



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 18 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:42 P.M., 18 July 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[\[29877\]](#)

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

Edward Timpson:

Details of Government contracts valued between £10,000 and £25,000 are published on [Contracts Finder](#). As Contracts Finder was implemented in 2016, not all records before this period are held centrally.

The Government Legal Department, (GLD) frequently award contracts to support legal work, the size, nature and timing of these awards is uncertain, and it is not possible to ascertain how many of £1m - £3m or more than £3m will be agreed in the next 12 months.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) estimate 8 contracts will be between £1m to £3m and 10 above £3m over the next 12 months.

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) are not able to provide this information due to commercial sensitivity.

The information on how much departments spend on monitoring the contracts or how many staff have monitored the contracts is not held.

■ Attorney General: Legal Costs

Jon Trickett:

[\[31722\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how much their Department and its associated agencies spent on legal disputes in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

Edward Timpson:

The Attorney General exercises a number of public interest functions in relation to legal disputes, including appointing advocates to the court in family proceedings and intervening in proceedings to protect charities. The amounts spent by the Attorney General's Office on external legal advice, include litigation and legal costs incurred in respect of the public interest activities of the Attorney General, for the calendar years of 2020 and 2021 and for the period 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022 is as follows:

	2020 (£k)	2021 (£k)	6 MONTHS TO 30 JUNE 2022 (£k)
Attorney General's Office (approximately*)	240*	155*	200*

These figures relate to costs of the Attorney General's Office only because while the Office superintends a number of bodies, they are not agencies of the AGO.

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Standards

Justin Madders: [\[33821\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the average time was between the Crown Prosecution Service receiving a referral and making a charging decision in the most recent period for which data is available.

Justin Madders: [\[33822\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment she has made of the extent of delays in Crown Prosecution Service decision-making.

Edward Timpson:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not collect data showing the average time from receiving a referral to making a legal charging decision. Legal charging decisions are decisions to authorise a charge, to take no further action or recommend and out of court disposal.

However, data is collected showing the average time from the first police referral to the CPS making the decision to authorise a charge. This data is published on the CPS website and on the CJS Delivery Dashboard and shows that during the calendar year 2021, it took on average 39 days from referral to charge.

■ Domestic Abuse: Reoffenders

Steve Reed: [\[35958\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many people were charged with domestic abuse offences after having being previously convicted of domestic abuse offences in each of the last 30 years for which data is available.

Edward Timpson:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not hold any data which shows the number of suspects charged with domestic abuse offences who have previously been convicted of similar offences.

However, management information is held which shows the number of suspects involved in allegations of domestic abuse where the CPS decided to charge and prosecute in each year from 2006. The table below shows the number and proportion of suspects charged from 2006 to the latest available year, 2021.

	CHARGED	% CHARGED
2006	42,675	69.8%
2007	49,233	68.7%
2008	54,352	70.6%
2009	60,176	70.7%
2010	68,029	70.1%
2011	67,284	71.1%
2012	60,942	71.9%
2013	68,819	72.3%
2014	83,208	72.3%
2015	82,222	72.9%
2016	80,186	74.1%
2017	79,203	75.8%
2018	70,600	75.0%
2019	57,408	73.4%
2020	52,817	70.8%
2021	43,945	71.8%

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Arts: Copyright

Kevin Brennan:

[\[35872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many meetings he held with the creative industries before deciding to expand the text and data mining exception.

Jane Hunt:

The Government conducted a full public consultation on Artificial Intelligence and Intellectual Property 29 October 2021-7 January 2022, which included options on text and data mining. Creative industry views were well represented in the responses, but little quantitative evidence of impact was received. Creative industry representatives

attended two of the six roundtable meetings which were held with different sectors as part of the consultation exercise. Other attendees included representatives of civil society, researchers and the tech sector

■ Audit: Fines

John McDonnell:

[33672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many fines have been issued by the Financial Reporting Council for audit failures in each of the past five years for which figures are available.

Jane Hunt:

The Financial Reporting Council has provided the following information on the fines it has imposed:

FINANCIAL YEAR IN WHICH FINES WERE IMPOSED	NUMBER OF FINES IMPOSED AGAINST AUDIT FIRMS	NUMBER OF FINES IMPOSED AGAINST AUDIT ENGAGEMENT PARTNERS AT THOSE FIRMS
2017/18	4	4
2018/19	9	14
2019/20	6	6
2020/21	4	4
2021/22	9	9
2022/23 (so far)	0	0

This information reflects that set out in “Recent Enforcement sanctions imposed against Audit firms and Audit partners” published by the Financial Reporting Council, which is updated as and when further cases are concluded and is available at <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditors/enforcement-division/enforcement-outcomes>.

■ Audit: Reform

John McDonnell:

[33670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Strategy, when he will bring forward the audit reform bill referred to in the Queen's Speech on 10 May 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Hunt:

Alongside the Queen's speech, the Government announced that we will prepare and publish a draft Bill on audit and corporate governance reform during this session of parliament. The Government will legislate when parliamentary time allows.

Further detail can be found in the Government Response to the consultation on “*Restoring trust in audit and corporate governance*”.

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

John McDonnell:

[33668]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason he did not initiate a consultation before laying the draft Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

Jane Hunt:

BEIS did consult. BEIS ran a consultation from 15 July to 9 September 2015 to gather views on what the impact would be of repealing the ban on agency workers. We received 167 substantive responses from a range of stakeholders. In addition to these responses, the TUC also submitted a petition opposing the repeal signed by 25,000 members, 1,500 of whom also made comments.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Consultants**

Jon Trickett:

[33692]

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

Jane Hunt:

The Department's consultancy spend is published in BEIS Annual Reporting Accounts within 'Legal, professional and consultancy' costs and can be found in table 4.1 [here](#). A more detailed breakdown of consultancy costs can be found in the Accountability Report on page 82.

Spend relating to financial year 2021-22 will be published later this year. BEIS Annual Report & Accounts are laid in Parliament once they have been certified by the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG).

All consultancy costs with details of the provider are published on gov.uk [here](#). Further transactions will be published during 2022.

■ **Employment: Environment Protection**

Munira Wilson:

[33011]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking steps to re-skill workers for jobs in the green economy.

Greg Hands:

The Net Zero Strategy sets out the Government's plans to work with industry to help retrain workers for jobs in a low carbon economy. This includes offering green skills bootcamps in housing retrofit, solar, nuclear energy and vehicle electrification, alongside delivering a Lifetime Skills Guarantee and Free Courses for Jobs Offer.

The Government has also established the Green Jobs Delivery Group, headed up by Ministers and business leaders, to act as the central forum for driving forward action on green jobs and skills.

■ Energy Charter Treaty: Carbon Emissions

Peter Aldous: [\[32950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the level of consistency between the UK's recently-negotiated carve-out of fossil fuels from the Energy Charter Treaty and the UK Government's net zero strategy.

Greg Hands:

The modernised Energy Charter Treaty recognises the urgent need to address climate change and align with the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. The Treaty removes the protection for new fossil fuel investments in the UK, in line with the UK's Net Zero Strategy.

■ Energy: Price Caps

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[35983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with (a) domestic property factors and managers and (b) energy suppliers regarding their utilisation of domestic-use only contracts in order to ensure that property (i) owners and (ii) tenants benefit from Ofgem's energy price cap.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem's Standard Licence Conditions stipulate the criteria to determine whether a premises should be classified as a domestic or non-domestic premises. These Licence Conditions therefore determine whether the premises is eligible for a default or standard variable tariff and therefore whether the price cap applies to energy supplied to that premises.

■ Energy: Prices

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[32995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of the rise in energy prices on (a) households and (b) businesses.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Strangford on 28th June 2022 to Question [21184](#), and to the answer given by my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State to the noble Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown on 9th June 2022 to Question [HL493](#).

■ EY: Fines

John McDonnell:

[33674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has asked the Financial Reporting Council to investigate audit firm Ernst & Young in response to the record fine issued by the US Securities and Exchange Commission in June 2022 for cheating on professional education courses to maintain its certified public accountant licensure.

Jane Hunt:

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) is an independent regulator and independently decides whether an investigation should be commenced. The recent fine imposed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on Ernst & Young (EY) in the United States relates to the conduct of EY and its audit professionals in the United States. The FRC is responsible for oversight of the qualification of external auditors in the UK and meets regularly with the SEC and also the Public Company Accounting and Oversight Board in the United States to discuss issues of common interest. The FRC has written to the seven largest UK audit firms about the impact of this issue and has published that letter on the FRC website on 13 July 2022.

■ Foreign Companies: Russia

Alyn Smith:

[33930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) he or (b) any other ministers in his Department have met with any Russian-based companies since 24 February 2022.

Jane Hunt:

Ministers regularly meet with external stakeholders. Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published quarterly and can be found on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

Data for January to March 2022 will be published shortly.

■ Fuel Poverty

Caroline Lucas:

[32943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to (a) the commitment on page 7 of his Department's fuel poverty strategy Sustainable warmth: protecting vulnerable households in England, published on 11 February 2021 and (b) his answer to the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion on Tuesday 7 June 2022, Official Report, column 654, whether his Department is on track to deliver on the £2.5 billion Home Upgrade Grant by the end of 2019 Parliament.

Greg Hands:

Government spending reviews have, to date, committed around £6.6bn to decarbonising heat and buildings during the lifetime of this Parliament.

Of this, HM Treasury has allocated £1.1bn to the Home Upgrade Grant, for delivery to 2025. £500m of this money – which is providing energy-efficiency upgrades to lower-income, energy-inefficient homes - has already been granted to local authorities as part of the Sustainable Warmth competition. The Government will continue to work with local authorities to reach as many households as possible.

■ Global Positioning System: Agriculture

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[35890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with his international counterparts on the potential merits of expanding GPS farm mapping systems in order to identify unusual bouts of production as potential sites of illegal deforestation.

Greg Hands:

Through the Forest Agriculture and Commodities Trade Dialogue, (co-chaired by the UK and Indonesia), the UK is working with 28 partner countries to deliver a roadmap for action on sustainable trade while protecting forests. This includes commitments to improve and enhance global Traceability and Transparency (T&T) systems that provide the basis for certification schemes and assurance of origin of forest risk commodities. Through this policy discussion FACT governments have collectively agreed, as a first step, to commission research to identify data gaps in T&T systems. This will enable the Government to consider how to support countries and stakeholders to identify and access funding, technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen T&T systems.

■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Steve McCabe:

[\[33677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on meeting the Government's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of reducing economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68 per cent by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

Greg Hands:

Cabinet colleagues regularly discuss progress towards meeting the Government's emissions reduction targets, including the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution. The Government will publish its Net Zero progress report in the autumn. This will include Net Zero delivery progress in the previous year against the delivery pathway to net zero.

■ Innovate UK: Expenditure

Chi Onwurah:

[\[33780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a breakdown of Innovate UK's annual spending by (a) sector, (b) funding stage and (c) technology preparedness level.

Jane Hunt:

Innovate UK's business awarded grant support by Sector based on their Company House registered Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code (where available):

SIC 2007

SECTION

DESCRIPTION	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Accommodation and Food Service			£0.34m	£0.86m	£0.06m	
Administrative and Support Service	£19.09m	£17.30m	£57.93m	£39.52m	£23.77m	£3.78m
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	£4.10m	£4.10m	£39.1m	£8.28m	£2.88m	£1.46m
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	£0.12m	£0.44m	£1.65m	£2.29m	£1.38m	£0.15m
Construction	£2.62m	£4.49m	£7.68m	£8.09m	£1.61m	£0.36m
Education	£0.33m	£3.18m	£2.12m	£5.81m	£0.70m	£0.79m
Electricity, Gas etc.	£2.75m	£2.37m	£20.06m	£6.50m	£4.26m	£0.57m
Financial and Insurance	£1.93m	£0.98m	£4.86m	£9.45m	£6.42m	£0.09m
Human Health and Social Work	£1.96m	£7.04m	£9.27m	£9.97m	£3.75m	£2.56m
Information and Communication	£69.90m	£73.02m	£89.01m	£172.27m	£99.32m	£25.08m
Manufacturing	£313.78m	£318.42m	£221.84m	£361.92m	£241.56m	£32.31m

SIC 2007**SECTION**

DESCRIPTION	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Mining and Quarrying	£0.40m	£1.14m	£0.85m	£2.64m	£2.80m	£0.04m
Other Service	£12.22m	£3.63m	£4.29m	£7.03m	£6.90m	£1.76m
Professional, Scientific and Technical	£167.26m	£190.60m	£229.29m	£261.64m	£180.19m	£49.85m
Public Administration	£0.14m	£0.07m	£1.79m	£1.93m	£0.08m	
Real Estate	£0.11m	£0.33m	£0.44m	£2.84m	£0.54m	
Transportation and Storage	£4.79m	£1.02m	£2.35m	£7.00m	£2.09m	£0.30m
Water & Sewage	£3.16m	£3.84m	£1.56m	£5.80m	£5.34m	£1.68m
Wholesale & Retail	£9.01m	£7.53m	£18.44m	£16.36m	£9.52m	£2.94m
Unknown / Not Provided	£24.15m	£19.08m	£43.43m	£7.09m	£23.39m	£4.46m

Data is not routinely collected on business funding stage, or technology preparedness level. Innovate UK programmes may have a focus for both of these scales but will support a range of innovation within them. Innovate UK's role is to enable business-led innovation across the UK, helping businesses at all stages grow through technology development and commercialisation

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

John McDonnell:

[\[33666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish legal advice received in relation to the Liability of Trade Unions in Proceedings in Tort (Increase of Limits on Damages) Order 2022.

Jane Hunt:

The Government does not propose to publish any legal advice received in relation to this Order.

John McDonnell:

[33667]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason he did not carry out a consultation before laying the Liability of Trade Unions in Proceedings in Tort (Increase of Limits on Damages) Order 2022.

Jane Hunt:

This change only increases the limits in line with inflation to match what they would have been had they increased year on year since 1982.

As no other changes to the trade union liabilities for damages regime are being proposed, the Government does not consider that further consultation is necessary.

■ **Music: Copyright**

Kevin Brennan:

[35871]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential financial impact on the UK music industry of his decision to expand the text and data mining exception.

Jane Hunt:

The Government asked specific questions about impact in the consultation on AI and IP, but received very limited quantitative evidence. An impact assessment will be published alongside the legislation when laid. The proposed exception will be targeted to limit negative impacts, and the government welcomes further evidence from rights holders on how to best achieve this

■ **Pay: Ethnic Groups**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[33893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the trends in the level of pay among people of different ethnicities.

Jane Hunt:

The ONS publish official data on ethnicity pay. Data for 2019 is available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandwork/nghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2019>.

There is also detailed information on ethnicity pay at the following link:

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/pay-and-income/average-hourly-pay/latest>.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Energy Bills Rebate**

Owen Thompson:

[36021]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to require landlords who include tenants energy costs in their rental charges to pass on the Energy Bills Support Scheme credit to their tenants.

Owen Thompson:

[\[36022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to require landlords who include tenants' energy costs in their rental charges to pass on the Energy Bills Support Scheme credit to their tenants, and to provide a means of redress for those tenants in case that credit is not passed on to them.

Greg Hands:

Landlords who have a domestic electricity contract with an electricity supplier and resell the electricity to their tenants based on energy usage may be required to comply with the maximum resale price (MRP) rules. The MRP for electricity is currently set as the same price as that paid by the person reselling it. Under these circumstances, the Government expect landlords to pass on the discount received through tenants.

Landlords with a domestic electricity connection who charge 'all inclusive' rent, where a fixed cost for energy costs are included in their rental charges, are strongly encouraged to pass on the discount to their tenants.

■ Retail Trade: Urban Areas

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) engage with and (b) support retail park businesses which are seeking to move to the high street.

Jane Hunt:

I chair regular retail roundtables to understand retailer's needs and issues, including trading conditions and represent these across Government.

Last year, Government published our vision for the future of high streets in the Build Back Better High Streets strategy. This document set out the Government's long-term plan to support the evolution of high streets into thriving places to work, visit and live.

Alongside this, the Government is providing new temporary business rates relief worth almost £1.7 billion for eligible retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking steps to encourage retail park businesses to have a presence on the high street.

Jane Hunt:

Last year, the Government published the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy, where we committed to continue working with the retail sector, and the Retail Sector Council, to set out our long-term plan to support the evolution of high streets into thriving places to work, visit and live.

We have gone further to set out our ambition for our towns and high streets in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, published last month, through High Street Rental

Auctions which will grant a permissive power to local authorities to tackle the problem of persistently vacant property on high streets and in town centres.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Census: Greater London

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[36121]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Census 2021 results published by the Office for National Statistics on 28 June 2022, what adjustments the Government will make to population estimates for 2021 and 2022 to reflect the changes in London's population since that census was undertaken.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

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

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 13 July is attached.

Attachments:

1. [UKSA response \[Authority Response to PQ36121 \(1\).pdf\]](#)

■ Infected Blood Inquiry

Drew Hendry:

[35990]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the report by Sir Robert Francis entitled Compensation and Redress for the Victims of Infected Blood, Recommendations for a Framework, what impact assessment has been undertaken relating to the time taken in making funds available.

Michael Ellis:

There are a number of complex issues arising from the recommendations in the Compensation Framework Study. These issues are under active consideration across government, including consideration of Sir Robert's evidence to the independent Inquiry on 11-12 July. I will update the House as this work progresses.

■ Ministers: Redundancy Pay

Ruth Jones:

[33926]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many former Ministers will be entitled to severance pay since 6 June 2022.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Under the provisions of the Ministerial and other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991, a former eligible minister only becomes entitled to a severance payment in the event that they are not appointed to another relevant office within three weeks of stepping down. Currently, no minister who has left office since 6 June 2022 is entitled to a severance payment.

COP26**■ Carbon Emissions: South Africa**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[33762\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the progress the Department has made on delivering the Just Energy Transition Partnership with South Africa.

Alok Sharma:

Following my visit to South Africa in June, I have briefed Cabinet Colleagues on the Climate Action Implementation Committee about the progress we are making. During my visit I met with the South African Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Energy Transition and we made public the formal 6-Month Update to Leaders agreed by South Africa and the International Partners Group (IPG).

The COP26 Unit is working with FCDO and other Departments, international partners and the South African government to support the design of an Investment Plan against which the \$8.5bn can be mobilised.

■ Climate Change

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[33766\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what progress the Department has made on the delivery of COP26 objectives at the Bonn Climate Change Conference in June 2022.

Alok Sharma:

The June Intersessional on Climate Change brought together 5000 representatives across 180 parties to discuss issues relating to climate change ahead of COP27. Progress was made in many areas, including on the technical details of Carbon Markets (Article 6) following the direction set by COP26. Substantive policy discussions took place in forums created by the Glasgow Climate Pact, including workshops on the Glasgow Dialogue on Loss and Damage and the Global Goal on Adaptation, and Finance and Ocean dialogues. Parties and stakeholders also engaged positively in the first technical discussions under the Global Stocktake: the Paris Agreement's ambition ratcheting mechanism.

More work remains to be done ahead of COP27 to drive practical action across all issues in line with the Glasgow Climate Pact and support reaching a successful outcome in Sharm El-Sheikh, and we are committed to delivering on this for the remainder of our COP Presidency.

■ Climate Change: Commonwealth

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[33760\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the response of Commonwealth nations on tackling climate change.

Alok Sharma:

Last month I joined the Prime Minister in Kigali for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). In the communique text coming out of this meeting, leaders renewed their commitment under the Paris Agreement to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and resolved to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius as outlined in the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact. They also stressed the urgency of enhancing ambition and action in relation to mitigation, adaptation, and finance in this critical decade to address the gaps in the implementation of the goals of the Paris Agreement, and welcomed the substantive progress made at COP26.

Four Commonwealth countries have already come forward with new or strengthened NDCs since COP26: Australia, Gabon, Dominica, and Mozambique. We look forward to working with other member states to deliver on these commitments ahead of COP27.

■ Climate Change: Developing Countries**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[33767\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what discussions he has had during his presidency with Small Island Developing States on climate mitigation and adaptation.

Alok Sharma:

I have had regular engagement with the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) throughout the UK's COP26 Presidency.

I have held meetings with representatives from many countries, and also with representative groups for the regions, including the Caribbean and Pacific regions, such as CARICOM and the Pacific Island Forum.

Over 2021 and 2022, I have visited Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, and Jamaica. In all countries, my climate change discussions were wide-ranging and covered global climate ambition and mitigation, the urgency of climate adaptation and issues around loss and damage, among many other topics.

In addition to this I will visit Fiji later this month, and will also meet with regional institution representatives, civil society groups and climate champions during my time there.

Regional Ambassadors for COP26, Fiona Clouder and Ken O'Flaherty, have also discussed a wide range of topics with SIDS and conducted several visits.

The UK is committed to ensuring the voices of all SIDS are heard in the run-up to COP27, in partnership with Egypt as COP27 Presidency holders.

■ COP26: Departmental Responsibilities**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[33765\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what his priorities are for the remainder of the UK's COP Presidency.

Alok Sharma:

At COP26 in Glasgow all 197 Parties agreed to the Glasgow Climate Pact to urgently keep 1.5°C alive and finalise the outstanding elements of the Paris Rulebook.

Through our COP26 Presidency, we are committed to working with international partners to deliver the commitments made at COP26.

On Mitigation, the Glasgow Climate Pact requests parties to revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as necessary to align with the Paris Agreement temperature goal by the end of 2022.

On Adaptation, we must demonstrate that sufficient progress is being made through the Glasgow Sharm El-Sheikh work programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation and on efforts to double climate finance for adaptation to developing countries by 2025.

On Finance, we will work on delivering the South Africa Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) announced at COP26 and continue discussions with potential future partners announced at this year's G7.

We will continue our ambition as an inclusive Presidency Year, collaborating across sectors and all parts of society to deliver effective climate action.

■ COP26: Wales**Ruth Jones:**[\[33922\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, when he last met Ministers in the Welsh Government in Cardiff.

Ruth Jones:[\[33923\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the devolved Administrations on the role of energy efficiency in meeting the UK's climate targets.

Alok Sharma:

COP26 Devolved Administrations Ministers Meetings, which I chair, have formally convened five times. Communiqués from these meetings can be found on GOV.UK. The Welsh Government Minister for Climate Change has been present at these meetings.

Energy policy, including energy efficiency, falls within the remit of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). With support from the devolved administrations, BEIS established an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) that is responsible for discussing Net Zero, Energy and Climate Change. This aims to meet every two months and brings together Ministers from the four administrations to discuss emission reduction efforts across the UK. This intergovernmental engagement on net zero will continue to facilitate collaboration and coordination across devolved and reserved competence, ensuring we are delivering effectively for all parts of the UK.

We are committed to working with the devolved administrations to achieve our shared goals of leading the charge against climate change.

DEFENCE**■ Ammunition: Procurement****Munira Wilson:****[35058]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure sufficient production and supply of munitions to (a) maintain the UK's defence stockpiles and (b) support the Ukrainian military.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence continually manages and reviews all of its stocks of weapons and munitions to ensure that it can meet its commitments, including supplying to Ukraine whilst ensuring UK Armed Forces stocks are sufficiently maintained. These considerations have also informed the numbers of munitions supplied to Ukraine. There are regular strategic supplier conversations throughout Defence and the department is fully engaged with industry, allies and partners to ensure that equipment and munitions granted in kind from UK stocks are replaced as quickly as possible.

■ Armed Forces' Pay Review Body**John Healey:****[35836]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the membership number of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in each year since 2010.

Leo Docherty:

The details of the membership of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB), including how many members there are and their names, is already published and is given in the AFPRB annual reports.

The AFPRB annual reports, from 2014 onwards, are available on the .gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/afprb-report>

Older AFPRB reports, from 2000-2013, are available on the National Archives website:

https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130705000947/http://www.ome.uk.com/AFPRB_Reports.aspx

■ Armed Forces: Housing**John Healey:****[33689]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 27 May 2022 to Question 5341 on Armed Forces: Housing, which of the high rise forces accommodation buildings has been replaced with a new build; and how much that cost his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

No high-rise Forces accommodation buildings have been replaced with a new build.

Nile Block at HMS Nelson is planned for demolition towards the end of 2025, to be replaced with a new build. The estimated costs of the re-development of Nile Block

as well as several other buildings is included in one project, with total estimated project costs of £240 million.

Chris Elmore: [\[901132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the quality of housing accommodation for armed forces personnel.

Leo Docherty:

We continually strive to improve the quality of accommodation for our personnel.

We have invested more than £936 million in Service Family Accommodation in the last seven years

As of 12 July 2022, 96% of Service Family Accommodation has been assessed as meeting or exceeding the Decent Homes Standard.

Housing below this standard is not allocated to Service Families.

■ **Armed Forces: Labour Turnover**

Anthony Mangnall: [\[901133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to improve retention figures across the armed forces.

Leo Docherty:

We closely monitor where skills shortages impact on the ability to deliver Operational outputs and the impact on specific "Pinch Point" cadres.

These include financial incentives, flexible service, and an improved accommodation offer.

We have also frozen daily food charges, limited accommodation charge increases to 1%, are ensuring council tax rebates reach those in military accommodation and are increasing availability of free wraparound childcare.

■ **Armed Forces: Protective Clothing**

John Healey: [\[32930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether General Dynamics were consulted on the procurement process for the Urgent Capability Requirement.

Jeremy Quin:

Urgent Capability Requirements (UCR) are conducted through a standard procurement methodology, as was the case in this circumstance. GD was not consulted on the procurement process adopted.

John Healey: [\[32933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total value is of the Armed Fighting Vehicle Headset project.

Jeremy Quin:

Funding approval for the Armoured Fighting Vehicle Headset Project is pending, following the Formal Change Request.

■ Ministry of Defence: Animals**Mr Kevan Jones:****[35876]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many animals of each species in the service of his Department were euthanised in the last 12 months.

Mr Kevan Jones:**[35877]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many dogs have been euthanised by (a) his Department and (b) agencies and public bodies of his Department since July 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

Collation and verification of Military Working Animal (MWA) End of Service data, including information on deaths and euthanasia, is undertaken annually. For the 2021 calendar year 12 dogs and 11 horses were euthanised under veterinary grounds and 1 dog was euthanised for safety reasons. All were carried out by qualified veterinary surgeons.

MWA are only ever euthanised to prevent their unnecessary suffering or because they pose an unacceptable risk. The decision to euthanise is always made by a registered veterinary surgeon, who is required to have taken into consideration each individual animal's specific health and welfare needs.

■ Ministry of Defence: Consultants**Jon Trickett:****[33705]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department maintains a central record of overall consultancy expenditure which is disclosed as part of the Annual Report and Accounts (ARAc). For ease of reference, the values reported for all Consultancy spend in 2020 and 2021 is shown below:

Financial Year 2020-21 £109.668 million

Financial Year 2019-20 £98.080 million

Please be aware that the UK Public Sector fiscal year runs April-March and as such, analysis is captured by financial not calendar year.

The total consultancy spend during Financial Year 2021-2022 will be reported within the MOD's 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts which is due to be published imminently. This will be available at the link below;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-annual-reports>

The following table lists the Top 10 Companies by Value of Consultancy Services provided to the MOD in 2019-20 and 2020-21:

2019-20 - TOP 10 BY CONSULTANCY VALUE		2020-21 - TOP 10 BY CONSULTANCY VALUE	
1	KPMG LLP	1	KPMG LLP
2	DELOITTE LLP	2	PA CONSULTING SERVICES LTD
3	PA CONSULTING SERVICES LTD	3	DELOITTE LLP
4	CGI IT UK LIMITED	4	QINETIQ LIMITED
5	DENTONS UKMEA LLP	5	DENTONS UKMEA LLP
6	QINETIQ LIMITED	6	MCKINSEY & COMPANY INC UNITED KINGDOM
7	MASS CONSULTANTS LIMITED	7	MASS CONSULTANTS LIMITED
8	FRAZER-NASH CONSULTANCY LIMITED	8	BURGES SALMON LLP
9	IMPROBABLE WORLDS LTD	9	JONES LANG LASALLE LIMITED
10	ERNST & YOUNG LLP	10	ARCADIS LLP

■ Ministry of Defence: Energy

John Healey:

[33687]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the additional costs to his departmental budget that will arise across the defence estate in the UK in the financial year 2022-23 as a result of increased prices for gas and electricity compared with the level of those costs in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

Jeremy Quin:

While we do not routinely release forecast figures for the current or future financial years, the impact of rising gas and electricity prices is ongoing and being closely monitored by the department. The costs for gas and electricity for the previous financial years (FY) are as follows:

£ MILLION	FY2019-20	FY2020-21	FY2021-22
Gas	82.095	73.439	83.002

£ MILLION	FY2019-20	FY2020-21	FY2021-22
Electricity	239.455	227.515	243.311

John Healey:

[\[33688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to (a) divert existing funds from his departmental budget and (b) seek additional funding from elsewhere to meet the additional costs that will arise across the defence estate in the UK in the financial year 2022-23 as a result of increased prices for gas and electricity.

Jeremy Quin:

The impact of rising gas and electricity prices is ongoing and being closely monitored by the Department. We are confident that we have made adequate provisions within our funding allocation to offset these rises without impacting any existing projects.

■ **Royal Military Police: Finance**

John Healey:

[\[35838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual budget was for the Royal Military Police in every year since 2010.

Leo Docherty:

It is taking time to collate the required information to answer the hon. Members Question about the budget of the Royal Military Police. I will write to him when the information is available, and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of The House.

■ **Royal Military Police: Staff**

John Healey:

[\[35837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many staff did the Royal Military Police have in each year since 2010.

Leo Docherty:

The table below shows Trade Trained Regular Adjutant General's Corps, Royal Military Police Strength as at 1 April each year 2010 - 2022, by Officers/Other Ranks:

SITUATION DATE	TOTAL	OFFICERS	OTHER RANKS
1 April 2022	1,263	189	1,074
1 April 2021	1,320	195	1,125
1 April 2020	1,355	190	1,165
1 April 2019	1,437	197	1,240
1 April 2018	1,463	188	1,275

SITUATION DATE	TOTAL	OFFICERS	OTHER RANKS
1 April 2017	1,509	185	1,324
1 April 2016	1,573	192	1,381
1 April 2015	1,614	200	1,414
1 April 2014	1,713	212	1,501
1 April 2013	1,744	219	1,525
1 April 2012	1,722	214	1,508
1 April 2011	1,711	211	1,500
1 April 2010	1,701	213	1,488

Notes/Caveats:

- Figures are for the Trade Trained Regular Army only and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service, Mobilised Reserves, Army Reserve and all other Reserves, but includes those personnel that have transferred from GURTAM to UKTAP.
- Figures are for personnel with an Arm/Service of Adjutant General's Corps, Royal Military Police. Personnel serving in Senior Soldier Continuity Posts with a late Arm/Service of Adjutant General's Corps, Royal Military Police have been excluded from these figures.
- Personnel who have served in the Adjutant General's Corps, Royal Military Police over multiple years in this time period will be counted separately on each date in which they were serving, and will therefore be represented more than once in this table.
- Officers with a Paid Rank of Colonel or above are included in Staff regardless of late Arm/Service and therefore have been excluded from these figures.

■ **Type 26 Frigates and Type 31 Frigates: Iron and Steel**

John Healey:

[33691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the steel used in the construction of Type (a) 26 and (b) 31 frigates is from the UK.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answers I gave on 14 March 2022 to Question numbers 136651 and 136652 to the hon. Member for Angus (Dave Doogan).

Attachments:

- [Type 26 Frigates: Iron and Steel \[UIN 136651.docx\]](#)

■ Ukraine: Military Aid

Geraint Davies:

[\[901135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to provide medium-term military assistance to Ukraine.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Ukraine's current priority is rightly on the immediate fight. We continue to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine with both lethal and non-lethal aid. On 5 July 2022 I announced a major new training initiative for Ukrainian forces.

The UK continues to liaise closely with Ukraine to understand their medium-term priorities and what support the UK and international community can offer Ukraine, to help them continue to defend their sovereign territory.

■ Veterans' Health Innovation Fund: Standards

James Sunderland:

[\[901126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the effectiveness of the Veterans' Health Innovation Fund.

Leo Docherty:

I am pleased to announce that the £5 million Veterans' Health Innovation Fund launched on 4 July and will close on 31 August.

We are working with the Defence and Security Accelerator on the Fund's open competition, to explore how the marketplace can offer to help advance better health outcomes for veterans.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ National Lottery

Jamie Stone:

[\[33886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate her Department has made of levels of (a) lottery duty and (b) returns to good causes (i) in 2022-23 and (ii) in each of the next three financial years.

Damian Collins:

National Lottery ticket sales return 12% to the Exchequer as lottery duty. The Gambling Commission provides DCMS and the Lottery Distributing Bodies with good cause forecasts on a six-monthly basis to assist them with their grant planning. The forecast is presented as a range, with low, high and central scenarios. The modelling approach is regularly refined to ensure the forecasts remain as accurate as possible. The most recent forecast extends to 2023-24. We do not publish this information given commercial sensitivities.

Actual good cause returns are broadly consistent with these forecasts and are published in the National Lottery Distribution Fund Annual Report and Accounts and can be found on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

The fourth National Lottery Licence is due to commence on 1 February 2024. 12% in Lottery Duty will continue to be paid on each National Lottery ticket. However, the method for calculating good cause returns will change. The design of the new Licence is such that as National Lottery sales grow, so do the benefits to good causes.

EDUCATION

■ Children: Food

Rachael Maskell:

[35998]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential effect of inflation on the levels of access to food over the school holidays for children in living in low income families.

Will Quince:

The department is investing over £200 million a year in its holiday activities and food programme to support families in England during the school holidays. This programme provides healthy meals, enriching activities, and free childcare places to children from low-income families. The provision is for school-aged children from reception to year 11 who receive benefits-related free school meals. Local authorities also have discretion to use up to 15% of their funding to provide holiday club places for other children who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, but who the local authority believe could benefit from the provision.

Schools are responsible for the provision of school meals and may enter individual contracts with suppliers and caterers to meet this duty. The department is confident that schools will continue providing pupils with nutritious school meals as required by the school food standards.

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. These are global challenges, 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.

To support people who need additional welfare help, the government is providing an extra £500 million of local support in England, via the Household Support Fund, which is being extended to March 2023. This brings the total amount provided to £1.5 billion since October 2021.

■ Children: Social Services

Helen Hayes:

[32586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will make an estimate of the spending on early help social services in 2017-18 by region.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The department publishes local authorities' planned and actual expenditure on education and children's and young people's services annually. The data does not show a total amount spent on early help.

The data for 2017/18 is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/section-251-materials>. Whilst there are non-statutory services spend captured in the data it is not possible to provide overall spend data on 'early help'.

■ Classroom Assistants and Teachers: Training

Peter Gibson:

[27744]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he will take to record the training provided to (a) teachers and (b) teaching assistants on (i) autism and (ii) other neuro-diverse conditions.

Will Quince:

All teachers are teachers of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The department is committed to ensuring that all pupils can reach their potential and receive excellent support from their teachers.

Consideration of SEND underpins both the Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework and Early Career Framework.

All trainees who achieve Qualified Teacher Status must demonstrate that they can adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.

Schools are given the freedom to train teaching assistants according to their needs. Teaching assistants can take a level three apprenticeship, which teaches apprentices how to support pupils with special educational needs and emotional vulnerabilities.

Data for the number of starts can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-apprenticeship-target>. The department does not ask schools to collect data and report it back to us.

In February 2022 the department announced funding which includes nearly £12 million for the new Universal Services programme, to deliver SEND-specific continued professional development to the school workforce. This will help schools to support children and young people with SEND, including autism, and includes specific support on the needs of autistic children and young people.

■ Foster Care: Training

Rachael Maskell:

[\[30062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to train foster parents in enabling children to move out of residential care provision and into a foster home.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The department recognises how challenging a role fostering is, and the skills and dedication that it requires.

Training and preparation is essential for placement stability. As set out in the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards, foster carers must receive the right training to meet the needs of the children in their care. All foster carers should be able to evidence that the training, support, and development standards for foster care have been attained within 12 months of approval. Foster carers should also maintain a training and development portfolio, as outlined by standard 20 of the national minimum standards.

It is up to local fostering service providers to determine what training they offer so they are able to meet local need. There are many good practice examples of foster carers receiving enhanced or specialist training, for example in life story work and therapeutic approaches.

The department has also funded commissioning and sufficiency projects, which have included innovative work towards delivering suitable foster placements for children leaving residential care. The evaluations of these projects will be published in due course.

■ Free School Meals

Peter Gibson:

[\[27737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he will next review the eligibility thresholds for free school meals.

Will Quince:

The department has extended the eligibility for free school meals (FSM) several times and has also introduced universal infant free school meals and further education free school meals.

We have also permanently extended eligibility to children from all groups with no recourse to public funds.

Schools fund benefit-related FSM from their core funding, which they receive through the schools block of the dedicated schools grant. This is derived from the national funding formula (NFF). For the 2022/23 financial year, the funding schools attract through the FSM factor in the NFF is increasing to £470 per eligible pupil.

The department is committed to aiming provision at supporting the most disadvantaged, those out of work, or those on a low income. The department will

continue to keep all FSM eligibility under review, to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them.

■ National Curriculum Tests

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Government's delivery partner Capita on reports of missing SATs papers.

Will Quince:

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) oversees the logistics and marking operation for assessments for almost 680,000 pupils in over 16,000 schools, including the collection, scanning, and marking of some 3.8 million test scripts. The vast majority of these were collected, scanned, and marked without any issues. STA is in constant communication with Capita over service delivery, including understanding and investigating the small number of instances where papers may be flagged as missing.

STA will work with Capita to identify lessons learned from the delivery of this year's assessments so that service improvements can be implemented for the next test cycle.

■ Pupils: Discrimination

Alexander Stafford:

[26925]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support (a) pupils and (b) families who are the victims of discrimination in schools.

Will Quince:

The government condemns and strives to tackle all forms of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. Under the Equality Act 2010, schools have a duty to take steps to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all protected characteristics, including between people of different ethnic backgrounds. The department has published advice to support schools to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Advice can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools?msclid=9ce22dddc5d11ec9a0a2d6e2fd0a666>.

The department is 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). The curriculum has a strong focus on equality, respect, the harmful impact of stereotyping, as well as the importance of valuing difference. Guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

The department is also 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 hate-related bullying.

The department continues to publish information, guidance and support for teachers and school leaders on how to challenge radical views, including racist and discriminatory beliefs, on the Educate Against Hate website, available at: <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/respectful-school-communities-self-review-signposting-tool-2/>.

■ Pupils: Visual Impairment

Jane Hunt:

[33034]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the absence rates from education of blind and partially sighted pupils at (a) primary and (b) secondary school were in each year from 2012 to date.

Will Quince:

The department publishes annual statistics on absence from school broken down by pupils' type of special educational need (SEN). The most recent figures, for the 2020/21 academic year, are published here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>.

The publication includes figures for pupils whose type of SEN is visual impairment. The figures for primary and secondary schools are available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/34b7634d-01b2-45bb-be2e-5003ac8ea73f>. For comparative purposes, 'Total' includes all pupils, including those who have no SEN.

The figures do not include the 2019/20 academic year, because the publication was cancelled that year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Special Educational Needs

Geraint Davies:

[35828]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report by the Children's Commissioner for England entitled *Voices of England's Missing Children*, published in June 2022, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of locating (a) education psychologists, (b) emotional learning support assistants and (c) speech and language therapists within (i) individual and (ii) networks of schools.

Will Quince:

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

The department is grateful to the Commissioner for her report on the 'Voices of England's Missing Children', and her commitment to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard. The department shares her ambition to support the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, through high-quality education and local services, to ensure no one is left behind.

Through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Green Paper, the department is publicly consulting on a number of proposals to bring

together a multidisciplinary support offer, and to provide more timely access to specialist support from health and social care partners.

Meanwhile, the department is taking steps to increase the capacity of the specialist workforce. Since 2020, we have increased the number of educational psychologist trainees that we fund from 160, to over 200 per annum, and have invested £30 million to train three more cohorts for academic years 2020, 2021 and 2022. In February 2022, the department announced a further investment of over £10 million to train over 200 more educational psychologists, who will begin their courses in September 2023.

The department is actively exploring the impact of embedding multi-disciplinary specialist teams in education providers. Since November 2021, we have established specialist taskforces in 22 alternative provision schools, in areas where serious youth violence is most prevalent. Through this work, professionals, including speech and language therapists, youth workers and mental health specialists, are delivering targeted support to minimise the risk of children and young people disengaging from education.

The department has worked with the Youth Endowment Fund to commission an evaluator to understand the impacts that the specialist taskforces are having.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Ipswich**

Tom Hunt:

[22560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of provision for specialist education settings in Ipswich.

Will Quince:

There are currently six special schools within Ipswich providing 368 places to children (up to age 16) with special educational needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs and specific learning difficulties. More information on the special schools can be found here: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Establishments/Search?tok=8UB4PirD>.

Two of the six schools (The Bridge School and Sir Bobby Robson School) are yet to be inspected by Ofsted. Two schools (Thomas Wolsey Ormiston Academy and Stone Lodge Academy) are rated good. The other two schools (West Lodge School and New Skill Centre) are rated requires improvement (to be good). Further queries regarding the adequacy of specialist educational settings should be directed to Ofsted.

■ **Speech and Language Therapy: Staff**

Geraint Davies:

[30980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans to ensure that speech and language therapists are included in the local multidisciplinary Family Help teams recommended by the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Will Quince:

The department will carefully consider the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care relating to multidisciplinary Family Help teams. Further information will be provided in the publication of a detailed and ambitious implementation strategy later this year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Animal Products: Imports****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[32525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to prevent the importation of any animal produce that is (a) bred, (b) reared and (c) slaughtered using methods that are prohibited in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare. We are taking forward an ambitious programme of reforms which will maintain our world leading position on animal welfare.

All imports of meat must come from animals that have been subject to humane slaughter methods and some animal products cannot be imported into the UK. This includes cat and dog fur, and seal products which are not covered by specific limited exemptions.

■ Birds**Jim Shannon:**[\[32545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made a recent estimate of the number of turtle doves in the UK.

Steve Double:

The 2021 national turtle dove survey has provided a UK population estimate of 2,100 pairs.

■ Birds of Prey: Conservation**Paul Blomfield:**[\[31826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 24 March 2022 to Question 141136 on Birds of Prey: Conservation, whether his Department has taken recent steps to work with the police to identify cases of white-tailed eagles that have been deliberately killed.

Steve Double:

Enforcement of wildlife offences is an operational matter for the police and it is not for the Government to comment on individual police investigations. However, where any protected birds are killed illegally the full force of the law should apply to any proven perpetrators of the crime. We have significant sanctions for this type of wildlife crime

in place which includes an unlimited fine and/or a six-month custodial sentence. Defra officials have been in regular contact with the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) with regard to two fatal poisonings of white-tailed eagles in the south of England. The NWCU monitors and gathers intelligence on wildlife crime and aids police forces in their investigations when required.

The Government takes all wildlife crime seriously. To address concerns about the illegal killing of birds of prey, senior government and enforcement officers have identified raptor persecution as a national wildlife crime priority. Defra continues to be fully involved with the police-led national Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group and Natural England continues to work closely with wildlife crime officers. This year, Defra has also more than doubled its funding of NWCU from £165,000 per year to over £1.2 million over the next three years to target wildlife crime priorities including raptor persecution.

■ Birds: Registration

Jim Shannon:

[32546]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle people keeping unregistered birds their gardens.

Steve Double:

It is a legal requirement for poultry keepers to register their birds with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) on the [Great Britain Poultry Register](#) if they have 50 or more birds, even if the birds are only kept as pets. Poultry includes chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, pigeon (bred for meat), partridge, quail, guinea fowl and pheasants.

However we encourage all bird keepers - regardless of the number of birds they keep to register even if they do not have to by law, so that APHA will be able to contact them if there's a disease outbreak.

Mandatory poultry registration is enforced by Local Authorities. Non-compliance should be reported to the Local Authorities Animal Health Function, which is normally situated with the Trading Standards or Environmental Health Service of a local authority.

■ Climate Change: Costs

Rachael Maskell:

[34961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the annual cost to the public purse of managing (a) the consequences of climate change and extreme weather events and (b) climate change and extreme weather events (i) across the UK and (ii) through UK's international contributions in each of the last five years.

Steve Double:

The UK Government's third Climate Change Risk Assessment was published in January 2022 and is available at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2022>

■ **Deer**

Jim Shannon: [31845]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the rising deer populations do not cause damage to farms and rural areas.

Steve Double:

Wild deer, especially native species, are an important and valued part of our natural heritage. However, they present a threat to agricultural crops as well as new and existing woodlands.

That is why, as set out in the England Trees Action Plan, we have committed to developing a national deer management strategy, which will set out the actions necessary for a sustainable approach that leads to long term improvements. We will shortly be consulting on the strategy's proposals.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Contracts**

Jon Trickett: [31006]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural 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.

Victoria Prentis:

There have been two contracts held by the department with Capita since 2020, with a total value of £118,000. There have been no other contracts held since 2020 with G4S or Serco.

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

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

Emily Thornberry: [31794]

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

Victoria Prentis:

There were 210 cardholders in the core department able to spend from the core department's budget.

■ Drinking Water: South East

Tim Farron:

[31059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the likelihood of London and the South East running out of drinking water as a result of over-stressed or polluted water supplies; and whether his Department has a contingency plan in the event of that occurrence.

Steve Double:

There is no current risk of London and the South East having no access to drinking water. The Environment Agency's National Framework for Water Resources, published in March 2020, sets out the strategic water needs for England up to 2050. In the South East, action is being taken to provide around an extra 1,765 million litres of water per day by 2050 to address future pressures on drinking water supplies. The pressures include the impacts of climate change, population growth, replacing unsustainable abstractions to improve the environment, and making water supplies more resilient to droughts.

The Government's National Infrastructure Strategy set a requirement for water companies to increase the drought resilience of public water supplies to withstand up to one in 500 year drought events. To achieve this, the Government expects a twin track approach with action to reduce water demand, supported by the proposed Environment Act 2021 water demand targets, and action to develop new supply infrastructure such as reservoirs.

Statutory Water Resources Management Plans set out how water companies will continue to meet their duties of providing secure water supplies, over at least a 25 year period. All water companies will consult on new Water Resources Management Plans at the end of 2022.

■ Environment Protection: Regulation

Kerry McCarthy:

[35893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of the proposed changes to the Habitats Regulations on the Government's ability to comply with its international obligations under the (a) Bern Convention and (b) Ramsar Convention.

Steve Double:

Review of the Habitats Regulations was proposed in the Nature Recovery Green Paper. That consultation closed on 11 May and we are now in the process of analysing responses. The Government will publish a formal response in due course.

As set out in the Nature Recovery Green Paper, any review of legislation relating to protected sites will be consistent with the UK's international commitments.

■ Environmental Land Management Schemes

Daniel Zeichner: [\[35971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much and what proportion of his Departmental budget has been allocated to (a) the Environmental Land Management Scheme, (b) the Sustainable Farming Incentive, (c) Local Nature Recovery and (d) Landscape Recovery.

Victoria Prentis:

We are not allocating specific budgets to individual schemes, instead we are managing the budget as a whole and will follow demand across the offers we have. Through this Parliament, we will spend more than £2.5 billion on the new Sustainable Farming Incentive, Countryside Stewardship and its successor, Local Nature Recovery, and continue to fund existing Environmental Stewardship agreements. This amounts to around 12% of the funding allocated to the department in this Spending Review. Additionally, we will spend £3.3 billion, or around 16%, on direct payments over the same time period.

■ Food: Public Sector

Derek Thomas: [\[31895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has plans to (a) monitor progress against and (b) enforce the target that 50 per cent of the public sector food budget is spent on sustainable, organic and locally grown produce.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government wants the public sector to lead by example, championing healthier, sustainable food, provided by a range of suppliers. We have launched a consultation on public sector food and catering policy, including updating the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services. This includes a proposal that the public sector reports on progress towards our aspiration that 50% of its food expenditure is on food produced locally or to higher environmental production standards. To monitor progress, the consultation will examine a proposal for new data reporting requirements to increase transparency and improve our understanding of what is bought and served in the public sector.

■ Food: Research

Jim Shannon: [\[31841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on the level of funding for the research and development of innovative food products for international consumers.

Victoria Prentis:

Our Food Strategy sets out our ambition to promote innovative practices and technologies across the entire agri-food sector. This includes our plans to deliver a £270 million pound R&D Farming Innovation Programme; and partnership with UK

Research and Innovation (UKRI) to invest over £120 million in agri-food research. This will help drive uptake of R&D and innovation across the food system including in novel foods such as alternative and sustainable proteins. This will help create global opportunities for growth and contribute to the dietary needs of consumers and farming objectives.

Defra engages with other Departments and Devolved Administrations through the UKRI-led Global Food Security Programme, which coordinates research and innovation activity of public funders to address food system challenges.

■ Non-native Species

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[32989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) reduce the rate of and (b) prevent the introduction and establishment of invasive non-native species.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[32990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) control and (b) eradicate invasive non-native species.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[32991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure work tackling invasive non-native species is receiving adequate (a) priority and (b) public funding.

Steve Double:

Our approach is set by the 2015 GB Invasive Non-Native Species Strategy, which ensures coordinated action across Great Britain. This strategy follows internationally recognised principles and priorities of prevention, rapid eradication and management, which we are committed to continuing. We are currently updating this, and the refreshed strategy will support the prioritisation and resourcing of our efforts over the next few years.

To reduce and prevent the introduction and establishment of invasive non-native species (INNS) we have prioritised five pathways of introduction and developed Pathway Action Plans (PAPs) for angling, recreational boating and zoos and aquaria sectors. Two further horticultural PAPs are in progress, and Defra expects to complete all the PAPs by the end of 2022. The PAPs allow the Government to set out actions that will prevent or minimise the risk of spread of INNS via certain pathways. The Angling PAP, for example, led to the refresh of the 'Check, Clean, Dry' campaign, which has been strengthened through new collaborative initiatives with stakeholders such as the Aquatic Biosecurity Partnership with water companies. The Government also continues to fund the non-native species information portal, including its alert system which has played a key role in preventing the establishment of Asian hornet in the UK, and horizon scanning exercises which allow us to understand the potential of future threats.

We have put in place the Invasive Alien Species Order, which gives us strong legislative tools, to tackle the threat of 66 species of special concern, including effective enforcement at the UK border. We are funding the establishment of a new NNS Inspectorate to bring the management of NNS in line with other biosecurity regimes. The Government funds strategic research, such as for biocontrol agents for a range of invasive non-native plants including a weevil which will eat floating pennywort, and fertility control of grey squirrels.

We are also controlling and eradicating species through continuing to support the network of local action groups (LAGs) to facilitate strategic action at a local scale, making the most of the invaluable work that LAGs do. This includes a recently launched fund to support LAGs carrying out essential work over the next three years.

■ Outdoor Recreation

Mr Toby Perkins:

[34888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the Government has decided not to publish the findings of the Agnew Review into improving access to green spaces.

Steve Double:

No formal report was produced by the Access to the Outdoors commission. The outcomes of the commission include £30 million provided through the Spending Review to improve public access to green spaces and better joined up working across government in taking forward a number of policy measures.

These include the development of the Levelling Up Parks Fund which will create parks and green spaces on urban land which has become unused, undeveloped or neglected. This Government is investing an unprecedented £2 billion in walking and cycling over this Parliament, building hundreds of miles of high-quality cycle lanes and increasing access to a range of places including green spaces. We have also launched the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, which includes a commitment to increase opportunities for all children and young people to spend time in nature, learn more about it, and get involved in improving their environment.

The 'Preventing and Tackling Mental Ill Health through Green Social Prescribing' cross-governmental project is testing nature-based social prescribing in seven test and learn sites. The project is working in both rural and urban locations and is helping connect those living in cities with nature.

We are working to complete the England Coast Path, to support our network of National Trails and intend to create a new National Trail across the North of England.

■ Package Holidays: Animal Welfare

Andrew Rosindell:

[31772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the impact of advertising animal experiences with elephants overseas on the (a) welfare and (b) preservation of elephants.

Steve Double:

As noted in this department's answers to PQs [17967](#), [28428](#) and [30010](#), this Government takes the welfare of all animals seriously. Ministers and officials continue to engage on many of the measures set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare, including reforms relating to banning the advertising or offering for sale, here, of activities involving unacceptable practices abroad.

■ Silk Stream Flood Resilience Innovation Project

Dr Matthew Offord:

[32945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the outline business case for the Silk Stream Flood Resilience Innovation Project.

Steve Double:

This document is owned by the London Borough of Barnet, not the Environment Agency. I would recommend that the Hon. Member direct his request for a copy to them.

■ Tree Planting

Kerry McCarthy:

[32936]

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 each financial year from 2022-23 to 2024-25; and which schemes will receive this funding.

Steve Double:

The England Trees Action Plan sets out our long-term vision for the treescape in England, including how we will treble tree planting rates supporting the Government's manifesto target of planting 30,000 hectares of trees per year by the end of the Parliament. The £750 million Nature for Climate Fund is the main delivery vehicle, focussed on peat restoration, woodland creation and management.

The Fund is already supporting a series of grants for tree planting and management for 2022/23, including:

- The £8 million Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund which will provide financial support to local authorities to bring in specialist skills and capacity to boost tree planting and woodland creation across England.
- £500,000 this year in support of the collaborative Woodlands for Water project which will increase woodland creation along rivers to deliver biodiversity, water quality improvements and flood risk mitigation.

- More than £3.8 million available through the fourth round of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund.
- The Local Authority Treescapes Fund will allocate up to £5.4 million for the planting of up to 650,000 trees in 2022/23.

Additional funding will also shortly be announced for the England Woodland Creation Offer and for Woodland Creation Partnerships. Nature for Climate Fund deployment in future years is dependent on analysis of previous year's performance across projects and workstreams.

■ Voluntary Work: Rural Areas

Rachael Maskell:

[\[31165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he is taking steps to increase levels of volunteering on rural recreation projects that (a) improve access to the rural environment, (b) support mental wellbeing and (c) tackle loneliness.

Steve Double:

Simplifying routes into volunteering and supporting a more inclusive volunteer experience across England is a key focus of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Through the Volunteering Futures Fund, over £7 million has been made available through our matched funders and delivery partners to improve the accessibility of volunteering, including in areas where there are fewer opportunities.

Our £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund is connecting people with nature. For example, the Durham Wildlife Trust's Healing Nature project and the Norfolk Coastal Partnership's Coastal Resilience project are developing volunteer networks and community groups – supporting access and investment in the local environment.

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme can fund projects that provide opportunities for diverse audiences to access rural landscapes, including through volunteering. For example, funding was recently given to a project in the Blackdown Hills for equipment and training to enable more effective conservation management of Young Wood, while providing more experiences and activities for volunteers and wellbeing groups.

On rural loneliness in particular, we provide grant funding (£1.7 million per annum) to Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) who are alleviating rural loneliness as one of their key objectives. To mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we announced the £3 million Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund. This is in recognition of the important role that village halls play in underpinning local community life, enabling activities to prevent loneliness among people living in rural areas and to create stronger communities. Lastly, a roundtable on rural loneliness was held on 9 June 2022, attended by a wide range of rural stakeholders. We will use the information gathered to help focus our efforts on reducing loneliness in rural communities.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Brazil: Elections****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[35861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her Brazilian counterpart on the (a) death of Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) official Marcelo Arruda and (b) risk of violence towards PT members and candidates ahead of the October elections in that country.

Vicky Ford:

We are following closely the investigation into the recent death of Marcelo Arruda.

It is crucial that all participants in the upcoming elections in Brazil respect core democratic principles and electoral processes. Through our Embassy in Brasilia, the UK continues to engage with the Brazilian Government, political parties and civil society organisations on the upcoming elections, including on the issue of security. In addition, I [Minister Ford] met with representatives from the Brazilian Workers' Party in London recently where they discussed a broad range of issues including the importance of free and fair elections in Brazil in October.

■ Colombia: Paramilitary Forces**Ellie Reeves:**[\[36066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made representations to her Colombian counterpart on the effectiveness of the dismantling of paramilitary groups in that country following the 2016 peace agreement.

Vicky Ford:

Colombia is a UK Human Rights Priority Country and UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise our concerns about the activities of illegal armed groups with the Colombian Government and in multilateral fora. Most recently, Lord Ahmad discussed human rights and the security situation in Colombia in his meeting with President Duque on 12 April. Successive UK-drafted UN Security Council press statements have called for the National Commission on Security Guarantees, working with civil society, to adopt and implement a public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups.

To date, we have spent over £69 million through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement in Colombia and improve stability and security. Our funding is supporting the Colombian Government's rural development and reintegration programmes, transitional justice mechanisms, and strengthening the security and participation of communities in conflict-affected areas.

■ Colombia: Peace Negotiations**Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[35904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Colombian government's implementation of the 2016 peace agreement's first chapter on comprehensive rural reform.

Vicky Ford:

Comprehensive rural reform is an important commitment in the 2016 Peace Agreement, and considerable progress has been made on this during the first five years of implementation. As emphasised by our Permanent Representative to the UN at the UN Security Council on 14 July, we look to the Colombian Government to accelerate this progress and further advance rural development to support the transformation of conflict-affected regions and their communities.

To date, we have spent over £69 million through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement in Colombia and improve stability and security. Our funding is supporting the Colombian Government's rural development and reintegration programmes, transitional justice mechanisms, and strengthening the security and participation of communities in conflict-affected areas.

■ Colombia: Police Brutality**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[36122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has made an assessment of the Colombian government's progress on investigating alleged police killings during protests in that country in (a) September 2020 and (b) April and May 2021.

Vicky Ford:

The British Government remains concerned about reports of human rights violations in Colombia during recent protests. We are clear that we support the right of all Colombians to protest peacefully, and that the right to peaceful assembly and association must be guaranteed.

We look to the Colombian authorities to investigate fully any excessive use of force and take appropriate action against those responsible. Members of the Security services must also be held accountable for their actions, and all complaints thoroughly investigated.

■ Developing Countries: Genito-urinary Medicine**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[35907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps her Department has taken to meet target 3.7 of the UN Sustainable

Development Goals on universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services by 2030.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We are proud to defend universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights as outlined in the International Development Strategy and Ending Preventable Deaths of Mothers, Babies and Children by 2030 approach paper. This includes our renewed support to life saving global health initiatives such as the Global Financing Facility and to the United Nations Population Fund Supplies programme to advance the availability of modern contraception in the world's poorest countries. The UK continues to work with like-minded partners to accelerate global progress, including by securing joint commitments at the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government and G7 Health Ministerial. This work is crucial to unlock the potential, agency and freedom of women and girls around the world.

■ **Development Aid: African Development Bank**

Sarah Champion:

[\[35954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department sets performance targets for its spending through the African Development Bank.

Vicky Ford:

As part of the process of agreeing funding for the African Development Bank's 7th General Capital Increase and 15th Replenishment of the African Development Fund (ADF15), the Bank agreed a number of policy commitments and results targets with the UK and other shareholders. We monitor progress on delivering these commitments closely through the Board of Directors and meetings of African Development Fund donors.

In 2019, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office also made part of its funding to ADF15 contingent on meeting certain performance targets. These targets have now been met.

■ **Diego Martínez**

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[35859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Colombian counterpart on the deportation of Diego Martinez from Argentina to Colombia.

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[35860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Argentine counterpart following the deportation of Colombian lawyer, Diego Martinez, from Argentina to that country.

Vicky Ford:

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government and in multilateral fora. Most recently, Lord Ahmad discussed human rights and the security situation in Colombia in his meeting with President Duque on 12 April. I [Minister Ford] also discussed human rights concerns with Vice-President and Foreign Minister Ramírez on 10 February.

Immigration and border decisions are a matter for the two countries. The UK expects all countries to follow their international obligations in respect of deportations.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Contracts**Jon Trickett:**[\[29887\]](#)

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

Vicky Ford:

We would ask you to please see the link below to our contract finder <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>. Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on Contracts Finder. Publications include early engagement, future opportunities, and opportunities.

In relation to your request, part b) this information is not readily available/held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Special Advisers**Emily Thornberry:**[\[35902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) Mr Adam Jones and (b) Ms Sophie Jarvis were employed by her Department on full-time special adviser contracts as of 13 June 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The Cabinet Office routinely publishes an annual report on the numbers and costs of special advisers, which is available on GOV.UK. Adam Jones and Sophie Jarvis were employed by FCDO on 13 June 2022.

■ Iran: Nuclear Weapons

Robert Jenrick: [\[35964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for international peace and security of Iran achieving nuclear breakout.

Robert Jenrick: [\[35966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of Iran's non-compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Amanda Milling:

Iran's nuclear programme is more advanced than ever, and is continuing to worsen. This includes producing Highly Enriched Uranium which is unprecedented for a state without a nuclear weapons programme. Iran's nuclear escalation is threatening international security and undermining the global non-proliferation system.

We have reached the end of talks in Vienna to restore the nuclear deal. There is a viable deal on the table which would return Iran to compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments, and return the US to the deal. If Iran fails to conclude the deal its nuclear escalation will collapse the JCPOA. In this scenario we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies.

Robert Jenrick: [\[35965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help ensure the security of (a) Israel, (b) the United Arab Emirates, (c) Saudi Arabia and (d) Bahrain if Iran achieves nuclear weapons capability.

Amanda Milling:

We continue to have regular discussions with a range of regional and international partners, including Israel, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and Iran's nuclear escalation. We are clear that our priority is to see Iran return to compliance with its commitments and the US to return to the deal. Our commitment to the security of our allies is unwavering. The UK is committed to working with the international community to ensure Iran abides by international laws and norms and is held to account for its destabilising activity in the region.

It is for this reason that we currently have over 200 sanctions designations in place against Iran, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety, and support the enforcement of UN prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons to non-state actors in the region, including to Lebanese Hizballah (UNSCR 1701) and the Houthis in Yemen (UNSCR 2216).

■ Islamic State West Africa Province

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[33753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her Department's policies of the potential threat to security posed by the Islamic State's West African Province.

Vicky Ford:

Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) have claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in the Lake Chad Basin region in recent months. The UK Government remains concerned about ISWA, not only because of the significant impact of the conflict in North East Nigeria and the wider Lake Chad Basin, but also because ISWA is a leading propaganda outlet for Daesh.

The UK Government is supporting Nigeria to respond to the conflict with extremist groups, including ISWA, in the Lake Chad Basin. We are supporting regional stabilisation efforts and efforts to increase interagency cooperation to tackle terrorism and respond to terrorist attacks. We are also delivering training to increase the Government of Nigeria's ability to tackle terrorist financing. In addition, the UK Government is supporting Nigeria to deliver comprehensive and human rights compliant defection, demobilisation, disengagement and deradicalisation and reintegration (4DR) processes, which provide a genuine pathway for members of Violent Extremist Organisations to defect and reintegrate into their communities.

■ Nigeria: Abduction

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[33754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an estimate of the number of kidnappings for ransom that have occurred in Nigeria in the last two years.

Vicky Ford:

A reliable estimate of the number of kidnaps for ransom in Nigeria in the last two years is hard to calculate, because of the number of agencies involved in kidnap response and recording. However, we are aware that several thousand kidnap for ransom cases are reported each year.

Through our Security and Defence Partnership, the UK is helping Nigeria build its capacity to respond to kidnaps. We are providing mentoring and capacity-building support to Nigerian Police Force units to improve their anti-kidnap capacity, to help reduce harm to victims, and to hold those responsible to account.

■ Nigeria: Development Aid

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[33752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much financial resource her Department provides for development aid in Nigeria.

Vicky Ford:

UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) bilateral spend in Nigeria in 2021/22 was over £100.8 million. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) final 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts, 2021 Statistics on International Development, and the 2022/23 budgets are due to be laid in Parliament shortly. More detail on all UK aid is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development> and here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fcdo-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021> on GOV.UK.

■ Nigeria: Fulani**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[33755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of people who have been killed in clashes between farmers and nomadic Fulani herders and militants in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government draws on a range of sources of information to deepen our understanding of conflict in Nigeria. We are aware of attempts by research bodies and international organisations to estimate the number of people killed due to farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria. While exact figures are hard to verify, it is clear that these conflicts continue to have a devastating impact on those affected and on Nigeria's security as a whole. We continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to protect all those at risk of violence, bring perpetrators to justice, and address the root causes of the violence. Through our programmes in Nigeria, we are supporting dialogue, mediation and sustainable livelihoods to help address the short and long-term drivers of conflict.

■ Nigeria: Human Trafficking**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[33756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an estimate of the number of cases of human trafficking in Nigeria in the most recent period for which data is available.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government does not make its own estimate of the prevalence of human trafficking in other countries. Instead we draw on data gathered by national governments, UN agencies and international civil society organisations better placed to gather this information. For example, we know that the International Organisation for Migration (<https://www.iom.int/>) has helped to repatriate over 21,000 Nigerian trafficking victims, mainly from Libya, since 2017.

The UK supports the Nigerian Government, through our Security and Defence Partnership, to respond to serious and organised crime and human trafficking.

■ Nigeria: Poverty

Dr Matthew Offord:

[33757]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an estimate of the number of people in Nigeria who live in poverty.

Vicky Ford:

Nigeria has the second highest number of extreme poor people in the world. In 2018/19, approximately 83 million people in Nigeria (around 40 per cent) lived below the national poverty line (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/03/21/afw-deep-structural-reforms-guided-by-evidence-are-urgently-needed-to-lift-millions-of-nigerians-out-of-poverty>). The World Bank estimates that the Covid-19 crisis caused five million more Nigerians to fall below the poverty line (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2022/03/21/afw-nigeria-poverty-assessment-2022-a-better-future-for-all-nigerians>).

■ Sierra Leone: Abortion

Preet Kaur Gill:

[35023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that women in Sierra Leone have safe access to abortion.

Vicky Ford:

The UK remains the largest bilateral donor to Sierra Leone's health sector through our nation-wide Saving Lives in Sierra Leone programme (£68.6 million, 2016-2022), which is focused on reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health. Between 2013 and 2019, the programme increased demand for family planning services, contributing to a reduction in teenage pregnancy rates from 30 per cent to 21 per cent. It also helped drive a 30 per cent reduction in pregnancy-related deaths.

The Government of Sierra Leone has announced it intends to introduce a Safe Motherhood Bill. If passed, this would expand access to contraceptives and other reproductive health services, as well as decriminalise abortion. The UK will continue to encourage action by both Government and civil society in Sierra Leone to help make abortion safe and legal.

■ Somalia and South Sudan: Capital Punishment

Ms Lyn Brown:

[33739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an estimate of the number of executions that occurred in (a) Somalia and (b) South Sudan in 2021; and what discussions she has had with her counterparts in those countries on the rising numbers of executions.

Vicky Ford:

Amnesty International published credible figures in May 2022 that suggest at least 21 executions were carried out in Somalia and 9 in South Sudan during 2021. Our longstanding policy is to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. Somalia and South Sudan are Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) human rights priority countries and we have repeatedly made this position clear to the governments of both countries. In October 2021, we secured a resolution, supported by Somalia, at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), promoting greater protection of human rights. On South Sudan, we helped ensure continued monitoring of the human rights situation through the renewal in March of the mandate for the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan. We also made clear our ongoing concerns at the human rights situation, and proposed actions for both countries, at their respective Universal Periodic Reviews at the HRC this year.

■ St Helena: Non-native Species**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[32992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the Government has provided for removing invasive non-native plants which threaten native cloud forests in St Helena in each of the last five years.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government has funded 3 projects over the last 5 years that have included support for the removal of invasive non-native plants as part of the cloud forest rehabilitation. Two of these projects have been funded by grants from Darwin Plus: DPLUS059 for the establishment of the national framework for invasive plant management in St Helena and DPLUS099 for fragmented cloud forest habitat rehabilitation through innovative invasive plant management. A third project is funded by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Programme to restore the cloud forest, remove invasive plants and improve water security. The funding for these projects, which cover multiple programmes on St Helena, over the last five financial years is:

2018/19 - £82,793

2019/20 - £166,775

2020/21 - £90,000

2021/22 - £785,048

2022/23 - £993,659 grant allocation for this Financial Year

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Accident and Emergency Departments**

Rachael Maskell: [\[31878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to move emergency care interventions closer to the patient.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Health Service is increasing the capacity of NHS 111 to act as the first point of triage for urgent care services. In 2022/23, we are providing an additional £50 million to support increased call taking capacity to relieve pressures on accident and emergency departments. The ambulance service is also increasing the number of calls resolved without requiring a face-to-face response, from 6.5% in May 2019 to 11.6% in May 2022.

Where appropriate, urgent community response teams are providing urgent care to patients in their homes. This includes older people and adults with complex health needs and provides access to a range of health and social care professionals within two hours.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards

Mrs Pauline Latham: [\[31080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help reduce waiting times at emergency departments for (a) patients and (b) ambulances with patients in (i) England and (ii) the University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England's Urgent and Emergency Care Recovery 10 Point Action Plan includes an increased role for NHS 111 as the first point of triage, measures to improve patient flow through hospitals and reduce pressure on emergency departments and ensuring medically fit patients can be discharged as soon as possible.

University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust is extending its same day emergency care service to seven days a week and reducing demand on accident and emergency through expanding community rapid intervention services and collaborating with the local health and care system to increase primary care capacity. The Trust plans to develop its medical workforce, establish a frailty assessment area for elderly patients and maximise the use of its urgent treatment centre.

■ Antimicrobials: Developing Countries

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[34876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the UK 5-year action plan for antimicrobial resistance 2019-2024, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development

Affairs on the allocation of funding for (a) clean water, (b) sanitation and (c) hygiene in low and middle income countries to help prevent the spread of infections and the development of antimicrobial resistance.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: The Department of Health and Social Care continues to engage with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to discuss the Government's approach to addressing anti-microbial resistance (AMR). This includes the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's international investment of UK Aid into water, sanitation and hygiene programmes in low and middle-income countries to prevent infection, control its spread and reduce the need for antimicrobials. Between 2016 and 2020, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office supported 62.6 million people to gain access to clean water and/or sanitation.

In addition, international projects such as the Department of Health and Social Care's Fleming Fund and the Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship Scheme assist pharmacists in low and middle-income countries to participate in improving sanitation in healthcare settings.

■ **Autism and Hyperactivity: Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people with (a) autism, (b) ADHD and (c) Asperger's syndrome have been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 in each of the last 10 years.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 14 July 2022]:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ **Bipolar Disorder: Diagnosis**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[28908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle delays in diagnoses of Bipolar disorder.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 6 July 2022]: We have committed to invest approximately £1 billion by 2023/24 to increase access to high quality, timely care in the community for people with severe mental illness, including bipolar disorder. Through the new models of care provided by integrated care systems, services will be based on the needs of individuals, rather than solely on diagnoses. This follows feedback received from people with severe mental illnesses, such as bipolar disorder, during the development of the community mental health framework.

■ Bowel Cancer: Mortality Rates

Tracey Crouch: [\[32517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of regional variations in bowel cancer survival rates; and what steps his Department is taking to help tackle these variations.

James Morris:

The National Bowel Cancer Audit is currently underway which aims to improve care for bowel cancer patients and ensure equity in services.

The bowel cancer screening faecal immunochemical test (FIT) kit, introduced in England from April 2019, has increased uptake of bowel cancer screening. FIT has increased accessibility as it requires one stool sample, replacing multiple samples used by its predecessor. Information for patients on bowel cancer screening and how to use the screening kit is available in different languages and formats, including easy read and animations, to increase awareness and address potential variations in patient outcomes.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Navendu Mishra: [\[35072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for cancer care in (a) Stockport and (b) England.

James Morris:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: In Stockport, the Greater Manchester Cancer Alliance is implementing best timed pathways for lung, prostate and colorectal cancer to accelerate early diagnosis, reduce variation and improve patient experience.

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' sets out the ambition of returning the number of people waiting more than 62 days to start treatment following an urgent referral due to suspected cancer to pre-pandemic levels by March 2023. The plan also aims that 75% of patients who have been urgently referred by their general practitioner for suspected cancer will be diagnosed or have cancer ruled out within 28 days by March 2024.

The Department committed an additional £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million targeted Investment Fund made available this year to increase capacity in elective services, including for cancer treatments.

■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[35909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that NHS Trusts meet targets for cancer treatment waiting times.

James Morris:

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' sets out how we aim to return the number of people waiting more than 62 days to start treatment following an urgent referral for suspected cancer to pre-pandemic levels by March 2023. We have committed a further £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund to increase capacity in elective services, including for cancer treatment.

Care Homes: Jersey**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[31768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will hold discussions with his counterpart in the Government of Jersey on potential support his Department can provide in the context of staffing challenges in nursing and residential homes.

Gillian Keegan:

While the Department has regular engagement with the Crown Dependencies on health and social care issues, we have no current plans for specific discussions with the Government of Jersey on potential workforce support in nursing and residential homes.

Care Homes: Nurses**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[34901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to increase the quality of nursing in private care homes.

Gillian Keegan:

In December 2022, we published the white paper 'People at the Heart of Care', which outlined the strategy for adult social care, supported by an investment of at least £500 million in the adult social care workforce over the next three years. This includes funding for registered nurses and nursing associates to access professional development opportunities to deliver outstanding care within care settings, including private care homes.

In 2020, the first Chief Nurse for Social Care was appointed to raise the profile of nursing in social care and increase the recognition, appreciation and quality of practice of nurses in adult social care.

Carers: Finance and Respite Care**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[31905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure adequate (a) financial support and (b) respite opportunities are available to carers.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government provides financial support to eligible unpaid carers through the Carer's Allowance, the carer element in Universal Credit and other benefits. Carers in low-income households may benefit from the Means-Tested Benefit Cost of Living Payment and disabled carers may benefit from the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment. Unpaid carers may also benefit from the £400 rebate through the Energy Bills Support Scheme to Domestic energy users, and those who pay Council Tax in England have received a £150 rebate. In England, the Government is providing assistance through the £421 million Household Support Fund, which will be extended from October 2022 to March 2023.

On 13 May 2022 we wrote to local authorities to reiterate the importance of respite support for unpaid carers and that funding for respite and short breaks for carers is included in the National Health Service contribution to the Better Care Fund (BCF). In 2021/22, £285.7 million was allocated through the BCF to provide short breaks and respite services for carers and additional advice and support.

■ Community Diagnostic Centres: Hospitals

Wes Streeting: [\[32582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many community diagnostic centres are located on existing hospital sites as on 7 July 2022.

Wes Streeting: [\[32583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many community diagnostic centres are located in buildings which were built within the last 12 months as on 7 July 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 14 July 2022]: As of 7 July 2022, 47 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) are located adjacent to a National Health Service trust site. Of these, two CDCs are located in buildings which were built within the last 12 months.

■ Community Diagnostic Centres: Staff

Peter Dowd: [\[35974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of diagnostic staff in community diagnostic centres were (a) agency or bank staff, (b) recruited within the last three months and (c) reassigned from other service providers as on 13 July 2022.

Peter Dowd: [\[35975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of clinical radiologists working in community diagnostic centres are (a) agency and bank staff (b) newly recruited and (c) reassigned from other service providers.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Peter Dowd:

[\[35976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of the diagnostic staff that will work as part of the expanded community diagnostic centre programme will be (a) agency or bank and (b) newly recruited staff.

Peter Dowd:

[\[35977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of (a) clinical radiologists and (b) other NHS diagnostic staff will be reassigned from other service providers to support the expansion of the community diagnostic centre programme.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally.

NHS England and Health Education England are developing a plan to ensure sufficient workforce capacity in community diagnostic centres. This aims to improve existing good practice across the professional workforce to increase capacity through the optimisation of staff and the variety of skills available, retention and health and wellbeing measures.

■ **Community Diagnostic Centres: York**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[31877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of York being a pilot for the provision of further community-based diagnostic centres.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England is working with integrated care systems, diagnostic networks and primary care services to assess the locations and configuration of further community diagnostic centres, based on the needs of local populations. This will consider a number of sites in the Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership, including York.

■ **Continuing Care: Finance**

Catherine West:

[\[30082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide additional funding to NHS Continuing Care in the context of increased costs of care and residential homes.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England allocates funding to integrated care boards to meet the costs of providing healthcare, including NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC). For 2022/23, additional funding has been issued to local systems for a range of cost pressures, including NHS CHC.

NHS CHC is a package of ongoing National Health Service-funded care for adults with the highest levels of complex, intense or unpredictable needs, who have been assessed as having a 'primary health need'. The Department is responsible for the policy and legislation for NHS CHC, which includes the National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care. This statutory guidance sets out the process for determining eligibility for CHC. The application of this guidance is intended to ensure that those individuals eligible to receive CHC are identified, assessed and receive an appropriate package of care.

■ Cost of Living Payments

Alex Sobel:

[\[36874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the cost of living payments being made in 2022 will be considered as income by local authorities when making care cost calculations.

Gillian Keegan:

As this financial support constitutes one-off payments, it should not be considered as regular income for the purposes of social care costs under the Care Act 2014. The Department has laid a statutory instrument to ensure that these payments are disregarded in the calculations of an adult's capital for the purpose of assessing that individual's financial resources with respect to the provision of adult social care.

■ Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust: Mental Health Services

Kate Osborne:

[\[31926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding the Government has allocated to mental health services in the Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust compared to all other regions in each of the last 5 years.

Gillian Keegan:

The information requested is not held centrally. Local commissioners are responsible for allocating funding to mental health providers, including to local mental health trusts to meet the needs of the local population.

■ Cystic Fibrosis: Health Services

Sir George Howarth:

[\[33713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the proportion of (a) paediatric and (b) adult cystic fibrosis centres in England that did not provide at least 85 per cent of their patients with a management plan discussion at their annual review, for each year since 2015.

Gillian Keegan:

The data is not held centrally in the format requested. However, the following table shows the percentage of patients receiving an annual review in each year from 2015 to 2020.

YEAR	PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS RECEIVING AN ANNUAL REVIEW
2015	91%
2016	91%
2017	95%
2018	96%
2019	96%
2020	91.6%

NHS England contractually requires all paediatric and adult cystic fibrosis centres in England to have a management plan discussion with patients at their annual review. The service specification states that a full review must be undertaken by the specialist centre and a personal care plan must be produced by a consultant and agreed with the patient as a result of every annual review undertaken.

■ Cystic Fibrosis: Mental Health Services and Social Workers**Marsha De Cordova:****[35050]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the average waiting time for (a) paediatric and (b) adult cystic fibrosis inpatients in England to be referred to a (i) clinical psychologist and (ii) social worker in each year since 2015.

Gillian Keegan:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Dementia: Carers**Jim Shannon:****[31840]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional funding for music therapy training for carers working with dementia patients.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department has commissioned research on dementia care and living well with dementia through the National Institute for Health and Care Research, which includes the methods and effectiveness of music therapy. In addition, resources for social prescribing link workers to expand music prescriptions is available at the following link:

<https://musicfordementia.org.uk/advice-resources/toolkits-resources/toolkits-resources-for-social-workers-and-link-workers/>

■ Dementia: Diagnosis

Dame Diana Johnson: [34841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the National Dementia Strategy enables people living with dementia to access an accurate and timely diagnosis.

Gillian Keegan:

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

Cat Smith: [35981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he will make it his policy to set out steps to increase sub-type diagnosis of dementia in the forthcoming dementia strategy.

Gillian Keegan:

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

Cat Smith: [35982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including pilot programmes for the latest innovations in diagnostics in the forthcoming dementia strategy.

Gillian Keegan:

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

■ Dementia: Females

Caroline Lucas: [32944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Alzheimer's Research UK report on The Impact of Dementia on Women, published in May 2022, if he will take steps to tackle the disproportionate impact that dementia has on women in the national dementia strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

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

■ Dementia: Health Services

Caroline Lucas: [33750]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the paper by Schaffer et al. entitled Fine Particulate Matter and Dementia Incidence in the Adult

Changes in Thought Study, published in Environmental Health Perspectives on 4 August 2021, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for (a) Transport and (b) Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on including cross departmental work to improve air quality in the national dementia strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Gillian Keegan:

There have been no recent discussions. We are reviewing plans for dementia in England and further information will be available in due course.

Peter Dowd:

[\[33809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what specific funding will be assigned to the upcoming 10-year plan for dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

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

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[34842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what key areas he expects will be covered in the Government's National Dementia Strategy.

Gillian Keegan:

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

■ Dental Services: York

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to enable people living in York to access an NHS dentist.

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 improve access for patients safely. An additional £50 million was allocated for National Health Service dentistry for the final quarter of 2021/22 to provide urgent care to patients. Of this funding, £8,633,000 was made available to the North East and Yorkshire region, including York. NHS England's Customer Contact Centre offer assistance for patients wishing to access dental services or via NHS 111 for those seeking urgent care.

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with stakeholders, including the British Dental Association, on improvements to the NHS dental system. This aims to improve access to NHS dentistry, including in York.

■ Dentistry: Migrant Workers**Rachael Maskell:** [\[22476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to establish a process whereby people from overseas with professional dentistry qualifications are able to shadow NHS dentists for the purposes of learning the (a) professional language and (b) operations of UK dentistry.

James Morris:

All dentists wishing to join the Performers List in England must demonstrate the equivalent knowledge and experience as a dental practitioner who has completed dental foundation training. Dentists trained overseas can undertake the Performers List Validation by Experience programme in an approved dental practice. An approved validation supervisor will assess the applicant's communication and clinical skills when treating patients and to ensure patient safety.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**Emily Thornberry:** [\[31798\]](#)

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

Maria Caulfield:

The Department had 89 electronic procurement card cardholders on 31 March 2022.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: EU Law**Layla Moran:** [\[27726\]](#)

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

Maria Caulfield:

Between November 2021 and May 2022, 10 Departmental officials were involved in this activity.

There has been no additional non-pay cost to the public purse by creating the dashboard. The process was led by the Cabinet Office, which commissioned Government Departments to find Retained European Union Law (REUL) within its legislation and compile where REUL exists in the United Kingdom's statutes.

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

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Official Engagements

Wes Streeting: [\[36036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will list his engagements on Wednesday 13 July 2022.

Wes Streeting: [\[36037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will list his engagements on (a) the date of his appointment and (b) each day from then up to and including 12 July 2022.

Steve Barclay:

On 13 July, I visited Whipps Cross hospital, the Hamlyn Centre at Imperial College and held meetings with NHS England on ambulances and emergency care, elective services and the hospital building programme. Since my appointment, I have held meetings on subjects such as primary care, pay, capital, data and technology. I have also accompanied shifts with staff in the London and East of England ambulance services. This is in addition to other Ministerial duties.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Official Hospitality

Jon Trickett: [\[27527\]](#)

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

Maria Caulfield:

The Department's expenditure on hospitality was £4,984 in 2019/20 and £66,322 in 2020/21. Data for 2021/22 is currently subject to audit for publication in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts later this year.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Pay

Jon Trickett: [\[28394\]](#)

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

Maria Caulfield:

In 2020, the ratio between the highest paid member of staff and the lowest was 12.9. In 2021, the ratio was 12.3 and 10.7 in 2022.

■ Depressive Illnesses: Mental Health Services

Navendu Mishra: [\[35066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make additional funding available to tackle depression in the context of NHS figures on the rise in the number of adults receiving antidepressants.

Gillian Keegan:

We are investing an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24 to expand mental health services in England to allow a further two million people to access mental health support, including those with depression.

We have also committed to increasing access to talking and psychological therapies through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme to ensure that 1.9 million adults can access support for common mental health conditions, such as depression, by 2023/24.

Eating Disorders: Young People**Ian Lavery:**[\[34929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to increase (a) funding for research into and (b) accessibility of treatment for adolescent eating disorders or potential eating disorders.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). In 2020/21, the NIHR's expenditure on mental health research was £109 million. While it is not usual practice for the NIHR to ring-fence funding for particular topics or conditions, it welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including eating disorders.

Since 2016, we have increased investment in children and young people's community eating disorder services, with an additional £53 million per year from 2021/22 to enhance the capacity of the 70 new or improved community eating disorder teams in England.

Evusheld**Fabian Hamilton:**[\[34828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make Evusheld available to immunocompromised patients on the NHS.

Maggie Throup:

We continue to monitor promising compounds which can be used to prevent infection. While the evidence has most strongly supported the use of COVID-19 treatments rather than prophylaxis, we will keep this under review.

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

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[35894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 31781 on Evusheld, when he plans to conclude the consultation with clinicians on the rollout of Evusheld.

Maggie Throup:

We have now received the advice requested from clinicians, which we are currently considering.

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[35895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 31781 on Evusheld, whether patient groups representing people who are (a) clinically vulnerable, (b) clinically extremely vulnerable and (c) immunosuppressed have been consulted on the rollout of Evusheld.

Maggie Throup:

The Department has met with stakeholder representatives through the Therapeutics Clinical Review Panel and the Antivirals and Therapeutics Taskforce Engagement Board. These meetings discussed progress on treatments for high risk patient groups, including Evusheld.

■ **General Practitioners: Access**

Lee Anderson:

[\[33040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to help patients access GP appointments.

James Morris:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Diana Johnson MP) on 15 June to Question [13657](#).

■ **General Practitioners: Telephone Services**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[32628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to patients of the phone-only GP appointment booking system in use (a) on the Isle of Wight and (b) in the rest of England.

James Morris:

No specific estimate has been made as a phone-only booking system has not been implemented nationally. Patients can contact their general practitioner (GP) practice, including by telephone, in person and using a secure online form. NHS England and NHS Improvement advise that these methods are available to patients in GP practices on the Isle of Wight.

The GP Contract states that a practice must not enter into, renew or extend a contract or other arrangement for telephone services unless it is satisfied that patients will not be charged more for phoning the practice than phoning a

geographical landline number. Where it is not possible for a practice to take reasonable steps to do so, the practice must consider introducing a system where if a caller asks for their call to be returned, this will be done at the practice's own expense.

■ Health Education: Schools

Ian Lavery: [\[34931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to increase support for emotional and mental health and wellbeing in primary schools.

Gillian Keegan:

In 2021/22, we provided an additional £79 million to increase children's mental health services, including expanding the availability of mental health support teams in schools and colleges. These teams now provide support in approximately 25% of the country and we aim for this to increase to more than 500 teams or 35% of pupils by 2023/24.

Mental health support teams integrate with existing measures, such as counselling, educational psychologists, school nurses, pastoral care, educational welfare officers, local authority provision and National Health Service children and young people's mental health services. The Department for Education also provided more than £17 million in 2021/22 to increase existing mental health support in education settings. This includes £9.5 million to enable up to a third of schools and colleges to train a senior mental health lead, through the Government's commitment to fund training for leads in all schools and colleges by 2025.

■ Health Professions: Radiology

Helen Hayes: [\[27674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the finding set out in the Royal College of Radiologists' Clinical radiology census report 2021 that there is a 10 per cent. funded vacancy rate in NHS England's clinical radiology workforce, whether he plans to take steps to ensure that the forthcoming 10 Year Cancer Plan addresses that vacancy rate.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department has commissioned Health Education England (HEE) to review the long-term workforce demand and supply, including in radiology. In addition, the Department asked NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop a long-term workforce plan and its conclusions will be available in due course. The forthcoming 10 Year Cancer Plan will set out plans to ensure that the appropriate workforce is in place to support all cancer patients.

Peter Dowd: [\[35978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of the assessment of the size of the clinical radiology workforce in the report by the Royal College of Radiologists entitled RCR

Clinical radiology census report 2021; and whether his Department will take steps to help increase the number of clinical radiologists in future workforce planning documents.

Maria Caulfield:

At the end of March 2022, there were 5,081 full time equivalent doctors in the specialism of clinical radiology working in the National Health Service, an increase of 1,853 or 57.4% since March 2010. This includes doctors in training, specialists and doctors on other contracts.

The Department has commissioned Health Education England (HEE) to review long-term workforce demand and supply and asked NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop a long-term workforce plan. The conclusions of this work will be available in due course. In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement and HEE are developing a plan to ensure sufficient workforce capacity in community diagnostic centres.

■ **Health Services and Social Services**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[32966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to manage the demands on health and care services in autumn and winter 2022-2023.

Maria Caulfield:

Further guidance for the National Health Service on winter planning and priorities is expected in due course. Additional funding has been made available to support services this year, including £50 million for NHS 111 for urgent care and £150 million for the ambulance service.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[32967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate numbers of staff working in primary and secondary care to meet demand for health and care services during winter 2022-2023.

Maria Caulfield:

Guidance for the National Health Service on winter planning and priorities is expected to be issued in due course.

There are currently more than 1.2 million full time equivalent (FTE) staff or over 1.3 million headcount staff working in the National Health Service. Since April 2021, there are an additional 16,300 professionally qualified clinical staff working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups, including over 4,000 more doctors and over 9,600 more nurses. We are working with NHS England, Health Education England and the profession to increase the general practice workforce in England. There were an additional 1,462 FTE doctors in general practice in March 2022 compared to March 2019. Since 2019, a further 18,000 staff have been recruited into Primary Care Networks and practices in a range of roles, such as clinical pharmacists.

In 2020/21, we invested £450 million to upgrade accident and emergency facilities in over 120 trusts, to increase capacity through expanding waiting areas and the

number of treatment cubicles to reduce overcrowding and maintain infection prevention and control measures. The Spending Review 2021 provides a further £23.3 billion for the NHS from April 2022 to March 2025 to manage the impact of COVID-19, while addressing waiting lists in elective care.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[32968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to provide additional funding to support hospitals in (a) York and (b) England to meet demand for health and care services in winter 2022-2023.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government has provided additional revenue funding for the National Health Service, which increased to £152.6 billion in 2022/23, including this winter. NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) has been allocated £2.78 billion. ICBs will prioritise funding to support hospital services locally to meet patient demand this winter, including in York. Further guidance for the NHS on winter planning and priorities is expected to be issued in due course.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Migrant Workers

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[34945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has received reports of activities by recruitment agencies supplying workers to the UK health and social care sector from overseas in breach of his Department's code of practice on the recruitment of such workers.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: Where concerns have been raised with officials on compliance with the code, these cases have been referred to NHS Employers or other relevant regulatory bodies.

NHS Employers hosts a list of agencies which adhere to the code to assist employers during the selection process. It undertakes routine checks of agencies' compliance with the code, responds to complaints or breaches and takes necessary action where the code is contravened.

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[34947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which countries his Department is in negotiations with on Government-to-government agreements on health and social care workforce recruitment as of 12 July 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: We are unable to provide the information requested as it would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states.

When signed, Government-to-Government agreements are published to ensure transparency. All agreements on health worker migration are explicit in the commitment to ensure fair, ethical, and sustainable recruitment and employment of

healthcare professionals pursuant to existing laws and regulations in each partner country. The Government has agreed and published agreements with Philippines, Malaysia, Kenya and Sri Lanka.

■ Health Services: Migrant Workers

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[34948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Bilateral agreement between the UK and Kenya on healthcare workforce collaboration, published on 11 November 2021, if he will make an assessment of the level of compliance by recruitment agencies with the sections of that agreement relating to their activities.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: The first cohort of Kenyan nurses recruited via this agreement arrived in the United Kingdom in June 2021. The organisations engaged in this recruitment were compliant with the agreement.

■ Health Services: Tourism

Rachael Maskell:

[\[28447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he takes specific steps to ensure adequate funding for health provision in UK tourist destinations.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England is responsible for allocating healthcare resources to integrated commissioning boards (ICBs) to meet the healthcare needs of the local population. These resources are calculated using an independently recommended weighted-capitation formula, which includes factors statistically associated with higher or lower need per head. 'Who Pays? Determining which NHS commissioner is responsible for commissioning healthcare services and making payments to providers' sets out how local National Health Service providers can make appropriate charges to the relevant ICB where people who are registered with a general practitioner in another area, such as United Kingdom holidaymakers, make use of NHS services.

For those visiting from overseas, where a visitor is chargeable for services, NHS providers have a statutory duty to identify these individuals and follow the mechanisms for recovering payment for health provision. In the case of visitors entitled to free NHS care, NHS England takes account of charge-exempt patients in setting ICB allocations.

■ Health Services: Waiting Lists

Wes Streeting:

[\[32580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of patients who will choose to wait longer than two years for NHS treatment by the end of July 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 14 July 2022]: No formal estimate has been made, as centrally validated data is not held. Patients may choose to wait until friends or family can support them during recovery or to receive treatment locally rather than accepting an alternative offer. The National Health Service continues to support patients awaiting treatment, including regular engagement and reviews of their condition.

Wes Streeting:[\[33869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of complex patients who will have been waiting more than two years for care by the end of July 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

No formal estimate has been made, as no centrally validated data is available. However, engagement with the National Health Service suggests a small number of patients with complex cases will have waited longer than two years for NHS treatment by the end of July 2022.

Health: Screening**Mike Amesbury:**[\[25996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time for NHS biopsy results is; and what steps his Department taking to reduce those waiting times.

Mike Amesbury:[\[25997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of outsourcing NHS biopsy contracts on waiting times for results; and what discussions he has had with representatives of outsourced providers on reducing waiting times for test results.

Mike Amesbury:[\[25998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the waiting times for biopsy results at Leighton Hospital; and if he will hold discussions with Leighton Hospital and outsourced providers to (a) improve biopsy care and (b) reduce waiting times for results.

Maria Caulfield:

Information on the average time for National Health Service biopsy results is not collected in the format requested. The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' sets out for how the NHS will recover and expand elective services over the next three years, including biopsy services. The Department has committed £2.3 billion to increase the volume of diagnostic activity, including the launch of up to 160 community diagnostic centres (CDC) by 2024/25 to increase capacity for clinical checks, including simple biopsies. Since July 2021, CDCs have delivered more than one million additional checks. This funding will also support the

digitisation of cell pathology services in the NHS to accelerate turnaround times in testing and improve digital infrastructure.

No specific assessment of the effect of outsourcing NHS biopsy contracts or current waiting times at Leighton Hospital has been made and there are no plans to have such discussions with providers. Decisions to outsource histology reporting are taken by the clinical leadership of the local pathology network or laboratory.

■ Heart Diseases: Screening

Henry Smith:

[\[26734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of community diagnostic centres on waiting times for echocardiography.

Maria Caulfield:

No formal assessment has been made. However, as of 12 June 2022, community diagnostic centres have completed 29,153 additional echocardiography scans.

■ Hospitals: Admissions

Wes Streeting:

[\[34990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the rising cost of living on hospital admissions in England.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. However, the Government is providing £22 billion in 2022/23 to address the effect of the current global challenges. In addition, integrated care systems must ensure that urgent community response services are available for local populations.

■ Hospitals: Construction

Rachael Maskell:

[\[31876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to commence the construction of the next tranche of new hospitals.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government has committed to build 40 new hospitals by 2030, in addition to eight previously announced schemes. Of the 48 schemes, six are under construction and one is completed.

The hospital schemes are grouped into cohorts for delivery by 2030, based on an assessment of readiness to progress and the extent to which schemes can realise the benefits of the national programme. This assessment is subject to continuous review and the timescales for individual schemes may change. The following table shows the number of schemes in each cohort and the expected start dates of construction.

COHORT	NUMBER OF SCHEMES	EXPECTED START DATE FOR CONSTRUCTION
Cohort 1 'In-flight' schemes	8	Schemes are complete, in construction or in the final stages of approval
Cohort 2 'Early' schemes	10	Within the period 2022 to 2024
Cohort 3 'Pathfinder' schemes	8	Start dates to be confirmed
Cohort 4 'Full adopter' schemes	14	From 2025
Cohort 5 'Future eight' schemes	8	From 2025, subject to an ongoing selection process and confirmation

■ Hospitals: Visits

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[33026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will issue guidance to hospitals on allowing both parents to visit their child in hospital at the same time.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England's guidance states that providers are expected to facilitate visits and to do so in a risk-managed way. Visiting should be accommodated for at least one hour per day and ideally for longer. Visiting policies also need to reflect that COVID-19 is in general circulation. National Health Service trusts and other organisations have responsibility to make local risk assessments of the appropriate level of visiting which can be implemented.

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[\[31778\]](#)

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

Maria Caulfield:

With NHS England and NHS Improvement, we have regular discussions with National Health Service trusts on waiting lists for planned treatment. These discussions include assessing current progress in addressing backlogs, offering support and sharing advice to deliver the targets within the 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care'.

The University Hospitals of Dorset NHS Trust are optimising efficiencies within surgical theatres and improving staff and patient experience through the Trust's Enabling Excellence, Digital Outpatients and Pathway Transformation programme.

■ Integrated Care Systems

Chris Green:

[\[31133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) health and (b) infrastructure requirements of each of the integrated care systems in England.

Maria Caulfield:

The Strategic Infrastructure Board is sponsoring a programme to support integrated care boards as these bodies assume the role for strategic infrastructure planning in local areas. NHS England is working with system leaders throughout the development of this programme.

■ Integrated Care Systems: Hendon

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[25829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how health and social care services are being integrated in Hendon constituency.

Gillian Keegan:

In Hendon, the Integrated Paediatric Service Programme and Paediatric multi-disciplinary team, a collaboration of secondary care consultant paediatricians, early years representatives and primary care general practitioners, are facilitating early expert advice and care.

The cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention and management workstream has been established in Hendon to address health inequalities in outcomes for CVD, with the voluntary care sector, Inclusion Barnet, public health and the Barnet Borough Partnership.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largin:

[\[32634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 4 May 2022 from the hon. Member for High Peak, reference RL32229.

Maria Caulfield:

We replied to the hon. Member on 12 July 2022.

■ Mental Health Services: Cheshire**Ian Lavery:**[\[34925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make additional funding available for the provision of child and adolescent mental health services in patient hospitals in north Cheshire.

Gillian Keegan:

It is for local commissioners to allocate funding to meet the needs of children and young people in the local population, including in Cheshire. Through the Mental Health Investment Standard (MHIS), local National Health Service organisations must increase the planned spending on mental health services by a greater proportion than its overall increase in budget allocation each year. All clinical commissioning groups met the MHIS in 2020/21.

We have also committed to invest an additional £2.3 billion a year into mental health services by 2023/24 to ensure an additional 345,000 children and young people will have access to mental health services.

■ Mental Health Services: Finance**Ian Lavery:**[\[34927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to increase funding for mental health and wellbeing support in disadvantaged areas.

Gillian Keegan:

We are investing at least £2.3 billion a year in mental health services by 2023/24 to allow an additional two million people in England to access National Health Service-funded mental health services. The funding and provision of health services, including mental health services, are the responsibility of integrated care systems, which can allocate funding according to local need. Through the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan, we made £15 million available to invest in activity to promote positive mental health in the most deprived local authority areas in England.

■ Mental Health Services: Jarrow**Kate Osborne:**[\[31931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of children and young people waiting to access children and mental health services in the Jarrow constituency.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific estimate has been made, as there are no overall waiting time standards. However, data on waiting times is available for mental health services where a waiting time standard is in place, which includes access to psychological therapies, early intervention in psychosis and children and young people eating disorders. This data is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-mental-health-dashboard/>

In February 2022, NHS England published the outcomes of its consultation on the potential introduction of five new access and waiting time standards for mental health services. We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement on the next steps.

■ Mental Health Services: Mothers

Feryal Clark:

[35086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of counselling services available to new mothers who have (a) experienced birth trauma, (b) existing mental health conditions and (c) babies with suspected neonatal problems.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific assessment has been made. However, specialist community perinatal mental health services have now been deployed in England. The NHS Long Term Plan committed to implementing new measures to improve safety, quality and continuity of care to allow an additional 24,000 women to access specialist perinatal mental health care by 2023/24. This care will also be available from preconception to 24 months after birth, which will provide an additional year of support.

We are expanding access to psychological and talking therapies within specialist perinatal mental health services. This includes 33 new maternal mental health services providing psychological therapy, maternity services and reproductive health for women with mental health needs following trauma or loss related to their maternity experience. These will be available in England by March 2024. We are also investing £100 million in perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship support by 2024/25, through the Start for Life and Family Hub programme in 75 upper tier local authorities in England.

■ Mental Health Services: Refugees

Ian Lavery:

[34928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is providing financial support for psychological and emotional treatment for Ukrainian refugees.

Gillian Keegan:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leeds North West (Alex Sobel MP) on 9 June 2022 to Question [11851](#).

■ Midwives

Grahame Morris:

[34892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) total number and (b) full-time equivalent number of midwives worked in the NHS in (i) England and (ii) each

region of England in (A) the most recent month for which data is available and (B) the same month in the preceding year.

Grahame Morris:

[\[34894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many midwives there were in the NHS in England in (a) December 2019 and (b) the most recent month for which data is available.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) workforce statistics for England. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but excludes staff working in primary care, general practitioner surgeries, local authorities, and other providers. In December 2019, there were 22,061 full time equivalent (FTE) midwives working in HCHS in England. In April 2022, the most recent data available, there were 21,741 FTE midwives in HCHS in England.

The following table shows the headcount and number of FTE midwives working in the HCHS in England and each National Health Service region in March 2022 and March 2021.

	HCHS MIDWIVES HEADCOUNT		HCHS MIDWIVES, FTE	
	March 2022	March 2021	March 2022	
March 2021				
England	27,188	26,636	22,523	22,027
East of England	2,807	2,800	2,321	2,307
London	4,986	4,911	4,335	4,262
Midlands	5,064	5,015	4,147	4,076
North East and Yorkshire	4,214	4,033	3,475	3,331
North West	3,731	3,614	3,100	3,009
South East	3,882	3,793	3,121	3,041
South West	2,505	2,473	2,024	2,001

Source: NHS Digital HCHS Workforce Statistics

Grahame Morris:

[34893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the age profile was of the NHS midwifery workforce in (a) England and (b) each region of England in the most recent period for which data is available.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics for England. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), but excludes staff working in primary care, general practitioner surgeries, local authorities and other providers.

The attached table shows the age profile of midwives by headcount working in National Health Service trusts and CCGs in England and NHS regions as of 31 March 2022.

Attachments:

1. [TABLE \[FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE Table PQ34893 age profile of midwives in England \(1\).docx\]](#)

■ NHS: Databases

Clive Lewis:

[31888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the information published in the Prior Information Notice for the NHS Federated Data Platform is accurate.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 12 July 2022]: The published Prior Information Notice is accurate and is available at the following link:

<https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/009960-2022>

■ NHS: Sciensus

Emma Hardy:

[26838]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the Sciensus Group's performance on its NHS contracts.

Emma Hardy:

[26839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what contracts the NHS holds with Sciensus Group as on 28 June 2022; and what the value is of those contracts.

Maria Caulfield:

In England, there are 12 providers of homecare medicines services and approximately 500,000 patients in receipt of a homecare medicines service. Sciensus Group provides services to over 200,000 of these patients. However, information is not collected centrally the value of these contracts. NHS England is not aware of any specific issues concerns regarding the performance of Sciensus Group in National Health Service contracts or framework agreements.

As part of the quality assurance and governance processes, homecare providers, including the Sciensus Group, are assessed on a monthly basis against key performance indicators (KPIs) and through meetings with the National Homecare Medicines Committee and NHS England. Where a provider does not meet the relevant KPIs, action will be taken to ensure that levels of service return to the agreed standards.

■ **NHS: Workplace Pensions**

Ben Lake: [\[36072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of recent inflation levels on the NHS pension scheme.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Health Service Pension Scheme protects the value of pensions in payment by increasing them by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) each April, based on the CPI figure from the previous September. The Scheme also revalues accrued career-average pension benefits by CPI plus 1.5% each year for active members.

A higher rate of revaluation will increase the size of pensions and may therefore increase annual allowance pension tax liability where inflation is increasing. However, when inflation reduces in the subsequent tax year, this may increase the scope for more pension growth before exceeding the annual allowance that year. Most NHS staff build their pension tax-free. Where the annual allowance is breached, it is not required to pay the tax in advance. The Scheme Pays facility allows staff to meet any annual allowance charge from their existing pension.

■ **Pembrolizumab**

Jim Shannon: [\[32539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to make Pembrolizumab available on the NHS for people with tumours.

Maria Caulfield:

Pembrolizumab is licensed in the treatment of several different types of cancer and has been recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for the treatment of tumours, such as melanoma and non-small cell lung cancer subject to specified clinical criteria. Pembrolizumab is available to National Health Service patients in England in line with NICE's recommendations.

■ **Personality Disorders: Medical Treatments and Research**

Ian Lavery: [\[34932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to increase (a) research into and (b) treatment of personality disorders.

Gillian Keegan:

Through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) we have funded or supported studies into the causes and treatments of personality disorder. This includes a study to evaluate dialectical behavioural therapy skills for employment for individuals with a personality disorder and a randomised controlled trial of structured psychological support for people with a personality disorder. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including personality disorder. The NIHR's funding is available through open competition and we encourage researchers to submit applications in this area.

We will invest an additional £1 billion in community mental health care for adults with severe mental illness by 2023/24. This will allow a further 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illnesses, including personality disorders, greater choice and control over their care and to live well in their communities.

■ Protective Clothing: Storage**Wes Streeting:**[\[34988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what quantity of personal protective equipment purchased by his Department is in storage abroad as on 12 July 2022; and in which countries is it stored.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 14 July 2022]: This information is not held in the format requested. However, as of 27 June 2022, there were 2.4 billion items of personal protective equipment stored in China. There are no storage arrangements with other countries.

Wes Streeting:[\[34989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) total cost to the public purse and (b) cost by country has been of storing personal protective equipment purchased by his Department abroad in each year since 2020.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 14 July 2022]: In 2020/21, the total cost of storage for personal protective equipment (PPE), excluding detention and demurrage costs, was £168 million. Of this, £12 million was spent on storage in China and £156 million in the United Kingdom.

In 2021/22, the total cost of storage for PPE, excluding detention and demurrage was £267 million, which includes an estimate for costs in March 2022. Of this, £23 million was spent on storage in China and £244 million in the UK.

■ Radiotherapy**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[35908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to expand radiotherapy service capacity; and what assessment he has made of potential future demand for those services.

James Morris:

In 2022/23, NHS England intends to undertake a capacity and demand review of external beam radiotherapy capacity. This aims to support local systems to plan radiotherapy provision, including the replacement of equipment.

■ **Sleep****Martyn Day:**[\[34985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 354 on Sleep, when his Department plans to publish findings from its evidence review on sleep and health.

Gillian Keegan:

The review has been completed and the outcomes will be published in due course.

■ **Social Services: Databases****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[32986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the quality and quantity of adult social care data; and whether he plans to collect data on (a) numbers and characteristics of people accessing care and support, (b) care outcomes and (c) market conditions.

Gillian Keegan:

The 'People at the Heart of Care' white paper and 'Data saves lives: reshaping health and social care with data', published in June 2022, set out how we will improve adult social care data. This includes the collection of pseudonymised client-level data from local authorities to ensure that the Government, local authorities and those providing care have regular and comprehensive data to enable person-centred care. The Health and Care Act 2022 provides powers to require data from regulated adult social care providers, which will improve our understanding of those accessing care and support, care outcomes and market conditions.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[32987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve adult social care (a) data sharing and (b) data-linkage.

Gillian Keegan:

Each integrated care system in England has a basic shared care record which is accessible to appropriate staff and enables sharing of information between general practitioner practices and National Health Service trusts. We have provided at least £150 million to support Care Quality Commission registered care providers to adopt a digital social care record and committed that within six months of a care provider implementing a digital social care record, it can connect to the local shared care record. By March 2023, we set out a standardised approach to social care terminology which will support interoperability and sharing of data across social care and health.

■ Speech and Language Therapy: Health Services

Geraint Davies:

[\[35829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Department's policy paper Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care published in March 2022, whether speech and language therapy services regarded as part of 'elective care services'.

Gillian Keegan:

In England, speech and language therapy services are not consultant-led and therefore not included in the elective care services.

■ St Helens and Knowsley Hospital Services NHS Trust: Discharges

Derek Twigg:

[\[31747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients from the Halton local authority area are currently deemed to be medically well enough for discharge from the St Helen's and Knowsley NHS Acute Hospital Trust but are unable to leave the hospital because arrangements for continuing care have not been finalised.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: This information is not collected in the format requested. As of 31 May 2022, there were 125 patients remaining in hospital in St Helen's and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust who no longer met the criteria to reside. This data includes all patients who no longer meet the criteria to reside and who remain in hospital, regardless of the reason.

■ Strokes: Health Services

Seema Malhotra:

[\[35949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help improve stroke prevention.

James Morris:

The Department is supporting local authorities in reinstating the NHS Health Check programme following a pause during the COVID-19 pandemic. NHS Health Checks aim to prevent stroke and other forms of cardiovascular disease (CVD) among adults aged 40 to 74 years old

Following a review in 2021, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities is supporting local authorities to increase the uptake and impact of the NHS Health Check. NHS England has commissioned a national primary care audit, CVDPREVENT, to provide data on the diagnosis and management of six high risk conditions which cause stroke, heart attack and dementia. The data will enable the National Health Service to identify disparities and opportunities for improvement in the prevention of stroke and other CVD conditions.

■ Surgery: Waiting Lists

Wes Streeting:

[\[32579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in the context of the commitment in the NHS' Delivery plan for tackling the covid-19 backlog of elective care published on 8 February 2022, if he will take steps to ensure that no patient will be waiting longer than two years for NHS treatment by the end of July 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 14 July 2022]: The National Health Service has developed a tiered programme of support and scrutiny for patients who have experienced the longest waiting times. This involves support from expert teams and a national mutual aid programme to match patients to providers with capacity. Patients waiting up to two years for treatment are being offered greater choice in where they receive treatment to suit their individual circumstances.

We have provided more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to increase activity in elective services, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Children

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[34940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 11682 on Asylum: Children and with reference to the 355 children aged 11 to 17 who were housed by her Department between 22 February and 1 June 2022, how many local authorities did she direct to look after those children using her powers under section 72 of the Immigration Act 2016; how many local authorities refused to do so; and if she will publish those local authorities.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: All local authorities with children's services in the UK have been directed to participate in the NTS. This means they are required to accept transfers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) into their care, providing crucial placements to these children.

Only one local authority has challenged the direction to participate in the scheme. Given this matter is currently subject to legal challenge, I am unable to comment further at this time.

■ Asylum: Rwanda

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[35911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to establish the Monitoring Committee set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership.

Simon Baynes:

An independent Monitoring Committee for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership will monitor the entire relocation process and compliance with assurances in the Memorandum of Understanding, including the processing of asylum claims and provision of support in Rwanda.

The Monitoring Committee will agree an annual, resourced monitoring plan with the Joint Committee. The terms of reference and membership of the Monitoring Committee for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership are in the process of being developed and will set out how the Monitoring Committee will report its findings.

The Monitoring Committee is due to become established over the next few weeks. More details on this will be set out in due course.

■ Employment Agencies: Migrant Workers**Stephen Kinnock:**[\[32959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has received reports of unlawful activities by recruitment agencies bringing care workers to the UK under the new immigration rules announced by her Department on 24 January 2022.

Stephen Kinnock:[\[33970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority on the (a) prevalence and (b) implications for her policies of the exploitation of workers recruited to the care sector from overseas.

Kevin Foster:

The Government takes reports of illegal and unsafe employment practices, including in the social care sector, incredibly seriously. The Government works closely with enforcement bodies, including the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA). Any information regarding allegations of Modern Slavery practices should be referred to the GLAA. In addition, the Government is guided by the Director of Labour Market Enforcement strategy, which includes an assessment of the scale and nature of non-compliance across all sectors, which enables the enforcement bodies to target their activity in areas of greatest concern.

Employers in the health and care sector are expected to adhere to the Department for Health and Social Care's code of practice in their recruitment and support of overseas employees. This is in the process of being updated and will include stronger guidance on ensuring fairness in recruitment practices and setting out clear routes of escalation for anyone with concerns about exploitative recruitment or employment practices to ensure they can be fully investigated by the appropriate organisation.

The Home Office's sponsor licence system also places clear and binding requirements and obligations on employers looking to recruit and manage overseas

employees. Should an employer be found to be in breach of these requirements we will take action and can remove their ability to recruit from overseas.

■ HM Passport Office

Dr Rupa Huq:

[31178]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that people who need fast-track HM Passport Office appointments for (a) business and (b) compassionate purposes are able to secure an appointment as a priority.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 11 July 2022]: Her Majesty's Passport Office has explored options to further increase appointment capacity for its urgent services. This has led to the recent opening of an eighth public counter, in Birmingham, to help support those people whose need for urgent travel does not meet the compassionate criteria.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

John Healey:

[31179]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people who are eligible for the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

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

The capacity of the UK to resettle people is not unlimited and difficult decisions have to be made on who will be prioritised. However, we will exceed our initial aim to resettle 5,000 people through the ACRS in the first year.

Those eligible for the ACRS will be prioritised and referred through one of three pathways as set out in a Statement to Parliament on 6 January 2022:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/oral-statement-on-the-afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

There are around 6,500 people in the UK who have been brought to safety through and after the evacuation and who are eligible for the ACRS. They include women's rights activists, journalists, and prosecutors, as well as Afghan families of British Nationals.

Under pathway two, we anticipate receiving referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for up to 2,000 refugees during the first year of this pathway, although this number will be kept under review. We will continue to receive UNHCR referrals to the scheme in coming years.

Under pathway three, in the first year we will offer resettlement places to up to 1,500 people from the three identified cohorts (British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni).

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

Resettlement figures for the ACRS will be published in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

■ Visas: Applications

Peter Kyle:

[\[34993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to increase the number of priority appointments available for priority service visa applicants.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: UKVI closely monitor visa demand across all overseas locations and remain focussed on clearing the oldest applications as quickly as possible. We continue to review the availability of priority visa services and any changes will be published at Get a faster decision on your visa or settlement application: Applying from outside the UK - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Customers applying for priority visa services from within the UK to the UK Visa and Citizenship Application Service (UKVCAS) do not have to select a specific PV appointment, they can select any appointment at any site shown to them on the UKVCAS website

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Cameras

Steve Reed:

[\[34938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether restrictions on the use of cameras in court rooms prevents the wearing of body-worn cameras being worn by staff escorting suspects into court.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Currently Prisoner Escort and Custody Services staff are not permitted to wear or use Body Worn Cameras (BWVC) in court buildings due to existing legislation (s.41 Criminal Justice Act 1925 and s.9 Contempt of Court Act 1981) that prohibits cameras and recording equipment in court buildings, including BWVC.

The Ministry of Justice is committed to progressing work to review and potentially take forward the legislative change to permit the use of BWVC in court buildings as soon as practicable.

■ Courts: Pilot Schemes

Steve Reed:

[\[35961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the speech entitled Lord Chancellor's Speech: White Paper Launch - A Smarter Approach to Sentencing, published on 16 September 2020, whether his Department has implemented the pilots for the problem-solving courts.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government committed to piloting up to five Problem Solving Courts pilots in the Sentencing White Paper published in September 2020, and legislated in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022 to provide the legislative framework to enable the pilots to operate.

The Government announced on Sunday 17th July the location of two PSCs which will focus on offenders with substance misuse issues, at Liverpool and Teesside Crown Courts. A PSC for female offenders with complex needs will be in Birmingham Magistrates Court. These pilots are planned to launch from April 2023.

We are considering a range of locations for the remaining PSCs in order to ensure that they are situated in the best possible areas to provide the broadest range of support services to help manage offenders in the community.

■ Domestic Abuse: Convictions

Steve Reed:

[\[34939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were convicted of domestic abuse offences after having being previously convicted of domestic abuse offences in each of the last ten years for which data is available.

Tom Pursglove:

The Ministry of Justice does not hold the data requested centrally and information could only be identified by manually searching case records at disproportionate cost. Offences involving domestic abuse can take various forms and are prosecuted under the offence in law that best reflects their nature and circumstances, for example, harassment. These offences can take the form of domestic abuse or non-domestic abuse and data collected centrally from courts does not distinguish between the two.

The Government is committed to tackling this abhorrent crime, demonstrated by our landmark Domestic Abuse Act passed last year, bringing in important new protections and support for victims in court and creating new offences such as of non-fatal strangulation and suffocation. Building on the Act, the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan published in March seeks to transform the whole of society's response in order to prevent offending, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the systems processes in place needed to deliver these goals.

In May, we published our draft Victims Bill and wider package of measures, to put victims at the heart of the criminal justice system. The Bill will amplify victims' voices

and entitlements, strengthen transparency and the oversight of victims' treatment by criminal justice agencies, and improve support for victims.

■ **Fraud: Prosecutions**

Steve Reed: [34936]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2022 to Question 31123 on Criminal Proceedings: Statistics, how many defendants were (a) prosecuted for and (b) convicted of fraud offences at each Crown Court in England and Wales in each year for which data is available since 2011.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Ministry of Justice holds information on the number of defendants prosecuted and convicted for fraud offences, between 2011 and 2021, in England and Wales, by Crown Court. The data requested has been provided in the attached tables.

Attachments:

1. [PQ 34936 Table \[2022-07-15 34936.xlsx\]](#)

■ **Ministry of Justice: Departmental Responsibilities**

Steve Reed: [35960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the full list of Ministerial responsibilities within his Department.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Departmental responsibilities for MoJ Ministers have all been published on the department's gov.uk pages. These can be found via the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice>.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Devolution**

Liz Saville Roberts: [36043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) publications have been produced by and (b) formal meetings held involving the Justice Devolution Team within his Department since January 2020.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Justice Devolution Team has not issued any publications since January 2020. Since January 2020, the Justice Devolution Team has engaged with stakeholders from across the MoJ and has been involved in formal meetings with: the Lord Chancellor and junior Ministers on a regular basis; the MoJ's Non-Executive Director with responsibility for devolution; and the MoJ's Executive Committee and senior MoJ officials. In addition, the Justice Devolution Team also regularly engage with officials in the Devolved Governments in a number of forums and this remains an ongoing priority.

■ Prisoners: Literacy and Numeracy

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[32947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the (a) literacy and (b) numeracy of people in prison.

Stuart Andrew:

The Prisons Strategy White Paper sets out the government's ambition to equip all prisoners with the literacy and numeracy skills they need to get jobs on release. To support this, HMPPS has introduced new performance measures for English and maths, and we are holding Governors and providers to account for progress.

The delivery of face-to-face education was constrained by the pandemic but the numbers of enrolments on literacy and numeracy courses are now back up to, and in some cases exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

The joint report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Ofsted on *Prison education: a review of reading education in prisons* highlighted the need to improve literacy education in prisons. To address its recommendations, we are reviewing the current mechanisms for assessing and recording the levels of prisoners' reading, improving the curriculum guidance given to governors to ensure they prioritise the teaching of reading, and reviewing teacher capability to ensure that all providers have staff who are properly qualified to teach reading.

To improve support for prisoners with additional learning needs we have started to recruit new support managers for prisoners with conditions such as learning disabilities, autism, acquired brain injury or ADHD

We are also planning to develop a Literacy Innovation Scheme to encourage new providers to work with us to trial new approaches to teaching reading with the aim of driving up quality and improving outcomes across the estate.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Buildings: Insulation

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[33748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's policy is on leaseholders who need to re-mortgage to pay for fire safety remediation works but cannot secure an EWS1 form to do so.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The leaseholder protections in the Building Safety Act came into force on 28 June 2022. This means qualifying leaseholders in England can no longer be charged for cladding remediation. There are legal protections in place for non-cladding costs which are capped and spread over ten years.

Furthermore, qualifying leaseholders in properties valued at below £325,00 in Greater London and £175,000 elsewhere in England will be protected from all cladding and non-cladding costs.

We are working with lenders to ensure that a qualifying lease certificate will provide all necessary assurances for mortgage decisions.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[33749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the number of leaseholders that require an EWS1 form to (a) move or (b) re-mortgage.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The requirement for and use of EWS1 forms is determined by the lending policies of banks and building societies. Not all lenders ask for an EWS1 form, but when or whether they do remains a commercial decision. Data published by the department on 19 May 2022 demonstrates that lenders require EWS1 forms for fewer than 1 in 10 mortgage valuations for flats.

Major lenders confirmed in a statement on the 15 July, that the Building Safety Act means that they will lend on properties impacted by building safety issues on the basis of a qualifying lease certificate, subject to lenders' individual lending policies.

■ Community Relations: Religion

Sir Stephen Timms:

[\[35830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which Minister in his Department is responsible for faith community engagement.

Paul Scully:

As with all departmental business, the Secretary of State maintains overall responsibility for the work of the department, and I support the Secretary of State on faith community engagement.

■ Housing Associations: Service Charges

Dan Carden:

[\[36090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to review the practice of service charging by housing association landlords.

Eddie Hughes:

The law is clear that variable service charges must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, the work or services must be of a reasonable standard. The Government believes that there should be a clear route to challenge or redress if things go wrong.

The Government's policy statement on rents for social housing (published in February 2019) encourages registered providers of social housing to keep increases for services charges in line with inflation, within CPI+1% per annum, to help keep

charges affordable. It also states that tenants should be supplied with clear information on how service charges are set, and in the case of social rent properties, providers are expected to identify service charges separately from the rent charge.

The Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard notes that registered providers must comply with all the requirements and expectations of the Government's Rent Policy Statement on the setting, increase and decrease of rents and service charges.

■ Landlords: Databases

Mrs Paulette Hamilton: [\[36144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many entries have been made on the Database of Rogue Landlords and Property Agents in (a) England, (b) Birmingham and (c) Birmingham Erdington constituency since that database was established.

Eddie Hughes:

There are currently 57 entries on the Database of Rogue Landlords and Property Agents.

There are currently no entries listed on the Database in the Birmingham and Birmingham Erdington Constituency.

Local authorities are responsible for uploading and maintaining records on the Database. Where records have expired, local authorities are required to remove the entry from the Database.

■ Levelling Up Fund

Alexander Stafford: [\[32636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his planned timetable is for opening the online portal for applications for the second round of the Levelling Up Fund.

Lia Nici:

I refer my Hon Friend to the written statement made by my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State ([HCWS 207](#)) on 15 July 2022.

■ Local Government: Remote Meetings

Daisy Cooper: [\[36123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to reinstate the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 to enable local authorities to hold virtual meetings, in the context of the rise in covid-19 infections.

Paul Scully:

The Government launched a call for evidence last year to gather views and inform a longer-term decision about whether to make express provision for councils to meet

remotely and in hybrid form on a permanent basis. The department has considered the responses to the consultation and the Government will respond shortly.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Fleur Anderson:

[\[33020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Answer to the Question from the hon. Member for Sheffield South East at Prime Minister's Questions on 6 July 2022, Official Report, column 873, when Ukrainian refugees will be able to move from the Ukraine Family Scheme to the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

More than 95,000 Ukrainians have arrived in the UK since Putin's invasion. The overwhelming majority of people are settling in well but in the minority of cases where a Family Scheme placement breaks down, councils have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their head.

We are exploring all options for providing suitable accommodation for those impacted, including the possibility of using sponsors for the Family Scheme for people presenting homeless.

■ Supported Housing: Housing Benefit

Mrs Paulette Hamilton:

[\[36150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a robust mandatory licensing scheme for Exempt Accommodation.

Eddie Hughes:

On 17 March, I announced the Government's intention to address quality concerns in supported exempt accommodation, and introduce measures to put an end to unscrupulous landlords exploiting some of the most vulnerable in our society.

The package of measures announced include:

- Standards for the support provided to residents to ensure residents receive the good quality support they expect and deserve.
- New powers for local authorities to enforce standards and be able to better manage their local supported housing market.
- Changes to Housing Benefit regulations to seek to define care, support and supervision to improve quality and value for money across all specified supported housing provision.

The measures are intended to mandate providers to deliver quality services and hold landlords to account where they are not doing this. We will bring these forward when parliamentary time allows.

PRIME MINISTER

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Caroline Lucas: [\[35912\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to the Answer to the Question from the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion at Prime Minister's Questions on 22 June 2022, Official Report, column 840, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 22 June, (b) 5 July and (c) 11 July 2022 from the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion.

Boris Johnson:

A reply will be sent by the relevant Minister in due course.

SCOTLAND

■ **Scotland Office: Advertising**

Jon Trickett: [\[34822\]](#)

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

Mr Alister Jack:

The Scotland Office spend on advertising in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022 is shown below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND
19-20	£36,704
20-21	£75,681
21-22	£39,818

TRANSPORT

■ **Airlines**

Michelle Donelan: [\[35019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to (a) support airlines in preventing flight cancellations and (b) help the airline sector to tackle staff shortages.

Robert Courts:

The aviation industry operates in the private sector, therefore it is the responsibility of the industry to manage demand, recruit and roster staff and have appropriate mitigations in place.

We have been clear that the aviation sector's recovery and associated challenges are the responsibility of the aviation sector.

The Government recognised that while the issues was one for industry to solve, a series of targeted measures could support their efforts . Therefore, on 30 June, the Secretary of State announced a 22-point plan, which sets out the measures the Government is taking to support the aviation industry.

Included in these measures was a one-off slot "amnesty" giving airlines the flexibility to operate a reliable schedule and avoid last minute cancellations for passengers.

We have also changed the law to allow greater flexibility over background checks for aviation staff, cutting the time it takes to bring in newly recruited staff and alleviating pressure, while ensuring that safety and security are not compromised.

The Government has taken action to support the industry. Now the sector itself needs to take the appropriate steps to ensuring they deliver realistic summer schedules, work together as an ecosystem, and put the consumer first.

■ Airports: Vetting

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[33954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what targets the Civil Aviation Authority sets for the time to process airport staff's security and safety checks before they can take up employment; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The Civil Aviation Authority and Department for Transport do not process airport staff security checks and there are no targets that are set. It is important to thoroughly check that an individual working at an airport does not pose a threat to the travelling public.

In recent months, Government has been working with the aviation industry to offer support and ways to speed up the employment process for prospective airport staff conducted by industry.

Where possible, UK Security Vetting (UKSV) responsible for the government security checks has prioritised applications from the aviation sector. 97% of Accreditation Checks being completed in around five days on average, with Counter Terrorist Checks (CTC) in the Aviation sector being processed in under ten days on average.

■ Aviation: Recruitment

Mike Kane:

[\[35963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Written Statement of 30 June 2022 entitled 22-point plan to tackle aviation disruption, when he plans to launch the Generation Aviation campaign to increase the number of people applying for jobs in the sector.

Robert Courts:

The Department for Transport will launch the Generation Aviation campaign in due course. The campaign will aim to work with industry to raise awareness of aviation careers and increase the number of people applying for jobs in the aviation sector.

■ Aviation: Standards**Mike Kane:**[\[35962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the planned timetable is for the publication of the review conducted by the Civil Aviation Authority into (a) practices to ensure that legal responsibilities on providing care and assistance, refunds, and compensation are being met and (b) encouraging best practice.

Robert Courts:

Government and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) have been clear with industry on their obligations to passengers in the event of flight disruptions. The CAA is undertaking engagement and information gathering with airlines. The CAA, as the regulator for aviation, will take enforcement action where they identify systemic failures.

CAA publishes guidance to industry to support good practice. Additionally, we are regularly engaging with industry through the weekly Strategic Risk Group and through our development of the Aviation Passenger Charter to encourage best practice.

It is essential that consumers have access to the information they need when travelling and are clear on their rights and responsibilities. The CAA and industry already publish guidance for consumers. To further support this, the Government is working with the CAA, industry, disability and consumer groups to develop and publish an Aviation Passenger Charter. The Charter will provide passengers with a single point of information to help understand their rights and responsibilities when travelling by air. The Charter will be published shortly.

■ Brinnington Station: Access**Navendu Mishra:**[\[36133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure step-free access at Brinnington Station.

Wendy Morton:

I recently launched the next round of nominations for the Access for All programme and welcome nominations for any station in Great Britain currently without step-free access.

Stations will need to be nominated by the industry and need support from the local MP. You may therefore wish to contact Northern, the local train operator, to ensure Brinnington is a priority for them.

■ Bus Services: Fares

Rachael Maskell:

[\[32961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the affordability of bus fares for (a) students and (b) pensioners; and whether his Department plans to provide additional funding and support to reduce bus fares for all ages.

Karl McCartney:

Under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), the Government supports council spending of around £1 billion a year to offer free bus travel to those who have reached State Pension Age and those with eligible disabilities.

Concessionary travel legislation gives local authorities the flexibility to offer further local travel concessions such as free or discounted travel to young people. Bus operators can also offer discounted travel for young people. In 2020/21 operators in 80% of the travel concession authority areas in England, outside London, offered some form of discounted travel for young people.

The Government has provided nearly £2 billion in recovery funding to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on bus services. Operators who received emergency funding were required to freeze their fares. The initial phase of recovery funding also required operators not to increase fares by more than inflation and so they were kept flat in real terms. Through the Bus Service Operators Grant we spend over £200 million every year to help keep fares down and maintain an extensive network.

The Government is also investing over £1 billion for bus transformation deals to deliver London-style fares, infrastructure and service improvements around the country.

■ Driving Licences

Mrs Paulette Hamilton:

[\[36145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the causes for the backlog in issuing medical paper driving licences at the DVLA; and what steps he is taking to resolve that backlog.

Karl McCartney:

The length of time taken to deal with an application for a driving licence where a medical condition must be investigated depends on the condition(s) involved and whether further information or clinical tests are required from medical professionals. The receipt of information from NHS professionals has been impacted by pressures on the NHS. Delays in this area were also exacerbated by six months of industrial action by the Public and Commercial Services union, which was targeted at the areas that would have the most impact on the motoring public.

To reduce waiting times for customers, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has recruited more staff and opened new customer service centres in Swansea and Birmingham which are focused on medical applications. DVLA staff also continue to work overtime at evenings and weekends. These measures are

having a positive impact and the DVLA expects to return to pre-pandemic levels for medical applications in September.

It is important to note that most applicants will be able to continue driving while their application is being processed, providing they meet specific criteria. More information can be found online [here](#).

■ EasyJet

Ruth Jones: [33918]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what most recent discussions he has had with the management of EasyJet.

Robert Courts:

I chair the weekly Strategic Risk Group, as the Minister for Aviation, which brings together senior executives from across the aviation sector. easyJet have been a central part of this group and were also invited to the meeting held by the Aviation Minister and the Secretary of State on 1 June. On 12 July I visited easyJet's data centre at Luton Airport.

As part of regular engagements over the summer DfT senior officials have been meeting weekly with easyJet management.

■ Freight: Ports

Hywel Williams: [35867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the levels of freight traffic passing through the ports of (a) Holyhead, (b) Pembroke dock and (c) Fishguard in (i) 2019 and (ii) 2022.

Robert Courts:

Ports and Port policy in Wales (with the exception of the port of Milford Haven) are devolved and are handled by the Welsh Assembly.

■ High Speed 2 Line: Cost benefit Analysis

Sarah Olney: [36050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the calculated benefit-cost ratio was for HS2 (a) in its original conception, including a link to HS1 and a spur to Heathrow airport, (b) as originally envisaged but without the link to HS1, (c) as originally envisaged but without the link to HS1 and without the Heathrow link, (d) in the configuration following the deletion of most of the eastern leg, and (e) in its present configuration with the deletion of the link from HS2 to the west coast main line just south of Wigan.

Trudy Harrison:

Benefit Cost Ratios for the HS2 programme have been published within business cases at different stages of the scheme's development. A list of relevant business cases is provided below.

It is important to note that the BCRs set out below have been developed over a significant period of time and will reflect different inputs and assumptions as well as changes to the network assessed. This includes changes in exogenous forecasts such as GDP and population forecasts, which are inputted into the models and which impact on benefit and revenue estimates. Cost estimates have also been developed over time, reflecting changing levels of cost maturity. These factors mean that direct comparison between the BCRs for the different HS2 networks set out below is not possible. It should also be noted that there is an inherent degree of uncertainty in developing a single BCR for a programme being developed and delivered over several decades.

Nevertheless, the below are available as publicly assessable documents. The BCRs requested are provided below as is a link to the documents they were published in:

(a) In its original conception, including a link to HS1 and a spur to Heathrow airport

https://hs2ltd.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/summary-economic-case_0.pdf

(b) As originally envisaged but without the link to HS1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3650/hs2-economic-case-appraisal-update.pdf

(c) As originally envisaged but without the link to HS1 and without the Heathrow link

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365065/S_A_1_Economic_case_0.pdf

(d) In the configuration following the deletion of most of the eastern leg

We do not have a BCR for the full HS2 network which accounts for the commitments on the Eastern Leg made in the Integrated Rail Plan, as options are being developed. The BCR for the full network for HS2 which includes Phase One, 2a and 2b Western Leg was published in the January 2022 business case:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051209/hs2-phase-2b-western-leg-crewe-to-manchester-an-update-on-the-strategic-outline-business-case.pdf

(e) In its present configuration with the deletion of the link from HS2 to the West Coast Main line just south of Wigan.

As above, we do not have a BCR for the full HS2 network which accounts for the commitments on the Eastern Leg made in the Integrated Rail Plan, as options are being developed. However there is a BCR for the full network for HS2 which includes Phase One, 2a and 2b Western Leg (excluding the link from HS2 to the west coast main line (known as the Golborne Link)) which was published in the June 2022 business case:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1084080/hs2-phase-2b-western-leg-crewe-to-manchester-supplement-to-the-update-on-the-strategic-outline-business-case.pdf

■ High Speed 2 Line: West Coast Main Line

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[36073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the final report of the Union Connectivity Review, published on 26 November 2021, whether his Department plans to connect HS2 with the West Coast Main Line at a point south of Preston, in the context of his decision to remove the Golborne Link from the High Speed Rail (Crewe to Manchester) Bill scheme.

Trudy Harrison:

The government has confirmed it will look at alternatives to the Golborne Link which deliver similar benefits to Scotland, so long as these deliver for the taxpayer within the £96 billion envelope allocated for the Integrated Rail Plan. Options to be explored could range from upgrading existing infrastructure to new high-speed lines.

■ Maritime Skills Commission

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[33722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2022 to Question 23730 on Maritime Skills Commission: Staff, whether the Commission's focus is to increase diversity in the maritime taskforce.

Robert Courts:

The Maritime Skills Commission was established with the purpose of assessing the current and future skills needs of the maritime sector. A separate body, the Diversity in Maritime Taskforce, with networks for Ethnicity, Mental Health, Pride and Women, was established to support increasing diversity in the sector. The two bodies, along with the Careers Taskforce, sit within Maritime UK and work closely together to support the ambitions of the Maritime 2050 Strategy and People Route Map, which included increasing diversity as a key objective for the UK maritime industry.

■ National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers: Industrial Disputes

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[36856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) on negotiations relating to the planned strike action on 27 July 2022.

Wendy Morton:

Negotiations on matters such as pay must take place between the trade unions and the employer. The Secretary of State is in close touch with the industry on the negotiations and frequently engages with them.

■ Railway Signals

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36075]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of implementing digital (a) signalling and (b) train control technology on the capacity of the rail network.

Wendy Morton:

My department recognises the value of introducing digital signalling and train control technology to the GB rail network due to the associated benefits gained for users. That is why the Government recently announced over £1bn of new funding to deliver the East Coast Digital Programme, which will implement digital signalling on the East Coast Mainline between Kings Cross and Stoke Tunnel, just North of Peterborough.

The analysis underpinning this investment decision shows that implementing digital signalling on this route will increase rail system capability on the line due to the greater flexibility in train control offered by the technology. This can either be used to increase performance or capacity. The priority for the East Coast Digital Programme, and therefore the central economic analysis for this investment decision, has assumed that the benefits offered by this increased system capability are captured as performance improvements.

However, future rail policy may evolve in different ways, government and industry might choose to prioritise capacity of the railway over performance. As such the benefits from additional system capability might manifest in different ways, such as increasing the frequency of existing services or lengthening trains. These benefits would be assessed at the time of this future policy decision.

The strategy for increasing the spread of digital signalling across the rest of the GB network is outlined in the Long Term Deployment Plan, which sees the East Coast Digital Programme as a galvanising force for industry to pivot to digital signalling technology.

Through the East Coast Digital Programme Network Rail is currently undertaking an assessment exercise to determine the benefits of introducing traffic management technology alongside digital signalling on the East Coast Mainline. We expect that work to be concluded in early 2023 which provide a full assessment of the impact of implementing traffic management.

■ Railways

Michelle Donelan:

[35016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reopen previously closed railway lines and stations, including Corsham station.

Wendy Morton:

The £500m Restoring Your Railway Fund is supporting over 45 promising schemes with the potential to level up areas and reconnect communities. Wiltshire Council was successful in its Round 3 bid to the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund to reopen

Corsham Station. As a result, Wilshire Council is receiving up to £50,000 in development funding to complete a Strategic Outline Business Case for the scheme to be submitted to the Department in September 2022.

■ Railways: Passengers

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[36076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of expected rail passenger numbers for the next 12 months.

Wendy Morton:

In line with our published guidance, the Department has developed a number of scenarios of possible rail demand to reflect uncertainty including how passengers respond post-covid-19. The Department considers a wide range of evidence for our project appraisals and policy decisions

■ Railways: Tickets

Fleur Anderson:

[\[33019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take to ensure that people without internet access are able to book train tickets in the event that Government proposals to close railway ticket offices are enacted.

Wendy Morton:

We are committed to ensuring the railways are accessible for all passengers, and the reforms as outlined in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail will be centered around improving the customer experience. A fully functioning and passenger focused railway is vital in building an economic recovery from the pandemic. However, the rail industry must modernise to meet the demands of passengers while reducing the cost to the taxpayer.

Staff will always provide face-to-face services on the railways, which is crucial for those who need additional support and those who cannot or do not want to use contactless or mobile tickets or booking systems.

No final decision has been taken on ticket offices. The reality is that ticket offices have seen a significant decline in use over the last decade, yet numbers have not substantially changed since then. Potential reforms in this area would allow station staff to better meet the needs of passengers by providing a more personal service. These reforms should provide greater flexibility for industry to deploy staff where they will offer the greatest value to customers.

■ Railways: Veterans

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[33721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Veterans Railcards have been issued since the inception of that scheme.

Wendy Morton:

As of June 2022, 53,900 Veterans Railcards have been sold.

■ **Stansted Express Railway Line**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[36082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of when service frequencies on the Stansted Express will return to pre-covid-19 levels.

Wendy Morton:

Greater Anglia is continuing to monitor passenger numbers on a regular basis and are making adjustments to services if required. At present, new trains on the Stansted service are providing sufficient capacity throughout the day with spare seats on all services and Greater Anglia recently added a 05:25 service, calling at Tottenham Hale, Bishops Stortford and Stansted Airport. Looking forwards, if there is sufficient demand and an overall positive financial case for further services then we would expect Greater Anglia to look at how best to respond to that situation. Additional services must be targeted and provide value for money for the taxpayer.

■ **Stansted Express Railway Line: Environmental Protection**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[36081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the impact of reducing the frequency of Stansted Express rail services on the environment.

Wendy Morton:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Greater Anglia operated two trains per hour on the Stansted Express route. Additional services have been added as demand has increased where they are needed. Greater Anglia has introduced new, more energy-efficient trains on this route which provide increased capacity. Under the terms of the National Rail Contract, Greater Anglia is required to carry out an Environmental Impact Monitoring Audit of its operations.

TREASURY

■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Jim Shannon:

[\[36764\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support security in the banking sector in the context of risk of Russian cyber attack; and if he will provide financial assistance to the banking sector to help maintain the integrity of its digital systems.

Richard Fuller:

Responsibility for information technology infrastructure in the UK financial sector is primarily for the firms themselves. Financial assistance is not provided to firms to do

so. However, the Financial Authorities have a role to play in supervising, coordinating and driving change to improve the sector's operational resilience.

HMT works together with the Bank of England, the Prudential Regulation Authority, the Financial Conduct Authority (as the UK Financial Authorities), Cabinet Office, the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Crime Agency to improve cyber resilience across the finance sector.

The finance sector also benefits from having a dedicated team within the UK's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC). They work closely with the Financial Authorities and firms to help improve the sector's resilience and provide support during incidents. This includes providing advice and consultancy to critical national infrastructure organisations to secure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the banking sector's digital systems.

While the NCSC have stated they are not aware of any current specific threats to the UK, they have published guidance on actions organisations, including those in the finance sector, can take when the cyber threat is heightened. They have also warned that the threat may remain that way for some time and advised organisations on how to maintain a heightened security posture.

■ Child Benefit

Wendy Chamberlain:

[33933]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of levels of child benefit.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government is committed to managing the public finances in a disciplined and responsible way by targeting support where it is most needed.

For the third consecutive year, Child Benefit has increased in line with CPI (3.1 per cent). The Government will continue to review levels of Child Benefit alongside other benefits annually.

■ Consumer Goods: Prices

Michelle Donelan:

[35014]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps his Department has taken to help tackle the effects of inflation on (a) consumers and (b) the price of goods.

Richard Fuller:

The Government understands that people across the UK are worried about the rising cost of living and are seeing their disposable incomes decrease as they spend more on the essentials.

Monetary policy is the responsibility of the independent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England. Since independence Consumer Prices Index inflation has averaged around the MPC's 2% target.

In May, the Government announced over £15bn of additional cost of living support, targeted at those with the greatest need. As a result, millions of vulnerable households will receive at least £1,200 of support this financial year, with the vast majority of households receiving at least £550. This package builds on the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year, equivalent to 1.5% of GDP.

■ Corporation Tax

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[33027\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is his policy to reduce corporation tax.

Lucy Frazer:

Any future changes to the rate of Corporation Tax that is currently legislated for will be set out to Parliament in the usual way.

■ Financial Services and Markets Bill

Justin Madders:

[\[33817\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish his planned timetable for the introduction of the (a) Financial Services and Markets Bill and (b) provisions to protect neighbourhood access to cash.

Richard Fuller:

As announced in the Queen's Speech on 10 May, the government is committed to legislating to protect access to cash as part of the Financial Services and Markets Bill. The Bill will be introduced when parliamentary time allows.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Daisy Cooper:

[\[33939\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of making it Government policy to introduce tax reductions on motor fuel for holders of Blue Badge parking permits.

Alan Mak:

Fuel duty becomes due to HMRC when fuel leaves the refinery or import warehouse for onward supply. Although it is included in the cost of fuel at the pump, it is not paid directly by motorists. On that basis, a fuel duty cut cannot be targeted at specific individuals – such as holders of Blue Badge parking permits.

In response to high fuel prices, the Government announced a temporary 5p cut to duty on petrol and diesel. This is a tax cut for consumers worth £2.4 billion in 2022-23.

All taxes remain under review.

■ Fuels: Prices

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[35899\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the impact of the removal of the red diesel fuel entitlement and rising costs of fuel on small businesses; and if he will make it his policy to reinstate the entitlement for landscaping contractors.

Alan Mak:

The Government confirmed at Spring Budget 2021 that it would remove the entitlement to use red diesel from most sectors from April 2022.

The Government recognised that this would be a significant change for some businesses, and ran a consultation to gather information from on the expected impact of these tax changes and make sure it had not overlooked any exceptional reasons why other sectors should be allowed to continue to use red diesel beyond April 2022.

Having assessed the cases made by other sectors to retain their red diesel entitlement, including the landscaping industry, the Government did not believe that they were compelling enough to outweigh the need to ensure fairness between the different users of diesel fuels and the Government's long-term environmental objectives.

In response to high fuel prices, the Government announced a temporary 12-month cut to the duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre and an equivalent percentage cut on the rates for rebated fuels. Overall, this is a tax cut for consumers, including small businesses, worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23.

■ Fuels: VAT Zero Rating

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[32946\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to introduce zero-rating VAT on domestic fuel.

Lucy Frazer:

A zero rating of VAT on domestic fuel is not targeted. To support households with the rising cost of living, the Government is providing over £15 billion of additional support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package builds on the over £22 billion announced previously, with Government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37 billion this year. This support is more generous than a VAT cut on domestic fuel and power and it provides targeted support to those who need it.

■ Horizon Europe

Chi Onwurah:

[\[35941\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on replacing funds that may be lost as a result of disaffiliating from Horizon Europe.

Alan Mak:

The UK stands ready to formalise our association to EU programmes at the earliest opportunity. However, the EU's delays to the UK's association are putting long term science collaboration at risk. Supporting the UK's research and development sector through this period of uncertainty remains our top priority.

In order to provide reassurance, the UK Government has guaranteed funding for the first and second waves of eligible successful applicants to Horizon Europe. And if the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe we will put in place an ambitious alternative, including a suite of transitional measures, funded from the budget set aside for our association to these programmes.

Individual Savings Accounts**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[33795\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of raising the £450,000 property value limit for the Lifetime ISA in line with house prices.

Richard Fuller:

The Lifetime ISA is intended to support younger people saving for their first home or for later life by offering a generous government bonus of 25% on up to £4,000 of savings each year. These funds, including the government bonus, can be used to purchase a first home up to the value of £450,000.

The Government considers that the £450,000 price cap is suitable to support the majority of first-time buyers across the UK, who typically purchase less expensive properties than other buyers, while ensuring sustainable public finances.

The most recent Office for Budget Responsibility forecast stated that bonus payments will have an exchequer cost of £3.7 billion between 2021 and 2027. The price cap ensures that this significant investment of public money is more precisely targeted towards households that may find it more difficult to get onto the property ladder.

First-time buyers who can purchase a home valued over £450,000 are likely to have an income significantly above that of the average household in the UK and are therefore more likely to be able to purchase a first home without the support of this scheme.

The Government continues to keep all aspects of savings policy under review.

National Bank Trust: Damages**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[34857\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to take steps to prevent the National Bank Trust from remitting to the Central Bank of Russia any damages it receives from legal action in the UK.

Richard Fuller:

I am unable to comment on individual cases. However, the UK has imposed sanctions that prohibit UK persons from providing financial services for the purposes of foreign exchange or asset management of the Central Bank of Russia, the Russian Ministry of Finance, the National Wealth Fund of Russia, and entities owned or controlled by those bodies. These restrictions apply to all activity within the UK. I note that the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office has assessed that the National Bank Trust is owned by the Central Bank of Russia.

■ **Treasury: Consultants****Jon Trickett:****[33706]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 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.

Alan Mak:

HM Treasury's spend on consultancy is published and available for viewing within the Annual Report and Accounts. HMT is yet to lay its accounts for 2021-22, but these are due to be published prior to the summer recess. We have included the links to the published Annual Report and Accounts for each of the available years in question within the table below. The names of all contracts issued for consultancy can be found using the Gov.Uk contracts finder (link included below).

Contract Finder - [Contracts Finder - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/contracts-finder)

FINANCIAL YEAR	PUBLICATION LINK	PAGE REFERENCE
2019-20	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020	Page 104
2020-21	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-treasury-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021	Page 101

■ **Treasury: Special Advisers****Emily Thornberry:****[35903]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether any special advisers have had their contracts with his Department terminated since 4 July 2022.

Alan Mak:

HM Treasury does not employ any special advisers; all special advisers are employed by Cabinet Office.

WALES**■ Driving Licences: Wales****Gerald Jones:**[\[36029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the waiting time for driving licence applications for people in Wales.

Sir Robert Buckland:

I understand that concerns have been expressed with regards to waiting times for driving license applications. I would like to refer the honourable Member to the response provided by the Department for Transport's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on this matter on 14 June 2022 (UIN 13126).

Gerald Jones:[\[36031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the impact of the waiting time for driving licence applications on people with long-term medical conditions in Wales.

Sir Robert Buckland:

The length of time taken to deal with an application for a driving licence where a medical condition must be investigated depends on the condition(s) involved and whether further information or clinical tests are required from medical professionals.

To reduce waiting times for customers, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has recruited more staff and opened new customer service centres in Swansea and Birmingham which are focused on medical applications. DVLA staff also continue to work overtime at evenings and weekends. These measures are having a positive impact and the DVLA expects to return to pre-pandemic levels for medical applications in September.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia**Gerald Jones:**[\[36028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on (a) UK's trade deal with Australia and (b) safeguards for Welsh Lamb.

Sir Robert Buckland:

Wales Office ministers have regular discussions with departments across Whitehall on a range of matters, including the trade deal with Australia and safeguards for Welsh lamb. Leaving the EU has given us the ability to strike our own trade deals, creating new opportunities for UK businesses to trade internationally. The UK Government's future trade agreements will bring further investments into Wales, with the mutual opening of markets. Trade deals mean more opportunities for businesses across the UK, including Wales.

The UK exported £438.1m worth of lamb to the world last year, and we want those numbers to grow. For sectors such as lamb, the volume of duty-free imports to the UK from Australia will be limited by Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ) and Product Specific Safeguards (PSS). TRQs will set a maximum level for tariff-free imports for up to 10 years, whilst PSSs will allow the UK to impose higher tariffs when imports exceed a certain threshold in years 10 to 15.

In addition, we also have a general bilateral safeguard mechanism that will provide a temporary safety net for industry, if it faces serious injury or threat from increased imports as a result of tariff elimination under the FTA.

■ Wales Office: Advertising

Jon Trickett: [\[34821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much their Department has spent on advertising in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022.

David T C Davies:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales spent the following on advertising over the last three years:

YEAR	SPEND ON ADVERTISING
2020	£45,979.05
2021	£57,586.04
2022 to date	-

■ Wales Office: Consultants

Jon Trickett: [\[33710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, 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.

David T C Davies:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales spent the following on consultancy fees over the last three years:

YEAR	SPEND (£)	CONSULTANT
2020	6,600	Professor Cole
2021	Nil	N/A
2022 to date	Nil	N/A

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Females: Employment

Ruth Jones:

[\[36107\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent steps she has taken to support more women into work.

Amanda Solloway:

There are nearly two million more women in work since 2010, with many benefiting from the wider work the Government is doing to support women into employment.

We are committed to changing the culture of the workplace so that every woman can get into work and thrive. Most recently we have: called on all employers to empower women to negotiate their pay by providing greater transparency, announced a pilot to help women return to STEM roles where their talents are most needed, and launched a new taskforce to increase the number of women-led high-growth businesses.

These are just some of the ways in which we are ensuring that women are supported to reach their full potential throughout their careers.

■ HIV Infection: Screening

Peter Gibson:

[\[36120\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential merits of extending opt-out HIV testing on a nationwide basis.

Amanda Solloway:

Equality Ministers maintain a keen interest in the delivery of the Government's HIV Action Plan, which sets out the ambitious plan to achieve zero new HIV infections in England by 2030 and an interim target of an 80% reduction in new infections by 2025.

The HIV Action Plan sets out how DHSC will maintain progress made with key groups, and significantly improve diagnosis for other groups.

The previous Minister for Equalities, Mike Freer, recently met Professor Kevin Fenton, Regional Director for London in the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Chief Advisor on HIV and Chair of the HIV Action Plan Implementation Steering Group, to discuss implementation of the HIV Action Plan and how it links to the Government's ambitions on improving outcomes for LGBT people.

NHS England and NHS Improvement is investing £20 million over the next three years to expand opt-out testing in emergency departments in the highest prevalence local areas to identify new cases of HIV. High prevalence is defined as those areas with five or more cases per 1,000 residents in line with guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. DHSC Ministers would be able to respond to more detailed questions.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Boilers

Charlotte Nichols:

[33951]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the average number of boilers installed per year per Gas Safe registered engineer.

Chloe Smith:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) holds the Gas Safe Register (GSR) Service Concession Agreement.

GSR maintain the register of businesses and operatives who are competent to undertake both piped natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) work in domestic and commercial premises in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and Guernsey.

GSR does not collect data on the “average number of boilers installed per year per Gas Safe engineer”, but does hold information on the numbers of engineers and notifications received for installation of domestic gas boilers.

Further information about GSR and domestic gas health and safety can be found on HSE’s [website](https://www.hse.gov.uk/gas-safe-register/). [Gas Safe Register \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/gas-safe-register/)

In England and Wales from the 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

NUMBER OF ENGINEERS ON REGISTER	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES ON REGISTER	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES COMPETENT TO INSTALL DOMESTIC GAS BOILERS	TOTAL NUMBER OF NOTIFICATIONS RECEIVED FOR INSTALLATION OF DOMESTIC GAS FIRED BOILER (NATURAL GAS)
130,703	78,644	66,914	1,210,407

■ Members: Correspondence

Gerald Jones:

[36026]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to the enquiry of 7 June 2022 from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, reference POSCMP2022/44277.

Guy Opperman:

The Department aims to respond to Hon. Member’s correspondence within 20 working days where possible, although complex issues may mean it will take longer.

All complaints and enquiries are investigated fully. A member of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Complaints team contacted your constituency office on 14

th July 2022 to provide an update and details of their investigations. They aim to provide a full response by Friday 22nd July.

■ **Pension Credit**

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[36116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average processing time was for new Pension Credit claims made between 1 April 2022 and 13 July 2022.

Guy Opperman:

The Average Actual Clearance Time for Pension Credit New Claims for the period 1st April 2022 to 3rd July 2022 was 40 days. The data is not yet available for period between 4th July to 13th July.

Source: Customer Account Management System

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[36117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average processing time was for change in circumstance applications to existing Pension Credit claims in the latest month for which data is available.

Guy Opperman:

The Department does not measure the average clearance times of changes specifically relating to existing Pension Credit claims.

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[36118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average processing time was for Pension Credit claims made on the Pension Credit Day of Action on 15 June 2022.

Guy Opperman:

This information is not held.

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[36119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 32578 on Pension Credit, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure that (a) claims and (b) enquiries for Pension Credit are processed in a reasonable time.

Guy Opperman:

The media campaign continues to reach those who may be entitled to Pension Credit and has had a significant impact on the number of claims the Department has received. This has the Department's full attention with options. To ensure we provide the right service to these customers additional resource is being deployed and increased digital automation will take place in the coming weeks which will speed up processing time further.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Standards

Catherine West: [\[35000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the time taken to process Personal Independence Payment applications on disabled people's ability to pay bills and rent.

Catherine West: [\[35001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support is available for disabled people whilst they wait for their Personal Independence Payment application to be processed.

Chloe Smith:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is designed to provide a contribution towards the additional, disability-related costs faced by people with a long-term health condition or disability. PIP is paid in addition to the other financial support that the individual may already be entitled to, including income maintenance benefits designed to help pay for day-to-day and housing costs, such as Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit and Universal Credit. Once a PIP claim has been determined any arrears of entitlement are paid.

■ Poverty: Children

Alex Cunningham: [\[35933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the 7,300 children reported to be living in poverty in Stockton North constituency.

Alex Cunningham: [\[35934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her department has made on the level of child poverty in Stockton North constituency.

Alex Cunningham: [\[35935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help families with children in poverty in Stockton North.

Alex Cunningham: [\[35936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the level of child poverty in (a) Stockton South, (b) Redcar (c) Middlesbrough South and (d) East Cleveland and Hartlepool constituency in the latest period for which data is available.

Alex Cunningham: [\[36757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking which are specifically intended to help families with children in poverty in Stockton North.

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2021).

This Government is committed to reducing child poverty and supporting low-income families, and believes work is the best route out of poverty. With a record 1.3 million vacancies across the UK, our focus is firmly on supporting people to move into and progress in work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of parental employment - particularly where it is full-time – in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for families and children.

The latest available data on in-work poverty shows that in 2019/20, children in households where all adults were in work were around six times less likely to be in absolute poverty (before housing costs) than children in a household where nobody works. Compared with 2010, there are nearly 1 million fewer workless households and almost 540,000 fewer children living in workless households in the UK. In 2020/21, there were 200,000 fewer children in absolute poverty before housing costs than in 2009/10.

To help parents into work, our Plan for Jobs is providing broad ranging support for all jobseekers with our Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP), Job Entry Targeted Support and Restart scheme. Our plan for jobs is providing results. As of 6 July, we estimate that at least 520,400 unemployed Universal Credit claimants and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31 January and the end of 30 June 2022.

We are also extending the support Jobcentres provide to people in work and on low incomes. Through a staged roll-out, which started in April 2022, around 2.1m low-paid benefit claimants will be eligible for support to progress into higher-paid work. This is on top of the support we have already provided by increasing the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour and giving nearly 1.7 million families an extra £1,000 (on average) a year through our changes to the Universal Credit taper and work allowances.

To further support parents to move into and progress in work, eligible UC claimants can claim back up to 85% of their registered childcare costs each month up to a maximum of £646.35 per month for one child and £1,108.04 per month for two or more children. This is on top of the free childcare offer in England which provides 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3- and 4-year-olds and disadvantaged 2-year-olds, doubling for working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds to 30 hours a week.

Around 9 million of the most disadvantaged pupils are eligible for and claiming a free school meal, saving families around £450 per year. In addition, around 1.25 million more infants enjoy a free, healthy and nutritious meal at lunchtime as well as over 90,000 disadvantaged further education students. We are also investing £200 million a year to continue the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, which benefitted over

600,000 children last summer, and we have increased the value of the Healthy Start Vouchers by a third to £4.25 a week.

On top of this, the government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. These are global challenges, that is why the government is providing over £15bn in further support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package is in addition to the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year.

This includes an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, the current Household Support Fund is already providing £421m of support for the period 1 April – 30 September 2022, at least a third (£140m) will be spent on families with children.

Afzal Khan: [36101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to help reduce the numbers of children living in poverty in Manchester Gorton constituency.

Afzal Khan: [36102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the number of children living in poverty in Manchester Gorton.

Afzal Khan: [36103]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps her Department has taken to help support families with children who are in poverty, in the context of the level of child poverty in Manchester Gorton constituency.

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2021).

This Government is committed to reducing child poverty and supporting low-income families, and believes work is the best route out of poverty. With a record 1.3 million vacancies across the UK, our focus is firmly on supporting people to move into and progress in work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of parental employment - particularly where it is full-time – in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for families and children.

The latest available data on in-work poverty shows that in 2019/20, children in households where all adults were in work were around six times less likely to be in absolute poverty (before housing costs) than children in a household where nobody works. Compared with 2010, there are nearly 1 million fewer workless households and almost 540,000 fewer children living in workless households in the UK. In 2020/21, there were 200,000 fewer children in absolute poverty before housing costs than in 2009/10.

To help parents into work, our Plan for Jobs is providing broad ranging support for all jobseekers with our Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP), Job Entry Targeted Support and Restart scheme. Our plan for jobs is providing results. As of 6 July, we estimate that at least 520,400 unemployed Universal Credit claimants and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31 January and the end of 30 June 2022.

We are also extending the support Jobcentres provide to people in work and on low incomes. Through a staged roll-out, which started in April 2022, around 2.1m low-paid benefit claimants will be eligible for support to progress into higher-paid work. This is on top of the support we have already provided by increasing the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour and giving nearly 1.7 million families an extra £1,000 (on average) a year through our changes to the Universal Credit taper and work allowances.

To further support parents to move into and progress in work, eligible UC claimants can claim back up to 85% of their registered childcare costs each month up to a maximum of £646.35 per month for one child and £1,108.04 per month for two or more children. This is on top of the free childcare offer in England which provides 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3- and 4-year-olds and disadvantaged 2-year-olds, doubling for working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds to 30 hours a week.

Around 9 million of the most disadvantaged pupils are eligible for and claiming a free school meal, saving families around £450 per year. In addition, around 1.25 million more infants enjoy a free, healthy and nutritious meal at lunchtime as well as over 90,000 disadvantaged further education students. We are also investing £200 million a year to continue the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, which benefitted over 600,000 children last summer, and we have increased the value of the Healthy Start Vouchers by a third to £4.25 a week.

On top of this, the government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. These are global challenges, that is why the government is providing over £15bn in further support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package is in addition to the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year.

This includes an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, the current Household Support Fund is already providing £421m of support for the period 1 April – 30 September 2022, at least a third (£140m) will be spent on families with children. Manchester City Council has been allocated £6,453,163.20.

■ Social Security Benefits: Death and Injuries

Hywel Williams:

[\[35868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2022 to Question 27621 on Social Security Benefits: Injuries and Death, if she will publish that information by nation of the UK in which these occurred.

Chloe Smith:

Please see the attached information as requested.

	JULY 2020 TO JUNE 2021			JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022		
	Eng	Scot	Wales	Eng	Scot	Wales
IPR Started – Death*	52	≤5	≤5	35	≤5	≤5
IPR Started - 18 Serious Harm**		≤5	≤5	15	≤5	≤5
IPR Completed – Death*	33	≤5	≤5	39	≤5	≤5
IPR Completed - Serious Harm**	11	≤5	≤5	15	≤5	≤5

* Death includes the categories death, alleged suicide and confirmed suicide.

** Serious Harm includes the categories self-harm, serious harm, attempted suicide and 'other'.

NB: Prior to July 2020 IPR data on the nation of occurrence was not captured. We do not hold information for Northern Ireland.

≤5 signifies figures less than or equal to 5.

■ Social Security Benefits: Older People

Angela Crawley:

[\[35995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of removing age related benefit rates in response to the cost of living crisis.

David Rutley:

No assessment has been made of the potential merits of removing age related benefits in response to the cost of living.

Universal Credit provides those who are under age 25 with lower rates than those age 25 or over. This is to reflect the fact that these claimants are more likely to live in someone else's household and have lower living costs. It also reflects the lower wages that younger workers typically receive. However, it is acknowledged that some claimants under 25 do live independently, which is why Universal Credit includes separate elements to provide support to claimants with these additional costs, such as housing costs.

These additional amounts are provided to claimants at the same level irrespective of age.

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living. These are global challenges, that is why the government is providing over £15bn in further support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package is in addition to the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37 billion this year.

The £37 billion includes:

A £650 payment, made in two instalments, to more than 8 million low-income households on means tested benefits and tax credits. Separate one-off payments of £300 to pensioner households (through and as an addition to the Winter Fuel Payment) and £150 to individuals receiving disability benefits.

■ Social Security Benefits: Uprating**Afzal Khan:**[\[30125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to increase Personal Independence Payments and other associated benefits in line with inflation.

Chloe Smith:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is required to undertake an annual statutory review of benefits and pensions. She uses the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) in the year to September to measure inflation.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP), alongside the other extra costs benefits available to people who have needs arising from a long-term health condition or disability – Attendance Allowance (AA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) – has been continuously updated in line with inflation since its introduction.

The Secretary of State's review for 2023/24 will commence in the autumn and her decisions will be announced to Parliament in November in the normal way.

Those who were entitled to AA, DLA or PIP and being paid on 25 May will also be entitled to a disability Cost of Living Payment of £150, due to be paid in September, in addition to any other Cost of Living Payments they may be entitled to.

■ Universal Credit**Hywel Williams:****[35866]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Universal Credit claims were subject to deductions in each parliamentary constituency; what the (a) average size of sums and (b) total sum deducted was in each constituency; what proportion of each of those sums was deducted to repay advance payments; and how many children were living in households that were subject to deductions in each constituency in the most recent month for which data is available.

David Rutley:

The Government recognises the importance of supporting welfare of claimants who have incurred debt. We seek to balance recovery of debt against not causing hardship for claimants and their families. Processes are in place to ensure deductions are manageable, and customers can contact DWP Debt Management if they are experiencing financial hardship, to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment or a temporary suspension, depending on their financial circumstances.

Since April 2021, we have reduced the normal maximum rate of deductions in Universal Credit from 40% to 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance. These positive measures were put in place to support claimants to manage financial difficulties

Advances are a claimant's benefit entitlement paid early, allowing claimants to access 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront. They ensure nobody has to wait for a payment in Universal Credit and those who need it are able to receive financial support as soon as possible. Claimants can receive up to 100% of their estimated Universal Credit award if required, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period. This is not a debt.

The requested analysis of Universal Credit claims with a deduction in February 2022 by Parliamentary Constituency in Great Britain (GB) is provided in the separate spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. [PQ 35866 \[Table 1.xls\]](#)

Chi Onwurah:**[35944]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the potential relationship between the rollout of Universal Credit and increasing trends in the level of crime.

David Rutley:

No such assessment has been made.

Universal Credit is a modern benefit which mirrors the world of work, with monthly payments that can adjust to the amount claimants receive as people earn more or indeed less, and there are safeguards in place to help those who are unable to handle their own rent including direct payments to landlords.

Universal Credit provides a strong financial safety net: it is more generous overall than the old system and makes it easier for people to claim support they are entitled to.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ A pro-innovation approach to regulating AI

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):
[\[HCWS212\]](#)

The Government is today publishing a paper setting out its emerging pro-innovation approach to regulating Artificial Intelligence. The UK can provide clarity and confidence to our AI ecosystem as well as ensuring the public and consumers are protected.

At the heart of our approach is a steadfast commitment to ensuring the UK is a place where AI companies can innovate, grow, and flourish. In areas from transport to healthcare, our AI ecosystem is driving forward new research, scientific breakthroughs, and growth across the nation. This policy paper seeks to shape the transformational effects of this critical technology: to unleash growth and innovation while safeguarding our fundamental values and keeping people safe.

The success of our AI sector is in no small part due to the UK's reputation for high quality regulation and the rule of law. However, as AI continues to develop, a transparent, clear, and coherent regulatory regime must develop with it. Government believes that a pro-innovation approach is needed to create clarity for businesses and investors, while also taking proportionate steps to address existing risks posed by AI and standing prepared to identify and mitigate new risks as they emerge.

This policy paper sets out the building blocks of a regulatory framework that is coherent but flexible and can apply to AI's vast range of uses across different industries. It will support our regulators in addressing new challenges in a way that is proportionate, supports innovation and drives growth. This pro-innovation, pro-growth ethos will continue to inform policy development as we develop and refine the approach set out in this paper.

It is essential that we get this approach right, and I look forward to hearing views from the House on our proposals. We will also be seeking the views of AI experts across business, civil society, academia and beyond, as we work towards the publication of a full AI Governance White Paper later in the year.

A copy of the paper will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Data Protection and Digital Information

Minister for Media, Data and Digital Infrastructure (Matt Warman): [\[HCWS210\]](#)

Today, the Government is introducing the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill in the House of Commons. The Bill is being introduced after the Government published its response to the Data: A New Direction consultation on 17th June 2022.

We now have the opportunity to seize the benefits of Brexit and transform the UK's independent data laws. We have designed these new updates to our data protection framework so it works in our interests, protects our citizens, and unburdens our businesses..

Through this Bill we will realise the opportunities of responsible data use whilst maintaining the UK's high data protection standards. The EU does not require countries to have the same rules to grant adequacy, so it is our belief that these reforms are compatible with maintaining a free flow of personal data from the European Economic Area.

Our Bill will improve people's lives in many different ways. Firstly, we are increasing fines for nuisance calls and texts that break the rules. Telecoms network providers will also be required to notify the ICO when they have reasonable grounds for believing that unsolicited direct marketing is occurring on their networks.

Reforms to the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations will also remove the need for cookie banner pop ups for low risk activities, such as audience measurement, so it's easier for businesses to use information to improve their services. The Bill will also pave the way for the removal of irritating banners for other types of cookies when browser-based or similar solutions are sufficiently developed.

The Bill will bring some everyday physical processes into the 21st century. It will be easier and more secure to use digital identities, which give people more choice and greater security when they want to prove things about themselves online or via apps instead of with physical documents. We will improve government data sharing to improve public services for businesses, and the Bill will also update the way births and deaths are registered by clerks, moving from a paper based system to an electronic register used by officials.

Our reforms to data protection laws will mean that UK scientists are no longer needlessly impeded by overcautious, unclear rules on how they can use people's personal data. We will simplify the legal requirements around research, which will provide scientists the clarity and confidence they need to get on with life enhancing and life saving research.

We are reducing the burdens on businesses that have held the UK back from the benefits of greater personal data use before now. By focussing on outcomes not box-ticking, we will unburden businesses from prescriptive requirements and empower them to protect personal data in the most proportionate and appropriate way. Our changes could create around £1 billion in business savings over ten years.

The Bill will sustain and scale the UK's approach to supporting international data flows by capitalising on its independent status to strike partnerships with some of the world's fastest growing economies. Reforms will ensure that the mechanisms to transfer personal data internationally are secure and flexible to help British businesses grow.

The structure and objectives of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will be modernised so that it remains an internationally renowned regulator, including increased investigatory powers to help it keep pace with changing practices. New strategic

objectives will have an emphasis on economic growth and innovation, while ensuring the ICO continues to produce high-quality codes of practice, and has the flexibility to allocate its resources appropriately. The ICO will remain operationally independent while enabling the public and parliament to more effectively hold it to account through key performance indicators.

Reforms will also confirm that elected representatives may process general personal data where necessary for the purposes of democratic engagement activities. The intent is to allow MPs, councillors and political parties to undertake the democratic engagement activities they have done for decades (such as opinion surveys of local residents, and targeted letters to constituents), without the unnecessary complexity and confusion of the EU's GDPR. This builds on measures in the Data Protection Act 2018 which received broad cross-party support at the time.

The Bill will improve the efficiency of data protection for law enforcement and national security partners – encouraging better use of personal data where appropriate to help protect the public. Our proposed reforms create greater consistency between general, law enforcement and national security data processing. They will provide agencies with clarity on their obligations, boosting the confidence of the public on how their data is being used. These changes are vitally important for the work of our law enforcement and national security agencies who process personal data in the public interest, to prevent crime and safeguard national security.

New information standards for IT products and services supplied to the health and adult social care sector will ensure these are interoperable to make it easier for staff to access the information they need to help their patients.

The powers included in the Bill allow Government departments to establish sector based Smart Data schemes with supporting regulation, to ensure consumer and business protection. This is the secure and consented sharing of customer data with authorised third-party providers. These approved providers then use this data to deliver innovative services for the consumer or business, such as automatic bank account switching. This saves time, money and effort for customers who can more easily find and choose better-suited deals.

■ DCMS Update

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Ms Nadine Dorries):
[[HCWS211](#)]

The [Government response](#) to the call for evidence on loot boxes in video games has been published on GOV.UK.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK is one of the safest places to be online, and this includes video games. We want all players, especially children and vulnerable people, to have the tools and information they need to enjoy games safely.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) launched a call for evidence on loot boxes in video games in September 2020, in light of concerns about the potential for loot boxes to cause harm.

The call for evidence received over 32,000 responses to a player survey, and 50 submissions from organisations and individuals. We are thankful to the organisations and individuals, including players and parents, who responded to the call for evidence. In addition, the Government commissioned an independent Rapid Evidence Assessment of academic literature on loot boxes, which was conducted by InGAME in 2021.

The Government response sets out findings from the call for evidence. The call for evidence identified a range of potential harms associated with the purchase of loot boxes, though a causal relationship is yet to be evidenced. This includes harms which have been associated with gambling, but also a range of other potential mental health, financial and problem gaming related harms. The evidence suggests that the risks of harm are likely to be higher for children.

In response to the findings from the call for evidence, the Government wants to see improved protections for children and adults with regards to loot boxes, and better longer term research into the impacts of video games. The Government's view is that:

1. purchases of loot boxes should be unavailable to all children and young people unless and until they are enabled by a parent or guardian;
2. all players, including children, young people and adults, should have access to and be aware of spending controls and transparent information to support safe and responsible gaming; and
3. better evidence and research, enabled by improved access to data, should be developed on the positive and negative impacts of video games to inform future policy making on loot boxes and video games more broadly.

DCMS will convene a technical working group to pursue enhanced industry-led solutions to mitigate the risk of harms for children and young people and adults from loot boxes in video games. In addition, we will work with academics and other partners to launch a Video Games Research Framework.

The Government response has been developed alongside our review of the Gambling Act. We will continue to keep the position set out in the Government response under review, considering any new and emerging evidence on loot boxes and harms, progress made in strengthening industry-led protections, and any specific proposals on how statutory protections could be enhanced. We will not hesitate to consider legislative options if we deem this necessary to protect children and adults.

I will be placing a copy of the Government response to the call for evidence in the Libraries of both Houses, and this response has been published on GOV.UK. The Rapid Evidence Assessment of academic literature on loot boxes, conducted by InGAME, has also been published on GOV.UK.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Vaccination Update

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health)

(Maggie Throup):

[[HCWS215](#)]

The COVID-19 vaccination programme continues to protect the nation against the virus. As of 13 July 2022, over 149 million doses have been administered in the UK, including over 53.6 million first doses, over 50.2 million second doses and over 40 million third primary or booster doses in the UK. This represents uptake of 93.3% for the first dose, 87.4% for the second dose and 69.6% for the third primary and booster doses in the UK. During the spring campaign, data to 10 July shows over 4 million over 75s received a further dose in England. Up to 10 July, over 85% of those eligible by the end of May, had received a spring booster, ensuring that the most vulnerable in our society have recent protection.

On 15 July, Her Majesty's Government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) regarding the COVID-19 vaccination campaign for autumn 2022. The JCVI's advice is that a COVID-19 booster vaccine should be offered to:

- Residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults
- Frontline health and social care workers
- All adults aged 50 years and over
- Persons aged 5 to 49 years in a clinical risk group including pregnant women, as set out in the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) Green Book Chapter 14a - Tables 3 and 4
- Persons aged 5 to 49 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- Persons aged 16 to 49 years who are carers, as set out in the UKHSA's Green Book Chapter 14a - Table 3

The final eligible groups are broader than those announced in the JCVI's interim advice in May. The committee considered the recent epidemiology of the BA.4 and BA.5 waves, as well as the benefits of aligning the COVID-19 programme with the flu vaccine rollout, concluding that expanding the offer would provide necessary protection to those at higher risk of severe illness and keep greater numbers of people out of hospital.

All eligible groups are encouraged to take up the vaccine when the time comes, even if they have had a spring booster, to give themselves the best possible protection against severe outcomes of COVID-19 this winter.

In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care will once again be offering the free flu vaccine to additional groups. These groups will only be eligible once the most vulnerable, including previously announced pre-school and primary school children, those aged 65 years and over and those in clinical risk groups, have been offered the jab.

The additional groups set to be offered the free flu vaccine in England will be:

- All adults aged 50 to 64 years

- Secondary school children in years 7, 8 and 9, who will be offered the vaccine in order of school year (starting with the youngest first)

The National Health Service will announce in due course when and how eligible groups will be able to book an appointment for their COVID-19 autumn booster, and when people aged 50 to 64 years old who are not in a clinical risk group will be able to get their free flu jab.

HOME OFFICE

■ Public consultation on reforming the Clandestine Entrant Civil Penalty Scheme

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice and Tackling Illegal Migration (Simon Baynes):

[\[HCWS213\]](#)

The Government is today launching a consultation on reforming the Clandestine Entrant Civil Penalty Scheme – part of the ambitious work to tackle illegal migration we are delivering through our New Plan for Immigration.

Illegal migration is facilitated by serious organised criminals exploiting people and profiting from human misery. The same criminal gangs and networks are also responsible for other illicit activity ranging from drug and firearms trafficking to modern slavery and serious violent crimes. A significant number of people, who arrive in the UK through concealment in vehicles by tourist and freight transport routes, have had their entry illegally facilitated by organised criminal gangs. Despite extensive work with overseas partners to strengthen our shared borders and enhance our strategic partnerships, this method of entry continues and endangers the lives of those involved. In many cases, this is a result of criminal gangs and opportunistic migrants taking advantage of unsecured or poorly secured vehicles to smuggle people or enter the UK illegally.

For these reasons, the UK operates a scheme to tackle illegal migration called the Clandestine Entrant Civil Penalty Scheme. The Scheme means that when clandestine entrants are found concealed in a vehicle, a penalty of up to £2,000 per entrant can be imposed on any responsible person connected to the vehicle in question, up to a maximum aggregate of £4,000 in total per clandestine entrant. A responsible person is defined as the owner, hirer or driver of the vehicle. The Scheme applies to all vehicles, commercial and private, as well as anything that is designed to be towed or carried by a vehicle (such as trailers, caravans, containers etc). In circumstances where the driver is employed by the vehicle owner or hirer, such as an HGV, the employer is also liable for the driver's penalty. The penalty level has not been changed for nearly twenty years.

During the financial year 2020-2021, there were 3,145 incidents where clandestine entrants were detected concealed in vehicles, despite the Covid-19 pandemic causing a lower volume of traffic. This rose to 3,838 incidents during the financial year 2021-2022. The Government is therefore concerned that the Scheme is not having enough of an effect, as drivers are not taking the steps required to secure vehicles, and clandestine entrants are continuing to use these routes to enter the UK.

It is for this reason that the Government committed to review and overhaul the Scheme as part of its New Plan for Immigration. A public consultation on the New Plan for Immigration was held from 24 March to 6 May 2021. The Government then introduced changes to the Scheme through the new Nationality and Borders Act 2022.

The changes under the 2022 Act include narrowing the statutory defences available to those who have carried a clandestine entrant. This means that where a clandestine entrant has been carried, it will no longer be a statutory defence to say that an effective system for preventing the carriage of clandestine entrants was in operation, and that person may still be issued with a penalty. However, if the person has complied with regulations to be issued by the Secretary of State, which will require them to take actions to secure their transporter, report unauthorised access and keep records to show they took these steps, this could mean the level of the penalty is reduced.

The 2022 Act also introduces a new civil penalty for failing to adequately secure a goods vehicle, regardless of whether a clandestine entrant has been found. The Secretary of State will also make regulations which set out what is meant by a goods vehicle being adequately secure and the required vehicle security standards that will determine whether liability arises under this new offence. These may include vehicle checks, reporting unauthorised access and retaining records to demonstrate steps taken.

Before any of these regulations can be made under the 2022 Act, the Secretary of State has a statutory duty to consult with such persons as she considers appropriate. The Government has also agreed to consult on the level of penalty for the new offence of failing to adequately secure a goods vehicle, with a view to bringing into operation a new Level of Penalty: Code of Practice. The Secretary of State is now discharging these obligations through this consultation, which is designed to seek the views of all interested parties on these issues and others connected with the Scheme. The consultation will run for eight weeks and will close on 12th September 2022.

Alongside the consultation, the Home Office will be running a series of engagement events to explore these issues in more detail. If you would like to join an engagement event, please email:

ClandestineEntrantCivilPenaltyConsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk

The closing date to express an interest in joining an engagement date is 19th August 2022.

We welcome your views and look forward to hearing from you.

A copy of the consultation will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and also made available on GOV.UK.

■ **Swift, Certain, Tough: new consequences for drug possession**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):

[[HCWS214](#)]

Today, I am pleased to announce the publication of a white paper, 'Swift, Certain, Tough: new consequences for drug possession' and accompanying public consultation, which has been laid before the House (CP 723). It has also been published on GOV.UK.

As set out in the 10-year Drug Strategy, published in December 2021, we are committed to exploring options for tackling so-called recreational drug use. This white paper does just that and proposes new sanctions to deter people from illicit drug use and change attitudes. Fundamental to this new regime is that drug users face greater consequences than they do today. And whilst we want consequences to be tough, we also want them to be fair, meaningful, and appropriate .

The white paper sets out a combination of proposals for legislation, as well as broader areas for reform on which we invite consideration. We propose a new escalatory three tier framework for drug possession offences which will apply to all drug users, except where users have a drug dependence where treatment is the most relevant intervention.

Three Tiers

Where appropriate, those caught for a first-time drug possession offence will be placed in Tier 1 and issued with a fixed penalty notice. This requires them to either attend a drugs awareness course (paid for by the individual), or, if they do not attend the course, to pay a financial penalty.

For those who do not change their behaviour and are caught for a second time they will progress to Tier 2. In this tier, the offender would be offered a caution which would include, where proportionate, a period of mandatory drug testing alongside attendance at a further stage drugs awareness course.

Should an individual be caught for a third time, they move to Tier 3 and we expect them to be charged with the relevant offence. To ensure the courts have the right powers to change behaviours of drug offenders, we propose introducing a new civil court order to enable a range of conditions to be imposed, including: (i) exclusion order; (ii) drug tagging; (iii) passport confiscation; or (iv) driving licence disqualification.

Progression through the Tiers should always be linear. We would not expect an individual to start with a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention or indeed ‘jump’ from Tier 1 to Tier 3. The escalatory framework gives individuals the opportunity to understand the harms of illicit drugs better and to reflect on their behaviour and the harm they are doing to themselves and to wider society. Should they nevertheless continue to offend, consequences will escalate.

Drug Testing on Arrest

Given our focus is on reducing drug demand, we must take any opportunity to reach individuals and provide the right interventions. Therefore, this white paper also proposes some important changes to drug testing on arrest powers to ensure the police can drug test more individual than today. Drug testing on arrest is not about further criminalising drug users, but about identifying those who use drugs where their drug use may be a causal factor in their criminal behaviour and intervening to help them to change their behaviour. To achieve this we are therefore proposing to:

1. Expand the types of drugs that can be tested for to include a wider range of Class A drugs;

2. Expand the types of drugs that can be tested for to include drugs in other classifications where relevant, and in particular cannabis as the most widely used illicit drug;
3. Expand the number of 'trigger offences' that can lead to drug testing on arrest.

The proposed legislative changes will apply to both drug testing on arrest and to drug testing on charge.

Consultation

Given many of the changes will require primary legislation, we believe the right approach is to publish a consultative white paper. We will therefore open a formal consultation period on the document today for a period of 12 weeks. I would encourage parliamentary colleagues to review the document and the consultation, and to make relevant organisations in their areas aware. Consultation responses will be thoroughly analysed and taken into consideration before finalising any policy.

This white paper represents a significant step in reducing overall drug use towards a historic 30-year low and shows we do not shy away from proposing new interventions to do this. Ultimately these sanctions are aiming to change behaviour and reduce demand for drugs. We want people to lead healthier lifestyles and we want them to stop putting money into the pockets of dangerous drug gangs who fuel violence in our communities.

We are utterly steadfast in our determination to grip this problem and, ultimately, turn the tide on illegal drugs.