



Daily Report

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 13 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 13 July 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: EU Countries

Rachael Maskell:

[\[31154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help build partnerships between European and UK businesses.

Jane Hunt:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State maintains a positive relationship with a range of specialist chambers of commerce focused on business operating between the UK and European partners. In June alone he has spoken with the British-Irish Chamber of Commerce and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce to hear their perspective and to promote partnership between our respective business communities.

The Department is also working to facilitate closer links with European partners in key sectors. In the automotive sector, the German and UK trade associations are collaborating closely, while in the aerospace sector we will this month welcome delegations from across Europe to the Farnborough International Air Show.

■ Business: Government Assistance

Rachael Maskell:

[\[31150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to help ensure that opportunities for business growth are assessed.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: Government monitors and evaluates our business support programmes to ensure that opportunities for business growth are assessed. In addition to this independent sources have found:

- Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity in the UK in 2021 was 12.6%, increased from 7.8% in 2020[1].
- The UK was the third largest destination in Europe for foreign direct investment in 2021, receiving \$27.6bn in inward FDI[2].
- The UK is a centre of global finance and has the strongest venture capital market in Europe, more than France and Germany combined[3].
- The number of scale-ups* stand at 34,000, a rise of 8% over 5 years, and scale-ups account for around 13% of private sectors businesses with 10+ employees.

[1] Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – 2021 Global report

[2] OECD, Most recent FDI statistics for OECD and G20 countries

[3] Tech Nation (2020), *UK Tech for a Changing World* (<https://technation.io/report2020/#11-global-investment-trends>)
<https://technation.io/report2021/#key-statistics>

* businesses with 10+ employees with either turnover or employment growth of over 20%

■ Cobham Ultra Acquisitions: Ultra Electronics

Mr Kevan Jones: [32496]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the proposed undertakings offered by Cobham Ultra Acquisitions Limited in relation to its acquisition of Ultra Electronics Holdings plc, whether the Government will maintain a shareholding in Ultra Electronics.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: The Government does not have a shareholding in Ultra Electronics.

■ Companies: Environment Protection and Human Rights

Thangam Debbonaire: [28892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to enable people to seek redress from companies registered in the UK whose (a) supply chains and (b) subsidiaries are found to be complicit in (i) human rights and (ii) environmental abuses.

Jane Hunt:

The Government expects UK businesses to respect human rights and the environment in line with the OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The UK's National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines provides a non-judicial grievance mechanism to consider complaints against UK companies which may not have observed the Guidelines in their operations and supply chains overseas.

The Government has no current plans to propose legislation to introduce corporate liability of UK companies for human rights or environmental violations either by other companies in their supply chains or by their overseas subsidiaries

■ Construction: Materials

Geraint Davies: [32462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Net Zero Strategy published in October 2021, if he will take steps to promote the use of sustainable building materials, including hempcrete.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: The Government recognises that the use of environmentally sustainable building materials has an important role to play in

meeting our net zero target. The Government also recognises that sustainability can be achieved in different ways. We are focused on promoting the use of low-carbon products and processes, and reducing waste, rather than specific material types.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Contracts

Jon Trickett: [\[31003\]](#)

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

Jane Hunt:

The total value of contracts held by BEIS with (a) G4S, (b) Serco and (c) Capita in each year since 2020 is detailed in the table below.

	2020	2021	2022	2023 (COMMITTED)
Capita	£1,176,448	£1,662,948	£1,606,198	£264,050
Serco	£3,525,500	£2,510,000	£1,986,131	£6,786
G4S		£4,308	£26,880	£26,880
TOTAL	£4,701,948	£4,177,256	£3,619,209	£297,715

■ Foreign Investment in UK

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[31108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress his Department has made on securing business investment in the UK.

Jane Hunt:

The Government has worked to secure internationally mobile, transformative investment projects in sectors across the economy, supporting the delivery of key Government priorities. In March, Australian Investors announced £28.5 billion of investments for clean energy, technology and infrastructure. In addition, the Government has provided further support to attract significant investment in manufacturing, including delivering Britishvolt's £1.7 billion Gigafactory in Blythe Valley which will support 3,000 direct jobs and a further 5,000 across the supply chain. The Government has further worked to secure over £80 million R&D investment by Smith and Nephew into their manufacturing facility near Hull.

Rachael Maskell: [\[31149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in what way his Department assesses opportunities for business investment in cities such as York.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: The Government works with mayors and local authorities to assess and promote investment opportunities in city regions across England using measures that include freeports, devolution deals and enterprise zones. For example Government is supporting York Central, a large and ambitious city centre brownfield regeneration site, with £77million in funding and Enterprise Zone status. The development is expected to create a £1.2bn boost to the local economy and around 6500 new jobs. Government is also awarding York £5.8m of UK Shared Prosperity funding and is currently negotiating a York and North Yorkshire mayoral devolution deal.

Hospitality Industry**Navendu Mishra:**[\[30178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department plans to take to help protect and support pub and hospitality businesses in England and Wales.

Jane Hunt:

The Government published its first-ever Hospitality Strategy in July 2021. The Strategy set out twenty-two commitments to support the sector across a range of policy areas, grouped into three themes: Reopening, Recovery, and Resilience. This Department launched the Hospitality Sector Council to oversee the delivery of the strategy, and I and my officials continue to work with the Council and the sector to deliver the strategy commitments. The Government engages regularly with hospitality businesses and organisations to understand the pressing issues that they face, including cost pressures and supply chain disruptions. An update on the Strategy will be published shortly.

Investment Security Unit: Staff**Darren Jones:**[\[31898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many full time equivalent staff were employed in the Investment Security Unit as of 6 July 2022.

Darren Jones:[\[31899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what percentage of staff employed in the Investment Security Unit as of 6 July were previously employed in the Investment Security Group.

Darren Jones:[\[31900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what percentage of staff previously employed in the Investment Security Group were employed in the Investment Security Unit as of 6 July.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: As of 6 July 2022, there are 94 full time equivalent posts in the Investment Security Unit. As with any organisation, actual staffing levels fluctuate over time. The ISU operates a 'hub and spoke' model, bringing together expertise from across government and the intelligence community to scrutinise acquisitions and assess the need for intervention to protect the UK's national security, ensuring the Business Secretary can make well evidenced decisions.

The Investment Security Group team was previously based in the Cabinet Office but moved to BEIS in April to form the basis of the ISU.

■ Living Wage

Rachael Maskell: [\[31864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing (a) local and (b) regional living wages.

Rachael Maskell: [\[31865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential value of (a) local and (b) regional living wages in areas outside of London.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: This Government is committed to building an economy that works for everyone. The National Living Wage is part of our wider commitment to ensuring we have a labour market that works for everyone, both in terms of fair pay and fair working conditions.

A single national rate is clear and simple for employers to understand. Introducing regional rates would make the system more complex and increase the risk of non-compliance.

■ Manufacturing Industries

Rachael Maskell: [\[31156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps is he taking to increase industrial partnerships across the Union.

Greg Hands:

The Government continues to work with industries across the UK, supporting sectors to deliver on key issues including, skills, net zero, growth and productivity.

■ Manufacturing Industries: Government Assistance

Rachael Maskell: [\[31152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what fiscal steps he plans to take to maximise industrial growth over the next 12 months.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: Fiscal policy is a matter for HM Treasury.

■ **Meggitt**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[31040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on the acquisition of Meggit by a US company.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[31041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on the acquisition of Ultra Electronics by Cobham.

Jane Hunt:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular meetings with Ministerial colleagues on a range of topics.

■ **National Grid: East of England**

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[31070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on what financial assessment National Grid has made of an offshore route for energy cables for the proposed new East Anglia GREEN project.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[31071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on what financial assessment National Grid has made of the undergrounding of energy cables for the proposed new East Anglia GREEN project.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[31072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on what financial assessment National Grid has made of installing additional energy transmission capacity immediately adjacent to the current pylon route for the proposed new East Anglia GREEN project.

Greg Hands:

The developer responsible for the new East Anglia GREEN project, National Grid Electricity Transmission, considers a range of factors of the project, including cost, environmental and socioeconomic impacts, deliverability and system benefit.

Network regulation is a matter for Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator.

■ Nuclear Power

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[31107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to deliver new and advanced nuclear power in the UK.

Greg Hands:

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

The Government will set up a new flagship body - 'Great British Nuclear' - to develop a resilient pipeline of projects. The Government appointed Simon Bowen to lead and help develop government proposals for this body.

On the 13th of May 2022, the Government launched a Request for Information for the £120million Future Nuclear Enabling Fund. This fund will provide targeted support to potential new and advanced nuclear projects seeking to enter the UK nuclear market.

■ Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the statement of 27 June 2022 by the chair of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry on the Department's application for a restriction order, including the redaction of the names of junior civil servants from relevant documents, what the Department's definition of a junior civil servant is.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the statement of 27 June 2022 by the chair of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry on the Department's application for a restriction order, for what reason the restriction order was requested.

Jane Hunt:

We are fully committed to enabling the Inquiry to get to the bottom of the Horizon scandal so it can set out exactly what went wrong. Ministers and senior civil servants are responsible and accountable for policy, and we have therefore asked that the Inquiry redact the names of junior civil servants that appear in documents we provide if they have not had a decision-making role. This request is consistent with the approach adopted by the department when handling matters covered by the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act.

The Department's definition of a junior civil servant is those at Grades 6 and 7, Senior Executive Officer ("SEO"), Higher Executive Officer ("HEO"), Executive Officer ("EO") or Administrative Officer/Assistant levels.

■ Post Offices: Bank Services

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[31176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on providing a wider range of Post Office services through banking hubs.

Jane Hunt:

Ministers have had discussions with the Post Office CEO, Nick Read, to discuss the future of bank hubs. As part of the industry-led Community Access to Cash Pilots, Post Office Limited (POL) have been trialing the Bank Hub format since April 2021 both in Rochford and in Cambuslang near Glasgow.

Five new Bank Hubs are due to be operational by end of 2022 (with three more commissioned, likely at the start of next year).

■ Post Offices: Finance

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[31175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the investment provided to the Post Office by the Government in November 2020 to maintain and enhance the network of post offices in England.

Jane Hunt:

Over the past ten years, the Government has provided over £2.5 billion in funding to support the Post Office network. The funding includes a subsidy to ensure the viability of rural and community branches. Since 2019 this subsidy has been maintained at £50 million a year and will remain at the same level until 2025.

Through Government funding, Post Office Limited (POL) is on a more sustainable footing; ensuring POL continues to meet the core requirements for the network, including maintaining a network of at least 11,500 branches and ensuring that 99% of the UK population lives within three miles of their nearest branch.

■ Post Offices: Parcels

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[31177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many packets and parcels were processed through Post Office counters in each of the last five years for which records are available.

Jane Hunt:

Information on the number of parcels and packets processed through the Post Office is commercially sensitive.

■ Power Failures: Compensation

Andrew Bowie: [\[31188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact on the adequacy of compensation received by affected consumers of the Ofgem Quality of Service Guaranteed Standards Regulation 9, 2.24, which defines a restoration of power as a period over three minutes; and if he will hold discussions with Ofgem on the potential merits of reviewing that provision.

Greg Hands:

The Government expects energy companies to deliver the best support to customers after a disruption to energy supply. Ofgem monitors and enforces the guaranteed standards relating to quality of supply. When a distribution company fails to meet the level of service required, it must make a payment to the customer, subject to certain exemptions.

As part of the Storm Arwen Review, Ofgem has commissioned a review of the guaranteed standards to assess the current compensation provision and payment structure.

■ Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme

Dan Carden: [\[31216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the National Audit Office report on Low-carbon heating of homes and businesses and the Renewable Heat Incentive, published on 23 February 2018, what progress his Department has made on implementing the recommendations set out in Part Three: controlling the costs and the impact of fraud and non-compliance.

Greg Hands:

All recommendations from the 2018 National Audit Office Renewable Heat Incentive report have been implemented.

■ Research

Rachael Maskell: [\[31151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to assess the extent of the research and development potential of locations across the UK.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: BEIS will aim to invest 55% of its R&D budget outside the Greater South East by 2024/25. We have also given UKRI a new organisational objective to increase consideration of local growth criteria and impact in R&D fund design. These measures will help to ensure that high potential R&D clusters across the UK see the benefit from our record uplift in R&D investment to £20 billion by 2024/25.

■ Royal Mail: Industrial Relations

Ian Byrne: [\[31943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with Royal Mail management on industrial relations at that company.

Jane Hunt:

The Department has regular discussions with Royal Mail on a wide range of issues. Industrial relations are a matter for Royal Mail and its workforce and their representatives and the Government encourages Royal Mail and its unions to reach an amicable agreement and in order to avoid disruption to businesses and consumers.

■ Sodium Hypochlorite

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[32934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure industries have sufficient access to sodium hypochlorite.

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[32935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has in place to mitigate the current shortage of sodium hypochlorite.

Greg Hands:

The day-to-day supply of sodium hypochlorite is a commercial matter for industry. The Government works closely with industry to monitor supply and to encourage diverse and resilient supply chains to protect consumers and businesses.

■ Tidal Power

Jim Shannon: [\[31113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to progress the development of tidal energy generation; and if he will take steps to ensure that representatives of the fishing industry are consulted as part of that work.

Greg Hands:

The Government has a long and continuing history of supporting the development of tidal power, with over £175m invested in marine energy innovation to date. Last week the Government announced that the UK's 4th Allocation Round of the Contracts for Difference auction scheme has secured 40MW of new tidal power.

All users of the sea have had the opportunity to engage with Government on offshore renewable energy consenting as part of the Government's ongoing work on the Energy National Policy Statements.

■ Toys and Games

Stephen Morgan: [\[28916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing support to independent toymakers and sellers.

Jane Hunt:

We have cut business rates by 50% for eligible retail businesses in 2022-23, increased the Employment Allowance to £5,000 cutting the cost of employment for 495,000 small businesses, and increased the Annual Investment Allowance to £1 million.

We have also cut fuel duty by 5p for 12 months, and our Help to Grow programmes will enable eligible SMEs to mitigate the effects of rising costs by providing financial discounts on approved digital technologies up to a value of £5000 and improving SME leadership and management skills through subsidised courses.

■ Universities: EU Countries

Rachael Maskell: [\[31155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to build partnerships between European universities and UK (a) university and (b) business sectors.

Jane Hunt:

The UK has strong and deep research and innovation ties with our European partners through longstanding university and industrial partnerships both bilaterally and multilaterally. We remain committed to associating to European research programmes, but if delays to our association continue, we will introduce a comprehensive set of alternative programmes to maintain our global science superpower trajectory. We will continue to support work with European universities to maintain research and innovation excellence, collaborative networks and thought leadership.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Civil Servants: Pay

Imran Hussain: [\[31127\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people directly employed by the Government who are based in London are paid less than £11.05 per hour.

Imran Hussain: [\[31128\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people indirectly employed the Government who are based in London are paid less than £11.05 per hour.

Imran Hussain:

[\[31129\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people directly employed by the Government who are based outside London are paid less than £9.90 per hour.

Imran Hussain:

[\[31130\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many indirectly employed by the Government who are based outside London are paid less than £9.90 per hour.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

As at 31 March 2021 there were an estimated 1,440 civil servants based in London earning less than £11.05 an hour.

As at 31 March 2021 there were an estimated 29,100 civil servants based outside London (including overseas) earning less than £9.90 an hour.

Pay for civil servants below the senior civil service is delegated to individual departments to determine. In April 2022, the National Living Wage increased to £9.50 an hour, however at the reference point for these figures (31st March 2021) it was £8.72 an hour.

The Government has committed that the National Living Wage will reach 66% of median UK earnings by 2024. Departments must ensure that they apply the legislative increase to the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage.

These figures are estimates based on full-time equivalent gross salary earnings, working hours, and location information collected as part of the Annual Civil Service Employment Survey as at 31st March 2021. A small proportion of civil servants do not have a reported location or salary in this centrally held data, and have not been included in these figures. Information on earnings of the broader public sector and all those indirectly employed by the Government is not held centrally.

These estimates may differ from those calculated by aggregating figures directly requested from individual departments.

■ Civil Service: Guaranteed Minimum Pensions

Dave Doogan:

[\[33005\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many pensioners with (a) Civil Service Pension and (b) Equiniti had their pensions reduced following the Guaranteed Minimum Pension reconciliation exercise undertaken between 2016 and 2019.

Dave Doogan:

[\[33006\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government has provided Civil Service Pensions with all the necessary information relating to Guaranteed Minimum Pension for all pension holders.

Dave Doogan:

[\[33007\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Guaranteed Minimum Pension review in 2016, whether (a) notional or (b) payable additional State Pension was

compared to Guaranteed Minimum Pension before the adjustments were made to civil service pensions.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Cabinet Office is not responsible for the pension arrangements of Equiniti. 26,715 of around 700,000 pensioner members of the Civil Service Pension Scheme were affected following the Civil Service Pension Scheme Guaranteed Minimum Pension reconciliation and rectification exercise.

Civil Service Pension Scheme members were provided with detailed information about the change to their pension, along with any lump sum underpayment due to the member. In cases where pensions had been overpaid the overpayment was written-off and future pension payments adjusted to the correct level. Members requesting a complete breakdown of the calculations supporting these figures, following receipt of the detailed information about the change to their pension, were provided with the complete breakdown.

The reconciliation exercise compares member data held by the scheme with records held by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Where there is a discrepancy between the data sources the reason is investigated in order to reconcile the scheme data with the HMRC data which may result in changes to pensions in payment. Consideration of notional or payable Additional State Pension is not relevant to the reconciliation exercise.

■ **Mental Health Services: Veterans**

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[31095\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on improving access to mental health services for veterans.

Johnny Mercer:

The Minister for the Cabinet Office recently met the Minister for Care and Mental Health to discuss issues surrounding veterans' health, including mental health services. The Minister for Defence People recently had the opportunity to meet Op COURAGE staff and service users at Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust.

Op COURAGE is a mental health support pathway in England which continues to grow, and the Government strongly encourages any veterans who need support to engage with it. Op COURAGE was allocated £17.8 million funding last year and an extra £2.7 million over the next three years.

■ **Ministers: Resignations**

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[32637\]](#)

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 Exports and Minister for Equalities, the hon. Member for Finchley and Golders Green, dated 6 July 2022.

Michael Ellis:

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

■ Veterans

Owen Thompson:

[\[32979\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Minister for Veterans' Affairs plans to take to improve the Government's statistical knowledge of the (a) number and (b) whereabouts of veterans.

Johnny Mercer:

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

One of three 'Areas of Action' underpinning this Plan is "Understanding our veteran community: work on data and research to ensure policy across government is rooted in robust evidence". The Office for Veterans' Affairs will publish a data and research strategy in Autumn 2022, to set out further steps to better understand the UK's veteran community.

For the first time ever, we included a question on veteran status in the 2021 Census in England and Wales, and the 2022 Census in Scotland. The Office for National Statistics will analyse and publish the Census data on the veteran population in England and Wales and the results will be published in 2023. This will give us data on the demographics of our veteran population which will allow us to better design and target future support. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency is working with the MOD to gather data on its veterans and the OVA is working with colleagues across the Devolved Administrations to share best practice and co-ordinate on data collection and analysis.

Following the census, the Office for Veterans' Affairs has commissioned, alongside the Office for National Statistics, a regular veterans survey. This will gather views and opinions on a range of areas, including life satisfaction, using services, and awareness of services. The first survey will be conducted in later 2022.

Owen Thompson:

[\[32980\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Minister for Veterans' Affairs will make it his policy to develop a mechanism for following up on the welfare of veterans.

Johnny Mercer:

The welfare of this country's veterans is a high priority for this government. We set up the Office for Veterans' Affairs in 2019 to sit at the heart of government in the Cabinet Office. It coordinates and drives forward work across the UK Government to support veterans.

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

Veterans UK provide ongoing welfare support for veterans of any age, and their families through the Veterans Welfare Service. The NHS' veterans health and wellbeing service, Op COURAGE, provides a bespoke mental health pathway for veterans, as well as supporting links to other organisations which can help with veterans' wider health and wellbeing needs. The Veterans' Gateway provides a first point of contact to ensure veterans are directed to the right services via a website and telephone, SMS and live chat advisors. The Government strongly encourages any veterans who need support to engage with it.

■ Veterans: Homelessness

Owen Thompson:

[\[32981\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he plans to take to improve the quality of data-gathering on the number of veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Johnny Mercer:

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

According to data from the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection, Veterans are not more likely to be homeless than the general population. Research from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities shows that only 0.6% of households who were homeless or at risk of homelessness in 2020-21 had served in the Armed Forces.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs has a strong focus on data and research, so that we can better understand the veteran community and the support they need. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are looking at the supply of supported housing by the end of 2022 and ensuring data on veteran homelessness is collected consistently. DLUHC are also working with all Local Authorities (LA) to ensure they are recording all veterans approaching LAs who are owed a homelessness duty.

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Refugees****Ruth Jones:**[\[30142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people have repatriated to the UK under the Afghan relocations and assistance scheme; and how many outstanding applications for resettlement to the UK remain as of 1 July 2022.

James Heappey:

As of 6 July 2022 we have relocated over 9,700 individuals under the ARAP scheme and there are approximately 14,500 applications awaiting a final eligibility decision.

■ Air Force**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[29916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, as of today, how many qualified aircrew are available at (a) limited combat ready and (b) combat ready.

James Heappey:

I am withholding the information as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

■ Armed Forces: Deployment**John Healey:**[\[31718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel are deployed abroad to fulfil the UK's NATO obligations; and which countries those personnel have been deployed to.

James Heappey:

As the leading European Ally, the UK sends Armed Forces personnel to participate in every NATO operation and mission. At present, 936 are deployed on NATO activity in Estonia, 198 in Romania, 129 in Poland, 37 in Kosovo, and 24 in Iraq. This month the UK also has approximately 700 additional personnel on NATO exercises and operations contributing across Land, Air, and Sea.

In addition, UK personnel are engaged in other NATO activity in countries across the Alliance: the table below details those personnel.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL
Belgium	243
France	11
USA	54
Italy	174

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL
Spain	18
Germany	156
Norway	34
Turkey	40
Portugal	20
Netherlands	111
Bulgaria	1
Estonia	1
Latvia	4
Lithuania	1
Romania	3
Poland	6
Greece	1
Slovakia	1

■ Armed Forces: Protective Clothing

John Healey: [\[32928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether headsets procured through the Urgent Capability Requirement procurement programme will be used on Ajax vehicles.

Jeremy Quin:

The specific headsets procured through the Urgent Capability Requirement are for current in-service vehicles only.

John Healey: [\[32929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether headsets procured through the Urgent Capability Requirement procurement programme are PPE standard.

Jeremy Quin:

The headsets we are procuring through the Urgent Capability Requirement are being tested by independent test houses using BSEN352, the UK standard for testing hearing protection PPE. The headsets are one element of a system that collectively ensures personnel are appropriately protected in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (including the Control of Noise at Work Regulations

(CNAWR) 2005). Military headsets are integrated into the communications system and have to perform a range of military functions (including, where appropriate, integration with ballistic protection equipment). They are not being individually issued as PPE, but will perform as part of the Hierarchy of Controls specified by the Health and Safety Executive to protect personnel from hazards, including noise.

John Healey:

[\[32931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total value is of the Urgent Capability Requirement procurement programme.

Jeremy Quin:

At the time of writing Defence expects to spend in the vicinity of £77 million within this financial year on Urgent Capability Requirements.

John Healey:

[\[32932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which armoured vehicles the headsets procured through the Armoured Fighting Vehicle Headset project will be used for.

Jeremy Quin:

It is intended that the headsets to be procured through the future Armoured Fighting Vehicle Headset project will be used across the entire Armoured Fighting Vehicle fleet.

■ **Army: Operating Costs**

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[\[29944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual running cost is of a (a) standard and (b) logistics brigade.

James Heappey:

There is no 'standard' brigade however, we can provide running costs for a cross section of the Army's capability in financial year 2021-22. The workforce and activity costs to maintain the following brigades at routine levels of readiness, and at full strength, are as follows:

4th Infantry Brigade (to become 4th Light Brigade Combat Team) (which does not include Engineers or Artillery) costs c£140 million p.a.

20th Armoured Brigade Combat Team (including attached Engineers and Artillery) costs c£300 million p.a.

102 Logistic Brigade's costs are similar to that of a light brigade at c£150 million p.a.

These figures are inclusive of pay and operating costs (fuel, rations, travel and ammunition) however, due to the way in which the Army measures and forecasts its spend, it has not been possible to include infrastructure, utilities and equipment running costs at brigade level.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[31044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether it is his policy that the successful manufacturing team for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract must be led by a UK company.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 29 June 2022 to Question number 24549.

Attachments:

1. Fleet Solid Support Ship [UIN 24549.docx]

■ Guided Weapons

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [\[31048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps his Department has taken to develop hypersonic missile technology.

Jeremy Quin:

The Integrated Review settlement has enabled the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to build upon previous research and development programmes to explore hypersonic technologies.

The MOD is working closely with AUKUS partners to accelerate development of advanced hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities to meet current and future threats.

■ HMS Echo

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[29929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what role did HMS Echo fulfil.

James Heappey:

HMS ECHO was the first of two Echo-class survey ships (alongside HMS ENTERPRISE which is still in service) designed for hydrographic and oceanographic operations across the world.

The Royal Navy is moving towards the delivery of an exciting new hydrographic capability programme known as the Future Military Data Gathering Programme. This will transform the collection and exploitation of hydrographic and oceanographic information to more effectively meet the maritime geospatial data needs of Defence.

■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[28408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of changes to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Maliand (MINUSMA) mandate and other parameters in relation to the (a) availability of

air support within MINUSMA with cooperation from authorities in Mali and (b) adequacy of human rights due diligence processes on the (i) safety of UK personnel taking part in missions within MINUSMA and (ii) efficacy in increasing security and preventing abuses of future UK participation in MINUSMA.

James Heappey:

We dynamically review the UK's deployment to MINUSMA including on the basis of risk to personnel, continued ability to deliver against our mission, and issues such as restrictions on movement imposed by the Malian Transitional Authorities. On the basis of those assessments the UK deployment continues. Support from MINUSMA to non-UN security forces in Mali must comply with the UN's Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP). We flag consistently with the UN the importance of strict compliance and regular reporting on its implementation. UK forces are not providing support to the Malian Transitional Authorities, and any potential plans to do so would need to be HRDDP compliant.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Contracts**

Jon Trickett:

[\[31015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

Jeremy Quin:

The total value of contracts between the Ministry of Defence and G4S, Serco and Capita since 2020 is set out in the table below:

COMPANY	2020 (£MILLION)	2021 (£MILLION)	2022 (£MILLION AS AT 06/07/22)
G4S PLC	£0.007	£0.038	£5.835
Serco Group PLC	£890.6	£899.5	£804.4
Capita PLC	£2,023.0	£3,355.2	£3,299.6

The figures provided reflect contract end dates and use the latest current agreed value for the contract. Contract values may change throughout a contract's life and figures may have been revised up or down from the value in previous years.

Furthermore, contracts spanning multiple years can appear in more than one year. As such, the totals for each separate year cannot be further aggregated as this would introduce double or triple counting.

■ **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference**

John Healey:

[\[30997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to attend in person the NPT Review Conference in August 2022.

Mr Ben Wallace:

No, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office is the lead Government Department for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Review Conference.

Refugees: Afghanistan**Ruth Jones:**[\[30141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Afghan relocations and assistance scheme.

James Heappey:

The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world.

To date, over 9,900 eligible individuals and their families have already safely relocated to the UK under ARAP, and we are working with partners in the region to ensure safe passage of the eligible individuals that we know remain in Afghanistan.

The effective operation of the scheme is kept under regular review within the Department. The continued high number of monthly applications has recently led the Defence Permanent Secretary to dedicate more resources towards processing ARAP applications in the coming weeks and months to reflect the priority of this scheme.

RFA Fort Victoria**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[31046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will make an assessment of whether RFA Fort Victoria will need to be refitted to keep it operational until 2028.

Jeremy Quin:

RFA FORT VICTORIA has planned refits in early 2024 and a docking period in early 2027.

Type 31 Frigates: Operating Costs**Dave Doogan:**[\[33003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's most recent estimate is of the average yearly running costs of Type 31 Frigates.

Jeremy Quin:

The in-service support solution for the Type 31 frigates is still in development, therefore we are currently unable to supply the average yearly running costs.

Ukraine: Military Aid**John Healey:**[\[30996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 18781 on Ukraine: Military Aid, how much and what proportion of the £1.3 billion funding for military support to Ukraine had been spent as of 5 July 2022.

James Heappey:

The Department has committed to spend £1.1 billion of funding in addition to the provision of equipment from the Ministry of Defence's own stores. Full disclosure of the spending on Ukraine will be undertaken in the Department's annual report and accounts.

■ USA: F-35 Aircraft**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[31039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether two additional US squadrons of F-35A will be permanently deployed from Lakenheath.

James Heappey:

As announced in 2015, RAF Lakenheath has two F-35A Fighter Squadrons; the first arrived in December 2021 and the second is due to stand-up later this year. No further changes are planned at this time.

■ Watchkeeper WK450**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[29925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many soldiers are fully qualified to fly Watchkeeper.

James Heappey:

I am withholding the number of personnel qualified as Watchkeeper Pilots as disclosure would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness, or security of the Watchkeeper Force and therefore the British Armed Forces.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[29926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the public purse is of training a Watchkeeper operator.

James Heappey:

The estimated cost to the public purse of the Watchkeeper Pilot course per student is £170,000.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[29927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many pilots have left the Watchkeeper programme in each of the last five years.

James Heappey:

I am withholding the number of pilots who have left the Watchkeeper programme, as disclosure would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness, or security of the Watchkeeper Force and therefore the British Armed Forces.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **Betting****Andrew Bridgen:****[32955]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has instructed the Gambling Commission to impose rules or guidance on betting operators to subject their customers to affordability checks.

Damian Collins:

The Gambling Commission is the independent regulator for the gambling industry. As part of its responsibilities it issues a social responsibility code, including the requirement that operators identify and interact with customers who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing harm.

In 2021, the Gambling Commission closed a consultation and call for evidence on Remote Customer Interaction, including the specific issue of affordability checks. In its consultation response, the Commission confirmed it will conduct a further consultation on specific steps operators should take to tackle three key risks associated with financial harm. The response can be found [here](#).

The Government cannot issue instructions to the Commission on how it fulfils its statutory duties or what to include in its guidance and codes, but we have worked closely on this issue in the run up to publishing our white paper on the Review of the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure any proposed changes are joined up.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Pay****Pat McFadden:****[31805]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if they will take steps to pay all (a) employees, (b) contractors and (c) agency workers who work in their Department and relevant agencies and public bodies no less than the (i) UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London and (ii) London Living Wage inside of Greater London, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Matt Warman:

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

Public Bodies sponsored by DCMS, are their own employer and make their own decisions on pay, within the parameters of the Civil Service pay remit guidance.

■ **Freedom of Expression****Mr Jonathan Lord:****[31104]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to protect freedom of expression.

Damian Collins:

Freedom of expression and the media are essential qualities of any functioning democracy.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is taking a number of steps to protect freedom of expression and democratic values online. This includes our Online Safety Bill, the G7 work on open societies, and our work on press freedom and sustainability.

We introduced the Online Safety Bill on 17 March 2022. It has recently passed its Commons Committee stage and will begin the Report stage shortly. These laws will usher in a new era of accountability for tech companies, and uphold free expression and pluralism online.

Internet: Advertising**Mr Jonathan Lord:**[\[31103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress her Department has made to ban fraudulent online advertisements.

Damian Collins:

Fraudulent online advertisements are illegal. However, the government recognises that more should be done to tackle the devastating effects caused by fraudulent online advertisements that are placed.

The Online Safety Bill includes a standalone duty on the largest online platforms and search services (Category 1 and 2A services) to prevent the publication of fraudulent adverts on their services.

In addition, the Online Advertising Programme will look at the entire online advertising ecosystem in relation to fraud, as well as other harms caused by online advertising. It will consider the role of all actors not currently covered by regulation. The Online Advertising Programme consultation closed on 8 June, and the government will set out its response in due course.

Public Records: Armed Forces**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[31753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to allow Ministry of Defence service personnel records to be accessioned as official records to The National Archives.

Matt Warman:

The MOD has selected service personnel records with a discharge date prior to 1963 as official records for permanent preservation at The National Archives.

■ VisitBritain and VisitEngland: Media**Emily Thornberry:****[31785]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the total cost to the public purse, inclusive of VAT, was for media buying services provided under the Crown Commercial Service's media buying framework agreement reference RM6003, incurred by (a) the British Tourist Authority, (b) Visit Britain and (c) Visit England, between May 2018 and May 2022.

Nigel Huddleston:

The total spend including VAT, via the Crown Commercial Service's media buying framework reference RM6003, between May 2018 and May 2022 (inclusive) was £35,837,403 for the British Tourist Authority (BTA). For VisitBritain it was £23,819,556 and for VisitEngland it was £12,017,847.

EDUCATION**■ Academies****Nick Gibb:****[30971]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the form entitled Model articles of association for academy trusts, published on 3 January 2013, whether it remains his policy that the maximum aggregate number of votes exercisable by local authority associated persons should not exceed 19.9 per cent of the total number of votes exercisable by Members in general meeting.

Will Quince:

The most recent model articles of association for use by mainstream academies, last updated on 30 June 2021 states:

"Notwithstanding the number of Members from time to time, the maximum aggregate number of votes exercisable by Local Authority Associated Persons shall never exceed 19.9% of the total number of votes exercisable by Members in general meeting and the votes of the other Members having a right to vote at the meeting will be increased on a pro-rata basis."

This remains the department's policy position, and we have no plans to change this approach for most types of academy trusts.

The department is testing an approach to allow local authorities to establish new multi academy trusts, where there is a need, to which the above limit on local authority Associated Persons shall not apply. We will, however, require at least one member to be independent of any association with the local authority. We will work with a small number of local authorities to test the concept. Local authority-established multi-academy trusts will be subject to the same oversight and, where necessary, intervention as all trusts. More information about this policy can be found in the registration of interest document, [here](#):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-established-mats-registration-of-interest>.

■ Carers

Dr Rupa Huq: [30077]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a single statutory definition of kinship care.

Dr Rupa Huq: [30078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing all kinship carers with a weekly allowance.

Dr Rupa Huq: [30079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of granting kinship carers paid time off work when a child starts living with them.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The department will consider the recommendations made in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, including the recommendations to introduce a statutory definition of kinship care, provide kinship carers with paid time off work when a child starts living with them, and provide financial allowances at the same rate as foster carers.

■ Children: Day Care

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [31209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that childcare is (a) affordable and (b) accessible.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The government is committed to improving the cost, choice, and availability of childcare. That is why we have spent over £3.5 billion in each of the past three years on early education entitlements.

On 4 July, the government announced further measures to increase take-up of childcare support and reduce the costs and bureaucracy facing providers. We have also announced a new £1.2 million campaign to make sure that every parent knows about the government-funded support for which they are eligible.

■ Primary Education: Physical Education and Sports

Mark Garnier: [31090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans to bring forward proposals on long-term funding for the PE and Sport Premium for primary schools.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

My right hon. Friend, the former Secretary of State for Education, confirmed on the 25 of June that the £320 million PE and sport premium will continue for the 2022/23 academic year, supporting primary schools to continue to improve the PE, sport and physical activity which they offer.

The position of the PE and sport premium beyond the 2022/23 academic year will be confirmed in due course. Any decisions beyond the 2024/25 financial year are subject to the outcome of future spending reviews in the usual way.

■ Pupils: Bullying**Jim Shannon:**[\[31115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the prevalence of ethnicity-based bullying of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in schools.

Jim Shannon:[\[31844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help reduce ethnicity-based bullying in schools.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

The department has clearly communicated to schools that bullying should never be tolerated, and we are committed to supporting schools' efforts to tackle it. State funded schools are required by the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to fostering good relations between those who share a particular protected characteristic and those who do not and to eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

All schools are required to have a behaviour policy by law, with measures to prevent all forms of bullying. The department provides advice for schools, which outlines schools' responsibilities. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>.

The department is providing over £2 million of funding, between August 2021 and March 2023, to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. We have deliberately focused this grant programme on preventing and tackling bullying of pupils with protected characteristics. The training and resources provided cover hate-based bullying, including resources specifically relating to the bullying of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children. For example, one organisation funded by the department has produced a new eLearning course on 'Bullying and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people' that is available to all schools in England.

In addition, the department is ensuring that all children in England will learn about respectful relationships, in person and online, as part of mandatory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). These subjects are designed to give pupils the knowledge they need to lead happy, safe, and healthy lives and to foster respect for

other people and for difference. The statutory RSHE guidance can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

■ School Meals: Standards

Munira Wilson:

[33009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to (a) monitor schools progress towards and (b) enforce the School Food Standards.

Will Quince:

The department supports the provision of nutritious food in schools via the Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1603/contents/made>.

Compliance with the School Food Standards is mandatory for all maintained schools including academies and free schools. School Governors have a responsibility to ensure compliance and can ask the headteacher for evidence that the school is compliant with the School Food Standards.

In February 2022 the Levelling Up White Paper outlined what the department is doing to strengthen adherence with the School Food Standards, including investing up to £200,000 in a pilot Governor Training Scheme. We will also be running a joint project with the Food Standards Agency to design and test a new approach for local authorities in England, to help assure compliance with the School Food Standards. We will promote accountability and transparency of school food arrangements by encouraging schools to complete a statement on their school websites, which sets out their whole school approach to food. The reporting would be voluntary initially, with the intention that this will become mandatory when schools can do this effectively.

The Healthy Schools Rating Scheme celebrates the positive actions that schools are delivering in terms of healthy living, healthy eating and physical activity, and supports schools in identifying further actions that they can take in this area. This voluntary rating scheme is available for both primary and secondary schools. Schools engage in a self-assessment exercise and receive their rating based on their responses to questions on subjects including compliance with the mandatory school food standards.

■ Schools: Bullying

Alexander Stafford:

[26926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help reduce ethnicity-based bullying in schools.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The government condemns and strives to tackle all forms of racial discrimination, prejudice, and harassment.

All schools are required to have a behaviour policy by law, with measures to prevent all forms of bullying. The department provides advice for schools, which outlines schools' responsibilities: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>. The advice makes clear that schools should make appropriate provision for a bullied child's social, emotional and mental health needs.

The department is providing over £2 million of funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2023, to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. This includes projects targeting bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of ethnic-based bullying or hate-related bullying.

We are also making sure that all children in England will learn about respectful relationships, in person and online, as part of mandatory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). These subjects are designed to give pupils the knowledge they need to lead happy, safe, and healthy lives and to foster respect for other people and for difference. The statutory RSHE guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

We have published 'Respectful School Communities', a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline, available here: <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/respectful-school-communities-self-review-signposting-tool-2/>. This can help to combat bullying, harassment and prejudice of any kind, including ethnicity-based bullying.

■ Special Educational Needs: Lancashire

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[26714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils with an Education Health and Care plan were missing education whilst awaiting a place at a Specialist School in Preston and Lancashire at the beginning of the last three academic years; and for how long was each pupil missing education.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The department collects and publishes data annually from local authorities on the total number of children and young people who are awaiting the provision specified in their Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>.

Figures for Lancashire on the number of children of compulsory school age who have an EHC plan and were not in education can be found at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/2d628262-9886-457c-aca3-e0c32b749269>. Data is only collected at local authority level so figures for Preston are not available.

The information requested on how long each pupil was missing education is also not held.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Dangerous Dogs: Exemptions****Ruth Jones:**[\[30147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs have been entered on the Index of Exempted Dogs in each year since 2018 inclusive; and how many dogs on that index in each year since 2018 have been involved in a significant bite incident and fatality.

Victoria Prentis:

The table below indicates the number of dogs that were entered onto the Index of Exempted Dogs in each year since 2018 inclusive.

2018	229
2019	197
2020	127
2021	128
2022*	23

* As of 5 July 2022

No dog on the Index of Exempted Dogs has ever been involved in a fatality.

Information on biting incidents involving dogs is not held by Defra but may be held by individual police forces, local authorities and the NHS. Dogs on the Index of Exempted Dogs would have been assessed by the Court as having an acceptable temperament and whether the proposed owner is a fit and proper person and are required by law to be kept on a leash and to be muzzled in public. In light of these requirements, we would not expect that such dogs would be involved in any biting incidents involving the public.

■ Dogs: Animal Breeding**Helen Morgan:**[\[31248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of unregulated canine fertility clinics on animal welfare.

Steve Double:

Fertility clinics which offer the diagnosis of diseases, perform tests for diagnostic purposes, or carry out medical or surgical treatment such as artificial insemination on dogs, are subject to the requirements of The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. The 1966 Act prohibits anyone who is not a veterinary surgeon registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) from undertaking any non-exempt

procedure. Concerns about a person's legitimacy to practice should be reported to the RCVS as Regulator for the Act.

Those operating canine fertility clinics, and owners using their services, are required under The Animal Welfare Act 2006 to protect the animals involved from harm and to provide for their welfare in line with good practice. A breach of these provisions may lead to imprisonment, a fine, or both.

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

Under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the 2018 Regulations) anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs and/or who breeds three or more litters in a 12 month period needs to have a valid licence from their local authority.

Under the 2018 Regulations licencees must achieve and maintain statutory minimum animal welfare standards, linked to the welfare needs of the Animal Welfare Act 2006: [Dog breeding licensing: statutory guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/dog-breeding-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities).

■ Dogs: Electronic Training Aids

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[30100]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the number of people who have trained their dog with an e-collar since his Department first announced a ban on those collars.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government assessed the number of people who have reported using a remotely activated electronic training device in 2018. Based on peer reviewed evidence, we estimate that 3% of owners use such devices. As our proposed ban will only prohibit those collars which deliver an electric shock controlled by hand-held devices, and not those which deliver stimuli such as vibration or sound, the number of affected users will be significantly lower.

The proposed ban on the use of electric shock collars controlled by hand-held devices was developed after considering a broad range of factors, including the impact of banning them. When considered alongside the academic research, the public consultation responses, and direct engagement with the sector, the Government concluded that these collars present a risk to the welfare of dogs and cats and that their use should be prohibited. The same conclusion was reached by other nations that have already banned the use of collars which deliver a shock, including Wales, Austria and Germany.

We appreciate that the right approach for pet owners to take in managing and controlling their dog's behaviour differs from both person to person and from pet to pet. Defra would advise all owners who are concerned about controlling their dog's behaviour, for whatever reason, to take advice from their vet or a suitably qualified dog behaviourist or trainer. Such specialists would be best positioned to advise on the best approach for their specific case. The Animal Behaviour and Training Council maintains national registers of appropriately qualified trainers and behaviourists which can be found at the link below: <https://abtc.org.uk/practitioners/>.

■ Environment Agency and Office for Environmental Protection

Dr Matthew Offord:

[31079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amalgamating the Environment Agency into the Office of Environmental Protection.

Steve Double:

The Environment Agency is Defra's largest Arm's Length Body, delivering environmental regulation and services on behalf of government. The Office of Environmental Protection has a specific remit, set out in the Environment Act 2021, to hold the government and public bodies, including the Environment Agency, to account. Whilst the department is keen to examine opportunities to reform Arm's Length Bodies, as set out in the recent Nature Recovery green paper, merging the Environment Agency and the Office of Environmental Protection would not seem a good fit.

■ Forests: Conservation

Dr James Davies:

[31168]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much and what proportion of the £30 million Big Nature Impact Fund his Department plans to use to protect and restore Britain's temperate rainforests.

Steve Double:

The Government is working to design a new Big Nature Impact Fund, which we propose should focus investments on the creation or restoration of carbon-rich biodiverse habitats, primarily native woodlands and restored peatlands. This could include projects involving temperate rainforest should they apply. In line with the Fund's aims to develop environmental markets, investments will only be made in projects capable of generating revenue from ecosystem services.

Dr James Davies:

[31169]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to include temperate rainforest restoration in its Landscape Recovery pilot projects.

Steve Double:

Landscape Recovery will provide funding for long-term, large-scale projects to enhance habitats and deliver land-use change with a focus on biodiversity, water quality and net zero. This could include projects that plan to restore woodland or temperate rainforest.

Applications for the first round of Landscape Recovery pilots closed on 24 May. We are currently assessing the 51 bids received and will confirm which projects have been selected later this summer.

We intend to launch a second round of pilot projects next year and will confirm the proposed focus for that round later this year.

■ Livestock: Animal Welfare**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[31903]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps has he taken to improve the (a) health and (b) welfare of farmed animals.

Steve Double:

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

The Government shares the public's high regard for animal health and welfare, having committed to working with producers and the food sector to raise standards across the board. We are delivering a series of ambitious reforms that will continue our collective drive to improve standards in farm animal health and welfare through, for example, delivery of the Action Plan for Animal Welfare.

As part of our plans for future farming, this autumn will see the launch of Annual Health and Welfare Review, the first step on the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, which will fund vet visits to undertake a health and welfare review for farms across England. In 2023 we will introduce Animal Health and Welfare Grants, followed by Endemic Disease Eradication and Control Programmes and a Payment-by-Results trial. Beyond this financial assistance, the Pathway also aims to stimulate market demand for higher welfare products by increasing transparency and strengthening the regulatory baseline.

We also remain committed to delivering the Government's bovine TB (bTB) eradication strategy. Developing a deployable cattle bTB vaccine with the objective of introduction by 2025 is one of the Government's top priorities. A deployable cattle bTB vaccine is expected to be a game-changer in terms of providing a strong additional tool to help eradicate bTB. Field trials began in 2021.

We have a strong track record in raising the bar for welfare standards — the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 now provides legal recognition that animals are sentient beings and introduced an Animal Sentience Committee as a new scrutiny mechanism requiring Ministers to explain how policy decisions have taken into account their impact on animals.

■ **Sheep: Dogs**

Tim Farron:

[\[28884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many recorded incidents there were of dogs attacking sheep in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the issue of livestock worrying very seriously, recognising the distress this can cause farmers and animals, as well as the financial implications.

Defra does not hold data on the on the specific number of recorded incidents of livestock worrying per year, as this data is held by individual police forces.

Defra recently held a series of roundtables with key stakeholders, which indicated that livestock worrying is a significant problem that warrants effective action.

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

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

Tim Farron:

[\[28885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were shot or injured by farmers for attacking sheep in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the issue of livestock worrying very seriously, recognising the distress this can cause farmers and animals, as well as the financial implications, which can be very significant.

Defra does not hold data on the number of dogs shot or injured by farmers for attacking sheep per year, as this data is held by individual police forces. The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill does not include a provision to allow a farmer to shoot a dog which is worrying livestock on their land. However, the Animals Act 1971 provides that in civil proceedings against a person for killing or injuring a dog, it is a defence in certain circumstances where a dog is killed or injured by someone protecting livestock.

New measures to crack down on livestock worrying in England and Wales are to be brought in through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, which was introduced in Parliament on 8 June 2021.

We appreciate that the right approach for pet owners to take in managing and controlling their dog's behaviour differs from both person to person and from pet to pet. Defra would advise all owners who are concerned about controlling their dog's

behaviour, for whatever reason, to take advice from their vet or a suitably qualified dog behaviourist or trainer. Such specialists would be best positioned to advise on the best approach for their specific case. The Animal Behaviour and Training Council maintains national registers of appropriately qualified trainers and behaviourists.

Defra's statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs and Natural England's refreshed version of the Countryside Code apply to handling dogs in the vicinity of livestock and outline the actions that can be taken by dog owners to reduce the occurrence of attacks or chasing.

Tim Farron:

[29987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of banning e-collars on the number of dogs being shot by farmers for attacking sheep.

Victoria Prentis:

Data on the number, and outcome, of recorded incidents of livestock worrying is held by individual police forces rather than centrally by Defra. The proposed ban on the use of electric shock collars controlled by hand-held devices, or e-collars, in England was developed after considering a broad range of factors, including the impact of a ban. When considered alongside the academic research, the public consultation responses, and direct engagement with the sector, the Government concluded that e-collars present an unacceptable risk to the welfare of dogs and cats and that their use should not be permitted.

The Government takes the issue of livestock worrying very seriously, recognising the distress this can cause farmers and animals, as well as the financial implications. New measures to crack down on livestock worrying in England and Wales are to be brought in through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, which was introduced in Parliament on 8 June 2021.

Meanwhile we maintain that it is best practice to keep your dog on a lead around livestock. Natural England recently published a refreshed version of the Countryside Code, which highlights that it is best practice to keep dogs on a lead around livestock. The Code also makes specific reference to keeping dogs in sight and under control to make sure they stay away from livestock, wildlife, horses and other people unless invited. Moreover, the Code helpfully sets out certain legal requirements, encouraging visitors to always check local signs as there are locations where you must keep your dog on a lead around livestock for all or part of the year.

The statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs includes guidance and reminders for owners about their responsibilities to provide for the welfare needs of their animal, but also to keep their dogs safe and under control. The code of practice is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/697953/pb13333-cop-dogs-091204.pdf

■ Thames Water: Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances

Fleur Anderson: [33017]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that PFAS levels in Thames Water are safe.

Fleur Anderson: [33018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the most recent results were of tests for PFAS levels in Thames Water.

Steve Double:

In England and Wales, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) has provided guidance to water companies since 2009 which ensured that two key PFAS substances were considered in their risk assessments. The [guidance](https://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/pws-installations/guidance-on-the-water-supply-water-quality-regulations-2016-specific-to-pfos-perfluorooctane-sulphonate-and-pfoa-perfluorooctanoic-acid-concentrations-in-drinking-water/) was updated in January 2021 to reflect current knowledge and include consideration of other PFAS:

www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/pws-installations/guidance-on-the-water-supply-water-quality-regulations-2016-specific-to-pfos-perfluorooctane-sulphonate-and-pfoa-perfluorooctanoic-acid-concentrations-in-drinking-water/

In October 2021, the DWI wrote to water companies informing them of additional requirements for sampling, testing and monitoring for PFAS in raw water sources from which abstractions are used for drinking water. The Inspectorate is in the process of assessing the information provided by companies, so we are unable to provide specific results for Thames Water. Where appropriate, DWI will share any relevant learning on PFAS through the publicly available Chief Inspector's Report.

■ Tree Planting

Kerry McCarthy: [32937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding his Department plans to allocate to tree planting programmes in 2025; and which schemes will receive this funding.

Steve Double:

The £750 million Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) will support peat restoration, woodland creation and management until 2025. This currently includes supporting the Woodland Creation Partnerships, Urban Tree Challenge Fund, the Local Authority Treescapes Fund, and the flagship grant scheme the England Woodland Creation Offer.

The NCF is working alongside the Environmental Land Management schemes through its design and pilot stage to ensure a smooth transition of all relevant NCF programmes into the schemes post 2025. The majority of new applications for woodland creation payments from 2025 will be made through the Local Nature Recovery scheme. The Local Nature Recovery design and the approach to payment rates for planting trees will largely mirror those offered by the England Woodland Creation Offer.

■ Water Companies: Pollution**Tim Farron:****[31060]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many times (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department met with representatives of environmental groups on sewage discharge by water companies into rivers, lakes and coastlines since 1 April 2022.

Steve Double:

The Government has repeatedly made it clear to the water industry that the current use of sewage discharges is unacceptable. We are going further and faster than any other government to protect and enhance the health of our rivers and seas. This includes by proposing the largest water company infrastructure project in history to tackle this historical problem. Defra Ministers regularly meet environmental groups on a range of issues, including river health and water quality.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ China: London Policing College****Sir Iain Duncan Smith:****[30975]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether UK aid funding via the British Council China was allocated to the London Police College during its historic partnership with Xinjiang Police College.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith:**[31709]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Freedom from Torture report entitled UK partnerships with Chinese policing institutions linked to crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, dated 17 May 2022, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of reports of collaboration between the London Policing College, which is a partner of the Metropolitan Police, and Xinjiang Police College, China's Ministry of Public Security and the People's Public Security University of China.

Amanda Milling:

The Government has robust processes in place to ensure that all projects funded by UK aid meet our human rights obligations and values. This includes publicly available HMG guidance

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583304/OSJA_Guidance_2017.pdf) that sets out the human rights risks that must be considered prior to providing any justice or security sector assistance.

We are aware of concerns raised by a recent report from Freedom from Torture regarding a British Council partnership with London Policing College (LPC). This project was part of a regional programme that included efforts to reduce human rights violations and other malpractice through better policing. Neither the Xinjiang Policing

College, nor the People's Public Security University of China participated in the project, and no funds were distributed to any overseas institutions. The LPC have now ceased all programme partnerships in China.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[32611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 9952 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, what the expiry dates are of the covid-19 vaccines which have not yet been deployed to countries in need; and what her policy is on the donation of covid-19 vaccines that have less than the minimum 10-week shelf-life required by the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

Amanda Milling:

The UK has donated 85.6 million doses benefiting 42 countries. Of these, approximately 76.5 million have been delivered to COVAX, and 9.1 million have been delivered bilaterally. Although our 100 million commitment stands, there is not currently demand for additional UK donations via COVAX or bilaterally.

Her Majesty's Government policy is to donate doses with at least eight weeks until expiry in line with the WHO minimum standard. We remain ready to meet COVAX or country demand for further UK donations up to our 100 million commitment. Doses would be provided with at least WHO minimum standards on expiry dates.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Annual Reports**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[32984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when her Department plans to publish its annual report and accounts.

Vicky Ford:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Annual Report and Accounts is being finalised and will be published shortly.

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

Jon Trickett:

[\[31012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, 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.

Vicky Ford:

Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on Contracts Finder (<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>).

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Living Wage**James Murray:** [\[33024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will ensure that staff who work (a) directly or (b) indirectly in her Department and its relevant agencies and public bodies are paid at least the UK real living wage outside Greater London or the London living wage inside Greater London as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Vicky Ford:

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

Records for staff employed 'indirectly' by the Department are not held centrally. To produce this data would incur disproportionate cost.

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

■ Jim Fitton**Fleur Anderson:** [\[33015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help secure the release of Jim Fitton.

Amanda Milling:

Consular officials in Iraq and the UK continue to provide consular assistance to Mr Fitton and his family. We cannot, of course, 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. Mr Fitton's safety and welfare remain of the upmost importance.

■ Lithuania: Russia**Jim Shannon:** [\[32542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her Lithuanian counterpart on Russian aggression towards transitioned goods.

Graham Stuart:

Ministers and Officials across Government regularly meet their Lithuanian counterparts. On 4 July 2022, senior FCDO Officials met with Lithuanian Vice-Foreign Minister Adomenas in London to discuss broad areas of cooperation, including our countries' coordinated efforts in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine. The UK supports the full implementation of sanctions on Russia by all countries in compliance with legally binding agreements.

■ Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference

John Healey:

[\[30998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to attend the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty Review Conference in 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 who will represent the UK delegation will be the UK's Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament.

■ Selemani Masiya

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[32942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make representations to her counterparts in Mozambique on the need for a credible and independent investigation into the killing of Selemani Masiya on 7 July 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The British High Commission in Mozambique is aware of the sad death of Selemani Masiya on 7 July. It is of course the responsibility of the Mozambican authorities to investigate the killing. As with investigations into any crime, the UK encourages the Government of Mozambique to conduct the investigation promptly and in accordance with Mozambican law.

■ Western Sahara: Gender Based Violence

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[29978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she plans to take to raise with her Moroccan counterpart allegations of physical and sexual abuse by Moroccan authorities of Sahrawi women activists in Boujdour, Western Sahara.

Graham Stuart:

Support for human rights is a UK priority around the world. We raise human rights issues with Morocco accordingly and continue to monitor cases in Western Sahara, including by encouraging the investigation of such allegations both by the relevant authorities and Morocco's national human rights body.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**Breast Cancer: Screening**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[31052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) research and (b) pilots are underway in the NHS breast screening programme to determine which (i) invitation models and (ii) interventions are most effective in achieving high uptake levels.

James Morris:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to a review of the breast screening pathway, to optimise the patient experience of breast screening. This includes a project to review the reasons for non-attendance, which will inform the understanding of the impact different invitation methodologies, with reference to factors such as age, previous screening history and deprivation.

Breast Cancer: Surgery

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[31053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) national and (b) local activity is underway to help ensure that potential local restrictions to breast reconstruction surgery are removed.

James Morris:

The National Health Service Cancer Programme has reiterated that no local time limits should be applied to reconstructive surgery, particularly where reconstructive surgery has been delayed due to the pandemic. Cancer Alliances have been asked to ensure that wherever possible surgery with immediate breast reconstruction takes place and to seek opportunities to accelerate reconstruction for those women who have not yet undergone the procedure following previous breast surgery during the pandemic.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[31054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to include the oncoplastic workforce within the updated Framework-15.

Maria Caulfield:

Health Education England's long-term strategic framework, Framework 15, will not contain information about specific professions. However, it will inform the more detailed long term workforce plan, integrated care boards' and subsequent pathway and profession specific plans.

Cancer: Mental Health Services

Jess Phillips: [\[30030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has taken steps to improve training for NHS professionals providing emotional and psychological support for (a) solid tumour cancer patients and (b) blood cancer patients.

Jess Phillips:

[30031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the provision of psychological support for blood cancer patients across England; and what plans he has to address regional disparities in that provision.

James Morris:

[Holding answer 7 July 2022]: Health Education England is developing a career framework for cancer nurses and allied health professionals, which will include training in emotional and psychological support. In addition, a project to establish training standards and job roles for cancer support workers will also include training in the knowledge of cancer, cancer treatments and the potential short and long term effects and enhanced communication and psychological skills to support patients, including those with solid tumours and blood cancer.

No specific assessment has been made of the provision of psychological support for blood cancer patients. However, NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked Cancer Alliances to review mental health provision for these patients through its 2022/23 planning guidance. Access to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies long term condition pathways have been identified as a priority to support integration of mental health and physical health services for patients with co-morbid long-term conditions, such as cancer.

■ **Carers: Coronavirus**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[31066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to increase financial support for carers in the event that they are unable to work because they tested positive for covid-19.

Gillian Keegan:

We are continuing to provide free personal protective equipment, testing and vaccinations to the social care sector to manage the spread of COVID-19. While the vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers which determine their pay and terms and conditions, we expect all care providers to support good health and safety practice. This includes ensuring that staff stay away from the workplace when there would be a health risk to those in their care, as before the pandemic. We continue to review infection, prevention and control measures in line with the latest evidence on COVID-19 infections.

■ **Dementia: Health Services**

Ian Byrne:

[31944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the dementia strategy is able respond to future healthcare innovations and developments.

Gillian Keegan:

We are currently reviewing the plans for dementia in England and further information will be available in due course.

Ian Byrne:

[\[31945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional Government funding will be made available to enable the implementation of the forthcoming dementia strategy.

Ian Byrne:

[\[31946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional Government funding will be made available to services in Liverpool to enable the implementation of the forthcoming dementia strategy.

Gillian Keegan:

We are currently reviewing plans for dementia in England and further information will be available in due course.

■ Dementia: Research

Dan Carden:

[\[31218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take as part of the national dementia strategy to enable greater participation in dementia research.

Gillian Keegan:

The Join Dementia Research platform, delivered by the National Institute for Health and Care Research with Alzheimer's Society, Alzheimer Scotland and Alzheimer's Research UK, allows people to register an interest in dementia research and be matched to trials. This aims to improve participation and diversity in dementia research.

We are currently reviewing plans for dementia in England and further information will be available in due course.

■ Dental Health: Disadvantaged

James Wild:

[\[23433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve oral and dental health in areas of deprivation.

James Morris:

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities co-ordinates annual dental surveys to assess the local oral health needs of specific population cohorts. This data is available to local authorities for targeted oral health improvement programmes. The Department has published resources to support local authorities, including toolkits to support commissioning of evidence-based oral health improvement programmes for pre-school children and vulnerable adults.

In England, local authorities are responsible for assessing the oral health needs, developing strategies and commissioning improvement programmes for children and adults in the local area. Public health services commissioned by local authorities in England are funded through the ring-fenced Public Health Grant. In 2022/23, the total Public Health Grant will be £3.417 billion.

■ Dental Services: Fines

Navendu Mishra:

[\[30180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many penalty charge notices for NHS dental treatment have been issued in each year since 2011 as a result of claimants declaring that they were in receipt of income-related Employment Support Allowance.

James Morris:

The following table shows the number of penalty notices issued for National Health Service dental treatment where claimants had declared they were in receipt of income-related Employment Support Allowance in each year from 2011 to 2022.

2011	245
2012	3,627
2013	9,855
2014	29,419
2015	39,333
2016	38,495
2017	42,578
2018	51,598
2019	52,759
2020	1,405
2021	6,090
2022	14,116

■ Dental Services: Standards

Jim Shannon:

[\[31116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that NHS dentistry service provision returns to pre-covid-19 outbreak levels.

James Morris:

From July 2022, 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. An additional £50 million was also provided for the final quarter of 2021/22 to support the provision of urgent National Health Service dental care. The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with stakeholders, including the British Dental Association, to improve the NHS dental system and continue to increase access for patients.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Living Wage**James Murray:**[\[33023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that staff who work (a) directly or (b) indirectly in his Department and its relevant agencies and public bodies are paid at least the UK real living wage outside Greater London or the London living wage inside Greater London as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Maria Caulfield:

Departmental employees, including its agencies and public bodies whether employed indirectly or directly, are paid at least the United Kingdom real living wage outside Greater London or the London living wage inside Greater London, depending on the office location they are contracted to.

■ General Practitioners: Labour Turnover**Imran Hussain:**[\[31131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many Clinical Commissioning Groups are participating in the National GP Retention Scheme as of 5 July 2022.

James Morris:

The responsibility for the National GP Retention Scheme transferred to integrated care boards (ICBs) from 1 July 2022. The Scheme is available in all 42 integrated care systems in England. A general practitioner can apply to the Scheme via Health Education England locally, which is then considered by the relevant ICB.

■ Health Services: Finance**Chris Green:**[\[31134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to conduct a review of the potential merits of introducing alternative sources of financing for healthcare infrastructure.

Maria Caulfield:

We have no current plans to do so.

■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[33016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to resolve shortages of estradiol gel; and what his timeframe is for increasing access to HRT.

James Morris:

Following the issue of Serious Shortage Protocols for hormone replacement therapy (HRT), the supply of in-demand products, including Oestrogel (estradiol) pump-pack gel and Sandrena (estradiol) gel has improved. The Protocols limited dispensing to three months' supply to manage distribution and allow alternative products to be dispensed, as necessary. Suppliers have secured additional stock of the HRT products experiencing shortages and deliveries of further stock have been expedited.

We continue to work with manufacturers and suppliers to ensure reliable access to HRT products. We welcome plans by suppliers to build additional capacity, including a production facility for Oestrogel and the introduction of new products to the United Kingdom.

■ **Hospitals: Construction**

Chris Green:

[\[31132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to announce a funding envelope for the New Hospitals Programme that will increase in line with inflation.

Maria Caulfield:

At the Spending Review in 2020, the Government confirmed an initial £3.7 billion for the first four years of the programme. Further details on funding beyond 2024/25 will be set out at future Spending Reviews. The latest inflation forecasts have been factored into the programme's plans.

■ **Hyperactivity: Mental Health Services**

Kate Osborne:

[\[31929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the waiting list for an assessment for Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder in the NHS Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust area.

Kate Osborne:

[\[31930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people waiting to be assessed for Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder in the NHS Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust area.

Gillian Keegan:

Integrated care systems (ICSs) and National Health Service trusts in Cumbria and Northumberland should have due regard to the National Institute for Health and Care

Excellence's guideline 'Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management' when commissioning services for their local population. While this guideline does not recommend a maximum waiting time for people to receive an assessment for attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), it includes information aimed at improving diagnosis in adults and children and the quality of care and support received. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local authorities' children's social care, education services and expert charities to support neurodivergent children, including children with ADHD and their families, through the diagnostic process. Data on waiting times for an ADHD assessment are not held centrally.

■ Integrated Care Systems: Buildings

Chris Green: [\[31137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to devolve estate and property management functions to each of the 42 integrated care systems areas in England.

Maria Caulfield:

The Strategic Infrastructure Board, an advisory Board of national partners with a policy or delivery responsibility for the National Health Service estate, is sponsoring a programme to support integrated care systems (ICSs) to take responsibility for local strategic infrastructure planning. NHS England is working with ICS leaders and others through the development of this programme.

■ Macular Degeneration: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon: [\[26769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to increase capacity in the NHS for intravitreal injections for people with geographic atrophy.

Jim Shannon: [\[27605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to improve NHS capacity to deliver intravitreal injections for the treatment of geographic atrophy.

James Morris:

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

All new licensed medicines are then appraised by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), with guidance issued shortly thereafter. In the absence of NICE's guidance, local commissioners should consider the evidence available, with the infrastructure and resources needed locally before determining whether to fund new treatments. This will include consideration of the local National Health Service's capacity to deliver the treatment.

■ Medical Equipment: Standards

Chris Green:

[\[31135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the condition of key equipment in acute, primary and secondary care settings; and if he will make it his policy to fund a rolling programme of equipment upgrades across each integrated care system.

Maria Caulfield:

Individual National Health Service organisations are responsible for utilising existing equipment effectively and for maintaining and replacing these assets. The Government has provided operational capital for NHS trusts and primary care which is prioritised locally by integrated care systems (ICSs). In addition, we are also providing £1.5 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to support elective recovery through investment in equipment.

ICSs are aiming to eliminate the backlog of diagnostic equipment currently over 10 years old by 2024/25. In addition to replacing aged equipment, all imaging networks should develop capital investment plans which identify funding for the replacement, upgrades or optimisation of existing assets necessary to meet the forecasted growth in capacity.

■ Medicine: Training

Navendu Mishra:

[\[30181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of replacing the NHS Bursary for medical students with access to the NHS Learning Support Fund.

Maria Caulfield:

We have no plans to make a specific assessment. From year five of an undergraduate course and from year two of a graduate-entry course, medical students can access the non-repayable NHS Bursary. This comprises payment for tuition fees, a non-means-tested grant and a further means-tested award. Students eligible for the NHS Bursary can also apply for a reduced rate non-means tested maintenance loan for living costs from Student Finance England.

■ Mental Health Act 1983

Fleur Anderson:

[\[33014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason self-neglect leading to starvation is not classified as risk to self under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Gillian Keegan:

The Mental Health Act 1983 does not define specific mental illnesses or describe specific risks. However, section 136 of the Act provides a power for a police constable to take a person who appears to have 'a mental disorder' and is 'in

immediate need of care or control' from a public place and take them to a place of safety. Section 136 also requires that the constable must, if practicable, consult with a registered medical practitioner, registered nurse or approved mental health professional before exercising this power.

■ **Mental Health Services: Mothers**

Jill Mortimer:

[30207]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve maternal mental health services.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: We have deployed specialist community perinatal mental health services in England. The NHS Long Term Plan committed to improve the safety, quality and continuity of care and allow an additional 24,000 women to access specialist perinatal mental health care by 2023/24. This will also be available from preconception to 24 months after birth to provide an additional year of support.

We are expanding access to psychological and talking therapies within specialist perinatal mental health services. A further 33 maternal mental health services will integrate psychological therapy, maternity services and reproductive health for women who have mental health needs following trauma or loss related to their maternity experience. These will be available in England by March 2024.

We have also invested £100 million in perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship support, through the Start for Life and Family Hub programme for 75 upper tier local authorities in England. This will improve access to early intervention to support the wellbeing and mental health of parents and carers.

■ **NHS: Dental Services**

Luke Pollard:

[9154]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been returned to the NHS for undelivered Units of Dental Activity in each of the last five years in each NHS region in England.

James Morris:

The information is not held centrally in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate**

Cat Smith:

[31143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme in reducing the number of children born with birth defects and persistent developmental disorders.

James Morris:

No specific assessment has been made. The Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme does not collect data on children exposed to and affected by sodium valproate.

Cat Smith:[\[31144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of healthcare professionals who are not complying with the requirements of the valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme in the latest period for which figures are available.

James Morris:

No specific estimate has been made, as the Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme does not measure the compliance of healthcare professionals.

Prisoners: Injuries**Chris Bryant:**[\[900901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new prisoners have been screened for acquired brain injury since April 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: The information requested is not held centrally. Each arrival at a prison, whether sentenced or remanded, should receive a first night health screen. This screening tool contains questions on acquired brain injury which, if answered in the affirmative, would result in a referral for a specific assessment.

Radioligand Therapy**Alex Norris:**[\[32997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2022 to Question 23788 on radioligand therapy, what plans he has to meet the new National Speciality Adviser for Nuclear Medicine when they are appointed, to discuss funding arrangements for local radioligand therapy service expansion.

James Morris:

No specific plans have yet been confirmed.

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust: Finance**Daisy Cooper:**[\[33008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 15766 on West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust: Finance, whether the £38 million was intended for the renewal of carparking facilities at the Watford General Hospital site; and whether that was provided separately to the request by West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust for £19 million funding to enabling works from the New Hospital Programme in October 2021, including a new pathology building, temporary wards on the Granger Suite at Watford General Hospital and an oxygen plant.

Maria Caulfield:

The funding consisted of £32.7 million for the construction of a multi-story carpark at Watford General Hospital and £5.4 million for the installation of a new electronic patient record system. Further requests for funding for enabling works have been received and will be considered subject to the appropriate governance process to ensure maximum value for money.

HOME OFFICE■ **Asylum: Applications****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[32957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2022 to Question 6782, how many and what proportion of the personnel working on asylum applications have completed their training in full as of 8 July 2022; and how many additional decision makers were being actively recruited as of 8 July 2022.

Kevin Foster:

As of the 8 July 2022, the Home Office has 906 asylum decision makers, of whom 756 have completed their foundation training. Of those, 337 who have completed their mentoring can be considered fully trained and effective.

We are recruiting up to an additional 950 decision makers as of 8 July 2022.

■ **Asylum: Hotels****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[32567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of asylum seekers who are living in emergency hotel accommodation have been (a) granted and (b) waiting more than six months for a decision on an application for leave to remain as on 7 July 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: This information is not held in a reportable format and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Cammell Laird: Strikes****Gareth Thomas:**[\[32469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department holds documents on the 1984 Camell Laird dispute; and whether she will make a statement.

Tom Pursglove:

I refer the Honourable Member to the response made to PQ 210572 tabled on 29 January 2019. The Home Office does not hold any files relating to the 1984 dispute at Cammell Laird shipyards.

■ Cannabis: Misuse

Stephen Morgan:

[31224]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy and effectiveness of delegated powers and resources of local authorities and police to tackle (a) the use of cannabis on private property and (b) its potential harms.

Tom Pursglove:

Possession of cannabis is illegal and anyone using it, regardless of location, is committing an offence. The police have a range of powers at their disposal to deal with drug-related offences, including tackling cannabis use in private properties and may, subject to a court ordered warrant, enter private properties where they suspect a person on the premises is in possession of cannabis and search the premises and any persons found therein. How police choose to pursue investigations is an operational decision for Chief Constables, but we are clear that we expect them to enforce the law.

Cannabis use poses a large number of health risks, including psychosis and respiratory disorders, and, after heroin and crack cocaine, is the most common drug that results in people seeking treatment. The Drug Strategy will invest £780 million to create a world-class treatment and recovery system and £533 million of this will be invested to rebuild local authority commissioned substance misuse treatment services in England.

■ Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis: Public Appointments

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[31025]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the criteria for selecting the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner will include non-police officers.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[31026]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether senior leaders outside of the police service can apply to be the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

Tom Pursglove:

Details of the criteria for selecting the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner were published in the recruitment information pack: [Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service: application pack - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114444/Commissioner_of_the_Metropolitan_Police_Service_application_pack_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

The process to recruit a new Commissioner is well underway and there will be an announcement in due course.

■ Drugs: Organised Crime**Helen Morgan:****[31950]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to introduce a national strategy to reduce the exploitation of children in county lines drug trafficking.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government is committed to tackling county lines drug trafficking and supporting those exploited by this harmful activity.

On 6 December the Government published a ten-year Drug Strategy which sets out a whole-system approach of how the Government is doing more than ever to cut off the supply of drugs by criminal gangs.

Through the Strategy, we are bolstering our flagship County Lines Programme, investing up to £145m to tackle the most violent and exploitative distribution model yet seen. Since November 2019 police activity funded by the County Lines Programme has closed over 2,400 lines, made over 8,000 arrests, and engaged over 9,500 individuals through safeguarding interventions.

As part of the County Lines Programme, we are investing up to £5m over three financial years 2022-25 to provide support to victims of county lines exploitation and their families. This includes specialist support for under 25s from London, the West Midlands, Merseyside and Greater Manchester who are criminally exploited through county lines, to help them safely reduce and exit their involvement and a confidential national helpline service to young people and their families/carers who are affected by county lines exploitation.

■ Home Office: Contracts**Jon Trickett:****[31014]**

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

Tom Pursglove:

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

■ Home Office: Omnicom Media Group**Emily Thornberry:****[32940]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2022 to Question 29970, what assessment she has made of the compatibility of her responsibilities under the (a) Managing Public Money handbook and (b) Ministerial Code with the current availability of information on her Department's contracts with Omnicom Media Group.

Emily Thornberry:

[32941]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2022 to Question 29970, whether any other contractual agreements were in place between her Department and Omnicom Media Group between March 2019 and May 2022 besides Media Buying framework agreement RM6003.

Tom Pursglove:

Home Office manages its commercial agreements aligned to Treasury guidance (green book) and Cabinet Office Commercial Function guidelines including the Outsourcing playbook. The information sought in prior question 29970 was not available at the level of granularity inside boundaries for disproportionate cost to allow Home Office to consolidate data.

Two Contracts were in place between the Home Office and Omnicom Media Group between 1 March 2019 and 31 May 2022. The Media (Advertising) Buying Service was contracted under CCS Media Buying Framework Agreement RM6003 with the contract running from 01 April 2020 to 21 May 2022.

The Media (Advertising) Buying Service Contract was replaced by the new Media Services Contract which was contracted under the replacement CCS Media Services Framework RM6123 with the contract running from the 20 May 2022 to 20 May 2023.

Both of the above contracts were awarded via a compliant direct award process.

A further contract was in place between Home Office and Omnicom from the 01/04/2021 – 31/03/2021 but due to the sensitive nature of the subject area, we are unable to share further details of this contract.

■ Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Applications

Alison McGovern:

[32954]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the expected completion time is for applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme made in 2022.

Kevin Foster:

UKVI have issued thousands of visas under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. The latest figures can be found here: [Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) visa data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukvi-have-issued-thousands-of-visas-under-the-homes-for-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme)

Applications are being processed as quickly as possible, with an aim of deciding the majority within 48 hours where we can do so.

■ Immigration Controls: Airports

Mr Steve Baker:

[31087]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ease queues for passport checks at airports.

Kevin Foster:

Border Force's number one priority is to maintain a secure border. Building on the successes so far this year Border Force will seek to maximise all available resource to minimise wait times for passengers travelling into the UK.

We are also working with other Government Departments and UK ports and airports to implement robust and dynamic plans which allow us to anticipate and quickly respond to the effects of increased passenger travel on the UK's border controls, whilst continuing to maintain border security and facilitating the movement of people and legitimate goods.

■ **Members: Correspondence****Louise Haigh:** [\[32572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 13 April 2022 from the hon. Member for Sheffield Heeley, reference LH5703.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office responded to the Hon. Member's correspondence on 8 July 2022.

■ **National Security Council****John Healey:** [\[30999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2022 to Question 26695 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.

Stephen McPartland:

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

■ **Passports: Applications****Virginia Crosbie:** [\[31948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to expediate the processing of passport applications.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks to get their passport. Across March, April, and May 2022, 98.5% of applications from the UK were completed within this published processing time of up to ten weeks.

Her Majesty's Passport Office has added 850 staff since April 2021. This has helped to ensure that more passport applications are being processed than ever before, with

the processing of approximately three million applications being completed between March and May.

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

■ **Passports: Biometrics**

Chris Bryant:

[31047]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number of British passports that will require additional biometric details before the EU requires ETIAS for a visa waiver.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: The British passport is compliant with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO 9303) on international passport standards so there are no plans to make changes.

■ **Refugees: Afghanistan**

Layla Moran:

[30122]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghans who were not evacuated under Operation Pitking the UK has resettled under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme since that scheme opened and as of 4 July 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: Following the evacuation from Afghanistan and subsequent Afghan arrivals, work is underway to ensure accurate data recording for individuals relocated under the Afghan schemes.

On the conclusion of this, ACRS statistics will be included in future editions of the Immigration Statistics.

John Healey:

[31720]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme applications her Department has processed in the last two months.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: Over 15,000 people were supported to come to the UK directly following the evacuation of Afghanistan, and a further 4,000 have since arrived.

Statistics on ACRS and ARAP will be included in future editions of the Immigration Statistics.

■ Visas: Applications

Gareth Thomas: [30987]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made on processing the visa applications for family members of the constituent of the hon. Member for Harrow West, reference GT52722; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

We do not comment publicly on individual cases.

Grahame Morris: [32523]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2022 to Question 30000, if she will (a) write to the Member for Easington to explain how multiple errors occurred in visa application GWF064124251, (b) correct the information in the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 18876 which advised visa application GWF064124251 was resolved, and (c) take steps to issue visa application GWF064124251 to the correct Visa Application Centre.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: Given the question relates to an individual application, there are significant GDPR and safeguarding constraints which prevent a detailed response being given in an answer which is publicly accessible.

■ Visas: India

Gareth Thomas: [30986]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting time was for a Standard Visitor visa application to be processed for applicants from Mumbai in the latest period for which data is available; whether her Department is taking steps to reduce the waiting time for those applicants; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not publish data on the individual processing times by location. It does publish data of its performance against its service level agreement, which can be found on the GOV.UK webpage: [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-transparency-data)

Resources are focussed on reducing the current processing times and will continue to prioritise urgent compelling or compassionate cases across all workstreams.

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

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

■ Visas: Sports Competitors

Stephen Morgan: [\[31222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her policy to allow those people with an International Sportsperson Visa to participate in amateur cricket, including those with First Class/List A standard experience; and what assessment she has made of the potential impact of her Department's immigration rules for Professional Sportspersons on (a) resident player opportunities and (b) grassroots cricket.

Stephen Morgan: [\[31223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the equity of rules for cricket players who are considered to be professional sportspersons, but who do not qualify for an International Sportsperson Visa, being unable to play competitive cricket in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The International Sportsperson route has been purposely designed to be the single immigration route for elite sportspeople coming to work in the United Kingdom.

The restriction on work as a professional sportsperson seeks to protect the integrity of the route, encourage investment in resident sportspeople and protect opportunities for home-grown sporting talent. This responsibility is shared with the over 60 Home Office approved Sports Governing Bodies, including the three cricketing bodies in the UK.

This Government does not restrict anyone taking part in recreational sport. However, if an individual meets any of the indicators listed in the definition of a 'Professional Sportsperson' in the Immigration Rules, they are classified as such, and if the restriction on work as a professional sportsperson is present in their visa conditions, they would therefore be breaching the terms of their visa.

■ Visas: Turkey

Peter Kyle: [\[32584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the (a) average time taken to process a Turkish Businessperson visa extension applications and (b) proportion of those applications which have been refused in each of last five years.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: The current average processing times of work routes visa extensions is 6 months.

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

The Home Office publishes data on ECAA Businesspersons in the ' [Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release \(opens in a new tab\)](#) '.

Data on applications for ECAA Businesspersons are published in table Vis_D01 of the [entry clearance visa detailed dataset](#). Data on the number of ECAA Businesspersons issued and refused are included in table Vis_D02. These data may be selected using the 'ECAA Businessperson' visa type subgroup.

Information on how to use the [entry clearance visa detailed dataset](#) can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to year ending March 2022.

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Databases

Steve Reed:

[32550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will (a) expand and (b) update Open Justice to include sentences for individual offences at individual courts, broken down by (i) gender, (ii) ethnicity and (iii) other demographic characteristics.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Open Justice concerns the rights of members of the public, including the media, to attend and scrutinise the work of the justice system, of which the courts are the administrators. The Government is committed to Open Justice and to wider transparency across the Justice System. Data relating to Criminal Justice cases is regularly published via the Criminal Justice System Delivery Data Dashboard ([Criminal Justice System Delivery Data Dashboard - GOV.UK](#)), the Crown Court Information Tool ([Crown Court Information | Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#)) and the [Criminal Court Statistics series](#) and we regularly publish a range of information linked to specific offences, including ethnicity, sex and other demographics which is already collected in criminal courts and is published in tools available here:

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

Subject to the legislation listed in the note to rule 5.10 of the Criminal Procedure Rules, the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee decides what information about individual cases is to be made available to members of the public and others on request in criminal cases. Data relating to specific cases is available from the courts on request as set out in Criminal Procedure Rule 5.8. This includes the identity of the defendant, including the defendant's date of birth, and information about sentencing but does not include the defendant's sex (unless that is apparent from the defendant's name), ethnicity or demographic data because that information is not required from the defendant in public in the courtroom. There are no current plans to change this.

■ Criminal Proceedings: Legal Aid Scheme

Afzal Khan:

[33000]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many criminal legal aid firms have offered the Legal Aid Agency back-up advocacy since 11 May 2022.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The number of contacts registered with the Legal Aid Agency's Crown Court Representation helpline is subject to fluctuation. The number of registered contacts as of 11 July is seven. The helpline does not require higher court advocates to be registered individually. Therefore, some of the registered contacts may have multiple higher court advocates available to provide advocacy services in the Crown Court.

The Crown Court Representation Helpline is in place to make the process of identifying higher court advocates easier for providers who may be impacted ongoing disruptive action by the Criminal Bar. Providers are not limited to instructing higher court advocates registered with the helpline. The [Public Defender Service](#) may also be able to provide advocacy support where cases have been impacted by disruptive action.

Legal Aid Scheme**Afzal Khan:**[\[32999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to tackle legal aid deserts.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Legal Aid Agency keeps market capacity under constant review, ensuring access across England and Wales and taking immediate action where required. Wherever you are in England and Wales, legal advice is available through the CLA telephone service, which provides specialist telephone advice in housing as well as on other civil and family matters within the scope of legal aid.

In addition we are taking several priority actions to ensure the sustainability of civil legal aid. We are injecting more than £10 million a year into housing legal aid through our reforms to the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme and £8 million a year into immigration legal aid through the Nationality and Borders Act. We are also launching an early legal advice pilot this summer to test its impact in resolving social welfare problems earlier.

Ministry of Justice: Contracts**Jon Trickett:**[\[31016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Ministry of Justice awards contracts to suppliers following a rigorous procurement activity. The successful supplier will be able to provide the goods and services provided with the best value for money to the taxpayer.

The total value of contracts for G4S, Serco and Capita which were held by the Department and Active in the years since 2020, 2021 and 2022 are shown in the following tables:

a) G4S:

YEAR	TOTAL VALUE OF ALL ACTIVE CONTRACTS
2020	£862,754,245
2021	£688,029,750
2022	£1,054,103,396

b) Serco:

YEAR	TOTAL VALUE OF ALL ACTIVE CONTRACTS
2020	£1,346,038,866
2021	£1,038,139,364
2022	£1,335,153,142

c) Capita:

YEAR	TOTAL VALUE OF ALL ACTIVE CONTRACTS
2020	£563,991,975
2021	£567,722,435
2022	£567,722,435

■ Probation: Qualifications**Ellie Reeves:**[\[31202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications there were to the PQiP scheme for each recruitment drive since the inception of that scheme; and how many prison officer vacancies there were in each 12 month period over the last 10 years.

Stuart Andrew:

More than 1,500 new trainee probation officers have been hired this year - hitting the government's target while helping to cut crime, make streets safer and protect the public.

Table 1: Number of applications to the PQiP scheme.

PQIP CAMPAIGN	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
PQIP 08	3542			3542
PQIP 09	6392			6392

PQiP CAMPAIGN	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
PQiP 10		6225		6225
PQiP 11		1811		1811
PQiP 12			3444	3444
PQiP 13			3736	3736
Overall	9934	8036	7180	25150

Table 1 notes:

1. Data prior to PQiP 8 is not available on the Oleo recruitment system that we have access to as recruitment was carried out by a third party.

Prison Officer vacancy figures for the past 10 years are not available as we do not have a fixed staffing requirement for each individual prison establishment.

■ Reparation by Offenders

Ellie Reeves:

[\[30110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans his Department has to issue an updated Restorative Justice Action Plan for the Criminal Justice System given the last action plan elapsed in 2018.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[30111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Delivering justice for victims: Consultation response published on 25 May 2022, if he will provide more details on the restorative justice pilot to understand gaps in provision.

Tom Pursglove:

We are committed to supporting restorative justice as a way to help victims cope and, as far as possible, recover from the impact of crime. However, it should only take place when both the victim and the offender agree, and it is considered safe. That is why, under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime ('the Victims' Code'), all victims must be told about the option of restorative justice and how to access it, should it be appropriate.

On 25 May 2022, we published our response to the 'Delivering justice for victims' consultation and a draft Victims Bill, which sets out how we intend to enshrine the Victims' Code in legislation, sending a clear signal that the justice system must deliver these entitlements for victims. We are also working with criminal justice agencies, Police and Crime Commissioners and Local Criminal Justice Boards to develop a set of metrics to ensure consistent monitoring of compliance with the Code and improve the delivery of its entitlements.

We want to make sure that restorative justice services target the most appropriate cases, where we have clear evidence for the benefits of that approach. We provide Police and Crime Commissioners with grant funding for victim support services, including restorative justice services. We are increasing our funding for victim and witness support services to £192 million by 2024/25, more than quadruple the level in 2009/10. In order to improve local partnership working regarding restorative justice services, work is underway by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service to identify the factors supporting quality practice and to test effective, evidence-based access to, and delivery of, MoJ-funded restorative justice work. I continue to carefully consider the recommendations of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, which included a recommendation to refresh the action plan, and will respond in due course.

■ Victim Support Schemes: Ethnic Groups

Ellie Reeves: [\[30112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Victims Funding Strategy published on 26 May 2022, if his Department will publish the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Commissioning Guidance.

Ellie Reeves: [\[30113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of whether the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Commissioning Guidance has led to any improvements in specialist victims services being commissioned for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

Tom Pursglove:

Under the Victims' Code, victims are entitled to access support services which are tailored to their needs. This can only begin to be achieved by government departments, and other funders of victims' services, adopting more aligned commissioning processes.

We have set out, in the newly published [Victims Funding Strategy](#), our intention to monitor and review the impact of existing commissioning guidance that relates to victim support services, including the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Commissioning Guidance. As part of this work, we will consider the updating and publication of any relevant guidance in due course.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Composite Materials: Air Pollution

Geraint Davies: [\[32460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of hempcrete buildings on levels of indoor air pollution.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: I am not aware of government research carried out to specifically measure the effects of hempcrete on indoor air pollution levels.

To comply with the Building Regulations, new buildings must meet minimum ventilation requirements. Statutory guidance for the Building Regulations ventilation requirements is given in Approved Document F. Approved Document F gives guidance on the maximum levels of indoor air pollutants in buildings. The regulations are technology neutral, and alternative approaches to meeting the requirement for adequate ventilation can be used so long as it can be demonstrated to the Building Control Body that the building meets all relevant parts of the regulations.

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Contracts**Jon Trickett:****[31008]**

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

Eddie Hughes:

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

■ Disabled Facilities Grants**Wera Hobhouse:****[31189]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many recipients of the Disabled Facilities Grant there were in each local authority in (a) 2020 (b) 2021 (c) 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

Full, audited data on recipients of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in each local authority each year is not held centrally by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Data from voluntary local authority annual returns on their DFG delivery is analysed each year by Foundations, the National Body of Home Improvement Agencies. Their most recent report for 2020-21 can be found at the following link: <https://www.foundations.uk.com/library/dfg-performance/>.

Wera Hobhouse:**[31190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much funding the Government has allocated to Disabled Facilities Grants in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Eddie Hughes:

Government funding allocated to the Disabled Facilities Grant in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022 can be found at the table below.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT FUNDING

Financial year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-23
Funding (millions)	£573*	£573	£573

*£505 million annual grant plus an additional £68 million paid to local authorities in December 2020

■ Government Departments: Conflict of Interests

Dan Carden:

[\[31221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to Transparency International UK's report entitled Parliamentary Estates: analysing parliamentarians' interests in the property sector, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of links between policymakers and vested interests on policy decisions; and what steps his Department is taking to (a) manage and (b) mitigate conflicts of interest.

Eddie Hughes:

The Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Code set out the requirement that Ministers and Civil Servants (including Special Advisers) act with integrity. Under these codes, it is not appropriate for a conflict of interest to exist and any such conflicts must be resolved. Further requirements are set out in those Codes and in the Civil Service Management Code regarding the declaration, assessment and management of outside interests, including how any actual, perceived or potential conflicts should be handled. Revised guidance for Civil Servants on the declaration and management of outside interests has been issued to departments and was published on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) on 24 June 2022.

All members of the Government are Members of Parliament or Peers from the House of Commons and House of Lords, and are subject to the declaration of interests and registration regime for Members of Parliament and Peers.

■ Housing: Students

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[31074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will make an estimate of the level of investment in purpose-built student accommodation in each of the last three years.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department has made no such assessment. It is for local areas, through their Local Plans and in response to local needs and concerns, to determine the level of student accommodation required in their area.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[31075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason his Department's policy is that tenants residing in Purpose-Built Student Accommodation will not be moved onto the new single system of periodic tenancies.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[31076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation being subject to periodic tenancies rather than a system that recognised building classification as defined by membership of the UUK or ANUK codes.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[31077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy rationale is for rejecting a tenancy exemption scheme for students residing in Purpose Built Student Accommodation.

Eddie Hughes:

Privately managed purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) is distinct to the rest of the private rented sector (PRS). It caters specifically to student needs, is often restricted to housing students due to planning constraints, and it is not designed to offer long-term accommodation. Standards in privately managed PBSA are upheld by Government Codes, which outline the obligations of PBSA landlords and set benchmark standards for the accommodation they manage. Compliance with The Codes also ensures that problems or disputes can be resolved promptly if they do occur. Currently around 95% of PBSA providers are signed up to The Codes.

PBSA developments are an important part of student accommodation supply. Under our proposed reforms to the private rented sector, private PBSA providers who are signed up to a government-approved code will be exempt from assured status and therefore the new periodic tenancy system. This will make sure that PBSA can continue to provide efficiently run housing in line with the academic year for the students that choose to live there.

■ Islamophobia

Afzal Khan:

[\[33002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to adopt a definition of Islamophobia.

Paul Scully:

We remain fully committed to doing all that we can to tackle anti-Muslim hatred. We will outline our next steps in due course.

This Government has taken strong steps to support Muslim communities, by supporting TellMAMA with over £4 Million between 2016 and 2022 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred. We have also committed £24.5 Million for the Places of Worship Security Grant in 2022/23, to help protect Mosques and Muslim Communities.

■ Planning Obligations

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[31078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how the provisions of Section 106 differ from the infrastructure levy proposed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Infrastructure Levy will be a mandatory charge, set and collected locally, to largely replace the complex and discretionary section 106 regime and CIL charge. The new Levy is designed to collect more value than the existing system and will reduce the levels of protracted and costly negotiation present in the existing system.

We will be retaining section 106 for limited purposes, such as for large and complex sites. In these instances, infrastructure will be able to be provided in-kind and negotiated, but with the guarantee that the value of what is agreed will be no less than will be paid through the new Levy. This will make sure that development pays its way, and that developers cannot negotiate below what a charge to the Infrastructure Levy would have secured.

A technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy will be published in due course.

■ Planning Permission

David Warburton:

[\[30088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to improve support for local councils to uphold their decisions when refusing planning applications.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Due to the quasi-judicial role of Ministers in the planning system, it would not be appropriate to intervene or comment on the planning decisions made by local authorities. When a planning application is refused, local authorities are required by law to set out the reasons for their decision and these will be contained in the decision notice. The reforms in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will modernise our planning system and make it more accessible, enabling a more consistent, streamlined and digitally enabled approach to the way planning applications are made. This will ensure faster and better decision making that delivers more of the development that communities want. In addition, the Planning Advisory Service works with the Department and provides support to local authorities to deliver good decision making when determining planning applications.

■ Planning Permission: Public Consultation

David Warburton:

[\[30089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure that local communities are consulted on the detailed aspects of planning applications.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Local planning authorities are required to undertake a formal period of public consultation of no less than 21 days, prior to deciding a planning application. Consultees, particularly those living near to the site in question, may offer particular views or detailed information relevant to the consideration of the application. Where relevant considerations are raised by local residents, these must be taken into account by the local authority before they determine an application.

The Government is clear that communities must have the opportunity to have a say on development that affects them. The reforms in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will retain the right for people to comment on planning applications and will make the planning system more accessible, enabling a more consistent, streamlined and digitally enabled approach to the way planning applications are made. This will ensure faster and better decision making that delivers more of the development that communities want.

■ Right to Buy Scheme**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[31032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his planned timetable is for bringing forward legislative proposals on the expansion of the Right to Buy scheme.

Mr Marcus Jones:

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

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

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

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites**Peter Gibson:**[\[30149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which local authorities have (a) reviewed their provision for authorised travellers sites and (b) made progress towards adequate and appropriate provision for those sites.

Mr Marcus Jones:

This Department does not collect data on which local authorities have reviewed their provision for authorised traveller sites. It is the responsibility of local planning authorities to make their own assessment of need for traveller sites and in producing their local plan, to identify sites to meet that need. The independent examination of the plan will consider whether adequate site provision has been made for gypsies and travellers based on assessed needs. Paragraph 10a of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out that local authorities should identify and update annually, a

supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against locally set targets.

Data on progress towards the adequate and appropriate provision for of authorised traveller sites is collected at local authority rather than Central Government level. In producing plans the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites states that local planning authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. Within this context, it is the responsibility of local authorities to allocate land and determine planning applications for suitable sites in appropriate locations.

■ Woodhouse Colliery: Planning Permission

Kerry McCarthy: [\[32499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, by what date his Department plans to make a decision on whether to grant planning permission to the proposed coking coal mine in Whitehaven.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: The case remains under consideration. The target has been varied to 17 August, and a decision will be issued on or before that date.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Consultants

Jon Trickett: [\[33709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department has spent on consultancy fees in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022; and what the name is of each consultancy contracted.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Scotland Office incurred no spend on consultancy fees during 2020, 2021 or 2022.

■ Scotland Office: Legal Costs

Jon Trickett: [\[31739\]](#)

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

Mr Alister Jack:

The costs incurred by the Scotland Office and Office of the Advocate General on legal disputes in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022 are shown below:

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
£16,264	£53,739	£20,254

TRANSPORT**■ Department for Transport: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution****Emily Thornberry:** [\[31796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people held electronic purchasing cards that allowed them to make purchases against his Department's budget as of 31 March 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

Up to March 31 2022, the Department had 294 active cardholders.

■ Department for Transport: Legal Costs**Jon Trickett:** [\[31730\]](#)

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

Trudy Harrison:

DfT and its Executive Agencies have spent the below amounts on Litigation Costs in the last 3 calendar years. The 2022 figure covers up until 8th July 2022.

CALENDAR YEARS	£
2020	£5.1m
2021	£3.8m
2022 (<i>up until 8th July</i>)	£1.9m

■ Department for Transport: Living Wage**James Murray:** [\[33021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to ensure that those who work (a) directly or (b) indirectly in his Department, and relevant agencies and public bodies, are paid at least the (i) UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London or (ii) London Living Wage inside of Greater London, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Trudy Harrison:

The department for Transport does not have any current plans to set targets with regards to the UK Real Living Wage and/ or the London Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation. However, the Department for Transport is committed to maximising this year's pay award, in line with this year's Civil Service Pay Remit

guidance, targeting some of our highest headline awards to our lowest paid staff and ensuring we are an above National Living Wage employer.

■ **Driving Tests: Scottish Borders**

John Lamont:

[32612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will make an estimate of the (a) number of people waiting and (b) the average waiting time to take a category F driving test in the Scottish Borders in the latest period for which data is available.

Trudy Harrison:

As at 8 July 2022, there are 22 people waiting to take a category F (tractor) driving test in the Scottish Borders.

To accommodate the tractor testing manoeuvres, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) conducts category F tests at the closest, suitable location to the candidate's home address. The DVSA allocates the most suitable examiner to do this. As the test does not take place at a DVSA test centre, the examiner needs time to travel to and from the meeting point for the test as well as the time to conduct the test itself.

The DVSA does not calculate an average waiting time for the category F test as the very low test demand and non-standard booking procedure for tractor tests could distort the waiting time, which would not be representative.

■ **High Speed 2 Line: Cheshire**

Mike Amesbury:

[31228]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July 2022 to Question 26843 on High Speed 2 Line: Cheshire, where in the North West jobs for building Phase 2bWL will be based; and what job roles are included in the figures.

Trudy Harrison:

Jobs will be created along the line of route, in counties including Cheshire. We do not have any further details of locations at this stage.

The job roles included in the figures previously given for Phase 2bWL include those in both the construction and rail engineering sectors. The peak workforce in 29/30 split for Phase 2bWL is: construction 15,400 FTE and rail engineering 2,500 FTE giving a total of 17,500 FTE.

Construction peaks at around 15,400 people with a relatively constant workforce around that level from 2027/28 to 2029/30. Around 48% of the workforce are in construction operative roles and close to 40% in management roles. Design service roles account for about 13% of the workforce and peak in 2021/22.

In rail engineering, the largest demand for labour and skills occurs in the track asset type, followed by traction and rolling stock, and then signalling systems & telecommunications.

Source document : [HS2 Labour and Skills demand and supply forecasting and analysis: July ' 21](#). (Further break down of figures explained on page 37).

■ Railways: Industrial Action

Dan Carden:

[31220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential implications of unskilled staff being used to fill skilled roles during periods of industrial action in the rail industry; and whether his Department has provided guidance to rail companies on this subject.

Wendy Morton:

The use of agency and temporary workers in the rail sector is not new and there is existing general guidance on the use of agency workers available. The proposed change in law, which will apply across all sectors, is designed to minimise the negative impact of strikes on the public by providing employers with more flexibility during periods of industrial action. It would help mitigate against the impact of future rail strikes by allowing trained, temporary workers to carry out crucial roles to keep trains moving. However, train operating companies – and all employers - will still be obliged to comply with existing health and safety regulations and contractual obligations designed to keep both employees and the public safe. Where temporary agency workers are used, they must of course be qualified and trained to safely and efficiently undertake the work in question. This development means that where possible and appropriate, temporary agency workers could be used to support services during times of industrial action, which is good news for passengers and those who rely upon the railway.

■ Railways: Students

Chi Onwurah:

[31110]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of students who regularly use trains to travel to school in the North East.

Wendy Morton:

Based on data from the National Travel Survey, the number of students who regularly use trains to travel to school in the North East is estimated to be less than one percent.

■ Shipping: Conditions of Employment

Ian Byrne:

[31942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the dismissal of workers by P&O on 17 March 2022, whether he has taken steps to strengthen the employment rights of UK seafarers.

Robert Courts:

The government continues to promote and deliver its seafarer protections nine-point plan, and the wider objectives of Maritime 2050.

On 6 July, the government introduced the Seafarers' Wages Bill to the House of Lords and published the Government's Response to the Consultation on Seafarers' Remuneration. The Bill seeks to ensure that seafarers working on vessels that regularly use UK ports are paid at least an equivalent rate to the UK National Minimum Wage, irrespective of flag or nationality.

This is in addition to other commitments in the nine-point plan, including BEIS' forthcoming consultation on a "fire and rehire" statutory code, reform to longer-term working conditions for seafarers, and working with international partners to collaborate on seafarer protections and welfare.

TREASURY

■ Car Allowances

Olivia Blake: [\[33035\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the approved mileage rates.

Alan Mak:

The Government sets the Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAP) rates to minimise administrative burdens. The AMAP rates aim to reflect running costs including fuel, servicing and depreciation. Depreciation is estimated to constitute the most significant proportion of the AMAP rates.

Employers are not required to use the AMAP rates. Instead, they can agree to reimburse the actual cost incurred, where individuals can provide evidence of the expenditure, without an Income Tax or National Insurance charge arising.

Alternatively, they can choose to pay a different mileage rate that is higher or lower than the AMAP rates. If an employee is paid less than the approved amount, they are allowed to claim Mileage Allowance Relief (MAR) from HMRC. However, if the payment exceeds the relevant AMAP rate, and this results in a profit for the individual, they will be liable to pay Income Tax and National Insurance contributions on the difference.

As with all taxes and allowances, the Government keeps the AMAP rates under review and any changes are considered by the Chancellor.

■ Commuters: Fuels

Mr Steve Baker: [\[31086\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take further steps to assist commuters with the rising cost of petrol.

Alan Mak:

At Spring Statement 2022 in response to fuel prices reaching record levels, the government announced a temporary 12-month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre.

This is the largest cash-terms cut across all fuel duty rates at once, ever, and is only the second time in 20 years that main rates of petrol and diesel have been cut. This cut represents savings for households and businesses worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23.

The Government has been clear that it expects those in the supply chain to pass the fuel duty cut through to consumers as promptly as possible. Following a request from the Business Secretary, the Competition and Markets Authority will undertake a short and focused review of the fuel market and will provide advice to the Government on steps that could be taken to improve outcomes for consumers.

All taxes, including fuel duty, remain under review.

■ Electricity: Prices

Owen Thompson:

[\[32977\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of changing the Advisory Electric Rate each quarter in order to reflect changes in energy prices.

Alan Mak:

The Government introduced the Advisory Electric Rate (AER) in 2018. It applies to employees who use a fully electric vehicle as a company car.

The Advisory Electric Rate (AER) was changed in December 2021 from 4 pence per mile (ppm) to 5ppm. This was calculated using published consumption rates, adjusted to reflect real driving conditions, and the average cost of electricity.

However, employers are not required to use the AER. Instead, they can use different rates to reflect their employee's circumstances. Provided they show that the bespoke rates do not result in a profit for the employee, there will be no tax to pay.

The Government keeps this policy under review.

■ Fuel Poverty

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[31088\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take further steps to support households at risk of fuel poverty.

Alan Mak:

The Government recognises that millions of households across the UK have been impacted by rising energy bills and the wider cost of living. That is why the Government is providing over £15 billion in further support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package is in addition to the over £22 billion announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37 billion this year. The package includes:

- £400 off GB energy bills from October through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS);

- A £650 Cost of Living Payment for over 8 million households across the UK in receipt of means tested benefits;
- A £150 one-off disability Cost of Living Payment for 6 million people who receive non-means tested disability benefits;
- An extra one-off £300 this year for over eight million pensioner households to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter;
- An extra £500 million of local support, via the Household Support Fund, for households that are not eligible for Cost of Living Payments or for families that still need additional support.

The Government has also expanded and increased the Warm Home Discount. Three million vulnerable households will now receive £150 each year. The Government's objective for the Warm Home Discount is to focus the support towards those on the lowest incomes and in, or at greatest risk of, fuel poverty.

The Government has robust plans in place to improve the efficiency of peoples' homes. The Heat and Buildings Strategy, published in October, detailed the £3.9 billion committed over the Spending Review period to improve the energy efficiency of our building stock and help to reduce bills.

We are also expanding the Energy Company Obligation, which places an obligation on larger energy suppliers to provide energy efficiency and heating measures for fuel poor households across Great Britain, to £1 billion per year from 2022-2026. This will help 133,000 low-income households annually to improve their energy efficiency.

The Government will continue to monitor how global events affect energy bills and the cost of living into the winter.

■ **Guaranteed Minimum Pensions**

Dave Doogan:

[33004]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, under what circumstances the (a) Department for Work and Pensions or (b) HMRC may change an individual's Guaranteed Minimum Payment information.

Lucy Frazer:

An individual's National Insurance record is a living entity that can be updated at any time through routine 'business as usual' reviews or if additional information is received from Pension Scheme Administrators and/or employers. Any of these updates to the National Insurance record could result in a change to the Guaranteed Minimum Pension value held on HMRC records.

■ Revenue and Customs: Disclosure of Information

Dame Margaret Hodge:

[\[30973\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC made Common Reporting Standard data available to analysts within HMRC's Knowledge Analysis and Intelligence division.

Lucy Frazer:

Common Reporting Standard data has been made available to analysts in Knowledge Analysis and Intelligence.

Dame Margaret Hodge:

[\[30974\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will require HMRC to make Common Reporting Standard data available to independent academic researchers in a suitably anonymised format.

Lucy Frazer:

Common Reporting Standard data is available to HMRC in an aggregated, anonymised format. However, there is a limit to what can be shared beyond HMRC as the data is provided by other countries under international legal agreements which contain strict rules about onward disclosure of information and must be respected.

■ Shipping: Russia

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[31237\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his policy to ban British companies insuring ships carrying Russian oil cargo will be made retrospective to prevent contracts being signed that last beyond the end of 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Richard Fuller:

As announced in the G7 leaders' statement on 28 June we have collectively committed to explore a price cap on globally shipped Russian oil and petroleum products, given the G7's dominant position in the provision of maritime services that enables the transportation of Russian seaborne crude oil and petroleum products globally.

The G7 will now consult with other countries and key stakeholders in the private sector.

■ Sports: Clubs

Munira Wilson:

[\[33010\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many community amateur sports clubs registered with HMRC in each year since 2019.

Alan Mak:

The Community Amateur Sports Club scheme contains over 7,000 registered clubs. The breakdown of clubs that registered with HMRC in each year since 2019 is:

235 clubs in 2019

227 clubs in 2020

155 clubs in 2021

70 clubs in 2022.

■ Tax Evasion

Dame Margaret Hodge:

[\[30972\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps HMRC has taken to use Common Reporting Standard data to assess the extent of offshore tax evasion by UK residents.

Lucy Frazer:

The Common Reporting Standard (CRS) provides HMRC with critical information, which is playing a major role in tackling offshore tax non-compliance, including evasion.

When CRS data is received, HMRC systematically compare it to customer information and tax records, to establish whether UK taxpayers have properly reported their overseas income and determine the appropriate response.

HMRC plans to calculate and publish a new stand-alone offshore tax gap, which estimates the amount of offshore tax not being correctly reported by UK taxpayers next year, for the 'Measuring tax gaps 2023 edition'.

■ Treasury: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[\[31013\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 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.

Alan Mak:

HM Treasury 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.

■ Treasury: Living Wage

James Murray:

[\[33025\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will ensure that staff who work (a) directly or (b) indirectly in his Department and its relevant agencies and public bodies are paid at least (i) the UK real living wage outside Greater London or (ii) the London living wage inside Greater London, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Alan Mak:

The Living Wage Foundation provides a suggested rate of pay, rather than a legislated minimum wage. All HM Treasury employees are paid above the statutory minimum wage. HM Treasury are currently reviewing their 2022-23 London and National rates of pay in conjunction with this year's Cabinet Office remit guidance.

We are planning to implement new pay ranges across the department in August this year.

HM Treasury does indirectly employ a number of agency workers and contractors. The rate of pay for agency workers and contractors will be determined by the company for which they work and not HM Treasury in line with The Crown Commercial Service's minimum pay requirements which all suppliers must adhere to when negotiating contracts with Government Departments.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Duncan Baker:

[\[901086\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she is taking with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to support women who have a miscarriage.

Maria Caulfield:

Every pregnancy loss is a tragedy, and ensuring grieving families have access to the support they need is one of my highest priorities. Mental health services around England are being expanded to include new mental health "hubs" for new, expectant or bereaved mothers. These will offer physical health checks and psychological therapy in one building. We have funded SANDs, the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death charity to work with other baby loss charities and Royal Colleges to produce and support the roll-out of a National Bereavement Care Pathway to reduce the variation in the quality of bereavement care provided by the NHS.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[901087\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to improve support for self-employed mothers who have children through surrogacy arrangements.

Chloe Smith:

The Law Commissions of England & Wales and Scotland plan to publish the report of their long-standing review of UK surrogacy legislation in November 2022. Upon receipt, the Government will consider the timetable for introducing this to Parliament for pre-legislative scrutiny.

■ Equality: Technology

Chi Onwurah:

[\[901089\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she is taking to ensure that new technologies are deployed in accordance with equalities legislation.

Amanda Solloway:

In its recently published Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025, the Equality and Human Rights Commission singled out digital services and artificial intelligence as one of its strategic priorities. The Commission intends to intervene where necessary to ensure

that people are protected from discrimination online, just as they must be in more traditional settings.

■ Hate Crime: LGBTQ+ People

Florence Eshalomi:

[901084]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to prevent hate crimes against LGBT+ people.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government takes all hate crimes seriously, and we have robust laws to respond to them. Whilst police recorded hate crimes targeting LGBT communities have increased, the biggest driver for this is improvements in police recording and the increased willingness of victims to come forward.

However, we are not complacent about these abhorrent crimes. We will continue to work with the police and stakeholders to understand what more can be done, and we will shortly respond to the Law Commission's recent review of hate crime laws.

■ Higher Education: Ethnic Groups

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[901085]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will take steps with the Secretary of State for Education to help ensure that the proportion of white state-school educated students obtaining a place in higher education is raised to the same proportion as mixed heritage, Black, Asian and Chinese students.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

There are still under-represented groups who are struggling to access Higher Education (HE), including white, working-class males.

Prior attainment is a key determinant of successful participation in HE. When we account for this, we see reductions in the gaps between the most and least advantaged groups.

That is why we are refocusing the entire access and participation regime to drive up standards throughout the system – and we are asking universities to take a more direct role in doing this.

We are asking universities to raise standards in schools and colleges, offer flexible and skills-related courses, tackle drop-out rates, and support students throughout university and graduation into meaningful employment.

To increase aspiration and attainment a far greater focus needs to be placed on activities which benefit students, including summer schools, programmes of intervention in schools and targeted bursaries to assist with living costs.

An investment of up to £75 million has been announced to create a National Scholarship Scheme which will support high achieving disadvantaged students to reach their full potential.

■ Spiking

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[901088\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent steps she has taken with Cabinet colleagues to tackle spiking.

Amanda Solloway:

In recent months, we have been specifically focused on preparedness at summer events to prevent and respond to spiking incidents. The government has been working closely with the police, and the festivals and outdoor events sector to ensure that action is taken to protect potential victims and deter would be offenders.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carer's Allowance: Employment

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[33932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the impact of Carer's Allowance on the ability of unpaid carers to undertake employment.

Chloe Smith:

The benefit system aims to support unpaid carers to work where they can and choose to do so. Those receiving Carer's Allowance can receive net earnings of up to £132 a week. This earnings limit has increased by around one third since 2010. Many carers who are receiving Carer's Allowance and doing some work will also be receiving Universal Credit. For those receiving Universal Credit, the 55% taper rate and any applicable work allowance will help to ensure that people are better off in work.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[\[31010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 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.

Guy Opperman:

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

Under the Government's Transparency agenda, all spend data over £25,000 is published and can be found at [DWP: departmental spending over £25,000 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Living Wage**James Murray:**[\[33022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has plans to ensure that those who work (a) directly or (b) indirectly in her Department, and relevant agencies and public bodies, are paid at least the (i) UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London or (ii) London Living Wage inside of Greater London, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Guy Opperman:

DWP and its associated Arm's Length Bodies, adhere to the mandatory National Living Wage. This government is committed to paying people a decent living wage, which is being addressed through the statutory National Living Wage. In April 2022, the National Living Wage increased to £9.50 per hour. By 2024, the Government have committed that the National Living Wage will reach 66% of median UK earnings.

As of 12/07/2022 The Pensions Regulator (TPR) has 23 individuals earning below the Real Living Wage. TPR will keep this position under review. TPR, as above, adhere to the mandatory National Living Wage.

■ Disability Living Allowance: Cost of Living**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[31894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of granting the £650 cost of living payment to people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

David Rutley:

The Government recognises that disabled people face extra costs, which is why 6 million disabled people who are in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit will receive a one-off Disability Cost of Living Payment worth £150. This includes people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. Households will receive a payment for each eligible disabled person.

Many disabled people are also in receipt of a means-tested benefit. Therefore, they will be eligible for both the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment and the £650 Cost of Living Payment. Disabled pensioners will in addition benefit from the £300 increase in the Winter Fuel Payment.

The Government is also providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, £421m will be used to further extend the Household Support Fund from October 2022 to March 2023.

Guidance and individual local authority indicative allocations for this further extension to the Household Support Fund will be announced in due course.

■ Household Support Fund

Sir Stephen Timms:

[32927]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the Household Support Fund for supporting low income families.

David Rutley:

The Household Support Fund has provided additional support for households who have needed extra help to meet cost of living pressures. The Department for Work and Pensions requires that Local Authorities provide management information returns detailing their expenditure.

For the Household Support Fund, the returns record the Local Authority's grant allocation, spend and volume of awards made in relation to food, energy and water bills, wider essentials and housing costs.

This information, for the scheme running 6 October 2021- 31 March 2022, will be published shortly, and will be considered during future policy making.

Management Information for previous discretionary welfare funds is published online and can be found here: [COVID Local Support Grant management information](#) ; [COVID Winter Grant management information](#).

■ Social Security Benefits: Armed Forces

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[31896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to ensure that entitlements derived from National Insurance contributions are consistent for the spouses of members of the armed forces who serve overseas.

Guy Opperman:

The new State Pension is usually based on an individual's own National insurance record. A spouse or civil partner who accompanies a member of the Armed Forces on a posting overseas is able to apply for National Insurance credits for that period, which can protect their State Pension entitlement. More information on the credits available and how to apply is available on gov.uk ([National Insurance credits: Eligibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud and Maladministration

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[31098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the level of fraud and error in the welfare system.

David Rutley:

Our Fraud Plan, Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System, published 19 May 2022, sets out our plans for reducing the level of fraud and error in the welfare system by:

- Investing in DWPs frontline counter-fraud professionals and data analytics, including recruiting 2,000 trained specialists to review over two million Universal Credit cases.
- Creating new legal powers to investigate potential fraud and punish fraudsters (subject to legislation).
- Bringing together the full force of public and private sectors to keep one step ahead.

The full document can be found at [Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115444/Fighting_Fraud_in_the_Welfare_System_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

The government is investing £1.4bn of funding over the next three years, to combat fraud and error.

We estimate this investment will stop over £2.0bn of loss in fraud and error during this time.

■ Universal Credit: Woking

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[31097]

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

David Rutley:

Universal Credit claimants who were entitled to at least 1p during assessment periods that ended between 26 April 2022 to 25 May 2022 will be eligible for the £326 Cost of Living Payment from 14 July.

Statistics on the number of households that had an assessment period which covered the monthly count date and received a Universal Credit payment are available by Westminster parliamentary constituency at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

The latest statistics show the number of households with Universal Credit in payment on 10 February 2022. Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

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

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Channel Four Television Corporation Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021**
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):
[\[HCWS201\]](#)

The Channel Four Television Corporation (C4C) Report and Financial Statements 2021 have today been laid before Parliament.

The 2021 annual report shows that C4C performed well last year, delivering on its remit and obligations and reporting a strong set of results, particularly in terms of growth in digital revenue and viewers. To enable C4C to continue to build on this success over the long term, it needs greater access to capital and the option to make and own content to ensure it has the best tools to support a long-term sustainable future. In this context it is right that the Government acknowledges both the considerable opportunities and challenges presented by the dynamic market context in which C4C operates. The Government is committed to take the steps necessary to protect one of our most important public service broadcasters (PSBs) not just today, but in the years to come. That is why, as part of a package of reforms set out in the recent White Paper: [Up Next](#), the Government is moving ahead with plans to move C4C out of public ownership to become a privately-owned, free-to-air public service broadcaster, alongside other successful privately-owned PSBs, including ITV, STV and Channel 5.

On 14 June 2022, the House of Commons debated a motion on the future of C4C. This statement fulfils the Government's obligation to respond to this debate.

The motion called on the Government to reverse its decision on C4C. Like every broadcaster, C4C faces huge competition for viewers, for programmes and for talent. Streamers such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video and global media groups such as Disney and Paramount have far deeper pockets than our PSBs. C4C is uniquely constrained. Under its current ownership model, C4C has fewer options to invest, fewer options to innovate, and, crucially, fewer tools to support its growth than its competitors.

As a responsible Government, we must recognise these constraints and be prepared to act now to address them. We therefore believe it is the right time to unleash C4C's full potential, and open the broadcaster up to private ownership while protecting its public service broadcasting remit. A sale will allow C4C to access greater investment - meaning it can create more great programming made by people who live and work in the UK - without losing what makes it distinctive and without exposing taxpayers and the public finances to greater risk.

The motion called on the Government to protect C4C's contribution to levelling up and maintain its Leeds headquarters and commissioning expenditure outside of London. The Government recognises and values C4C's ongoing commitment to levelling up, as emphasised in its annual report, and its support for national and regional economies. We

will maintain C4C's existing obligations in terms of production outside London and England. We expect C4C's access to networks outside London and its ability to speak to a diverse range of audiences across the UK to be an attractive asset that any potential buyer will look to nurture and develop. Across PSBs, it is clear that ownership is not correlated to regional spending. In fact, though its latest annual report shows it is on an improving path, C4C spent less in the North of England as a percentage of its total production spend than PSBs as a whole [in 2020](#), and less than privately-owned ITV, with C4C spending 19.3% in 2020 in Northern England, compared to ITV's 30.4%. There is no reason that a sale could not accelerate the process of growing the broadcaster's impact outside London.

The motion also called for the Government to maintain the publisher-broadcaster restriction. The Government will remove this restriction to enable C4C to diversify its revenue streams into content and improve its business resilience. C4C will still be required to commission a minimum volume of its programming from independent producers, in line with the quotas placed on other PSBs, ensuring its continued contribution to the sector. The Government believes that in the long run, the UK production ecosystem will benefit from a more sustainable C4C. A change of ownership that improves Channel 4's access to capital could increase spending on production. For example, Channel 5's overall content budget increased following its acquisition by Viacom in 2014, with first-run spending up by an average of 7% per year [between 2014 and 2018](#). C4C has excellent relationships with independent producers right across the UK and there is no reason this should change. Indeed, we expect a new owner to value and want to build on those relationships.

The Government is clear that C4C will remain a public service broadcaster. Its public service broadcasting remit will remain written into law and the right buyer for Channel 4 will be one who shares our ambition for the business and our belief in what makes it special. We are not trying to change the distinctive role C4C plays; we are seeking to give it the best set of tools and the freedom to flourish and thrive long into the future.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Publication of the Intelligence and Security Committee's Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism Report

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS200\]](#)

The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) has today laid before Parliament a report on Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism, examining the threat to the UK and the UK's response. I welcome the comprehensive and detailed nature of the report, and thank the Committee for the extensive work that has gone into it.

This report highlights the significant close working relationship between our Security and Intelligence Agencies and Counter-Terrorism Policing. It is through this regular collaborative approach that we can keep our citizens safe from all forms of terrorism. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Agencies and Counter-Terrorism Policing

for their excellent work to better understand and disrupt the threat from Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism. The Government will consider the ISC's report in full and respond formally in due course.

TRANSPORT

■ Transport Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[[HCWS199](#)]

Following my statement to the House on 27th June, I am updating the House on an extension of the current Transport for London (TfL) funding settlement that was due to expire on 13th July to 28th July. This has been agreed by the Mayor of London.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have supported the transport network in London with over £5bn funding through extraordinary funding settlements for Transport for London. We have recognised the reliance of London's transport network on fare revenue, and Government continues our commitment to mitigating loss of fare revenue because of the pandemic.

This extension to the current funding settlement is necessary due to the unsatisfactory progress made by TfL on meeting agreed deadlines, including relating to pensions. Resolving these issues is an integral part of setting TfL on the path to financial sustainability, and Government stands ready to engage constructively to reach a resolution. This extension ensures that they receive due attention.

Government is committed to supporting London's transport network as we have since the start of the pandemic and is in discussions with TfL on a longer-term settlement. By rolling over the provisions of the existing agreement, the extension provides continued support to Transport for London and certainty to Londoners while we work with Transport for London on their funding needs.

This extraordinary support to Transport for London has always been on the condition that Transport for London reaches financial sustainability as soon as possible and with a target date of April 2023 and Government continues to press the Mayor of London and Transport for London to take the decisions needed to put the organisation on a sustainable footing. I will update the House at my earliest opportunity on the details of any longer-term funding settlement.