development, champion consumer interests and seek to minimise food prices impacts.

The Government recently announced a new £15 billion support package to help families with the cost of living, bringing total support for households this year to £37 billion. This includes continued support to children and families on low incomes through various initiatives such as the Healthy Start Scheme, free school meals, breakfast clubs and the Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:[\[29940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to mitigate against increases in food prices.

Matt Vickers:[\[30197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) relevant stakeholders to help reduce the cost of food.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government monitors food prices using the ONS's inflation figures (Consumer Prices Index including Housing Costs).

Defra is taking action to maintain an efficient food supply chain by mitigating against any potential burdens or friction which could otherwise drive-up consumer food prices. For example, we have introduced labelling flexibility to reduce additional cost burdens resulting from the availability of sunflower oil. Food prices themselves are set by business and it is not for the UK Government to set retail food prices nor to comment on day-to-day commercial decisions by companies.

The broader affordability of food, and individuals' access to food, is a key element of the Government's approach to tackling poverty as we manage the impact of cost-of-living pressures. Defra is holding regular discussions with industry to explore ways in which industry can support low-income households by ensuring affordable food remains available, for example by maintaining value ranges, price matching, price freezing measures and use of loyalty card offers.

The Government recently announced a new £15 billion support package to help families with the cost of living, bringing total support for households this year to £37 billion.

Agricultural commodities are closely linked to global gas prices. Farmers are facing increased input costs for fertiliser, livestock feed, fuel and energy. We have taken steps to assist farmers with the availability of fertiliser ahead of the coming growing season and we have also brought forward 50% of the BPS payment to July to help ease cash flow pressures.

■ Forests: Commodities**Daisy Cooper:**[\[26857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government response to the Consultation on implementing due diligence on forest risk commodities, published June 2022, if he will make it his policy to include cattle and cattle products in the regulations which will implement the first phase of Schedule 17 of the Environment Act, in response to the 99 per cent of responses in that consultation which were in favour of that approach.

Daisy Cooper:[\[26858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the report by Global Witness, entitled Cash Cow, published on 23 June 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including cattle and cattle products in the regulations which will implement first phase of Schedule 17 of the Environment Act, in response to the findings of that report that cattle and cattle products are responsible for the largest proportion of the UK's deforestation footprint globally.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK is committed to tackling deforestation and protecting forests, and has taken action through our world leading Environment Act to deliver that. We recently consulted on implementing a key measure of the Act, mandatory due diligence on forest risk commodities, and on 1 June 2022 we published the government response: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933985/due-diligence-forest-risk-commodities-government-response.pdf

■ Livestock: Animal Housing**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[31904]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is his policy to end the use of cages in farming practices.

Steve Double:

Transitioning to non-caged systems continues to be a government priority. We are committed to working with producers and the food sector to raise standards of animal health and welfare, supporting farmers through the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway.

Ultimately, decisions we make on cage reforms must be the right ones and need full consideration of the implications for animal welfare and for the sectors concerned, including a realistic phase out period to secure achievement of our better welfare goals and sustainability for the industry.

■ Marine Animals: North East**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:****[27560]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority has taken to collect data on reports of incidences of marine life stranding.

Victoria Prentis:

The North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NE IFCA) is working closely with partner agencies to record and verify reports of incidences of marine life strandings with a focus on shellfish within the affected area between Hartlepool and Robin Hoods Bay. Following receipt of a report, Officers will attend to confirm the location of strandings and their extent or composition.

Any reports received are submitted as intelligence reports to the Marine Management Organisation/IFCA national intelligence database from which periodic summary documents are being circulated to the relevant agencies. Furthermore, any reports received by NE IFCA which link to suspected pollution are being shared with the Environment Agency.

■ Members: Correspondence**Mr John Baron:**[\[31750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to correspondence of (a) 28 February, (b) 28 March, (c) 26 April and (d) 25 May 2022 from the on. Member for Basildon and Billericay on a constituent, reference JB36531.

Steve Double:

I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon. Member. A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 8 July 2022.

■ Nature Conservation: EU Law**Sarah Green:**[\[31247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to revoke legislation implementing the EU Habitats Directive in the forthcoming Brexit Freedoms Bill announced in the Queen's Speech 2022.

Steve Double:

We set out our initial proposals to reform the Habitat Regulations in the Nature Recovery Green Paper: protected sites and species. The Nature Recovery Green Paper consultation closed on 11 May and we are now in the process of analysing responses. The Government will publish a formal response in due course.

■ Phytophthora Pluvialis: Disease Control**Caroline Lucas:**[\[27573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps relevant authorities have taken to prevent the outbreak of *Phytophthora pluvialis* since that disease was confirmed in (a) Devon and Cornwall on 20 October 2021 and (b) Cumbria on 19 November 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

Following the positive identification of *Phytophthora pluvialis* on western hemlock and Douglas-fir trees in a woodland in Cornwall in September 2021, several findings of the pathogen have now been identified in Cornwall, Devon, Cumbria, Surrey and Shropshire, and at multiple sites in Scotland and Wales.

This is the first report of the pathogen in Europe and the first published finding of *P. pluvialis* on western hemlock.

Forestry Commission and scientists from Forest Research are leading intensive action to understand more about the pathogen. This includes UK wide aerial surveillance, extensive ground survey of over 1200 sites across England, and comprehensive research and modelling to explore factors such as climatic suitability and species susceptibility. On most of the sites affected, the symptoms are mainly on young, naturally regenerated western hemlock.

A Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) is being undertaken to evaluate the latest scientific and economic evidence, assess the risk posed to the UK and inform our approach. We are currently seeking views on the PRA through public consultation.

In the meantime, we have adopted a cautious approach. An initial risk assessment has concluded that *P. pluvialis* meets the criteria to be classified as a GB quarantine pest for regulatory purposes. To prevent spread of disease, robust management action is underway on the most affected sites. Six demarcated areas have been introduced around confirmed outbreaks, and there are prohibitions on the movement of any wood, isolated bark and trees (tanoak, western hemlock, pine and Douglas-fir) originating from within a demarcated area, and any plants for planting that have originated or reside within the demarcated area.

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[27634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the total amount of Sustainable Farming Incentive payments to farmers in 2022.

Victoria Prentis:

We are not allocating specific budgets to individual schemes, instead we are managing the budget as a whole and will follow demand across the offers we have.

We are not yet able to make a detailed estimate of payments to a single scheme in 2022 as we have only just opened the scheme (30 June). Farmers will be paid quarterly which will limit the total level of payments in 2022. We have a medium-term ambition of 70% of farmers within environmental land management schemes by 2028.

Through the remainder of this Parliament, we will spend more than £2.5 billion on the new Sustainable Farming Incentive, Countryside Stewardship and its successor, Local Nature Recovery, and continue to fund existing Environmental Stewardship agreements as part of our £7.2 billion investment in farming, including £600 million on grants and other support for farmers to invest in productivity, innovation, research and development.

■ Sustainable Farming Incentive: Organic Food

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[26777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the date of introduction for the Sustainable Farming Incentive organic food standard is not until 2025.

Victoria Prentis:

We recognise the benefits that organic farming can offer to the wider environment. Currently, organic producers can join the Countryside Stewardship scheme in addition to a Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) agreement. In SFI they are well

placed to adopt the higher levels of ambition in the soils standards and receive a higher level of payment.

We have confirmed that an organic standard is currently being developed as part of the roll out of the SFI. Our current plan is that all levels of the SFI organic standard will be introduced in 2025. Furthermore, organic farmers will benefit from other standards in development such as Integrated Pest Management due to the specific farming practices they undertake.

We are phasing out Basic Payments over the agricultural transition, which will allow us to progressively roll out new standards and options.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[26779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his planned timetable is for introducing the advanced level of the Sustainable Farming Incentive organic standard.

Victoria Prentis:

Healthy soils are the foundation of sustainable farming and underpin a range of environmental benefits, as well as food production. Two of the first batch of standards to be rolled out under the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme in 2022 focus on soils. The soil standards will be widely applicable and will therefore provide opportunity for a large number of farmers to be rewarded for sustainable soil management. They will improve soil health, structure, organic matter and biology.

This year we're also rolling out the introductory level of the moorland standard and, a bit later in the year, vet farm visits to help improve animal health and welfare. Further standards on nutrient management, integrated pest management, hedgerows, and the advanced levels for the soils standards will follow in 2023, with more standards being introduced in 2024 and 2025. All types of farmers, including organic farmers, will be able to benefit from applying these standards. The organic standard is scheduled to be in place from 2025.

■ Veterinary Services

Alan Brown: [\[25913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 22466, what potential benefits her Department has identified from an updating of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

Alan Brown: [\[25914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2022 to Question 22466, what her planned timescale is for identifying how best the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 could be updated.

Victoria Prentis:

There are many potential benefits associated with updating the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and, including the possibility of allowing allied professionals to work as part of a vet led team, providing a modern regulatory framework for the profession and

enabling greater participation in the profession. We are currently considering the proposals. Further, creating new or amending existing veterinary legislation will be a significant undertaking and subject to Parliamentary time. As such, Defra is unable to provide an indicative timescale at present.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Afghanistan and Taliban: Females

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[30042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to counter the threat to the education of women and girls around the world arising from the actions of the Taliban since they took power in Afghanistan.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government has made clear its condemnation of the Taliban's decision not to re-open girls' secondary schools, including through statements from the G7+, female Foreign Ministers and the UN Security Council. Women in Afghanistan, and Afghan women in the UK diaspora, demand that girls' right to education be upheld, and we stand with them.

As the Prime Minister has said several times, we are working to hold the Taliban to account to ensure that they live up to the promises they have made. With our international partners, we continue to press the Taliban to reverse this decision. We continue to provide funding for emergency education support through the UN system, Education Cannot Wait, and the Global Partnership for Education.

■ Afghanistan: Embassies

Ruth Jones:

[\[30139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many former staff of the British Embassy in Afghanistan remain in Kabul.

Graham Stuart:

The UK Government continues to support those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan.

We are aware of a small number of former British Embassy staff who remain in Afghanistan. We continue to work to ensure that all those in Afghanistan who are eligible are able to relocate to the UK.

■ Africa: Energy Charter Treaty

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[29981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment has made of the potential impact of accession to the Energy Charter Treaty by African states on the ability of those states to (a) transition to renewable energy and (b) meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Amanda Milling:

In considering any requests for accession to the Energy Charter Treaty, the UK Government will aim to ensure that the policies of those accession states are aligned with the priorities of the modernised Treaty, including the Sustainable Development Goals, UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. We would encourage African nations to look at the opportunities Treaty membership offers to support the clean energy transition.

Angola: Politics and Government**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[29979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with the Government of Angola on protecting the rights of civil society activists in that country.

Vicky Ford:

The UK, along with like-minded partners, works closely with the Government of Angola and civil society organisations to encourage modern and progressive legislation and to ensure that rights and freedoms are enjoyed by the whole of society. This includes recent work in Angola promoting media freedom with female journalists; improving access to education with the Global Partnership for Education; and raising environmental awareness through the Youth for Climate summit.

Bahrain: Political Prisoners**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[31179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Bahraini counterpart on the cases of (a) Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace and (b) Hasan Mushaima.

Amanda Milling:

Officials and ministers have regular discussions with senior Bahraini counterparts on human rights, including most recently during my visit to Bahrain from 2-3 July.

We continue to follow and discuss the cases of Dr Abduljalil al-Singace, Hassan Mushaima and others with the Bahraini Government as well as with the independent oversight bodies. We continue to encourage those with concerns to raise them directly with the appropriate Bahraini oversight body.

Botswana: Freedom of Expression**Ruth Jones:**[\[30143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the level of freedom of expression in Botswana.

Vicky Ford:

Botswana is a stable multi-party democracy and freedom of expression is guaranteed and protected by its Constitution. In their 2022 'Freedom in the World' report, Freedom House assessed Botswana to be a 'free' country.

■ Botswana: Politics and Government

Ruth Jones: [\[30144\]](#)

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

Vicky Ford:

Botswana is a stable democracy which has a strong record of respect for presidential term limits and peaceful transfers of power. The Botswana Democratic Party has been in government since independence in 1966. The next election will take place in 2024.

■ Developing Countries: LGBT+ People

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[29861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make representations to her international counterparts on the level of funding provided for LGBT+ community groups in low and middle income countries.

Vicky Ford:

The UK regularly engages our partners, including governments, civil society, philanthropists, and multilateral organisations, on taking a collaborative approach to Official Development Assistance funding in support of LGBT+ rights.

As co-chairs of the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC), the UK and Argentina oversaw the adoption of the ERC's first strategy and five-year implementation plan in July 2021. The UK actively participates in the ERC Donor Coordination Working Group which aims to improve coordination between all actors.

Plans for the levels of UK funding for the 2022-5 Spending Round are not yet confirmed, but we will continue to focus on low and middle income countries in the global south. In June 2022, the Prime Minister announced £2.7 million of new UK funding to support LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders, and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth.

■ Development Aid

Sarah Champion: [\[30024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what her Department's policy is on investing in fragile and conflict affected settings; and which fragile and conflict affected settings her Department is prioritising for that investment.

Amanda Milling:

As our strategy sets out, aid will be spent where it is most needed and effective. We will target how we invest in fragile states and conflict affected states. In these contexts, our development partnerships will tackle the root causes of instability, conflict and human suffering. Our work will focus on delivering honest, reliable investment, providing women and girls with the freedom they need to succeed,

stepping-up our life-saving humanitarian work and taking forward our commitments on climate change, nature and global health.

■ East Africa: Non-Governmental Organisations

Mrs Pauline Latham:

[\[30005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take steps to provide further support and flexible funding to local NGOs in East Africa whose recipients have been affected by drought in that region.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is a major humanitarian donor to countries in East Africa. We will provide at least £156 million in emergency humanitarian assistance to the Horn of Africa in financial year 2022/2023. to help support communities affected by conflict, drought, flooding and other pressures. We will continue to work with NGOs. In Ethiopia in 2021 the UK provided US\$18 million to the UN's Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF). The EHF mechanism supported a range of international and Ethiopian NGOs, disbursing US\$23 million to the latter. Similarly, the UK-funded 'Building Resilient Communities in Somalia' programme has supported a number of Somali NGOs alongside international civil society organisations.

■ Food Poverty: Females

Chris Law:

[\[30038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she had discussions with her G7 counterparts on the specific needs of girls and women experiencing hunger during the G7 summit in June 2022.

Vicky Ford:

Supporting women and girls is at the heart of UK foreign policy. The Foreign Secretary consistently champions women's and girls' rights in her international engagements. The Foreign Secretary did not attend the G7 Leaders' Summit in June 2022. However, G7 foreign ministers discussed the implications of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security in their 14 May 2022 meeting in Germany. During the same meeting, G7 foreign ministers reaffirmed the importance of a gender-transformative mainstreaming approach. The UK is committed to protecting the most vulnerable countries and people suffering from Russia's attack and its global repercussions. We will continue to work closely with our allies in the G7 to mitigate the risk of a global food price crisis and protect food security. The FCDO's food & agriculture development programmes have always focused on improving women's food security, livelihoods and economic empowerment, and will continue to do so.

■ Foreign Policy

Ruth Jones:

[\[30136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2022 in meeting the Government's foreign policy objectives.

Vicky Ford:

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), Commonwealth Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to work together across a number of UK foreign policy priority areas, including trade, climate, women and girls. The Prime Minister spoke at the CHOGM Business Forum on his vision to deepen trade and investment between Commonwealth countries and announced the launch of the Developing Country Trading Scheme (DCTS) benefitting 18 Commonwealth countries. The Foreign Secretary highlighted concerns about the impact of the war in Ukraine on food and energy security. Together with the External Affairs Minister of India, the Foreign Secretary also announced a new Commonwealth Diplomatic Academy programme for young diplomats. My Right Honourable friend Alok Sharma, the COP26 President, hosted a high level climate side event with Rwanda on maintaining momentum towards COP27. The UK, including Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for the Commonwealth, held bilateral discussions and underlined our unwavering commitment to the Commonwealth family, including through support such as an additional £217 million as part of our ongoing commitment to support Girls Education priorities and a further investment of £2.7 million to support work on the rights LGBT+ people.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Official Hospitality

Jon Trickett:

[\[27528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much her Department spent on hospitality in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Vicky Ford:

FCDO spend on hospitality globally is as follows:

	FINANCIAL YEAR			FY 2022/2023
	(FY) 2019/2020	FY 2020/2021	FY 2021/2022	THUS FAR (AS OF 6 JULY 2022)
Catering Services	£2,274,750.47	£2,583,246.85	£1,920,301.81	£907,874.61
Business Hospitality	£9,892,328.23	£2,245,977.25	£5,450,119.98	£2,553,484.84

■ Gabon: Human Rights**Ruth Jones:** [\[30133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) humanitarian, (b) political and (c) human rights situation in Gabon.

Vicky Ford:

We monitor developments in Gabon from our High Commission in Yaoundé (in Cameroon). We have frequent conversations with the Gabonese authorities on a range of topics including politics and human rights. We have discussed these issues in the context of Gabon's seat on the UN Security Council, the Human Rights Council, and their recent accession to the Commonwealth. In Gabon's most recent Universal Periodic Review, we welcomed progress on women's rights and the protection of children, particularly in relation to human trafficking, and we urged greater progress on increasing political space for opposition voices and freedom of expression and assembly. During the process of accession to the Commonwealth, Gabon was assessed by the Commonwealth Secretariat and members on a number of criteria, including its commitment to democratic processes, including free and fair elections, and the protection of human rights and freedom of expression. We will continue to monitor the situation closely in the run-up to the 2023 presidential elections, working with international partners, including the EU, UN, and Commonwealth. We call for all parties to engage constructively in the elections and uphold democratic principles including the rule of law.

■ Gaza: Development Aid**John McDonnell:** [\[29857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of Save the Children's report entitled Trapped: The impact of 15 years of blockade on the mental health of Gaza's children, published on 15 June 2022.

John McDonnell: [\[29859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Israeli counterpart on protecting children in Gaza.

Amanda Milling:

We are aware of Save the Children's report into the wellbeing of Gazan children. In 2021, the UK contributed £2 million to UNICEF, which provided child-sensitive grants to vulnerable households in Gaza reaching 4,311 boys and girls. This support met the essential needs of vulnerable children, with the majority of it being spent on food, education, and healthcare. The UK also contributes annually to UNRWA, supporting their Mental Health and Psychosocial Support interventions, especially for children, which included summer school activities targeting 98,595 children in Gaza in 2021.

I recently visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) where I saw first-hand the challenges of the prolonged conflict and the impact of the occupation. I reiterated UK support for a two-state solution and the need to improve conditions for ordinary Palestinians in my meetings with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Roll, and with the Palestinian leadership, including Prime Minister Shtayyeh.

■ India: Press Freedom

Claudia Webbe: [\[31242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to take steps to ensure that the Indian Government fulfils its commitments as a signatory to the 2022 G7 Resilient Democracies Statement in the context of reported persecution of Indian journalists who are critical of the governing Bharatiya Janata party.

Claudia Webbe: [\[31243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to ensure the safety and independence of journalists in India in the context of the recent change in that country's position on the Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index.

Claudia Webbe: [\[31244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Indian counterpart on press freedoms in India.

Claudia Webbe: [\[31245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the arrest of journalist Mohammed Zubair in India, if she will discuss with her Indian counterpart the (a) protection of press freedoms and (b) safety of journalists in that country.

Claudia Webbe: [\[31246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the arrest of journalist Mohammed Zubair, what steps her Department plans to take to help protect the freedom and safety of religious minority journalists in India.

Vicky Ford:

We are aware of the arrest of Mohammed Zubair, a journalist and the co-founder of Alt News, and concerns around media freedom in India. The British High Commission in New Delhi continues to follow these events closely, while recognising that the Indian judicial system is a matter for the Government of India. The UK Government remains committed to media freedom, and to championing democracy and human rights around the world. We engage with India on a range of human rights matters, including media freedom and freedom of religion or belief, and where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at Ministerial level.

We work closely with and regularly engage India's vibrant media, which promotes lively debate across the political spectrum, and do this through the annual South Asia Journalism Fellowship Programme under our flagship Chevening brand which includes over 60 Indian alumni. In 2021, we supported the Thomson Reuters Foundation in running workshops for journalists reporting on issues such as human trafficking and child labour. On 5 May 2021, the then-Foreign Secretary led a discussion with G7 members and guest states, including India, on further multilateral coordination to promote media freedom. He stressed to all states the importance of media freedom and combatting the use of arbitrary detention and encouraged support for UNESCO's Global Media Defence Fund.

■ Israel: Palestinians

John McDonnell:

[\[29858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps she is taking to help end the 15-year blockade of Gaza.

Amanda Milling:

The UK continues to urge both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authorities 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. I recently visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) where I saw first-hand the challenges of the prolonged conflict and the impact of the occupation. I reiterated UK support for a two-state solution and the need to improve conditions for ordinary Palestinians in my meetings with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Roll, and with the Palestinian leadership, including Prime Minister Shtayyeh.

We remain longstanding supporters of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and their work to support Palestinian refugees across the region including Gaza. At the UNRWA pledging conference in New York in June, we announced a new multi-year funding programme with the agency providing £15 million in 2022, which helps UNRWA provide education to over 533,000 children a year (half of them girls), and access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees.

■ Jim Fitton

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[30172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure the safety and welfare of Jim Fitton in detention in Iraq.

Amanda Milling:

Consular officials in Iraq and the UK are continuing to provide consular assistance to Mr Fitton and his family. We cannot interfere in the judicial process of another country, just as we would not expect interference in our own. The British Ambassador in Baghdad has raised and will continue to raise our interest in Mr Fitton's case with the Iraqi Government. While he is detained, we will continue to register our interest in

Mr Fitton, including that the conditions of the prison where he is detained are in line with international standards. Mr Fitton's safety and welfare remain of the utmost importance.

■ Libya: Terrorism

Ruth Jones:

[\[30137\]](#)

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

Graham Stuart:

We continue to monitor the security situation closely in Libya, including recent public protests across the country between 1-3 July. These were protests against the increased cost of living and lack of electricity, and dissatisfaction with the political elite. The UK is committed to supporting the UN-facilitated, Libyan-led and owned political process, including efforts to unblock the executive impasse and agree a pathway to presidential and parliamentary elections. UK travel advice continues to advise against all travel to Libya.

■ Nigeria: Religious Freedom

Jim Shannon:

[\[27607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her international counterparts on providing support for Nigeria following recent attacks on people practicing religion in that country.

Vicky Ford:

Increasing insecurity across Nigeria is having a devastating impact on affected communities. All communities should be able to practise their religion or faith without fear. I have discussed insecurity with the Nigerian authorities on a number of occasions, most recently in February this year. At the first dialogue of our Security and Defence partnership in February, the UK Government committed to support Nigeria as it responds to growing security challenges in different parts of the country, including serious and organised crime, kidnap and terrorism.

Promoting the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities. We remain committed to working with international partners to promote freedom and openness. On 5-6 July, we hosted an International Ministerial Conference on FoRB and brought together over 500 delegates from more than 60 countries around the world to increase global action to protect this right.

■ Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference

Caroline Lucas:

[\[32510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Ministers will represent the UK at the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on 1 to 26 August 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The UK looks forward to working with all states to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the Tenth Review Conference in August. The FCDO is still finalising Ministerial attendance. The senior official leading the UK delegation will be the UK's Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament.

■ Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment**Liam Byrne:**[\[29900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the G7 Communique expressing progress on the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), which Minister leads UK policy on the PGII; which role is providing executive day to day leadership of the PGII; how much resource has been committed to the PGII (a) by the UK and (b) in total; and how many projects are in the pipeline for funding through the PGII.

Vicky Ford:

The Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) is the G7's commitment to help countries get the investment they need to grow secure, open, thriving economies. Collectively, G7 countries aim to mobilise \$600 billion of honest, reliable finance for low and middle-income countries over five years, as announced at the recent Leaders' summit, and are committed to closer co-ordination and communication of initiatives, in close conjunction with the G7 Presidency. The UK's contribution to PGII will be our work through British Investment Partnerships (BIP), as set out in our recently published International Development Strategy. Led by the Foreign Secretary, BIP aims to mobilise up to £8 billion of UK backed financing a year by 2025, including from the private sector. The UK delivers BIP through a range of instruments and tools, including development finance, export finance, concessional finance, guarantees and expertise, and each of these mechanisms has its own pipeline of initiatives, either being implemented or under development.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan**Caroline Lucas:**[\[27570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Question from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay at Deputy Prime Minister's Questions on 29 June 2022, when her Department will formally announce its policy on allowing high risk British Council contractors still in Afghanistan to be processed immediately on their application to pathway three of the Afghanistan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme; if she will make it her policy for this decision to also apply to high risk (a) Chevening alumni and (b) GardaWorld contractors; and if she will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

The FCDO is processing all expressions of interest (EOI) as they are submitted.

■ Russia: Freezing of Assets

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[32610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an estimate of the value of frozen Russian assets that are held in the UK as on 7 July 2022; and if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of redistributing those assets to the victims of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Graham Stuart:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) is responsible for the recording of frozen Russian assets. Relevant firms are legally obliged to report to OFSI if they hold frozen assets of a designated person or entity they suspect to be on the list of asset freeze targets. OFSI is currently receiving a high volume of reporting about assets being frozen relating to sanctions imposed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This information is being collated and assured. Further details will be released by OFSI in due course and will mark a substantial increase on previous assets reported as frozen under Russia sanctions. We are carefully considering all options that might enable the seizure of assets to contribute towards the reconstruction of Ukraine.

■ Russia: Prisoners of War

Abena Opong-Asare:

[\[31241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with (a) NATO and (b) her other international counterparts on the detention and prosecution of British prisoners of war by Russian forces in Ukraine.

Graham Stuart:

The Government of Ukraine is responsible for negotiations with Russia on the exchange of Prisoners of War and we are working closely with the Ukrainians to secure the release of all British National Prisoners of War held by Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine. The UK Government is also in regular contact with international partners, including NATO Allies, about violations of International Humanitarian Law by Russia and Russian proxies, including their treatment of Prisoners of War and civilian detainees. British Nationals detained by Russian forces and its proxies must be treated in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, including the Geneva Conventions. The UK Government has raised this issue with the Russian authorities and reminded them of their obligations under International Humanitarian Law.

■ South Africa: Carbon Emissions

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[32504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the £1.8 billion pledged to the Just Energy Transition Partnership with South Africa will be provided as (a) equity, (b) grants and (c) loans; how much of that pledge will

be allocated from (i) International Climate Finance and (ii) Official Development Assistance; and which Government departments will be responsible for that programme.

Vicky Ford:

The details of the UK's \$1.8 billion contribution to the South African Just Energy Transition Partnership are still being discussed with South Africa. This is part of the overall International Partnership Group offer of \$8.5 billion to support their ambition for an accelerated and inclusive energy transition to a low carbon economy as set out in the country's Nationally Determined Commitment submitted ahead of COP 26. Our finance will support an Investment Plan currently under preparation by the South African Government. We currently anticipate that over 70% will be provided in the form of guarantees which will increase the availability of loan finance for South Africa. We anticipate the remainder will take the form of loans and equity for private sector investment. The UK's offer forms part of the commitment to double our international climate finance over the next 5 years and is classified as Official Development Assistance. This offer is in addition to the £270 million grant funds the UK has pledged into the \$2 billion Accelerating Coal Transition programme being run by the Climate Investment Funds, which South Africa will benefit from.

■ **Sri Lanka: Economic Situation**

Ruth Jones:

[\[30145\]](#)

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

Vicky Ford:

Sri Lanka is experiencing a severe economic crisis. Shortages of hard currency, caused by a debt crisis, have led to shortages of imported necessities including medicines, cooking gas, fuel and food. The economy contracted by 1.6% in Q2 of 2022 and annual inflation jumped to an all-time high of 54.6% in June. The UK welcomes ongoing discussions between Sri Lanka and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a bailout package and the reforms needed to bring the economy back to a sustainable path. We urge the government to engage fully and deeply with the IMF, to build confidence in a stronger future for Sri Lanka and drive reform, growth and development for Sri Lanka's people.

The UK has a significant voice in international debt fora. We are working closely with fellow Paris Club members and multilateral organisations, including the World Bank, on solutions to Sri Lanka's debt crisis. We are also supporting the UN and its agencies in their coordinated response based on the UN's joint Humanitarian Needs and Priorities (HNP) Plan, launched on 9 June. This called for \$47.2 million to provide life-saving assistance to 1.7 million people who are most at risk and need immediate support.

■ Sudan: Politics and Government

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[32503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to (a) help prevent violence and abuse and (b) support a renewed inclusive process for a civilian-controlled transition to democracy in Sudan following the withdrawal of the military from existing mediation mechanisms and the removal of civilians from the sovereign council on 4 July 2022.

Vicky Ford:

We condemn the use of violence against protesters by the Sudanese security forces, most recently in a statement following the killing of at least nine people during protests on 30 June. We continue to urge Sudan's military to allow peaceful protest and to deliver accountability for abuses: messages delivered during the recent session of the UN Human Rights Council and by the UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan during a visit to Khartoum on 25-28 June. In support of justice and accountability, we also secured a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council on 7 July to maintain monitoring and reporting on the situation.

Since the 25 October 2021 coup, we have been clear with all political actors that dialogue is necessary to agree a genuinely civilian-led government and eventual elections. We continue to work with the UN and other partners to deliver this message to all sides, including the Sudanese military.

■ Togo

Ruth Jones:

[\[30134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) humanitarian, (b) political and (c) human rights situation in Togo.

Vicky Ford:

The UK was pleased to welcome Togo to the Commonwealth last month; as the organisation continues to grow it will remain a champion of shared values of peace, democracy and stability. The UK welcomed the Presidential election in Togo in February 2020, which was assessed as predominantly free and fair, although not without some irregularities. We noted Togo's progress highlighted in the 2022 UN universal periodic review, in particular on constitutional and institutional reforms, the adoption of core instruments relating to the promotion of international human rights and dialogue with political actors. However, progress on LGBT+ rights remains a concern and we continue to monitor developments. The UK is also following closely the impact on West African states of deteriorating security in the Sahel and of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

■ USA: Trade**Liam Byrne:** [\[29901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had on seeking participation in the US-EU Trade and Technology Council.

Rehman Chishti:

The Foreign Secretary has not held any discussions seeking participation in the US-EU Trade and Technology Council. The UK continues to work closely with the US and EU to further our shared technology objectives.

■ Zimbabwe: Politics and Government**Ruth Jones:** [\[30135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions the Government has had with the Government of Zimbabwe.

Vicky Ford:

I [Minister Ford] met with Foreign Minister Shava and Finance Minister Ncube in London on 30 June and discussed political and economic issues. I [Minister Ford] noted that the UK would like to see Zimbabwe achieve debt arrears clearance, and that this can happen if Zimbabwe successfully completes an International Monetary Fund Staff Monitored Programme and makes reasonable progress on political reform. Ahead of upcoming elections in 2023 I [Minister Ford] stressed the importance of civic space, and the need for all political parties to respect the rule of law, refrain from violence and be able to campaign freely.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Ambulance Services****Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[29931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of ambulances in England.

Maggie Throup:

We are investing £20 million from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to increase the number of ambulances in England. This will reduce the age profile and emissions of the fleet while increasing its size and productivity.

■ Breast Cancer: Screening**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[29998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the one million tests and checks carried out by community diagnostic centres since July 2021 were for (a) people urgently referred by their GP with suspected breast cancer and (b) breast symptoms where cancer was not initially suspected.

James Morris:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]:

This data is not collected in the format requested. Information on general practitioner referrals to community diagnostic centres is not collected by specific care pathway.

Derek Twigg:[\[31021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 19569 on Breast Cancer: Screening, what recent assessment he has made of reasons for breast screening coverage in people aged 53 to 71 years old in the Halton local authority area being 55.8 per cent compared to 64.2 per cent for England in 2020-21.

James Morris:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: NHS England has advised that comparisons for screening coverage in specific locations with the average in England is challenging. This is due to providers within the National Health Service breast screening programme restoring services at different times and operating different invitation models.

Providers within the Warrington, Halton and St Helens programme are returning to timed invitations across all sites. Commissioners will work with local providers to monitor coverage to ensure that uptake rates return to and subsequently exceed pre-pandemic levels.

■ Cancer: Children**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[31206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of childhood cancer outcomes in (a) Slough and (b) England.

James Morris:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: No assessment has been made of childhood cancer outcomes in Slough. The one-year age-standardised survival for the 1,367 children aged 0 to 14 years old in England diagnosed with cancer in 2019 is 93.4%. The five-year age-standardised survival estimate for the 1,392 children aged 0 to 14 years old in England diagnosed with cancer in 2019 is 85.0%. The 10-year age-standardised survival estimate for the 1,376 children aged 0 to 14 years old in England diagnosed with cancer in 2019 is 81.7%.

■ Cancer: Health Services**Wes Streeting:**[\[31173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients with suspected cancer have waited 104 days or more for NHS care in the most recent month for which data is available.

James Morris:

In April 2022, 1,251 patients or 9.7% of the 12,932 patients treated for cancer on a 62-day pathway in England were treated after 104 days.

Care Homes: Costs**Catherine West:**[\[30081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the rise in the cost of living on the cost of care homes and residential homes.

Gillian Keegan:

No formal assessment has been made. However, we are working with the sector to understand the impact of emerging challenges and ensure continuity of care. We have made an additional £3.7 billion available for councils in 2022/23, which includes £1 billion for social care. Councils also have access to additional funding, including from un-ringfenced grants and council tax and should work with care providers to determine fee rates based on local market conditions. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are required to shape their local markets. Local authorities are best placed to understand and plan for the care needs of their populations, and to develop and build local market capacity.

Coronavirus: Disease Control**Rachael Maskell:**[\[27660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of covid-19 cases; and what recent advice he has received on the risks of covid-19 in autumn 2022.

Maggie Throup:

Data shows that COVID-19 infections are currently rising in all age groups. This is likely to be caused by infections compatible with the Omicron variants BA.4 and BA.5, which are now dominant in the United Kingdom. While hospitalisations are rising, the number of people in mechanical ventilation beds remains low.

We continue to monitor the current situation ahead of the autumn, including advice from the UK Health Security Agency on progress on contingency planning. In May 2022, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation provided its interim advice to the Government on an autumn booster vaccination programme in the autumn. We expect its final advice shortly.

Coronavirus: Medical Treatments**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[31051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of broadening the eligibility list for covid-19 antiviral treatments to include diabetics.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: The Therapeutics Clinical Review Panel considers the latest evidence on the patients most at risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19 and provides advice to the National Health Service on the appropriate patient cohorts for new therapies. Patients with diabetes were not identified in the initial patient cohorts currently receiving these treatments.

However, the PANORAMIC study is gathering further evidence on those patients who would benefit from oral antiviral treatments, including patients with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. The results from this study will inform clinical access policy for these treatments through the NHS, including any expansion of the current eligible patient cohorts. Any such changes would be proposed by the NHS and agreed by the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers.

■ Dementia: Health Services

Julian Knight: [\[31142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using the forthcoming dementia strategy to encourage the concept of brain health.

Rachael Maskell: [\[31147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what interventions will be included in the dementia strategy to reduce dementia risk.

Rachael Maskell: [\[31148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will include in the dementia strategy proposals for a public awareness campaign to improve the understanding of brain health.

Gillian Keegan:

We are developing the approach for dementia in England for the next 10 years, which will focus on the specific health and care needs of people living with dementia and their carers, including diagnosis, risk reduction and prevention and research. We are exploring the concept of brain health in encouraging people to reduce their dementia risk.

■ Dementia: Speech and Language Therapy

Geraint Davies: [\[30977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he had with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists on the development of the 10-year plan for dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: There have been no recent discussions.

We will set out plans for dementia in England shortly, which will focus on the specific health and care needs of people living with dementia and their carers, including dementia diagnosis, risk reduction and prevention and research.

■ Dental Health

James Wild: [\[23432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what public health campaigns on improving oral and dental health his Department has commissioned in each year since 2017; and what funding his Department has provided for those campaigns.

James Morris:

The Department has not commissioned specific national public health campaigns on improving oral and dental health since 2017.

■ Dental Services: Darlington

Peter Gibson: [\[27739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what specific steps he is taking to improve access to NHS Dentistry in Darlington constituency.

James Morris:

An additional £50 million was allocated for National Health Service dentistry for the final quarter of 2021/22 to provide urgent care to patients. Of this funding, £8,633,000 was made available to the North East and Yorkshire region, including Darlington. NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked practices to deliver at least 95% of contracted units of dental activity and 100% of units of orthodontic activity to safely improve access for patients safely.

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

■ Dental Services: West Sussex

Nick Gibb: [\[18760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that dental practices in West Sussex accept NHS-funded patients.

James Morris:

We provided an additional £50 million for National Health Service dentistry for the final quarter of 2021/22 to provide urgent care to patients. Of this funding, £6,887,000 was made available to the South East region, including West Sussex. 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.

Dental patients are not registered to a particular practice outside a course of treatment. A dental practice can accept a patient for a course of treatment and there are no geographical restrictions on which practice a patient may attend. In addition, NHS Digital has written to practices to ensure that information on appointment availability via NHS.UK is updated to allow patients to access NHS dental care. Patients can contact NHS England's Customer Contact Centre for assistance in finding a local dental practice or NHS 111 if seeking urgent dental care.

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with stakeholders, including the British Dental Association, to improve NHS dentistry and negotiations are underway on initial measures. This aims to increase access to NHS dentistry, including in West Sussex.

■ Dialysis Machines

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[30074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 2572 on Dialysis Machines, what discussions officials in his Department have had with the NHS on the distribution of communications with patients receiving haemodialysis treatment at home about reimbursement for the costs incurred as a result of their treatment.

James Morris:

Departmental officials have regular discussions with NHS England on a range of issues, including support for patients receiving haemodialysis at home. NHS England advise that a Specialised Commissioning Circular was issued on 20 June 2022 to all commissioned providers of home haemodialysis and renal clinical networks. This stated that all providers should ensure that eligible patients are alerted to the available reimbursement arrangements. NHS England is seeking assurance through regional commissioners and renal networks that processes to distribute this communication and reimbursement processes are in place, with an initial review due in autumn 2022.

■ Diseases

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[31231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure policy convergence between risk factors for non-communicable diseases, including alcohol, smoking and obesity.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: Over 40% of ill-health and early death is due to preventable risk factors, with more than half of this total related to tobacco, alcohol and diet. Addressing these major risk factors, including where these issues converge, forms part of the ambition to increase healthy life expectancy by five years by 2035 and to reduce the difference between local areas by 2030.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities was established in 2021 to provide expertise in public health, evidence and policy to ensure informed and integrated national policy making and local delivery.

■ Disinfectants

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[32478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the NHS has sufficient access to sodium hypochlorite.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department and the National Health Service have not received any such reports of insufficient access to sodium hypochlorite. However, the Department monitors and mitigates any disruptions to the continuity of supply of medical products.

■ Disinfectants: Shortages

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[32481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what contingency plans his Department has in place to ensure that the NHS has access to sodium hypochlorite in the event that the shortage being experienced continues.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department and the National Health Service have not received any such reports of insufficient access to sodium hypochlorite. However, the Department monitors and mitigates any disruptions to the continuity of supply of medical products.

In the event of potential disruption, the Department's National Supply Disruption Response has been available since March 2020, supporting providers and suppliers with supply disruptions and offering express freight support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

■ Epidermolysis Bullosa: Clinical Trails

Sir Oliver Heald: [\[29850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit additional funding for clinical trials on the repurposing of drugs to treat Epidermolysis Bullosa; and if he will make a statement.

James Morris:

The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). While the usual practice of the NIHR is not to ring-fence funds for expenditure on particular topics, the NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of health or care research, including trials for the repurposing of drugs for conditions such as Epidermolysis Bullosa. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

■ Evusheld

Helen Hayes: [\[25942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the levels of stock of Evusheld held by NHS England.

Helen Hayes: [\[25943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to increase the availability of Evusheld to immunocompromised people in the event of future waves of covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 30 June 2022]: The Department is currently conducting an assessment of Evusheld, including requesting advice from clinicians on the most appropriate option for the National Health Service in line with available data, the public health situation and other treatments available. While we are considering the advice received, we are unable to confirm a specific timetable for any decision.

Sarah Olney: [\[28911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a decision on the (a) procurement and (b) planned extent of availability of Evusheld.

Maggie Throup:

The Department is conducting an assessment of Evusheld, including requesting advice from clinicians on the most appropriate option for the National Health Service in line with available data, the public health situation and other treatments available. While we are considering the advice received, we are currently unable to confirm a specific timetable for any such decision.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[31781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to expedite the rollout of Evusheld.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: The Department is conducting an assessment of Evusheld, which includes requesting advice from clinicians on the most appropriate option for the National Health Service in line with all available data, the public health situation and other treatments available. As we are currently considering the advice received, we are unable to confirm a specific timetable for any decision to deployment this treatment.

■ Food: Labelling

Caroline Lucas: [\[27574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, by what mechanisms he is evaluating the impact of out of home calorie labelling regulations (a) across the population and (b) on people with eating disorders; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

We continue to evaluate the impact of the out of home calorie labelling Regulations, including on people living with eating disorders. We will publish a post-implementation review, which will consider the implementation and effectiveness of the policy.

Gender Recognition: Health Services

Sarah Olney: [\[28470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken recent steps to improve data collection practices in the Gender Identity Development Service.

James Morris:

The Gender Identity Devolvment Service is currently being reviewed by Dr Hilary Cass, with interim findings published in February 2022. The outcome of this review will inform the future of the service, including data collection practices.

Health: Equality

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[31230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made about the combined impact of different risk factors for non-communicable diseases, including alcohol, smoking and obesity together, on health disparities.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: Over 40% of ill-health and early death is due to preventable risk factors, with more than half of this total due to tobacco, alcohol and diet-related risk factors. These are more prevalent in the most deprived areas and communities and are a significant contributor to disparities in health outcomes.

Heart Diseases and Kidney Diseases

Wes Streeting: [\[24628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2022 to Question 6793 on Heart Diseases and Kidney Diseases, what his timeline is for the implementation of pathways within the Renal Services Transformation Programme.

Wes Streeting: [\[24631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the objectives are of the Renal Services Transformation Programme.

James Morris:

The Programme has established five expert-led multidisciplinary clinical pathways: Improving Access; Identifying Best Practice and Developing Solutions in Chronic Kidney Disease; Acute Kidney Injury; Dialysis; and Transplants. All pathways are intended to be implemented by April 2023.

The Renal Services Transformation Programme aims to reduce unwarranted variation in the quality and accessibility of renal care to improve outcomes and services for those with kidney disease. Its specific objectives are to ensure equity of access by understanding and addressing long-known health inequalities; increase quality of care with an emphasis on defining and implementing best practice; improve services by using local dashboards to understand and correct variation; and increase value in healthcare by developing new and local commissioning models.

■ Heart Diseases: Health Services

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[29952\]](#)

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, and by Strange (et al.) entitled Uncovering the treatable burden of severe aortic stenosis in the UK, published on 26 January 2022, what steps his Department is taking to improve (a) detection rates, (b) diagnosis rates and (c) treatment capacity for heart valve disease, in the context of the epidemiology and risk of mortality of the disease.

James Morris:

[Holding answer 7 July 2022]: We have committed £2.3 billion to launch at least 100 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) by 2024/25 to increase the volume of diagnostic activity and reduce patient waiting times. CDCs will support the earlier detection and diagnosis of cardiovascular disease, including physiological measurement tests such as echocardiography and electrocardiograms, pathology tests and computerised tomography and magnetic resonance imaging scans.

In addition, the National Health Service is investing in cardiac networks to support improvements in the patient pathway. These networks have been developed to take an evidenced based, clinically led, whole pathway approach to improvement from prevention, diagnosis, treatment and end of life care.

■ HIV Infection

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[31193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle stigma related to HIV.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[31194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to provide additional streams of support for people who are newly diagnosed with HIV.

Maggie Throup:

We have committed to achieving zero new HIV infections and AIDS and HIV-related deaths in England by 2030. In December 2021 we published an HIV Action Plan, which sets out how we will achieve the interim ambition of an 80% reduction in new infections by 2025. The Plan's objectives include rapid and adequate access to

diagnosis, treatment and support for those living with HIV, including addressing stigma to improve health outcomes and reduce onward transmission of infection. We will improve workforce training in the National Health Service to improve HIV awareness and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and academic partners will monitor levels of stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV.

In February, we delivered a campaign through National HIV Testing Week to increase awareness and the acceptability of HIV testing and reduce barriers, such as stigma. A summer campaign has commenced in July through the National HIV Prevention Programme. For those living with HIV, including those newly diagnosed, we will develop an audit tool to enable local areas to understand provision of availability and accessibility of HIV mental health, psycho-social and peer support services available. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and the UKHSA will share emerging evidence on the effectiveness of voluntary sector-led peer support networks for local commissioners to develop similar models. We have also established the HIV Action Plan Implementation Steering Group which will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the delivery of the Plan and we will update Parliament annually on progress.

■ HIV Infection: Screening

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[31192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to extend opt-out HIV testing to (a) Luton, (b) Leicester, (c) Coventry, (d) Birmingham (e) Bristol and (d) Milton Keynes, in the context of the prevalence of HIV in those areas.

Maggie Throup:

NHS England and NHS Improvement is investing £20 million over the next three years to expand opt-out testing in emergency departments in the highest prevalence local areas to identify new cases of HIV. High prevalence is defined as those areas with five or more cases per 1,000 residents in line with guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. However, as Luton, Leicester, Coventry, Birmingham, Bristol and Milton Keynes have lower HIV prevalence levels, there are no specific plans to extend such testing.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Costs

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[30173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will bring forward the hormone replacement treatment costs reduction from April 2023 to an earlier date.

James Morris:

The new hormone replacement therapy prepayment certificate (PPC) will be available for people to purchase by April 2023. Due to the changes necessary to introduce the PPC, we are unable bring forward the date of implementation.

■ Hospitals: Discharges

Rachael Maskell: [\[31879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to accelerate discharge for patients from hospital with social care or community health support.

Rachael Maskell: [\[31880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to accelerate discharge from hospital for patients that require a step down facility.

Rachael Maskell: [\[31881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his is taking steps to use a transitional care facility for step up transitional care in the context of hospital discharges.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department is working with NHS England, local government and social care providers to monitor and address the underlying causes of delayed discharges, including accelerating discharge for patients from hospital with social care or community health support.

A national discharge taskforce has been established with membership from local government, the National Health Service and the Government to support regional and local systems. The taskforce aims to identify long-term, sustainable changes to accelerate safe discharge for patients and ensure people are only in hospital for as long as they need to be.

The Department continues to explore options to accelerate hospital discharge for patients, including identifying capacity to accommodate people who no longer need acute hospital care but who continue to need other forms of support. These options may include step-up or step-down transitional care at home or in the community.

■ Mental Health Services

Tony Lloyd: [\[29899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the availability across health providers of (a) cognitive behavioural therapy, (b) eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing and (c) dialectical behaviour therapy.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: The 'Health Education England Adult IAPT Workforce Census 2021' reported that in March 2021, 92% of providers offered cognitive behavioural therapy through local Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services and 88% offered eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing. Dialectical behaviour therapy is not offered through IAPT services.

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out an ambition to expand and transform community mental health services for adults, including increasing access to evidence-based

psychological therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing and dialectical behaviour therapy. No assessment has been made of the availability of psychological therapies provided by adult and children and young people's community health services.

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[29930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to mental health services in (a) Bournemouth East constituency and (b) England.

Gillian Keegan:

In Bournemouth East constituency, integrated multi-disciplinary teams across primary and secondary care are being developed, with contributions input from the voluntary community and social enterprise sector to enable access to evidence-based mental health interventions. We are investing an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24 to expand and transform mental health services to enable a further two million people in England to access mental health support.

■ **Mental Health: Disadvantaged**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of material deprivation on mental health.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[30048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of poverty on mental health among the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities.

Gillian Keegan:

No recent assessment has been made. We launched a public call for evidence to support the development of a new cross-Government 10 year plan for mental health, which closed on 7 July 2022. We will review the responses received to the call for evidence, including on the causes of poor mental health, as the plan is developed.

■ **Mental Health: Racial Discrimination**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of racism on mental health.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[30047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of racism on mental health among the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities.

Gillian Keegan:

No recent assessment has been made. We launched a public call for evidence to support the development of a new cross-Government 10 year plan for mental health, which closed on 7 July 2022. We will review the responses received to the call for evidence, including on the causes of poor mental health, as the plan is developed.

■ **Mental Health: Travellers**

Kirsten Oswald: [\[30046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the mental health needs of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities in the UK.

Gillian Keegan:

No recent assessment has been made. We launched a public call for evidence to inform the development of a new cross-Government 10 year plan for mental health, which closed on 7 July 2022. We will review the responses received, including on the causes of poor mental health, as the plan is developed.

■ **Mental Illness**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the population have been diagnosed with a mental health condition (a) in total and (b) in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the latest period for which figures are available.

Gillian Keegan:

The information is not held in the format requested. However, approximately 5% of the population in England were in contact with National Health Service-funded secondary mental health, learning disabilities and autism services in 2020/21.

■ **Musculoskeletal Disorders: Medical Treatments**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish guidance for Health Trusts on the availability of the Alexander technique for patients.

Gillian Keegan:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) develops evidence-based guidance for the National Health Service on best practice. NICE can recommend any treatments, including the Alexander technique (AT) where there is sufficient evidence to support its use. NICE's guideline on Parkinson's disease recommends that healthcare professionals should consider the AT for people with Parkinson's disease who are experiencing balance or motor function problems. Healthcare professionals are expected to take NICE's guidance fully into account in the care and treatment of individual patients.

■ NHS: Databases

Clive Lewis: [\[31886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NHS England on when the Invitation to Tender for the Federated Data Platform will be published.

Gillian Keegan:

There have been no specific discussions. The contract notice will be available from the anticipated publication date in September 2022. This will initiate a 30-day period for interested suppliers to respond to a pre-selection questionnaire and express interest in the procurement. At the end of this period, an invitation to competitive dialogue will be issued.

Clive Lewis: [\[31887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS England plans to conduct a public consultation on the (a) nature and (b) remit of the Federated Data Platform before the invitation to tender for the platform is published.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England has no plans to do so.

However, 'Data saves lives: reshaping health and social care with data,' published in June 2022, commits to improve trust in the health and care system's use of data. This includes engagement with the public and stakeholders on data programmes and projects, such as research and development, General Practice Data for Planning and Research and the Federated Data Platform.

We plan to engage through methods including surveys, large-scale public engagement and focus groups, which will inform a public campaign in early 2023 on how the National Health Service uses data to improve the lives of patients. A specific theme of the engagement programme will focus on Secure Data Environments, including the Federated Data Platform.

Clive Lewis: [\[32574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value of the Federated Data Platform contract was as of 7 July 2022; and how that figure compares with the value in the Prior Information Notice.

Gillian Keegan:

The proposed contract value for the Federated Data Platform is £360 million over five years, with an option to extend over two years. The initial Privacy Information Notice (PIN) referred to the intention to procure a three year contract, originally estimated at £240 million. However, a subsequent decision was made to procure a longer-term contract to allow for an improved return on investment, which increased its value. An opportunity notice will be issued following the launch of the competition, which will state the revised contract values.

■ NHS: Software

Cat Smith: [\[28894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients who do not have access to the NHS app are able to have the same access to NHS services as those with the app.

James Morris:

The free NHS App is available for people who are registered with a general practitioner in England and can also be accessed via NHS.UK. These services are also available via NHS 111, NHS 119 for COVID-19 support services and direct calls to local services and face to face appointments.

■ Pain: Drugs

Alicia Kearns: [\[28928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the removal of specific pain medicines under NICE guidelines does not negatively impact people living with chronic pain.

Gillian Keegan:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guideline recommends that people with chronic primary pain should not initially receive commonly used drugs including paracetamol, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, benzodiazepines or opioids. NICE has determined there is little or no evidence that these treatment options have an impact on quality of life, pain or psychological distress and can cause harm, including possible addiction.

While NICE guidelines are not mandatory, we expect that patients presenting with symptoms consistent with chronic long term pain conditions should be managed according to clinical need and all current guidance. NICE continues to work with system partners to support the implementation of its updated guidelines. However, NICE has stated that medicines should not be withdrawn from patients when shown to be safe and effective for the individual and recommends that clinicians should discuss the risks and benefits of medication with the patient.

■ Pharmacy: Labour Turnover and Recruitment

Kim Leadbeater: [\[30209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support pharmacies in the recruitment and retention of pharmacists.

James Morris:

Community pharmacies are commercial organisations with responsibility for staff recruitment and retention. However, with the National Health Service, we continue to monitor workforce pressures in community pharmacy. Analysis undertaken by NHS England shows that reported workforce pressures facing community pharmacies is limited to geographical areas and are complex and multifactorial. NHS England is

working with employers to provide support and maintain good access to NHS pharmaceutical services.

In addition to the £2.5 billion a year allocated to the sector, Health Education England is investing a further £15.9 million over the next four years to support the expansion of frontline pharmacy staff in primary and community care.

■ Prader-Willi Syndrome: North West

Afzal Khan: [\[30126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of provision of specialist care for patients diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome in the North West.

James Morris:

[Holding answer 7 July 2022]: No specific assessment has been made.

■ Public Health: Equality

Sir George Howarth: [\[27543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of regional inequality on public health; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

No recent assessment has been made. However, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities publishes health indicators at upper tier local authority level in the Public Health Outcomes Framework and other related profiles. The information assists local government and health services to improve the health of the local population and reduce health disparities.

The 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom' white paper (LUWP) published in February 2022 includes an element to narrow the gap in healthy life expectancy by 2030. The LUWP committed the Department to the publication of a Health Disparities White Paper. We will provide further information on timing and plans in due course.

■ Radiotherapy

Greg Smith: [\[R\] \[26867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken steps to improve patient access to selective internal radiation therapy since that treatment received a NICE technology appraisal in March 2021.

James Morris:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are expanding the number of trusts which are commissioned to provide selective internal radiation therapy. This involves a market assessment and Prior Information Notice, which is in the final stages of completion.

■ Tirzepatide

Jim Shannon:

[\[25852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the weight maintenance drug Tirzepatide will be available on the NHS.

Maria Caulfield:

Tirzepatide is not yet licensed in the United Kingdom for any condition and therefore not routinely available to National Health Service patients in England. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) develops evidence-based guidance for the NHS on whether medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. NICE is currently appraising tirzepatide for the treatment of type 2 diabetes and expects to publish final guidance in April 2023. If recommended and granted a licence by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, clinicians could prescribe tirzepatide to eligible NHS patients, in line with NICE's recommendations.

■ Travellers: NHS

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[29966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of the inclusion of Gypsy/Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller as distinct categories in the NHS data dictionary.

Gillian Keegan:

No recent assessment has been made. The NHS Data Model and Dictionary reflects the latest approved Information Standard for the data submission of ethnicity categories in the National Health Service. This is derived from the Office for National Statistics' categories in 2001, which do not currently include Gypsy/Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groupings.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum

Holly Lynch:

[\[30072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting time is for asylum seekers to be invited to a substantive asylum interview after arrival in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

This information is not routinely published and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

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

■ Asylum: Napier Barracks**Tim Farron:** [\[29990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the High Court's ruling in June 2022 that the Special Development Order laid in August 2021 for the use of Napier Barracks for asylum accommodation for a further five years was unlawful.

Kevin Foster:

We will consider the judgment fully once the final order has been made.

■ Asylum: Rwanda**Caroline Nokes:** [\[31081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the annual cost of the UK and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership.

Caroline Nokes: [\[31082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of asylum seekers that will be removed to Rwanda as part of the UK and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership each year.

Simon Baynes:

The number of individuals relocated to Rwanda as part of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership is expected to be in the thousands over the lifetime of the partnership, which is expected to last at least five years. However, there is no limit under the agreement so there is scope to increase this.

Regarding costs, the UK is investing an initial £120 million into the economic development and growth of Rwanda. Funding will also be provided to support the delivery of asylum operations, accommodation and integration. Every person's needs are different, but we anticipate the amount would be comparable to processing costs incurred in the UK. Funding will only be provided while a person remains in Rwanda.

Caroline Nokes: [\[31083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the selection criteria by which asylum seekers' suitability for the UK and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership is assessed.

Simon Baynes:

As set out in the Home Office's updated Inadmissibility guidance, published on 9 May, an asylum claimant may be eligible for removal to Rwanda if their claim is inadmissible under this policy and (a) that claimant's journey to the UK can be described as having been dangerous and (b) was made on or after 1 January 2022. A dangerous journey is one able or likely to cause harm or injury. For example, this would include those that travel via small boat, or clandestinely in lorries. A case-by-

case assessment will take place for every individual considered for relocation. No one will be relocated if it is unsafe or inappropriate for them

■ Domestic Abuse

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[\[29933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help tackle domestic (a) abuse and (b) violence.

Amanda Solloway:

Tackling all forms of domestic abuse, whether or not they involve physical violence, is a priority for this Government.

That is why we introduced our landmark Domestic Abuse Act in 2021. The Act strengthens our protection to victims and ensures perpetrators feel the full force of the law. It includes the first legal definition of domestic abuse, improved support for victims in the courts, a new offence of non-fatal strangulation and an extension of the controlling or coercive behaviour offence.

More recently, in March 2022, we went even further and published our Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan which seeks to transform the whole of society's response in order to prevent offending, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the systems processes in place needed to deliver these goals.

This Plan, backed by over £230 million, commits to exploring options for a register to manage the most harmful domestic abusers, to providing support services with multi-year funding, with £47 million ringfenced for community-based support services, and funding for police training and development of a ground-breaking algorithm to help police better target the most harmful serial domestic abusers.

We are now in the process of delivering these commitments.

■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

Stuart Anderson:

[\[30148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to (a) provide support for groups for victims of domestic abuse and (b) increase the availability of those groups.

Amanda Solloway:

Tackling domestic abuse and ensuring victims receive the support they need is a priority for this Government. Our landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will strengthen our protection to victims and ensure perpetrators feel the full force of the law. It includes the first legal definition of domestic abuse, improved support for victims in the courts, new offences, including on non-fatal strangulation, and strengthened legislation around cruel acts of controlling or coercive behaviour.

The Act also places a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation, backed by £125 million of Government funding to ensure that these

vital services are available to anyone who needs them, wherever they live. This will be supported by a new £6 million Domestic Abuse Capacity Building Fund to help Local Authorities prepare for the upcoming duty.

In March 2022, we published the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan which will seek to transform the whole of society's response in order to prevent offending, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the systems processes in place needed to deliver these goals.

The Plan invests over £230 million into tackling domestic abuse. This includes over £140 million to support victims, much of which is multi-year funding, part over £47 million of which is ringfenced for community-based support services.

As committed to in the cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy published on 21 July last year, the Home Office has also provided an additional £1.5 million funding this year for 'by and for' service provision and to further increase funding for valuable specialist services for victims of violence against women and girls.

The Home Office is also planning to double funding for survivors of sexual violence and the National Domestic Abuse Helpline by 2024-25, and further increase funding for all the national helplines it supports.

The VAWG National Statement of Expectations, and Commissioning Toolkit, which we have published alongside the Plan, will also provide support to commissioners to help them increase provision of 'by and for' and specialist services.

■ Home Office: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[29889]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, 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.

Tom Pursglove:

Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on [Contracts Finder](#). As Contracts Finder was implemented in 2016, not all records before this time are held centrally.

The information sought, contract volumes, and values and volumes of monitoring activity, would only be available at disproportionate cost.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Kirsten Oswald:

[30043]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential impact on EU citizens with settled or pre-settled status under the

EU Settlement Scheme as a result of them having no physical document to prove that they have the right to reside in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

We are rolling out a 'digital by default' immigration system incrementally and all people with immigration status will eventually receive digital status only, with physical and paper-based products phased out.

Feedback has been positive from those using the online checking services. User satisfaction is at 80% and higher for landlords and at 84% for tenants. Most report to find it simple and easy to use, they can check their status at any time and contact the Home Office if they have any issues.

We have also enabled an individual's immigration status to be automatically available through system-to-system checks when they access a public service reducing the need to use the online service or present documents where applicable. This is live with Department for Work and Pensions, NHS England, and HM Revenue & Customs.

When a user encounters an issue, they can contact the Home Office Settlement Resolution Centre for support. This can include assistance through their online journey, recovering and updating details and sharing statuses on their behalf if they are unable to do so.

We continue to improve the service and welcome feedback on what further enhancements could be made.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Robert Largan:

[\[28935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he will respond to the correspondence of 10 May 2022 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL38512.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: The Home Office responded to the Hon Member's correspondence on 4 July 2022.

Damian Collins:

[\[31073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 13 March 2022 and (b) 7 June 2022 from the hon. Member for Folkestone and Hythe on Dr Stephen Coles and Mr Heenmunne Arachchige Chaturanga Kumara.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 6 July 2022

Louise Haigh: [31166]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 17 May 2022 from the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley, reference LH20946.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the Hon. Member's correspondence on 6 July 2022.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Caroline Lucas: [26733]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department used to determine the cap of 1,500 places available in the first year under Pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme; if she will expand that number in the event that expressions of interest from people eligible for that pathway exceeds it following the deadline for expressions of interest on 15 August 2022; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

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

Under pathway three of the ACRS, in the first year, the government will consider only eligible at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni for resettlement. The capacity of the UK to resettle people is not unlimited and difficult decisions have to be made on who will be prioritised for resettlement.

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) will consider Expressions of Interest (Eoi) in the order that they are received. These will be prioritised depending on:

- The role performed (for GardaWorld contractors); or
- The role performed and the project worked on (for British Council contractors); or
- Exceptionally compelling circumstances.

Further information on Expressions of Interest can be found at:

<https://forms.digital.fcdo.gov.uk/afghanistan-20220620/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme-acrs-pathway-3>

Caroline Lucas: [27571]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 22 June to Question 13691 on Refugees: Afghanistan and with reference to the oral statement of the Minister for Afghan Resettlement of 6 January 2022, for what reason referrals via pathway two of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme did not begin in spring 2022 did not happen; what factors are preventing referrals via that route as of 29 June 2022; whether she has a target date to begin taking referrals via pathway two; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 8 July 2022]: The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will see up to 20,000 people from Afghanistan and the region resettled to the UK over the coming years.

On 13 June 2022, the Government announced the launch of the second and third pathways of the ACRS. I am pleased to be able to confirm the UK has received its first referrals from the UNHCR under pathway two.

The ACRS is a bespoke scheme, which responds to a challenging and complex situation. The pace of actual arrivals in any particular period will depend on a range of factors including the flow of referrals from UNHCR and the availability of suitable accommodation and support in the UK.

■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[31174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the current level of violence perpetrated against retail workers.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government recognises the significant and long-lasting impact violence and abuse towards retail workers can have on its victims.

The Home Office Annual Commercial Victimization Survey was published on 30 March 2022. The surveys highlight the sector's experience of, and concerns about, levels of violence and abuse towards shop workers, and shop theft by customers. Annual retail sector crime surveys, undertaken by the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS), Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) and the British Retail Consortium (BRC) were published in Spring 2022. Each of these surveys show an increase in violence and abuse towards retail workers in the previous year.

The Government has taken action to tackle assaults against any worker providing a service to the public by introducing a statutory aggravating factor via the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The public-facing nature of the victim's role will be considered an aggravating factor when it comes to sentencing for assault offences. It applies where an assault is committed against those providing a public service, performing a public duty or providing a service to the public. This includes those working in retail and other public-facing roles. The provision commenced on 28 June and builds on the important work already underway by the Home Office through the National Retail Crime Steering Group to ensure assaults are not seen as part of a retail worker's job.

■ Spiking

Grahame Morris:

[\[31815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will create a specific criminal offence for (a) drink and (b) needle spiking.

Amanda Solloway:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: Spiking is an issue that the government takes very seriously. Perpetrators of such attacks need to be brought to justice, and the Government are committed to achieving that. Everybody has the right to enjoy a night out without fear.

Spiking is already illegal, and there are a range of offences which the police can use to prosecute this behaviour depending on the circumstances of individual cases.

I recognise the concerns that have been expressed that the lack of a specific spiking offence makes it more difficult to identify trends, and my department is considering the case for a criminal offence.

We will not hesitate to legislate if necessary and will inform parliament on the outcome of this consideration in October.

■ Spiking: Music Festivals

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[\[20227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to prevent spiking incidents at music festivals over summer 2022.

Amanda Solloway:

[Holding answer 27 June 2022]: Government is clear. Spiking is a heinous crime and we must stamp it out. We have been working with the Festivals and Outdoor Events sector and the National Police Chief's Council to ensure that they, alongside event organisers, local authorities, law enforcement, and hired security staff are taking appropriate action to protect potential victims and deter would be offenders. This includes opportunities for joint communications, updated guidance for audiences and staff and a shared understanding of the emergency service response to spiking incidents.

A letter will be sent to colleagues across the House shortly setting out further detail.

More broadly, the Government is taking a number of actions to address Spiking, including:

- Working across government to ensure that we have a joined-up and effective response to this issue from education and awareness through to support for victims in healthcare settings.
- Will publish a report in Spring 2023 on the prevalence and nature of spiking and the action that the Government is, and will take, to tackle it.
- Considering the case for a specific offence of spiking.

- Through the Safety of Women at Night Fund, and Round 3 of the Safer Streets Fund, supporting the rollout of pilot initiatives to improve the safety of women in public spaces, including in the night-time economy (NTE).
- Reclassifying GHB and related substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. These are so-called “date rape” drugs, which have been used in drug-facilitated crime (though there is little evidence to link these drugs to needle-spiking specifically)
- Deputy Chief Constable, Maggie Blyth, who is leading the national policing response to spiking has also: improved coordination amongst forces; police crime recording; work with local health providers; and provided consistent guidance around support for victims.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Members' Interests

Dan Carden: [\[31913\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, with reference to the Committee on Standards' report entitled, Review of the Code of Conduct: proposals for consultation, published on 29 November 2021 and its report entitled, New Code of Conduct and Guide to the Rules: promoting appropriate values, attitudes and behaviour in Parliament, published on 24 May 2022, what steps the Commission is taking to help ensure that the Register of Members' Financial Interests is published in more searchable and analysable formats.

Sir Charles Walker:

Following the report from the Committee on Standards, Parliamentary Digital Service and the Registry Office established a project team to develop and deliver fully searchable registers and a new online interface for Members to register their interests. The initial phases of the project have been completed. The project board that oversees this work will now make proposals to the House authorities on the delivery of this work.

■ Members: Conduct

Dan Carden: [\[31914\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, with reference to the Committee on Standards' report entitled, Review of the Code of Conduct: proposals for consultation, published on 29 November 2021, what steps the Commission is taking to action the recommendation that a more in-depth training session on the code of conduct should be offered within six months of a Member of Parliament first being elected.

Sir Charles Walker:

All new Members returned at a General Election receive one-to-one meetings with members of the Registry Office at which the Code of Conduct is explained alongside their responsibilities in relation to the Register of Members' Financial Interests. Members elected at by-elections have similar meetings with Members of the Registry Office. The Committee on Standards has said that it intends to hold an inquiry on raising awareness of the Code of Conduct and the Register. That inquiry will consider the provision of adequate and appropriate training. Members are always advised to seek the advice of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and the Registry Office should they have any questions on the Code of Conduct and the Guide to the Rules.

Parliament: Educational Visits**Peter Aldous:**[\[26749\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, if the Commission will undertake a review into the travel subsidy regime for schools to undertake educational visits to Parliament, in the context of disparities between the level of subsidy received by schools in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Sir Charles Walker:

The Commission notes that the Finance Committee has recently requested a briefing on the specific issues raised and the request for a review. The Commission will write to the Member after the matter has been considered and any recommendations made.

JUSTICE**Bail: Advisory Services****Ellie Reeves:**[\[30105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) courts and (b) prisons had a dedicated Bail Information Service in the most recent period for which data is available.

Ellie Reeves:[\[30106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people accessed Bail Information Services in (a) courts and (b) prisons in the most recent period for which data is available.

Ellie Reeves:[\[30107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish his Department's evaluations of recent pilots of Bail Information Services in (a) courts and (b) prisons.

Ellie Reeves:[\[30108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to provide Bail Information Services with dedicated Bail Information Officers in all Magistrates courts; and what the timeframe is for that work.

Ellie Reeves:

[30109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans his Department has to involve the voluntary sector in supporting the delivery of Bail Information Services in courts.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Bail Information Service (BIS) project has Bail Information Officers (BIOs) operating in 31 public sector remand prisons across England and Wales, providing bail information reports for defendants who are being considered for release on bail following an initial remand into custody. This can be provided to magistrate and Crown Courts at the second or subsequent hearing.

Bail Information Services are not yet provided in court at first hearings; however, we anticipate that over the coming months the project will generate sufficient data to help us to understand the efficacy of any design and development of a potentially permanent dedicated and proactive Bail Information Service that can operate in both prisons and courts across England and Wales.

Owing to the circumstances created by the pandemic, it was not possible to carry out the pilot as originally planned. A limited bail information service was attempted in a few magistrates' courts in the North West of England – mainly Liverpool Magistrates' Court and Manchester Magistrates' Court, with some partial cover in a few smaller courts in Lancashire. Owing to the delivery environment at that time, however, it was not possible to collect the data needed for the pilot.

In March 2021, Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service introduced a bail information scheme in prisons across England and Wales. Every public sector remand prison, apart from high-security establishments, now has a bail information officer. This project was originally intended to run for 12 months, but as the difficulties relating to the pandemic continued throughout 2021-22, the scheme has been extended to April 2023. This will enable data to be gathered and evaluated, to inform decisions about the design and development of a potentially permanent scheme in prisons in England and Wales (the scheme could also include magistrates' courts).

We do not currently hold data on the number of people accessing the Bail Information Service. However, the data we are collecting through the current initiative is to provide us with the evidence we need in order to develop a longer-term scheme.

The Bail Information Service project has been extended until April 2023. A key aim of the project is to gather sufficient data and evidence to inform decisions around the development of a future dedicated and pro-active Bail Information Service in England and Wales. As the project develops, we are exploring how voluntary sector involvement can support the operational delivery of the Bail Information Service, and any findings will be analysed as part of the overall evaluation post April 2023.

■ Criminal Proceedings: Ethnic Groups

Steve Reed:

[\[31850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has agreed a cross-criminal justice system method for recording data on ethnicity.

Tom Pursglove:

Everyone has a right to be confident that the justice system is there to protect them, regardless of their background. That's why we are committed to tackling racial inequalities, wherever we find them.

The Lammy Review recommended that a cross-CJS approach be agreed to record data on ethnicity to enable more future scrutiny and reduce inefficiencies that come with collecting the same data twice. Data on ethnicity is primarily collected by the police, which is the point of entry into the criminal justice system. Our plan is for CJS partners to use that data - however, we acknowledge that the ethnicity data collected is not of sufficient quality and we are undertaking to improve the system.

■ Crown Court: Publications

Steve Reed:

[\[32551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether sentencing remarks in the Crown Court are published in (a) audio and (b) written form.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Audio recordings of sentencing remarks are not published. However, under the Criminal Procedure Rules (5.5(3)), parties in a case may ask to hear the audio recording of proceedings, including sentencing remarks.

Written sentencing remarks are available in certain circumstances. The Criminal Practice Directions I 5B.25 also state that written sentencing remarks should be provided if the judge was reading from a prepared script which was handed out immediately afterwards. If not, then permission to obtain a transcript should usually be given. Transcripts are currently made available automatically in certain types of criminal cases. They can also be made available when requested by a judge in a case of significant public interest, when paid for by a party to proceedings, or at public expense on application approved by a judge.

Furthermore, a small number of written sentencing remarks are provided by the trial judge for publication on the judiciary.uk website shortly after they have been delivered in court. These are usually for cases that are of high public interest, but they are not published if there are reporting restrictions in place.

Finally, in 2020 legislation was passed to allow, for the first time, television cameras into our courtrooms to film and broadcast sentencing remarks. We expect this power to be used for the first time in Summer 2022 and, subject to judicial discretion, the filming of a limited number of sentencing remarks to take place. This will allow the public to see justice being delivered to increase people's understanding of, and faith in, our justice system.

■ Magistrates' Courts: Databases

Steve Reed:

[\[32549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has taken steps to improve data collection on pleas and remand decisions in magistrates' courts.

Miss Sarah Dines:

As part of the HMCTS Reform Programme's introduction of the Common Platform digital case management system, we are focusing on various issues including improving data collection for magistrates' courts. Common Platform will provide a national single approach to recording and sharing remand decisions, pleas or verdicts at each stage of a defendant's journey through the criminal justice system in both the Magistrates' and Crown Court jurisdiction, in court and in as near to real-time as possible. This is something which has not been previously possible on the separate systems that have existed.

Management information from the single source of Common Platform can in turn be interrogated from these results to better support HMCTS operations, or in response to specific questions around volumes or trends in defendants' choices after new legislation is enacted. In addition, having one single platform means any legislative changes can be made available nationally in one action.

■ Prison and Probation Service: Ethnic Groups

Ellie Reeves:

[\[30101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish his Department's plan for the HMPPS Race Action Programme.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[30102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress his Department has made on implementing its Race Action Programme.

Stuart Andrew:

We are committed to actively tackling the impact of race disparities in the Criminal Justice System. As part of this commitment, in December 2020 HMPPS launched the Race Action Programme (RAP), which builds on the MoJ Race Action Plan. The RAP will increase the diversity of our workforce, address the risk of bias in our policies and tackle disparity in outcomes for prisoners, people on probation and children in our system. This will also help to reduce reoffending and enhance rehabilitative practices.

The programme has worked to establish a network of stakeholders, internally and externally, to ensure all interventions are sustainable. A range of initiatives have successfully been implemented across HMPPS which has included: a successful pilot of enhanced training for staff to improve the quality of pre-sentencing reports on ethnic minority individuals; the launch of a Race Allyship charter to build a community of staff who proactively support ethnic minority individuals; introducing a series of inclusive policy consultations sessions with expert third sector organisations; and

piloting healing events to create safe spaces for staff to manage and overcome racial trauma.

HMPPS are also leading an External Advice and Scrutiny Panel (EASP) which includes a wide range of expert stakeholders to review, assure, and challenge our plans and implementation accordingly. The RAP Strategic Case has also been shared with external and internal stakeholders setting out the background for the programme, including an evidence summary and the deliverables and outcomes of the five priority projects. It also outlines our approach to evaluation and a summary of the headline benefits. There are no current plans for official publication of this document, however, all key stakeholders will continue to be updated on the progress of the programme throughout the Programme lifecycle.

■ Prisoners

Ellie Reeves: [\[30103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to improve the collection of data on prisoners' (a) gender, (b) ethnic group, (c) age and (d) religion.

Ellie Reeves: [\[30104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to improve the publication of disaggregated data on prisoners' demographics and protected characteristics including (a) gender, (b) ethnic group, (c) age and (d) religion.

Stuart Andrew:

Data on prisoners' gender, ethnicity, age and religion is obtained through self-declaration by prisoners on reception into custody. Declaration rates across Sex, Age, Ethnicity & Religion are high and present no barrier to publishing of prison population data.

We are currently developing a new service to improve the creation of prisoner records and collection of data which will include protected characteristics. This will reduce duplication and improve storage of information by redesigning the way we ask questions about these characteristics.

There are no current plans to change the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly publication which provide regular data on sex, ethnicity, age and religion within the prison population.

■ Prisoners: Ethnic Groups

Ellie Reeves: [\[30115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking in response to the survey of Black, Asian and minority ethnic women in prison published by the Independent Monitoring Boards and Criminal Justice Alliance in April 2022.

Ellie Reeves: [\[30116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to provide support to women prisoners who have been victims of racial abuse in prison.

Ellie Reeves: [\[30117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many equality staff work in prisons holding (a) men and (b) women by (i) their grade and (ii) the time allocated to their equalities work.

Stuart Andrew:

HMPPS are considering the findings of the IMB / CRA reports and will act accordingly. We recognise that race disparities persist in the Criminal Justice System, and we are committed to actively tackling the impact of this across MoJ. In December 2020 HMPPS launched the Race Action Programme, which will increase the diversity of our workforce, address the risk of bias in our policies and tackle disparity in outcomes for prisoners, people on probation and children in our system.

The Female Offender Strategy also included a clear commitment to look at how the distinct needs of ethnic minority and non-British national women can be better addressed. This is being taken forward by the Female Offender Minority Ethnic working group, which brings together officials and stakeholders to work together to improve outcomes for this cohort of women.

There is no place for racial abuse in prisons, which should be safe, orderly and decent places for both prisoners and staff. As set out in the Prisons Strategy White Paper we are introducing training for staff in women's prisons to address the diverse needs of all women in their care. This will include cultural competence training to equip our staff with an increased knowledge of the effects of culture, faith and sustaining family relationships for ethnically diverse communities, increasing their confidence and skills in supporting all offenders, including those subjected to racial abuse.

Information on the number, grade and allocated duties of equality staff is not held centrally. The majority of HMPPS PGDs have a dedicated Regional Equality Lead (Band 8 & Full Time) who coordinate activity and drive a regional strategy designed to best represent the unique situations arising in that part of the country, representative of the staff and prisoner population. Profiles for equalities work are decided at a local level to ensure they best fit the nature of individual establishments.

■ Prisoners: Terrorism

Kate Green: [\[31830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) women and (b) men are held in prison for offences under the Terrorism Act 2000 as on 6 July 2022.

Tom Pursglove:

As of 31 March 2022, there were 233 persons in custody for terrorism-connected offences in Great Britain. Breakdowns based on specific terrorism-related legislation

or gender is withheld to prevent the identification of individuals, as some of this information amounts to five people or fewer.

■ Prisons: Drugs

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[31210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle drug use in prisons.

Stuart Andrew:

Tackling drug misuse in prisons is a priority for the department. All prisons must have a zero-tolerance approach to drugs.

The Government's £100m Security Investment Programme to reduce crime and prevent drugs entering prisons completed in March 2022. This funded a range of security measures, including X-ray body scanners across the entire closed male estate. Since July 2020, these have resulted in over 10,000 positive scans, many finding multiple contraband items, preventing drugs and mobile phones and other illicit items from entering prisons. We are going further this year with £25m investment to restrict drug supply into prisons, including installing x-ray baggage scanners at 42 high priority sites, and enhancing our mobile blocking technology.

Alongside this, the Ministry of Justice is investing £120m over the next three years to get more offenders engaged in treatment, and support them towards abstinence. With this investment, we will enhance testing regimes in prison, expand the use of Drug Recovery Wings where prisoners commit to remain drug-free and undergo regular voluntary drug tests, support prisoners to engage with community treatment ahead of their release and increase the use of intensive drug rehabilitation requirements for those on community sentences.

■ Prosecutions

Steve Reed:

[\[32548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department plans to implement the deferred prosecution model trialled by Operation Turning Point for adult and youth offenders.

Stuart Andrew:

The Ministry of Justice, partnering with two police forces, have co-ordinated two policing pilots under the title 'Chance to Change', one of which was Turning Point in the Metropolitan police boroughs of Barnet and Brent for adults and under 18s, and the other in the West Yorkshire police force area for under 18s.

Pilot areas have been asked to assess the effectiveness of their schemes. We are supporting the qualitative research study being undertaken by Manchester Metropolitan University, which aims to examine participant and practitioner experience of the pilots. These findings are expected to be published later this year.

The use and implementation of deferred prosecution schemes are an operational decision for individual police forces. We continue to work closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council on the appropriate use of these schemes, supporting local forces who wish to take these up.

■ Rights of Accused

Steve Reed:

[\[32547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has taken steps to test different approaches to explaining legal rights and options to defendants.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The criminal justice system assumes that defendants have individual communication needs and that no one single means of explaining rights and options will be appropriate for everyone. Represented defendants will have a legal professional advising them and ensuring that they are aware of their legal rights.

The Criminal Procedure Rules also require courts to ensure that relevant explanations are given to defendants in terms that they can understand, with additional help where needed, including simple written guidance for those with communication difficulties. If necessary, the court is required to appoint an intermediary to facilitate a defendant's effective participation in proceedings.

■ The Mount Prison

Daisy Cooper:

[\[30155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP The Mount, published in May 2022, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of (a) staffing levels and (b) prisoner welfare at HMP The Mount.

Stuart Andrew:

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) provides invaluable independent scrutiny and found that despite some improvements in core functioning, officer shortages were an ongoing issue predominantly due to high volumes of COVID related absences and that 40% of staff at that time could not be deployed to operational duties. This directly impacted upon the regime offer for prisoners.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are currently supporting the prison through the Operational Stability Panel by offering incentivised payments to staff to cover existing shortfalls. Recruitment of prison officers remains a focus and campaigns continue to be advertised to attract new staff.

Prisoner welfare is monitored by residential officers, with systems in place to ensure the most vulnerable prisoners are offered support through keywork and assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) processes. Prisoner safety and welfare is a top priority of the Governor and Prison Group Director. HMIP found that outcomes in terms of prisoner safety had improved since the last inspection in 2018.

■ War Crimes: Criminal Investigation

Mr Andrew Mitchell: [\[29906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what budget was expended over investigations into war crimes committed abroad by suspects living in the UK over each of the last five years.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Ministry of Justice does not hold this information. This is an operational matter for the police.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Antisemitism

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[29932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle anti-Semitism.

Paul Scully:

Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we are taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms. The UK became the first country to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism and we have encouraged councils and universities to do the same. We have provided funding for innovative projects, such as Holocaust Educational Trust, to reinforce messages of tolerance for our young people and teach them about the dangers of hate. We have provided over £65 million to date for the Protective Security Grant to help secure Jewish schools, colleges, nurseries, and community sites, including synagogues and we are also working to tackle antisemitism online through the Online Safety Bill.

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Contracts

Jon Trickett: [\[29884\]](#)

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

Eddie Hughes:

a) Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on [Contracts Finder](#). As Contracts Finder was implemented in 2016, not all records before this time are held centrally

b) The information requested is not held centrally. However, the department publishes twice yearly information on the pipeline for contracts above £2 million here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dluhc-procurement-pipeline>. Homes England publish their commercial pipeline here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-england-commercial-pipeline>.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Philip Davies: [26729]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assurance process he has put in place to ensure funding provided to local authorities for the Homes for Ukraine initiative is being used solely for that purpose.

Eddie Hughes:

The department monitors data submitted from councils who are responsible for reporting the number of guests who arrive, the number of “thank you” payments awarded to sponsors and the amount of tariff funding they are entitled to receive. The department expects councils to use the tariff to support costs associated with the scheme and final assurance will be conducted within a reconciliation process at the end of the financial year.

Claire Hanna: [28930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether Ukrainians resident in the UK with (a) leave outside the immigration rules and (b) asylum seekers status can transfer their residence to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

[Holding answer 6 July 2022]: The Homes for Ukraine scheme is only open to Ukrainians outside the UK. The Home Office has introduced changes to support Ukrainian nationals currently in the UK who are now unable to return when their existing visa expires. These changes will assist Ukrainian nationals in extending their stay in the UK without having to leave and re-apply from overseas. Further details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukrainian-nationals-in-the-uk-visa-support>.

■ Leasehold: Reform

Tulip Siddiq: [30080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of leasehold reform on landlords.

Eddie Hughes:

We will continue with our reforms to leasehold as part of our mission to level up homeownership.

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022 came into force on 30 June 2022. It makes homeownership fairer and more transparent for thousands of future leaseholders, by preventing landlords under new residential long leases from requiring a leaseholder to pay a financial ground rent. The impact assessment for the

Act was published on 12 May 2021 and can be accessed via the Parliamentary Bills website (<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2864>).

In line with usual practice, the government's intention would be to publish an assessment of the impact of our leasehold reforms as part of taking future primary legislation through Parliament.

■ Local Government: Devolution

Michael Fabricant:

[29866]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether shire counties, including Staffordshire, can receive devolved additional powers without an elected mayor; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing other governance models to enable shire counties to exercise those powers.

Lia Nici:

For all places across England, including shire counties, who are interested in pursuing a new devolution deal, a mayor will not be a pre-requisite. However, we do believe that high-profile, directly elected leaders (such as a mayor) will be most effective for levelling up: providing a single point of accountability to local citizens, acting as a champion for their areas and attracting investment and opportunity to their places. As such, the most comprehensive devolution package will only be available to areas with a directly elected mayor. The devolution framework - published in the Levelling Up White Paper - sets a clear and consistent set of devolution pathways for places, enabling them to widen and deepen their devolved powers subject to meeting certain pre-conditions.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[29893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 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.

Conor Burns:

Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on [Contracts Finder](#). As Contracts Finder was implemented in 2016, not all records before this time are held centrally.

With regards to contracts due to be agreed within the next 12 months, the information requested is not held centrally for the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Of the NIO's agencies and non-departmental public

bodies, the Crown Solicitor's Office is due to agree two contracts with a value of between £1 million and £3 million in the next 12 months.

The NIO does not hold records on expenditure on monitoring each contract in each year since 2010, or on how many officials have been working on monitoring contracts in each year since 2010.

Jon Trickett: [\[31018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the total value has been of contracts held by their Department with (a) G4S, (b) Serco and (c) Capita in each year since 2020.

Conor Burns:

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) makes use of collaborative contract frameworks where possible for its procurements. These contracts are held collaboratively with the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), with the NIO one of several parties.

The NIO was part of a NICS collaborative contract with G4S for security services until March 2022. The value held by the NIO was £317,619 in 2020, £284,047 in 2021, and £71,012 in 2022.

The NIO has not held contracts with Serco or Capita for this period.

■ Northern Ireland Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

Emily Thornberry: [\[31795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many people held electronic purchasing cards that allowed them to make purchases against his Department's budget as of 31 March 2022.

Conor Burns:

As of 31 March 2022, there were 6 live Government Procurement Card accounts that could be used to make purchases against the Northern Ireland Office's budget.

■ Northern Ireland Office: Legal Costs

Jon Trickett: [\[31738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much their Department and its associated agencies spent on legal disputes in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Conor Burns:

The Department does not hold the information in a form that can readily be interrogated to provide a response. The accompanying physical invoice for each recorded financial transaction related to legal expenditure would have to be examined to determine the nature of the expense and whether it relates to legal disputes.

Therefore, the information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

PRIME MINISTER

■ **Chequers**

Caroline Lucas: [\[32513\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, if he plans to hold a gathering at Chequers to mark his 2021 wedding.

Michael Ellis:

I have been asked to reply.

As I outlined in my answer of 18 October 2021 to PQ 54006, Chequers is not a government building; it is run and managed by an independent trust. As has been the practice under successive Premiers, the incumbent Prime Minister uses Chequers consistent with the wishes of the donor, the late Sir Arthur Lee, who gave it to the nation for the use of the serving Prime Minister, for both official and private use. This is set out in the Chequers Estates Act 1917.

Notwithstanding the above, it is in the public domain that the Prime Minister does not intend to make use of Chequers in such a way.

■ **Lord Lebedev**

Caroline Lucas: [\[32509\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to his evidence to the Liaison Committee on 6 July 2022 that he probably did meet The Lord Lebedev in Italy on 28 April 2018 without officials from his Department, whether he informed his personal protection team that he was attending that meeting; whether any security services attended that meeting; and whether he received any documents at that meeting.

Boris Johnson:

I have committed to write to the Liaison Committee with further details. A copy of that letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

SCOTLAND

■ **Scotland Office: Contracts**

Jon Trickett: [\[31017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what the total value has been of contracts held by their Department with (a) G4S, (b) Serco and (c) Capita in each year since 2020.

Mr Alister Jack:

The total value of contracts held by my Department with (a) G4S, (b) Serco and (c) Capita in each year since 2020 are shown below:

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
G4S	£41,890	£12,093	£0

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Serco	£324	£0	£0
Capita	£2,912	£1,236	£0

TRANSPORT

■ Air Routes: Pakistan

Mark Eastwood:

[\[31936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help increase the number of direct flights between the UK and Pakistan.

Robert Courts:

Air services between the United Kingdom and other countries are governed by a portfolio of bilateral air services agreements, which set the framework in which airlines from both countries operate. Our agreement with Pakistan does not place any restrictions on the frequency or nature of direct air services. Any airline from the UK or Pakistan, designated under this agreement, can operate between any points in the two countries.

However, it is for individual airlines to determine whether to take advantage of the rights and routes available to them within any air services agreement. Market conditions, such as the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, often affect the commercial considerations of airlines.

My Department's officials and the Civil Aviation Authority stand ready to assist any UK or Pakistan airline which wants to operate between the two countries.

■ Aviation: Costs

Ruth Jones:

[\[30146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the trends in the cost of air travel.

Robert Courts:

More than in any other country, UK aviation operates in the private sector and in a competitive environment. The aviation market is regulated by the CAA to ensure that practices and policies of airlines comply with UK consumer legislation.

The Department assesses the possible long term trends in the cost of air travel as part of the process of generating long-term passenger demand forecasts. The most recent assessment of the long term trends in the cost of air travel was conducted as part of the analysis to support the Jet Zero Strategy further technical consultation, published in March 2022.

■ Bus Services: Finance**Mike Amesbury:**[\[31227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Campaign for Better Transport's report, Funding local bus services in England, published in June 2022, if his Department will make an assessment of the implications for its policies of the findings of that report that (a) more than half of areas that applied for more support received no funding and (b) more than a third of the country's population did not receive funding; and if he will (a) review the competitive funding model and (b) replace that model with long-term funding allocations for all local authorities conditional on achieving certain objectives.

Trudy Harrison:

A total of 31 Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs), representing 34 local authority areas, have been selected for funding from the £1.2 billion new dedicated funding announced in April to level up local bus services.

Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) not in receipt of BSIP funding have been offered a further capacity support grant to strengthen their in-house capacity; will be able to access practical assistance, including training, under the auspices of the new Bus Centre of Excellence; and can apply for other government funding sources to improve their bus services and grow bus patronage.

In the Levelling-Up White Paper, the Government recognised the benefits of long-term funding and has committed to simplifying the funding landscape for local authorities.

■ Department for Transport: Contracts**Jon Trickett:**[\[31009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the total value has been of contracts held by their Department with (a) G4S, (b) Serco and (c) Capita in each year since 2020.

Trudy Harrison:

The total value of contracts held since 2020 by DfTc with: -

(a)G4S £0

(b)Serco £0

(c)Capita £152,951

■ Dover Port: Undocumented Migrants**Grahame Morris:**[\[32522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Port of Dover on the impact on that organisation of undocumented migrants arriving on the Kent coast.

Robert Courts:

The Secretary of State for Transport has not had recent discussions with the Port of Dover on the impact on that organisation of undocumented migrants, but Departmental officials meet regularly with representatives of the Port of Dover to discuss all relevant issues impacting their operations.

High Speed 2 Line: Old Saltleians RFC**Emily Thornberry:**[\[29969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much in public funds has been paid by his Department to (a) Old Saltleians Rugby Football Club and (b) contractors carrying out construction and related work for the benefit of that club in each financial year from the start of 2017-18 to the end of 2021-22.

Trudy Harrison:

In answer to the first part of the question, the release of this information would prejudice, or would be likely to prejudice, a commercial interest.

In answer to the second part of the question, the Department for Transport does not directly engage contractors for construction work on major capital programmes, as this activity rests with the arm's length bodies responsible for project delivery.

Accordingly, there were £nil payments from the Department to contractors carrying out construction and related work for the benefit of Old Saltleians Rugby Football Club between 2017-18 and 2021-22.

Local Government: Motor Vehicles**Jim Shannon:**[\[31114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a part-funded scheme that allows local authority refuse vehicles that are near end-of-life to be replaced with zero emission vehicles.

Trudy Harrison:

Government welcomes innovative retrofit technology for converting internal combustion engine vehicles to zero emission. This will be an important element in reducing road transport emissions, helping to bridge the gap in the journey to net zero. Government has invested over £80 million in retrofitting vehicles (mainly buses) with low- and zero-emission technology since 2013.

Additionally, government has supported the accreditation of vehicle retrofit technologies under the Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme, looking particularly to bring solutions for different vehicle types to the market.

■ Manston Airport: Undocumented Migrants**Grahame Morris:** [\[32521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the use of Manston Airport to temporarily accommodate undocumented migrants arriving in the Port of Dover.

Robert Courts:

No such discussions have taken place on the former site of Manston Airport temporarily accommodating undocumented migrants arriving at the Port of Dover.

■ P&O Ferries: Contracts**Grahame Morris:** [\[32519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what advice his Department has provided to other Government departments regarding publicly funded contracts with P&O Ferries since 17 March 2022.

Robert Courts:

The way 800 loyal and experienced workers were treated by P&O Ferries was shameful and utterly unacceptable. There is no excuse for their actions – and we continue to hold them to account.

The Department for Transport has conducted a thorough review of government contracts with P&O Ferries, finding that they are not providing any direct services to UK Government. One contract between the Home Office and P&O Ferries was terminated.

Whilst the review has concluded, if a contract were to emerge elsewhere which has not been identified through this process, then we would take appropriate action.

■ Railways: Passengers**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[31908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to ensure the personal safety of rail passengers.

Wendy Morton:

The rail industry has a well-established strategy to target personal safety, and the Department works closely with British Transport Police and industry to deliver safer physical environments and operational responses to vulnerability, through both the Secure Stations Scheme, and Safeguarding on Rail Scheme.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[31910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has taken steps to help prevent incidents of verbal and physical abuse on the rail network.

Wendy Morton:

The rail industry in partnership with the British Transport Police (BTP) are working hard to protect passengers and rail staff and deliver a safer transport network. BTP

undertakes a range activity to address violence against staff, including holding a specific work-place violence group with industry to identify and share best practice.

■ Speed Limits

Stephanie Peacock: [\[30094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support is available for local authorities seeking to reduce speeding to improve road safety.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[30095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage and support local authorities to introduce safety measures on dangerous roads proactively rather than retrospectively after multiple accidents.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[30096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local authorities have the funding required to introduce adequate road safety measures to reduce speeding.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government believes that any form of dangerous or inconsiderate driving behaviour is a serious road safety issue. All available research shows a link between excessive speed and the risk of collisions.

We expect all drivers to observe the speed limit, and enforcement is a matter for the police. Policing of our roads, and how available resources are deployed, is the responsibility of individual chief officers, taking into account the specific local issues.

Responsibility for making decisions, and prioritising works, about the roads under their care rests with local traffic authorities based on their knowledge of local needs. This includes introducing measures to tackle dangerous roads and reduce speeding.

The Department for Transport provides guidance to support local councils on the implementation of various traffic management issues.

In addition, the Department for Transport provides funds directly to local authorities which may be used for road safety purposes.

This includes the £170 million the Department is providing in 22/23 to local highways authorities in England, outside London and City Region areas, through the Integrated Transport Block for small scale transport schemes, including road safety measures. The Integrated Transport Block is not ring-fenced, allowing authorities to spend their allocations according to their own priorities. It is therefore for each authority to decide how it allocates its resources and which transport improvement projects to support.

It also includes the £5.7 billion City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) provide consolidated, long-term capital funding to improve the local transport networks of eight city regions across England through five-year settlements from 2022/23. This funding combines new and existing funds, including Highways

Maintenance, Integrated Transport Block, Potholes fund and final year Transforming Cities Fund.

The Safer Roads Fund was established to treat the 50 highest risk local A road sections in England with remedial road safety engineering interventions. As a result, £100 million has been committed by the Department for Transport across 48 schemes.

TREASURY

■ Business Rates Review

Dr Luke Evans: [\[901019\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the business rates review.

Lucy Frazer:

With the conclusion of the Business Rates Review, the Government has delivered meaningful reform and cuts worth £7 billion to business over the next five years.

The review has implemented significant new measures to reduce the burden of business rates on firms, including a freeze in the multiplier, new support for improvements and green technology, and further relief for high street businesses.

The Government is committing to more frequent revaluations, which represents significant reform of the system and will ensure that liabilities are more responsive to changing market conditions. This addresses key asks of stakeholders for more frequent revaluations and for a reduction of the burden of business rates to make the system fairer.

■ Cash Dispensing

Charlotte Nichols: [\[30169\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling the UK's existing ATM network to accept cash deposits as well as withdrawals.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[30170\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he is taking steps to help ensure that the UK's main banks maintain their membership of (a) LINK, (b) the Post Office and (c) other collective bodies for the purposes of ensuring the long-term sustainability of the UK's ATM infrastructure.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[30171\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has plans to promote the redistribution of ATMs in urban locations to rural and suburban sites.

Richard Fuller:

In the Queen's Speech in May 2022 the government announced that it will introduce legislation to protect access to cash as part of the Financial Services and Markets Bill. The government intends to establish the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) as the lead regulator for access to cash with responsibility to ensure that people can continue to access cash withdrawal and deposit facilities. Through this legislation the government intends to ensure that people can continue to use cash in their day-to-day lives. The Bill will be brought forward when Parliamentary time allows.

Industry will continue to be best placed to develop the most efficient and sustainable solutions to provide access to cash, under the oversight of the FCA. The Government's approach focuses on preserving the distribution of existing facilities rather than seeking a substantial redistribution or large-scale introduction of access points to additional areas.

With regards to ATMs, LINK (the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network) has commitments to protect the broad geographic spread of free-to-use ATMs and is held to account against these commitments by the Payment Systems Regulator. LINK has committed to protect free-to-use ATMs more than one kilometre away from the next nearest free ATM or Post Office, and free access to cash on high streets (where there is a cluster of five or more retailers) that do not have a free-to-use ATM or a Post Office counter within one kilometre.

Furthermore, following the Government's commitment to legislate, firms are working together through the Cash Action Group to develop new initiatives to protect access to cash. As part of this work, any community facing the closure of a key cash service will have its needs independently assessed by LINK, who will consider whether additional cash services are required. Communities are now also able to request an assessment of their community's access to cash by LINK.

■ Children: Day Care

Helen Hayes: [\[32591\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) forecast and (b) actual expenditure was for the tax free childcare scheme in 2021-22.

Helen Hayes: [\[32592\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of how underspend on tax free childcare has been used in each of the last five years.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government is committed to supporting families with their childcare costs through Tax-Free Childcare and we are continuing to encourage eligible families to sign up for it. Take-up of Tax-Free Childcare is on a steady upward trajectory and has continued to increase despite the covid-19 pandemic. At the end of March 2022 (the most recent data) an estimated 384,000 families used Tax-Free Childcare for 458,000 children, compared to 328,000 families for 384,000 children in December

2021. The Government spent £43 million on Tax-Free Childcare top-up for families in March 2022.

Actual spend on Tax-Free Childcare in financial year 2021/22 was above forecast. At the Spring 2021 Budget, the forecast expenditure for Tax-Free Childcare in 2021/22 was £0.39bn. Tax-Free Childcare expenditure in 2021/22 was £0.41bn.

Government spending on Tax-Free Childcare was below forecast for the financial years 2017/18 to 2020/21. When many childcare settings were closed in 2020 and 2021 due to the covid-19 pandemic, the Government brought easements into Tax-Free Childcare, 30 hours and Working Tax Credit childcare support offers, allowing parents to remain eligible for these offers despite potential changes to their circumstances due to covid-19.

The Government is also driving a renewed campaign – via the Childcare Choices website - so parents can access the support they are entitled to. This will also encourage providers to take the necessary steps to offer the full range of childcare support to parents.

■ Cost of Living: Visual Impairment

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[29896\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department is taking fiscal steps to reduce the impact of the rising cost of living on people who are blind or partially sighted.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government recognises that the rising cost of living has presented additional financial challenges to many people, and especially to the most vulnerable members of society, such as blind or partially sighted people. That is why this government announced on 26th May a Cost of Living package, providing over £15bn of support targeted particularly at those with the greatest need. This package builds on the over £22bn already announced, bringing total government support for the Cost of Living to over £37bn this year. The latest package includes additional UK-wide support to help disabled people with the particular extra costs they are facing, with 6 million people who receive non-means-tested extra-costs disability benefits due to receive a one-off Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150. People who are blind or partially sighted and were eligible for payment of disability benefits such as Personal Independence Payment on the 25th May will be eligible for this Disability Cost of Living Payment. This payment can be received in addition to the other Cost of Living Payments for households on means-tested benefits or in receipt of Winter Fuel Payments that were announced as part of the same package. People who are blind or partially sighted will also benefit from the £400 of support for energy bills that the government is providing through an expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme, doubling the £200 of support announced earlier this year and making the whole £400 a non-repayable grant.

This Cost of Living package is in addition to the existing specific financial support to help blind or partially sighted people. The government provides the Blind Person's

Allowance (BPA), an extra amount of tax-free allowance that can be added to an individual's Personal Allowance, to those who are blind or severely sight impaired. In 2022-23, the allowance is £2,600 and therefore worth £520 given the basic rate of 20%. If the recipient does not pay tax or earn enough to use their full BPA, the remainder of the allowance can be transferred to a spouse or civil partner.

■ Credit

Beth Winter:

[\[31937\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the change in consumer credit borrowing for essential household purchases in each of the past twelve months.

Richard Fuller:

HM Treasury regularly monitors changes in the consumer credit market as part of its normal processes of policy development. We are not aware of regularly available data that links consumer credit use to categories of spending. However, our regular engagements with stakeholders, such as retail banks and trade bodies, allow us to keep track of emerging trends.

Retrospective analysis of trends in consumer credit product usage is produced by other organisations, including the Bank of England's monthly statistical releases on money and credit and the Financial Conduct Authority's Financial Lives Surveys. Recent Bank of England data shows that net consumer credit lending has shown some increase in recent months but remains close to the levels seen in 2019.

■ Revenue and Customs: Correspondence

Emily Thornberry:

[\[29974\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the speech by the Brexit Opportunities Minister to the Policy That Works Conference on 1 March 2022, if he will publish examples of late payment letters issued by HM Revenue and Customs where Romanised words were replaced with Anglo-Saxon words to improve comprehension by taxpayers.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC is doing a great deal of work to make letters easier for customers to read and understand. This is part of the commitment in the HMRC Charter to make its services accessible, easy, and quick to use.

HMRC has produced guidelines for its staff for writing to customers. The guidelines focus on avoiding unnecessarily formal or complex language. This includes using shorter, simpler Anglo-Saxon words rather than their more formal Romanised equivalents. For example, 'need', rather than 'require'; 'give' rather than 'provide'; and 'help' rather than 'assist'.

HMRC is also investing in writing skills training for staff to continue to improve the quality of customer letters across the department.

HMRC has no plans to publish its standard letters as there are several thousands of them, the majority of which are tailored to specific circumstances.

■ Treasury: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[29888]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 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.

Alan Mak:

The Government is committed to maintaining transparency about its procurement activity and publishes information about its contracts with a value of over £10,000 on the "[Contracts Finder](#)" website.

Contracts that are due to be agreed can be found on the [HMT Commercial Pipeline](#). The next version of this is due to be published at the end of July 2022.

The amount spent on monitoring each contract and the number of officials working on that monitoring each year since 2010 is information that is not held centrally and can only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

■ Treasury: Pay

Pat McFadden:

[29982]

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

Alan Mak:

As of 31/03/2022, the total number of full-time employees in HM Treasury earning below the London Living Wage rate of £11.05 per hour was 17. This number is comprised mainly of apprentices. The Living Wage rate is a suggested rate of pay by the Living Wage Foundation, rather than a legislated minimum wage.

All HM Treasury employees are paid above the statutory minimum wage. Since 31/03/2022 we have been conducting a review of all pay ranges across the department in line with this year's Cabinet Office remit guidance.

As pay and conditions are set between employee and employer, the rate of pay for agency workers and contractors will be determined by the company for which they work and not HM Treasury.

WALES**■ Buildings: Wales****Geraint Davies:**[\[32461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, if he will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on making Wales an international leader in building (a) sustainable, (b) net-zero and (c) hempcrete buildings and homes.

David T C Davies:

Although housing is devolved in Wales, officials in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have regular discussions with counterparts in the devolved administrations, including the Welsh Government to discuss modern methods of construction.

Furthermore, as part of the Swansea Bay City Deal, the UK Government is supporting the 'Homes as Power Stations' project, a pioneering project looking to integrate energy efficiency design and renewable technologies into the development of new build homes and retrofit programmes carried out by the public, private and third sectors. This will tackle fuel poverty while helping residents save money on their energy bills. The project aims to facilitate the take up of renewable technologies in at least 10,300 properties within five years.

■ Passports: Wales**Gerald Jones:**[\[32576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the (a) delays at HM Passport Office and (b) impact of those delays on people in Wales.

David T C Davies:

We have seen unprecedented demand following the return of unrestricted international travel, with 9.5 million passport applications forecasted for 2022, an increase of roughly 35% on pre-pandemic application numbers.

Nonetheless, 98.5% of UK applications were completed within the published processing time of ten weeks between March and May, with approximately 250,000 passport applications being processed each week.

To help meet increased demand, HM Passport Office have recruited 850 additional staff since April 2021, with a further 350 arriving during this summer. Passport applications from Wales may be handled at all Passport Office processing sites throughout the UK.

■ Regional Planning and Development: Wales

Gerald Jones:

[\[32575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities on the levelling up funding for Wales relative to other parts of the UK.

David T C Davies:

I have regular discussions with colleagues across Government on how local growth funding will benefit communities the length and breadth of Wales. Wales received £120 million in the first round of the Levelling Up Fund (over 7% of the total UK allocation), £46 million through the one-year UK Community Renewal Fund (23% of the total UK allocation) and £460,000 in the first round of the Community Ownership Fund (9% of the total UK allocation). For each of these funds Wales has received more than its 5% UK population share.

All of this is in addition to the £585 million Wales will receive through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (a 22.5% share of the total UK allocation).

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Companies: Databases

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[28926\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make it his policy to require all large employers to collect socio-economic background data on (a) work experience schemes, (b) apprenticeships and (c) entry-level applicants for use in (i) outreach work with schools and (ii) recruitment and progression policies.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[28927\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make it his policy to require large employers to collect socioeconomic background data for use in (a) outreach work with schools and (b) recruitment and progression policies.

Amanda Solloway:

This government believes the circumstances of one's birth should not determine life outcomes. The Social Mobility Commission (SMC), an independent body sponsored by the Equality Hub in the Cabinet Office, works to achieve this aim.

The Commission's employer engagement team works with employers of varying size, across multiple sectors, to create more inclusive and diverse socio-economic workforces. Through their research and engagement with industry trade bodies and employers, and external diversity and inclusion research, they have produced guidance for employers that offers practical help and ideas. This includes guidance on how employers can collect the socio-economic background data of their workforce alongside other diversity data, which can be used by them to measure the socio-

economic background of their employees and potential recruits in order to understand if their hiring or progression practices are as fair and meritocratic as they can be.

The SMC's advice is for employers to collect anonymous data from their workforce, apprentices and applicants using the key question "What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were about aged 14?" Optional supplementary questions include the type of school attended for ages 11-16 and eligibility for Free School Meals. Further information is available in their [employers' toolkit](#).

The current approach encourages the collection of data on a voluntary basis, as a mandatory approach would represent a significant burden on employers.

■ Equal Pay

Rachael Maskell: **[31867]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the (a) gender, (b) ethnicity and (c) disabled person's pay gap in (i) Yorkshire and (ii) England.

Amanda Solloway:

The national gender pay gap has fallen significantly under this government - and by approximately a quarter in the last decade. The ONS publishes data on the national gender pay gap annually, with regional breakdowns.

On ethnicity pay gaps; in "Inclusive Britain", the response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities' report, we accepted the recommendation to publish guidance for employers to support a voluntary approach to ethnicity pay reporting. Work on this is already underway. The ONS published national ethnicity pay gap data in 2019, with additional breakdowns by region.

With regard to the disability pay gap, we recognise that one of the greatest challenges is opening up opportunity in the workplace. We recently consulted on Disability Workforce Reporting. This focused on reporting on disability employment, as opposed to pay gaps. The ONS published national disability pay gap data in 2021, broken down by UK country with regional estimates.

■ LGBTQ+ People

Wera Hobhouse: **[31191]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she is having with her Cabinet colleagues on ensuring that those with LGBTQ+ identities are able to choose the terminology used by the Government to indicate their community.

Amanda Solloway:

The government firmly believes that everyone should be free to live their lives as they wish. The Equalities Ministerial team regularly engage with Cabinet and other Ministerial colleagues on the full range of equality issues.

Ministers and officials meet regularly with a variety of stakeholders, including LGBT organisations, faith groups, health professionals and international bodies to build a full range of experiences and expertise into our work.

Data from Census 2021, which included voluntary questions on sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time, will also provide insight into what terms individuals choose to use.

■ Social Mobility Commission: Public Appointments

Emily Thornberry:

[31784]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2022 to Question 25779 on Social Mobility Commission: Public Appointments, for what reason she is unable to name the seven people appointed in an individual capacity to publicly-funded positions with the Social Mobility Commission's Policy and Evidence Advisory Panel.

Amanda Solloway:

We were unable to publish the names of private individuals contracted as Policy & Evidence Advisory Panel members in order to comply with GDPR. We have since requested and received consent from all individuals to share their names. They can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/social-mobility-commission/about>

■ STEM Subjects: Equality and Social Mobility

Chi Onwurah:

[30015]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of (a) the contribution of STEM careers to social mobility and (b) the adequacy of the Social Mobility Commission's new Social Mobility Index to (i) assess and (ii) improve diversity in STEM careers.

Amanda Solloway:

We must draw on all our available talent and inspire more young people, including those currently under-represented in the STEM workforce, to take up STEM subjects and careers. Our focus on STEM diversity is primarily because of its importance to the UK's continued growth and its impact on wider society. STEM sector jobs are, on average, higher paid than those in the retail and care sectors, so supporting under-represented people into STEM helps their income, and supports our levelling up agenda.

The Equality Hub's focus is on data and evidence, and a commitment to sharing that across Government so that we can all develop practical interventions that we know will have an impact. Officials work closely with other relevant departments, as well as academics and other organisations working in the sector to improve the shared evidence base.

The Social Mobility Commission (SMC), an independent body sponsored by the Equality Hub in the Cabinet Office, looks at social mobility from a UK perspective. The Social Mobility Commission's new Index does not focus on any one sector or industry, but looks at occupational classes more broadly, using the NS-SEC classifications from the ONS Labour Force Survey.

■ Travellers: Cost of Living

Owen Thompson:

[\[32573\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on providing additional support for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community in the context of the cost of living crisis.

Amanda Solloway:

The government understands that people across the UK are worried about the rising cost of living and are seeing their disposable incomes decrease as they spend more on the essentials. Although it is impossible for the government to solve every problem, we can and will ease the burden as we help the entire country through the worst of this crisis.

In May, we announced over £15 billion of additional cost of living support, targeted at those with the greatest need. As a result, millions of vulnerable households will receive at least £1,200 of support this financial year, with the vast majority of households receiving at least £550. This package builds on the over £22 billion previously announced, meaning government support for the cost of living now totals over £37 billion this year, equivalent to 1.5% of GDP.

In addition to timely, temporary and targeted support, the government is also committed to tackling the root cause of the cost of living challenge – high inflation. Through independent monetary policy, responsible management of the public finances and supply-side reforms, we will combat high inflation and reduce it over time.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carer's Allowance

John McNally:

[\[32568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of (a) the carer's allowance earnings cap on people looking to accept a wider range of employment and (b) her Department's policy of immediately terminating that benefit in the event that someone breaches the income cap through (i) receipt of a tax rebate and (ii) other genuine means.

Chloe Smith:

The Carer's Allowance weekly earnings limit is designed to allow carers to combine their caring responsibilities with some paid employment where they can. It is set at a level that aims to encourage those who give up full time work in order to undertake caring responsibilities, to maintain a link with the labour market through part time work.

The £132 limit, which has increased by around a third since 2010, is a net figure which is the figure left once any Income Tax, National Insurance contributions and

other allowable payments and expenses are deducted from net earnings. So some people can earn more than £132 a week gross and still retain Carer's Allowance.

When calculating earnings for Carer's Allowance purposes, any amount by way of a refund of income tax is disregarded.

Once earnings exceed £132 a week (or on a weekly average where possible for those with fluctuating earnings) then there is no longer an entitlement to Carer's Allowance and it will cease.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[29886]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 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.

Guy Opperman:

Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on [Contracts Finder](#). As Contracts Finder was implemented in 2016, not all records before this time are held centrally.

In relation to funding, under the Governments Transparency agenda, all spend data over £25,000 is published and can be found at [DWP: departmental spending over £25,000 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

For the Department, there are 166 contracts with a value between £1 million and £3 million, and 69 contracts with a value over £3 million, due to be agreed in the next 12 months.

The numbers represent the anticipated forecast number of contracts that may be agreed within the next 12 months to 31/07/2023. These figures are unsupported by any necessary dependent approval governance and/or change in demand signal.

For the Department's agencies and non-departmental public bodies, there are 11 contracts with a value between £1 million and £3 million, and 4 contracts with a value over £3 million, due to be agreed in the next 12 months.

Due to a number of organisational and staff changes since 2010, information on Departmental spend on monitoring each contract and the number of officials working on them, is not readily available and would require a very high degree of manual processing. To provide this information would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Employment: Poverty

Gerald Jones: [\[32577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of the rise in the cost of living on levels of in-work poverty; and what steps the Government is taking to mitigate that impact.

David Rutley:

The latest available statistics for in-work poverty are for 2019/20.

The Treasury published distributional analysis which shows that the full package of measures announced on May 26th is well targeted at households on low incomes.

- Households (in England) who are in the bottom 10% of the income distribution will receive support worth the equivalent of around 7 percentage of their net income (£800 in cash terms) in 2022/23 as a result of these measures.
- Those on average incomes will receive support worth between 1 and 2 percent of net income increases (around £500 in cash terms).

■ Household Support Fund

Sir Stephen Timms: [\[32463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance she has given to local authorities on the disbursement of the Household Support Fund for each of the three tranches of that Fund.

David Rutley:

For each iteration of the Household Support Fund, the Government has issued a Grant Determination as well as written guidance for Local Authorities. For the current scheme, which runs 1 April – 30 September 2022, these documents, along with others relating to the scheme, can be found here: [Household Support Fund: guidance for local councils - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). A further £421 million extension of the Household Support Fund is to be made available from October 2022. Guidance and individual Local Authority indicative allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

Sir Stephen Timms: [\[32464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much has been allocated from the Household Support Fund to each local authority in England, in each of the three tranches announced so far.

David Rutley:

Local Authorities have received their allocations for the current £421m Household Support Fund covering April – September 2022, alongside the grant determination and guidance. The allocations for Local Authorities for this period are the same as for the first scheme which ran from 6 October 2021 - 31 March 2022 and can be found [here](#).

A further £421 million extension of the Household Support Fund is to be made available from October 2022. Guidance and individual Local Authority allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

Sir Stephen Timms: [32465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which local authorities have (a) underspent and (b) returned to her Department funding allocated to them from the first tranche of the Household Support Fund.

David Rutley:

Local Authorities are paid in arrears, at the mid-way point and after the Fund end, subject to the return of management information confirming the spend is in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Determination and Guidance. For the first iteration of the Household Support Fund, 6 October 2021 – 31 March 2022, the Management Information, including Local Authority spend levels, will be published shortly.

Sir Stephen Timms: [32466]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what basis the allocations from the Household Support Fund to each local authority in England have been calculated in each of the three tranches announced as of 7 July 2022; and if she will make a statement.

David Rutley:

For the current Household Support Fund running 1 April – 30 September each Local Authority has been allocated a share of the £421m based on population weighted by the index of multiple deprivation. This is the same basis on which the previous Household Support Fund running 1 October 2021 – 31 March 2022 was allocated. The allocations for the current Household Support Fund can be found [here](#)

A further £421 million extension of the Household Support Fund is to be made available from October 2022. Guidance and individual Local Authority allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

■ Lung Diseases: Health and Safety

Yvonne Fovargue: [31821]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to introduce further measures on prevention of respiratory conditions in the workplace.

Chloe Smith:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) continues its activity to help prevent work related respiratory ill health by using the best available evidence to design interventions that will improve health outcomes. HSE delivers a wide range of regulatory activity to prevent work related respiratory ill health, focusing on steps employers and workers can take to control occupational exposures.

■ Pension Credit

Gerald Jones:

[\[32578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to promote the take up of pension credit to help tackle the cost of living crisis.

Guy Opperman:

We have already undertaken a range of actions to raise awareness of Pension Credit and increase take-up. We are now putting all our efforts into the substantial and sustained take-up campaign, which was launched on 3 April. This has included print advertising and promotion in the national press, across social media, via internet search engines and on screens in Post Offices and GP surgeries across Great Britain. Our digital toolkit has been updated with information and resources, as well as leaflets and posters which advice organisations, charities and other stakeholders working across local communities can use to help promote Pension Credit

Most recently, on 15 June DWP held another Pension Credit day of action with broadcasters, regional and national newspapers and other partners encouraged to reach out to pensioners, as well their family and friends, through their channels. Although not all claims can be directly attributed to the campaign, early indications are that the day of action has been highly effective. Our internal management information suggests there have been over 10,000 Pension Credit claims made during the week of the media day – an increase of 275% compared to the same week in 2021, which itself was an enhanced week due to the 2021 Pension Credit Action Day.

The impact of these claim volumes on numbers of successful awards and on Pension Credit take up will take longer to establish given the usual cycle involved in producing those statistics. However, the campaign is ongoing including a particular focus on getting the private sector to drive forward efforts to enhance claims, and specific effort to reach out to communities who have traditionally not claimed Pension Credit. That work is very much ongoing.

■ Pension Credit: Romford

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[31777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pensioners in the Romford constituency were in receipt of pension credit in the latest period for which figures are available.

Guy Opperman:

The latest published data shows there were 1,746 Pension Credit claimants in Romford constituency.

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

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

Guidance for using Stat-Xplore is available at:

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

Pension Credit applications and take up have improved dramatically following the Pension Credit awareness campaign in April, and the Pension Credit day of action on 15 June; this involved work with broadcasters, media, newspapers and other stakeholder partners who were encouraged to reach out to pensioners to promote Pension Credit through their channels.

Although not all claims can be directly attributed to the campaign, early indications are that the day of action has been highly effective. Our internal management information suggests there have been over 10,000 Pension Credit claims made during the week of the media day – an increase of 275% compared to the same week in 2021, which itself was an enhanced week due to the 2021 Pension credit Action Day.

The impact of these claim volumes on numbers of successful awards and on Pension Credit take-up will take longer to establish given the usual cycle involved in producing those statistics. However, the campaign is ongoing including a particular focus on getting the private sector to drive forward efforts to enhance claims, and specific effort to reach out to communities who have traditionally not claimed pension credit. That work is very much ongoing.

■ Pensioners: Energy

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[31085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take further steps to assist pensioners who are experiencing increased energy bills.

Guy Opperman:

The Chancellor announced on 26 May a cost-of-living package which included a pensioner cost of living payment of £300 per household to be paid alongside the winter fuel payment this coming winter increasing the amount to £500/£600 depending on age. Once added to the non-repayable £400 discount on energy bills this autumn for domestic electricity customers, this will result in all pensioners households in Great Britain receiving £900 for households with someone of state pension age and under 80 and £1,000 for households with someone aged 80 or over to help with increased fuel costs. In addition, there is a £650 Cost of Living Payment deliberately targeted at low-income households in receipt of a means tested qualifying benefit. For people above State Pension age, this is those in receipt of Pension Credit.

■ Personal Pensions

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[31100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to help people understand their personal pensions.

Guy Opperman:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is currently introducing several initiatives to assist people in understanding their pensions.

We currently offer pensions guidance, through the Money and Pensions Service, in the form of MoneyHelper and Pension Wise.

The Stronger Nudge to pensions guidance regulations, which came into force in June 2022, ensures no-one will be able to access their savings through pension freedoms without having received Pension Wise guidance or opted out. As part of this, schemes now offer to book of a Pension Wise appointment for the member as part of the application process, removing the inertia introduced by members having to book their own appointment.

On 14th June DWP published the 'Helping savers understand their pension choices' call for evidence, to explore what support members of pension schemes need to help them make informed decisions about how to use their savings. The responses to this call for evidence and other engagement with industry and member representatives will inform what, if any, government action is needed.

From October this year, new regulations come into force that require defined contribution schemes used for automatic enrolment to send simpler, 2-page maximum, statements to members. These short, simpler statements will give savers the key information they need to be able to better engage with and understand their pensions. They will help people plan for the retirement they want.

Finally, on 31st January 2022, DWP published a consultation on the draft regulations for Pensions Dashboards, which closed on 13 March 2022. Following publication of its response, expected this summer, the department will lay regulations for dashboards when parliamentary time allows. Pensions dashboards can help make accessing pensions information easier by empowering people to see what they have in their various pensions, including their State Pension, at the touch of a button on their smartphone, laptop or computer at home. This will put the saver in control and help reconnect people with their lost pension pots, transforming how people think and plan for their retirement.

DWP regulates for trust-based workplace pensions. Individual and other personal pensions within the contract-based market are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

■ Poverty**Mr Richard Holden:****[30183]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the potential change has been in the number of (a) people, (b) children and (c) pensioners living in absolute poverty since 2010.

David Rutley:

In 2020/21, there were 1.2m fewer people, 200,000 fewer children and 400,000 fewer pensioners in absolute poverty (before housing costs) in the UK than in 2009/10.

Latest statistics for the number of people, children and pensioners who are in absolute poverty in the UK can be found at: [Households below average income: for financial years ending 1995 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2021)

■ Poverty: Travellers

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers are living in (a) relative and (b) absolute poverty.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[30045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of (a) relative and (b) absolute poverty rates within Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities in the UK.

David Rutley:

It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers' poverty rates due to the small sample size.

■ Silica: Health and Safety

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[31816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she has taken to help reduce exposure to respirable crystalline silica in the workplace.

Chloe Smith:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has a well-established regulatory framework in place to protect workers from the health risks associated with exposure to hazardous substances at work.

Under the [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 \(COSHH\)](#) employers have a duty to prevent or adequately control worker exposure to hazardous substances such as Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS). COSHH sets out the hierarchy of control that must be implemented and, if managed appropriately, should result in achieving a level below the Work Exposure Limit (WEL) as detailed in HSE Guidance ' [EH40/2005, Workplace exposure limits](#) '.

HSE also delivers communications campaigns to support its regulatory activity. These campaigns inform duty holders and workers of the hazards faced and how these should be controlled and monitored. HSE's dust campaign which ran in late 2021, included silica exposure, and involved social media and press activity to support awareness of the risks and how to control them.

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[31818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will reduce the Workplace Exposure Limit in the UK for silica related work to 0.05 mg/m³ in line with other countries.

Chloe Smith:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not currently intend to review the Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) of Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) in Great Britain. HSE contributed to the more recent European Union (EU) assessment of the limit in January 2019, where the EU reclassified RCS as a carcinogen and implemented the same occupational exposure limit as already existed in GB.

HSE will continue to monitor international developments in this area and the evidence base to consider the range of interventions that might be suitable, including any change to the exposure limit in GB.

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[31819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will introduce an industry awareness campaign on the potential effects of exposure to silica.

Chloe Smith:

Over the last three years the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has delivered several month-long inspection campaigns encompassing risks arising from silica in the construction industry. These campaigns also ran over the period impacted by coronavirus restrictions. HSE used these campaigns to highlight risks from dust, including silica, and used repeated messaging to drive sustained behaviour changes. The campaigns involved inspectors across the country visiting around 1000 sites identified as being likely to have dust risks present.

HSE also delivers communications campaigns to support its regulatory activity. These campaigns inform duty holders and workers of the hazards faced and how these should be controlled and monitored. HSE's dust campaign which ran in late 2021, included silica exposure, and involved social media and press activity to support awareness of the risks and how to control them.

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[31820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to introduce real-time exposure monitoring for workers exposed to respirable crystalline silica.

Chloe Smith:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is aware of developments in real time monitoring instruments claiming to measure aerosols containing respirable crystalline silica (RCS) onsite.

HSE will continue to monitor developments, as validation data to confirm accuracy remains limited. As with all advances in technology claims made for any of these instruments would need to be examined further and substantiated with robust data.

■ Silicosis

Yvonne Fovargue:

[31817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to make silicosis a notifiable disease under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Chloe Smith:

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) are made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and apply to all sectors and workplaces in Great Britain.

The 2013 regulations clarified and simplified the list of reportable ill-health conditions (occupational diseases), as a result of a recommendation made by Professor Löfstedt in his report “[Reclaiming health and safety for all: An independent review of health and safety legislation](#),” published in 2011.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) keeps the regulations, including specified injuries and reportable diseases, under review. The list of current reportable occupational diseases, including silicosis, will be considered as part of the next formal post-implementation review of RIDDOR, which is due to report in October 2023. HSE will engage with a range of stakeholders as part of the review process.

■ Sodium Hypochlorite: Health and Safety

Dame Angela Eagle:

[32479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the Health and Safety Executive’s plans to ensure that there is sufficient access to sodium hypochlorite to maintain health and safety standards.

Chloe Smith:

Disinfectants based on sodium hypochlorite are widely used to maintain hygiene levels, however health and safety legislation is not prescriptive about how effective levels of disinfection should be achieved. Instead, it gives duty holders the freedom to select the best method of cleaning and disinfection based on their individual circumstances.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not regulate supply chain issues and it is for end users to source adequate supplies of effective disinfectants, whether sodium hypochlorite or alternative products, to achieve appropriate levels of hygiene.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Cost of Living

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[31901]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the State Pension in the context of increases in the cost of living.

Guy Opperman:

The government is committing an extra £37 billion to support the most vulnerable this year. The £650 Cost of Living Payment is deliberately targeted at low-income households in receipt of a means tested qualifying benefit. For people above State Pension age, this is those in receipt of Pension Credit. The full basic State Pension is now £2,300 a year higher than in 2010 and is supported by many other measures.

State Retirement Pensions: Females**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[31050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions her Department has had with representatives of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman on when they plan to publish the stage two report on complaints about communication of changes to women's State Pension age.

Guy Opperman:

The publication of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) stage 2 report is a matter for the Ombudsman.

It would not be appropriate to comment whilst the investigation is ongoing; and section 7(2) of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 states that Ombudsman investigations "shall be conducted in private".

Universal Credit: Northern Ireland**Claire Hanna:**[\[31940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number people in Northern Ireland that will be moved from legacy benefits to Universal Credit by the end of 2023.

Claire Hanna:[\[31941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with the Minister for Communities in Northern Ireland on plans to migrate people on legacy benefits to Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

Social Security is a devolved matter. As such, there have been no discussions with the Minister for Communities in Northern Ireland on managed migration.

Any Universal Credit forecasts relate only to Great Britain.

Universal Credit: Veterans**John Healey:**[\[32472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate on the number of Universal Credit claimants who previously served in the armed forces as of May 2022.

David Rutley:

We are not able to make an estimate of the total number of Universal Credit claimants who previously served in the armed forces.

The previous answers to PQs [11554](#) and [16851](#) explained that for assessment periods ending in April 2022, DWP held a response for approximately 45% of UC claimants. Possible responses are “previously served”, “currently serving”, “never served”, or “prefer not to say”. From this data we have identified 33,800 UC claimants who have previously served in the Armed Forces. We will not make an estimate of the total number because the claimants for whom we have data may not be representative of all claimants. Nor can we provide further breakdowns by geography or any characteristics relating to the UC claim because of potential bias in the data.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

EDUCATION

■ Capital Update

The Secretary of State for Education (James Cleverly):

[\[HCWS197\]](#)

I am delighted to confirm details of the next 61 schools prioritised for the School Rebuilding Programme.

The School Rebuilding Programme was announced by the Prime Minister in June 2020 and will transform the learning environment at 500 schools and sixth form colleges over the next decade, supporting teachers in England to deliver a high-quality education, so that pupils gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need to succeed. The programme will also support levelling up of opportunity by addressing school buildings with the highest condition need across England.

It represents an important commitment to invest in construction sector jobs and skills, helping drive growth in the economy. The programme will have a continued focus on modern methods of construction and provide opportunities across the industry, including for small and medium-sized enterprises.

As with the first 100 schools announced in 2021, this group of schools has been prioritised solely on the basis of the condition of their buildings. The projects include primary and secondary schools, as well as special schools. This also represents a substantial investment in schools in the midlands and north of England, with 37 out of 61 projects in these regions.

The new school buildings will be energy efficient designs with high sustainability standards, delivering a generation of new school buildings that will be net zero carbon in operation and mitigate the risks of climate change.

The ten-year programme will continue to target school buildings in the worst condition across England. From 19 July to 8 October 2021, we conducted a public consultation with the sector on our approach to prioritising schools for the long-term programme. As set out in the Government's response, we invited responsible bodies – such as academy trusts and local authorities – to submit nominations for their schools with the poorest condition buildings to join the programme.

In 2022 to 2023, we expect to prioritise up to 300 schools in total. We are announcing a smaller group of 61 schools now to maintain the pace of delivery and address some of the poorest condition buildings as soon as possible. We are still assessing all other nominations received and have not ruled out any nominated schools for selection at this point. We plan to make another announcement later this year to confirm further schools selected.

Alongside the rebuilding programme, the Government has committed £1.8 billion in the financial year 2022-23 for maintaining and improving the condition of the school estate.

Further details, including lists of the school rebuilding projects, have been published on GOV.UK. Copies will be placed in the House Library.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Health Update

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care) (James Morris): [\[HCWS198\]](#)

In July 2021, the Government published its formal response to the recommendations by the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety review led by Baroness Cumberlege setting out an ambitious programme of change. As part of our response, we committed to appoint a Patient Safety Commissioner with a remit covering medicines and medical devices.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Henrietta Hughes OBE FRCGP SFFMLM as the first ever Patient Safety Commissioner for England. This appointment was made following an open competition, in line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments, and following a pre-appointment scrutiny hearing with the Health and Social Care Committee. Dr Hughes will continue working as a GP and remain Chair of Childhood First.

The First Do No Harm report, led by Baroness Cumberlege highlighted the need to avoid harm and protect patients. The Patient Safety Commissioner will add to and enhance existing work to improve patient safety in relation to medicines and medical devices by being a champion for patients and helping us to learn more about what we can do to put patients first. The Commissioner's core duties are to promote the safety of patients, and promote the importance of the views of patients and other members of the public. The Commissioner will act independently, and a Memorandum of Understanding will be agreed to ensure the Commissioner's independence is safeguarded.