

Daily Report

Thursday, 21 July 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 21 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 21 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

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ATTORNEY GENERAL

Asylum: Rwanda

Emily Thornberry: [38559]

To ask the Attorney General, whether her Department's legal position in respect of challenges to the UK-Rwanda Migration Partnership in the courts is that the partnership agreement is compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Edward Timpson:

By convention, whether the Law Officers have been asked to provide advice, and the contents of any such advice, is not disclosed outside Government.

This convention protects the Law Officers' ability as chief legal advisers to the Government to give full and frank legal advice and provides the fullest guarantee that government business will be conducted at all times in light of thorough and candid legal advice.

As you are aware, litigation is ongoing. It is the Government's position that the Migration and Economic Development Partnership is fully compatible with all of our domestic and international legal obligations including ECHR rights.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Air Pollution

Rachael Maskell: [34971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere; and what recent steps his Department has taken to help tackle air pollution.

Greg Hands:

The World Meteorological Organisation's State of the Environment 2021 report showed that levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in 2020 were 413.2 parts per million.

Air quality policy is led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Department regularly engages with Defra on a range of issues relating to air quality. In recent months, this has included detailed consideration of the Net Zero Strategy, and the interaction of economy-wide decarbonisation with the Government's air quality objectives .

Artificial Intelligence: Copyright

Mr John Whittingdale:

[35825]

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To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the text and data mining exception on levels of growth within the artificial intelligence sector as a percentage.

Jane Hunt:

The new exception will put the UK amongst the leading nations globally who support Al development and wider use of text and data mining. It will make data more accessible, and help unlock the value of data sharing across the economy to drive innovation and growth and support the public good.

An academic study estimates that the effort required from researchers to undertake systematic reviews, an important part of research and innovation, is cut by 75% when using text mining services. An impact assessment will be published alongside the legislation when laid.

Arts: Artificial Intelligence

Mr John Whittingdale:

<u>35824</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a list of instances in the last three years where creative industries have failed to licence their content to artificial intelligence developers.

Jane Hunt:

The Government asked specific questions about impact in the consultation on AI and IP, but very limited quantitative evidence was submitted. However, smaller users such as small businesses and start-ups, as well as many researchers, have indicated that - when seeking to analyse works from multiple sources - licences have been out of reach on the grounds of cost or complexity.

Arts: Copyright

Mr John Whittingdale:

[35823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the financial impact on the creative industries 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.

Kevin Brennan: [37453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many meetings he has held with representatives of the creative industries in relation to the Government's decision to expand the text and data mining exception.

Jane Hunt:

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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.

The former minister for Science, Research and Innovation also discussed the exception with representatives of the Alliance for Intellectual Property at a meeting on 6 July.

Audio-visual Industry: Copyright

Pete Wishart: [37455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the financial impact on the UK audio-visual sector 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.

Business: Fraud

Emily Thornberry: [34853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on producing an estimate for the total financial cost of fraud committed against businesses in the UK in (a) financial year 2020-21, (b) calendar year 2021 and (c) financial year 2021-22.

Jane Hunt:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular meetings with Cabinet colleagues on a variety of issues. Fraud policy is not a matter for BEIS.

Business: Regulation

Claudia Webbe: [36952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Groceries Code Adjudicator, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing regulatory bodies for other industries, including the garment industry.

Jane Hunt:

Increased regulatory burdens result in increased costs for business, and could have an anticompetitive impact by restricting choice, driving up prices and inhibiting innovation in the supply of services.

In the response to the single enforcement body consultation published last year, the government reaffirmed its commitment to continue to engage with the enforcement bodies and industry partners to strengthen our understanding of levels of non-compliance across the garment trade. We will continue to review this issue and consider options to drive up standards across the sector.

Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

Claudia Webbe: [36951]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a fashion watchdog or garment trade adjudicator to tackle exploitation in the garment industry.

Claudia Webbe: [36953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a garment trade adjudicator to prevent abusive purchasing practices in the garment industry.

Claudia Webbe: [36954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a fashion watchdog, or garment trade adjudicator, to prevent incidences of brands from cancelling orders without paying compensation.

Claudia Webbe: [36955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a fashion watchdog, or garment trade adjudicator, to prevent incidences of brands from making late amendments to orders with resultant costs to suppliers.

Jane Hunt:

While the adjudicator model has had some success in raising standards in the groceries sector, there are significant differences between those two industries which calls into question how effectively the model can be transferred.

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In the response to the single enforcement body consultation published last year, the government reaffirmed its commitment to continue to engage with the enforcement bodies and industry partners to strengthen our understanding of levels of noncompliance across the garment trade. We will continue to review this issue and consider options to drive up standards across the sector.

Claudia Webbe: [36956]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a fashion watchdog, or garment trade adjudicator, in respect of ensuring that brands fulfil their contracts and pay garment factories on time and in full.

Jane Hunt:

In response to the single enforcement body consultation published last year, the government reaffirmed its commitment to continue to engage with the enforcement bodies and industry partners to strengthen our understanding of levels of noncompliance across the garment trade. We will continue to review this issue and consider options to drive up standards across the sector.

Small businesses affected by late or unfair payment practices can contact the Small Business Commissioner's investigation service at enquiries@smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk or by calling the office on 0121 695 7770.

Coal: Surrey

Wera Hobhouse: 36059

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the (a) number and (b) dates of meetings between Ministers in his Department and officials at UK Oil and Gas on the Surrey coal mine since 1 January 2019.

Greg Hands:

This Department holds many meetings with companies to discuss a wide range of business issues. Details of meetings held by Ministers in the Department are recorded in our transparency data, which is published at

www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-andmeetings.

Construction: Materials

Drew Hendry: [35989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of helping construction firms with training costs related to the use of sustainable alternative construction materials in the event that firms have to alter materials they plan to use for construction activities as a result of material shortages.

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Drew Hendry: [<u>35991</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the impact of leaving the EU on the availability of construction materials.

Greg Hands:

The Government regularly reviews matters related to construction skills. The Government is working closely with the industry to ensure that it can attract, retain and develop the skilled workforce it needs for the future.

Overall, the availability of construction materials is improving. Whilst manufacturers are mostly keeping up with demand, demand for some materials continues to outstrip supply due to high levels of global construction activity, lack of stock and Coronavirus-related disruption to production facilities, shipping and logistics. The Government continues to work with the Construction Leadership Council's Product Availability Group to monitor and manage the situation.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Jane Hunt:

Table below shows Department's air travel spend booked through our travel provider for years 2020, 2021 and 2022. There are occasions when ministerial travel is booked outside of our provider but are not included in this response as this information can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Department's published ministerial overseas travel can also be found on gov.uk here.

AIR TRAVEL SPEND VIA TRAVEL PROVIDER

| | (i) 2020 | (ii) 2021 | (iii) 2022 | TOTAL |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| (a) Ministers | £9,076 | £30,615 | £36,182 | £75,873 |
| (b) Officials | £265,381 | £106,732 | £308,566 | £680,679 |
| TOTAL | £274,457 | £137,347 | £344,748 | £756,552 |

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Photographs and Video Recordings

Angela Rayner: [37499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) photographers and (b) video producers were employed by his Department in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020 and (iii) 2021.

Jane Hunt:

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The Department has no one employed exclusively as a photographer or video producer. The content producers in the digital communications team are multi-skilled and work on many other aspects of creative production and digital delivery.

In July 2019, July 2020 and July 2021, the BEIS digital communications team had 3 full time content creators. Currently the BEIS digital communications team has 2 full time content creators.

There are a number of other employees who are not primarily content producers, but who sometimes support videos and photography – we do not have a record of how many members of staff this has included across the department in this time period.

Development Bank of Wales and Scottish National Investment Bank

Liz Saville Roberts: [36836]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many meetings he has held with the (a) Development Bank of Wales and (b) Scottish National Investment Bank in 2022.

Jane Hunt:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy regularly meets a variety of stakeholders.

Directors: Pay

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has plans to remove restrictions on non-executive director remuneration.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to remove restrictions on executive director remuneration.

Jane Hunt:

The Government is reviewing whether there are any unnecessary restrictions on remunerating directors, particularly non-executive directors, in shares. This is about how directors are remunerated, not how much. The Government has no plans to amend the statutory reporting and other requirements covering directors' remuneration under the Companies Act 2006

If it is concluded that there is a case in principle for amending existing provisions of the UK Corporate Governance Code relating to remuneration, any changes to the Code would be subject to consultation by the Financial Reporting Council.

Energy Bills Rebate

Alex Sobel: [38815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how people who pay all-inclusive bills for their homes will receive their entitlement through the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

Greg Hands:

There are rules which can protect tenants and ensure they receive the benefit of this policy. Ofgem's guidance on how to ensure customers are being charged no more than they should when they buy the electricity through their landlord, including what to do if they think there has been a mistake can be found here: https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/docs/2005/10/11782-resaleupdateoct05_3.pdf.

Energy: Billing

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36077]

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To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the press release entitled Ofgem requires improvements from energy suppliers on customer direct debits, published on 13 July 2022, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the finding that there are moderate to severe weaknesses in the direct debit and charging processes used by some energy suppliers.

Greg Hands:

The independent regulator Ofgem has a duty to protect energy consumers by ensuring they are treated fairly. Ofgem has said it expects the five suppliers with moderate or severe weaknesses to review their direct debit arrangements, submit an action plan, and make repayments if needed. More detail can be found here: https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/press-release-ofgem-requires-improvements-energy-suppliers-customer-direct-debits.

Energy: Housing

Bill Esterson: [38892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has had from housing sector organisations and trade groups in respect of the potential implications for his policies of the availability of housebuilding software to calculate energy efficiency in new homes; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has had representations from the Home Builders Federation in relation to the availability of

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housebuilding software to calculate energy efficiency in new homes and has responded to them.

Energy: Meters

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Drew Hendry: [38709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with Ofgem on energy companies' policies on informing people who are moved to meter estimates when Smart Meter data is unavailable as a result of signal problems.

Greg Hands:

Energy suppliers are required by their licence conditions to take all reasonable steps to ensure their customers' smart meters are fully functional. Suppliers are also obligated to treat customers fairly and provide information that is complete and accurate. Ofgem is responsible for regulating energy suppliers against their licence obligations

Sarah Olney: [38770]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made the number of households on pre-payment meters in each of the last three years, by parliamentary constituency.

Greg Hands:

The Government does not have this data at constituency level, however, data is compiled of households with pre-payment meters by region, which can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/quarterly-domestic-energy-pricestastics.

Energy: Price Caps

Drew Hendry: [35992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of setting a price cap for domestic heating in winter 2022.

Greg Hands:

The energy price cap was introduced to address an issue where certain groups of customers in the domestic market were found to be paying too much for their energy through a loyalty penalty. It therefore only applies to domestic gas and electricity consumers who are on a default or standard variable tariff. The price cap rate is set by Ofgem.

Energy: Prices

Tulip Siddig: [36830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason people with communal heating systems are not subject to the energy price cap.

Greg Hands:

The CMA completed its investigation into the energy market in 2016. It reported that default tariff customers of the large energy suppliers were paying an average of £1.4billion a year more than they would in a truly competitive market. In response, the Government legislated for Ofgem to introduce a cap on household default gas and electricity tariffs.

Heat networks typically buy their energy through commercial contracts which, in the past, resulted in competitive heat prices for those on networks. Commercial contracts are not covered by the existing Default Tariff Price Cap. The Energy Security Bill will provide Ofgem with powers to regulate heat networks.

Fracking

Wera Hobhouse: [36058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many licenses have been issued for oil and gas drilling each year from 2019.

Greg Hands:

The most recent offshore licensing round was the 32nd UK Offshore Licensing Round. It was conducted by the Oil and Gas Authority (now the North Sea Transition Authority), and concluded on 30 September 2020, with 113 licences offered.

Four offshore licences were also offered in 2019.

No onshore licences have been offered in England in this period. Onshore oil and gas licensing is a devolved matter in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

■ Fuels: Transport

Ben Lake: [36854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Competition and Markets Authority on its Market Study into road fuel and the potential merits of including a breakdown of the costs of inland fuel transportation and their impact on retail price.

Jane Hunt:

The Competition and Markets Authority launched a market study into the supply of road fuel in the UK on 08 July. This followed my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State's request to the CMA for advice on a number of features of the market for road fuel. The Government fully supports the CMA in its further work on this important issue. As part of its market study, the CMA welcomes views from stakeholders of all kinds on the issues it should be considering. Details on how to submit views to the CMA are available on the webpage for the market study, accessible at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/road-fuel-market-study.

Green Homes Grant Scheme

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Wera Hobhouse: [36062]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for the total number installations made under the Green Homes Grant since its completion.

Greg Hands:

The Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme closed to new applicants at the end of 31 March 2021. The latest Green Homes Grant voucher release official statistics published in February 2022 show, at the end of 7 February 2022, nearly 49,600 measures were installed.

■ Groceries Code Adjudicator

Daisy Cooper: [35053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2022 to Question 23427, and with reference to the conclusion of the Statutory Review of the Groceries Code Adjudicator: 2016-2019 that the existence of the GCA had sent a message to large retailers that their supplier relationships needed to be conducted fairly and in accordance with the Code, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the proposals from Traidcraft Exchange to establish a fashion watchdog.

Jane Hunt:

While the adjudicator model has had some success in raising standards in the groceries sector, there are significant differences between those two industries which calls into question how effectively the model can be transferred.

In the response to the single enforcement body consultation published last year, the government reaffirmed its commitment to continue to engage with the enforcement bodies and industry partners to strengthen our understanding of levels of non-compliance across the garment trade. We will continue to review this issue and consider options to drive up standards across the sector.

Heat Pumps

Wera Hobhouse: [36064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Department's Heat Pump Ready Programme, if he will make an estimate of the total number of heat pump installations that have taken place in each of the past three years in each local authority area.

Greg Hands:

The <u>Heat Pump Ready Programme</u>, part of the £1billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio, was launched October 2021.

Heat Pump Ready Stream 1, Phase 1 projects began feasibility studies in July 2022 and have not yet installed heat pumps. BEIS recently published the Stream 1, Phase 1 projects. In Stream 1, Phase 2, commencing in early 2023, the most successful

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Phase 1 projects will trial their proposed methodology, deploying heat pumps within their local authority areas.

An earlier BEIS Energy Innovation Programme, <u>Electrification of Heat Demonstrator</u>, has installed a total of 742 heat pumps across South-east Scotland, Newcastle and South-East England.

Hospitality Industry and Small Businesses: Energy

Sarah Olney: [37581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the impact of (a) rising fuel costs and (b) introducing a commercial energy price cap on (i) small businesses and (ii) the hospitality industry.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: The Government continues to engage with businesses to understand the impacts of high global energy prices.

The price cap for households was put in place because the Competition and Market's Authority found that a loyalty penalty exists for the disengaged households. The CMA did not find evidence of this in the business sector.

The price cap prevents suppliers making excess profit, but it cannot reduce wholesale energy costs. The cap allows suppliers to recover the efficient costs of supplying its customers.

Living Wage

Carolyn Harris: [36020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to implement the recommendations of the report by the Low Pay Commission entitled, The National Living Wage Review (2015-2020), published on 18 May 2022.

Jane Hunt:

We welcome the publication of the Low Pay Commission's review. We would like to thank them for their continued excellent work and look forward to receiving their recommendations in the Autumn for minimum wage rates to apply from April 2023.

Mathematics: Finance

Afzal Khan: [35049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the remaining £176 million of the Government's commitment of £300 million of additional funding for mathematical sciences will be released.

Jane Hunt:

UKRI's council level allocations were published on 30 May. The total UKRI allocation is £25.1 billion for 2022-25 and will reach its highest ever level in 2024-25 (over £8.8

billion). This multi-year settlement provides UKRI and its constituent research councils with stability and certainty to deliver world class research and innovation across their portfolio, including in mathematical sciences.

As part of the Additional Funding Programme for Mathematical Sciences, UKRI have committed £124 million out to 2028-29. UKRI will seek further opportunities to support mathematical research as it moves towards greater collective management of its funding, creating a portfolio of investments.

National Grid

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James Cartlidge: [36039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it is his Department's policy to attribute different weight in different parts of the UK to the impact on communities as determining factor in whether new electrical transmission pylon infrastructure should be via overland pylons or undersea connections.

Greg Hands:

It is Government policy for any part of Great Britain that overhead lines are the starting presumption for most electricity network developments. This takes account of the fact that undergrounding and the use of offshore subsea cables is significantly more expensive.

However, overhead lines can cause detrimental landscape and visual impacts in particularly sensitive areas. Within the energy National Policy Statements, undergrounding and the use of subsea cables can be considered where the benefits outweigh other considerations. This applies across Great Britain.

National Grid: East of England

James Cartlidge: [36040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an estimate of the (a) time it would take to complete and (b) cost of transmitting the capacity required from East Anglia GREEN pylons through alternative primarily undersea interconnectors.

James Cartlidge: [36041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information he holds on whether National Grid or National Grid ESO has sought estimates from companies capable of delivering undersea bootstraps to ascertain the potential cost of offshore transmission alternatives to East Anglia GREEN.

Greg Hands:

Private network operators, in this case National Grid Electricity Transmission, are responsible for delivering network infrastructure necessary to meet consumer needs. This includes identifying preferred options for the infrastructure, considering a range of factors. Network operators tender for suppliers to deliver the project, considering efficiencies and cost, to ensure value for money for the consumer.

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The independent energy regulator, Ofgem, regulates and incentivises network operators to do this efficiently through its network price controls, including considering delivery times and technical capability of individual projects.

Nuclear Reactors: Weather

Owen Thompson: [38736]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of rising temperatures on the capacity of nuclear reactors to maintain adequate levels of cold water.

Greg Hands:

All UK nuclear reactors take their cooling from the sea, which is largely unaffected by short-term peaks in ambient temperature. Heatwaves will not lead to unexpected reactor outages.

The independent regulator, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (the ONR), requires all of its nuclear site licensees to demonstrate resilience against external hazards like extremes of temperature. This must be updated regularly to reflect the latest evidence and climate projections.

The ONR would not allow a nuclear installation to operate if it judged that it was not safe to do so.

Occupational Health: Weather

Florence Eshalomi: [37639]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps they are taking to protect employees when expected levels of hot weather make their commute potentially hazardous.

Jane Hunt:

The Government encourages conversations between employers and employees regarding this issue. Employers may have special arrangements in place through contracts and workplace policies, or be able to offer discretionary, informal arrangements. Guidance on rights in relation to leave and pay and travel disruption is available at: https://www.gov.uk/travel-disruption-your-rights-at-work.

Parental Leave

Owen Thompson: [37562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make a comparative assessment of the merits of different systems of (a) maternity, (b) paternity and (c) shared parental leave.

Jane Hunt:

In 2019 the Government consulted on high-level options for reforming parental leave and pay. This consultation considers the objectives of parental leave and pay entitlements as a whole as well as specific entitlements.

We are currently considering responses to the consultation and will respond in due course.

■ Park Homes: Energy Bills Rebate

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[**36065**]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 17919 on Energy Bills Rebate, what steps his Department will take to support park home residents; and when his Department plans to make this support available.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for St Albans on 20th June 2022 to Question 18990.

Sensee

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Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

35027

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the business and employment practices of Sensee; and whether he has received representation on that companies practices on (a) unpaid work, (b) working hours, (c) statutory leave and (d) provision of work equipment.

Jane Hunt:

Sensee Ltd were named on 15 February 2017 for failing to pay National Minimum Wage of £252.00 to 1 worker.

Further information is available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-number-of-employers-named-and-shamed-for-underpaying.

Small Businesses

Ruth Jones: [36105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to prevent a reduction in the number of small businesses in the UK.

Jane Hunt:

The Government provides a range of support that all businesses can access. These include information on starting up and running a business on GOV.UK, one to one advice via our free Business Support Helpline and through 38 Growth Hubs across England, government backed Start-Up Loans, and our Help to Grow schemes.

Small businesses will also benefit from the £15 billion of targeted government support to help with the rising cost of living. This brings the total cost of living support measures announced to £37 billion this year. Government has cut fuel duty for 12 months, raised the Employment Allowance to £5,000, and is zero-rating VAT on energy-saving materials. This builds on existing support, including business rates relief worth £7 billion over five years.

■ Small Businesses: Newport West

Ruth Jones: [36106]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to support small businesses in Newport West constituency.

Jane Hunt:

Although business support is largely a devolved matter, the Government also provides a range of support that all businesses across the UK can access. This includes information on starting up and running a business on GOV.UK, and our new Help to Grow Schemes which will help small businesses across the UK learn new skills, reach new customers, and boost profits.

The Government backed British Business Bank helps make finance markets work better for small businesses, and 160 businesses in Newport West have benefitted from over £1.6 million in Start Up Loans since the programme was launched in 2012. At Spending Review 2021 we announced an additional £1.6 billion of funding for the next generation of UK Funds, including £130 million for a new fund in Wales that will provide debt and equity finance for innovative Welsh businesses.

Technology: Copyright

Mr John Whittingdale:

35826

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of proposals on the expansion of the text and data mining exception on the financial gains of non-UK based technology companies.

Jane Hunt:

The exception only applies to copying for data mining conducted in the UK. The new exception will make the UK one of the most attractive nations for businesses to carry out data mining, whether basing their whole business here or the part which conducts data mining. An impact assessment will be published alongside the legislation when laid.

This provision supports the National Al Strategy by helping to capture the benefits of Al innovation in the UK and ensure that Al technologies benefit all sectors and regions. This applies to all sizes of firms, whether established, start-up, growing, or even unicorn.

CABINET OFFICE

■ 10 Downing Street: Press Conferences

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

36861

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many televised press conferences have taken place in the new Downing Street press briefing room during 2022.

Nigel Adams:

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The Downing Street Briefing Room is in regular use for media briefings twice a day on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, once a day on Fridays when Parliament is sitting, and once a week during parliamentary recess.

There have been seven televised press conferences held so far in the room in 2022.

It is also used for other events such as virtual calls with world leaders.

■ Civil Service: Pay

Beth Winter: [36128]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what dates (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have met with the (i) PCS, (ii) Prospect and (iii) First Division Association civil service trades unions since the publication of the Civil Service Pay Remit guidance 2022 to 2023 on 31 March 2022.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

There have been numerous meetings between officials and national representatives of PCS, Prospect, FDA and other Trade Unions on a wide range of Civil Service wide workforce matters, including pay and the proposed reductions, since that date.

Specific dates where meetings have taken place are:

7th April

11th April

12th April

17th April

20th April

25th April

28th April

12th May

17th May

31st May

16th June

27th June

30th June

14th July

■ Efficiencies and Value for Money Committee

Pat McFadden: [38590]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the responsibilities of the Domestic and Economic (Efficiency and Value for Money) Committee include identifying savings in respect of civil service staffing.

Michael Ellis:

The Terms of Reference of the Domestic and Economic (Efficiency and Value for Money) Committee are to drive efficiency, effectiveness and economy in government spending, and scrutinise plans to manage major current and future cost pressures. Further details about this committee were released on GOV.UK on 20 March 2022, accessible below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-efficiency-drive-to-cut-55-billion-of-government-waste.

There are a number of Cabinet Committees that could take agenda items related to civil service staffing. It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees is not normally shared publicly.

Food: Prices

Drew Hendry: [38706]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of the Government's Cost of Living Business Tsar's recommendation on independent retailers that food businesses reduce the retail price of food.

Michael Ellis:

The Cost of Living Business Tsar, David Buttress, has and will continue to engage business of all sizes as part of his work to help households cope with the cost of living crisis. He is working closely with business associations to ensure that SMEs - including independent retailers - are able to contribute to this work. The Cost of Living Business Tsar will also work with officials to ensure that deals developed as part of his initiative are ethical and help UK consumers.

Food prices are set by businesses and it is not for the UK Government to set retail food prices or comment on day-today commercial decisions by companies. We continue to monitor food prices using the ONS inflation figures.

■ Government Departments: Vacancies

Sarah Olney: [38775]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many job vacancies there are in each Government (a) department and (b) agency.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

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As at 8am on 19 July, there are 3,349 adverts for 10,409 total postings advertised on the Civil Service Jobs website. The below table shows vacancies and posts by department.

| DEPARTMENT | AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE) | Adverts Live | TOTAL POSTS LIVE |
|---|---|--------------|------------------|
| Ministry of Defence | Ministry of Defence | 597 | 1,199 |
| HM Prison & Probation Service | n HM Prison & Probation Service | า 519 | 3,480 |
| HM Revenue and Customs | HM Revenue and Customs | 243 | 504 |
| Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (Internal) | Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (Internal) | 230 | 262 |
| UK Health Security Agency | UK Health Security Agency | 112 | 175 |
| Home Office | Home Office | 107 | 990 |
| Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy | Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy | 86 | 164 |
| Ministry of Justice | Ministry of Justice | 82 | 206 |
| Department for Work and Pensions | Department for Work and Pensions | 76 | 396 |
| Cabinet Office | Cabinet Office | 50 | 60 |
| Department for International Trade | Department for International Trade | 50 | 61 |
| Department of Health and Social Care | Department of Health and Social Care | 48 | 54 |
| Office for National Statistics | Office for National Statistics | 47 | 149 |
| Department for Education | Department for Education | 45 | 71 |

| DEPARTMENT | AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE) | ADVERTS LIVE | TOTAL POSTS LIVE |
|---|---|--------------|------------------|
| | Defence Science and Technology Laboratory | 43 | 203 |
| Crown Prosecution Service | Crown Prosecution Service | 39 | 82 |
| Health and Safety Executive | Health and Safety Executive | 38 | 63 |
| HM Courts and Tribunals Service | HM Courts and Tribunals Service | 38 | 297 |
| OFGEM | OFGEM | 37 | 57 |
| Natural England | Natural England | 36 | 82 |
| Scottish Government | Scottish Government | 34 | 43 |
| Department for Transport | Department for Transport | 30 | 32 |
| Forestry Commission | Forestry Commission | 26 | 28 |
| HM Treasury | HM Treasury | 26 | 31 |
| Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency | Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency | 24 | 36 |
| House of Commons | House of Commons | 23 | 32 |
| Social Security Scotland | Social Security Scotland | 22 | 70 |
| Government Digital Service | Government Digital Service | 20 | 30 |
| Insolvency Service | Insolvency Service | 20 | 34 |
| Homes England | Homes England | 19 | 28 |
| Government Legal Department | Government Legal Department | 17 | 146 |
| DEFRA | Food Standards Agency | 16 | 20 |

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| DEPARTMENT | AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE) | ADVERTS LIVE | TOTAL POSTS LIVE |
|--|--|--------------|------------------|
| Government Commercial Function | Government Commercial Function | 16 | 29 |
| Care Quality Commission | Care Quality Commission | 16 | 65 |
| Forestry Commission - Forest Research | Forestry Commission - Forest Research | 16 | 16 |
| Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities | Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities | 15 | 25 |
| Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport | Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport | 15 | 16 |
| College of Policing | College of Policing | 15 | 44 |
| UK Hydrographic Office | UK Hydrographic Office | 15 | 49 |
| Valuation Office Agency | Valuation Office Agency | 14 | 130 |
| Pensions Regulator | Pensions Regulator | 13 | 16 |
| Met Office | Met Office | 13 | 23 |
| Welsh Government | Welsh Government | 13 | 56 |
| National Crime Agency | National Crime Agency | 13 | 144 |
| The Money and Pensions Service | The Money and Pensions Service | 13 | 18 |
| Government Property Agency | Government Property Agency | 12 | 29 |
| DEFRA | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | 12 | 13 |
| Legal Aid Agency | Legal Aid Agency | 11 | 29 |
| Historic Environment Scotland | Historic Environment Scotland | 10 | 10 |

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| DEPARTMENT | AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE) | Adverts Live | TOTAL POSTS LIVE |
|---|---|--------------|------------------|
| Student Loans Company | Student Loans Company | 6 | 14 |
| Department for Transport | Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency | 6 | 92 |
| Department for Transport | Maritime and Coastguard Agency | 6 | 10 |
| Serious Fraud Office | Serious Fraud Office | 5 | 9 |
| Office of the Public Guardian | Office of the Public Guardian | 5 | 12 |
| Trade Remedies Authority | Trade Remedies Authority | 5 | 5 |
| Planning Inspectorate | Planning Inspectorate | 5 | 7 |
| Cross Departmental Opportunities | Cross Departmental Opportunities | 5 | 9 |
| UK Statistics Authority | UK Statistics Authority | 4 | 4 |
| • | Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service | | 5 |
| DEFRA | Rural Payments Agency | 4 | 5 |
| Northern Ireland Office | Northern Ireland Office | : 4 | 6 |
| Forestry and Land Scotland | Forestry and Land Scotland | 4 | 4 |
| Intellectual Property Office | Intellectual Property Office | 4 | 4 |
| Consumer Scotland | Consumer Scotland | 4 | 5 |
| Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education | Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education | 4 | 4 |
| Office of Rail and Road | Office of Rail and Road | 4 | 5 |

| DEPARTMENT | AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE) | Adverts Live | TOTAL POSTS LIVE |
|--|--|--------------|------------------|
| Government Statistical Service | Government Statistical Service | 4 | 40 |
| Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre | Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre | 4 | 10 |
| Charity Commission | Charity Commission | 4 | 7 |
| Independent Office for Police Conduct | Independent Office for Police Conduct | 4 | 5 |
| Independent Monitoring Authority | Independent Monitoring Authority | 3 | 3 |
| UK Research and Innovation | UK Research and Innovation | 3 | 3 |
| Government Internal Audit Agency | Government Internal Audit Agency | 3 | 4 |
| Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office | Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office | 3 | 7 |
| Medical Research Council | Medical Research Council | 3 | 3 |
| Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority | Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority | 3 | 3 |
| The National Lottery Community Fund | The National Lottery Community Fund | 3 | 3 |
| DEFRA | Animal and Plant Health Agency | 3 | 3 |
| Defence Electronics & Components Agency | Defence Electronics & Components Agency | 3 | 3 |
| Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service | Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service | 3 | 3 |
| Gambling Commission | Gambling Commission | 3 | 3 |
| Registers of Scotland | Registers of Scotland | 3 | 4 |

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|---|--|------------------|------------------|
| DEPARTMENT | APPLICABLE) | ADVERTS LIVE | TOTAL POSTS LIVE |
| Competition & Markets Authority | Competition & Markets Authority | 2 | 3 |
| Innovate UK | Innovate UK | 2 | 3 |
| National Savings and Investments | National Savings and Investments | 2 | 2 |
| Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman | Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman | 2 | 2 |
| Housing Ombudsman Service | Housing Ombudsman Service | 2 | 2 |
| MI5 | MI5 | 2 | 2 |
| DEFRA | Veterinary Medicines Directorate | 2 | 2 |
| Office for Nuclear Regulation | Office for Nuclear Regulation | 2 | 2 |
| Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority) | Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority) | 2 | 3 |
| The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom | The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom | 2 | 2 |
| Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council | Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council | 2 | 10 |
| Security Industry Authority | Security Industry Authority | 2 | 3 |
| Office for Environmental Protection | Office for Environmental Protection | 1 | 2 |
| Equality and Human Rights Commission | Equality and Human Rights Commission | 1 | 1 |
| Home Office | Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services | 1 | 1 |

| DEPARTMENT | AGENCY (IF APPLICABLE) | ADVERTS LIVE | TOTAL POSTS LIVE |
|---|--|--------------|------------------|
| The National Archives | The National Archives | 1 | 1 |
| Valuation Tribunal Service | Valuation Tribunal Service | 1 | 1 |
| DEFRA | Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science | 1 | 2 |
| MI6 - Secret Intelligence Service | MI6 - Secret Intelligence Service | 1 | 1 |
| Government Actuary's Department | Government Actuary's Department | 1 | 5 |
| Environmental Standards Scotland | Environmental Standards Scotland | 1 | 1 |
| Scottish Forestry | Scottish Forestry | 1 | 1 |
| Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority | | 1 | 1 |
| UK Debt Management Office | UK Debt Management Office | 1 | 1 |
| Parole Board | Parole Board | 1 | 1 |
| Criminal Cases Review Commission | Criminal Cases Review Commission | 1 | 1 |
| Youth Justice Board | Youth Justice Board | 1 | 6 |
| Building Digital UK (BDUK) | Building Digital UK (BDUK) | 1 | 1 |
| National Institute for Health and Care Excellence | National Institute for Health and Care Excellence | 1 | 1 |
| | Grand Total | 3,349 | 10,409 |

■ Members: Email

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Chi Onwurah: [38661]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his Department's expected timeframe is for Minister or Department to respond to an hon. Member's email on behalf on a constituent; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle incidences of responses being outstanding for several months.

Michael Ellis:

The Cabinet Office attaches great importance to the effective and timely handling of correspondence from MPs and Peers. On 26 May 2022, we published data on the timeliness of government responses to correspondence from MPs and Peers for 2021 on GOV.UK: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-on-responses-to-correspondence-from-mps-and-peers-2021. Cabinet Office timeliness improved each quarter of 2021, with 89% of correspondence received from hon. Members in quarter four responded to within 20 working days.

As per the <u>Guide to Handling Correspondence</u>, updated by the Cabinet Office in July 2021, the target response time set by Departments for correspondence must not exceed 20 working days. The Cabinet Office continues to keep its own processes under review to further improve the time taken to respond.

Ministers: Codes of Practice

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[<u>35028</u>]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the compatibility of the gesture made by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education outside Downing Street on 7 July 2022 with provisions in the Ministerial Code in respect of the conduct of Ministers during their interactions with members of the public.

Michael Ellis:

The Ministerial Code sets out that Ministers are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and to behave in a way that upholds the highest standards of propriety. Ministers are personally responsible for deciding how to act and conduct themselves in the light of the Ministerial Code, and for justifying their actions and conduct to Parliament and the public. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State has released a public statement and commented that she 'should have shown more composure'.

Mortality Rates

Esther McVey: [38654]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales: week ending 1 July 2022 published by the Office for National Statistics on 13 July 2022, what steps his Department is taking to investigate the higher than expected rate of deaths of 12.2 per cent above the five-year average.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

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

A response to the Rt hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 18 July is attached.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [UKSA_Response_to_PQ36854 (1).pdf]

Nusrat Ghani

Ms Nusrat Ghani: [38704]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the investigation by the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests into the events related to the hon. Member for Wealden's departure from Government in February 2020, for what reason that report has not been published; and if he will publish that report before a new Prime Minister takes office.

Michael Ellis:

This investigation had not been completed by Lord Geidt prior to his resignation. The investigation, therefore, remains outstanding.

The Prime Minister has taken the decision that the investigation should be a matter for a new Independent Adviser function, as soon as appointed by his successor.

RAF Coningsby: Domestic Visits

Dan Jarvis: [38671]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total cost to the public purse was of the Prime Minister's visit to RAF Coningsby on 14 July 2022.

Luke Pollard: [38826]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost was of the Typhoon fighter jet demonstration the Prime Minister received at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire in July 2022.

Michael Ellis:

The Prime Minister accompanied pilots on a routine training flight and, therefore, no extra cost was incurred.

Special Advisers: Termination of Employment

Preet Kaur Gill: [38796]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether any special advisers to Government have had their contracts terminated since 4 July 2022.

Michael Ellis:

Under paragraph 14b of the <u>Model Contract for Special Advisers</u>, a special adviser's employment is automatically terminated when their appointing minister ceases to hold the ministerial office to which they were appointed to assist them.

COP26

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Climate Change

Wendy Chamberlain:

[901197]

To ask the President of COP26, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Government policies to tackle climate change.

Alok Sharma:

Over the last thirty years the UK has reduced its emissions by over 40% whilst GDP has gone up over 80%.

In recent years, we have decarbonised our economy faster than any other G7 nation.

■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Kerry McCarthy: [32939]

To ask the President of COP26, how many nations have submitted updated Nationally Determined Contributions in advance of COP27 as of 8 July 2022.

Dr Matthew Offord: [33764]

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the progress of nations on submitting new Nationally Determined Contributions since COP26.

Alok Sharma:

Since COP26, there have been 16 NDC submissions. This represents progress but the Government continues to work closely with partner countries and organisations to drive climate ambition, and to urge all countries to revisit and strengthen their NDCs by the end of 2022 to close the ambition gap and keep 1.5C within reach.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey: [36690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghans with confirmed eligibility for relocation to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Police are in third countries as of 14 July 2022.

James Heappey:

As of 14 July 2022, we are aware of approximately 200 ARAP eligible principals, along with their families, that are in third countries.

Armed Forces: Housing

John Healey: [36971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will provide details of the (a) locations of all the high rise buildings housing armed forces personnel and (b) proportion of flammable cladding attached to each of those buildings.

Jeremy Quin:

The locations of the 38 high rise buildings, which currently house Armed Forces personnel, can be found in the table below. Of the 38, 26 of these have combustible components in their external wall system. The table below shows the approximate amount of combustible element in the external wall system as a percentage of the overall wall area:

| | | APPROXIMATE AMOUNT OF COMBUSTIBLE ELEMENT IN THE |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|
| LOCATION | NO OF BLOCKS | EXTERNAL WALL SYSTEM |
| HMNB Clyde | 22 | 17 = 20% 5 =15% |
| HMS Drake | 2 | 1 = 15% 1 = 0% |
| Glenart Castle, Longbridge | 1 | 95% |
| HMS Nelson | 3 | 1 = 90% 2 = 0% |
| Hyde Park Bks | 2 | 1 = 0% 1 = 5% |
| Edinburgh Castle | 1 | 0% |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 1 | 0% |
| Westminster | 2 | 0% |
| Belgravia | 1 | 0% |
| Wellington Bks | 3 | 0% |

All buildings have a current Fire Risk Assessment in place and remain legally compliant for continued occupation.

Emily Thornberry: [38564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2022 to Question 33685 on Armed Forces: Housing, if he will publish details for each listed type of service family accommodation of (a) the standard number of occupants and bedrooms, (b) the square footage of the property and (c) the number of service personnel living in each type of accommodation as of 31 March 2022.

Jeremy Quin:

The table below details each type of Service Family Accommodation (SFA), the standard number of occupants and bedrooms, floor size by square meterage and the number of personnel living in each type of SFA.

| | | | | NUMBER OF SERVICE LICENCE |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| PROPERTY TYPE | STANDARD NUMBER OFOCCUPANTS | NUMBER OF BEDROOMS | TOTAL FLOOR SIZE (SQ M) | HOLDERS OCCUPYING AS AT 31 MARCH 2022 |
| Type 1 | 6/7 | 2 Double, 2/3 Single | 251 | 55 |
| Type 2 | 6/7 | 2 Double, 2/3 Single | 210 | 207 |
| Type 3 | 6 | 2 Double, 2 Single | 155.5 | 1,433 |
| Type 4 | 6 | 2 Double, 2 Single | 137 | 2,900 |
| Type 5 | 5 | 2 Double, 1 Single | 116.4 | 2,539 |
| Type 5S | 5 | 2 Double, 1 Single | 137 | 611 |
| Туре В | 4 | 2 Double | 85.5 | 6,978 |
| Type C | 5 | 2 Double, 1 Single | 94.5 | 18,515 |
| Type D | 7 | 3 Double, 1 Single | 119.5 | 3,050 |
| Type DS* (Type DS* is a Type D SFA, that is comprised of two SFA's reconfigured to make one). | 7 | 3 Double, 1 Single | 47 | |

Some SFA will comprise of more than one service resident.

Emily Thornberry:

[<u>38565</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2022 to Question 33685 on Armed Forces: Housing, what factors other than square footage account for the difference in the costs of supplying energy to a standard property of each type of Service Family Accommodation occupied by officers (Type I-V) compared to each type occupied by other ranks (Type A-D).

Jeremy Quin:

In addition to square meterage, a property's energy efficiency rating is the other factor which accounts for the difference in the costs to the Ministry of Defence of supplying energy to a standard property of each type of Service Family Accommodation.

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Emily Thornberry: [38566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2022 to Question 33685 on Armed Forces: Housing, whether the average costs to his Department of supplying energy to each type of Service Family Accommodation are assessed to be higher, lower or broadly the same as the average costs incurred by service personnel living in equivalent accommodation and buying their energy direct from private sector suppliers.

Jeremy Quin:

The average costs to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) of supplying energy to each type of Service Family Accommodation on the MOD network, are assessed to be lower than the average costs incurred by Service personnel who buy their energy direct from private sector suppliers.

Armoured Fighting Vehicles

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [36714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June to Questions 18841, 18834, 18835 on Armoured Fighting Vehicles, and to Question 18836 on Challenger Tanks, and Questions 18837 and 18838 on Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle, and Question 18839 on Armoured Fighting Vehicles, if he will provide updated Answers for those Questions in the context of his Department's annual publication of the total number of vehicles across the armed forces on open access internet.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence publishes statistics on Armed Forces Equipment and Formations on an annual basis. The next update, giving detail as at 1 April 2022, is expected to be published on gov.uk in autumn 2022.

Army: Operating Costs

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [35880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual running cost is of (a) 1 (UK) Division (b) 3 (UK) Division.

James Heappey:

In financial year 2021-22, the workforce and activity costs to maintain the units within 1st (United Kingdom) Division and 3rd (United Kingdom) Division at routine levels of readiness, and at full strength, are as follows:

1st (UK) Division costs c £1.277 billion p.a.

3rd (UK) Division costs c £1.307 billion p.a.

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

■ Clyde Naval Base: Rescue Services

John Healey: [36970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many fire and rescue workers there have been at HMNB Clyde in each year since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

The below table shows the number of Defence Fire and Rescue workers at Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Clyde.

| YEAR | Number of Defence Fire and Rescue workers at HMNB CLYDE |
|---------|---|
| 2010 | 30 |
| 2011 | 60 |
| 2012 | 60 |
| 2013 | 50 |
| 2014 | 50 |
| 2015 | 40 |
| 2016 | 50 |
| 2017 | 60 |
| 2018 | 60 |
| 2019 | 60 |
| 2020 | 50 |
| 2021 | 40 |
| 2022[1] | 50 |

[1] Data for 2020-2022 has been provided by Capita.

Data provided for 2010-2021 as of 31 December. Data for 2022 as of 19 July 2022. Data has been rounded to ensure compliance with the Data Protection obligations.

■ Defence: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [38531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the social value formulas used by his Department to assess procurement bids.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence assesses social value in procurement bids via criteria set out in Procurement Policy Note 06/20, published by the Cabinet Office. This defines these criteria and provides information on how social value is scored in relevant Government procurements. Tender documentation for each procurement will set out for participating tenderers the specific weighting and scoring to be applied to the chosen social value criteria, along with other requirements.

The model and associated guidance note have been published on the gov.uk website:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/940826/Social-Value-Model-Edn-1.1-3-Dec-20.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/940827/Guide-to-using-the-Social-Value-Model-Edn-1.1-3-Dec-20.pdf

■ Libya: Radicalism

John Healey: [36698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) level of violent extremism in Libya and (b) risk of that extremism to the UK.

James Heappey:

Violent extremism in Libya remains a concern and the issue is kept under review by the Ministry of Defence. We work closely with the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC). JTAC is the UK's independent centre for analysis and assessment of terrorism, it keeps the UK national threat level under constant review. This is a systematic, comprehensive, and rigorous process, based on the very latest intelligence and analysis of internal and external factors which drive the threat.

■ Low Flying: Compensation

Mr Kevan Jones: [35878]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much compensation his Department has paid to landowners in response to the effects of low-flying aircraft, by case, since June 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

The total amount of compensation paid for all low flying claims since June 2021 is £423,084.52. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is unable to verify whether claimants are landowners or hold other occupations.

The MOD takes the issue of safe low flying extremely seriously and understands that military low flying can be noisy and unpopular but it is an essential part of operational training. The MOD is constantly striving to ensure that such disturbance is kept to an absolute minimum and that the burden of noise pollution is as evenly distributed as possible throughout the UK Low Flying System as a whole. In order to ensure that military low flying is as accountable to the public as possible the MOD provides the

Low Flying Complaints Enquiry Unit, located at RAF Wittering, which allows the public to report low flying incidents which have raised concern.

■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

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Mr Tobias Ellwood: [35888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of (a) expanding Operation NEWCOMBE and (b) increasing British armed forces presence in Mali in the context of levels of extremism.

James Heappey:

West Africa has strategic importance to the United Kingdom; from our enduring partnership with a number of countries in the region – notably Ghana and Nigeria, to insecurity and instability in the Sahel, to countering piracy, smuggling and illegal fishing in the Gulf of Guinea.

The UK constantly reviews our contribution to international missions to ensure that the military instrument is being effectively used alongside political and economic efforts. As the Malian government has chosen to work more closely with a Russian private military company and the violence has spread to Burkina Faso causing a direct threat to the UK interest in the littoral states, the Ministry of Defence is currently working across Whitehall to consider whether our interest in West Africa might be better pursued through a different mission with regional partners.

Military Aid: Weather

John Healey: [38504]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether armed forces personnel have been deployed in response to extreme heat.

James Heappey:

As of 19 July 2022, the Ministry of Defence has neither received requests for, nor undertaken, any Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) tasks in response to the extreme heatwave currently affecting the UK. Defence has an appropriately comprehensive network of liaison officers in Government departments, and across all regions of the UK, to facilitate any requests for support.

Minesweepers: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [38535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish a list of the bids which entered the tender for the mine countermeasures vessel contract.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence will be making an announcement in due course regarding the Mine Countermeasures Support Vessel, but to provide further details at this time could be prejudicial to the commercial interests of the Department.

Ministry of Defence: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Leo Docherty:

This information is published every quarter and can be found at

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-with-external-organisations-in-the-ministry-of-defence

Data for Ministry of Defence senior officials can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-senior-officials-business-expenses-hospitality-and-meetings-january-to-december-2021#full-publication-update-history

NATO Enlargement

Rachael Maskell: [36001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he is having with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) international counterparts on the potential expansion of NATO and how the UK can contribute to this.

James Heappey:

The UK Government regularly engages with allies and international partners on NATO's open door policy. This policy supports the right of any European state that shares the values of our alliance and are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership to join NATO. Finland and Sweden have now started this process and we hope to see them join the alliance at the soonest opportunity.

NATO's expansion has been pivotal in spreading democracy, free speech and the rule of law across Europe. Each nation has the right to choose it's own security arrangements. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally changed European security and it is understandable that faced with this threat, countries may review their security arrangements, including considering applying to join the alliance and to benefit from it's collective security guarantees. The alliance continues to work with aspirant countries to prepare them for eventual membership.

Persian Gulf: Armed Forces

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [35887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department intend to increase armed forces presence in the Persian Gulf to help prevent the illegal movement of arms and equipment.

James Heappey:

While there are no current plans to increase our armed forces presence, we have a substantial presence in the Gulf under Op KIPION, upholding International Law and

undertaking a range of Security Operations across the Gulf to address threats to the global commons and to states' security. These are often in partnership with allies or as part of multinational constructs such as the US-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and our leadership of the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) which has continued to grow its member nations since its creation in 2019.

In a demonstration of the UK's commitment to upholding international law HMS MONTROSE conducted two interdictions earlier this year resulting in the seizure of Iranian advanced conventional weaponry, which we presented to the UN Panel of Experts in June.

To ensure regional security, including in the maritime domain, our deployed force levels in the Middle East are kept under constant review and adjusted in line with UK requirements and priorities. The UK is committed to the region's security and as such engages broadly with regional partners and international constructs to maximise the benefit, and effect, realised from UK force attribution.

■ RAF College Cranwell: Food

Mr Kevan Jones: [38533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the purchase of toast and butter from RAF Cranwell is categorised as Pay As You Dine for servicemen and servicewomen.

Leo Docherty:

Yes.

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RAF Coningsby: Typhoon Aircraft

John Healey: [38499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total cost to the public purse was of the Prime Minister receiving a demonstration and flying in a Typhoon plane at RAF Coningsby.

Jeremy Quin:

The Prime Minister's flight was incorporated into a routine training sortie. The Ministry of Defence does not routinely calculate the cost of individual sorties.

John Healey: [38500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel were involved in and supported the Prime Minister's recent flight in a Typhoon plane at RAF Coningsby.

James Heappey:

RAF Coningsby has some 3,000 military, Civil Service and contractor personnel all playing their part in supporting Typhoon flying operations and training, including Quick Reaction Alert (QRA). The Prime Minister met a range of military and civilian personnel involved in maintaining, operating and supporting of Typhoon.

Trafalgar Class Submarines: Iron and Steel

John Healey: [36972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether UK pressure hull steel was used to construct the Trafalgar class submarines.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 19 July 2022 to Question 33690.

Attachments:

1. Warships; Iron and Steel [UIN 33690.docx]

■ Typhoon Aircraft: Operating Costs

Mr Kevan Jones: [38532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an estimate of the cost per flying hour of a Typhoon aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

I am withholding the information requested as its release would prejudice commercial interests.

Ukraine: Military Aid

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [35886]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the announcement of 17 June 2022 that the UK will start a programme to train Ukrainian troops on British soil, whether his Department now plans to expand this training offer.

James Heappey:

We are working with the Armed Forces of Ukraine to provide training that meets their requirements now and into the future. We welcome the support of international partners to deepen and broaden the training programme.

As my right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary said in his statement on 5 July 2022, our ambition is to increase the scale and frequency of these courses, in line with Ukrainian requirements.

Rachael Maskell: [35999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel have served in roles relating to Ukraine since February 2022.

James Heappey:

Since February 2022, a total of 2,243 UK Service personnel have served in roles providing dedicated support to Defence's activities in relation to Ukraine. This includes both personnel deployed overseas as well as UK based personnel involved in the identification of Ukraine's defence requirements and training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces as announced in the Defence Written Ministerial Statement on Continued Support to Ukraine on the 5 July 2022.

The figure provided does not include personnel across Defence who have contributed within their existing roles.

Attachments:

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1. Continued Support to Ukraine [WMS 5 July 2022.docx]

John Healey: [36697]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 19 May 2022, Official Report, column 919 and figures on the total weapons delivered to Ukraine by the UK and international allies, when he plans to place those figures in the Library.

James Heappey:

On 21 July 2022 the Defence Secretary released a Written Ministerial Statement providing the House with a further update on equipment that the UK is providing to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. This included two summaries: one of UK donations; and a second of combined international donations.

John Healey: [38501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Ukrainian interpreter vacancies there are as part of the training programme for Ukrainian forces in the UK; and what assessment he has made of the potential impact of those vacancies on the timing of delivery of that programme.

James Heappey:

The provision of interpreters to support the training programme for Ukrainian forces in the UK is delivered through an established contract. All the required services have been delivered to date. As a result, there is no impact on the timing of delivery of the programme. The situation is monitored by PJHQ and the Contractor as part of the planning and risk management process.

John Healey: [38502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many translators who speak Ukrainian are employed by his Department to train Ukrainian soldiers in the UK.

James Heappey:

No interpreters are directly employed by this department. Currently 209 interpreters are contracted to assist in the training of Ukrainian soldiers in the UK.

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [38547]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many M270B1 were donated to Ukraine as part of the UK's support to that country's war effort.

James Heappey:

Our gifting of Multiple-Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) follows detailed discussions with the Armed Forces of Ukraine on what they need to meet their operational requirements. The highly capable MLRS systems we have given provide Ukraine with a significant boost in capability. For operational security reasons, we will not comment on the quantity of M270 that we have provided.

Unmanned Air Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [35874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July to Question 31759 on Unmanned Air Vehicles: Procurement, how his Department has estimated that £400 million will be reinvested into UK industry; and what that money will be reinvested in.

Mr Kevan Jones: [35875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 31759 on Unmanned Air Vehicles: Procurement, if he will publish a list of the twelve industry partners referred to in that answer.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department estimate that some £400 million will be invested in the UK is based on current and proposed contractual commitments with UK companies. The 12 industry partners across the UK in the Protector Programme are shown in the table below:

| COMPANY | Role |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Abaco Systems | Computer Modules |
| CAE | Synthetic Training Systems |
| Draken | Logistics and Maintenance Services |
| Cobham | Brimstone Launchers |
| Cosworth | Engine Development |
| DACO Hand Controllers | Stick and Throttle Hand Controllers |
| DECA | Maintenance Repair and Overhaul |
| Flight Data Systems | Flight Data Recorders |
| GKN | Fuel Bladders and V-Tails |
| MBDA | Brimstone Missiles |
| Meta Mission Data | Consultancy and Flight Demos |
| Raytheon UK | Paveway IV Guided Munitions |

USA: Nuclear Disarmament

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John Healey: [<u>38506</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on nuclear arms controls in the last 12 months.

Jeremy Quin:

The Government has close and regular dialogue with the US Administration on all aspects of nuclear and arms control policy.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts: Industry

Chris Elmore: [38755]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her policy is on the Government's vision for the creative industries; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Elmore: [38756]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the upcoming creative industries sector vision statement will include a workforce plan on career pathways for creative freelancers from low-income backgrounds and marginalised groups.

Chris Elmore: [38757]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has undertaken consultation with trade unions in the creative sector on her upcoming creative industries sector vision statement.

Matt Warman:

The creative industries are a vital part of the UK's economy, worth approximately £116 billion in Gross Value Added and employing over 2 million people across the country. They were identified as one of four key sectors in the Plan for Growth to encourage recovery following the pandemic, and as a result we are developing a Creative Industries Sector Vision. The Sector Vision will set out our 2030 vision to promote inclusive growth, support the development of the creative workforce, maximise the wider impacts of the sector, and deliver on the government's levelling up, Global Britain and net zero objectives.

We recognise the need for a network of flexible and accessible routes into the creative industries, from early years education to adult reskilling, for people of all backgrounds, and the Sector Vision will look closely at these issues. We also recognise the importance of job quality to ensure broad pathways into the creative industries, which is why we are working with the Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre to deliver a Review into Job Quality and Working Practice in the Creative Industries. This will be published in the Autumn and has involved consultation with creative trade unions.

The Sector Vision is being developed in partnership with the Creative Industries Council (CIC). As our primary partner, the CIC membership includes representatives of the creative workforce and the CIC engages wider stakeholders through its working groups.

Broadband: Finance

Dr Matthew Offord: [35922]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much Project Gigabit funding will be distributed to devolved authorities.

Matt Warman:

Project Gigabit funding for the planned procurements in the devolved administrations will be determined following thorough market reviews and using a modelled estimate of the costs involved in providing gigabit coverage.

Eligible premises in hard-to-reach communities across the United Kingdom can also get support from Project Gigabit's £210m UK Gigabit Voucher scheme, which can provide immediate help to communities right now in advance of the wider rollout.

Broadband: Schools

Dr Matthew Offord: [35921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding his Department provides to primary schools in England for the installation of faster gigabit broadband.

Matt Warman:

To support the delivery of gigabit-capable connectivity for public buildings, including schools, as part of Project Gigabit we are investing up to £110 million into our GigaHubs programme.

As part of this, DCMS has recently announced a joint £82 million investment with the Department for Education (DfE) to connect up to 3,000 eligible schools across England to gigabit-capable broadband. DCMS will connect up to 2,000 of these schools with a contribution of up to £57 million, and the DfE will be funding up to an additional 1,000 schools.

The majority of the delivery will be for primary schools, although some secondary schools may benefit from this funding, with the number of primary and secondary schools to be confirmed after procurement is complete.

We are also currently investing approximately £900,000 for primary schools in Dorset and Oxfordshire to receive gigabit-capable broadband through existing GigaHubs projects.

Dr Matthew Offord: [35924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate her Department has made of the number of schools in England that will take part in her gigabit broadband initiative for schools.

Matt Warman:

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To support the delivery of gigabit-capable connectivity for public buildings, including schools, as part of Project Gigabit we are investing up to £110 million into our GigaHubs programme.

As part of this, DCMS has recently announced a joint £82 million investment with the Department for Education (DfE) to connect up to 3,000 eligible schools across England to gigabit-capable broadband. DCMS will connect up to 2,000 of these schools and the DfE will fund up to an additional 1,000 schools as part of their mission to enable every school in England to access high-speed internet by 2025.

Up to 35 primary schools in Dorset and Oxfordshire are also in line for delivery of a gigabit-capable connection through existing GigaHubs projects.

Channel Four Television

Dr Matthew Offord: [35923]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the financial impact of Channel 4 on the independent television production sector.

Matt Warman:

The Government consulted extensively on the future of Channel 4, and the views and evidence gathered from a wide range of stakeholders has informed the Government's assessment of any potential impact of a change of ownership. The Government published its <u>sale impact analysis</u> on 28 April.

Channel 4 has done an excellent job in supporting the UK production sector and thereby delivering on one of its founding purposes. Forty years on, independent production in the UK is now booming, with revenues having grown from £500 million in 1995 to £3 billion in 2019. Companies are increasingly less reliant on Channel 4 for commissions. According to Pact's 2020 census, only 7 per cent of the UK's independent production sector revenues come from Channel 4 commissions.

More broadly, the independent production sector is now a mature industry, driven principally by medium sized and larger companies. The majority of revenues flow to a relatively small group of large companies in the independent production sector. Pact's figures suggest that 63 per cent of sector revenues were captured by companies with £25m+ revenues in 2020, and 34 per cent of revenues were captured by companies with £70m+ revenues.

Under new ownership, Channel 4 will still be required to commission a minimum volume of its programming from independent producers, in line with the quotas

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placed on other public service broadcasters, ensuring its continued contribution to the sector.

Channel 4 has excellent relationships with independent producers right across the UK and there is no reason this should change. The Government expects a new owner to want to build on and develop those relationships. Ultimately, the Government believes that in the long run the UK production ecosystem will benefit from a more sustainable Channel 4. A change of ownership that improves Channel 4's access to capital could increase spending on production. For example, Channel 5's overall content budget increased following its acquisition by Viacom in 2014, with first-run spending up by an average of 7% per year between 2014 and 2018.

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

Jon Trickett: [35840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Matt Warman:

For Ministers, DCMS spent £1,064.99 in 2020, £12,117.80 in 2021 and £6,450.40 in 2022 (flights booked up to 24 July 2022).

For Officials, DCMS spent £57,597.22 in 2020, £34,302.00 in 2021 and £94,579.80 in 2022 (flights booked up to 24 July 2022).

■ Mobile Phones: Surcharges

Theresa Villiers: [38552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she is taking steps to (a) reduce and (b) prevent roaming charges for UK travellers using smartphones in the EU.

Damian Collins:

The UK Government continues to monitor the mobile telecommunications market and promote a competitive marketplace that serves the interests of consumers. Some operators, such as Virgin Media O2, continue to offer surcharge free roaming to consumers, whilst others offer low cost packages. We continue to advise that consumers check with their operators before travelling abroad to the EU.

Public Service Broadcasting: Wales

Kevin Brennan: [38530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her planned timetable is for bringing forward legislative proposals for the Media Bill as announced in the Queen's Speech 2022; and what progress her Department has made on developing proposals relating to the (a) online prominence of Welsh language Public Service Broadcasting content and (b) remit of S4C.

Matt Warman:

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The Government set out its programme for the third session in the Queen's speech on 10th May 2022 which included a commitment to legislate for a Media Bill.

Regional and minority language broadcasting has an important role to play in the UK's broadcasting ecology, providing not only an opportunity for speakers to access content in a language familiar to them, but as a means of cultural expression for communities across the UK.

In recognition of this, the government set out its intention in the Broadcasting White Paper - *Up Next* - to legislate to introduce a new prominence regime which would require designated TV platforms to give appropriate prominence to PSB online services, including S4C. We will also legislate to update the public service remit of S4C to reflect the growth of digital and online services, and remove the current geographical broadcasting restrictions to allow S4C to broaden its reach by offering its content on a range of new platforms in the UK and beyond.

The Government will introduce this legislation when Parliamentary time allows.

EDUCATION

Academies: Standards

Stephen Morgan: [38809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of primary schools under the control of a multi-academy trust that are judged outstanding by Ofsted that retain that status once they have been moved to the control of another multi-academy trust.

Will Quince:

The department has not made an estimate of this number. Schools rated outstanding by Ofsted very rarely move between multi-academy trusts, meaning there would be too few schools from which to make such an estimate.

Adoption

Luke Pollard: [38827]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the independent review of children's social care: Final report, published in May 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of implementing that report's recommendations regarding (a) contact in general and (b) letterbox contact.

Luke Pollard: [38828]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Adoption strategy, published in July 2021, what recent progress his Department has made on working with the regional adoption agencies Leaders Group to (a) trial and develop good practice and (b) set national standards in (i) supporting birth families and (ii) contact arrangements.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The government is determined to respond to the challenges set by the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and will consider the recommendations carefully. As set out in our adoption strategy paper, improving contact for children, birth families, and adoptive parents is a key priority.

The adoption strategy commits us to working with regional adoption agencies to develop and trial what good practice around contact looks like, with a view to setting national standards in this area. This includes investigating what support is needed for children, birth parents, and adoptive parents. Regional adoption agencies are currently trialling a programme called 'Letterswap', which is a new digital platform to improve the current 'Letterbox' system.

In addition, the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board has established a 'Maintaining relationships for children' sub-group. It has a remit to improve children's understanding of their identity to improve their ability to reach their potential as adults. This group's work will complement that of regional adoption agency leaders to help develop good practice around contact which can be shared with adoption agencies across the country.

BTEC Qualifications

Rachael Maskell: [30070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage young people to take up BTEC qualifications.

Andrea Jenkyns:

From 2024, T Levels and A levels will be the qualifications of choice for classroom-based study. As part of the post-16 qualifications review, the department set out the types of qualifications that we intend to fund alongside T Levels and A levels at level 3 in July 2021.

T Levels are challenging qualifications developed with 250 leading employers, have significantly longer teaching hours, and include a meaningful nine-week industry placement that sets them apart from many current vocational qualifications. We believe that it is the right thing to do to remove funding for technical qualifications that overlap with T Levels once they become nationally available.

Students will continue to be able to study BTECs and other Applied General qualifications as part of mixed programmes alongside A levels, where they meet new quality standards and support progression to higher education. Students will also be able to study qualifications such as BTECs as their full programme of study where there is no T Level or A level.

BTEC Qualifications and T-levels

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Mr Toby Perkins: [35916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students began, but did not complete, each (a) BTEC and (b) T Level course, broken down by institution and by course, in 2021-22.

Andrea Jenkyns:

T Level students who started their programme in September 2020 will complete their learning this summer. Information on the outcomes for T Level and BTEC students will not be available until after results day. Final data on students who have completed their learning will not be available until official data collections have been submitted later this year.

Care Leavers: Pupil Premium

Munira Wilson: [36903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium Plus in the financial year beginning 1 April 2022 as a result of having ceased to be looked after by a local authority because of a (a) special guardianship order and (b) child arrangements order or residence order.

Will Quince:

Information on the number of pupil premium plus pupils in England, including allocations for financial year 2022/23, for the pupil premium for all local authorities is available at the link below. The total number of pupil premium plus pupils can specifically be found in both the 'School_Type' and Local_Authority' sheets of the June 2022 allocations file: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2022-to-2023.

Children: Food

Mike Amesbury: [36098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to guarantee access to healthy meals for children living in poverty who are not eligible for free school meals.

Mike Amesbury: [36099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the cost of living crisis on levels of the number of children living in poverty who are not eligible for free schools meals.

Mike Amesbury: [36100]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to review the eligibility criteria for free school meals before the beginning of the next school year.

Will Quince:

Under this government, free school meal eligibility has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century. This includes the introduction of universal infant free school meals, further education free meals, and the permanent extension of free school meals to some groups of children who have no recourse to public funds.

Under current criteria, in January 2022, 1.9 million pupils were eligible for and claiming a benefit-related free meal in school at lunch time, saving families hundreds of pounds a year per child. This equates to 22.5% of all pupils, up from 15% in 2015.

The government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and is providing over £37 billion in support for the cost of living this year. This includes an extra £500 million of local support, which will be extended from this October to March 2023 to help those most in need with payments towards the rising cost of food, energy, and water bills. This brings the total amount provided through the Household Support Fund to £1.5 billion since October 2021. This is administered by local councils in England and helps those in most need with payments towards the rising cost of food, energy, and water bills.

In setting eligibility for free school meals, the government's position remains that it is right that provision is targeted at supporting the most disadvantaged, those out of work or on the lowest income. The department will continue to keep all free school meal eligibility under review, to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them. 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.

Department for Education: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Will Quince:

The amounts spent by the department on air travel in total for the requested financial years are shown below. The department does not have the split for ministers and officials readily available. These are the full amounts for both ministers and officials:

2019/20: £296,227

2020/21: £40,166

• 2021/22: £38,294

The department always strives to keep costs as low as possible and to get the best out of available funds.

Department for Education: Ministerial Changes

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish all emails from the Department's Permanent Secretary to departmental staff informing them of the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Education.

Will Quince:

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On the appointment of a new Secretary of State, the Permanent Secretary will generally communicate with staff to inform them of the appointment, noting the continuation of the department's key business, while outlining any changes to portfolios or responsibilities. In the department, this is not done by email but through all-staff live broadcasts. Factual updates on department ministerial appointments have also been published on the departmental staff intranet and through the all-staff weekly newsletter. Information on all departments' ministerial appointments, and portfolios, is already available in the public domain.

Department for Education: UK Relations with EU

Munira Wilson: [36905]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to page 9 of the schedule to the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2022, what expenditure and support his Department plans to provide to other Government departments in the financial year 2022-23 to prepare for the UK's departure from the EU.

Will Quince:

The department's ambit within the central government supply estimates 2022/23 refers to 'Expenditure and support to other central government departments to prepare for EU exit' and the 'Income and support to other central government departments relating to support for EU exit'.

These statements were included in the 'Main Estimate' ambit to ensure the department has sufficient cover to manage any residual activity that may occur during the 2022/23 financial year.

The department expects to make one payment to The Stationery Office in respect of 'Statutory Instrument and Explanatory Memorandum on EU Agencies revocation'. In total, this amounts to £479.00 for the 2022/23 financial year.

Digital Technology: Apprentices

Matt Vickers: [30201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase apprenticeships opportunities in the cyber technology sector.

Andrea Jenkyns:

Apprenticeships provide people with the opportunity to earn and learn the skills needed to start, progress or re-train in the technology sector, helping employers to address their current and emerging skills needs and build a diverse pipeline of talent.

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The department continues to work in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and supports their newly launched strategy to make the digital economy more inclusive, competitive, and innovative by supporting the growth of Digital, Cyber, and Artificial Intelligence strategies.

We have put employers at the heart of our apprenticeship system, empowering them to design the standards they need. Employers in the digital sector have so far developed 26 high-quality digital apprenticeship standards across all levels in occupations such as Data Science, Cyber Security, Digital and Technology solutions, AI, Software Developer and Creative Digital Design.

In the 2020/21 academic year there were 18,400 apprenticeship starts in the Information and Communication Technology sector subject area, with 17,000 starts reported so far for the first eight months of the 2021/22 academic year.

The department is also encouraging all employers to offer more flexible training models. There are two flexi-job apprenticeship agencies supporting the digital sector, ensuring apprentices are ready to work on-site and can benefit from the high-quality long-term training that an apprenticeship provides.

We are working closely with stakeholders in the digital skills sector to identify opportunities for improvements that support digital growth and deliver sector growth campaigns via trusted sector voices including TechUK and BCS, to inspire and inform SMEs to recruit apprentices in the digital sector.

■ Free School Meals

Dan Jarvis: [38667]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the viability of automatically enrolling children who are eligible on to the free school meal scheme.

Will Quince:

The department wants to ensure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their free school meals, and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility.

We continue to explore the options and delivery feasibility of introducing autoenrolment functionality. However, there are complex data, systems, and legal implications to such a change.

Dan Jarvis: [<u>38668</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children in (a) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council area and (b) England are (i) eligible for and (ii) in receipt of free school meals.

Will Quince:

The department publishes the number of pupils eligible for free school meals in the 'Schools, Pupils and their characteristics' national statistics publication, which is

available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics.

The following link provides the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, and the number of pupils who were eligible and took a free school meal at census day, 20 January 2022, for Barnsley and England: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/8c29da0a-7a98-4107-9302-0328ee25a40e.

■ Further Education: Bournemouth East

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [35884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help improve post-18 education options for young people in the Bournemouth East constituency.

Andrea Jenkyns:

The department is continuing to invest in adult education for adults aged 19 and over, through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), which was £1.34 billion in each of the 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22 academic years. The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above, from pre-entry to level 3, to support adults to gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship, or further learning.

As part of the £2.5 billion National Skills Fund, Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with an employer.

Eligible learners in Bournemouth aged 19 and over can also take advantage of the free level 3 courses for job offers. Over 400 qualifications are on offer, which have been identified for their strong wage outcomes and ability to meet key skills needs. A list of these qualifications can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/find-a-free-level-3-qualification/list-of-free-level-3-qualifications-available-to-eligible-adults.

Adults can also be supported to access qualifications not included in the free courses for jobs offer through Advanced Learner Loans. Advanced Learner Loans are income-contingent loans that provide extensive coverage of regulated level 3 to level 6 qualifications, helping to meet the up-front tuition fees.

The department also wants to see more people in Bournemouth benefit from apprenticeships that offer high-quality training and opportunities for progression. There are over 640 high-quality, employer-designed apprenticeship standards available in a variety of industries. To support the growth of apprenticeships across the country, we are increasing apprenticeships funding to £2.7 billion by 2024/25.

The department continues to work with employers and providers to develop traineeships that provide clear progression routes for 16 to 24-year-olds, providing an opportunity to further develop skills. These include English, maths, and digital skills,

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alongside work preparation training and a work placement. It also includes support to help them prepare for progression into an apprenticeship, or another job.

Bournemouth and Poole College is developing new post-18 options for adults and progressing younger students, including shorter higher education (HE) provision, which is more directly linked to immediate careers to support adults who might not normally engage with HE. Around two thirds of the college's 1,900 apprentices are adults participating across a broad range of sectors. The college will be introducing two new apprenticeship programmes in 2023/24. It will also be creating new engagement and progression strands for under-skilled adults through its recent Strategic Development Fund for investing in electric vehicle charging point training.

Institutes of Technology: Standards

Rachael Maskell: [30068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department takes to measure the effectiveness of institutes of technology; and if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of York College at delivering on its objectives.

Andrea Jenkyns:

All Institutes of Technology (IoT) operate under a licence agreement, which includes stretching targets on learner starts, achievements, destinations, satisfaction and on specific learner groups such as level 4 and 5 technical learners, and underrepresented groups.

Performance reviews are carried out quarterly, which are linked directly to the Core Programme Objectives, and aim to:

- Significantly increase the number of learners with higher level technical skills which are crucial to national, regional, and local productivity growth.
- To attract a wide range of learners to maximise the social as well as the economic impact of this new type of institution.
- To improve the occupational competency of learners to meet the needs of employers now and in the future.

Each IoT has a named contact, which is an official from the department, who meets regularly with the IoT to provide support and monitor progress.

Individual partners involved in an IoT, such as York College in the Yorkshire and Humber IoT, do not have any official individual performance objectives set by the department. This is because we consider performance of the IoT as a whole, as part of wider performance monitoring processes.

National Implementation Board

Luke Pollard: [38829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to The independent review of children's social care, published in May 2022, and the Government's commitment in

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response that it will set up a National Implementation Board of sector experts, published on 23 May 2022, whether his Department has plans to (a) engage with birth parents through and (b) include representation of birth parents in that Board.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The National Implementation Board will support and challenge the department's delivery of the children's social care reform programme. It will be attended by those with expertise in leading transformational change, but also individuals with direct experience of the care system, which can include birth parents. The department will be working with charities over the summer on an application process for appointing these members to the Board. We are committed to ensuring those with lived experience are at the heart of our agenda.

Office for Students

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Matt Western: [31195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Office for Students (OfS) on the steps needed to mitigate the risks identified in the OfS Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22.

Andrea Jenkyns:

The department holds regular meetings with the Office for Students (OfS) where risks and mitigations, including financial risks, are discussed in depth.

In addition to these meetings, a director from the department attends each OfS board meeting, where the current and emerging risks affecting the OfS, and the mitigations for those, are also discussed.

It should also be noted that the department, as sponsor department of the OfS, takes the roles and duties set out in Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Sponsorship very seriously, including in relation to oversight of OfS resourcing, risk and performance.

Matt Western: [31197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, in the context of the risks identified in the Office for Students (OfS) Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22, what assessment he has made of the ability of the OfS to perform its legislative functions.

Andrea Jenkyns:

The department regularly holds meetings with the Office for Students (OfS), to discuss its resourcing, priorities and performance of its legislative functions. The OfS also reports on its progress against its Key Performance Measures publicly and to the departmental board.

It should also be noted that we, as sponsor department of the OfS, comply at all times with the roles and duties set out in Cabinet Office guidelines for sponsor departments.

Matt Western: [31198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ascertain the level of satisfaction amongst students with the performance of the Office for Students.

Andrea Jenkyns:

The Office for Students (OfS) has a Student Engagement Strategy which enables students to effectively contribute to shaping the OfS's work to regulate higher education. The OfS also has a student experience board member who is responsible for representing or promoting the interests of students on the OfS board.

In addition, the OfS has appointed a Student Panel to advise its board. The Student Panel informs policy development across the organisation, helping the OfS to understand students' views and perspectives. It also challenges the OfS to regulate in their interest.

All of these factors allow for regular input from students on how the OfS should best achieve its aim of ensuring that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education which enriches their lives and careers, and whether it is achieving that aim.

Matt Western: [31199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ascertain the level of satisfaction amongst universities with the performance of the Office for Students.

Andrea Jenkyns:

The department regularly meets with sector mission groups, in which we discuss their views on the impact of departmental policy and the Office for Students' (OfS) approach to regulation. We understand that the OfS does the same.

The OfS's purpose is to regulate in the interests of students. It is not in place to act in the interests of the sector. As a result, it will sometimes take decisions which some parts of the sector, or individual providers, do not support or agree with. Provider satisfaction is therefore not necessarily a good measure of how well the OfS is performing its legislative functions.

Primary Education: Standards

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[31204]

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To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that all primary school children reach the expected level of achievement in (a) reading, (b) writing and (c) maths.

Will Quince:

The department's 2030 ambition is 90% of primary school children achieving expected standards in reading, writing and maths, and that the national GCSE average grade in both English language and mathematics increases from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030.

The department will be publishing part two of the reading framework in 2023, which will provide evidence-based, non-statutory guidance on teaching reading for years 2 to 9. Our validation of systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programmes specifies that all validated programmes must provide opportunities for children to apply their phonics knowledge to writing words and sentences. This will support schools to drive up writing standards.

ANSWERS

In 2018, the department launched the £26.3 million English Hubs Programme. This is dedicated to improving the teaching of reading, with a focus on supporting children making the slowest progress in reading, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2021, we launched the £10 million accelerator fund for English and mathematics as part of the government's education recovery package. To date, over 430 schools have been provided with funding to adopt a department-validated phonics scheme and the training to implement this successfully. Thousands of primary schools have also benefitted from additional Maths Hubs support to strengthen the teaching of the core subject.

Our national network of 40 school-led Maths Hubs is also continuing to support local schools improve the quality of their mathematics teaching based on best practice. This includes through the established £100 million Teaching for Mastery programme, which will have brought training on mastery teaching to a total of 11,000 schools across England by 2023.

Stephen Morgan: [38810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of maintained primary schools previously rated as outstanding by Ofsted that retain that status in the event that they (a) remain maintained schools, (b) become a single-academy trust and (c) join a multi-academy trust.

Will Quince:

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Based on Ofsted's management information from June 2022, of the primary schools that were rated as outstanding as a maintained school at their previous inspection (1,743 schools):

- Of those that remained as local authority-maintained schools (1,146 schools), 27% (309 schools) were outstanding at their most recent inspection.
- Of those that became single-academy trusts (70 schools), 29% (20 schools) were outstanding at their most recent inspection.
- Of those that joined a multi-academy trust (527 schools), 30% (156 schools) were outstanding at their most recent inspection.

Between 15 May 2012 and 13 November 2020, maintained primary and secondary schools, and academies judged to be outstanding in their overall effectiveness at their most recent Section 5 inspection, were exempt from routine inspections under Section 5. This means that many of the schools included in these figures will have

been reinspected, specifically because there was reason to suspect the school was no longer outstanding.

Schools: Air Conditioning

Mohammad Yasin: [36051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the announcement of 2 January 2022 entitled More support to keep pupils in the classroom, how many of the 7,000 air purifiers his Department has delivered to schools; and how much of the £25 million funding committed for CO2 monitors has been (a) delivered and (b) spent as of 13 July 2022.

Will Quince:

As of 24 June 2022, there were 8,026 department-funded air cleaning units and 386,699 department-funded CO2 monitors delivered to state-funded education providers.

A total of £23,933,979.60 (including VAT) has been spent on CO2 monitors in this contract.

Schools: Platinum Jubilee 2022

Bridget Phillipson: [35929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2022 to Question 18885 on Schools: Platinum Jubilee 2022, who are the 40 recipients of Platinum Jubilee books given as ministerial gifts; and on what date each gift was made.

Will Quince:

The department does not hold the information requested centrally, but can confirm that most recipients were children, teachers, and international delegations.

Schools: Standards

Mr Toby Perkins: [36737]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an estimate of the number of schools who received a lower overall OFSTED grading as a result of their work experience or careers guidance in each local authority area in 2021-2022.

Mr Toby Perkins: [36738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools received an outstanding OFSTED assessment in each local authority area in 2021-22; and what proportion of those schools were assessed to have had an outstanding work experience offer in 2021-22.

Will Quince:

These are matters for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to you directly and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Schools: Uniforms

Munira Wilson: [36902]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the statutory guidance entitled Cost of school uniforms, published on 19 November 2021, what steps he is taking to monitor the requirement for school governing boards to be compliant with the guidance by September 2022.

Will Quince:

The government published statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms on 19 November 2021, to ensure the cost is reasonable and secures the best value for money for parents. The guidance is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms.

School governing boards are responsible for ensuring they are compliant with the guidance. The department expects schools to be taking steps towards this. All schools should review their current uniform policy to determine if any changes are required. Governing boards should be compliant with much of the guidance by September 2022, and fully compliant by summer 2023.

School leaders and governing boards are used to complying with appropriate legislation and statutory guidance. The department does not monitor every school to check their compliance with the guidance, but we continue to engage with schools to ensure that they are aware of their obligation to comply with the guidance. Through this, the department is aware that the sector is taking steps to respond to the guidance.

If a parent has a concern about a school's uniform policy, the department encourages them to raise this with the school in the first instance, including via the school's published complaints procedure where necessary. If, having gone through the school's complaints process, parents feel the school has not adequately addressed their concerns, they may then raise this with the department.

Secondary Education: Standards

Stephen Morgan: [38811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) maintained secondary schools, (b) secondary schools in multi-academy trusts and (c) secondary schools in single-academy trusts previously rated as outstanding by Ofsted that retain that status at their next inspection.

Will Quince:

According to Ofsted's management information from June 2022, of the 507 secondary schools that were rated as outstanding at their previous inspection:

- 98 schools have remained as local authority-maintained schools, and 37% (36 schools) were outstanding at their most recent inspection.
- 269 schools are in multi-academy trusts, and 40% (110 schools) were outstanding at their most recent inspection.

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• 134 schools are in single-academy trusts, 43% (58 schools) were outstanding at their most recent inspection.

Between 15 May 2012 and 13 November 2020, maintained primary and secondary schools and academies judged to be outstanding in their overall effectiveness at their most recent Section 5 inspection were exempt from routine inspections under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. This means that many of the schools included in these figures will have been re-inspected specifically because there was reason to suspect the school was no longer outstanding.

T-levels

Chi Onwurah: [35939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July 2022 to Question 27599 on T-levels, what estimate the Government has made of the potential number of students number of students enrolling for T t-levels in the (a) 22-23 (b) 23-24 and (c) 24-25 academic years.

Andrea Jenkyns:

The department does not publish estimates or set targets for the number of T Level students in each academic year. We want students to enrol on T Level courses because they are the right choice for them. The quality of the qualification and the value to the student's future career are what will drive take-up of T Levels.

■ T-levels: Standards

Rachael Maskell: [30069]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department plans to take to monitor the effectiveness of the Government's T-Level programme.

Andrea Jenkyns:

The delivery of T Levels is part of the Government Major Projects Portfolio. As a result, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority actively tracks the project, and regular assurance reviews ensure the programme is being delivered effectively. The department also continually monitors the programme through our own internal governance processes.

We are working closely with T Level providers, identifying and dealing with challenges, and sharing good practice as the T Level rollout continues.

The T Level student panel set up by the department in 2021 gives T Level students the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience, including raising issues or concerns, and discussing ideas for the future of T Levels. This allows us to hear first-hand the student experience and to make changes where needed.

The department has commissioned Ofsted to report on the first three years of T Level and T Level Transition Programme delivery. This includes questionnaires sent to T Level providers and students, plus field work in the form of deep dive survey visits.

This research will identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement to inform best practice for the wider rollout of T Levels and the T Level Transition Programme. Ofsted plan to publish an interim report in autumn 2022. A final report will follow in late 2023.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

[Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Chris Stephens: [901229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade on the impact of (a) trends in the level of and (b) barriers to imports on food security and availability in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, as demonstrated throughout the COVID-19 response. It is well equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption.

The capability, levers, and expertise to respond to disruption lie with industry. They have highly resilient supply chains, and this was proven in the initial COVID-19 response. The Government's role is to support and enable an industry-led response.

The UK Government has well established ways of working with the industry and with the Devolved Administrations to monitor risks that may arise. This includes extensive, regular and ongoing engagement in preparedness for, and response to, issues with the potential to cause disruption to food supply chains.

The UK's high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. We produce 60% of all the food we need, and 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year, and these figures have changed little over the last 20 years.

Bread

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Liz Saville Roberts: [38747]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of requiring that the definition of bread only includes produce which has been made without the use of food additives.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra, alongside the Department of Health and Social Care, the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland and Wales, Food Standards Scotland and the Scottish and Welsh Governments have been conducting jointly a review of The Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 and The Bread and Flour (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1998 to ensure the regulations are fit for purpose and support UK industry while protecting consumers.

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Existing food labelling rules and other requirements on the control of additives in food production ensure that food is produced safely and labelled effectively to enable consumers to make informed choices on the food they buy and consume. While we are always looking for ways to improve our regulations, legislative intervention is just one option and should be restricted to areas where there is clear market failure.

Fish: Conservation

Selaine Saxby: [36140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what species the Government classifies as forage fish; and if he will take steps to introduce an ecologically protective programme for the management of those species in UK waters.

Victoria Prentis:

Forage fish are important to the ecosystem as they provide food for predator fish and sea birds. We are reviewing our policy on forage fish that are caught for industrial purposes. In the context of the Northeast Atlantic, there are specific fleet segments that specialise in this type of fishing, and their effort within UK waters is targeted on particular species, principally sandeel and Norway pout.

Food Banks

Rachael Maskell: [36004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to work with food retailers and producers to identify opportunities for more produce to be made available to foodbanks.

Victoria Prentis:

This Government is committed to a sustainable, long-term approach to tackling poverty and supporting people on lower incomes. The Government recently announced a new £15 billion support package to help families with the cost of living, bringing the total support for households this year to £37 billion.

Through regular engagement, Defra will continue to work with food retailers and producers to explore the range of measures they can take to ensure the availability of affordable food. However, foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Government does not have any role in their operation.

Grant-funding provided by Defra is facilitating an increase in the availability, capacity, and capabilities of the surplus food redistribution sector. Since 2017, around £12 million has been awarded to over 250 redistribution organisations across the country. This funding has provided important infrastructure such as additional warehousing, vehicles, fridges and freezers. We also continue to support the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and its work with the redistribution sector in the provision of guidance and advice, finding practical ways of increasing surplus food redistribution and reducing waste.

Food: Waste

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Sir Mike Penning: [36715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government is taking steps to (a) help reduce (i) supermarket and (ii) other retail food waste and (b) provide an outlet so that food that would otherwise go to waste is made available to (A) food banks and (B) other means to help people in need.

Steve Double:

The Government is investing £2.6 million this year to combat food waste through funding the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

Through WRAP we work to address food waste in households and supply chains. This includes support for the Courtauld 2030 Commitment, a voluntary agreement with industry to tackle food waste, which includes a target of a 50% per capita reduction in food waste by 2030 against a 2007 baseline. Action through Courtauld includes working with businesses to measure and reduce food waste through the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap and the key tool to Target Measure and Act on waste. The government is currently conducting a consultation on options to improve food waste reporting by large businesses as measuring leads to a reduction in waste.

Grant-funding provided by Defra is also facilitating an increase in the availability, capacity, and capabilities of the redistribution sector laying the foundations for increasing surplus redistribution in the future. Since 2017 nearly £12 million has been awarded to over 250 redistribution organisations across the country. This funding has provided important infrastructure such as additional warehousing, vehicles, fridges and freezers. Recent data from WRAP stated that in 2021 over 106,000 tonnes was redistributed, worth over £330 million and the equivalent of over 253 million meals; over 40000 tonnes from the retail sector alone.

Surplus food redistribution in the UK 2015 to 2021 | WRAP

We also continue to support WRAP and its work with the redistribution sector in the provision of guidance and advice and the sharing of expertise and knowledge on practical ways of increasing redistribution and helping to facilitate new partnerships.

Surplus Food Redistribution Resource Hub | WRAP

Horse Racing: Animal Welfare

Lee Anderson: [36114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to ban the practice of using the whip in horse racing.

Steve Double:

The irresponsible use of the whip is unacceptable. The British Horseracing Association (BHA), British racing's governing and regulatory body, is responsible for the safety of racehorses at British racecourses including rules governing the use of the whip.

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The BHA recently published their response to a public consultation on the use of the whip in British racing in July 2022. The BHA accepted 20 recommendations made to them by the Whip Steering Group which can be found here:

https://www.britishhorseracing.com/press_releases/improving-standards-and-enhanced-deterrents-at-the-heart-of-20-recommendations-published-as-part-of-british-horseracings-whip-report/

Defra will continue to engage with the sector to ensure that the welfare of racehorses remains at the forefront of the British horseracing industry's priorities.

■ Livestock: Animal Breeding

Andrew Rosindell: [31774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish statistics his Department holds on how many (a) cows, (b) sheep and (c) pigs have been identified as having their health and welfare affected as a result of extreme conformation in the UK.

Steve Double:

Animal and Plant Health Agency does not hold any data regarding specific numbers of cows, sheep and pigs that have been identified as having their health and welfare affected as a result of extreme conformation and therefore, they are not available for publication.

Poultry: Animal Housing

Munira Wilson: [38867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's timescale is for launching a consultation on the use of cages for laying hens.

Steve Double:

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 12 July 2022 to the hon. Member for Slough, PQ UIN 31904.

River Tees: Pollution

Andy McDonald: [38681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment the Environment Agency has made of the quality of recently obtained samples of Tees water in the context of recent findings of dead crustaceans in that river.

Steve Double:

The Environment Agency routinely carries out a surveillance programme of monthly water samples in the Tees estuary. Monitoring data also exist for contaminants in blue mussels, fish, and sediments, as well as in the receiving waters of permitted water discharges.

The environmental samples collected as part of the investigation into recent crab and lobster mortalities have been considered against historic data for the Tees. Data and findings have fed in to a wider Defra-led investigation and have been reported via stakeholder briefings and within the final investigation report, available here (www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-agency-investigation-into-teesside-and-yorkshire-coast-crab-and-lobster-mortalities). The Environment Agency data are also published as Open Data, available here (://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/landing).

Sea Bream: Conservation

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Dr Matthew Offord: [34906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to support a position of zero catch of blackspot seabream in line with the scientific advice published by International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.

Dr Matthew Offord: [34907]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to protect the spawning sites of blackspot seabream by introducing additional unilateral conservation measures.

Victoria Prentis:

The International Council for Exploration of the Sea recognises western red seabream (blackspot seabream) as a seriously depleted stock. The UK is committed to making best use of scientific advice towards setting total allowable catches for all stocks, including western red seabream, seeking to rebuild sustainable fisheries in the longer term. The advice for deep sea stocks, which was released on 10 June, will form a central part of the UK position for this stock for the upcoming consultations. As with many stocks, this is a jointly managed stock with the EU and through the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, the UK and EU are developing improved management measures to support the long-term recovery of western red seabream.

Whisky: Scotland

David Linden: [35037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of rising energy costs on the Scotch Whisky industry.

Victoria Prentis:

Whilst no specific assessment has been made on the impact of rising energy costs on the Scotch Whisky industry, the UK Government is in regular dialogue with the industry, and aims to provide the framework for a forwarding-thinking, competitive alcoholic drinks sector which can grow, export and innovate in line with Government ambitions.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Africa: Primary Health Care

Ms Lyn Brown: [38586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what further steps her Department is taking to support investment in (a) primary healthcare services and (b) the strengthening of routine immunisation services in Africa, as part of pandemic preparedness efforts.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is shaping discussions on global learning from COVID-19 to improve future pandemic preparedness and response. Strengthening health systems is core, guided by FCDO's Health Systems Strengthening approach paper. The Prime Minister recently announced a £25 million UK contribution to a new "Financial Intermediary Fund" for pandemic preparedness. The UK will champion the importance of increased investment in primary healthcare in the design of this Fund.

The UK is the world's biggest funder of routine childhood vaccination, through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. We are working with partners to help recover the losses in routine immunisation caused by COIVD-19, and to strengthen the health systems that will both improve routine immunisation and provide a solid foundation for responding to the next pandemic.

Amazonia: Rainforests

Ruth Jones: [36112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the rate of deforestation of the Amazon rainforest in each of the last six years.

Vicky Ford:

Deforestation in the Amazon in Brazil has increased at a worrying rate since 2018, with a 22% increase in deforested area recorded between 2020 and 2021. This is the highest rate in 15 years. For the first time since monitoring began in 1988 deforestation rates have increased over four consecutive years.

At COP26 the Prime Minister committed £300 million to help protect the rainforest throughout the Amazonian biome through the International Climate Finance Programme. This has already helped avoid the clearance of 430,000 acres of forest. The UK welcomed Brazil's commitments made at COP26, including its signature of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, and pledges to eliminate illegal deforestation by 2028 and halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. It is important that the implementation process of these pledges begins this year. As President of COP26, the UK recognises its role as a key partner in supporting the realisation of these goals. We will continue to work with the Brazilian Federal Government, state level leadership, the private sector and civil society, to help them tackle deforestation and protect the Amazon.

Australia: Foreign Relations

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Ruth Jones: [36113]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Australian counterpart.

Amanda Milling:

The United Kingdom and Australia are close partners with a unique and enduring bond built on friendship and shared values. The Foreign Secretary was pleased to speak to the new Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong on 25 May, shortly after her appointment. More recently, they met in the margins of the G20 Foreign Minister's meeting in Bali, on 7 July. Both welcomed the strong bilateral relationship between our two countries, discussing AUKUS and our joint efforts to support infrastructure investment in the Indo-Pacific region.

Bahrain: Torture

Wayne David: [38523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any assessment was made of reports linking Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al'Khalifa to the torture of political dissidents in Bahrain before the Prime Minister met with Sheikh Nasser on 27 May 2022.

Wayne David: [38524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing sanctions under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020 against Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al'Khalifa in response to his alleged involvement in the torture of political dissidents in Bahrain.

Amanda Milling:

The alleged involvement of Sheikh Nasser in the torture of political dissidents in Bahrain was previously brought to the attention of the Metropolitan Police Service, which concluded there was insufficient evidence to proceed with a realistic prospect of prosecution. We take allegations or concerns of torture and mistreatment very seriously and will follow up with action, as appropriate. The UK Government unreservedly condemns the use of torture.

British Nationals Abroad: Passports

Stephen Kinnock: [38684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many UK nationals were issued with (a) new passports, (b) replacement passports and (c) emergency travel documents by UK embassies and consulates overseas in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2021 and (iv) 2022 to date.

Stephen Kinnock: [38685]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many applications for (a) new passports, (b) replacement passports and (c) emergency travel documents were received by UK embassies and consulates overseas in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2021 and (iv) 2022 as of 18 July 2022.

Rehman Chishti:

Passport issuing was repatriated to the UK in 2013. The application process was centralised with applicants submitting their passport applications to Her Majesty's Passport Office in the UK.

The FCDO issued the following numbers of Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) to British people overseas where their passports had been lost, stolen or were otherwise unavailable;

Year: Number of ETDs

2019 29332

2020 13144

2021 13469

2022 14223

(to 18/07/2022)

■ Chevening Scholarships Programme: Staff

Angela Rayner: [37502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff are employed at Chevening.

Vicky Ford:

Chevening House is managed by an independent trust. The number of staff employed is a matter for the trustees.

Colombia: Peace Negotiations

Fabian Hamilton: [38512]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the final report of the Colombian Truth Commission, published in June 2022.

Vicky Ford:

The UK welcomes the publication of the Truth Commission's final report, a significant milestone in Colombia's reconciliation process. The Truth Commission's final report provides a definitive account of the facts of the conflict in Colombia, derived from thousands of interviews with over 30,000 people.

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. As

part of this funding, the UK Government has contributed over £26 million towards transitional justice mechanisms, which includes the vital work of the Truth Commission. We are committed to helping all parties implement the Commission's recommendations, and to supporting the follow-up committee that will supervise their implementation.

Colombia: Politics and Government

Tony Lloyd: [<u>37446</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is providing support to former FARC combatants in Colombia forcibly displaced to Doncello, Caquetá in the context of a lack of security in their reincorporation zone.

Vicky Ford:

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

We will continue to support the Colombian Government in its commitment to implement the 2016 Peace Accords and ensure the protection and safety of former FARC combatants.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Mr Nicholas Brown: [38520]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help deliver on the Prime Minister's call for G7 countries to help vaccinate the world against covid-19 by the end of 2022.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is at the forefront of the international response to COVID-19. Our funding has enabled COVAX to deliver over 1.3 billion COVID vaccines to 87 developing countries. The UK has donated over 85 million doses, benefitting 42 countries, and offered a further 15 million doses.

The UK used its G7 Presidency in 2021 to mobilise G7 countries to donate vaccines that were surplus to domestic need, the majority channelled through COVAX. By May 2022, the G7 had donated 1.18 billion doses, more than the 870 million doses that G7 members agreed to make available by mid-2022. With supply no longer an issue, the UK is working with G7 and international partners such as COVAX Vaccine Delivery Partnership to tackle delivery bottlenecks and improve uptake in low coverage countries to meet national targets.

Darfur: Violence

Hilary Benn: [37444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made a recent assessment of the impact of violence in Darfur on the Massaleit community.

Vicky Ford:

The ongoing violence and destruction in West Darfur is very troubling. We issued a statement on 25 April, setting out our concerns and the need for the Sudanese authorities to deliver their responsibilities to protect civilians. We underscored the importance of an independent investigation into the violence at the UN Security Council (UNSC) on 27 April and helped to secure a UNSC statement condemning the violence on 29 April. We are in working with the UN to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected and have urged the military to allow humanitarian aid to flow without hindrance. We have raised our concerns over violence in Darfur with the Sudanese authorities, most recently during a visit to Khartoum by the UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan on 25-28 June. We will continue to raise these concerns, to press the Sudanese authorities to deliver their obligation to protect civilians, and push for accountability for any crimes committed.

The fragile security situation across Sudan has been exacerbated by the political crisis since the military coup on 25 October. We are therefore pushing all political actors to engage in dialogue and return to a civilian-led government. We are also calling for the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) and progress in wider peace talks.

Development Aid: Health Services

Mr Virendra Sharma: [38602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help support the strengthening of health systems in low- and lower-middle income countries.

Amanda Milling:

As set out in the International Development Strategy, strengthening health systems is at the core of our long-term approach and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is working to deliver the objectives set out in our published Health Systems Strengthening policy paper. This includes the mainstreaming of a health systems strengthening approach across the UK's health influencing and diplomacy activities, country programmes, research portfolios, and our investments in multilateral partners such as the World Health Organization, Global Fund and Gavi.

Development Aid: Malaria Vaccine

Ms Lyn Brown: [35905]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of global funding for the (a) production and

(b) distribution of the Mosquirix malaria vaccine in areas with high levels of malarial disease over the next 10 years.

Amanda Milling:

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The UK welcomes the World Health Organisation's recommendation for use of the new Mosquirix (RTS,S) malaria vaccine, alongside existing malaria tools such as bed nets, indoor sprays and chemoprevention, and recognises the need for sufficient global funding to ensure the benefits from this range of tools are maximised. The UK provides substantial core funding to Gavi, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, and Unitaid who together committed \$US 70 million to fund the RTS,S malaria vaccine pilots. We are supporting Gavi as a Board Member in their work on introducing the vaccine as part of national malaria control plans.

Development Aid: Primary Health Care

Mr Virendra Sharma: [38603]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure pandemic preparedness efforts lead to investment in primary healthcare services and the strengthening of routine immunisation services globally.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is shaping discussions on global learning from COVID-19 to improve future pandemic preparedness and response. Strengthening health systems is core, guided by FCDO's Health Systems Strengthening approach paper. The Prime Minister recently announced a £25 million UK contribution to a new "Financial Intermediary Fund" for pandemic preparedness. The UK will champion the importance of increased investment in primary healthcare in the design of this Fund.

The UK is the world's biggest funder of routine childhood vaccination, through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. We are working with partners to help recover the losses in routine immunisation caused by COIVD-19 and to strengthen the health systems that will both improve routine immunisation and provide a solid foundation for responding to the next pandemic.

■ El Salvador: Emergency Powers

Fabian Hamilton: [38510]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her counterpart in El Salvador on reports of the arrest of over 40,000 people since the implementation of that country's state of emergency.

Vicky Ford:

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office officials in London have raised this issue with the Salvadoran Ambassador and our Embassy in San Salvador is monitoring the situation closely.

Ethiopia: Abortion

Layla Moran: [38813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help promote access to (a) safe abortion and (b) post abortion care in Ethiopia.

Vicky Ford:

UK aid is supporting improvements to the whole Ethiopian health system. This includes improving access to reproductive and maternal healthcare, and strengthening the quality of these services. In areas affected by conflict and crises, temporary and mobile clinics are being used to reach displaced populations.

The Women's Integrated Sexual Health (WISH) programme is expanding access to sexual and reproductive health and rights in 17 countries across Africa, including Ethiopia. WISH works in Northern Ethiopia (Afar, Amhara and Tigray) to support sexual and reproductive health services, including the provision of voluntary family planning, the response to gender-based violence, and comprehensive abortion care.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry: [38888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what Northern Ireland business organisations (a) she and (b) her officials have met with in the last 12 months; and on what dates each of those meetings took place.

Graham Stuart:

Both the Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland engage with businesses regularly, as did their predecessors. The Foreign Secretary recently chaired a roundtable with key business representatives who reiterated a wide range of issues with the Northern Ireland Protocol and officials in departments across Government are in regular contact with business representatives.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Public Opinion

Angela Rayner: [37501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much her Department spent on (a) focus groups and (b) polling services in 2021.

Vicky Ford:

The information requested could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Iran: BBC Persian Service

Fabian Hamilton: [38508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Iranian counterpart on reported threats to BBC Persian journalists in that country.

Amanda Milling:

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We condemn the persecution of current and former BBC Persian employees and their family members and the many individuals who have had their assets frozen or are banned from leaving Iran. These actions by the Iranian authorities contravene multiple international obligations and we will continue to call them out for as long as they commit them. We regularly raise this issue of harassment directly with the Iranian Government, as well as in multilateral fora.

In March 2022, the UK's Global Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, delivered a statement to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, underlining that the Government of Iran has continued to violate human rights, including the rights of journalists and reiterated our demand that Iran improve its human rights situation.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Layla Moran: [R] [<u>38812</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the joint statement issued on 12 July 2022 by the foreign ministries of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden on the Israeli government's designation of Palestinian civil society organisations as terrorist organisations.

Amanda Milling:

The evidence which forms the basis for this decision is a matter for the Government of Israel. The UK maintains its own criteria for designation. We continue engagement with a number of these organisations on human rights issues and respect the role that NGOs and civil society organisations play in upholding human rights and democracy.

Jagtar Singh Johal

Sarah Owen: [<u>35059</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterpart in India on the release of Jagtar Singh Johal.

Vicky Ford:

The British Government has consistently raised its concerns about Mr Johal's case with the Government of India, including his allegations of torture and mistreatment and his right to a fair trial.

The Prime Minister raised the case with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi when they met in Delhi on 22 April 2022. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Johal's detention with India's Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, when they met in Delhi on 31 March 2022. The Foreign Secretary met Mr Johal's family and MP on 9 June 2022. Ministers and officials have raised Mr Johal's case on almost 100 occasions and will continue to do so.

Jovenel Moïse

Fabian Hamilton: [38509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the Government is providing to the Haitian Government in respect of its investigation into the assassination of President Moise.

Vicky Ford:

The Haitian Government have not requested our assistance with the investigation and in accordance with our commitment to Haitian sovereignty and independence we are not rendering unsolicited support. It is extremely regrettable that the perpetrators of the assassination of President Moïse have not yet been brought to justice. This abhorrent act undermined the Haitian people's right to determine their own future democratically.

The UK continues to use our platform both in country and at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to support the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Haiti, Helen Meagher La Lime and the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, BINUH, in their ongoing diplomatic engagement with, and support to, the Haitian authorities and civil society.

■ Melilla: Asylum

Daisy Cooper: [38855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2022 to Question 28505 on Melilla: Asylum, whether (a) she or (b) Ministers, as opposed to officials, have contacted their counterparts in (i) Spain and (ii) Morocco on that matter.

Graham Stuart:

Neither the Secretary of State, nor Ministers, have contacted their Spanish or Moroccan counterparts on this issue.

Nicaragua: Politics and Government

Fabian Hamilton: [38511]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Nicaraguan counterpart on reports of the removal of five opposition mayors in that country.

Vicky Ford:

We have voiced the UK's deep concern about the ongoing deterioration of political and human rights in Nicaragua and the subversion of democratic processes, with Nicaraguan authorities in London, in Managua and at multilateral fora. We have issued statements condemning the repression, and imposed sanctions against members of the Nicaraguan regime responsible for human rights abuses, in coordination with partners. We encouraged members of the UN Human Rights Council to vote in favour of a resolution on 31 March 2022 to establish a Group of

Experts on Human Rights with a mandate to seek accountability for human rights violations in Nicaragua. We will continue to raise our concerns, including on the expulsion of the five opposition mayors, and urge the Nicaraguan Government to end its repression against its citizens.

■ Nigeria: Economic Crime

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Kevin Brennan: [38528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Nigerian counterpart on tackling financial crime in Nigeria.

Vicky Ford:

Tackling financial crime in Nigeria is the responsibility of the Nigerian Government. It is a priority for Nigeria, and the UK is committed to helping them. In February we refreshed these commitments at a National Security Advisor led dialogue in London on our joint Security and Defence Partnership. The National Crime Agency is helping to strengthen the capacity of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria to investigate and prosecute corruption cases including illicit financial flows. In July, the #ProtectWhatsYours campaign was launched in Nigeria, supported by UK funding. The campaign aims to highlight the direct harms and costs of illicit finance and financial crime to the people of Nigeria and to encourage increased reporting on those involved in these crimes.

Nigeria: Gynaecology

Ms Lyn Brown: [35906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support access to safe gynaecological care in Nigeria.

Vicky Ford:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) supports strengthening health systems across a broad range of programmes, including on maternal and child health, family planning, and HIV and AIDS response.

In Nigeria, our Lafiya programme supports the strengthening of the health system and public health care. This does not specifically target gynaecological care but does include support on improving family planning service delivery and maternal health.

The UK has supported 9.5 million women and girls to use modern methods of contraception since 2018 through the Women's Integrated Sexual Health (WISH) programme, which now works across 17 African countries, including Nigeria. This £260 million programme delivers voluntary family planning services and reproductive health and rights, with a focus on reaching those most in need - young people, women living in extreme poverty and people with disabilities. It has averted 45,080 maternal deaths, 5.9 million unsafe abortions and 16.5 million unintended pregnancies.

The UK also plays a vital role in strengthening countries' own ability to deliver lifesaving maternal, reproductive and child health services through the Global Financing and Reproductive Health Supplies programmes, and our support to FP2030 and UNAIDS.

Northern Ireland Protocol Bill

Mr David Lammy: [39752]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill on the UK's international reputation; and what discussions she has with Cabinet colleagues on the compatibility of that Bill with the UK's international legal obligations.

Graham Stuart:

It is a longstanding convention for governments of all parties not to comment on the fact or contents of government legal advice. Proceeding with this Bill is consistent with our obligations in international law - and in support of our prior obligations to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. The Government has published a statement setting out its legal position (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-ireland-protocol-bill-uk-government-legal-position).

Pakistan: Maternal Mortality

Yasmin Qureshi: [38610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help reduce the maternal mortality rate in Pakistan.

Graham Stuart:

The UK is one of the largest donors in tackling maternal and child mortality in Pakistan. UK support has improved reproductive health, maternal and child health in Pakistan; since 2012 our programming has prevented 8,811 maternal deaths.

Saudi Arabia: Refugees

Kevin Brennan: [38527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her Saudi Arabian counterpart on support for Yemeni refugees in Saudi Arabia.

Amanda Milling:

We engage candidly and regularly with the Saudi authorities on a range of issues, including the efforts to end the war in Yemen and the status of migrants and refugees in Saudi Arabia.

The UK is playing a leading role in supporting UN led efforts to sustain, extend and expand the UN brokered truce in Yemen which came into effect on 2 April. Peace is the only sustainable solution to the humanitarian crisis.

■ Turkey: Asylum

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Stephen Kinnock: [38683]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Turkish Government on sending people seeking asylum in the UK from the UK to Turkey.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is interested in working with multiple international partners to break the business model of people smuggling gangs and fix the broken asylum system. We continue to explore Third Country Asylum Partnerships with those countries that are interested.

Ukraine: Exports

Sarah Champion: [35952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral evidence of the Prime Minister to the Liaison Committee on 6 July 2022, Question 2, whether the provision by the UK Government of insurance to vessels transporting grain from Ukraine through the Bosphorus will be (a) the responsibility of her Department and (b) counted as ODA; and which other international partners will be contributing to the provision of that insurance.

Graham Stuart:

Russia's illegal blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports is exacerbating a global food crisis, with approximately 23 million tons of grain stuck in Ukraine. We welcome the progress made in Istanbul under the UN-led process with Ukraine, Turkey and Russia on exporting grain out of Ukraine from Black Sea ports. It is critical now that the talks lead to an agreement so that Ukrainian grain can again feed the world at scale. We are working with commercial insurance companies on the availability of insurance for ships operating under the UN plan.

Vaccination

Mr Virendra Sharma: [38601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to ensure that backsliding in immunisation is a priority issue at the upcoming 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and the G20 Heads of State and Government Summit.

Amanda Milling:

The pandemic has placed substantial strain on immunisation programmes, with increasing numbers of children not receiving even the most basic vaccinations. The UK is the top donor to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's core mission. £1.65 billion of UK funding in 2021-25 will support countries to restore immunisation coverage and vaccinate children missed during the pandemic.

UNGA 77 and the G20 Summit represent important opportunities to maintain momentum and secure political commitments on global health. The UK will continue through both fora to champion health system strengthening and the critical role of strong, resilient and accessible health systems in supporting primary health care and essential services, including routine immunisation.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36860]

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To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the four-hour performance was at major Emergency Departments in June 2022.

Maria Caulfield:

In June 2022, 58.8% of patients attending a type 1 or major accident and emergency department were admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours of arrival.

Accident and Emergency Departments: Temperature

Rachael Maskell: [38715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps will be taken at emergency departments to ensure that patients are not waiting in ambulances during periods of extreme heat; and for what reason those measures are not in place permanently.

Maria Caulfield:

The 'Heatwave Plan for England' and National Health Service trusts' hot weather plans set out the existing measures in place. In addition, NHS England wrote to all NHS trusts to set out further action needed to ensure ambulances are not held for longer than 30 minutes during patient handovers. This includes moving patients awaiting an inpatient bed from emergency departments to maintain capacity. Decisions on the specific implementation of these actions are made by individual NHS trusts.

Alcoholic Drinks

Peter Dowd: [38695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made representations to the Health Promotion Taskforce on the impact of alcohol on health, economic recovery and levelling up.

Maggie Throup:

We are unable to provide the information requested as it is a long-established precedent that specific information about the discussions in Cabinet and its Committees is not shared publicly.

Ambulance Services: Government Assistance

Catherine West: [36044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support his Department is providing to NHS ambulance services during extreme heat in the UK.

Maria Caulfield:

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Ambulance trusts receive continuous central monitoring and support from the National Ambulance Coordination Centre. NHS England wrote to all National Health Service trusts further action to ensure ambulances are not held for longer than 30 minutes as patients are transferred. This includes moving patients awaiting an inpatient bed from the emergency department to increase capacity. In addition, NHS England has allocated an additional £150 million in 2022/23 to support improvements to response times through additional call handler recruitment and retention.

■ Ambulance Services: Shropshire

Daniel Kawczynski: [38574]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of delays in the Hospitals Transformation Programme on the adequacy of emergency ambulance provision in Shropshire.

Maria Caulfield:

No recent assessment has been made. The Department recently received the Strategic Outline Case for the transformation of accident and emergency services at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital. It is currently under review. The Trust aims to present the Full Business case in 2023, with construction starting in the same year and with completion anticipated by 2026.

Cancer: Children and Young People

David Simmonds: [36141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated by Government bodies and agencies to run awareness campaigns on the risks of cancer for (a) children and (b) young adults in (i) each of the last three years and (ii) the year ahead.

James Morris:

There have been no specific campaigns through the Department or its executive agencies. The National Health Service is currently scoping a campaign for 2023/24 to raise awareness of the symptoms of blood cancer, which may include advice for younger people.

Cancer: Radioisotopes

Henry Smith: [38617]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the availability of shielded rooms in the context

of the likely increase in the availability of (a) radioligand therapy and (b) other nuclear medicines to treat certain cancers.

Mohammad Yasin: [38781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the availability of shielded rooms in the NHS in the context of the potential increase in availability of (a) radioligand therapy and (b) other nuclear medicines to treat certain cancers.

James Morris:

No specific assessment has been made. Further work is required on the safe delivery of the service with an appropriate number of providers to balance patient access with available specialist expertise and infrastructure.

Cancer: York

Rachael Maskell: [36007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have exceeded the two week waiting time for cancer treatment in York.

James Morris:

This information is not collected in the format requested.

Care Homes: Temperature

Rachael Maskell: [38717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the risks of extreme heat to people living in residential care.

Rachael Maskell: [38719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is providing to domiciliary care staff during periods of extreme heat.

Rachael Maskell: [38720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support vulnerable residents living in the community will receive during the period of extreme heat.

Gillian Keegan:

No formal assessment of the impacts of extreme heat on those living in residential care has been made. However, the 'Heatwave Plan for England' sets out the risks to vulnerable people from extreme temperatures, including older people, those with pre-existing health conditions and care home residents. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has engaged with local resilience forums (LRFs) to ensure awareness of the latest heat wave guidance. All LRFs should respond to Heat Health Alerts using local protocols, including the Heat Health Toolkit which can be adapted from the Heatwave Plan for England.

Local authorities have plans to respond to adverse weather events and provide guidance and support to adult social care providers to ensure safety and continuity of care. Registered care home providers are also required to have adverse weather contingency plans, reviewed annually by the Care Quality Commission and should monitor residents' health and provide extra fluids where required.

For those receiving domiciliary care, local authorities and providers share information on prioritising those most at risk and intervening if needed. The UK Health Security Agency's guidance for carers and managers in residential care homes and for health and social care professionals has been shared with local authorities and providers. All care providers are expected to support good health and safety practice.

■ Community First Responders: Training

Rachael Maskell: [36011]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to train community first responders to assist in improving care for patients waiting for an ambulance.

Maria Caulfield:

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National Health Service ambulance services are responsible for the provision of training, equipment, oversight and support for volunteer community first responders.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Wera Hobhouse: [36054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help prevent rising levels of covid-19 cases in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

The COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme and the availability of antiviral treatments has ensured there is a reduced risk of severe illness or hospitalisation. The Government's guidance encourages responsible behaviours, while targeting protection for those most at risk from infection. While self-isolation is no longer required and testing is no longer recommended for those not at high risk, those with symptoms of COVID-19 or their household contacts should avoid contact with others where possible, in the same way as other infectious diseases.

The Government will continue to keep this response under review to ensure it remains effective and proportionate.

Rachael Maskell: [36823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has a timeline for the introduction of increased public health measures to tackle the level of covid-19 infections.

Maggie Throup:

The COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme and the availability of antiviral treatments has ensured there is a reduced risk of severe illness or hospitalisation.

The Government's guidance encourages responsible behaviours, while targeting protection for those most at risk from infection. While self-isolation is no longer required and testing is no longer recommended for those not at high risk, those with symptoms of COVID-19 or their household contacts should avoid contact with others where possible, in the same way as other infectious diseases.

The Government will continue to keep this response under review to ensure it remains effective and proportionate.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Theresa Villiers: [38551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to introduce measures to allow people using commercially purchased covid-19 tests to register their results via the www.gov.uk website.

Maggie Throup:

While we have no current plans to do so, we will keep the registration of privately purchased tests under review.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Sir Christopher Chope:

[38494]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what specialist medical care the NHS offers to people suffering from severe adverse reactions to covid-19 vaccinations; and if he will establish specialist clinics for that similar to those for treatment of long covid.

Maggie Throup:

In the very rare event where an individual may have suffered a severe adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, care would usually be managed by local National Health Service specialist services, supported by national specialist advice if required. Continuing care would be met by local care services with expertise in the treatment of disease or disability, as appropriate.

Defibrillators: Training

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[38880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage members of the public to undertake defibrillator training.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[38881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the availability of defibrillators in local areas.

James Morris:

NHS England and NHS Improvement and St John Ambulance are co-ordinating the development of skills to increase the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) by individuals in community settings, supported by confident cardiopulmonary resuscitation skills. This will include a national network of community advocates to

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champion the importance of first aid and train 60,000 people to save up to 4,000 lives each year by 2028.

The Government encourages organisations across England to consider purchasing a defibrillator as part of first aid equipment, particularly in locations with a high concentration of people. Many community defibrillators have since been provided through national lottery funding, community fundraising schemes, workplace funding or by charities in locations such as shopping centres.

Dental Services: Finance

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Feryal Clark: [37633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much and what proportion of the £50 million of additional funding for dentistry announced in January 2022 will be disbursed to each region in England.

James Morris:

The additional funding was used to commission additional dentistry in the final quarter of 2021/22. Accounting practices dictate that this funding cannot be carried over into the following financial year.

Dental Services: Suffolk

Jo Churchill: **36780**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional steps his Department will be taking to build further dental capacity in Suffolk.

James Morris:

NHS England has agreed short-term funding for dentistry in the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System to increase access to urgent dental care in Suffolk until 31 March 2023. The National Health Service in the East of England has developed a transformational dental strategy to deliver universal access to urgent dental care and preventative care.

Department of Health and Social Care: Ministerial Changes

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish all emails from the Department's Permanent Secretary to departmental staff informing them of the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

Maria Caulfield:

Departmental staff were informed of the appointment of a new Secretary of State through the following message on the Department's intranet:

"The Rt Hon Steve Barclay has been appointed by the Prime Minister as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 5 July 2022.

Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

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It is an honour to take up the position of Health and Social Care Secretary. Our NHS and social care staff have showed us time and again – throughout the pandemic and beyond – what it means to work with compassion and dedication to transform lives.

"This government is investing more than ever before in our NHS and care services to beat the Covid backlogs, recruit 50,000 more nurses, reform social care and ensure patients across the country can access the care they need."

Department of Health and Social Care: Protective Clothing

Wes Streeting: [38737]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2022 to Question 25941 on Department of Health and Social Care: Protective Clothing, if he will make an estimate of the (a) monthly, (b) weekly and (c) daily cost to the public purse of the three billion items of personal protective equipment recorded as held in storage in China.

Maria Caulfield:

The current estimated costs for the storage of personal protective equipment (PPE) in China is £2,477,547 per month; £571,742 per week; and £81,454 per day. The use of this storage has avoided costs relating to detention and demurrage which would have been incurred in the United Kingdom. The Department estimates these savings to be in excess of £40 million.

Diabetes: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon: [36767]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the availability of new treatments for diabetes.

James Morris:

No formal assessment has been made. However, the National Health Service continually monitors the market for new technologies and treatments to enhance outcomes and experience of care, including for those living with diabetes. The National Institute of Care Excellence (NICE) assesses all significant new medicines or indications via its health technology assessment programmes. NICE is currently developing updated guidelines on the use of medicines for the management of type 2 diabetes in children, young people and adults.

■ Epilepsy: Females

Cat Smith: [36802]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that women and girls with epilepsy have access to pre-conception counselling around epilepsy medicines and contraception.

Maggie Throup:

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The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare is responsible for producing clinical guidance on contraception and has published UK Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use (UKMEC).

UKMEC states that women and girls with conditions such as epilepsy, which expose them to increased risk as a result of unintended pregnancy and those using antiepileptic drugs, should be advised to use reliable and effective contraception, such as long-acting reversible contraception methods, during treatment and for the recommended timeframe after discontinuation. The sole use of barrier methods and user-dependant methods of contraception, such as condoms and oral contraception, may not be the most appropriate choice for women and girls with epilepsy given the relatively higher typical-use failure rates.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Medical Records

Chris Green: [31136]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans for a nationwide platform for patient data in health and social care settings.

Gillian Keegan:

While there are no specific plans, NHS England intends to procure a Federated Data Platform, which will be a system of connected platforms placed in individual National Health Service organisations. This aims to provide each trust and integrated care system with a platform for operational planning, care coordination and population health management. These platforms will adhere to the principles and requirements of Secure Data Environments, which provide approved users with access to analyse data. Organisations can control the data which users can access, the functionalities available to conduct analysis and the information which users can remove.

In 'Data saves lives: reshaping health and social care with data' published in June 2022, we committed to implementing Secure Data Environments as the default way to access NHS health and social care data for research and analysis.

Health Services: Equality

Feryal Clark: [36947]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of data collection on Black women's health.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made.

Feryal Clark: [36949]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the diversity of healthcare leadership.

Maria Caulfield:

The NHS People Plan sets out targeted action to tackle discrimination and promote equality, including overhauling recruitment and promotion practices to increase representation at senior levels and reducing the disproportionate number of minority ethnic people entering the disciplinary process. The Government accepted the seven recommendations made in the recent Health and Social Care Review. This includes embedding inclusive leadership practice as the responsibility of all leaders, enforcing existing equal opportunity and fairness measures, such as increasing the representation of ethnic minority staff at senior levels and enhancing the role of the Care Quality Commission to improve outcomes.

■ Health Services: Females

Sarah Champion: [38675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish a new Women's Health Strategy.

Maria Caulfield:

The Women's Health Strategy was published on 20 July 2022.

Heart Diseases: Health Services

Andrew Gwynne: [38554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 29952 on Heart Diseases: Health Services, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of auscultation tests in community diagnostic centres to support the detection of heart valve disease.

James Morris:

NHS England advise that the use of clinical auscultation using a stethoscope is not sufficiently sensitive to identify the presence and clinical significance of heart valve disease. While some community diagnostic centres may have examination rooms, the majority will effectively diagnose such conditions using echocardiograms.

Heart Diseases: Medical Treatments

Andrew Gwynne: [38553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the article entitled Aortic stenosis post-Covid-19: a mathematical model on waiting lists and mortality, by Stickels and others, published in the British Medical Journal on 16 June 2022, whether his Department is taking steps to support the immediate expansion of aortic stenosis treatment services in 2022-23.

James Morris:

NHS England recommends transcatheter aortic valve implantation for adults unable to receive heart valve surgery, which treats aortic stenosis through the implant of a valve into the heart. In addition, we have committed £2.3 billion to launch at least 100 community diagnostic centres by 2024/25 to improve the early detection and

diagnosis of heart valve disease, including aortic stenosis and reduce waiting times. The National Health Service is investing in cardiac networks to support improvements to the care pathway. These networks have been developed to take an evidenced based, clinically led, whole pathway approach to improvement from prevention, diagnosis, treatment and end of life care.

Hospitals: Air Conditioning

94

Daisy Cooper: [38854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department provided additional funding for hospitals to purchase (a) portable air conditioning units and (b) other air cooling equipment in the context of the Met Office's extreme heat warning.

Maria Caulfield:

In 2022/23, £8 billion has been provided to the National Health Service, including £4.2 billion for routine operational investments, such as air conditioning units or other air-cooling equipment. NHS trusts and integrated care systems prioritise funding based on an assessment of risks and investment needs in the local area.

Hypertension

Feryal Clark: [36946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve levels of hypertension.

James Morris:

The NHS Health Check aims to prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cases of dementia and kidney disease among adults aged 40 to 74 years old who do not have cardiovascular disease. The Health Check raises awareness through earlier assessment and management of seven risk factors, including blood pressure. Between April 2016 and March 2021, 5.2 million people received a NHS Health Check.

Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review

Cat Smith: [36800]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review published 8 July 2020, if his Department will respond to the recommendations on sodium (a) sodium valproate, (b) MESH and (c) primidos.

James Morris:

The Government published its response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review on 21 July 2021. We committed to publish an implementation update on the accepted recommendations, which will be made available as soon as possible.

Cat Smith: [36803]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the progress made on implementing recommendations in the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report entitled First Do No Harm; and what assessment he has made of the impact of those recommendations that have been implemented as of 14 July 2022.

James Morris:

We committed to publishing an implementation update on the accepted recommendations. We will publish this update as soon as possible.

■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Mental Health Services

Daisy Cooper: [36124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of psychosocial provision for people with (a) Crohn's disease and (b) ulcerative colitis.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific assessment has been made. However, the National Health Service recognises that integrating Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services with physical health services can provide better support to those living with common mental health problems and a long-term physical condition, such as irritable bowel disease (IBD). IAPT-Long Term Conditions services have been established to integrate pathways between IAPT services and physical health pathways for people with long term conditions, including IBD.

NHS England is working with front-line clinical experts, patient representative groups and leading charities, to develop evidence-based tools to improve care for IBD. This includes a new IBD RightCare scenario on high-quality integrated care.

Learning Disability: Mental Health Services

Afzal Khan: [38817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated to supporting people with learning disabilities under the Mental Health Recovery Action Plan.

Gillian Keegan:

The 'COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan' provided £31 million to support those with a learning disability and autistic people. This funding aims to support earlier discharge from mental health settings to the community and prevent admission into inpatient care.

Liver Diseases

96

Margaret Ferrier: [35973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of late presentation and diagnosis of liver disease on the incidence of hepatocellular carcinoma.

James Morris:

No specific assessment has been made. We would expect general practitioners to use professional judgement in diagnosing liver disease and refer patients as appropriate.

Between 2015 and 2020, hepatitis C-related mortality from end stage liver disease and hepatocellular carcinoma has reduced by 20%. NHS England's cancer programme is working with the hepatitis C elimination programme to deliver 11 community liver health check pilots. These pilots aim to support earlier detection and diagnosis of liver cancer by identifying and referring people with cirrhosis or advanced fibrosis into a liver surveillance pathway.

■ Liver Diseases: Diagnosis

Wayne David: [R] [<u>38525</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of patient care pathways for the early detection of liver disease in England by (a) region and (b) integrated care system.

James Morris:

No specific assessment has been made. However, in 2021, NHS England commissioned a stocktake of health inequalities in liver disease and the relevant care pathways, which recognised the association of regional variation with many risk factors, morbidity and mortality.

The Hepatobiliary Clinical Reference Group is reviewing the findings of this stocktake, which will inform priorities for action in 2022/23. NHS England is developing a policy on screening and treatment of patients commencing chemotherapy who may be unaware they are living with hepatitis B. The hepatitis C programme has reduced the prevalence of the disease through identifying patients in the community in a range of settings.

■ Liver Diseases: Health Services

Margaret Ferrier: [35972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including liver disease assessments in NHS health checks for people aged 40 and over.

James Morris:

During a NHS Health Check, the alcohol use disorder identification test (AUDIT) is used to assess alcohol consumption. The national guidance for the NHS Health

Check states that individuals with an AUDIT score of 16 or more should be referred for a liver disease assessment. The 2021 evidence-based review of the NHS Health Check programme recognised the benefit of including increasingly common conditions, such as mental and musculoskeletal ill-health. There are no current plans to include liver disease assessments in the NHS Health Check programme.

Mental Health Services: Further Education and Schools

Munira Wilson: [37611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide details of (a) each mental health support team, (b) the area that each of those teams serves and (c) the number of schools and colleges that each of those teams serves.

Munira Wilson: [37612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the typical number of school and college pupils that a single Mental Health Support Team is able to support during one academic year.

Gillian Keegan:

The information is not collected in the format requested. However, details of mental health support teams (MHST) are collected by integrated care system which is available at the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/cyp/trailblazers/

On average, each MHST covers 8,000 children in approximately 10 to 20 schools and colleges, providing group and one-to-one interventions. Provision is agreed locally, with consideration given to health inequalities and disparities in the area.

Mental Health Services: Schools

Jo Churchill: [36782]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on expanding the number of mental health clinicians working in schools.

Gillian Keegan:

We have committed to deploy mental health support teams to approximately 35% of schools and colleges by 2023. The role of education mental health practitioner has recently been added to mental health support teams. Since 2019, 1,164 practitioners have completed the one-year training. A further 503 are in training, with 221 due to complete training in September 2022 and the remaining 282 in January 2023. A further 456 training places have been commissioned, with 245 starting in September 2022 and the remaining 211 in January 2023. These cohorts will be available to join services in schools in September 2023 and January 2024 respectively.

Monkeypox: Vaccination

98

Stella Creasy: [37487]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure everyone at risk of exposure to Monkeypox is able to access a vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

On 21 June 2022 the UK Health Security Agency published a targeted vaccine strategy which recommends that gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men at higher risk of exposure to monkeypox should be offered a smallpox vaccine. Vaccines are also offered to those most likely to be exposed to monkeypox, including healthcare workers and close contacts of infected persons. The local National Health Service will contact members of the public at risk of exposure to offer a vaccination in due course.

NHS: Dental Services

Tulip Siddiq: [36831]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of Government funding to improve access to NHS Dental Care Services; and whether his Department has plans to announce additional funding in 2022.

James Morris:

No specific assessment has yet been made as data on the additional funding is not currently held centrally. We expect this information to be available shortly. There are no plans to announce additional funding for National Health Service dentistry in 2022 further to the £3 billion committed by NHS England each year.

We will shortly announce a range of measures to improve the NHS dental system to increase access, target care towards patients with higher oral care needs and reward dentists more fairly for the care they deliver. These improvements have been developed with the sector and the British Dental Association. Since July 2022, NHS England has asked practices to deliver 100% of contracted units of dental activity and 100% of units of orthodontic activity to safely improve access for patients.

Tulip Siddiq: [36832]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's proposed plans to improve access to NHS Dental Care Services, whether he will collect information on the number of dental patients registered with NHS practices in order to measure the progress on this matter.

James Morris:

We have no such plans to do so as there is no requirement for continuous registration of National Health Service dental patients.

We are working with the sector and the British Dental Association on improvements to the NHS dental system to improve access, which will be available in due course.

Ben Everitt: [36950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on improving access to NHS dentistry.

James Morris:

Ministers have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues relating to health and social care, such as access to dentistry.

Since July 2022, NHS England has asked practices to deliver 100% of contracted units of dental activity to safely improve access for patients. We will shortly announce a range of measures to increase access to National Health Service dentistry, target care towards those patients with higher oral health needs and reward dentists more fairly for the care they deliver through the NHS. We have developed these improvements with the sector and British Dental Association.

■ NHS: Staff

Rachael Maskell: [38716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is providing to (a) ambulance crews and (b) other NHS staff who are (i) working and (ii) working in full personal protective equipment during periods of extreme heat.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England wrote to all National Health Service trusts on further action to support staff during the extreme hot weather, including ensuring sufficient hydration when wearing personal protective equipment to avoid heat stress.

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust: Standards

Jo Churchill: [36784]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support improvement at the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England's recovery programme is working directly with Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust. In addition, the Care Quality Commission is currently proceeding with the enforcement process of the Section 29A Warning Notice and has scheduled an unannounced follow up inspection. The CQC's engagement with and visits to the Trust will continue, with further visits planned in August 2022.

Nutrition

Andrew Lewer: [24655]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department will be introducing a Calorie Reduction Taskforce; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of that taskforce on (a) consumers and (b) businesses.

Maggie Throup:

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We have no current plans to introduce a Calorie Reduction Taskforce. Any future policy will be subject to impact assessments, including consideration of the impact on individuals and business. We have an existing voluntary calorie reduction programme which was launched in 2020. This challenged all sectors of the food industry to reduce calories by 5% to 20% by 2024.

■ Patients: Waiting Lists

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[<u>36924</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the ability of people with (a) disabilities and (b) long term health conditions to see a consultant.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific assessment has been made. National Health Service trusts are responsible for ensuring reasonable adjustments are made to support patients accessing hospital services. This could include longer appointment times for patients with their consultant, priority for earlier appointments slots and provision of equipment aids for ease of access.

NHS Digital and NHS England have introduced the Reasonable Adjustment Flag, which indicates when reasonable adjustments are required for an individual. Following successful pilots, the platform is now available in all providers. Technology is also providing patients with disabilities or long-term health conditions with more choice and convenience when accessing the care they need. This includes virtual appointments, digital triaging and remote monitoring through the NHS app or My Planned Care.

Radioligand Therapy

Mohammad Yasin: [38780]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the extent of regional variations in the provision of radioligand therapy.

Chris Green: [39881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps NHS England is taking to help ensure standardised approaches to developing radioligand therapy services across England.

James Morris:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris MP) on 6 July 2022 to Question 23788.

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust: Labour Turnover

Daniel Kawczynski: [38573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff (a) left and (b) were recruited by the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust in 2021; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of delays in the Hospitals Transformation Programme on levels of recruitment in that hospital trust.

Maria Caulfield:

The following table shows the headcount number of joiners and leavers in the year to 31 December 2021 in Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, excluding doctors in training.

| JOINERS | LEAVERS |
|---------|---------|
| 942 | 725 |

Source: NHS Digital Quarterly NHS Workforce Statistics

Note:

- 1. Excludes staff commencing or returning from maternity leave.
- 2. Include those moving from or to other National Health Service organisations.

No specific assessment has been made of the impact of the Hospital Transformation Programme (HTP) on the recruitment of staff. However, the HTP's new clinical model will enable Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust to attract prospective staff and retain the current workforce.

Sleep

Martyn Day: [36827]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 354 on Sleep, whether his Department has concluded its review of the evidence on sleep and health.

Gillian Keegan:

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

Social Services: Learning Disability

Fleur Anderson: [38872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to day services.

Gillian Keegan:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 11 July 2022 to Question 26034.

Social Services: Private Equity

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Dame Diana Johnson: [35900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of private equity on the quality of care delivered by the social care sector.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific assessment has been made. Under the Care Act 2014, it is the responsibility of local authorities to shape local markets. Services are largely provided by commercial operators, including some which are private equity-owned and third sector organisations.

As of 1 July 2022, 84% of care providers are rated by the Care Quality Commission as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Levels of satisfaction with care and support services in England have remained stable, with 65% of care users reporting they were extremely or very satisfied with their care and support in 2019/20.

Social Services: Vacancies

Karin Smyth: [<u>37526</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with private sector providers on tackling the vacancy rate in the adult social care workforce.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: We recently met with the provider reference group on adult social care to discuss workforce pressures and proposed reforms, which was attended by representatives from the sector. We also plan to meet with independent care providers shortly.

Social Services: Visits

Karin Smyth: [37531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals on visiting arrangements in adult social care settings.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government's guidance states that care home residents should be able to receive visits from at least one visitor when there are restrictions within the home, such as during an outbreak of an infectious disease or while they are isolating. Visiting concerns may be raised with the Care Quality Commission, which will investigate whether a provider is following this guidance. The Department continues to keep the need for legislation under review.

Social Services: Waiting Lists

Karin Smyth: [<u>37525</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average length of time is from being assessed as eligible for care and receiving that care in each year from 2012 to date.

Gillian Keegan:

The information requested is not currently held centrally. Local authorities are responsible for assessing individuals' eligibility for care and support, as set out in the Care Act 2014 and, where the individual is eligible for financial support, for meeting those needs. The Health and Care Act 2022 includes a new duty for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to review and make an assessment of local authorities' delivery of adult social care duties, to ensure accessible, timely, high-quality care and support.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Drew Hendry: [35988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to help people who are owed refunds by covid-19 travel testing companies that have ceased operations.

Maggie Throup:

Where a customer service issue with a private testing provider arises, this should be raised directly with the provider. The terms and conditions of sale provide further information on consumers' rights. Where this cannot be resolved by the provider, <u>quidance on consumer rights</u> is available at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/consumer-protection-rights

In specific circumstances, the Department will support the relevant regulatory bodies, such as Trading Standards, to investigate the provider.

Ventilators: Finance

Tulip Siddiq: [36835]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department will take steps to provide financial support for patients who require respiratory support devices at home and are unable to afford these expenses.

James Morris:

Specific specialised NHS England services provide rebates on energy costs for patients using medical equipment at home, such as home oxygen concentrators. However, these arrangements are unique to the contracts or service specifications.

We will continue to monitor the situation to support home users of electrical medical equipment.

HOME OFFICE

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Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey: [35835]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghans have arrived in the UK under Pathway (a) 1, (b) 2 and (c) 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme in each month since April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

Over 15,000 people were supported to come to the UK directly following the evacuation of Afghanistan, and a further 4,000 have since arrived. Around 6,500 people brought to safety in the UK during and after the evacuation are eligible for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) under pathway 1.

Under the newly opened second pathway, we have now begun to receive the first referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of vulnerable refugees who have fled Afghanistan for resettlement to the UK. Further detail can be found on the UNHCR website: UNHCR United Kingdom

The FCDO have also launched a third referral pathway, which will see eligible British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni considered for resettlement to the UK. Eligible individuals are able to express interest in UK resettlement via an online system until Monday 15 August 2022, when the online system will close. The FCDO have set out further information on how this works:

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway 3: eligibility for British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening Alumni - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Following the evacuation from Afghanistan – and subsequent arrivals - work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under both schemes are on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on ACRS and ARAP will be included in future editions of the Immigration Statistics.

Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Alex Cunningham: [38655]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has beyond sobriety tagging to tackle alcohol consumption in the context of the link between alcohol consumption and violent crime.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government is committed to reducing alcohol-related crime and ensuring that swift action is taken to tackle alcohol-related offending. We have given powers to relevant authorities to tackle alcohol-related crime and harms. For example, we have placed cumulative impact policies on a statutory footing and have given new powers to immigration officers to tackle illegal working in licensed premises.

The Government recognises that alcohol continues to be one of the six main drivers of crime in the United Kingdom. We have focused on improving local intelligence, establishing effective partnerships and equipping the police and local authorities with the right powers to take effective action against alcohol related-crime and harms in the night-time economy. The Government continues to work closely with partners to tackle alcohol related crime.

Asylum: Applications

Mr Nicholas Brown: [38521]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applications have received a substantive interview in each (a) of the last five years and (b) quarter of the last five years in (i) the UK, (ii) the North East and (iii) Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency.

Mr Nicholas Brown: [38522]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applications have received a decision in each quarter of the last five years from applicants in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency, (b) the North East and (c) the UK.

Kevin Foster:

Whilst we hold data on the current addresses of asylum claimants, the Home Office is unable to state how many asylum applications have received a substantive interview in each (a) of the last five years and (b) quarter of the last five years in (i) the UK, (ii) the North East and (iii) Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency, nor can we state the number of asylum applications which have received a decision in each quarter of the last five years from claimants in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency, (b) the North East and (c) the UK as this information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost as it is not held in a reportable format.

The Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration and can be found at Asy_01 of the Transparency data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and those processed within 6 months and initial decision outcomes, for main claimants only, found at Asy_D02 and Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics: List of tables - GOV.UK (List of tables - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Asylum: Care Leavers and Children in Care

John McDonnell: [33669]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will commit to hold an inquiry or research into any deaths of (a) unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the care of local authorities and (b) young adult care-leavers who were formerly unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

John McDonnell: [34794]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will commission an independent inquiry into any deaths by suicide of (a) asylum-seekers living in Home Office-provided accommodation and (b) unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young adult care-leavers in the care of local authorities.

Kevin Foster:

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[Holding answer 19 July 2022]: The Home Office and its providers have robust processes in place to support those within the accommodation we provide.

As with the general population deaths can occur within Asylum Support accommodation, and our thoughts are with the families of those who pass away. In most cases these are as a result of existing and medical conditions or natural causes.

The Home Office does not routinely hold public enquiries into suicides that occur whilst someone is in receipt of asylum support. The Police and local coroner will investigate deaths in accordance with established processes and the Home Office will assist them to do so.

The Home Office supports the work of safeguarding boards and coroner services and complies with all enquiries and investigations they conduct.

Asylum: Hotels

Shabana Mahmood: [38605]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to assess the number of hotels used for asylum accommodation in each local authority in England.

Shabana Mahmood: [38607]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the number of hotels that have been procured for asylum accommodation in (a) Birmingham, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last two years.

Shabana Mahmood: [38608]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of asylum seekers housed in hotels in (a) Birmingham, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

The asylum accommodation system is under enormous pressure because of the significant and sustained increase in asylum intake over the last 12 months and the build-up of the population as a result of Covid-19 related measures, which is placing unsustainable pressure on a limited number of local authorities. This has resulted in the Home Office having to source temporary contingency accommodation, such as hotels.

The use of hotel contingency is only ever a short-term solution and we are working with our accommodation providers to find appropriate dispersed accommodation across the United Kingdom to replace it.

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support(opens in a new tab) Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 26 May 2022. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in August 2022.

Asylum: Rwanda

Caroline Nokes: [31084]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she will take to measure the effectiveness of the UK and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership.

Simon Baynes:

[Holding answer 13 July 2022]: The Migration and Economic Development Partnership will address the shared international challenge of illegal migration and is part of a suite of measures in the New Plan for Immigration to break the business model of people smugglers while maintaining a fair and robust immigration and borders system.

Recognising that the policy is still at an early stage, we are currently working on a monitoring and evaluation plan which will measure the effectiveness of this innovative arrangement. We will be able to set out more details on this in due course.

The European Court of Human Rights granted last-minute interim measures which prohibited the removal of three individuals set to be relocated to Rwanda on 14 June 2022. The European Court of Human Rights did not rule that the policy or removals were unlawful.. Therefore, no individual has yet been relocated to Rwanda under this partnership however as with all policies its impact will be kept under review.

We strongly believe that this project meets our obligations under both national and international law. We cannot comment on ongoing legal proceedings, however we have been clear from the start that we expect people to make legal challenges or barriers to removal. However, we will do what it takes to deliver this new partnership.

Aviation: EU Nationals

Drew Hendry: [37533]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that (a) airlines and (b) airports (i) follow Government guidance on the use of national identification documents by people with Settled Status going to and from the EU and (ii) ensure that travellers are aware of that guidance.

Kevin Foster:

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We have issued advice to airlines confirming EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who have been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) may continue to use a national identity card to enter the UK.

We have also advised airlines they do not currently need to establish whether a person has been granted EUSS status, and is thus entitled to use a national identity card, when deciding whether to bring them to the UK but may use the online View and Prove service if they elect to do so.

GOV.UK provides advice on documentary requirements, including the use of national identity cards, for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens with status under the EU Settlement Scheme travelling to the UK. If you're from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Carriers can, and do, play a role in encouraging their passengers to check that they are properly documented for travel to the UK for example by providing advice or links to government guidance on their websites and apps. However, it is ultimately a matter for individual carriers what information they provide for their passengers.

Burglary

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [36710]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings the Home Secretary has had on tackling domestic burglaries in each of the past 12 months.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 19 July 2022]: The Home Secretary considers domestic burglary, alongside other neighbourhood crimes, on a regular basis.

This Government recognises the devastating impact domestic burglary has on communities. That is why we are recruiting 20,000 extra police officers and why we established the Safer Streets Fund to prevent these crimes from happening in the first place, supporting the deployment of solutions such as home security, increased streetlighting and CCTV in high crime areas.

We are also taking a range of measures to tackle reoffending, including the tagging scheme for neighbourhood crime offenders released on licence, and work driven by the Residential Burglary Taskforce, driving forward the sharing of best practice about police effective investigations.

The importance of tackling neighbourhood crime was discussed at the most recent meeting of the Home Secretary's National Policing Board. This was attended by key senior police leaders, representing all forces and Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Cancer

Janet Daby: [35051]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the World Health Organisation report entitled Carcinogenicity of occupational exposure as a firefighter, published on 30 June 2022, if she will make an assessment of the implications of her policies of the evidence linking flame retardants to cancers in firefighters.

Janet Daby: [35111]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the World Health Organisation report entitled Carcinogenicity of occupational exposure as a firefighter, published on 30th June 2022, if she will include cancer in firefighters related to flame retardant chemicals in the list of diseases covered by the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

Miss Sarah Dines:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: The health and safety of firefighters is of great importance.

The emerging evidence of firefighters being exposed to risks of cancer is concerning.

It is for individual fire and rescue authorities, as employers with responsibility for health and wellbeing, to ensure that firefighters receive the appropriate equipment and training they need to safely respond to the wide range of incidents which they attend.

Fire and Rescue Services: Finance

Stephen Morgan: [36092]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of introducing emergency funding to fire safety crews in (a) Hampshire and (b) England to meet recent trends in the level of service demand.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: Fire and rescue services have the resources they need to do their important work. Overall fire and rescue authorities in England will receive around £2.5 billion in 2022/23. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority has a core spending power of £80.9m, an increase of £6.2m (8.3%) compared to 2021/22.

Over the past 10 years (year ending December 2011– year ending December 2021) the total number of all incidents in England attended by fire and rescue services has fallen by 8% and the total number of fire incidents in England has fallen by 34%.

■ HM Passport Office: Correspondence

Drew Hendry: [38710]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average processing time was for enquiries to support teams for hon. Members at HM Passport Office in each month in 2021; what steps her Department is taking to manage the (a) performance and (b) case management of those teams; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The Department works to a target of responding to 95% of Hon. Members written correspondence within 20 working days.

Performance against target has been impacted by a significant increase in the volume of correspondence received, including the unprecedented amount of correspondence about the situation in Afghanistan and more recently in Ukraine and about HMPO passport applications.

The Department continues to prioritise enquiries related to Ukraine and recognises that it has not been able to meet service standard in other cases. Actions are being taken to clear backlogs and drive-up performance.

Members can escalate urgent and compassionate cases via the team at Portcullis House or via engagement surgeries with the MP Engagement team.

The Department continues to recruit additional resources and has recently been loaned staff from non-operational areas to assist in clearing the backlogs. A detailed recovery plan to support a return to an acceptable service standard is being prepared.

Data about intake and performance in answering Hon. Members correspondence are published quarterly with the latest Quarter available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customer-service-operations-data-q1-2022

The Department does not publish average processing times for substantive responses to correspondence.

Home Office: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

Emily Thornberry: [31787]

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

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 15 July 2022]: As at 31 st March 2022 we have 944 live Government Procurement Cards (GPC) and 1839 live Travel & Expenses (T&E) Cards.

A further 33 cards are held by Arm's Length Bodies.

■ Home Office: Pay

Pat McFadden: [29983]

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

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 7 July 2022]: In April 2016, the Government introduced a higher minimum wage called the National Living Wage, which was increased to £9.50 per hour for those aged 23 and over, on 1 st April 2022. All employers in the UK are required to comply with National Minimum Wage legislation and all Home Office employees are paid at or above this rate.

The Living Wage Foundation (LWF) is an initiative by Citizens UK which advocates employers paying an alternative hourly rate known as the Living Wage or London Living Wage. which they believe represents a minimum income standard, reflecting the basic cost of living in the UK. The current Living Wage across the UK is £9.90 and London Living Wage is £11.05.

There are 495 staff, working nationally that are paid less than the LWF Living Wage. All staff based within London are paid above the LWF London Living Wage. This figure does not take into account the pay award for 2022 – 2023, where negotiations with the trades unions are currently taking place to determine the uplift to the AA grade (the grade affected by changes to either the Government NLW or LWFs London/living wage).

When the pay award is implemented, it will be backdated to July, the start of the pay award year.

Home Office does not require its contractors or suppliers (covering Agency workers) to comply with the London Living Wage although they must comply with pay legislation.

Of the agencies and public bodies sponsored by the Home Office, they currently have 22 direct employees outside Greater London who are paid less than National Living Wage.

Home Office: Redundancy

Steve McCabe: [35832]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 20 June 2022 to Question 17865 on Home Office: Redundancy, what the proposed number of job cuts was submitted by her Department to the Cabinet Office by the 30 June 2022 deadline.

Stephen McPartland:

All Departments, including the Home Office have been asked to develop plans to deliver against the target to return the Civil Service workforce to the level it was at in 2016.

The Home Office have completed the initial phase of its Workforce Review to respond to this ask, in line with the direction set by the Civil Service 2025 commission.

Options for headcount reductions arising from our review have been submitted to the Cabinet Office and Treasury and ministers and officials will be working over the summer to look in more detail at the deliverability and impact of those options. I will not be commenting on specific numbers while those discussions take place.

Home Office: Staff

Stephen Farry: [36139]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many caseworkers from her Department have been transferred from their usual duties to work on Ukraine cases.

Kevin Foster:

Staff are moved between work areas depending on need and priority. There are currently approximately 450 staff working on these schemes including resource from other Government Departments.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Rosie Duffield: [38801]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average processing time is for a visa application made under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Kevin Foster:

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

Human Trafficking: Children

Dan Jarvis: [38670]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children in Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council area are in social care as victims of child trafficking.

Amanda Solloway:

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's system for identifying and providing access to support for potential victims of modern slavery/human trafficking.

The Home Office publishes quarterly and annual statistics regarding the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which show the number of referrals made by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council by age at exploitation of the potential victim, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-referral-mechanism-statistics

Please note that these statistics will not show all cases where the local authority is responsible for the potential victim as other organisations may have made referrals for children living in the Local Authority area.

■ Immigration Controls

Yvette Cooper: [38518]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passengers at the UK border were not cleared within the timeframe set out in her Department's published service standards in each of the last twelve calendar months.

Kevin Foster:

Performance against our passenger wait time SLA's can be found in Border Force Transparency data available at:

Border Force transparency data: <u>Border Force Transparency data: Q1 2022</u> opens in a new tab)

Immigration Controls: Airports

Yvette Cooper: [38517]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many e-gate failures Border Force has recorded in each of the last twelve calendar months.

Kevin Foster:

It has never been government practice, for reasons of law enforcement, to comment on operational issues relating to border security and immigration controls. This includes offering commentary on the performance of border systems and of ePassport Gates data specifically.

The current eGate estate was upgraded in 2021. Incidents impacting the availability of eGates are proactively managed and the number of incidents is reducing.

The eGates process passengers arriving in the UK and provide a secure border check on approved travel documents and refer passengers to an officer if required.

Immigration: Appeals

Sir Christopher Chope:

[38895]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when written confirmation will be provided to the successful appellant in appeal HU/00496/2022, granted on 17 June 2022, so that she can establish her right to remain in the UK and her right to work.

Kevin Foster:

We do not comment publicly on individual applications.

Migrant Workers: General Practitioners

Owen Thompson: [38735]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to change visa rules to make it easier for international GP trainees to stay and work in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

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The Home Office have already delivered a range of measures to support the health and care sector. The Home Office launched the Health & Care visa in 2020, which makes it easier, cheaper, and quicker for health workers, including GPs, o be recruited.

The Government will therefore not be amending its policy on international medical graduates (IMGs) who have completed their GP training. IMGs may use the time between the end of their training and the end of their visa to apply for work, and are eligible for the skilled worker route, which includes the Health and Care Visa.

We strongly encourage more GP surgeries to become Home Office approved sponsors, as this is the best way for the sector to retain international medical graduates as GPs, providing them with the ability to continue to renew their visa while living in the UK. Sponsorship is straightforward and business-friendly, the majority of sponsors on our register are SMEs, much like GP surgeries are likely to be. The Home Office and the Department for Health and Social Care are working together to increase the number of GP Practices registered as Home Office sponsors.

Migrant Workers: Skilled Workers

Thangam Debbonaire:

38703

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that roles on the shortage occupation list (a) reflect the skills required by UK businesses and (b) are defined appropriately to allow individuals with relevant skills to apply for them, including an asylum seeker who has been in the UK for more than 12 months awaiting for a decision on a claim through no fault of their own.

Kevin Foster:

The Government intends to commission the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) shortly to review the Shortage Occupation List and we encourage businesses to provide their evidence to the MAC when their call for evidence issues. The Government looks forward to receiving the MAC's independent, evidence-based recommendations.

It is a matter for an employer to ensure workers have the specific qualifications and skills required for the relevant job they have applied for.

■ Migrants: Maternity Services

Stephen Kinnock: [34944]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of charges for NHS care on the availability of maternal health care for migrant women; and whether she has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on that matter.

Kevin Foster:

Visa holders who have paid the immigration health care (IHS) or who are exempt from payment, are able to access NHS care on broadly the same basis as UK nationals.

The exemptions to payment of the IHS are set out in the Immigration (Health Charge) Order 2015 and include vulnerable categories such as asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking. Migrants who have paid the IHS or are exempt from payment would be able to access maternity care without charge.

People without lawful status or who enter the UK for a period of less than six months are subject to charges for secondary NHS treatment. The decision on whether NHS treatment should be provided is for individual NHS trusts to make, however treatment deemed urgent or necessary such as maternity care is never withheld regardless of an individual's ability to pay charges.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department talks regularly to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on a range of issues.

National Crime Agency

Dame Margaret Hodge:

38474

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what new staffing, resources, and funding have been made available to the National Crime Agency's kleptocracy cell since it was established.

Stephen McPartland:

The SR21 settlement and the Economic Crime Levy represent an overall package of circa £400 million to tackle economic crime over the next three years, including support for the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) and wider law enforcement.

The Home Office are supporting the NCA by providing additional funding for the Combating Kleptocracy Cell in FY22/23. Details of specific capabilities and resources are protected for operational security reasons.

National Crime Agency: Inspections

Tony Lloyd: [<u>36700</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how often the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office inspects the work of the National Crime Agency; and whether any concerns have arisen during those inspections in the last three years.

Tom Pursglove:

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[Holding answer 19 July 2022]: IPCO carries out an inspection for each of the different powers utilised by the NCA at least once a year, though some powers are inspected more often. Following each inspection, feedback is provided in a detailed report to the public authority, with issues of note being set out in the Annual Report in the section on Law Enforcement Agencies and the Police.

The annual reports for years up until 2020 can be found on the IPCO website here: Annual Reports – IPCO. The Annual Report for 2021 has not yet been published but is due to be released before the end of the year. IPCO's Annual Reports are subject to a rigorous cross-government clearance process to ensure no information is included which might be injurious to national security, and as such inspection reports are not released outside of this process.

Passports and Visas: Applications

Drew Hendry: [33835]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will commit to undertake an external audit of average (a) visa and (b) passport processing times.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 14 July 2022]: The Home Office is regularly audited by external organisations, which includes the audit of our visas and passports operations.

Passports: Applications

Justin Madders: [33830]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passport applications were upgraded to the fast-track service in each month since January 2022.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 19 July 2022]: Since April 2021, Her Majesty's Passport Office has advised customers to allow up to ten weeks to get their passport when using the standard service from the UK. Customers will only choose to upgrade a standard application to the Fast Track or Premium services if they need a passport sooner than ten weeks.

Please see the table attached showing the number of upgrades to the Fast Track service from January 2022.

| MONTH | VOLUME UPGRADED TO FAST TRACK |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Jan-22 | 0 |
| Feb-22 | 0 |
| Mar-22 | 15 |
| Apr-22 | 82 |

| Month | VOLUME UPGRADED TO FAST TRACK | |
|--------|-------------------------------|--|
| May-22 | 10 | |
| Jun-22 | 6 | |
| Total | 113 | |

Stephen Kinnock: [38686]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff employed by her Department in roles primarily focussed on processing applications for UK passports as of 1 April in each year since 2010.

Kevin Foster:

The table below shows the total full-time equivalent staff of Her Majesty's Passport Office as of 31 March, for the years 2010–2022

| YEAR | FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT |
|------|----------------------|
| 2010 | 4,017 |
| 2011 | 3,629 |
| 2012 | 3,134 |
| 2013 | 3,284 |
| 2014 | 3,469 |
| 2015 | 4,376 |
| 2016 | 4,059 |
| 2017 | 3,879 |
| 2018 | 3,680 |
| 2019 | 3,620 |
| 2020 | 3,947 |
| 2021 | 3,704 |
| 2022 | *5,043 |

^{*}Figures show as of 30 June 2022

■ Passports: Birmingham Erdington

Mrs Paulette Hamilton: [36146]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the (a) causes for delays in processing passport applications at HM Passport Office and (b) the impact of those delays on people in Birmingham Erdington constituency.

Kevin Foster:

Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks when applying for their British passport as more than 5 million people delayed applying due to the pandemic.

Across the first 6 months of 2022 HMPO processed 97.7% of UK standard applications within 10 weeks.

Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme

Afzal Khan: [38816]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2022 to Question 33002 on Islamophobia, which organisations received funding from the Places of Worship Protective Security Fund in financial year 2021-22.

Stephen McPartland:

The Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme 2021/22 has, to date, provided funding to 82 places of worship including: 24 mosques, 38 churches, 11 Hindu temples, 5 gurdwaras and 4 other faiths.

We are unable to provide the names of organisations who received funding.

Police

Rachael Maskell: [37534]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the police to population ratio is for (a) police and (b) police community support officers (i) nationally and (ii) in York.

Tom Pursglove:

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the size of the police workforce in England and Wales on a biannual basis in the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, available here: Police workforce England and Wales statistics - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

These data are collected by Police Force Area only, and lower levels of geography, such as Parliamentary Constituencies or Metropolitan Boroughs are not collected.

Table H4 of the data tables accompanying the latest publication, shows the number of full time equivalent (FTE) police officers as at 31 March 2021 per 100,000 population both nationally and at a Police Force Area level. The data tables are available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1060642/police-workforce-mar21-tables-second-edition.ods.ods

As at 31 March 2021, there are 179 police officers per 100,000 population in North Yorkshire Police, and 227 in England and Wales.

Equivalently, as at 31 March 2021, there are 29 Police Community Support Officers per 100,000 population in North Yorkshire Police, and 16 in England and Wales.

The rate of police officers and PCSOs per 100,000 population has been calculated using the 2020 mid-year population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics at:

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2020

The next release of the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, which will cover the situation as at 31 March 2022, is scheduled for release at 9.30am on Wednesday 27 th July.

■ Police: Bournemouth East

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [35882]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to increase the (a) capability and (b) number of (i) Police Community Support Officers and (ii) Community Safety Accreditation Scheme officers in Bournemouth East constituency.

Tom Pursglove:

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are a valued part of the police workforce, working with others to act as a key liaison point to help resolve local issues and foster good community relations.

Decisions around recruitment and retention of PCSOs, their powers and duties, are for Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners. Similarly, the use of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme is a local matter for Chief Constables.

On the 2 nd February 2022, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £16.9 billion in 2022/23, an increase of up to £1.1 billion when compared to 2021/22.

Dorset's funding will be up to £159.1m in 2022/23, an increase of up to £8m when compared to 2021/22.

Prisons: Mental Health Services

Kerry McCarthy: [38550]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure DBS applications for mental health volunteers working with prisoners are processed swiftly.

Amanda Solloway:

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The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) operates to service standards of completing 80% of Basic check applications within 2 days, 80% of Standard check applications within 5 days, and 80% of Enhanced check applications within 14 days. DBS achieved these targets for 2021/22 and continues to do so for the current financial year.

The DBS cannot by law prioritise particular checks and does not provide a fast-track application service for any specific employment sector.

Refugees: Afghanistan

Layla Moran: [32626]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghans have been resettled into permanent accommodation under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme as of 7 July 2022.

Kevin Foster:

We have moved, or are in the process of moving, over 6,700 people into homes since the evacuation flights in June 2021.

We are working across government - and with c.350 Local Authority partners - to move Afghan evacuees into permanent homes as soon as possible, so they can settle and rebuild their lives. Alongside our engagement with local authorities, we are reaching out to landlords, developers and the wider private rented sector to encourage further offers of properties, either directly to Local Authorities or through our Housing portal.

Work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

Layla Moran: [33908]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan families remain in temporary accommodation as of 20 July 2022.

Layla Moran: [33912]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghans have been resettled into permanent accommodation under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

At 11 July 2022, we are providing temporary accommodation for c.9,400 individuals resettling in the UK under the ARAP or ACRS, whilst they await permanent accommodation. And we have moved, or are in the process of moving, over 6,700 people into homes since June 2021.

We are working across government - and with c.350 Local Authority partners - to move Afghan evacuees into permanent homes as soon as possible, so they can settle and rebuild their lives. Alongside our engagement with local authorities, we are reaching out to landlords, developers and the wider private rented sector to encourage further offers of properties, either directly to Local Authorities or through our Housing portal.

Work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

Schools: Pedestrian Crossings

Grahame Morris: [36740]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will amend the School Crossing Patrol uniform standards to include options for uniform suitable for extreme hot weather.

Tom Pursglove:

The Home Office has no plans to update the School Crossing Patrol uniform standards.

Current guidelines for school crossing patrols have been published by Road Safety GB and is available here: https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/resources-services/school-crossing-patrol-service-guidelines/

Science: Research

Henry Smith: [34889]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure faster progress on the development of non-animal technologies for use in scientific research and testing; and if she will make a statement.

Henry Smith: [34890]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential economic merits of the UK becoming a global leader in the development of non-animal technologies for use in scientific research and testing.

Henry Smith: [34891]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will commit to the (a) phasing out the use of animals in experiments and (b) phasing in of non-animal alternatives as soon as it is scientifically possible to do so; and if she will make a statement.

Tom Pursglove:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: The Government is clear that the use of animals in science is justified, for the benefits it brings to human, animal and environmental health and safety.

The Government is committed to assuring that those animals used in science are protected. The legal framework in the UK requires that animals are only ever used in scientific procedures where there are no alternatives, where the number of animals used is the minimum needed to achieve the scientific benefit, and where the potential harm to animals is limited to that needed to achieve the scientific benefit.

The Government continues to actively support and fund alternatives to the use of animals. The National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement, and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) leads on developing and sharing techniques in the UK and internationally.

Since the NC3Rs was launched in 2004, it has invested £77 million in research towards developing new approaches to Replace, Reduce and Refine the use of animals in scientific procedures, and an additional £32 million through its CRACK IT programme for SMEs and universities to work with the pharmaceutical and chemical industries on collaborative 3Rs projects that aim to generate commercial opportunities in this area.

Slavery

Rachael Maskell: [35997]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of organisations subject to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 have complied with their obligation to report annually on the steps taken to prevent modern slavery in each year since that Act was introduced.

Amanda Solloway

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 established the UK as the first country in the world to require businesses to report annually on steps taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

Compliance with section 54 is high. In 2019, the Home Office contracted the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) to undertake an audit of compliance with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The audit was concluded in January 2020 with data accurate up to this point. The high-level findings of this audit were published on 17 September 2020 in the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's annual report (available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-anti-slavery-commissioners-annual-report-2019-to-2020).

To further drive compliance with section 54, the Government response to the <u>Transparency in Supply Chains consultation</u> (opens in a new tab), published on 22 September 2020, committed to taking forwards an ambitious package of measures to strengthen the Act's transparency legislation, including:

Extending the reporting requirement to public bodies with a budget of £36 million or more;

Mandating the specific reporting topics statements must cover;

Requiring organisations to publish their statement on the Government modern slavery statement registry

The Government has also committed to introduce financial penalties for organisations who fail to meet their statutory obligations to publish annual modern slavery statements. These measures require primary legislation and, as announced in the Queen's Speech, we intend to legislate in the forthcoming Modern Slavery Bill.

In addition, in March 2021, the Government launched the modern slavery statement registry to radically enhance transparency by bringing together modern slavery statements on a single platform. The registry will provide a key tool for Government and others to monitor and drive compliance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Since launch, over 8,350 modern slavery statements covering over 28,000 organisations have been submitted on a voluntary basis.

Slavery: Children

Dan Jarvis: [38669]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of provisions in the Nationality and Borders Bill relating to an age identification scheme on the treatment of child victims of trafficking and modern slavery.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government is committed to protecting vulnerable children, including child victims of trafficking and modern slavery. Our age assessment process seeks to balance the needs of vulnerable children whilst preventing adults abusing the system and the age assessment reforms within the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 will further improve the accuracy of age assessment outcomes, minimising the risk that a person will be incorrectly treated as either an adult or a child.

In accordance with Section 51 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, if the Home Office is not certain of a person's age, but has reasonable grounds to believe that they may be under 18, they will be treated as a child until an assessment of their age is carried out by a local authority or their age is otherwise determined.

■ Visas: Applications

Yvette Cooper: [38519]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) skilled worker, (b) study, (c) spousal, (d) seasonal agricultural worker and (e) visitor visas have been processed outside target processing times in each of the last three years.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the number of a) skilled worker, (b) study, (c) spousal, and (e) visitor visas which have been processed outside target processing times in our Transparency data. Seasonal agricultural workers are grouped into other work groups in the data.

The Home Office Transparency data sets out how the department is performing against its service standard, which can be found on the GOV.UK webpage: <u>Visas and Citizenship data</u>: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

■ Visas: Married People

Charlotte Nichols: [36127]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants are awaiting a decision on a spousal visa as of 13 July 2022; and what steps her Department is taking to increase the speed of decisions on these applications.

Kevin Foster:

Migration work-in-progress data is published as part of transparency data. The data covering 13 July 2022 has not yet been published.

The transparency data does, however, include previous data and can be found at: Migration transparency data - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Home Office had been prioritising Ukraine Visa Schemes applications in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Staff from other government departments, including DWP and HMRC, have been surged into the department to help with Ukraine work and enable normal visa routes to return to normal service levels in due course.

■ Visas: Overseas Students

Alison Thewliss: [35980]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that international student visas are issued in time for the start of the upcoming university term.

Kevin Foster:

The UK continues to be a world leader for international education, the number of international higher education students in the UK is currently over 600,000 a year.

As part of our regular planning, we have analysed the expected demand and resource needed for the summer period. We commenced training additional staff

from the beginning of May, and this will continue throughout June and July, to ensure we have enough staff in place. We are also working with our commercial suppliers to ensure they have capacity to meet the student demand as we approach the summer peak.

We have closely engaged with the education sector on our plans, and to reinforce the part they play in ensuring sponsorship certificates are issued by them in good time before a course is due to start. We have also communicated with the education sector to encourage students to apply as soon as they canand to ensure they supply all the necessary documents to prevent delays.

Students applying for their initial Student visa to come to the UK can apply up to 6 months before the start of the course and we encourage them to apply as early as possible

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Palace of Westminster: Public Statues

Douglas Chapman: [37510]

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many statues and busts of (a) former hon. Members and (b) other people of note were on display in the Palace of Westminster as at July 2022.

Sir Charles Walker:

There are 184 statues and busts from the Parliamentary Art Collection on display within the Commons areas of the Palace of Westminster. Of this number, 62 portray former Members, and 122 portray other people of note.

Within the Lords areas, there are 216 statues and busts on display. 42 of those portray former Members, 174 other people of note.

Douglas Chapman: [37511]

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the cost was of (a) maintaining, (b) repairing and (c) cleaning statues and busts of (a) former hon. Members and (b) other people of note on display in the Palace of Westminster in each of the last five years.

Sir Charles Walker:

Maintenance, repair and cleaning work has continued consistently across the last five years. Collections care and maintenance is a bicameral function and the Commons share across all statues and busts in the Palace is as follows. A small proportion of these costs relates to work not in the Palace or on other objects.

2017 Maintenance and cleaning: £5240 Repair: £1066

2018 Maintenance and cleaning: £6497 Repair: £2120

2019 Maintenance and cleaning: £5604 Repair: £689

2020 Maintenance and cleaning: £3240 Repair: £555

2021 Maintenance and cleaning: £6966 Repair: £2308

2022 Maintenance and cleaning: £1080 Repair: £225

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Business: Wales

Hywel Williams: [36702]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has had recent discussions with the Welsh Government on supporting Welsh businesses at Hannover Messe 2022.

Andrew Griffith:

I have not had any discussions with the Welsh Government regarding supporting Welsh businesses at Hannover Messe.

Department for International Trade: EU Law

Layla Moran: [27722]

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

Penny Mordaunt:

Around 15 Department for International Trade officials were involved in recording retained EU legislation for the purposes of the Retained EU Law (REUL) Dashboard. This is an estimate as work was carried out within teams who lead on relevant policy areas rather than in a dedicated REUL team, and others might have been involved in a more limited capacity. The work was not undertaken on a full-time basis, and the work was completed within a defined window of time.

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

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

Department for International Trade: MG OMD

Emily Thornberry: [20239]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the (a) procurement reference, (b) start date, (c) end date and (d) maximum value, inclusive of VAT, is of the contract

that her Department has agreed with Manning Gottlieb OMD for the provision of strategic media activation services under the terms of the Crown Commercial Service's media services framework agreement reference RM6123.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 22 June 2022]: The Crown Commercial Service's (CCS's) media services framework agreement (RM6123, Lot 1) is a single supplier framework with Manning Gottlieb OMD, for the provision of Strategic Media Activation. The supplier was appointed by CCS following a competitive process in December 2021. The Department for International Trade (DIT) has entered into a compliant call-off contract with the supplier, which is effective from 22 May 2022 until 12 December 2025. DIT's contract reference is CR_1761 and it has a maximum value of £43,000,000 (excluding VAT) however it should be noted this is not a committed spend, only a contract ceiling.

Department for International Trade: Opinion Polls

Ruth Cadbury: [27641]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 23 May 2022 to Question 3615 on Department for International Trade: Opinion Polls, which countries were asked about in the opinion polling for internal use in (a) 2019, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022; and how much was spent on commissioning the polling for each country.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 5 July 2022]: In 2019, no money was spent on polling of this description.

In 2021, research of this description covered the USA at a cost of £72,109.

In 2022, research of this description covered India at £75,000, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations at £61,075. The total spend for 2022 has increased since the previous Question (UIN 3615) was asked as the second phase of GCC polling was completed.

Department for International Trade: Visits Abroad

Emily Thornberry: [17900]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the answer of 27 April 2022 to Question 155629 on Department for International Trade: Visits Abroad, for what reason the declaration of ministerial travel has not been updated as of 14 June 2022.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 20 June 2022]: The updated declaration has now been published: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dit-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-october-to-december-2020.

Emily Thornberry: [38561]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reason meetings held by the Minister of State for Trade Policy at Sunnylands, California, between 5 and 7 December 2021 with representatives of the Hoover Institution, the Observer Research Foundation America and other external organisations were not declared in the list of ministerial meetings for October to December 2021 published by her Department on 31 March.

Penny Mordaunt:

I attended the Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue from the afternoon of the 5th December to the morning of the 7th, where I joined a number of open panel discussions. Conferences and multilateral events are not reported in transparency unless specific meetings were held in the margins – which was not the case on this occasion.

Exports: Wales

Ruth Jones: [36877]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what support she is providing to businesses in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) Wales on expanding their export opportunities.

Andrew Griffith:

Our export strategy sets out a 12-point plan to help businesses in Newport West and across Wales expand their export opportunities. Welsh businesses can access our Export Academy, the Export Support Service, and our enhanced UK Export Finance Offer.

We have also opened a new office in Cardiff to focus our work in Wales, levelling up export growth, increasing productivity and supporting jobs.

Indo-Pacific Region

Emily Thornberry: [36722]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Minister of State for Trade Policy was officially representing the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office when she attended the Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue convened by the Hoover Institution and Annenberg Foundation Trust in California from 5 to 7 December 2021; and whether she was supported at that event by (a) officials and (b) briefing from that Department.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 19 July 2022]: The Minister for Trade Policy attended the Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue as a UK Government representative at the request of the British Embassy Washington. The event was added to the Minister's existing programme on her visit to a number of US States to advance UK-US interests. She was supported during the visit by UK Government officials.

Manufacturing Industries: Exports

Dr Matthew Offord: [35919]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to promote UK manufacturing exports in the last 12 months..

Andrew Griffith:

In 2021, DIT launched a new exports campaign for manufacturing businesses - Made in the UK Sold to the World. The campaign, part of our refreshed export strategy, celebrates the quality of the UK manufacturing sector and its global demand. We are harnessing the UK's potential and supporting businesses across all UK regions and nations to amplify exports opportunities for our manufacturers, engendering pride in local export success.

Overseas Trade

Dr Matthew Offord: [35925]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure that British businesses are able to trade overseas in the context of the UK no longer being part of EU trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

To date, we have agreed trade deals with 71 countries plus the EU, covering trade worth £808 billion of our bilateral trade in 2021.

We are just getting started. Negotiations to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership are continuing. In addition, we have launched negotiations with India, Canada, Mexico, and the Gulf Cooperation Council, plus we are preparing to begin negotiations on new trade deals with Israel and Switzerland.

Sanctions: Russia

Dr Matthew Offord: [35926]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make an estimate of the number of (a) vaccines, (b) blood, (c) antisera, (d) toxins and (e) cultures that have not been exported as a result of sanctions against Russia to date.

Andrew Griffith:

In lockstep with our allies, the UK is introducing the largest and most severe economic sanctions that Russia has ever faced, to help cripple Putin's war machine. Our sanctions against Russia do not target exports of medicines, nor do they seek to impede delivery of food supplies or humanitarian assistance. Our issue is not with the Russian people but with the actions of the Russian government and its supporters. We are committed to using the full range of tools available where necessary to mitigate unintended consequences on the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

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Catherine West: [28902]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement will permit the import to the UK of food produced with pesticides banned in the UK.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) does not create any new permissions for imports from Australia. All products imported into the UK will, as they do now, have to comply with our high import requirements and standards.

The government has a comprehensive programme for monitoring pesticides residues in food to determine whether food available to UK consumers complies with the statutory residue levels and is safe.

The independent Trade and Agriculture Commission recently concluded that the UK-Australia FTA does not affect the UK's statutory protections in relation to animal or plant life or health, animal welfare, and the environment.

Ruth Cadbury: [36786]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she will ratify the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement before the 21 July 2022.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: The Government will not be ratifying the UK-Australia free trade agreement before 21 July 2022. The agreement is scheduled to complete its formal pre-ratification scrutiny period under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 on 20 th July 2022.

The agreement cannot be ratified until the necessary domestic legislation is in place. The agreement therefore will not be ratified until the Trade (Australia and New Zealand) Bill has received Royal Assent and all secondary legislation is in place.

Ruth Cadbury: [36787]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Trade (Australia and New Zealand) Bill on her timetable for ratifying the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: The Government has been clear that the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement will be ratified once it has completed formal scrutiny under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and all necessarily domestic legislative changes have been made.

The Trade (Australia and New Zealand) Bill will allow for changes to domestic primary legislation to implement the Procurement chapters of the Australia and New Zealand agreements. The Bill was introduced in May and is awaiting a date for Second Reading. The agreement cannot be ratified until the Bill has received Royal Assent and all required secondary legislation has been passed.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia and New Zealand

Matt Vickers: [13283]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of the UK's trade agreements with (a) Australia and (b) New Zealand on the economy.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Impact Assessment of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the UK and Australia and the Impact Assessment of the FTA between the UK and New Zealand are available on gov.uk.

The Australia and New Zealand FTAs are expected to increase bilateral trade by 53% and 59% respectively in the long run and boost the UK economy by £2.3 billion and £800 million when compared to projected levels of GDP in 2035. Take-home pay for UK workers could increase by £900 million and £200 million respectively, when compared to 2019 levels.

We have committed to publishing a biennial FTA monitoring report, and a comprehensive ex-post evaluation report for both these agreements within 5 years of their entry into force.

■ Trade Agreements: Human Rights

Jim Shannon: [31112]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she is taking steps to help ensure that human rights are prioritised within the UK's trade deals.

Penny Mordaunt:

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to either negotiating trade deals or supporting human rights. The UK assesses and considers appropriate action in response to egregious human rights violations and abuses globally, and this goes much wider than considering trade alone, drawing on the wider tools and levers at our disposal.

The UK is a leading advocate for human rights around the world and we remain committed to the promotion of universal human rights. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office leads this effort within the UK government. This is undertaken separately to negotiations on free trade agreements.

Trade Agreements: Legal Opinion

Layla Moran: [33910]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the cost to the public purse has been of legal advice sought by the Government on trade deals in each of the last seven years.

Penny Mordaunt:

As of 12 July 2022, the Department for International Trade (DIT) has spent £2,012,339 on external legal advice to support trade deals. This includes £11,643 in

the 2022/23 financial year, £1,281,408 in the 2021/2022 financial year, £479,457 in the 2020/2021 financial year and £239,831 in the 2019/2020 financial year. There was no spend on advice of this nature prior to 2019. Government Legal Department supports a number of DIT's policy objectives and therefore we cannot separately identify costs on trade deals.

Trade: USA

John Spellar: [35834]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her Department's policy is on Government engagement with the EU-US Trade and Technology Council.

Penny Mordaunt:

The EU-US Trade and Technology Council is a bilateral forum between EU and US. We are monitoring this forum and tracking developments. We continue to engage with both the EU and the US on these important issues.

At the recent UK-US Trade Dialogue in Aberdeen, we agreed to take forward further work on a number of priority areas, including digital trade.

■ TRIPS Agreement: Vaccination

John McDonnell: [25725]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment the Government has made of how the TRIPS outcome will help to achieve ensure the equitable distribution of second-generation vaccines across the world.

Penny Mordaunt:

The consensus-based outcome reached at the World Trade Organisation's Ministerial Conference streamlines processes provided in the TRIPS Agreement for developing countries to make use of the compulsory licensing (CL). The decision, which is limited to COVID-19 vaccines and has a duration of five years, is intended to facilitate production and exportation of vaccines by developing countries while protecting the international intellectual property framework, which has and will continue to allow the development and production of vaccines at unprecedented pace.

Navendu Mishra: [35067]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the Government's position on a TRIPS waiver at the World Health Organisation on the global distribution of vaccines.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the Hon. Member for Stockport to the answer I gave to the Hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington on July 2022 (UIN: 25725). I would also like to note that discussions on a TRIPS Decision were held at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and not at the World Health Organisation (WHO).

UK Trade with EU

Ruth Jones: [36876]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with the Devolved administrations about any potential plans she has to increase trade with the European Union.

Andrew Griffith:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is delivering prosperity through trade and investment, to all parts of the UK. We have established teams in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to bring DIT's support closer to businesses in the nations and to strengthen our partnership working with the Devolved Administrations.

When implementing DIT's Export Strategy, launched in October 2021, we work alongside the devolved governments' own trade promotion plans and strategies. We support businesses across the UK to export to the European Union and beyond, through our new Export Support Service (ESS) including our one-to-many digital services offer and Export Academy, supported by our overseas trade advisers based across Europe.

UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland

Sir Mark Hendrick: [15708]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to findings of the statistical release from the Office for National Statistics published on 31 May 2022 of a higher level of quarter-on-quarter GDP growth for Northern Ireland than for the other countries of the UK, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of Northern Ireland's continued access to barrier-free trade with the EU on the relative performance of Northern Ireland's economy.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has not made an assessment of the performance of Northern Ireland's economy as DIT does not lead on sub-national economic growth. Also, DIT is not responsible for the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and its impact on the UK and nations and regions of the UK.

JUSTICE

Courts: Domestic Visits

Steve Reed: [38679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which Courts in England and Wales have been visited by Ministers from his Department in 2022.

Miss Sarah Dines:

As well as visits relevant to their other responsibilities, the Secretary of State and Justice Ministers have visited the following courts since January 2022:

- Woolwich Crown Court
- Leeds Crown Court and Cloth Hall Nightingale Court
- Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey)
- Ipswich Crown Court
- Inner London Crown Court
- Bristol Crown Court
- Sheffield Crown Court
- Chelmsford Crown Court
- Derby Crown Court

Criminal Records: Rehabilitation

Christine Jardine: [38805]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the reforms to criminal record rehabilitation periods introduced in Part 11 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, when he expects to implement those reforms.

Stuart Andrew:

The measures in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 concerning criminal record rehabilitation periods will require further secondary legislation before the policy can be implemented.

The Home Office have commissioned the Disclosure and Barring Service to make required changes to its IT systems to ensure that DBS certificates fully reflect the provisions within the Act with regard to rehabilitation periods. We expect the work to be completed before the end of 2023. The Ministry of Justice and Home Office will then lay the Statutory Instrument to bring the measures into force, once a specific date of implementation can be confirmed

David Parker

Sir Peter Bottomley: [36687]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department was first informed of the 21 June 2021 Court of Appeal judgment in the case of Parker v. Financial Conduct Authority; on what dates his Department received subsequent communication from David Parker or his Member of Parliament; and if he will make a statement on the reasons for which a payment has not yet been agreed with David Parker.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Court of Appeal judgment in the case of Parker v. Financial Conduct Authority was handed down on 25 June 2021 and in the public domain from that point. A letter from Mr Parker's solicitors, addressed to the Secretary of State, was received on 18 October 2021 informing him of the Court of Appeal judgment and seeking

compensation for Mr Parker's loss. An initial holding response was sent by the HM Courts & Tribunals Service Customer Investigations Team on the 3 December 2021.

Letters from Mr Parker's solicitors were received by the Ministry of Justice on 18 October 2021, 9 February 2022 and 7 March 2022. HM Courts & Tribunal Service Customer Investigations Team replied to these on the 3 December, 11 February and 31 March 2022. Ministerial correspondence was also received from the Honourable Gentleman on 16 and 30 November and 2 and 6 December 2021, to which former minister James Cartlidge MP replied on 14 December, and 4 April 2022, following which the Government Legal Department wrote to Mr Parker's solicitors on 8 April. Emails from the Honourable Gentleman's office were received on 7, 8, 13, 21, 28 June, and 6, 12, 14, and 18 July. Replies to these were sent from MoJ officials on 8 and 14 June, and 13, 15, and 18 July.

The Government Legal Department has written to Mr Parker's solicitors outlining the Government position. It would not be right to comment on the specifics of this.

■ Dispute Resolution

Sarah Green: [38889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to bring forward policy proposals in response to the Government's call for evidence on dispute resolution in England and Wales.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Ministry of Justice published a Summary of Responses to the Call for Evidence on Dispute Resolution in England & Wales in March this year. Policy proposals informed by these responses are under development and will be the subject of further public consultation in due course.

Isis Prison: Untold Creative Training

Grahame Morris: [38622]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether HMP YOI Isis has provided (a) rooms, (b) staff and (c) other resources to the charity Untold Creative Training Ltd; and if he will make a statement.

Stuart Andrew:

Untold is a charity which has been set up by the Governor of Isis and all relevant checks have been conducted to ensure a separation of duties. None of the prison's resources have been or will be used to support the work of the charity which is independently funded. The aim of the charity is to support the training of men in custody to find work in the creative arts industry.

■ Leyhill Prison: Security

Kerry McCarthy: [37461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the strength of security protocols at HMP Leyhill in Gloucestershire.

Stuart Andrew:

We do not provide public assessments of a prison's security as this may risk undermining the security of that prison. However, the overall score is published within the Prisons Performance Tool, and when the prison was last assessed in 2018 it received a substantial rating indicating that at the time of the audit the framework of governance, risk management and control at HMP Leyhill was adequate and effective. The next iteration of the performance ratings for 2021/22 is due to be released on 28 July 2022.

Mental Health: Prisoners

Kerry McCarthy: [38891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in average waiting times for mental health volunteers to gain security clearance to work with prisoners.

Stuart Andrew:

Officials have investigated this question and have liaised with those in the Approvals and Compliance Team (ACT) who have reviewed all data held on those wishing to work with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

The current average timescales for security clearance for a non-directly employed worker is 8 working days from the point of all correct documentation being submitted by the worker.

Unfortunately, the vetting platform used for non-directly employed personnel such as mental health volunteer workers is unable to provide specific timescales on groups of professionals that are placed through the vetting process.

Ministry of Justice: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35849]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost as costs for air travel for senior officials and ministers are aggregated with other costs.

Ministry of Justice: Written Questions

Emily Thornberry: [35901]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he will provide an Answer to Question 31786 tabled on 6 July 2022.

Miss Sarah Dines:

I can confirm that Question 31786 has now been answered.

■ Pre-sentence Reports

Liz Saville Roberts: [36839]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to publish findings from the pre-sentence report pilot.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The PSR Pilot was launched in March 2021 and was rolled out across 15 magistrates' courts in England and Wales. The pilot was recently extended until March 2023. This is to reflect the disruption and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the operation of courts, as well as the unification of the Probation Service. We intend to publish the initial findings from the process evaluation of the PSR Pilot in 2023.

Prison Officers

Steve Reed: [38676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2022 to Question 34937 on Prisoners, what data his Department holds on the number of prisoners per on-duty prison officer in each prison in England and Wales.

Steve Reed: [38677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2022 to Question 34937, on Prisoners, on how many occasions the minimum number of staff on a residential unit required during periods of unlock has not been met, in each of the past five years.

Stuart Andrew:

Pursuant to the answer to Question 34937 on Prisoners, the Department does not hold data on the number of prisoners per on-duty prison officer in England and Wales. This is because staffing levels in prisons change daily for several reasons including vacancies, training, sickness and operational deployments.

The Department does not hold data on how many occasions the minimum number of staff on a residential unit required during periods of unlock has not been met. Locally agreed Minimum Staffing Levels (MSLs) and secure operating levels (SDSOLs) are not held centrally by the Department.

Prisons: Domestic Visits

Steve Reed: [38678]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which prisons in England and Wales have been visited by Ministers from his Department in 2022.

Stuart Andrew:

As well as visits relevant to their other responsibilities, the Secretary of State and Justice Ministers have visited the following prisons since January 2022:

- HMP Brixton
- HMP Exeter
- HMYOI Feltham
- HMP Full Sutton
- HMP Five Wells
- HMP Frankland
- HMP Hatfield
- HMP Leicester
- HMP North Sea Camp
- HMP Prescoed
- HMP Thorn Cross
- HMP Wandsworth
- HMP Woodhill
- HMP Wormwood Scrubs

Prisons: Harborough

Neil O'Brien: [38818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish a full list of sites that have been considered for the construction of new prisons.

Neil O'Brien: [38819]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he announced his decision to change the number of new category C prisons to be built from three to two; and for what reason that decision was made.

Neil O'Brien: [38820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he decided to change the proposed new prison in Gartree from a category C to a category B prison; and for what reason that decision was made.

Neil O'Brien: [38821]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total projected cost is of the new prison his Department is proposing to build near Gartree in the Harborough district.

Neil O'Brien: [38822]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons his Department selected the proposed location of a new prison in Harborough constituency; and if he will publish the list of alternative sites considered in that decision.

Stuart Andrew:

The planning applications for new prisons next to HMPs Garth, Gartree and Grendon have been refused by the respective planning authorities. We have decided to appeal all of those planning refusals. As part of the evidence to those appeal inquiries, details of the site searches undertaken will be made publicly available.

The list of sites that were considered for the prison next to HMP Garth have been made available as part of that inquiry and can be found at: https://chorley.gov.uk/article/2612/Planning-appeals-HM-Prison-Wymott (document E1).

The proof of evidence in support of the new prison including the list of alternative sites considered at Gartree will be available after 6 September. The inquiry will run between 4 and 10 October 2022. The proof of evidence in support of the new prison at Grendon will be available in accordance with a timetable set by the planning inspector.

No decision has been made to change the number of new category C prisons from three to two.

The Deputy Prime Minister announced on 4 March this year that three of the four prisons will be run by the private sector and one will be run by the public sector. Planning permission has been granted for a category C prison at Full Sutton and construction of that prison is expected to commence in the summer. The MoJ has submitted planning applications for new category C prisons next to HMP Grendon Springhill and HMP Garth/Wymott in order to meet the forecast regional demand. A planning application has been submitted for a category B training prison next to the existing category B prison at Gartree in order to meet the forecast national need for category B places. The new prisons HMP Five Wells and HMP Fosse way will meet the regional demand for category C prisons in the Midlands.

As outlined above, planning for the new prison on land to the south of HMP Gartree is subject to an appeal process which is currently ongoing. The cost of the new prison can therefore only be finalised if planning permission is secured following the appeal process. If planning permission is granted an announcement will be made on the contract value and contractor who will take the project forward.

Prisons: Restraint Techniques

Grahame Morris: [38623]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 19 February 2019 to Question 219426 on Prisons: Restraint Techniques, whether the requirement specified in section 3.1 of PSI 26/2013 that Required Hours Addition recipients must be up to date with control and restraint training is still in effect.

Stuart Andrew:

The payment of Required Hours Addition (RHA) is not linked to the completion of any training, including control and restraint. RHA is made to recompense for having to work unsocial and unpredictable working hours and is automatically paid as a separate salaried element (pensionable) on taking up duty in a qualifying role. Prison Service Instruction 26/2013 relates to the circumstances in which operational staff undertake temporary roles in headquarters which do not normally qualify for the payment of RHA.

There is no specific control and restraint training for grades of staff to whom this would apply, and they are not required to complete it.

Probation: Domestic Visits

Steve Reed: [38680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which probation contact centres in England and Wales have been visited by Ministers from his Department in 2022.

Stuart Andrew:

As well as visits relevant to their other responsibilities, the Secretary of State and Justice Ministers have visited the following probation contact centres since January 2022:

- Manchester Probation Office
- Leeds Probation Office

The Secretary of State and Probation Minister have also visited Community Payback projects to see offenders supervised by the Probation Service carrying out Unpaid Work. These include:

- Perry Barr, Birmingham
- Chandler's Ford, Southampton

Road Traffic Offences: Community Orders

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [35883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will make an assessment of the effectiveness of community sentences for tackling the underlying drivers of offending.

Miss Sarah Dines:

This Government is committed to tackling the underlying drivers of offending and to keeping our communities safe by addressing the complex issues that lead to offending, while also strengthening the supervision of offenders in the community. Since 2009/10, the proven reoffending rate for adults serving a sentence in the community (i.e. a community order or suspended sentence order) has fallen by 7.2 percentage points (from 36.2% in 2009/10 to 29.0% in 2019/20).

Sentencing in individual cases is a matter for our independent courts. Community sentences can and should be tailored to address the individual needs, as well as to punish offenders and provide reparation to the community. Evidence suggests that community sentences, in certain circumstances, are more effective in reducing reoffending than short custodial sentences.

In September 2020 we published the Sentencing White Paper which set out our plans for tougher, better monitored and more effective community sentencing options which can tackle offending by providing punishment, addressing the underlying drivers of offending, and offering support for those who want to turn their lives around. We have delivered many of these reforms in the Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022. This includes our problem-solving courts pilot, closer supervision of certain offenders, and the option for more robust and flexible use of electronically monitored curfews. The rollout of the Alcohol Abstinence and Monitoring Requirement last year provides an option to directly tackle alcohol related offending, imposing an alcohol ban for up to 120 days; on 97% of the days monitored the ban was complied with.

The Government is also investing an additional £93 million to increase Community Payback delivery, with a particular focus on delivering more outdoor projects that improve public spaces and allow the public to see justice being done, whilst also providing more opportunities for offenders to give back to their local communities and gain further skills.

Special Guardianship Orders: Legal Aid Scheme

Andrew Gwynne: [38555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress his Department has made on expanding the scope of legal aid to cover special guardianship orders in private family proceedings as set out in Legal Support Action Plan, published February 2019; and if he will meet interested parties, including the all-party Parliamentary group on Kinship Care.

Miss Sarah Dines:

I am pleased to confirm that the Government intends to bring forward secondary legislation to expand the scope of legal aid to Special Guardianship Orders in Autumn 2022 to deliver on the commitment made in the Legal Support Action Plan, published in 2019.

■ Television Licences: Non-payment

Ellie Reeves: [37589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were imprisoned for non-payment of a TV licence, by gender, in each of the last ten years.

Ellie Reeves: [37590]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have received a fine for failure to pay the initial fine for TV licence fee evasion by (a) gender and (b) region in each of the last ten years.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The number of people admitted to prison for failing to pay fines in respect of the non-payment of a TV licence in England and Wales, by gender, between 1995 and 2018 can be viewed at the following link:

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-03-09/26808

The number of people admitted to prison for failing to pay fines in respect of the non-payment of a TV licence in England and Wales in 2019 was two or fewer (the actual number has not been released in order to protect against personal identification), none of whom were women.

In 2020 and 2021, there were no admissions into prison associated with failing to pay a fine in respect of the non-payment of a TV licence in England and Wales.

The penalty for TV licence evasion is a fine. A person cannot receive a custodial sentence for TV licence evasion but can be committed to prison for wilfully refusing to pay the fine or culpably neglecting to pay. The courts will do everything within their powers to trace those who do not pay and use a variety of means to ensure the recovery of criminal fines and financial penalties. Imprisonment is only pursued as a matter of last resort.

A person cannot receive an additional fine if they do not pay the initial fine for TV licence evasion.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Leader of the House of Commons: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35858]

To ask the Leader of the House, how much their Office has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Mark Spencer

Please find below information regarding the expenditure of the Office of the Leader of the House of Commons on air travel.

| YEAR | SPEND (£) |
|------|-----------|
| 2020 | 0 |
| 2021 | 0 |
| 2022 | 911.97 |

Expenditure in 2022 is from 1 January 2022 to 18 July 2022.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Ruth Cadbury: [38691]

To ask the Leader of the House, whether he has received correspondence from (a) Ministers and (b) officials at the Department for International Trade on the subject of finding parliamentary time for a debate in the House of Commons before the 21 July 2022 on the subject of the proposed free trade agreement between the UK and Australia.

Mark Spencer:

The Business Managers regularly engage with ministerial colleagues and departments on all elements of parliamentary business. The Government recognises the importance of free trade agreements (FTAs) receiving thorough scrutiny and the CRaG process provides Parliament with this opportunity. The Government commitment to holding debates on FTAs during the CRaG process is subject to the request being made in a timely manner and parliamentary time being available.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Building Safety Fund

Neil Coyle: [38688]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the time taken for claimants to receive a decision on Building Safety Fund applications on the cost of the works.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Building owners and managing agents remain responsible for completing their full applications without delay. Due to ongoing support and engagement from the Department we are continuing to see an increase in the number of buildings completing remediation. We continue to actively engage with building owners, including providing expert support, and to submit evidence of cost variations where they relate to the works permitted for grant funding.

For high-rise buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding, over £1.3 billion has already been allocated from the Building Safety Fund. This means that over 90,000 homes within high-rise blocks are covered by Building Safety Fund applications and leaseholders and residents can be assured the fire risks caused by the unsafe cladding will be addressed at no cost to them.

Neil Coyle: [38689]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether funding provided through the Building Safety Fund has been (a) insured and (b) otherwise protected against rising (i) workforce, (ii) energy and (iii) other costs.

Neil Coyle: [38690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will provide additional funding for approved or funded Building Safety Fund works that are at risk of incompletion due to rising (a) energy and (b) other costs.

Mr Marcus Jones:

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Government funding will continue to be available to pay for all eligible works within the Building Safety Fund and all eligible cost variations. It is the responsibility of building owners or managing agents to submit evidence of cost variations where they relate to the works permitted for grant funding - examples of which may include professional fees, site set up or construction costs.

The Department is regularly monitoring the costs of the remediation of high-rise buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding through regular consultation with industry bodies and associations. Officials closely track contractor capacity, cost and supply of construction materials and other external market factors to mitigate risk and ensure that remediation projects can complete as soon as possible .

Buildings: Repairs and Maintenance

Kevin Hollinrake: [37561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Developer pledge letter, published 13 April 2022, what steps he is taking to progress the implementation of the Developer pledge.

Mr Marcus Jones:

On 13 July we published the draft of a contract with developers. The draft contract, once finalised and executed, will turn the commitments made in the pledge into a legally binding agreement.

Publication marks the start of a four-week period of engagement, during which we will refine the contract as necessary. As well as discussing the contract with developers during this period, we will engage other interested parties including representatives of building owners, managing agents, residents, leaseholders, lenders and insurers.

We plan to have the terms of the contract finalised by 10 August. We expect developers to have signed the contract by the end of September.

Buildings: Safety

Kevin Hollinrake: [36018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment on the financial impact on UK pension funds of the Building Safety Act 2022.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Building Safety Act puts in place legal protections for leaseholders from historical building safety costs. The Act legally protects qualifying leaseholders (those living in their own home or with no more than three UK properties in total) from all costs relating to the remediation of unsafe cladding and contains robust and far-reaching protections from non-cladding costs, including those relating to interim measures such as waking watches. Where those directly responsible (for example, developers) cannot be held to account, building owners and landlords, rather than leaseholders, will now be the first port of call to pay for historical safety defects.

The Building Safety Act spreads the costs of fixing historical building safety defects as fairly and equitably as possible across the system. If building owners and landlords on 14 February were, or were related to the developer of the building, they are liable for the full cost of remediating all building safety defects, whether cladding or otherwise, to the benefit of all leaseholders. Qualifying leaseholders will be protected from all costs for remediation works if the building owners and landlord have a net worth of more than £2 million per in-scope building.

It is not our default expectation that building owners and landlords, including pension funds, will have to fund remediation works from their own resources: we want them to pursue those responsible for defective work, including associated companies of developers and manufacturers. That is why y there is now a toolkit of measures available under the Building Safety Act 2022 to enable that to happen.

We have retrospectively extended the limitation period under section 1 of the Defective Premises Act 1972 from 6 to 30 years; we have extended the reach of civil liability to associated companies of developers, including trusts, to ensure that some of the largest businesses in the sector who have used shell companies and other complex corporate structures to be pursed for contributions; and we have created a cause of action which will allow manufacturers of construction products to be pursued where defective or mis-sold products have been used in buildings.

Council Housing: Disability

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[36921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what provisions his Department enforces to ensure that a minimum number of new council houses are specially adapted to suit the needs of those with physical disabilities.

Mr Marcus Jones:

To promote much needed new supply, the £11.5 billon Affordable Homes Programme (2021-26) (England) includes delivery within the programme for new supported housing for disabled, older and other vulnerable people, alongside other investment through DHSC.

Our planning rules already mean councils must consider the needs of older and disabled people when planning new homes. We have given councils guidance on options they should consider, such as housing with improved accessibility, to enable older and disabled people to live safely and independently.

The Government consulted from 8 Sept to 1 Dec 2020 on options to raise the accessibility of new homes. Evidence gathered through the consultation will help identify what changes can be made, including reviewing or tightening the regulatory framework to deliver accessible new homes and updates to statutory guidance.

■ Council Tax: Energy Bills Rebate

Wera Hobhouse: [36846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many households have received the council tax rebate as of 14 July 2022.

Paul Scully:

All councils are paying the £150 council tax rebate. The Government intends to publish monitoring data outlining the progress of the scheme's delivery shortly.

■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35844]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Commercial ministerial air travel is captured in the department's quarterly returns and published on: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dluhc-departmental-spending-over-250.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Ministerial Changes

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will publish all emails from the Department's Permanent Secretary to departmental staff informing them of the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Mr Marcus Jones:

On the appointment of a new Secretary of State, the Permanent Secretary will generally write to staff to inform them of the appointment, noting the continuation of

the department's key business – while outlining any changes to portfolios or responsibilities.

Information on all departments' ministerial appointments, and portfolios, is already available in the public domain.

Elections: Proof of Identity

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[36919]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with groups representing disabled people in advance of the mandatory voter ID requirement coming into effect.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[36920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what standards a polling station must adhere to on accessibility for disabled people.

Paul Scully:

We continue to work with local authorities, charities, and civil society organisations, including those who represent people with disabilities, to help ensure that voter identification is accessible for everybody.

Local authorities are responsible for designating polling places and the law requires them to make sure that, as far as is practicable, these are accessible to the local community, including those voters with a disability.

The Elections Act 2022 will require Returning Officers to consider the needs of a wider range of disabled voters in polling stations and will remove restrictions on who can help disabled voters to cast their vote.

First Time Buyers: Greater London

Fleur Anderson: [38873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional financial support to first-time house buyers in London.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government is committed to increasing first time buyer numbers in all regions, and will do so by looking at all of the factors that influence ownership levels, including housing supply and the availability of low deposit mortgages.

Access to finance has a crucial role to play in helping people take their first step on the housing ladder. At present, the mortgage market is not working for everyone and only 6% of renters can access a mortgage, even though over half could afford the repayments. We will review the mortgage market in the round, seeking bold and innovative steps that Government and industry can take to support more first-time buyers into homeownership.

High Rise Flats: Weather

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Dr Matthew Offord: [38629]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what guidance his Department has published for planning authorities to ensure that high rise buildings do not experience adverse heat stress in times of excessive temperatures.

Mr Marcus Jones:

In December 2021 the Government introduced an uplift in building standards which came into force on 15 June 2022. This included a new part of the Building Regulations to reduce overheating risk in new residential buildings (Part O). Part O applies to new residential buildings, including high rise buildings. Guidance is given in Approved Document O, which can be found at the following web page https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overheating-approved-document-o

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. The National Model Design Code, which provides guidance on the production of local design codes, includes how new development should enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure. This references the National Framework of Green Infrastructure Standards which, when published, will provide further detail on principles to guide design.

For new non-residential buildings, guidance on limiting solar gains is set out in Approved Document L, volume 2. In workplaces, employers must provide suitable indoor workplace environment and comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

Housing Associations: Energy Performance Certificates

Steve McCabe: [37432]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the capability of housing associations being in a position to (a) develop stock investment plans and (b) apply for funding such as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Steve McCabe: [37433]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the decision to instruct housing associations to stop sharing energy efficiency data due to a clause in the Energy Performance of Building Regulations 2012 that makes it an offence for Energy Performance certificate (EPC) data to be shared.

Steve McCabe: [37434]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to allow housing associations to share energy efficient data through the publication of Energy Performance Certificates.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Disclosure of data gathered to support an Energy Performance Certificate is prohibited by Regulation 29 of the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations 2012 unless in accordance with specific provisions; sharing data outside these tightly defined parameters may create a criminal liability. There has been no change in the Government's position in this area. Energy efficiency information from Energy Performance Certificates is available to housing associations from the Energy Performance of Buildings Register and the Open Data Communities website. We recognise that wider use of Energy Performance of Buildings data could support energy efficiency investment plans for building stock, making further progress towards net zero in both domestic and non-domestic properties. We intend to hold a consultation on potential changes to the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations later this year and officials in my department are developing a proposal for sharing a larger subset of the data collected for Energy Performance Certificates with building owners.

Housing: Insulation

Kevin Hollinrake: [36019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will consult (a) building owners, (b) managing agents and (c) residents of buildings on the delivery of the commitments pledged by developers for buildings those developers no longer own or control.

Mr Marcus Jones:

On 13 July we published the draft of a contract with developers. The draft contract, once finalised and executed, will turn the commitments made in the pledge into a legally binding agreement.

Publication marks the start of a four-week period of engagement, during which we will refine the contract as necessary. As well as discussing the contract with developers during this period, we will engage other interested parties including representatives of building owners, managing agents, residents, leaseholders, lenders and insurers.

We plan to have the terms of the contract finalised by 10 August. We expect developers to have signed the contract by the end of September.

Housing: Students

Julian Sturdy: [35932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the impact of the proposals to abolish no-fault section 21 evictions on landlords of student accommodation that is not classified as purpose-built student accommodation.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government's commitment to abolish section 21 evictions and move to periodic tenancies will mean tenants enjoy greater security and feel empowered to challenge

poor practice and unreasonable rent rises. We want as many tenants as possible to benefit from these reforms, including students living in the private rented sector.

In July 2019, the Department published a consultation - 'A New Deal for Renting', on the implications of removing assured shorthold tenancies, which included a question on student accommodation. 19,697 consultation responses in total were received from a range of individuals and organisations. Since then, the department has used consultation feedback and extensive stakeholder engagement to understand the impact of proposals of the Renters Reform Bill, including on the availability and supply of student accommodation in the private rented sector.

We expect most students will continue to move in-line with the academic year. However, the proposed reforms will support student households who have children or local roots to remain in their properties after studying if they wish to. It will also mean that students are not locked into contracts when their circumstances change or if property standards are poor.

We will continue to consider the impact of our reforms as we move towards legislation and will publish a full impact assessment in due course.

Insulation: Housing

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Wera Hobhouse: [36055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has made a comparative regional assessment of the impact of higher temperatures on homes across England during heat waves in the context of a potential variance in the standards of building insulation.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The English Housing Survey collects a range of information about England's housing stock, including the insulation and construction of dwellings and whether occupants have reported that parts of their home get overheated. According to the 2020-21 survey, occupants in dwellings built with timber, concrete or steel frames or with insulated cavity walls were more likely to report overheating (between 9% and 18%) than those living in masonry or uninsulated solid walled dwellings (between 5% and 8%).

The findings also show that dwelling construction types vary by region. London had the lowest proportion of masonry dwellings and the highest proportion of concrete dwellings compared with other regions.

Levelling Up Fund

Helen Morgan: [36958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has conducted an impact assessment on the effect of delays to the opening of the Levelling Up Fund portal.

Lia Nici:

I am delighted to have opened the application portal for the second round of the Fund on the 15 July. I am aware that applicants across the UK have been working hard to develop ambitious bids. I am pleased that they have benefitted from some extra time, enabling them to make further use of the support materials provided to them including guidance and technical teach-ins. I look forward to announcing the outcome later this year, which will see much needed further investment awarded to places in need of levelling up.

Helen Morgan: [36959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what is the deadline for the submission of bids for the Levelling Up Fund Round Two.

Lia Nici:

This second round of the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will allocate further funding to infrastructure projects that will improve everyday life for residents across the United Kingdom.

I am aware that applicants across the UK have been working hard to develop ambitious bids to this second round of the Levelling Up Fund. I am therefore delighted to confirm that the application portal opened on Friday 15 July. To allow adequate time for the submission of bids, the portal will remain open until noon 2 August.

Lighting: Planning

Tony Lloyd: [<u>37449</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of controls for light pollution within the planning system; and what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that planning rules on light pollution are being followed.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Planning guidance is just one of the ways that we seek to manage light pollution impacts and most types of lighting will fall outside of the control of the planning system. Local planning authorities must take the National Planning Policy Framework into account when preparing their plans; and its policies - including those on light pollution - also need to be taken into account in making individual planning decisions.

We have given local planning authorities a wide range of enforcement powers, with strong penalties for non-compliance, to deal with development which has not been carried out in accordance with the planning permission granted. It is for authorities to decide when and how they use those powers depending on the circumstances of each case.

Beyond the limits of planning guidance, the statutory nuisance regime provides individuals with recourse to their local authority where artificial light constitutes a nuisance.

DEFRA coordinates policy relating to light pollution across Government and undertook a review of light pollution policy in January 2014, titled *Artificial light in the environment: policy update*.

Local Government Finance: Cost of Living

Mrs Paulette Hamilton: [36151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to protect local government finances from the cost of living crisis in (a) deprived and (b) all other areas with high demand for services from local authorities.

Paul Scully:

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The Government is making available an additional £3.7 billion to councils in England in 2022/23, with the most relatively deprived areas having access to 14% more per dwelling in core spending power.

How inflation interacts with local government's finances is not straightforward and we are working with the sector to understand any impacts.

■ Thames Freeport

Alan Brown: [38711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, who the responsible authority is for oversight of Thames Freeport.

Lia Nici:

Freeports bring together a broad coalition of local private and public sector partners to drive investment, innovation, and job creation across their regions. Each Freeport has a Governing Body formed of those partners, which is responsible for delivering the Freeport as agreed with the UK Government, and a nominated local authority, accountable to DLUHC for managing UK Government funding for the Freeport and ensuring the Governing Body operates effectively. In the case of the Thames Freeport, the accountable local authority is Thurrock Council.

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites

Peter Gibson: [36888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent discussions he has had with Minister for Women and Equalities on not collecting data on the provision of authorised traveller sites for the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller community; and if he will make an assessment of the impact of not collecting that data on that community.

Paul Scully:

Government policy (the 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' or PPTS) is clear that local planning authorities should assess the need for traveller accommodation and identify land for sites. Local authorities are best placed to make decisions about the

number and location of such sites locally, having had due regard to national policy and local circumstances.

DLUHC publishes the Traveller Caravan Count, which is compiled from information submitted by local authorities in England. Local authorities carry out the count of caravans on traveller sites twice a year, in January and July, providing a snapshot of the number of caravans on the day of the count. The Traveller Caravan Count can be viewed using this link: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traveller-caravan-count.

Peter Gibson: [36889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make a nationwide assessment on the provision of authorised traveller sites for the Gypsy Romany Traveller community.

Peter Gibson: [36890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of (a) the potential merits of a national strategy to provide a nationwide network for authorised traveller sites for the Gypsy Romany Traveller community and (b) whether every local authority is meeting its obligation to provide (i) socially, (ii) environmentally, and (iii) economically sustainable sites.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by section 124 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016) local housing authorities have a duty to consider the housing and accommodation needs of all persons who reside in and resort to their area, including those that live in caravans and houseboats.

The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (or PPTS), read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. Planning policy is clear that local planning authorities should assess the need for traveller accommodation and identify land for sites.

Local authorities are best placed to make decisions about the number and location of such sites locally, as part of their plan and decision making duties. Paragraph 13 of the PPTS sets out that when plan making, local authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally.

Authorities are encouraged to work collaboratively to develop effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for development.

UK Municipal Bonds Agency

Rob Roberts: [38879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the UK Municipal Bonds Agency; and what the (a) number and (b) value of loans it has provided to local authorities has been in each year since its establishment.

Paul Scully:

Under the current system, authorities are responsible for their own borrowing and investment decisions and are accountable to their electorate. Authorities have wide freedoms to borrow from any source, provided it is affordable. Authorities must however, ensure they comply with their statutory duties under the Prudential Framework, and have regard to the four statutory codes that set out best practice.

The Government collects aggregate data on local authorities borrowing and investment activity commensurate to its stewardship function and monitoring of risk, but does not routinely assess the use of borrowing from specific sources such as the UK Municipal Bonds Agency (UKMBA) or the effectiveness of lenders. The UKMBA is owned by local government, central government has no role in the operations of the agency.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Wales

Ruth Jones: [36111]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the amount Wales will receive through the Shared Prosperity Fund in each of the next five years.

Lia Nici:

Wales has been allocated a total of £585 million from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund over this Spending Review period. This equates to £89 million in 2022/23, £153 million in 2023/24 and £585 million in 2024/25. I am pleased to say that this provides Wales with a real-terms match of funding previously received from the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund. We have published a full breakdown of the allocations on GOV.UK.

Funding after 2024/25 will be a matter for the next Spending Review.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure

Vicky Foxcroft: [37571]

To ask the Prime Minister, what discussions he or his Office have had with representatives of companies with powers under the Electronic Communications Code since March 2021.

Boris Johnson:

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on gov.uk as part of the government's transparency agenda.

SCOTLAND

Sovereignty: Scotland

Douglas Chapman: [38697]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what the Government's position is on the outcome of the Smith Commission and its commitment that nothing in that report prevents Scotland becoming an independent country in the future should the people of Scotland so choose.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Scotland Act 2016 has been recognised as delivering the recommendations of the Smith Commission Agreement in full. Rather than talking about another referendum, the UK Government is focused on working to address the collective challenges we face, such as tackling the cost of living and growing our economy.

TRANSPORT

Bus Services

Wera Hobhouse: [36063]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of (a) the total number of bus routes each year over the past ten years (b) the total number of bus routes per local authority over the past ten years.

Karl McCartney:

The Department does not hold the information that is being requested on the number of bus routes.

Bus service registrations are notified to the Traffic Commissioners. The latest published data from the Traffic Commissioners, which provides the number of all live local bus services in England outside London, can be found in the Traffic Commissioners Annual Report at the link given below. Bus routes in London are registered separately with TfL:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment data/file/1080924/2021 Annual Report FINAL 220607.pdf

Car Allowances

Mr Laurence Robertson:

38495

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing approved business travel mileage rates, in the context of rising fuel costs; and if he will make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

The government keeps approved business travel mileage rates under review.

Department for Transport: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35845]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Trudy Harrison:

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

| FINANCIAL YEAR | EXPENDITURE (£'000) | |
|----------------|---------------------|--|
| 2019-20 | 1,478 | |
| 2020-21 | 72 | |
| 2021-22 | 356 | |

The department is unable to break down travel expense costs for officials and Ministers by mode of transport.

Driving Tests: Coronavirus

Rosie Duffield: [38800]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the limited availability of practical driving tests following the covid-19 outbreak, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the validity of a successful driving theory test to three years.

Karl McCartney:

It is important road safety knowledge and hazard perception skills are up to date at the critical point a person drives unsupervised for the first time.

The maximum duration of two years between passing the theory test and a subsequent practical test is in place to ensure a candidate's road safety knowledge and ability to identify developing hazards is current. This validity period is set in legislation and the Government has no current plans to lay further legislation to extend it.

Ensuring new drivers have current relevant knowledge and skills is a vital part of the preparation of new drivers, who are disproportionality represented in casualty statistics. Learners will therefore need to pass another theory test if their certificate expires.

East West Rail Line

Mohammad Yasin: [36842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his comments in an interview with lain Dale on LBC radio on 11 July 2022, whether he plans to cancel tranches 2 and 3 of East West Rail; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

Connection Stage 2 (Bletchley to Bedford) and Connection Stage 3 (Bedford to Cambridge) of East West Rail are at development stage. Next steps for the project will be set out in due course.

■ Electric Vehicles: Grants

Wera Hobhouse: [36849]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the news story entitled Plug-in grant for cars to end as focus moves to improving electric vehicle charging, published by his Department on 14 June 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of removing electric car subsidies on the transition to electric vehicles.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government's approach to supporting the uptake of electric cars is clearly working – while the Government slowly reduced the grant over time, the sale of electric vehicles soared. The Plug-in Car Grant has had significant impacts on building the early electric car market, which is now maturing. The sales of fully electric cars grew from less than 1,000 in 2011 to almost 100,000 in the first 5 months of 2022 alone. Although still important, price is no longer the paramount barrier to adoption of electric cars.

An independent report commissioned by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles to assess the impact of the grant scheme, found that the grant has had a material impact on demand for new electric cars, but also that the importance of it has reduced as the market has matured and price has become less of a barrier to vehicle uptake.

High Speed 2 Line: West Coast Main Line

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate his Department has made of the potential financial impact of (a) the Golborne Link and (b) an HS2 connection to the West Coast Main Line.

Trudy Harrison:

On 20 June 2022 the Government announced in a Written Ministerial Statement laid in Parliament the publication of the Supplement to that update:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-crewe-to-manchester-impacts-of-removing-the-golborne-link. This sets out the financial considerations regarding the Golborne Link and connecting the HS2 network to the West Coast Main Line.

Network Rail: Consultants

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Grahame Morris: [38620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much Network Rail paid specialist infrastructure consultancy firm Nichols Group to commission and produce the report entitled Network Rail Maintenance Comparator Study Report, published by Network Rail on 13 July 2022.

Wendy Morton:

The independent Nichols Group was commissioned to undertake a comparative study of 15 infrastructure organisations to assess Network Rail's progress in adopting modern working practices and new technology. The final report found that on most criteria, Network Rail's current restrictive and inflexible working practices make it less efficient than comparator organisations.

Grahame Morris: [38621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much Network Rail has spent on external consultants in each of the last two years; which consultancy firms were used; and on what matters they were consulted.

Wendy Morton:

Network Rail provides details of all spend over £25,000 on its website.

Railway Network: Suffolk

James Wild: [38869]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the benefit cost ratio was of the recommended option submitted by Network Rail in its outline business case for the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement under the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline.

Wendy Morton:

An update on the scheme will be provided in an updated Rail Network Enhancements Portfolio (RNEP) in due course.

Railways: East of England

Tom Hunt: [36898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much investment the region of the East of England has received in rail transport infrastructure in comparison to the other regions of England since 2019.

Wendy Morton:

Regional figures on public sector capital expenditure estimates are published in HM Treasury's Country and Regional Analysis (CRA):

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/country-and-regional-analysis

Capital expenditure has been used as a proxy for spending on infrastructure.

Capital railway expenditure attributed to the East of England for the financial years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 was £1.8bn. This was approximately 7% of all UK capital railway expenditure (see the attached Table 1).

Attachments:

1. <u>Table 1 - Capital Expenditure on Rail Transport [Table 1 - Public Sector Capital Expenditure on Rail Transport.docx]</u>

Railways: Weather

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[<u>36866</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking with rail companies to support the safety of (a) passengers and (b)) rail staff during the current heatwave.

Wendy Morton:

Train operators and Network Rail are keeping travel messages under active review and advising passengers through multiple channels, including National Rail Enquiries. In particular, they are advising passengers to follow public health advice and plan ahead for their journeys. Rail staff are also being encouraged to take regular breaks to remain cool and hydrated, while keeping aware of the signs of heat exhaustion. Air conditioning will be in operation on trains to reduce temperatures and improve ventilation throughout the hot weather.

Transport for the North

Christian Matheson: [37512]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he last met the Chair of Transport for the North.

Trudy Harrison:

The Secretary of State and Departmental ministers meet regularly with the Chair of Transport for the North.

TREASURY

Apprentices: STEM Subjects

Chi Onwurah: [35942]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the review of the Apprenticeships Levy, whether he has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on (a) increasing the uptake and (b) improving the quality of apprenticeships in STEM.

Mr Simon Clarke:

As part of the Spring Statement, the government committed to considering whether further intervention is needed to encourage employers to offer the high-quality employee training the UK needs. This will include examining whether the current tax system – including the operation of the Apprenticeship Levy – is doing enough to

incentivise businesses to invest in the right kinds of training. There will not be a formal review of the Apprenticeship Levy or system.

As an employer-led offer, employers can choose how many apprentices to take on, what standards they offer, and which training provider to use. Combined with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, the government has created hypothecated funds to support employer investment in the high-quality training an apprenticeship can deliver. Where these funds are not spent by levy payers, they are allocated to non-levy paying employers who receive support for 95% of the cost of high-quality apprenticeship training.

There are over 340 apprenticeship standards that are closely linked to STEM occupations in sectors including Construction, Engineering and Manufacturing, and ICT. In Academic Year 2020/21, there were 78,100 apprenticeship starts in STEM, making up 24% of all apprenticeship starts that year. Popular STEM standards included Level 3 Engineering Technician (5,401 starts) and Level 4 Data Analyst (3,717 starts).

Arms Trade: Export Controls

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Ruth Cadbury: [36788]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many fines HMRC have issued for breaches of the UK arms export regime since May 2022; and how much each of those fines has been.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC has issued 1 compound settlement from 1 May 2022 to date for breaches of the UK arms export regime. The value of this settlement was £105,000.

Information on HMRC enforcement outcomes is published in the Strategic Export Controls Annual Reports available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/united-kingdom-strategic-export-controls-annual-report.

Banks: Finance

Pat McFadden: [38589]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which industry stakeholders his Department met with ahead of the Bank of England's review of its approach to setting a minimum requirement for own funds and eligible liabilities (MREL).

Richard Fuller:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel

Capital Markets: Regulation

Pat McFadden: [38587]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a timeline for taking forward reforms to the UK's financial services regulatory framework for capital markets.

Tulip Siddiq: [38741]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide a timeline for taking forward reforms to the UK's financial services regulatory framework for capital markets.

Richard Fuller:

As the Chancellor laid out in his speech at Mansion House on Tuesday 19th July, the Government will take forward reforms to the UK's regulatory framework for capital markets in the Financial Services and Markets Bill.

In particular, the Bill will increase the competitiveness of our capital markets, allowing us to reform the Prospectus Regime, as recommended by Lord Hill. It will also take forward outcomes of the Wholesale Capital Markets review, stripping away poorly crafted EU rules like the double volume cap and the share trading obligation.

The roadmap for the delivery of the full set of reforms under the WMR is set out in detail in the recent consultation and consultation response document, which are both available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-wholesale-markets-review-a-consultation.

While the Government has set out its prioritisation for its capital markets reforms, the exact timeline for delivery will rely on Parliamentary timetabling.

Cash Dispensing

Pat McFadden: [38588]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what industry stakeholders his Department met with in advance of the announcement in the Queen's Speech 2022 that the Government will bring forward legislative proposals on ensuring access to cash.

Richard Fuller:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitalitygiftsand-overseas-travel

Corporation Tax

Tulip Siddiq: [38739]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken in response to the closure of the consultation on implementation of OECD Pillar 2.

Lucy Frazer:

The OECD's two pillar solution to the tax challenges resulting from digitalisation represents a major reform of the international tax framework and will help to ensure multinational businesses pay their fair share, with the right companies paying the right amount of tax in the right place.

On 20 July 2022, the Government published a response to the consultation on the implementation of Pillar 2 in the UK. The response can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/oecd-pillar-2-consultation-on-implementation. Draft legislation was also published, and the Government welcomes further consultation on this. The draft legislation can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-the-new-multinational-top-up-tax.

■ Counter-terrorism and Money Laundering: Regulation

Tulip Siddiq: [38740]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken in response to the close of the call for evidence on the Review of the UK's AML/CTF regulatory and supervisory regime.

Richard Fuller:

On the 24 June, HM Treasury published the review of the UK's AML/CFT regulatory and supervisory regime, that set out the strengths and deficiencies of the UK's regime. Alongside a forward-looking document, publication of two post-implementation reviews was legally required, assessing the effectiveness of the Money Laundering Regulations 2017 and the Oversight of Professional Body AML Supervision Regulations 2017.

The review is structured around systemic, regulatory and supervisory effectiveness and focuses on improving the effectiveness of the Money Laundering Regulations, ensuring the application of an effective risk-based controls across the regulated sector and continuing to develop a world-leading anti-money laundering supervision regime. The Treasury has also committed to issuing two further consultations, on supervisory reform and potential amendments to the MLRs.

Credit Cards: Interest Rates

Dr Matthew Offord: [38635]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the average rate of interest being charged on UK issued credit cards.

Richard Fuller:

HM Treasury does not make its own estimates on the average rate of interest being charged on UK issues credit cards, but instead uses The Bank of England monthly releases for monetary and financial system statistics, which can be found here under "Money and Credit Data": https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/statistics.

This data shows that in June 2022 the average quoted household interest rate charged on credit cards was 21.43 per cent.

■ Credit: Regulation

Pat McFadden: [37470]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many responses his Department has received to its consultation on the regulation of buy now pay later.

Pat McFadden: [37472]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what meetings officials in his Department have had with representatives of buy now pay later businesses.

Richard Fuller:

The Government received 86 responses to its consultation on the regulation of Buy-Now Pay-Later. A list of respondents can be found in Annex A of the Government's consultation response at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulation-of-buy-now-pay-later-consultation

Treasury Ministers and officials have held meetings with a wide variety of interested parties as part of the process of policy development and delivery. These have included meetings with consumer groups, with financial services sector trade bodies, and with a number of individual firms that will be affected by the regulation of Buy-Now Pay-Later.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel

Cryptocurrencies: Regulation

Kevin Brennan: [38529]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, (b) the Gambling Commission and (c) the Financial Conduct Authority on the regulation of crypto-based products and services.

Richard Fuller:

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Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

The Cryptoasset Taskforce, comprising HM Treasury, the Bank of England, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR), continues to monitor ongoing development in cryptoasset markets, and is taking forward a range of regulatory measures to mitigate market integrity risks, protect consumers and support innovation in the cryptoasset market.

Since January 2020, cryptoasset firms operating in the UK have been subject to the Money Laundering Regulations. To protect consumers, on 18 January 2022, the government set out its intention to legislate later this year to bring certain cryptoassets into financial promotion regulation. This would ensure that relevant cryptoasset promotions are held to the same high standards for fairness, clarity and accuracy that exist in the financial services industry. Additionally, on the 20 July, the government introduced the Financial Services and Markets Bill, which includes a measure allowing HM Treasury to bring stablecoins, where used as a means of payment, within the UK regulatory perimeter.

The government has committed to consult later this year on the broader regulation of cryptoassets.

Pat McFadden: [38591]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which industry stakeholders his Department met with ahead of the 4 April 2022 announcement on the regulation of crypto-assets.

Richard Fuller:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel.

Domicil

Pat McFadden: [37473]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent meetings he has had on the issue of non-domiciled tax status.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government keeps all tax policy under review, and the Chancellor attends policy discussions with officials as part of this process.

■ Financial Markets: Credit

Peter Dowd: [38692]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an estimate of the size of the secondary debt market trading consumer credit.

Peter Dowd: [38693]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an estimate of the amount of money that debt purchasers make by buying devalued consumer debt on the secondary market and seeking to collect it from people in debt.

Peter Dowd: [38694]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the level of debt that is devalued on the secondary debt market in consumer credit each year.

Richard Fuller:

HM Treasury does not hold data in relation to the secondary debt market trading consumer credit. HM Treasury has also not made estimates of the profits that debt purchasers make by buying devalued consumer debt or of the level of debt that is devalued on the secondary debt market in consumer credit.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

John McNally: [37515]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has further plans to support industries and professions affected by the cost of fuel following the lowering of fuel duty; and whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the RHA's plan for an essential user rebate of 15p per litre on fuel duty.

Alan Mak:

At Spring Statement 2022, in response to high fuel prices, the Government announced a temporary 12 month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5 pence per litre. This represents a tax cut worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23, benefiting anyone who consumes fuel across the UK.

All taxes, including fuel duty, remain under review.

Insurance Companies: Regulation

Tulip Siddiq: [38742]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which industry stakeholders his Department met with in advance of the launch of the Solvency II Review consultation.

Richard Fuller:

Treasury Ministers and officials have had meetings with a range of stakeholders both during and in advance of the launch of the consultation on the review of Solvency II published in April 2022, including representatives from insurance underwriters,

brokers and industry groups. Records of ministerial meetings are published quarterly and are available on gov.uk.

Loan Charge Action Group

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Liz Saville Roberts: [38748]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with Lord Morse regrading correspondence from the Loan Charge Action Group.

Lucy Frazer:

The Chancellor has not discussed correspondence sent by the Loan Charge Action Group with Lord Morse.

The Loan Charge has been legislated in Parliament and was introduced in the 2019-20 tax year. Lord Morse was clear in his report that the Loan Charge was an appropriate response to the tax avoidance activity that had taken place.

HMRC continue to work with and support taxpayers to resolve all outstanding enquiries and assessments relating to disguised remuneration loans.

Private Education: VAT

Rachel Reeves: [37483]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the revenue that would be raised from removing the VAT-exempt status of private schools.

Lucy Frazer:

Many supplies of education, including those provided by eligible independent schools, are exempt from VAT. This means that no VAT is charged to the final consumer, and that the schools cannot recover VAT they incur on their costs.

The Government keeps all taxes under review, and any future changes to the UK tax system will be costed in the usual way.

Public Sector: Workplace Pensions

Pat McFadden: [37471]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who officials in his Department have consulted in the development of its response to the consultation on the methodology used to set the SCAPE discount rate.

Mr Simon Clarke:

I refer the rt Hon Member to my answer of 19 July to PQ UIN 36751.

■ Revenue and Customs: Repayments

Martyn Day: [36023]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2022 to Question 26810 on Revenue and Customs Repayments, what the average time taken is

for HMRC to process repayments claimed through a self assessment tax return in the latest period for which data is available; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

Repayment times vary from case to case depending on individual circumstances. All repayments go through security checks, and the vast majority pass them, and they will then be issued within 10 days. Only cases that fail them will take longer to process.

Small Businesses: Corporation Tax

Sarah Olney: [<u>38771</u>]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the number of microbusinesses that will pay (a) corporation tax in the 2022-23 financial year and (b) will pay an increased rate of corporation tax after 1 April 2023.

Lucy Frazer:

The information requested is not available.

In Finance Act 2021, the Government legislated to increase the main rate of Corporation Tax to 25 per cent from April 2023 and introduce a small profits rate, keeping the rate at 19 per cent for companies with profits of £50,000 or less. The availability of marginal relief will avoid a sharp increase in rate for companies with profits between £50,000 and £250,000.

The introduction of a small profits rate means that around 1.4 million companies (around 70 per cent of actively trading companies) will continue to pay either no Corporation tax or Corporation Tax at 19 per cent. The majority of these will be microbusinesses.

Sports: Clubs

Munira Wilson: [38861]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2022 to Question 33010, on Sports; Clubs, how many registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs there were in total in each year since 2019.

Munira Wilson: [38862]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many Community Amateur Sports Clubs were deregistered in each year since 2019 because (a) they closed or (b) they were no longer eligible.

Alan Mak:

The total number of Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) registered with HMRC at the end of each year since 2019 is as follows:

2019 - 8539

2020 - 8793

2021 - 8947

2022 - 8970

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The number of CASCs that ceased registration with HMRC in each year since 2019 is as follows:

2019 - 1295

2020 - 1324

2021 - 1343

2022 - 1358

Taxation: Rebates

Stephen Farry: [35102]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason HMRC has issued personal tax refunds to third party companies rather than the individuals owed; and whether HMRC is taking steps to resolve that matter.

Lucy Frazer:

Individuals can claim tax repayments from HMRC and HMRC will refund them directly. However, HMRC will issue a tax repayment to a third party when a taxpayer has either nominated or assigned the repayment to them.

Companies which specialize in claiming tax refunds often use assignments as part of the sign-up process, which means the repayment then legally belongs to that agent. When a taxpayer signs an assignment, HMRC is obliged to make payment directly to the repayment agent. Individual taxpayers are entitled to withdraw a nomination unilaterally, but agreement is needed from both parties to revoke an assignment.

The Government is aware that some taxpayers are unaware that an assignment will be used, or may not understand what it means in practice. HMRC launched the "Raising standards in tax advice: protecting customers claiming tax repayments" consultation on 22 June 2022, which can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/raising-standards-in-tax-advice-protecting-customers-claiming-tax-repayments.

One proposed measure the consultation seeks views on is restricting the use of assignments for tax repayments.

The consultation is running for 12 weeks and will close on 14 September 2022. Any decision resulting from the consultation will be announced at a future fiscal event.

■ Treasury: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35853]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Alan Mak:

The air travel spend for HMT in each calendar year respectively is as follows: 2020: £343,886.61, 2021: £126,748.95 and 2022: £332,222.72. We are unable to provide the split between Ministers and Officials as the information is not held in that format in our systems.

However, Ministers international commercial air travel is captured in departmental quarterly transparency returns and published on gov.uk at the following location: <u>Transparency data HMT ministers' meetings, hospitality, gifts and overseas travel: 1</u>
April to 30 June 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Treasury: Ministerial Changes

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36083]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish all emails from the Department's Permanent Secretary to departmental staff informing them of the appointment of a new Chancellor.

Alan Mak:

On the appointment of a new Secretary of State, the Permanent Secretary will generally inform staff of the appointment, noting the continuation of the department's key business – while outlining any changes to portfolios or responsibilities.

Information on all departments' ministerial appointments, and portfolios, is already available in the public domain.

Vacancies

Sarah Olney: [38777]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of labour shortages on (a) economic growth and (b) gross domestic product in (i) 2022 and (ii) 2023.

Richard Fuller:

Like other advanced economies, the UK is affected by global economic challenges, including the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine. Support provided over the past two years has put the UK economy in a good position to deal with these challenges, with a record number of employees on payrolls and a strong economic recovery from the pandemic. Annual growth in 2021 was the fastest in the G7, and GDP data for Q1 2022 showed the UK had the joint fastest growth in the G7.

The UK has a strong labour market with an unemployment rate of 3.8% in the three months to May, which is close to historic lows, and youth unemployment and redundancies at record lows. Employment increased by almost 300,000 in the three months to May, with inactivity also falling.

The Office for Budget Responsibility are the government's official forecaster, and they will update their forecasts for UK GDP in the Autumn report.

WALES

Wales Office: Ministerial Changes

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, if they will publish all emails from the Department's Permanent Secretary to departmental staff informing them of the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Wales.

David T C Davies:

The Director for Wales Office did not send any emails to staff informing them of the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Wales. An all-staff meeting was held.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carer's Allowance

Daisy Cooper: [38847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of re-designating Carer's Allowance as a disability-related benefit rather than employment-related benefit, to enable carers who are in receipt of the State Retirement Pension to be eligible to claim Carer's Allowance.

Chloe Smith:

The principal purpose of Carer's Allowance is to provide a measure of financial support and recognition for people who give up the opportunity of full-time work in order to provide regular care for a severely disabled person. For benefit purposes it is an income replacement benefit. State Pension is also an income replacement benefit, albeit awarded in very different circumstances. Nevertheless, it is a fundamental and long-standing principle of the benefit system under successive Governments that duplicate provision should not be made for the same contingency. The extra costs disability benefits are not intended for income maintenance, rather they are for the additional costs arising from a long-term health condition or disability. Accordingly, it would be anomalous to change the designation of Carer's Allowance and there are no plans to do so.

Cystic Fibrosis: Employment

Feryal Clark: [36930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the report from Cystic Fibrosis UK entitled The cost of cystic fibrosis 2022, what assessment she has made of the impact of cystic fibrosis on employment for people (a) with cystic fibrosis and (b) caring for someone with cystic fibrosis.

Feryal Clark: [36931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the report from Cystic Fibrosis UK entitled The cost of cystic fibrosis 2022, what steps her Department is

taking to support people (a) with cystic fibrosis and (b) caring for someone with cystic fibrosis with employment.

Feryal Clark: [36932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the report from Cystic Fibrosis UK entitled The cost of cystic fibrosis 2022, what steps her Department is taking to support people with cystic fibrosis during the cost of living crisis.

Feryal Clark: [36933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the report from Cystic Fibrosis UK entitled The cost of cystic fibrosis 2022, what additional support her Department is providing to those with long term conditions who's employment opportunities are impacted by their condition.

Feryal Clark: [36934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the report from Cystic Fibrosis UK entitled The cost of cystic fibrosis 2022, what support her Department is providing to people with long-term conditions whose finances are impacted by their condition.

Chloe Smith:

The Government is committed to supporting people living with long term health conditions, including cystic fibrosis.

Currently, no specific assessment has been made of the impact of cystic fibrosis on employment for people. However a range of Government initiatives are supporting disabled people and people with health conditions, including cystic fibrosis, to start, stay and succeed in work. These include the Work and Health Programme, the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. We will be investing £1.3bn in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions over the next three years.

The Government continues to recognise the difficulties carers have in maintaining links to paid work whilst undertaking caring responsibilities. The Government is committed to supporting all individuals and businesses to work flexibly and recently consulted on measures to strengthen the existing right to request flexible working framework. The consultation ran from September to December 2021. The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is currently analysing over 1,600 consultation responses received and will be publishing the next steps in due course.

The Government wants to help carers combine their caring responsibilities with work where they can. Jobcentres can provide support to those carers looking for employment. This will be tailored to their individual needs and circumstances and could range from simply sign-posting them to local vacancies to more intensive employment and training support.

Alongside employment measures such as flexible working, the Government gives carers access to financial support when they need it, by ensuring the benefit systems (including Carer's Allowance and Universal Credit) meet the needs of eligible carers and support employment for those carers who are able to do some work.

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living which is why it is providing over £37 billion of support this year. People with cystic fibrosis who receive a qualifying means-tested benefit may be eligible for the £650 Cost of Living Payment which is designed to target support at low-income households. In addition, if they receive a disability-related benefit such as Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, they may also be eligible for a disability Cost of Living Payment of £150.

All domestic electricity customers will also benefit from the £400 support being provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme. We are also providing 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 and will be extended until March 2023 with a further £421m.

People with cystic fibrosis may be entitled to support of up to £156.90 a week, tax free, from the extra costs benefits: Attendance Allowance; Disability Living Allowance; and Personal Independence Payment.

Department for Work and Pensions: Aviation

Jon Trickett: [35846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much their Department has spent on air travel for (a) Ministers and (b) officials in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Guy Opperman:

The data provided is for all staff including the ministerial team.

Departmental Air Travel costs:

2020 - £90,408.81

2021 - £34,738.46

2022 - £94,349.12*

*January - June

Department for Work and Pensions: Staff

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[<u>36074</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will estimate expected staffing levels of her Department by the end of 2022.

Guy Opperman:

DWP continually monitors and reviews staffing levels. Based on current planning assumptions, we anticipate our headcount at the end of 2022 will be within a range of c.79,000 to c.82,000 full time equivalents.

■ Health and Safety: Weather

Rachael Maskell: [38727]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance she has issued to workers on the steps that employers should take during periods of extreme heat, including in respect of (a) dress codes, (b) working hours and (c) care of more vulnerable workers.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19th July to the Hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green, <u>UIN 36045</u>.

With regards to dress code, detailed guidance for employers on workplace temperature and thermal comfort is available on the Health and Safety Executive's website.

Jobcentres: Disability

Sir Stephen Timms: [38477]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) Disability Employment Advisors and (b) Work Coaches employed by her Department identify as disabled.

Guy Opperman:

Disability Employment Advisors who identify as disabled in June 2022 – 298.10 (FTE) Work Coaches who identify as disabled in June 2022 – 3062.25 (FTE)

Jobcentres: Training

Sir Stephen Timms: [38478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether training offered by her Department to (a) Disability Employment Advisors and (b) Work Coaches covers assistive technology.

Chloe Smith:

All staff who undertake the DEA role are expected to have completed the Work Coach Learning Journey prior to commencing learning for the DEA role. As part of the Work Coach Learning, staff complete a module, Assisted Digital (UC37) where they are provided with the knowledge and skills which will enable them to:

- · explain what assisted digital is
- describe the benefits of using the digital service to a claimant
- identify challenges claimants may have using digital channels

 explain the support available to claimants with low or no digital capability or access to digital services, and

signpost claimants to further support available

There is also a new product Accessibility Fundamentals learning which provides delegates with the knowledge to understand the various features in Microsoft that can be used to make opportunities more accessible.

Maternity Pay

Wera Hobhouse: [36052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of increasing statutory maternity pay in line with (a) inflation and (b) the cost of living.

Guy Opperman:

The standard rate of statutory maternity pay (SMP) is reviewed annually, alongside state benefits, and is generally increased in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). From April 2022 the standard rate of SMP increased to £156.66, in line with the September 2021 CPI rate of 3.1%.

Maternity Pay: Self-employed

Wera Hobhouse: [36053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to increase the level of maternity pay for self-employed mothers.

Guy Opperman:

Maternity Allowance, which is payable to eligible self-employed women, is reviewed annually, alongside other state benefits, and is generally increased in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). From April 2022 the standard rate of Maternity Allowance increased to £156.66, in line with the September 2021 CPI rate of 3.1%. The Government has no plans to increase the standard rate of Maternity Allowance outside of annual uprating.

Poverty: Children

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the rate of child poverty is in Slough constituency; and what steps is the Government taking to lower that rate.

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).

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 1.9 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. Slough Borough Council has been allocated £1,177,691.53.

Peter Dowd: [36795]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to tackle the level of child poverty in Bootle constituency.

David Rutley:

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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.

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Around 1.9 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. Sefton Council has been allocated £2,435,111.24.

Cat Smith: [36804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of children living in poverty in Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency.

Cat Smith: [36805]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the level of child poverty in Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency.

Cat Smith: [36806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what specific policies her Department has in place to support families with children in poverty.

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).

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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.

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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. Lancashire County Council has been allocated £9,678,235.22.

Social Security Benefits

Chi Onwurah: [35943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will make an assessment of the cumulative impact of (a) benefits not increasing in line with the Consumer Price Index, (b) the reduction in Universal Credit in October 2021 and (c) the rise in living costs on the living standards of households in receipt of Universal Credit.

David Rutley:

For the past 35 years benefits have been increased by the relevant price index for the 12 months to September and that convention was followed for 2022/23 and benefits were increased by 3.1%.

The Government has always been clear that the £20 increase to Universal Credit was a temporary measure to support those households most affected by the economic shock of Covid-19.

The Government understands the current cost of living pressures many are facing and has taken action to support and help families with a total package worth £37 billion in 2022-23. This includes the the £400 being paid to all domestic electricity customer millions of the lowest income households will get £1,200 of one-off support in total this year to help with the cost of living.

The Energy Bills Support Scheme has been doubled to a one-off £400 grant, and not recovered in future years. Energy suppliers will deliver this support to households with a domestic electricity meter over six months from October. This support is in addition to the £150 Council Tax rebate for households in England in Council Tax bands A-D, which was announced in February

Over 8 million households across the UK in receipt of eligible means tested benefits have started to receive a one-off Cost of Living Payment of £650, paid in two instalments from 14 th of July.

Social Security Benefits: Broadband

Jamie Stone: [39960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to raise awareness of social tariffs on broadband packages for consumers in receipt of benefits.

Julie Marson:

DWP works with DCMS and Ofcom to encourage broadband providers to extend eligibility of broadband social tariffs to low-income households. Because of this, some broadband providers have made social tariffs available to Universal Credit claimants and other claimants receiving means tested benefits. DWP will work with Ofcom to

raise claimant awareness of these tariffs with via our national Jobcentre Plus Work Coach network and wider stakeholders.

Jamie Stone: [39961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to share data with broadband providers on consumers in receipt of benefits for the purposes of increasing the efficiency and speed of the vetting process for applications for social tariffs.

Julie Marson:

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DWP currently have a verification system in place with BT to confirm benefit eligibility, allowing claimants to access the BT Basics social tariff.

DWP is developing a new API service which will enable more Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to confirm eligibility for broadband social tariffs.

Social Security Benefits: Work Capability Assessment

Ms Karen Buck: [37428]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether claimants in the support group of Employment Support Allowance will be required to undergo a new Work Capability Assessment in the event that they make a claim for Universal Credit later than the deadline provided in their migration notice.

David Rutley:

For claimants in the support group receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), at the point they make a claim to UC, there is no requirement for a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) reassessment. The claimant will not be required to have another assessment in order to be awarded the health-related addition in UC.

Where an individual's entitlement to ESA has stopped as a result of not making a claim to UC by the deadline date, any future claim to UC, after the last date legacy benefits were paid to the claimant, would be treated as a new claim. The claimant in these circumstances, as with any new claim to UC, would need a referral for a WCA to assess whether they have limited capability for work or limited capability for work-and work-related activity.

State Retirement Pensions

Wendy Chamberlain:

[38846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22, HC 193, published on 7 July 2022, which notes at page 71 errors in the recording of Home Responsibilities Protection, how many people benefited from the correction exercise undertaken by her Department between 2009 and 2011; what the cost of that correction exercise was; for what reason further corrective action is needed; and if she will make a statement.

Guy Opperman:

The Department published figures for the 2009-11 exercise on 15 June 2011. These showed that as a result of the correction exercise around 36,000 cases had an improved State Pension and around £89million had been paid in arrears. As part of our work to improve the accuracy of State Pensions, a small number of errors relating to historic NI records has been identified during DWPs Fraud and Error investigations for 2021/22. We are working with HM Revenue and Customs to investigate data discrepancies in the recording of historic periods of awards of Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP). HRP formed part of an individual's National Insurance record.

<u>Microsoft Word - 110615 - HRP correction exercise ad hoc analysis - FINAL.d...</u> (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Universal Credit

Cat Smith: [36807]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to understand the impact of the total amount deducted from universal credit on families living in poverty (a) at a constituency level in general and (b) in Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency.

David Rutley:

The standard deductions cap of 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance strikes the right balance of ensuring priority debts are repaid whilst ensuring claimants retain most of their award to meet day-to-day needs.

In recent years, the standard deductions cap has been reduced twice – from 40% to 30% of the Standard Allowance in October 2019, and down to 25% in April 2021. Reducing the threshold further would risk key social obligations such as Child Maintenance not being met.

For DWP Debt deductions, if a claimant is struggling financially, they can contact DWP Debt Management to discuss a reduction in their repayment, or temporary suspension, depending on financial circumstances.

Munira Wilson: [36904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households were exempt from the two-child Universal Credit benefits cap because they (a) have a child arrangement order, (b) have been appointed as a child's guardian, (c) have a special guardianship order, (d) are entitled to Guardian's Allowance and (e) have applied successfully using form IC1 as of 14 July 2022.

David Rutley:

The exceptions referenced fall under the "non-parental care" exception.

The data available does not break down to a lower level of detail.

The latest official statistics on the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children was released on 14th July and can be found here https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-and-child-tax-credit-

claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2022/universal-credit-and-child-tax-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2022

Ms Karen Buck: [37426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on 29 June 2022, what safeguards she has put in place to ensure that people are not left without money if they do not make a claim for Universal Credit by the deadline provided in their migration notice.

David Rutley:

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During the initial phase of discovery, the Department will not terminate any benefits if the claimant fails to claim within the three-month period. If these claimants have not been able to engage with the department, DWP will give a 1-month extension to the deadline outlined in their notice. In this time, we will undertake proactive engagement with the claimant to understand why they have not claimed and provide additional support where required.

Ms Karen Buck: [37427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2022, whether an eligible claimant will retain their Transitional Protection if they make a claim for Universal Credit later than the deadline provided in their migration notice.

David Rutley:

As set out in Regulation 46 of the Universal Credit (UC) (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2014, claimants in receipt of a migration notice who make a claim to Universal Credit up to one month after their deadline date, will have their UC award backdated to that date and will remain eligible for Transitional Protection.

Ms Karen Buck: [38492]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2022 to Question 28376, which relevant cabinet sub-committees approved the revisions to the Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) (Managed Migration) Regulations 2018; and on what date did each of those sub-committees make their decision.

David Rutley:

The Parliamentary Business and Legislation (PBL) Committee approved the revisions to the Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) (Managed Migration) Regulations 2018. Approval was given in the three-month period prior to the regulations being laid in January 2019.

Universal Credit: Housing

Ms Karen Buck: [37430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many requests for (a) split payment, (b) more frequent payment and (c) managed payment of housing element for

Universal Credit were (i) made and (ii) granted in each month from April 2019 to July 2022.

David Rutley:

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

Universal Credit: Manchester Gorton

Afzal Khan: [36104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of deductions from Universal Credit payments on people affected by the cap on benefits in Manchester Gorton constituency.

David Rutley:

The benefit cap provides a strong work incentive and fairness for hard-working taxpaying households and encourages people to move into work, where possible.

Universal Credit households with earnings of at least £658 in an assessment period are exempt from the cap. Exemptions also apply for the most vulnerable claimants that are receiving disability benefits and/or entitled to carer benefits.

In recent years, the standard deductions cap has been reduced twice – from 40% to 30% of the Standard Allowance in October 2019, and down to 25% in April 2021. Reducing the threshold further would risk key social obligations such as Child Maintenance not being met.

For DWP Debt deductions, if a claimant is struggling financially, they can contact DWP Debt Management to discuss a reduction in their repayment, or temporary suspension, depending on financial circumstances.

Universal Credit: Veterans

John Healey: [36699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Universal Credit claimants have been identified as previously serving in the Armed Forces for the assessment periods ending in May 2022.

David Rutley:

For assessment period ending in May 2022, we held a response of "previously served", "currently serving", "never served", or "prefer not to say" for approximately 46% of the GB UC caseload. From this data we have identified around 35,100 UC claimants who have previously served in the Armed Forces.

Notes:

- 1. Percentage rounded to the nearest percent
- 2. Number rounded to the nearest 100

Work Capability Assessment: Mental Illness

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [39941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what provisions have been put in place to support those with a mental health problem when completing a work capability assessment.

Chloe Smith:

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We are fully committed to supporting those with mental health conditions. The assessment of mental, cognitive, and intellectual function is an integral part of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) and all Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) have undergone comprehensive training in the functional assessment of disability and mental health conditions.

In addition, Mental Health Function Champions support HCPs by providing additional expertise about mental health, cognitive, developmental, and learning disabilities, and can be referred to at any time during the assessment process.

Before attending an assessment, claimants are given the opportunity to alert Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA) of any additional requirements they may have, who will look to meet any reasonable requests. Furthermore, companions or advocates play an active role in helping claimants answer questions where the claimant or HCP wishes them to do so. This may be particularly important where the claimant has a mental, cognitive, or intellectual impairment.

The department has worked closely with CHDA to develop and test new processes for obtaining further evidence as part of the WCA. The guidance has been expanded and provides examples of situations where further evidence may assist the WCA process at initial review stage, especially for those with a mental health condition.

CHDA also have a network of Customer Champions around the country focused on making sure individuals receive the best service possible. The support individuals need is very varied, so it is important that we have highly trained disability experts on hand to offer colleagues advice, explain best practice, or to support individuals who may be anxious or unwell on the day of their assessment. Customer Champions also focus on individuals with specific conditions like autistic spectrum disorder, learning difficulties, mental health issues and illnesses that vary from day to day.

Working Conditions: Temperature

Rachael Maskell: [38725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of setting an upper temperature limit for a working environment.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19th July to the Hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green, <u>UIN 36045</u>.

With regards to dress code, detailed guidance for employers on workplace temperature and thermal comfort is available on the Health and Safety Executive's website.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Attorney General's response to the findings of the Independent Review into the Serious Fraud Office's handling of the Unaoil case

The Attorney General (Suella Braverman):

[HCWS267]

I wish to provide details of the findings of an independent review I commissioned into the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) failings identified by the Court of Appeal in the case of *R. v Akle & Anor* [2021]. I committed to this in my written statement of 9 February 2022.

The objectives of the review were to consider and provide recommendations in relation to the following matters:

- 1. What happened in this case and why? In particular, assessing the two key failings identified in the judgment: a) What occurred as regards SFO contact with third-parties and why; and b) Why did the SFO disclosure failures identified in the Court of Appeal judgment occur?
- 2. What implications, if any, do the failings highlighted by this case have for the policies, practices, procedures and related culture of the SFO?
- 3. What changes are necessary to address the failings highlighted by the judgment and any wider issues of SFO policies, practices, procedures or related culture identified by the reviewer?

I am grateful for Sir David Calvert-Smith's work on leading this review. His findings fall into two categories: thematic failings and events. Sir David found five recurrent themes that were fundamental to the Court's judgment, some of which indicate general organisational issues within the SFO's control and where failures occurred. These themes are: record-keeping; compliance with casework assurance processes; resourcing; understanding about priorities; and distrust between the case team and senior management resulting from the latter's contact with David Tinsley. Sir David highlights a sequence of 17 events or mistakes that led to the Court's judgment.

Following these conclusions, Sir David makes eleven recommendations which the Attorney General's Office (AGO) and SFO accept. They broadly cover:

- Case assurance all cases should have sufficient resources, all members of case teams should comply fully with case assurance processes and all contact with defendants, suspects and their representatives should be recorded as necessary. Superintendence should be revised and considered further.
- Disclosure all cases should have effective disclosure strategies and management, and the Attorney General's Office and SFO should work together to identify any necessary changes to the Attorney General's Disclosure Guidelines.
- Personnel all staff should be able to raise concerns about cases, the relationships between investigators and prosecutors should function as envisaged

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under the Roskill model, and there should not be 'interregnum periods' between Directors or General Counsel.

Building on work already undertaken by the SFO a clear plan of action to respond to the Review recommendations has been developed. I will be closely monitoring the SFO's progress and delivery of that plan and will provide an update to Parliament in November 2022 and February 2023.

I will place a copy of the review and the response in the libraries of both Houses so that they are accessible to members. Junior officials' names have been redacted from the published review in line with standard government practice. The SFO has waived legal privilege in relation to legal advice referred to in the review only for the purposes of this review.

The documents will also be available on GOV.UK.

CABINET OFFICE

UK Commission on Covid Commemoration

Minister for the Cabinet Office and HM Paymaster General (Michael Ellis): [HCWS262]

My noble Friend the Minister of State, Lord True CBE, has made the following written statement:

Today, I am establishing a UK Commission on Covid Commemoration to secure a broad consensus across our whole United Kingdom on how we mark and commemorate this very distinctive period in our collective history.

I have appointed the Rt Hon Baroness Morgan of Cotes to chair the Commission. She will be supported by 10 members from across the UK who have knowledge and understanding of some of the issues experienced by those affected by COVID-19 and are well respected in their fields of expertise.

Working together with the administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Commission will recommend how those who have lost their lives should be remembered in our communities and across the UK. It will also consider how we can commemorate the service of critical workers, recognise the experience of those who were seriously affected by COVID-19, celebrate the advances in UK science and remember the national spirit which led to so many people volunteering to support their neighbours and communities.

The Commission will engage individuals, particularly those who have lost loved ones, and organisations across the UK, to inform its recommendations. I have asked the Commission to submit its report to the Prime Minister by the end of March 2023.

I have today placed a copy of the list of the Commissioners and terms of reference for the Commission in the libraries of both Houses in Parliament and published them on GOV.UK.

DEFENCE

Military Support to Ukraine

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[HCWS259]

I am pleased to provide the House with a further update on equipment that the UK is providing to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The UK is proud to lead the way in providing military assistance to Ukraine. The Prime Minister announced at the NATO Leaders' Summit on 30 June that a further £1bn of military support to Ukraine will be provided. This brings the UK's total military support to Ukraine to £2.3bn.

We have already supplied Ukraine with a significant quantity of equipment, including:

- More than 6,900 anti-tank missiles (including more than 5,000 NLAW, as well as Javelin, Brimstone, and other anti-tank weapons)
- Multiple Launch Rocket Systems
- 120 Armoured Fighting Vehicles
- 6 Stormer vehicles fitted with Starstreak launchers as well as hundreds of Starstreak missiles
- Maritime Brimstone
- More than 16,000 rounds of artillery ammunition, as well as anti-structure munitions and 4.5 tonnes of plastic explosive
- Communications equipment
- Electronic warfare equipment
- More than 82,000 helmets, 8,450 sets of body armour, medical supplies and more than 5,000 night-vision devices.

Our support for the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) will continue. In the next few weeks, we will be giving the AFU equipment, including:

- More than 20 M109 155mm self-propelled guns
- 36 L119 105mm artillery guns and ammunition
- More than 50,000 rounds of ammunition for Ukraine's soviet era artillery
- At least 1,600 more anti-tank weapons
- Unmanned aerial systems (including 100s loitering aerial munitions)
- Counter-battery radar systems
- Medical equipment

Future planned military support will also include more sophisticated defence systems across a range of capabilities.

On 25 April I also committed to placing an update on international donations of military equipment to Ukraine in the House Library. I include below two summaries: one of UK

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donations; and a second of combined international donations. These summaries only contain quantities known to the UK where other countries are content for this information to be released. We do not necessarily see or know the totality of assistance provided by all donors. The delivery and provision of aid is dynamic and fast moving so the numbers and types of capability included are likely to change quickly.

The scale and range of equipment we are providing, at pace, demonstrates how we are delivering on our commitment to provide Ukraine with support to resist and defeat the Russian invasion. We will continue to do so until Ukraine's sovereignty is restored.

UK DONATIONS TO UKRAINE

| ON DONATIONS TO ORNAINE | | | |
|--|--------|------------|-----------|
| Major capabilities | Weapon | Ammunition | Other Aid |
| Anti Air | <100 | >300 | |
| Anti Tank | >100 | >9,000* | |
| Anti Structure | | >15,000 | |
| Anti Personnel (including small arms, mortar & grenade) | >6,000 | >1,000,000 | |
| Anti Ship | | <100 | |
| Artillery | <10 | >16,000 | |
| Communication Systems | | | |
| Long range | | | <100 |
| Satellite | | | >100 |
| Short Range | | | >400 |
| Electronic Warfare Systems | | | |
| Jamming | | | >300 |
| Physical Counter | | | <100 |
| Equipment Support | | | |
| Spare Parts | | | >100 |
| Tools (pallets, kits etc) | | | <100 |
| Intelligence, surveillance & reconnaissance (ISR) systems | | | |

| UK DONATIONS TO UKRAINE | |
|--|----------|
| Laser Designator (eg range finders, aiming systems) | >100 |
| Optical (including Uncrewed Aerial Systems) | <100 |
| Radar | <100 |
| Life Support | |
| Rations | <100,000 |
| Medical | <100 |
| Clothing | <100,000 |
| NVDs / Thermal | >5,000 |
| Sleeping | >2,000 |
| Mobility | |
| Armoured Fighting Vehicles | >100 |
| Ambulances | <100 |
| Soft Skinned (including cargo Uncrewed Aerial Systems) | <10 |
| Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | |
| Ballistic Vest | >8,000 |
| Helmet | <100,000 |
| *Includes single use weapons and unguided munitions | |

International donations to Ukraine – 43 countries including UK (International data as at 5 July 2022)

| Major capabilities | Weapon Ammunition Other Aid |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Anti Air | >700 >100,000 |
| Anti Tank | <4,000 <250,000* |
| Anti Structure | >2,000 >600,000 |

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International donations to Ukraine -43 countries including UK (International data as at 5 July 2022)

| 7.6 7.1 ° C C C | | | |
|--|---------|--------------|---------|
| Anti Personnel (including small arms, mortars & grenades) | >700,00 | 0>100,000,00 | 0 |
| Anti Ship | | <200 | |
| Artillery | >200 | >250,000 | |
| Mobility | | | |
| Armoured Fighting Vehicles | | | >600 |
| Ambulances | | | <100 |
| Soft Skinned (including cargo Uncrewed Aerial Systems) | | | >200 |
| Communication Systems | | | |
| Long Range | | | <100 |
| Satellite | | | >900 |
| Short Range | | | >400 |
| Electronic Warfare Systems | | | |
| Jamming | | | >400 |
| Physical Counter | | | >200 |
| Equipment Support | | | |
| Spare Parts | | | >13,000 |
| Tools (pallets, kits etc) | | | >100 |
| Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) | | | |
| PPE | | | <100 |
| Metal Detector | | | >400 |
| Robot | | | <100 |
| Intelligence, surveillance & reconnaissance (ISR) systems | | | |
| Laser Designator (e.g. range finders, aiming systems) | | | >2,000 |
| Optical (including Uncrewed Aerial Systems) | | | >500 |

INTERNATIONAL DONATIONS TO UKRAINE – 43 COUNTRIES INCLUDING UK (INTERNATIONAL DATA AS AT 5 JULY 2022)

| Radar | <100 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Life Support | |
| Rations | >1,000,000 |
| Medical | >200,000 |
| Clothing | >200,000 |
| NVDs / Thermal | >30,000 |
| Optics (sights, binoculars etc) | >30,000 |
| Sleeping | >500,000 |
| Utilities (including generators) | >100 |
| Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | |
| Ballistic Vest | >100,000 |
| CBRN PPE | >70,000 |
| Helmet | >200,000 |
| | |

^{*}Includes single use weapons and unguided munitions

EDUCATION

Academy Trust and Local Government Pension Update

The Secretary of State for Education (James Cleverly):

[HCWS261]

In 2013, we introduced a guarantee to Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) administering authorities that in the event of the closure of an academy trust any outstanding LGPS liabilities will not revert to the fund.

Although there is no end date to the Guarantee, we committed to undertake assessments at regular intervals to determine whether the guarantee remains affordable and is being fully recognised by LGPS Administering Authorities in their risk assessments of academy schools and the subsequent setting of employer contribution rates.

I can today confirm that we will continue to provide a guarantee to LGPS administering authorities with a new increased annual ceiling of £20m, and a Parliamentary Minute, which sets out the detail of the Guarantee, has been laid in both Houses.

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When we first introduced the Guarantee, we agreed annual limits for each financial year based on estimates. We have reviewed all payments the Department has made under the Guarantee policy since 2013 and have set a new annual limit of £20m per annum.

In the three most recent financial years the amounts requested and paid under the Guarantee policy were as follows: 2021/22: £3m, 2020/21: £4m, 2019/20: £11m. Since the Guarantee was introduced, the Department has never reached the set annual limit.

We expect administering authorities to recognise the direct Government backing provided by the Guarantee and continue to treat academies equitably with Local Authority maintained schools when setting employer contribution rates and deficit recovery periods.

The Guarantee provides academy trusts with direct Government backing for certain pension costs which will enable LGPS administering authorities, and I ask you to ensure that this is reflected in this year's scheme valuation, both in the setting of the employer contribution rates and the length of the deficit recovery period.

■ Further Education Funding and Accountability Consultation

The Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Skills, Further and Higher Education (Andrea Jenkyns): [HCWS268]

Today, as the Government continues to build back better from the pandemic and begins the critical work of levelling up the UK, I am announcing further steps towards delivering the ambitious reforms set out in the *Skills for Jobs* White Paper. *Skills for Jobs* set out our vision for a skills system that supports people to access the skills required and to get the jobs our economy needs, increasing productivity, supporting growth industries, and giving people opportunity.

We are launching a second consultation today, containing proposals for **implementing a new further education funding and accountability system** in England to help deliver on this vision. The consultation is open from 21 July 2022 until 21 September 2022.

In this consultation, we want to hear from all interested stakeholders and welcome responses to the consultation from individual learners, providers (especially colleges), employers, representative bodies, local government partners and MCAs.

Our reforms are about changing the incentives in the further education (FE) system by focussing on employment outcomes and simplifying the funding system so we can best support learners into high value jobs. These reforms will:

Deliver a simpler and more effective funding system, to make it easier for providers can invest in the best way possible to achieve good outcomes for their learners.

Deliver a fairer system by moving towards a more equitable approach to funding areas in the next Spending Review, and in the meantime, exploring how our available resources can support those areas most in need to support levelling up and spread opportunity across England.

Finally, we want to create and deliver a system that is focussed on outcomes. We will use the funding system to encourage providers to offer courses that lead to better

outcomes for the local and national economy and society, while holding providers accountable for delivering for their learners.

This will enable providers to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their learners, employers, and the wider area, putting taxpayer investment to the best effect.

Subject to the responses to the consultation, we intend to introduce our reforms from the academic year 2023/24, with further reforms coming in the next Spending Review.

This is a key milestone in the delivery of our Skills for Jobs reform programme, which will transform the whole skills system so that we can train the dynamic and flexible workforce our economy needs.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Covid-19 Update

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health)
(Maggie Throup): [HCWS273]

As part of our continued commitment to support travel for the school holidays, on 21 July the Government is launching an NHS COVID Pass service for parents or guardians of children aged 5 to 15 years old to request a digital Travel Pass on behalf of their child. This will include a record of all COVID-19 vaccinations received and proof of prior infection (recovery status). Children aged 5 to 11 can currently only access an NHS COVID Pass letter. Children aged 12-15 can currently only access a digital NHS COVID Pass using their own NHS login, this new service means that parents can also request a Pass on their behalf.

Launching this new service, and thereby extending a digital solution to children aged 5 to 11, alongside giving the parents of children aged 12 to 15 the ability to request a pass on their child's behalf, will make it quicker, simpler and save families the cost of testing in countries where this is required for foreign travel. The UK has no Covid certification requirements, this is to support outbound travel to a variety of countries that still have requirements.

A parent or guardian will be able to request a PDF version of the travel NHS COVID Pass via the NHS website. The digital pass will only be sent if they enter a mobile number which matches the number on the child's GP record and if they correctly enter a one-time password sent to this number, or if they enter an email address that matches the email address on the child's GP record.

This service will be available for children aged 5 to 15 resident in England or Isle of Man. For those registered with a GP in Wales, parents or guardians should check the Gov.Wales "Get your NHS COVID Pass" website for information on their service. In Scotland, under 16s can request a copy by phoning the COVID Status Helpline on 0808 196 8565. In Northern Ireland, parents or guardians of children aged 5 to 11 years can request a digital or printed Covid certificate on behalf of a dependent. Those under 16 can upload the certificate (requested on their behalf) to display on the COVIDCert NI app.

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■ Covid-19 Vaccine Supply

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health) (Maggie Throup): [HCWS266]

This statement is a retrospective notification to the House of Commons following accounting advice that the initial phase of this transaction should be classified as a gift. It is normal practice that when a Department proposes to make a gift of a value exceeding £300,000, a minute is presented to the House of Commons setting out particulars of the gift.

In September 2021, the UK Government announced initiatives to share 4 million Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine doses with Australia and 1 million doses with the Republic of Korea. This arrangement was mutually beneficial and ensured these Pfizer/BioNTech doses – which were not immediately required in the UK – were used to support international vaccination efforts. The same volume of doses were returned later in the year. Sharing doses meant those countries had immediate access to vaccines they could put to use in their domestic campaigns and enabled the UK to better align timings of our own supply with our requirements.

The Vaccine Taskforce has worked to optimise supply for UK domestic need through its close work with vaccine developers, as well as supporting the global distribution of vaccines with our international partners. The reciprocal dose sharing arrangements with Australia and South Korea is an example where we have worked with other countries in a mutually beneficial way to achieve this.

HM Treasury has approved the decision.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTTP): Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [HCWS265]

The United Kingdom continues to make good progress toward joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) this year. Below is an update to Parliament on developments in negotiations over the course of recent months.

This bloc of 11 countries represents around £9 trillion in GDP and includes some of the world's largest current and future economies. Joining CPTPP puts Britain at the heart of a dynamic group of countries, as the world economy increasingly centres on the Pacific region. And as these economies grow, it is even more important that the UK is in a free trade agreement with them, so that we benefit from this growth.

CPTPP membership offers a wide range of benefits for the UK. Accession could see 99.9% of UK exports being eligible for tariff-free trade with CPTPP members. Joining could also, for example, greatly benefit our world-class services sector through advanced provisions that facilitate digital trade, and modern rules on data to enable more financial and professional services markets to be opened up.

This will support the economy across the UK: the Department for International Trade's published scoping assessment shows that joining the agreement could benefit all parts of the country, with the greatest relative gains expected in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The UK announced its intention to join CPTPP in February last year and began formal negotiations on our accession in June 2021. In February this year, CPTPP Parties confirmed that we were ready to move to the final phase of the accession process, having largely demonstrated our compliance with the existing CPTPP rules.

This final phase of the accession process involves applicants making high-standard market access offers to CPTPP Parties. The UK submitted initial offers in March 2022, including on goods, services, investment, government procurement and financial services. Since then, we have continued to engage in talks on both a bilateral and collective basis with CPTPP members in order to come to an agreement on these market access issues.

We will continue to negotiate with CPTPP members over the coming months. We will ensure the UK joins the agreement on the right terms, and that British businesses can begin taking advantage of this trade deal as soon as possible.

The Department will continue to engage with Parliament over the course of negotiations. Once the agreement is signed, it will be subject to pre-ratification scrutiny under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG), and any legislation required to implement the agreement will need to be passed. Prior to commencing scrutiny under CRaG the Government will commission and publish the advice of the independent Trade & Agriculture Commission, as well as laying its own report under section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020.

Mexico Trade Negotiations Update

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Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [HCWS270]

The first round of United Kingdom-Mexico Free Trade Agreement negotiations took place during the week commencing 11 July. A small delegation of officials undertook technical discussions in-person in Mexico City with most talks taking place virtually.

During the first round, talks focused on gathering insights on key interests and priorities across policy areas as well as building a shared understanding of each other's initial positions in the areas expected to be covered in the Free Trade Agreement. Technical discussions were held across 31 policy areas over 28 sessions.

The United Kingdom and Mexico share a joint ambition to take our trade and economic relationship to the next level, deepening trade and increasing investment flows for the benefit of both countries.

The existing United Kingdom-Mexico Trade Continuity Agreement is outdated. These negotiations are an important opportunity to negotiate a significantly more ambitious agreement which is better suited for the 21 st Century. This includes strengthening United Kingdom-Mexico trade in goods and services, already worth £4.2 billion, and delivering

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on new and progressive issues such as digital trade, trade and gender equality and innovation.

The second round of official level negotiations is due to take place in Autumn 2022.

HM Government remains clear that any deal will be in the best interests of the British people and the economy.

HM Government will keep Parliament updated as these negotiations progress.

■ Publication of report pursuant to Section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020 on the UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [HCWS269]

The Government has, today, laid before Parliament a report on the UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. The report is required under Section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020, prior to the agreement being laid before Parliament for formal scrutiny under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG).

The Government has always been clear that we will not compromise on the UK's high environmental protection, animal welfare and food safety standards in our trade negotiations. This report, which draws on independent advice from the Trade and Agriculture Commission^[1], Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland, confirms the Government's view that the UK-New Zealand FTA is consistent with the maintenance of UK statutory protections in these areas.

This report is intended to inform and support scrutiny of the UK-New Zealand agreement prior to its ratification and entry into force. The text of the agreement was published on 28 th February 2022 and will be formally laid before Parliament for scrutiny under the provisions of CRaG in due course.

TAC advice published on 30 th June 2022 at

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-new-zealand-fta-secretary-of-state-for-international-trades-request-for-trade-and-agriculture-commission-advice

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Intergovernmental Relations Quarterly Report: Quarter 2 2022

Secretary of State for Levelling UP, Housing and Communities (Greg Clark): [HCWS264]

Today, the UK Government published the report of our engagement with the devolved governments in quarter two of 2022 on GOV.UK.

The report covers a period where we have seen unprecedented events, and gives an insight into the extensive engagement between the UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive between 1 April and 30 June 2022. During this reporting period the governments collaborated on a number of areas, not least in the further development and progress of the domestic response to the

war in Ukraine, including the expansion of the 'Homes for Ukraine' resettlement scheme to allow children and minors under the age of 18 to come to the UK in defined circumstances.

The report is part of the UK Government's ongoing commitment to transparency of intergovernmental relations to Parliament and the public. The UK Government will continue with publications to demonstrate transparency in intergovernmental relations throughout 2022 and beyond.

PRIME MINISTER

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Government Delivery

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[HCWS260]

The Government that I have had the privilege to lead has focused relentlessly on delivery. This statement updates the House on what we have achieved since I was invited by Her Majesty The Queen to form a government in July 2019, and puts on record why the millions of people who voted Conservative in 2019, many for the first time, were right to place their trust in me and in this Conservative Government.

First, after the country had endured three years of indecision and uncertainty with a deadlocked Parliament and a paralysed government, we got Brexit done. We delivered on the decision the people of the United Kingdom made in 2016, and took our country out of the European Union, negotiating a new Trade and Cooperation Agreement that preserves zero tariff, zero quota trade. Since our exit, we have been seizing the opportunities that come with this new freedom. We have signed three major new trade deals with Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, supporting food, drink and manufacturing exports as well as digital trade, and taking our total number of FTAs to over 70, with negotiations underway on many more. We have selected eight locations for freeports, with two already operational and the others coming on stream later this year. We have passed the Agriculture Act and the Fisheries Act, reforming what were wasteful and bureaucratic European schemes to the benefit of our farming and fishing communities and the environment. We have put in place a points-based immigration system that gives the people of this country control over our own borders. It is because we have this control that we have been able to react swiftly and generously to events in Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Ukraine, and strike the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda in response to the shared international challenge of illegal migration, breaking the business model of people smuggling gangs.

Second, thanks to the fortitude and spirit of the British public, we guided the country through its greatest challenge since the Second World War. A pandemic is the kind of crisis that no administration wants to face, but which it is the Government's solemn duty to tackle. We supported the NHS and the incredible doctors, nurses and carers who acted so valiantly to treat and care for the ill, and to whom I owe my own life. We built a huge testing regime, distributing more than two billion lateral flow tests across the UK, and at the peak delivering more than seven million tests to households every 24 hours.

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We invested in antivirals, adding more powerful new drugs to our armoury than any of our neighbours. In the face of predictions of 12 per cent unemployment, we deployed the furlough scheme, which supported the jobs of 11.7 million people through lockdown. Most importantly, we bet early and bet big on vaccines before success was guaranteed, becoming the first country in the world to administer one outside of clinical trials and the fastest in Europe to roll them out at scale – over 70 per cent of the entire UK population aged 12 or above received at least one dose within the first six months, and the total number of jabs now stands at over 150 million. Thanks to these efforts, we were able to emerge from lockdown early and set out our plan for living with COVID, getting our lives back on track.

Third, when I became Prime Minister I stood on the steps of Downing Street and said it was my job to level up the country, because while potential is evenly distributed throughout the population, opportunity is not. This meant bringing down crime, strengthening our health system, sorting out social care and improving our schools – and the Government acted on every front.

Our streets are safer. We have recruited more than 13,500 additional police officers, over halfway to delivering our pledge to put an extra 20,000 officers on the streets by 2023. We have taken over 50,000 knives and offensive weapons off the streets, and brought knife crime and thefts down last year compared to 2019. We have backed the police with the support they need, providing the largest funding boost in a decade, and equipping them with new powers to tackle disruptive protests and use stop and search. We have rolled up over 1,500 county lines, going for the gangs that peddled them and protecting the young people exploited by them. We have changed the law to make sure serious violent and sexual criminals spend more time behind bars.

Our NHS is on a surer footing. We have more doctors and around 30,000 more nurses than in March 2019, well over halfway to meeting our commitment of 50,000 more nurses by 2024. We have recruited another 18,000 primary care staff, such as physiotherapists and pharmacists, putting us on track to reach 26,000 by 2024. We have launched the biggest catchup programme in the NHS's history to tackle the legacy of the pandemic, aiming to deliver around 30 per cent more elective activity by 2024-25 than before the pandemic hit, underpinned by a £39 billion investment. We have opened almost 100 Community Diagnostic Centres, helping millions of patients to access earlier diagnostic tests closer to home. We have begun the biggest hospital-building programme for a generation. We have published England's first women's health strategy to improve the health and well-being of women and girls, and widened access to life saving drugs.

Our broken social care system is finally being fixed. We have ended the cruel lottery of social care costs with a plan that means no one will pay more than £86,000 over their lifetime, when previously many had to pay six figure sums. We have lifted the previous limit for financial support by more than 400 per cent, so that anyone with assets of under £100,000 will be eligible for help, and those with under £20,000 will pay nothing at all. We have designed a way to make the overall system fairer, so that those who fund themselves do not pay more than state-funded individuals for the equivalent standard of care. We have committed to providing our brilliant social care workforce with new training

and qualification opportunities, so that they can progress and improve while providing an even greater standard of care.

Our schools are better. We have supported children to recover from the impact of the pandemic with over two million tutoring courses and a programme to reach six million by 2024. We have supported teachers too, with over 80,000 benefitting from additional training and support, while bringing starting salaries up to £30,000, attracting more bright and able graduates to inspire the next generation. We have injected the biggest funding boost in a decade, taking core funding to £56.8 billion by 2024-25. We have driven up school standards, with 87 per cent of schools now rated Good or Outstanding, up from 68 per cent in 2010. We have set an ambition for 90 per cent of children to leave primary school at the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by 2030.

Fourth, in spite of the challenges posed by COVID and the subsequent headwinds in the global economy, we secured the fastest economic growth in the G7 last year. We have helped people into jobs by partnering with employers, including 500,000 since January this year through the Way to Work programme, and we have the lowest unemployment rate in almost 50 years. We have focused on getting young people into work, an area where versus other OECD countries we know we can do better, with 163,000 supported by the Kickstart Scheme to start their career and gain vital work experience. We have redressed Britain's historic underinvestment in infrastructure, developing a five-year, £600 billion pipeline of infrastructure projects to improve connectivity and drive economic growth, including a £96 billion investment through the Integrated Rail Plan – building three new high-speed lines in Northern Powerhouse Rail, HS2 East and HS2 West, and reopening lines to industrial and country towns cut off under Beeching. We have committed £5 billion to boost buses and cycling and a further £5.7 billion to level up local transport systems in the mayoral combined authority areas. We have accelerated the deployment of wind, new nuclear, solar and hydrogen power generation, with the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and our broader net zero agenda already yielding £22 billion in private sector investment and 68,000 clean jobs – and an ambition to unlock £100 billion of investment and 480,000 such jobs by the end of the decade. We have continued to support the production of domestic oil and gas in the nearer term, which must underpin our transition to cleaner and cheaper power, working to retain the skills and industry in Aberdeen and elsewhere by putting nearly £2 billion into technologies such as carbon capture, usage and storage. We have raised the proportion of properties able to access the fastest gigabit-capable broadband from nine per cent when my administration took office to 68 per cent now. We have set an ambitious 2030 date for ending sales of new petrol and diesel cars, with over half of all new cars sold now electric or hybrid, and we have bolstered our strategic road network through a £27.4 billion Road Investment Strategy that includes building the first new trans-Pennine dual carriageway since 1971.

We have awarded 101 Towns Deals across the country to address high levels of deprivation and open up new opportunities by fostering economic regeneration, stimulating investment and delivering vital infrastructure. We have made it easier to own a home, with over 400,000 first time buyers last year marking the highest number since

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2006, and housebuilding rebounding strongly after the challenges posed by the start of the pandemic. We have set out plans for renters reform that will provide renting families more security at the same time as supporting landlords. We have cemented the UK's status as a science superpower, recognising that the ability to advance and exploit science and technology will be an increasingly important competitive edge over the coming decade, growing research and development spending by 33 per cent over this Parliament, the fastest ever rate. We have attracted more venture capital investment in tech startups this year than any country bar the US, putting us ahead of China, Japan and Germany. We are levelling up skills, because stronger skills lead to better, higher paid jobs – with over 20,000 people already benefiting from Skills Bootcamps, and 175 colleges due to offer T-Levels from this September. We have announced a Lifelong Loan Entitlement so that from 2025 everyone can access funding to support up to four years of post-18 study, be that modular or full time – helping people gain skills at any stage of their life. We have increased the National Living Wage by the largest ever cash amount, and reduced the Universal Credit taper rate to make sure work pays.

Fifth, embracing the freedom we now have to chart our own course, we led on the international stage. We used our G7 Presidency to launch the \$600 billion Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment – closing the infrastructure gap in developing countries while enhancing our economic and national security – and to agree a minimum corporate tax rate to crack down on avoidance. We have driven action on climate change, marshalling nearly 200 countries at COP26 to treble global net zero agreements so that they now cover 90 per cent of the world economy, committing to reach net zero in the UK by 2050, and driving down emissions at the fastest rate in the G7. We have stepped up where our help was needed, be it in evacuating over 15,000 people from Afghanistan in just 16 days through Operation Pitting, offering a route to the UK for holders of British National (Overseas) passports and their family members in Hong Kong, standing up the Homes for Ukraine scheme, or providing £548 million to COVAX to get 1.3 billion vaccine doses into 87 developing countries.

Across these five fronts – Brexit, COVID, public services, the economy, and the world stage – this Government has delivered. As we prepare for a change in administration, there are two further fronts on which we are already taking decisive action, and on which the commitment of the next Conservative Prime Minister will not waver.

At home, we are standing by the side of the British public as we cope with pressures on the cost of living – just as we did in the darkest hours of the COVID crisis. We have set out a £37 billion package which will see the most vulnerable eight million households get support worth £1,200. Qualifying low income households will get £650, with the first half being paid into bank accounts this month, and the remainder following in the autumn. Every household in the country will get £400 towards their energy costs. Most will get a £150 council tax rebate. Pensioners in receipt of winter fuel payments will get a separate payment of £300, and disabled people a further £150. Both I, and my successor, will continue to focus support on those who need it the most.

Abroad, we are standing up for Ukraine – as we always have when our fundamental values are threatened. We have brought the G7 and NATO together in support of the

Ukrainian people so that the free West speaks with one voice and brings its collective might to bear. We have provided significant amounts of lethal aid, including 2,000 antitank missiles in January before the invasion started. We have committed military, humanitarian and economic assistance totalling nearly £4 billion, more than any other country apart from the US. We have donated over 11 million medical items, 856 mobile generators and 20 NHS ambulances, and sent the largest fire deployment to ever leave the UK. We have acted decisively with our allies to sanction over 1,000 individuals and 100 entities, freeze the assets of banks, and isolate Russia from international trade. We have introduced the fastest and largest visa scheme in our history to welcome Ukrainians who wish to find safety elsewhere, with over 95,000 arriving in the UK to date. We have stepped up our NATO commitments to strengthen the alliance, more than doubling our presence in Estonia, providing the SkySabre air defence system to Poland, and delivering enhanced air policing missions. For as long as it takes, the UK will continue to back Ukraine's fight for freedom.

Finally, in everything this Government has done, we have striven to deliver for the whole of our United Kingdom – for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. From the vaccination programme, where we were able to ensure everyone across our islands could benefit from swift access to jabs, to the furlough scheme, which relied on the financial firepower of the UK Treasury, to our Levelling Up Fund, supporting town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets across the UK, the benefits of our great union have never been more evident.

I am proud of our record in office since 2019. I remain determined that we continue to deliver in our final weeks. And I know that the Conservative Government that follows after us will do what its predecessors have always done and meet the challenges of the day by serving the British people.

TRANSPORT

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Active Travel England Framework Document

Minister of State for Transport (Trudy Harrison):

[HCWS263]

The Department for Transport is today publishing the Framework Document for Active Travel England. This confirms Active Travel England's responsibilities and objectives and sets out its relationship with, and accountability to, the Department and Parliament.

Active Travel England will lead the delivery of the Government's strategy and vision for creating a new golden age of walking and cycling where half of all journeys in towns and cities are walked and cycled by 2030.

Active Travel England will hold the active travel budget in England, including for new infrastructure and behaviour change initiatives such as cycle training. It will assess all applications for active travel capital and revenue funding, including from wider funds such as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, the Levelling Up Fund and RIS2, and award funding to schemes only if they meet the standards and principles set out in Local Transport Note 1/20, or any later national design standards. It will also inspect new

active travel infrastructure to ensure schemes meet these new standards and principles and ask for funds to be returned for any which have not been completed as promised, or not started or finished within the agreed timeframe. Active Travel England will work with local authorities developing new schemes and support their capacity by delivering training and disseminating best practice. ATE will also begin to inspect, and publish reports on, highway authorities for their performance on active travel and identify particularly dangerous failings in their highways for cyclists and pedestrians. In these regards, the commissioner and inspectorate will perform a similar role to Ofsted from the 1990s onwards in raising standards and challenging failure.

It will also act as a statutory consultee in the planning system and review active travel provision in major planning applications.

Ministers at the Department for Transport will have responsibility for Active Travel England. As an Executive Agency, Active Travel England will have a degree of operational independence in delivering its duties. It will be led by its Chief Executive Officer who will be the agency's Accounting Officer and report to Parliament as needed. Active Travel England will also have its own Board which will be chaired by the National Active Travel Commissioner.

The Framework Document will come into effect when Active Travel England is formally established as an Executive Agency later this year and will be reviewed next year. I am placing a copy of Active Travel England's Framework Document in the Libraries of both Houses.

The standing up of Active Travel England is gathering pace. Today's publication of its Framework Document follows last month's announcement of senior appointments to Active Travel England. This included confirming Chris Boardman as England's National Active Travel Commission on a permanent basis and the appointment of Danny Williams as Active Travel England's Chief Executive.

Transport Update

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts): [HCWS271]

Following an extensive 18-month procurement process to procure the next decade of search and rescue aviation services, this process has now finished, and I wish to inform the House of the results.

I am pleased to announce that a £1.6 billion contract will be signed today to provide a search and rescue helicopter service for the whole of the UK with Bristow Helicopters Ltd.

The new contract will see the UK search and rescue region benefit from advances in technology to save more lives, even more quickly. A fleet of state-of-the-art helicopters, planes and drones will operate across the United Kingdom and far out to sea in support of the lifesaving work of HM Coastguard. These aircraft will also support the work of the other emergency services, border protection, fisheries protection and pollution prevention.

A strong competition led to this contract being signed, and a credible, data-led requirement resulted in a contract that is highly innovative and takes account of anticipated future demands such as increased tourism in certain areas.

The new contract will guarantee that there will be no base closures or job losses in this critical service. Instead, two new seasonal bases, operating for six months of the year, will be opened in areas of particular growing demand. A new base at Fort William will meet the summertime peak tourism demand in the Ben Nevis area, while a new base in Carlisle will also meet similar demands in the Lake District area. All helicopter bases will continue to be operational 24 hours a day, apart for Fort William and Carlisle which will operate 12 hours a day from April to September. The transition out from the current contract will start 30 September 2024 and run through to 31 December 2026. The transition will be seamless and will follow extensive engagement with stakeholders including the thousands of rescue volunteers who rely on these arrangements. In addition to our existing base in Doncaster, highly sophisticated surveillance planes will operate from Prestwick and Newquay. This will give the UK much more capability to search for people needing our help over large areas and prevent illegal or anticompetitive activity in UK waters. Both Doncaster and Prestwick will be operational 24 hours a day, with Newquay operational 12 hours a day all year round. Some of these aircraft can reach the mid-Atlantic, which is the extent of the UK's search and rescue region

The new service will comprise of:

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- 18 Helicopters including existing Leonardo AW189s and Sikorsky S92As augmented with the introduction of Leonardo AW139 helicopters.
- Six King Air fixed-wing planes, including the B350, B350ER and the B200.
- One mobile deployable Schiebel S-100 drone system capable of operating anywhere in the UK.

A new state-of-the-art search and rescue helicopter simulation training facility at Solent Airport next to the HM Coastguard Training Facility will house a synthetic rescue hoist and helicopter suspended over a large training pool. This is a vital addition to training the next generation of technical winch crew

Further innovation throughout the life of the contract will involve the use of uncrewed aircraft and aircraft powered by sustainable aviation fuels

This is a major investment by the UK Government in critical national service which covers a wide range of activity. It protects the services we have come to rely on for years to come.

TREASURY

Annual European Union Finances Statement

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr Simon Clarke):

[HCWS272]

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I am today laying before Parliament, " *The European Union Finances Statement 2021 on the implementation of the Withdrawal and Trade and Cooperation Agreements'*" (CP 732). This is an annual publication and the 41st in the series.

This year's statement continues to include an updated government estimate of the financial settlement. As detailed below, the estimate can be found in Annex A and contributing figures in Chapter 2 and 4.

This year's edition is the first in the publication series to cover the UK as a non-Member State and having completed the eleven-month transition period. Now that the UK has left the EU and is no longer involved in the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), detailed financial reporting on participation is of diminishing relevance.

This year's edition follows the recommendations from the European Scrutiny Committee in relation to how the information is presented in this year's document. The cut-off date for reporting for this edition of the EU Finances Statement is December 2021, as these statements will continue to be published on a yearly basis. However, the Statement also provides brief details of the invoice received subsequently to this period in April 2022, and which will be reported on in detail in next year's Statement. This year, the April invoice provides a single net liability for the UK of €3,419,693,252.35 (£2,877,500,887.19)

The focus of this statement, therefore, is on the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement (WA) and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), in effect turning the formerly annexed chapters into the main body of the text. The presentation of both payments and the outstanding liability under the WA has changed, accordingly.

This year the Statement separates backward-looking reporting on the payment of net liabilities made by the UK from HM Treasury's forecast of outstanding liabilities. Chapter 2 gives a breakdown of the April and September 2021 invoices received from the EU and their payment during that calendar year. It gives an updated figure for the total paid up to 31 December 2021 of £5,812,719,159.

Chapter 3 of the statement provides detail on the verification arrangements that HM Treasury has undertaken in relation to the financial settlement under the WA, and which was reflected in domestic law in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020.

HM Treasury estimates that the current net value of the financial settlement is £35.6bn. Chapter 4 breaks down the forecast outstanding UK net liabilities to the EU from 1 January 2022 onwards, providing a point estimate of the total outstanding of €29.0bn (£24.6bn).

This statement reports on the status of EU Programme association in Chapter 5. In this edition we give the current estimate for the total cost of participation in all three programmes over the 7-year MFF (around £17 billion). This breaks down to in the region

of £15 billion for Horizon Europe, £1.2 billion for Euratom R&T and Fussion4Energy, and £0.8 billion for Copernicus.

As all payments will be made from departmental accounts HM Treasury do not plan to replicate or consolidate financial reporting on the TCA in future editions of the statement. Nor do we intend to report annually our revised estimate of liabilities expected under the TCA, because actual costs will, in future years, appear in the departmental resource accounts.

The latest estimate of £42.5bn shows an increase against the original range of £35-39bn, which is primarily due to the most recent valuation of the UK's obligation under Article 142 for EU pensions. The primary drivers are the latest discount rates and inflation assumptions, which are centrally set by the Government for valuing long-term liabilities. However, given this is a multi-decade liability, the variables used in this forecast will continue to fluctuate up and down. The agreed scope of the underlying liability remains unchanged, and the UK will continue to pay those liabilities as they come due, according to the actual value at the time.