



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 July 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:29 P.M., 22 July 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	5	■ Offshore Industry	11
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	5	■ Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board	12
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	5	■ Renewable Energy	12
■ Agriculture and Manufacturing Industries: Photonics	5	■ Renewable Energy: Wales	12
■ Business: South West	6	■ Research: Ministerial Responsibility	13
■ Business: Standards	6	■ Roads: Freight	13
■ Carbon Emissions	6	■ Skilled Workers: Vacancies	13
■ Climate Change	7	■ Weather	14
■ Cobham Ultra Acquisitions: Ultra Electronics	7	CABINET OFFICE	14
■ Energy: Conservation	8	■ Aviation: Security	14
■ Energy: Housing	8	■ Cabinet Office	14
■ Energy: Price Caps	8	■ Covid-19 Inquiry	15
■ Fuel Oil: Prices	9	■ Special Advisers: Redundancy Pay	15
■ Fuels: Diversification	9	■ Temperature	16
■ Glass: Industry	9	DEFENCE	17
■ Government Departments: Renewable Energy	9	■ Commonwealth: Armed Forces	17
■ Heat Pumps	10	■ Defence Equipment & Support: Finance	17
■ Land Registry	10	■ Harvey Boulter	18
■ Microgeneration	11	EDUCATION	18
■ National Grid: East of England	11	■ Children: Day Care	18

■ Children: Disadvantaged	19	■ Developing Countries: Education	33
■ Department for Education: Legal Costs	19	■ Development Aid	33
■ Department of Education: Contracts	20	■ Development Aid: Genito- urinary Medicine	34
■ GCE A-level and GCSE	20	■ Development Aid: LGBT+ People	34
■ Literacy: Primary Education	21	■ Ethiopia: Malnutrition	35
■ Mental Health: Children	22	■ Gaza: Mental Health	35
■ Offences against Children	22	■ Guinea: Demonstrations	36
■ Pupil Exclusions: Travellers	23	■ Haiti: Coronavirus	36
■ Pupils: Assessments	23	■ Israel: Palestinians	36
■ Pupils: Discrimination	23	■ Israeli Settlements	37
■ Schools: Broadband	24	■ Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole	37
■ Vocational Education: Qualifications	25	■ Maryam Alsyed Tiyrab	37
■ Young People: Work Experience	25	■ Nigeria: Abortion	38
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	26	■ Southern Africa: Climate Change	38
■ Agriculture: Weather	26	■ Tigray: Telecommunications	39
■ Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill	27	■ Togo: Politics and Government	39
■ Avian Influenza: Disease Control	27	■ Tony Germain Nkina	39
■ Avian Influenza: Vaccination	28	■ Uganda: Freedom of Expression	40
■ Cereals: Subsidies	29	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	40
■ Climate Change	30	■ Ambulance Services: East of England	40
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Aviation	30	■ Breast Cancer	41
■ Water Abstraction	31	■ Breast Cancer: Screening	41
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	31	■ Dementia: Health Services	41
■ Africa: Marburg Virus	31	■ Electronic Cigarettes: Advertising	41
■ African Development Bank	32	■ General Practitioners: Finance	42
■ Cuba: Food Supply	33	■ General Practitioners: Pay	42
		■ General Practitioners: Recruitment	43

■ General Practitioners: Rural Areas	43	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	54
■ General Practitioners: Standards	44	■ Department for International Trade: Consultants	54
■ Gynaecology	44	■ Department for International Trade: Contracts	54
■ Health Services: Equality	44	■ Department for International Trade: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution	55
■ Health: Females	45	■ Department for International Trade: Living Wage	55
■ Heart Diseases	45	■ Department for International Trade: Official Hospitality	56
■ Heart Diseases: Diagnosis	45	■ Department for International Trade: Pay	56
■ Investigo: Contracts	46	■ Department for International Trade: Staff	57
■ Joint Replacements: Waiting Lists	46	■ Department for International Trade: Travel	57
■ Maternity Services: Equality	47	■ Department for International Trade: Visits Abroad	58
■ Maternity Services: Ethnic Groups	48	■ Diamonds and Gold: Russia	58
■ Maternity Services: Safety	48	■ Trade Agreements: Australia	58
■ Maternity Services: Standards	48	■ Trade Agreements: Australia and New Zealand	59
■ NHS: Complaints	49	■ Trade Agreements: Human Rights	59
■ Primary Health Care: Standards	49	■ Trade Agreements: Indiana	59
■ Refugees: Ukraine	49	■ Trade Agreements: Small Businesses	60
■ Social Services: Waiting Lists	50	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	60
■ Sodium Valproate: Compensation	50	■ Affordable Housing and Social Rented Housing: Construction	60
■ Temperature: Health Hazards	50	■ Members: Correspondence	61
■ Weather: Health Hazards	51	■ Multiple Occupation: Regulation	61
HOME OFFICE	51		
■ HM Passport Office: Staff	51		
■ Immigration: Ukraine	52		
■ Passports: Applications	52		
■ Slavery	53		
■ UK Visas and Immigration: Telephone Services	53		

TRANSPORT	62	■ Energy: Taxation	68
■ Bus Services: Concessions	62	■ Exports: Russia	68
■ Bus Services: Fares	62	■ Rescue Services: Finance	69
■ Doncaster Sheffield Airport	63	■ Revenue and Customs: Correspondence	69
■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Suffolk	63	■ Tax Avoidance	70
■ Litter: A14	64	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	70
■ Park and Ride Schemes: Urban Areas	64	■ Employment: Religious Discrimination	70
■ Railway Network: Weather	64	WORK AND PENSIONS	71
■ Railways and Roads: Weather	65	■ Child Maintenance Service: Telephone Services	71
■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions	65	■ Children: Maintenance	71
■ Shipping: Private Sector	65	■ Cost of Living Payments	72
■ Travel: Weather	66	■ Jobcentres: Staff	73
TREASURY	67	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	74
■ Bicycles: VAT	67	WORK AND PENSIONS	74
■ Cryptocurrencies: Regulation	67	■ Poverty: Children	74

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Jim Shannon:

[36763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Red Diesel Replacement competition to the metal recycling sector.

Greg Hands:

The £40 million Red Diesel Replacement (RDR) innovation programme focusses on construction, mining and quarrying sectors, accounting for 63% of UK red-diesel usage. The technologies developed and lessons learned through this programme will also benefit the metals recycling sector and will be disseminated to wider industry. Due to the financial and temporal constraints of the programme, there are no plans to expand the scope of RDR at present.

Other Government support includes:

1. Phase-2 Industrial-Fuel-Switching Competition, £55m, opens late 2022: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-fuel-switching-competition>.
2. Phase-4 Industrial-Energy-Efficiency-Accelerator, £8m, closes 19 September 2022: <https://programmes.carbontrust.com/ieea/participate-in-ieea/>.
3. Energy-Entrepreneur's-Fund: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/energy-entrepreneurs-fund>
4. Industrial-Energy-Transformation-Fund and Scottish-IETF, £220m, closes 9 September 2022: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/industrial-energy-transformation-fund>.
5. Capital Allowances: 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2023, companies can claim 130% first-year capital allowances on qualifying plant/machinery investments: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/super-deduction>.

■ Agriculture and Manufacturing Industries: Photonics

Chi Onwurah:

[35938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the adoption of new photonic technology by manufacturing and agricultural businesses.

Jane Hunt:

'Electronics, Photonics and Quantum' was one of seven technology families defined by the Government in the Innovation Strategy (HMG 2021), which highlighted UK strengths in high potential emerging technologies.

The UK is a global leader in photonics, which contributed £14.5 billion to the UK economy in 2020. Government is keen to see this contribution grow across many applications, including manufacturing and agriculture. Agriculture was specifically cited in the Innovation Strategy as a domain for the convergence of the technology families.

Photonics was also included within the National Security Investment Act (NSI) to ensure its growth and adoption is secure.

■ Business: South West

Mr Tobias Ellwood: [35885]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to encourage business investment to (a) Bournemouth East constituency and (b) the South West.

Jane Hunt:

This Department is committed to supporting business investment across Bournemouth East and the South West. The Government provided over £3bn in business covid grants to the South West alone and continues to support Bournemouth-based businesses through the investment of £231,000 in the Dorset Gateway which provides fully funded business support including helping businesses look at inward investment opportunities. The Government is also investing £375,000 in Dorset's Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in 2022/23 to support and incentivise local businesses in Bournemouth and across Dorset.

■ Business: Standards

Ruth Jones: [36882]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the cost to consumers of poor business practices.

Jane Hunt:

The Government published the Consumer Protection Study in April 2022. The study explores many factors contributing to consumer detriment including some which could be considered poor business practices such as misleading advertising, unfair terms and conditions and misleading pricing. The study can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-protection-study-2022>.

■ Carbon Emissions

Rachael Maskell: [36822]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps will he take to ensure that the UK achieve 1.5'C within the Government's committed timescale.

Greg Hands:

The Paris Agreement temperature goal is a collective aim for all Parties to limit global temperature increase to well below 2 degrees Celsius and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The UK has legislated to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which the Climate Change Committee has advised is consistent with the Paris Agreement temperature goal. The Government has set out plans to deliver on this in the Net Zero Strategy.

Climate Change**Rachael Maskell:**[\[36814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to tackle climate change in response to the final report of Climate Assembly UK, The path to net zero.

Greg Hands:

The Government welcomed the Climate Assembly UK report when it was published in September 2020 and has responded to all major areas of the report through the BEIS Select Committee's Climate Assembly UK inquiry.

The recommendations are an important part of the evidence base for developing the Government's approach to net zero. Many of the recommendations are already being delivered through the Government's Net Zero Strategy, which keeps the UK on the path to net zero.

Rachael Maskell:[\[36815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that UKRI continues to deliver on climate change (a) mitigation and (b) adaptation.

Greg Hands:

The Government has committed over £25 billion up to 2025 to UKRI to help deliver the Government's priorities on developing the UK's science and research capabilities.

Net Zero is one of the key strategic priorities agreed with UKRI for allocating this funding and is reflected in UKRI's five-year strategy over 2022-2027. This includes working across business, academic, policy and regulatory interfaces to deliver fundamental change in how the Government tackles the global climate crisis.

Cobham Ultra Acquisitions: Ultra Electronics**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[35873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to Answer of 13 July to Question 32496, with reference to the proposed undertakings offered by Cobham Ultra Acquisitions Limited in relation to its acquisition of Ultra Electronics Holdings plc, whether the Government will take a shareholding in Ultra Electronics.

Jane Hunt:

The Government has no such plans.

■ **Energy: Conservation****Rachael Maskell:**[\[36821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing access to a free energy efficiency assessment for all residential dwelling or small businesses.

Greg Hands:

The Simple Energy Advice platform provides users with energy advice tailored to their home and directs users to local tradespeople. The service is being transitioned to GOV.UK and enhanced allowing users to understand their home's current energy performance and develop a personal retrofit plan as part of a wider government-led home energy advice project.

BEIS has also sponsored 100,000 free copies of the energy management ISO 50005 that provides SMEs with a means to develop a practical, low cost-approach to energy management to improve energy performance. Additionally, BEIS will establish a dedicated industrial energy advice offering for smaller businesses.

■ **Energy: Housing****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[36057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of introducing minimum energy efficiency standards for owner-occupied homes.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon. member to the answer I gave her on 9th February 2022 to Question [116013](#).

■ **Energy: Price Caps****Ruth Jones:**[\[36884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the potential impact of increases in the energy price cap on living standards.

Greg Hands:

The Government understands the pressures that households are facing with the cost of living and in particular, the impact rising energy prices is having on consumers.

The Government recently announced a £15 billion package to support households with the cost of living, in addition to the over £22 billion previously committed, to help domestic energy customers with the cost of living and rising energy bills.

This support includes helping all domestic electricity customers in Great Britain cope with the impact of higher energy bills, with £400 off their bills from October through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

■ Fuel Oil: Prices

Jo Churchill: [\[36779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support rural homes that are not on mains gas to manage the increasing cost of domestic heating oil.

Greg Hands:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State to the noble Lord Allen of Kensington on 5 July 2022 to Question [HL1128](#).

■ Fuels: Diversification

Rachael Maskell: [\[36816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps is he taking to increase fuel diversification to clean energy sources.

Greg Hands:

Diversity in energy supply is a strength for Great Britain. The Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and the Net Zero Strategy set out a clear vision for how to transform the production and use of energy, in a smooth transition away from expensive fossil fuels. The Government's British Energy Security Strategy accelerates this plan, in a series of bold commitments to raise further this ambition.

■ Glass: Industry

Ruth Jones: [\[36885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the British glass industry.

Greg Hands:

BEIS ministers and officials regularly meet with glass manufacturers, British Glass and through the Energy Intensive Users Group to discuss a number of issues relevant to the glass sector.

■ Government Departments: Renewable Energy

Rachael Maskell: [\[36818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the transition to the use of renewable energy sources by their Departments.

Greg Hands:

Ministers from BEIS regularly meet their counterparts across Whitehall to discuss how best to support the deployment of renewable energy.

In the Government's British Energy Security Strategy, published in April 2021, the Government committed to ensuring secure, affordable and clean supplies of energy. This includes taking advantage of the UK's natural resources for wind and solar energy.

Heat Pumps**Rachael Maskell:**[\[36820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking with suppliers to ensure that heat pumps are available for residential dwellings at an affordable cost.

Greg Hands:

The Government is working with industry to help build supply chains and reduce costs for heat pumps. This includes providing grants, for example the Boiler Upgrade Scheme which offers £5000 towards an air-source heat pump, and by reducing VAT on heat pumps to 0% for the next five years to reduce upfront cost. The Government is providing up to £60 million through the Heat Pump Ready Innovation Programme to help overcome barriers to heat pump deployment, including reducing their lifetime costs.

Land Registry**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[36917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the causes of backlogs at HM Land Registry, including for applications to change properties from leasehold to freehold; and if she will make an estimate of the average waiting time are for those applications as of July 2022.

Jane Hunt:

HM Land Registry (HMLR) processed over 135,000 information requests and applications, of widely varying complexity, every day in 2021/22 (+14% on 2020/21).

Over 90% of information requests are delivered instantly via digital services, with the remainder within three days. The average waiting time for all other applications was four weeks in June, although more complex applications can take longer.

If a delay might have a negative impact on future transactions, customers can request fast-tracking at no extra cost. HMLR processes around 1000 of these every day, with 95% completed within 10 working days.

■ Microgeneration

Rachael Maskell: [\[36817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking steps to encourage energy microgeneration.

Greg Hands:

The Smart Export Guarantee ensures small-scale low-carbon electricity generators, such as homes or small businesses installing solar panels or wind turbines, receive payment for the renewable electricity they export to the grid.

The Government has removed VAT on residential solar panels and has exempted business from rates a range of on-site green generation technologies. As set out in the British Energy Security Strategy, the Government is exploring options to facilitate low-cost finance to drive rooftop solar deployment, will review permitted development rights to simplify planning for small-scale solar and will design performance standards to encourage renewables in new homes and buildings.

■ National Grid: East of England

Jo Churchill: [\[36778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on what assessment National Grid has made of the impact of its proposed East Anglia GREEN project on farmers and rural communities.

Greg Hands:

The Government does not hold this information, but as part of the planning process for new infrastructure National Grid Electricity Transmission will identify preferred options considering a range of factors, including impacts on land and local communities. This will need to be balanced against other considerations, such as cost and environmental impacts. National Grid Electricity Transmission are required to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment for projects such as East Anglia GREEN, and this includes an assessment of community impacts.

■ Offshore Industry

Wera Hobhouse: [\[36847\]](#)

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 with representatives of the oil and gas industry since 1 September 2021.

Wera Hobhouse: [\[36848\]](#)

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 representatives of renewable energy companies since 1 September 2021.

Greg Hands:

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

■ Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board

Anneliese Dodds: [\[38814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2022 to Question 9997 on Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board, when his Department plans to respond to emails from the hon. Member for Oxford East requesting copies of minutes from the Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 21 July 2022]: The Department responds to requests for information using the Freedom of Information or Environmental Information Regulations. The Department is preparing the information, requested by the hon. Member for Oxford East in response to their request, for safe release. This will be issued shortly.

■ Renewable Energy

Rachael Maskell: [\[36819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps is he taking to increase the level of renewable energy generation.

Greg Hands:

The Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme is the Government's main mechanism for supporting large scale renewable projects. The latest round of the Contracts for Difference, AR4 (Allocation Round 4), delivered almost 11GW of new renewable capacity, almost double the last round in 2019. Technologies like tidal and floating offshore wind were included for the first time ever and more new contracts have been awarded than in any previous rounds. In February, the Government announced the CfD auctions will be held annually, rather than every two years. This will help to further increase renewable energy deployment.

■ Renewable Energy: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[36838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Welsh Government and (b) National Grid ESO on how to support grid access for small-scale renewable energy generation in Wales.

Greg Hands:

The Department regularly engages with the Welsh Government and the Electricity System Operator on electricity networks, including renewable energy connections.

■ Research: Ministerial Responsibility**Chi Onwurah:** [\[38658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Government plans to appoint a Minister for Research, Science, and Innovation.

Jane Hunt:

[Holding answer 21 July 2022]: The appointment of Ministers is a matter for my Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister.

■ Roads: Freight**Ruth Jones:** [\[36883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Government on the impact of rising fuel costs on the road hauliers industry in that country.

Greg Hands:

The Road Haulage sector is a matter for the Department of Transport.

At the Spring Statement 2022, the Government announced a temporary 12-month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5 pence per litre as part of ongoing Government efforts to address the rising cost of living.

The Government estimates that this cut represents a saving worth around £1,500 for the average road haulier over the next six months.

■ Skilled Workers: Vacancies**Sarah Olney:** [\[38776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the sectors worst affected by skills shortages; and what steps his Department is taking to help fill those vacancies.

Greg Hands:

BEIS works closely with the Department for Education which leads on the collection of skills data for business sectors. The Employer Skills Survey^[1] 2019 found that skill-shortage vacancy density was highest in the Construction and Manufacturing sectors.

BEIS is working with other relevant departments and industry to address skills and workforce issues with a focus on construction and manufacturing where the data suggest skills challenges.

[\[1\] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-skills-survey-2019-uk-excluding-scotland-findings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-skills-survey-2019-uk-excluding-scotland-findings)

■ Weather**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[36056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the areas of the UK that will be most affected by extreme heat during summer 2022.

Jane Hunt:

Long-term average temperatures (1991-2020) show that a band extending from Surrey to Cambridgeshire is usually most likely to experience the absolute highest maximum temperatures in the UK during summer.

The Met Office 3-month outlook indicates there is a higher chance of a hot summer in 2022 compared to the long-term average. Detailed information at regional and local level is provided in short range forecasts.

When extreme temperatures are forecast the Met Office issues severe weather warnings for affected areas and works closely across government and with responder partners to support preparations for potential impacts.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Aviation: Security****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[36843\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent estimate he has made of the length of time it takes a baggage handler to complete counter terrorism checks.

Michael Ellis:

The Cabinet Office acknowledges the pressures that the aviation sector is under and has been working with the industry to offer support and speed up the security processes for prospective airport staff. UK Security Vetting (UKSV) has prioritised applications from the aviation sector since April of this year.

UKSV can only provide overall statistics for the aviation industry and are unable to separate out statistics for baggage handlers. On average, Accreditation Checks are being completed in five days or less. Counter Terrorist Checks (CTC) in the Aviation sector are being processed in under ten days on average.

In line with the practice followed by successive administrations, the Government does not otherwise comment on security matters.

■ Cabinet Office**Jon Trickett:**[\[35856\]](#)

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

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The amount spent on air travel for Cabinet Office Ministers and officials via Departmental contracts in 2020, 2021, and 2022 is as follows:

2020 - £691,109.04

2021 - £1,447,806.97

2022 (January to March) - £1,029,308.49

These figures include COP26 travel booked via Corporate Travel Management.

■ Covid-19 Inquiry

Emily Thornberry: [\[37467\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government has sought external legal advice on disclosures to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry.

Michael Ellis:

The Covid-19 Inquiry will play a key role in learning lessons from the pandemic. The final Terms of Reference for the Inquiry were published in June. The Prime Minister accepted all of Baroness Hallett's recommendations.

The Government does not comment on legal advice it may have received. We will meet our obligations to the Inquiry in full.

The Government is committed to working with the Inquiry to ensure that Baroness Hallett is able to conduct a thorough investigation into the preparations for and the response to the pandemic.

Emily Thornberry: [\[37468\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government is using a traffic light ranking system to assess disclosures to the Covid-19 Public Inquiry.

Michael Ellis:

The Covid-19 Inquiry will play a key role in learning lessons from the pandemic. The final Terms of Reference for the Inquiry were published in June. The Prime Minister accepted all of Baroness Hallett's recommendations.

The Government does not comment on legal advice it may have received. We will meet our obligations to the Inquiry in full.

The Government is committed to working with the Inquiry to ensure that Baroness Hallett is able to conduct a thorough investigation into the preparations for and the response to the pandemic.

■ Special Advisers: Redundancy Pay

Emily Thornberry: [\[38569\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many special advisers appointed by the Cabinet Office to assist his predecessor are entitled to severance payments in financial

year 2022-23 under the terms set out in Paragraph 14c of the model contract for special advisers; and what total costs will be incurred by his Department as a result.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Special advisers are employed by the department to which they were appointed to assist their minister, as such the Chancellor of the Exchequer's special advisers are employed by HM Treasury; the administration of special advisers is however overseen by the Cabinet Office.

Under paragraph 14b of the Model Contract for Special Advisers, 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. Paragraph 14c of the Model Contract details the conditions that apply should a special adviser's employment end, including eligibility for any severance payments. Paragraph 14c of the Model Contract also sets out that special advisers who are later re-appointed to government must repay their severance pay, less the amount of salary they would have been paid had they been employed during the period between their termination and their re-appointment.

These arrangements have been in place under successive administrations.

Pursuant to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and as part of the government's policy on open data and transparency, the Cabinet Office routinely publishes an annual report on the numbers and costs of special advisers. The total cost of exit packages, including severance payments, for special advisers are published annually.

■ **Temperature**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[38721\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what contingency planning he has carried out on dealing with periods of extreme heat.

Michael Ellis:

The Cabinet Office has been overseeing the cross-government response to the current heatwave, running daily COBR meetings and ensuring appropriate situation reporting to inform contingency plans and decision making.

Individual departments are responsible for the preparedness and contingency plans of their sectors, including ensuring that plans are in place to handle the impacts of extreme heat.

The UK Government has activated a number of pre-agreed contingency plans to cope with the current heatwave, using the Met Office's National Severe Weather Warning service and the UK Health Security Agency's Heat Health Alerts as triggers for contingency plan implementation. For example, in response to the forecast, the rail network has introduced widespread speed restrictions and the NHS has taken steps outlined in the National Heatwave Plan.

Ruth Jones:

[\[38837\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he discussed with the Welsh Government plans to announce a level 4 alert under the Heatwave Plan for England before that announcement was made on 15 July 2022.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Officials from the Welsh Government were first engaged by their counterparts in the Cabinet Office and the Met Office with respect to the possible severity of the current heatwave on 7 July 2022.

The First Minister for Wales was directly engaged by Cabinet Office Ministers on 14 July 2022.

DEFENCE

■ Commonwealth: Armed Forces

Luke Pollard:

[\[39998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that dependent family members of Commonwealth Armed Forces personnel granted Indefinite Leave to Remain are able to access employment, social security and healthcare.

Leo Docherty:

Family members of Commonwealth Armed Forces personnel who are granted Indefinite Leave to Remain have the same access to support as other Service families under the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Service Families Strategy provides a framework for the Nations of the UK, service providers across central and local government, the private and charitable sectors to improve outcomes for Armed Forces families. The strategy action plan is organised around eight core workstreams; Family Life, Family Home, Service Life, Support to Partners, Support to non-UK personnel, Health and Wellbeing, Education, and Childcare. Support and advice is also available from both Service and external sources such as Service Families Federations.

■ Defence Equipment & Support: Finance

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[38534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the Defence and Equipment budget is spent in (a) US Dollars and (b) Australian Dollars.

Jeremy Quin:

As at 5 April 2021, 14% of 10-year forecast spending on Defence Equipment was expected to be placed in US Dollars. There was no expected spending in Australian Dollars. This is consistent with data used in the 2021 Equipment Plan report.

■ Harvey Boulter**John Healey:**[\[36689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what basis Harvey Boulter was granted security clearance to enter Porton Down facilities.

Jeremy Quin:

We do not comment on individual vetting cases.

EDUCATION**■ Children: Day Care****Helen Hayes:**[\[32593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2022 to Question 25946 on Children: Day Care and her Majesty's Chief Inspector's response, what assessment he has made of the impact of nursery and childcare provider closures on the (a) availability and (b) affordability of childcare by region.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The department continues to monitor the sufficiency of childcare. Ofsted publishes the number of places offered by providers on the Early Years Register. This currently shows that the number of places has remained broadly stable since August 2015.

Both the national and regional data can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-march-2022>.

Officials from the department are in regular contact with local authority Early Years Leads in England to monitor delivery of the department's free early education entitlements, including sufficiency of places. All 152 local authorities report that they are fulfilling their statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, and children eligible for early education entitlements. Where localised sufficiency challenges have been identified, we are assured that local authorities have plans in place to mitigate these.

According to findings from the 2021 Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers, 7 in 10 of group-based providers reported having spare places in their full-day provision. Almost half of childminders, 49%, reported having spare capacity on average across the week.

All children aged three and four can access 15 hours of free childcare a week. The department has doubled this for three and four-year-olds in families where parents work, saving them over £6,000 a year. In the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, the department announced an investment in additional funding for the early years entitlements, worth £160 million in 2022/23, £180 million in 2023/24, and £170 million in 2024/25, compared to the 2021/22 financial year. This is for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free

childcare entitlement offers and reflects cost pressures and changes in the number of eligible children anticipated at the time of the Spending Review.

■ Children: Disadvantaged

Geraint Davies:

[\[35827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of the conclusions on inequality in early childhood in the report by the Nuffield Foundation entitled *The changing face of early childhood in Britain*, published on 12 July 2022.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

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

At the 2021 Autumn Budget, the department announced a £302 million package to transform services for parents and babies, carers, and children, through a new network of family hubs in half of local authorities in England. This includes £50 million over 3 years for parenting support programmes and over £26 million to train practitioners in supporting parents to improve the home learning environment. We are also investing up to £180 million to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in the early years. This includes up to £17 million on the Nuffield Early Language Intervention, aimed at improving the language skills of reception age children who need it most. Two thirds of primary schools have already signed up for this proven programme, benefitting around 90,000 disadvantaged four and five year olds in their reception year.

All parents of three and four year olds are eligible for 15 hours of free early education per week. Additionally, parents who earn the equivalent of 16 hours per week at National Minimum or Living Wage can benefit from the full 30 hours of free childcare, which can help save families up to £6,000 a year per child.

On 4 July, the department announced measures to increase the take-up of childcare support and reduce the costs and bureaucracy facing providers. We have launched two new consultations, one to reform the staff to child ratios required in early years settings and to make explicit the requirement of supervision of children whilst eating, and the other to reform how early years funding is distributed, so that the system is fair and effective. These plans give providers more flexibility and autonomy and ensure families can access government support to save them money on their childcare bills.

■ Department for Education: Legal Costs

Jon Trickett:

[\[31726\]](#)

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

Will Quince:

The department does not hold the total spend information relating to legal disputes, as the financial system does not have a specific structure to extract the data and legal spend is not recorded centrally.

For contract spend, following a search of the department's special payment register, the department has not made any payments in respect to the settlement of procurement disputes, either in or out of court, during the following three financial years:

- 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020: £0.00.
- 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021: £0.00.
- 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022: £0.00.

■ Department of Education: Contracts

Jon Trickett:**[31005]**

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

Will Quince:

Following a search of the department's records, the total value of contracts held by (a) G4S (b) Serco and (c) Capita is as below:

SUPPLIER	VALUE OF CONTRACTS 01/01/2020 TO 31/12/2020	VALUE OF CONTRACTS 01/01/2021 TO 31/12/2021	VALUE OF CONTRACTS 01/01/2022 TO 30/06/2022
G4S	£0	£0	£0
Serco	£4,000,000	£856,375	£856,375
Capita	£28,056,759	£35,816,679	£32,690,536

To note, the total value of the contract listed above is pro-rata over the length of the contract, using annualised contract values.

Details of government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on Contracts Finder available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>.

■ GCE A-level and GCSE

Rachael Maskell:**[27648]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to provide (a) clearance, (b) career, (c) other next steps and (d) emotional support for students receiving GCSE and A Level results in summer 2022 in the event that they do not get the grades they were hoping for.

Will Quince:

The department will continue to support students to ensure they can go on to their next step in life following GCSE and A level results days, whether that's further education, university, on-the-job training, or moving into employment.

This year, the department, in collaboration with Ofqual, has put in place a package of measures in place to ensure that students can take their exams fairly, recognising the disruption that this year's students have faced. In addition, this summer Ofqual will ask exam boards to set grade boundaries in a way that avoids disadvantaging some students who might otherwise have just missed out on a higher grade. This package of adaptations, combined with Ofqual's approach to grading, provides unprecedented support to maximise fairness and help students reach their potential.

Students can also seek advice from the Exam Results Helpline run by the National Careers Service, which will be open between 18 August 2022 and 2 September 2022. Young people or their parents can contact the helpline on 0800 100 900 to speak to a local professionally qualified careers adviser if they need advice on their next steps after receiving their results.

There are a number of options, as well as support, available to students who do not achieve the GCSE and A level grades that they were hoping for. As always, the department encourages students to talk to their school or college for advice, or to their preferred university, who may be able to offer some flexibility and still provide a place. Just as they do in any normal year, UCAS will help thousands of students to find places through Clearing if they need or choose to explore other options once students have received their grades.

The department knows that the period when results are released can be a worrying time for young people. Schools and colleges are responsible for supporting their students through examinations and should have strong pastoral support in place to help deal with any worries they might have, including over their results or future, throughout the year.

■ Literacy: Primary Education**Anneliese Dodds:****[27729]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what is the average number of hours of literacy teaching received per pupil in each year of Key Stage One.

Will Quince:

The department does not collect primary school curriculum data in the annual school workforce census and so there is no data available on the average number of hours of literacy teaching received per key stage 1 pupil. The school workforce census collects information on teaching in a sample of secondary schools and this information is published in our national statistics, the latest of which refers to the November 2021 census, and is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

■ Mental Health: Children

Ian Lavery:

[34934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of training for (a) teachers, (b) school staff, and (c) sports coaches to support children with their emotional and mental wellbeing.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

To support schools and colleges to introduce effective approaches to mental health and wellbeing, the department has committed to offer all state schools and colleges a grant to train a senior mental health lead by 2025. Over 8,000 schools and colleges, have taken up the offer so far and we have recently confirmed £10 million in grants this financial year, to offer training to two thirds of schools and colleges by March 2023.

The department has accelerated the delivery of a new training module for teachers on mental wellbeing to help all schools increase their confidence and the quality of their relationships, health and sex education (RSHE) teaching practice, details for which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>.

In autumn 2021, the department launched National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) to support teachers and leaders who want to develop their knowledge and skills in specialist areas of teaching practice. The NPQ in Leading Behaviour and Culture supports teachers in how they can affect and improve the wellbeing, motivation, and behaviour of pupils in the classroom. Full details of this NPQ can be accessed here: <https://nsc.northerneducationtrust.org/cpd-offers/national-professional-qualifications/npq-in-leading-behaviour-and-culture-npq/bc/#:~:text=The%20National%20Professional%20Qualification%20in%20Leading%20Behaviour%20and,or%20roles%20with%20other%20pastoral%20responsibilities.%20Modules%20include.>

■ Offences against Children

Rachael Maskell:

[30064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department takes to publicise to the public information on how to report abuse against children.

Rachael Maskell:

[30065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will create a single phone number by which members of the public can report safeguarding concerns.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

The government wants to strengthen the public and parents' understanding of the 'signs of abuse' and knowledge of how to report these suspicions. Since March 2015 the department has been working with the Local Government Association, local councils, police forces, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Children (NSPCC) to run a communication campaign called 'Together we can tackle child abuse' which helped people spot the signs of abuse and neglect.

The department has also worked closely with the Cabinet Office and Home Office to support the 'Stop Abuse Together' and 'ParentWise' campaigns.

In addition to directing people to report concerns to their local authority, or to the police if the child is in immediate danger, we direct people to the NSPCC Helpline. In recognition of the importance of this national helpline, the government is continuing to provide £1.6 million to help support the operational cost. The Adult Helpline number is 0808 800 5000.

■ Pupil Exclusions: Travellers

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[26745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the factors contributing to the exclusion rates of Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

Will Quince:

The department is aware that some groups of children have a greater likelihood of permanent exclusion than others. The updated suspension and permanent exclusion guidance sets out that schools, local authorities and local partners should work together to understand what lies behind local trends, such as high rates of exclusions among one group. If they identify any gaps, they should act to ensure those who work with children have the training, services and support they need to address them. In addition, information is provided to governing boards on carefully considering the level of pupil moves and the characteristics of pupils who have been permanently excluded to ensure the sanction is only used when absolutely necessary. The revised guidance will be published shortly.

■ Pupils: Assessments

Valerie Vaz: [\[27592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the premature online publication of the AQA A-level Chemistry Paper 2 in June 2022, what steps he is taking to ensure the integrity of examinations and fairness for pupils.

Will Quince:

This is a matter for Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. I have asked its Chief Regulator, Dr Jo Saxton, to write to the right hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Pupils: Discrimination

Jim Shannon: [\[36765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help support pupils and families who have been victims of discrimination in schools.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

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

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools have a duty to take steps to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all protected characteristics. The department has published advice to support schools to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The department is also making sure that all children in England learn about respectful relationships, in person and online, as part of mandatory relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). The curriculum has a strong focus on equality, respect, the harmful impact of stereotyping, and on the importance of valuing difference.

Guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

The department is providing over £2 million of funding between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2023 to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools with tackling bullying. This includes projects aimed at eradicating the bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of hate-related bullying.

The department continues to publish information, guidance, and support for teachers and school leaders on how to challenge radical views, including racist and discriminatory beliefs, on its Educate Against Hate website. One of these resources is the Respectful School Communities toolkit. This is a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach that promotes respect and discipline. This can help to combat bullying, harassment and prejudice of any kind, including hate-based bullying. The website also hosts information for parents and carers through the Parents' Hub.

■ Schools: Broadband

Chris Elmore: [\[31183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of schools in England that do not have access to gigabit broadband.

Chris Elmore: [\[31184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to implement the Connect the Classroom pilot project.

Will Quince:

Building on the £30 million investment for the Connect the Classroom pilot programme, the department is investing up to a further £150 million on Connect the Classroom to upgrade more schools that fall below our Wi-Fi connectivity standards in priority areas. The Connect the Classroom pilot started in 2021 and engagement with schools who qualify for the additional £150 million of investment began June 2022.

National connectivity data does not cover private business fibre connections procured by schools or the take-up of a high-speed internet service by a school. The previous analysis of publicly available data of access to infrastructure showed that 3,835 schools are in postcodes that do not have access to full fibre or are currently not in areas of proposed commercial build within the next five years. This covered schools which do not have access to gigabit infrastructure, but does not consider new activity planned since this time.

■ Vocational Education: Qualifications

Rachael Maskell: [\[30071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish a report on the educational outcomes of new vocational qualifications.

Andrea Jenkyns:

From 1 September 2020, the government stopped approving newly regulated qualifications at level 3 and below for funding for students aged 16 and over. However, there are some exemptions to allow certain qualifications to continue to be approved. This is intended to stabilise the publicly funded qualifications offer while T Levels are rolled out and the qualifications review takes place. T Levels were launched in 2020 as new post-16 technical qualifications. We will publish data on achievement rates for T Levels when results from the first cohort of students are known this August. T Levels will also be included in performance tables from the 2024 exam year.

■ Young People: Work Experience

Sir Stephen Timms: [\[34791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of large employers offering inclusive blended work experience programmes, both in-person and virtual, for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Andrea Jenkyns:

We currently do not collect data on the number of T Level industry placements delivered, or committed to, by individual employers. Instead, this information is held by education providers, who are responsible for securing industry placements for their T Level students and, therefore, we are unable to report on the number of large employers currently offering or planning on offering industry placements. However, as part of our ongoing engagement with employers on T Levels, we are encouraging employers of all sizes, including large employers, to offer industry placements.

Traineeships provide young people from all backgrounds with an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and skills needed to start a successful career in a variety of industries.

Through The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), we continue to support schools and colleges to provide young people with access to meaningful experiences of the workplace.

We know that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Careers Leaders in schools, colleges and employers responded creatively to the challenges of providing experiences of the workplace, adapting their careers programmes to provide virtual encounters with employers. Many employers are now taking a blended approach to providing workplace experiences..

The CEC have published a range of key resources to support Careers Leaders to develop their careers programmes. This includes guidance around how to meet Gatsby Benchmark 6 (experiences of the workplace) more meaningfully, resources from the 'My Week of Work' event, and links to virtual tours with employers and work experience programmes.

The CEC has also worked in partnership with CareerMap and Engineering UK to develop a new resource for employers around virtual work experience and continue to increase opportunities for young people to engage with employers.

Over 300 'Cornerstone' employers who represent a range of business sizes and sectors, including Rolls Royce and BAE Systems, are working with Careers Hubs to bring together business effort and engagement with local schools and colleges. 3,750 Enterprise Advisers are also working with schools and colleges to develop their employer engagement plans.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Weather

Rachael Maskell:

[\[38724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support he is providing to help farmers to protect their (a) livestock, (b) crops and (c) horticultural produce during the period of extreme heat.

Victoria Prentis:

We are keeping the extreme weather situation under close review, including through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group (UKAMMG), which was set up by Defra and the Devolved Administrations to monitor the UK market situation across all key agricultural commodities.

We have also recently increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real-time intelligence. This provides Government with the best possible intelligence on how the sector is performing.

We are also aware that the hot weather can cause welfare concerns for livestock, especially poultry and cattle. Farmers will be taking appropriate measures to address this.

Farmers and growers will decide how to best to respond to the current weather conditions based on their individual situation. However, we are bringing forward half of this year's BPS payment as an advance injection of cash to farm businesses.

Payments will be paid in two instalments each year for the remainder of the agricultural transition period.

■ **Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill**

Marsha De Cordova: [\[37601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will have discussions with the Leader of the House on ensuring that the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill completes its legislative stages in the House of Commons.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill strengthens protections for the welfare of pets, farmed animals and kept wild animals. The Bill was re-introduced following the Queen speech in May 2022 and will continue to Report Stage as soon as Parliamentary time allows. The Bill delivers three important manifesto commitments and remains a priority for this Government.

■ **Avian Influenza: Disease Control**

James Cartlidge: [\[38745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of his Department's effectiveness in dealing with avian flu in the last two years; and if he will make a statement.

Steve Double:

Over the last two years, the UK has experienced its largest ever outbreaks of avian influenza. Together with unprecedented numbers of findings of avian influenza in wild birds, between November 2020 and March 2021, 26 cases of notifiable avian influenza were confirmed in poultry and other captive birds, and during the current outbreak and since October 2021, 125 cases have been confirmed in poultry and other captive birds (prior to this the largest outbreak was 13 cases overwinter in 2016/2017). A similar situation is also being experienced across continental Europe and North America.

Defra's objective in tackling any outbreak of avian influenza is to eradicate the disease as quickly as possible from the UK poultry and captive-bird population and regain UK World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) disease-free status. Defra's approach is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notifiable-avian-disease-control-strategy) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/notifiable-avian-disease-control-strategy). Current policy is in line with international standards of best practice for disease control. It reflects our experience of responding to past outbreaks of exotic animal disease. However, we continue to monitor the current situation both in Europe and globally, as well as the effectiveness of any disease control measures taken.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) are leading on a cross-government, cross-agency review of lessons identified during the recent outbreaks. This review aims to identify what went well and areas where improvements can be made to improve the effectiveness of the response to future outbreaks. Any future decisions

on disease control measures will be based upon the latest scientific, ornithological, and veterinary advice.

In addition, epidemiological reports setting out our investigations into confirmed cases of avian influenza in poultry and other captive birds in Great Britain are published. Reports from past outbreaks are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reports-relating-to-recent-cases-of-avian-influenza-bird-flu) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/reports-relating-to-recent-cases-of-avian-influenza-bird-flu). The report of the current outbreak is in preparation and will be published once finalised.

Controlling avian influenza is only possible thanks to the tireless work of the APHA's field and laboratory staff in often challenging conditions as well as the continued efforts of all birds keepers to maintain scrupulous biosecurity and vigilance for signs of disease.

James Cartlidge: **[38746]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the needs and concerns of small avian farms are considered when developing the Government's response to avian flu outbreaks.

Steve Double:

Defra in collaboration with the Devolved Administrations host regular avian influenza stakeholder meetings attended by organisations representing the breadth of the bird keeping sector including commercial, small scale, pet and specialist bird keepers, together with ornithological and veterinary sector representatives. Expert advice is also sought by the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer and animal health policy officials through the Ornithology National Experts Group and Great Britain Avian Exotic Disease Core Group which include representatives from across the bird keeping sector. These forums, in conjunction with facilitating transmission of information from government on the latest outbreak situation, control measures and biosecurity advice to the sector, provide the opportunity for the sector to escalate questions and feedback to government.

In addition, the Animal and Plant Health Agency is leading on a cross-government, cross-agency review of lessons from the recent outbreak which will identify what went well and areas where improvements can be made to improve the effectiveness of the response to future outbreaks. Stakeholders, including small avian farms, have fed into this process and their suggestions and concerns will be reviewed as part of this.

■ Avian Influenza: Vaccination

James Cartlidge: **[38743]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress his Department has made in developing a vaccine to protect against avian flu.

Steve Double:

Defra's objective in tackling any outbreak of avian influenza is to eradicate the disease as quickly as possible from the UK poultry and captive-bird population and

regain UK World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) disease-free status. Defra's policy on vaccination is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notifiable-avian-disease-control-strategy) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/notifiable-avian-disease-control-strategy) and in [separate guidance on GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-bird-flu-vaccination/avian-influenza-bird-flu-vaccination) (www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-bird-flu-vaccination/avian-influenza-bird-flu-vaccination). Outside of zoos, the vaccination of birds as an immediate disease control response is not currently permitted. Swift and humane culling of birds on infected premises coupled with good biosecurity including the separation of poultry and other captive birds from wild birds and disease surveillance remains the most effective means of controlling the disease.

Commercial avian influenza vaccines are available; however, these vaccines are unlikely to provide full protection for the current strains of highly pathogenic avian influenza circulating in the UK and continental Europe, or cross-protection to other strains which may circulate in the future. At present, vaccination can help to reduce mortality, but it is likely that some vaccinated birds would still be capable of transmitting avian influenza if they became infected. This would increase the time taken to detect and eradicate the virus.

In addition, there are a number of practical, animal welfare and commercial disadvantages relating to the use of currently available vaccines which would present significant logistical and cost challenges to industry. These vaccines need to be delivered by individually injecting each bird and, since it is difficult to differentiate infected from vaccinated birds, this leads to issues relating to exporting poultry and their products to other countries.

Current policy is in line with international standards of best practice for disease control. It reflects our experience of responding to past outbreaks of exotic animal disease.

Defra continues to invest in avian influenza research and last month launched a new consortium, led by the Animal and Plant Health Agency, to fund research to help us prepare for future outbreaks. In addition, we continue to monitor the current situation both in Europe and globally, as well as the effectiveness of any disease control measures taken, including vaccine development. Any future decisions on disease control measures, including the use of vaccination, will be based upon the latest scientific, ornithological, and veterinary advice.

■ Cereals: Subsidies

Lee Anderson:

[36115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to introduce a scheme that would incentivise British farmers to grow cereal crops.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain which has coped well in responding to unprecedented challenges in the past few years. For the cereal crops that are produced domestically, the UK is 88% self-sufficient.

Cereals are internationally traded commodities, and their supply chains are dynamic and responsive to global market developments in price and availability. Government works with international partners to facilitate the smooth functioning of that global food trade. We keep the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group and have increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real-time intelligence and to identify where mitigations are available. In 2021 we also permanently removed Basic Payment Scheme 'greening measures' on crop diversification and ecological focus areas. This means that farmers are free to react to market signals when making crop planting decisions, as well as adjusting their plans according to the weather, their soil type, and their long-term agronomic strategy.

■ **Climate Change****Rachael Maskell:**[\[34963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what policy priority his Department affords to climate change (a) adaptation and (b) prevention.

Steve Double:

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are departmental priorities, underlined by the Government's legally binding target to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and legal obligation to publish a Climate Change Risk Assessment every five years, followed by a National Adaptation Programme. Defra is the lead department for adaptation and as such is coordinating action across Government to contribute to the programme and build climate resilience.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Aviation****Jon Trickett:**[\[35842\]](#)

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

Victoria Prentis:

The table below shows the amount spent on commercial air travel for Ministers and officials for calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022, based on booking date.

	2020	2021	2022
Ministers	£508.55	£1,354.13	£34,889.88
Officials	£95,931.59	£35,470.98	£286,116.75

■ Water Abstraction

Tim Farron:

[\[38598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the impact of water abstraction on chalk streams.

Steve Double:

Restoring England's internationally important chalk streams is a Government priority. The Environment Agency (EA) continually assesses and monitors ground water levels that impact chalk streams. This long term monitoring has shown that water abstraction is potentially having a negative impact on a third of all chalk rivers. It is because of this that an updated assessment of all of England's rivers will be included in updated River Basin Management Plans to be published later this year.

The EA has been working with the Chalk Stream Restoration Group to identify and address the issues that are preventing chalk streams from being in good ecological health. A Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy was published in 2021 and government will publish its response to the Strategy later this year.

The EA works closely with water companies on Regional Water Resources Plans, to set out how abstraction impacts on the environment can be reduced, and also how population growth and climate change can be accommodated without causing environmental deterioration. We expect chalk streams to feature in this work. Regional Water Resources Plans will be consulted on this autumn.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Africa: Marburg Virus

Ruth Jones:

[\[38836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what humanitarian support she plans to provide the African continent in the fight against the Marburg virus.

Vicky Ford:

As outlined in the International Development Strategy, the UK is committed to strengthening global health security. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Tackling Deadly Diseases in Africa programme and the Department for Health and Social Care's (DHSC) International Health Regulation Strengthening programme are working in nine African countries to improve their capacity to prevent, detect and respond to public health emergencies, including Marburg virus disease. The FCDO, DHSC and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are also providing technical support to the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention to improve regional preparedness and response.

In Ghana, including the regions affected by the current Marburg outbreak, the UK has recently trained 7,000 health workers on surveillance and response. This included

simulated outbreak exercises to quickly detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks such as Marburg. We are liaising with the Ghanaian Government and, if needed, the UK stands ready to provide support for infection prevention and control training, equipment for health workers in the affected regions, and by amplifying risk communication messages to affected communities.

■ African Development Bank

Sarah Champion:

[\[38672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the investment performance has been to the UK Government of its spending through the African Development Bank in the last three financial years.

Vicky Ford:

The UK provides funding to the African Development Bank (AfDB) through a number of different channels. We are currently contributing to a General Capital Increase (GCI) that was agreed by shareholders in 2019. We also provide funding to the Bank's concessional financing arm, the African Development Fund (ADF), which supports the poorest 37 countries in Africa. In addition, at COP26, the Prime Minister announced that the UK is providing a Room to Run guarantee to the Bank that will enable it to provide up to \$2 billion of additional financing over four years to support countries across Africa to tackle climate change.

In terms of performance, the UK and other shareholders secured from the Bank under seven reform objectives. As of May 2022, 79 percent of these were assessed as being on track. For the ADF, the UK and other donors secured 92 policy commitments from the Bank, 62 of which were due by the November 2021 Mid-Term Review. The Bank met 93 percent of these commitments despite the challenges posed by the pandemic in 2020. The ADF has scored an "A" (i.e. meeting expectations) in each Annual Review over the last three years, whilst the GCI has scored two "A"s and a "B" (i.e. moderately did not meet expectations) over the last three years.

The AfDB has also performed well in a number of recent external reviews. In 2020, an ICAI assessment of UK support to the AfDB rated the Bank's relevance and alignment with UK priorities as green and its effectiveness in delivering these as green/amber. ICAI found that the Bank was "highly cost effective relative to other comparable multilateral banks". Earlier this month, the AfDB came first in the 2022 Aid Transparency Index, via Publish What You Fund. And last year the AfDF was ranked 2nd out of 49 development organisations in the Centre for Global Development assessment based on the quality of its development assistance.

■ Cuba: Food Supply

Fabian Hamilton: [\[38513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to help support the Cuban government tackle food shortages in that country.

Vicky Ford:

Our Ambassador to Havana regularly engages with Cuban authorities on how the UK and Cuba can work together to support each other. We have not received a request for assistance from the Cuban Government for aid.

■ Developing Countries: Education

Claire Hanna: [\[38885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress the Government has made in delivering the Every girl goes to school, stays safe, and learns: Five years of global action 2021 to 2026 plan.

Vicky Ford:

In 2021, we co-hosted the Global Education Summit with Kenya which raised an unprecedented \$4 billion for the Global Partnership for Education and used our G7 leadership to obtain endorsement for the two global objectives to get 40 million more girls into school and 20 million more girls reading by age ten by 2026. Through our COP Presidency we highlighted the importance of girls' education for responding to the climate crisis. We are working with likeminded partners to build a global coalition on foundational learning for all and to ensure strong outcomes from the Transforming Education Summit in September.

We are delivering on our commitments at country level including new programmes announced over the past year in Rwanda, Jordan, Tanzania and Bangladesh. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is preparing ambitious new education programmes focused on scaling up evidence-based approaches to improve learning outcomes.

■ Development Aid

Daisy Cooper: [\[36894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allocating funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes for (a) education, (b) climate change resilience, (c) gender equality, (d) economic development and (e) political stability.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is committed to defending and promoting universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and supports a wide range of investments to achieve this. We know that these are fundamental to unlocking the potential, agency and freedom of women and girls around the world - underpinning progress on gender

equality, health, education, economic opportunities, climate resilience and stability. Realising sexual and reproductive health and rights means that women and girls can make their own decisions about their bodies, lives, and futures. It means that girls can complete their education and take up better jobs, which in turn boosts global prosperity, stability and resilience of individuals and communities to better handle climate change shocks and contribute to climate solutions.

■ **Development Aid: Genito-urinary Medicine**

Daisy Cooper: [\[36893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much and what proportion of UK Official Development Assistance will be allocated to sexual and reproductive health programmes in 2022-23.

Amanda Milling:

As set out in the International Development Strategy, the UK Government intends to restore bilateral funding for women and girls, which includes programmes focused on universal, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is working to complete its business and country planning process as soon as possible, which will allow us to finalise budget allocations, taking account of our Spending Review settlement. We cannot comment on funding allocations until this is finalised.

■ **Development Aid: LGBT+ People**

Sarah Champion: [\[38673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the announcement at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Annual Meeting by the Prime Minister of £2.7 million in funding to support LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders, and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth, what plans the Government has to provide such funding to other parts of the world.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to championing LGBT+ rights internationally and supporting those who defend them. As well as working across the Commonwealth, our programmes also work in countries across the world, such as Belize and Seychelles, supporting human rights defenders to promote the implementation of new laws and policies that better protect LGBT+ people from violence and discrimination. As an example, we are strengthening data in support of LGBT+ people at risk in and fleeing from Afghanistan, as well as continuing to support at-risk Afghans, including LGBT+ people, to come to the UK and we expect more to arrive in the UK in the coming months.

Sarah Champion: [\[38674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Global Philanthropy Project's latest Global Resources Report, whether

the Government plans to reverse the 60 per cent reduction in funding to support international LGBT+ rights.

Vicky Ford:

Since 2018, the UK committed over £11 million in programmes to support the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights, including over £5.47 million in the financial year 2021/22, an increase on previous years. On 24 June, the Prime Minister announced a further £2.7 million of UK funding to support LGBT+ grassroots human rights defenders, and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth. Plans for levels of UK funding for the current spending round are not yet confirmed.

■ **Ethiopia: Malnutrition**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[38583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what new steps she will take to mitigate acute malnutrition among breastfeeding mothers and children under the age of five in the Afar region of Ethiopia.

Vicky Ford:

Since the start of the conflict in northern Ethiopia in November 2020, the UK has spent over £18 million on nutrition support for mothers and children in the Afar, Tigray and Amhara regions. This has included specialised treatment for severe acute malnutrition, supplementary feeding for moderate acute malnutrition, and vitamin supplementation.

■ **Gaza: Mental Health**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[36718\]](#)

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

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[36720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact of the blockade of Gaza on children's ability to access vital health and education services in that country.

Amanda Milling:

We are aware of Save the Children's report into the wellbeing of Gazan children. The UK continues to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. In 2021, the UK provided £2 million to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund to help them provide child-sensitive grants to vulnerable households in Gaza reaching 4,311 boys and girls. This support enabled families to meet the essential needs of

their children, with the majority of the support spent on food, education, and healthcare. Through our annual support to United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the UK supports their Mental Health and Psychosocial Support interventions, especially for children, which included summer school activities targeting 98,595 children (52,236 girls and 46,359 boys) in Gaza in 2021.

■ **Guinea: Demonstrations**

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[38584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps she has taken to help tackle violence against protesters in Guinea.

Vicky Ford:

We condemn the use of violence against protesters in Guinea. In March, I met with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Vice President to discuss ECOWAS' work to protect and promote democracy in West Africa, including in Guinea. We continue to call for all parties to engage in peaceful dialogue to ease tensions and prevent any further violence. We also encourage the transitional government to allow peaceful protest and welcome enquiries into abuses. Following the 5 September 2021 coup, the UK encourages all parties to work towards a peaceful transition, through credible, inclusive and transparent elections, as quickly as possible.

■ **Haiti: Coronavirus**

Fabian Hamilton: [\[38514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to help support the Haitian Government access Covid-19 vaccines.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is working with our G7 partners to vaccinate the world against COVID-19 by the end of 2022. We are one of the largest donors to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Advance Market Commitment (AMC), which supports access to COVID-19 vaccines for 92 low and middle-income countries, including Haiti. Our £548 million commitment will support the COVAX AMC to deliver up to 1.8 billion doses to these countries in the course of 2022.

The UK is one of the largest donors to the international response for the COVID-19 pandemic. We have committed up to £1.4 billion of direct UK aid to address the impacts of the pandemic and to help end it as quickly as possible.

■ **Israel: Palestinians**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[36719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made representations to her Israeli counterpart on steps toward lifting the 15-year blockade of Gaza.

Amanda Milling:

The UK continues to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children.

■ **Israeli Settlements**

Sarah Champion: [\[36770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UN Security Council Resolution 2334, what assessment she has made for the implications of her policies of the settlements constructed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Amanda Milling:

We have long supported resolutions consistent with our policy, including United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334. The UK's position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We urge Israel to halt settlement expansion immediately.

■ **Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole**

Paul Blomfield: [\[37486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made representations to the Zimbabwean Government on the detention of (a) Job Sikhala and (b) Godfrey Sithole.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is monitoring the ongoing detention of opposition Members of Parliament Job Sikhala and Godfrey Sithole in Zimbabwe. I met with the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe on 30 June and reiterated the need for all political parties to respect the rule of law, refrain from violence and respect the right of others' to campaign freely ahead of upcoming elections in 2023.

■ **Maryam Alsyed Tiyrab**

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[38580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to monitor the potential sentence of death by stoning in the case of Maryam Alsyed Tiyrab in Sudan; and whether she has made any representations in relation to this case.

Vicky Ford:

We condemn the decision of a Sudanese court to sentence Maryam Alsyed Tiyrab to death by stoning for adultery. It is a longstanding policy of the UK Government to oppose the death penalty, in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. Our Embassy

in Khartoum has engaged the Sudanese authorities to raise our concerns and seek further clarification on the detail of this case. Sudan's transitional Government had made significant progress on human rights, including on legal reforms and the rights of women and girls. It is vital that this progress is not put at risk following the military coup on 25 October 2021.

■ Nigeria: Abortion

Chi Onwurah: [\[38666\]](#)

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

Vicky Ford:

The UK does not provide direct support for abortion or post-abortion care in Nigeria. The UK-funded Lafiya programme supports strengthening health systems, as well as a broad range of primary health care interventions that includes maternal and child health, family planning, and HIV and AIDS response.

The UK's Women's Integrated Sexual Health (WISH) programme, which works across 17 African countries including Nigeria, has prevented 5.9 million unsafe abortions since 2018. 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 also prevented 16.5 million unintended pregnancies, supported 9.5 million women and girls to use modern methods of contraception, and averted 45,080 maternal deaths.

The UK funded Global Financing and Reproductive Health Supplies programme (through support to FP2030 and UNAIDS) also plays a vital role in strengthening countries' own ability to deliver life-saving maternal, reproductive and child health services.

■ Southern Africa: Climate Change

Ruth Jones: [\[38831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Southern African Development Community counterparts on the effectiveness of UK efforts to assist climate adaptation in that region.

Vicky Ford:

We are building quality high-level relationships with counterparts in the region. I have travelled several times for engagements, as has the COP26 President.

Better data is critical to underpin climate adaptive actions and policy. It is also a strength of the UK offer. To shape Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) engagement, we are funding a Southern Africa regional climate risk assessment with the Met Office. The FCDO's Africa Regional Climate and Nature programme will continue engagement on transboundary water management started

in 2016 and expands support for the Weather and Climate Information and Services for Africa (WISER) into southern Africa. WISER will build on the UK's previous support to Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis programme which supports SADC and member states monitor and analyse vulnerability so informing humanitarian and adaptation responses.

■ **Tigray: Telecommunications**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[38582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Ethiopian counterpart on lifting the communications blackout in Tigray.

Vicky Ford:

I raised the importance of restoring services to Tigray, including communications, when I met Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Redwan during my visit to the country on 20 January, and wrote to the Ethiopian Minister for Justice regarding freedom of press and the lack of internet access in Tigray on 24 May. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)'s Director General for Humanitarian and Development raised telecommunications access with Ethiopian Finance Minister Shide on 13 July during a visit to Addis Ababa. The UK Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa and Red Sea raised the issue with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Redwan during his visit to Ethiopia in May, and the British Embassy in Addis Ababa regularly raises the restoration of services to Tigray with the Ethiopian Government.

■ **Togo: Politics and Government**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[37469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has received any requests for security partnerships or assistance from the Government of Togo in the last year.

Vicky Ford:

The UK remains concerned by the deteriorating situation across the Sahel, and the tangible impact this has on security across West Africa. The Minister for Armed Forces was pleased to visit Togo last month and have the opportunity to reiterate the UK's continued commitment to the region, as well as our support for the African Union, Economic Community of West African States and the Accra Initiative.

■ **Tony Germain Nkina**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[38581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make representations to her counterpart in Burundi on the case of lawyer Tony Germain Nkina.

Vicky Ford:

The UK Government regularly raises concerns on the overall human rights picture in Burundi, particularly the targeting of political opposition figures, critical voices and human rights defenders. We last raised the case of Tony Germain Nkina with the Burundian Government in March 2022 and with the Burundi's National Independent Human Rights Commission in July 2022. We continue to urge the Government of Burundi to deliver further progress on human rights. This includes cooperation by the Government of Burundi with all UN human rights mechanisms, including the new Special Rapporteur, and to enable the reopening of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi.

■ Uganda: Freedom of Expression**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[39792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Ugandan Government on freedoms of assembly and expression in that country.

Vicky Ford:

The freedoms of assembly and association, and of opinion and expression are integral to a functioning democracy. Ugandan citizens, should be able to question, inform and hold to account those in power. The UK is concerned about the downward trajectory of freedom of expression in Uganda. Our High Commission in Kampala has repeatedly raised concerns regarding the treatment of the opposition and their supporters during and since the 2021 elections. I raised these concerns with President Museveni and Foreign Minister Odongo during my visit to Uganda on 19 January 2022. I stressed the importance of Uganda upholding their obligations under international human rights law and respecting democratic freedoms. The UK reiterated these calls during Uganda's recent review under the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review Mechanism. The UK will continue to work with all Ugandans to advocate for democratic freedoms and respect for human rights.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Ambulance Services: East of England****Tom Hunt:**[\[36901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the quality of the provision of the ambulance service in the East of England.

Maria Caulfield:

Ambulance services are assessed through monthly performance data on response times. In June 2022, the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust's mean Category 1 response time was 10 minutes and 15 seconds, against the standard of seven minutes.

■ Breast Cancer

Chi Onwurah:

[\[36760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of women in England (a) that have been diagnosed with and (b) are living with triple negative breast cancer in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will provide a breakdown of triple negative breast cancer patients by (i) age and (ii) ethnicity.

James Morris:

We have no plans to make a specific estimate as this information is not collected centrally.

■ Breast Cancer: Screening

Elliot Colburn:

[\[27747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for primary breast cancer diagnosis by increasing the mammography capacity of the NHS.

James Morris:

We have committed £2.3 billion to increase the volume of diagnostic activity and launch up to 160 community diagnostic centres by March 2025 to reduce waiting times for clinical tests. This investment will also increase capacity in mammography for symptomatic patients, with funding determined imaging network bids, which are currently being developed.

NHS England will ensure that 75% of patients who have been urgently referred by their general practitioner for suspected cancer will be diagnosed or have cancer ruled out within 28 days by March 2024.

■ Dementia: Health Services

Karin Smyth:

[\[37530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the (a) publication and (b) delivery of the Government's new national dementia strategy.

Gillian Keegan:

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

■ Electronic Cigarettes: Advertising

Daisy Cooper:

[\[37602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to The Khan review: making smoking obsolete, published on 9 June 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing the recommendation to ban (a) cartoon characters and (b) images appealing to young people from vaping products.

Daisy Cooper: [\[37603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to The Khan review: making smoking obsolete, published on 9 June 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing the recommendation to review the (a) way flavours are described and (b) flavours themselves.

Daisy Cooper: [\[37604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to The Khan review: making smoking obsolete, published on 9 June 2022, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing the recommendation to prohibit vaping companies from giving away vapes for free.

Maggie Throup:

The Government is considering the recommendations from the Khan Review, including measures to protect children and young people from starting vaping. We are assessing options such as potential benefits of banning cartoon characters and images which are appealing to children and the merits of prohibiting free samples. We are also looking at flavours and the appeal for young people. In response to the Review, we will publish a new Tobacco Control Plan in due course.

■ General Practitioners: Finance**Feryal Clark:** [\[37628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding allocated to general practice.

James Morris:

‘A five-year framework for GP contract reform to implement The NHS Long Term Plan’, published in 2019, is supported by an additional investment of £4.5 billion in primary medical and community care by 2023/24. In 2020, we announced at least an additional £1.5 billion until 2023/24 to expand the general practice workforce and improve access for patients.

Funding is allocated to general practitioner practices based on the size of the registered patient list and factors such as geographical location. The amount of funding for general practice is adjusted each year and individual practice funding is calculated on a quarterly basis taking into account relevant factors such as patient list size changes.

■ General Practitioners: Pay**Feryal Clark:** [\[37629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on salaried GPs.

James Morris:

We expect that the majority of general practitioners (GPs) will continue in partnerships holding a GP contract. However, sustainable alternative models should

be available, particularly in areas where recruitment and retention challenges remain and GP practices can be organised in different ways.

Following the recommendations made in the independent 'GP partnership review: final report' in 2019, a number of schemes, including the GP New to Partnership Scheme and GP Fellowships, were launched to encourage GPs into partnerships.

■ General Practitioners: Recruitment

Feryal Clark:

[\[37625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the likelihood of achieving the target to recruit 6000 more GPs by 2024.

James Morris:

We remain committed to increasing the general practitioner (GP) workforce as soon as possible. In March 2022, there were an additional 1,462 full time equivalent doctors in general practice compared to March 2019.

We are working with NHS England, Health Education England and the profession to increase the number of GPs in England through recruitment, addressing the reasons why doctors leave the profession and encourage GPs to return to practice. The 2020 updated GP Contract Framework announced a number of new retention schemes alongside continued support for existing schemes. We have increased the number of GP training places, with 4,000 doctors accepting a place in 2021/22 – an increase from 2,671 in 2014.

■ General Practitioners: Rural Areas

Michelle Donelan:

[\[35010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the shortage of GPs in rural areas; and what assessment his Department has made of the impact of that shortage on the quality of services that patients receive.

James Morris:

In 2016, we launched the Targeted Enhanced Recruitment Scheme which provides a one-off financial incentive of £20,000 to attract doctors to train in locations where there have been challenges to recruitment, including many rural areas. In 2021, 550 places were available through the Scheme and following additional Government investment, there are 800 places available in 2022.

The general practice workforce also consists of other health professionals who can respond to the needs of patients, including in rural areas. We are diversifying the general practice workforce, including recruiting 26,000 more primary care staff, to ensure the appropriate range of skills is available in general practice to deliver high quality patient care.

■ General Practitioners: Standards**Feryal Clark:** [\[37627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the use of the current Quality and Outcomes Framework in general practice.

James Morris:

In 2017/18, NHS England reviewed the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) in general practice. The final report, published in 2018, concluded that there were aspects of QOF which are valued and valuable, but that improvements were necessary to deliver better patient care. 'A five-year framework for GP contract reform to implement The NHS Long Term Plan', published in 2019, implemented the findings of this review, including via the creation of a new Quality Improvement domain and modifying existing indicators to improve efficacy.

■ Gynaecology**Feryal Clark:** [\[36940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with (a) the Royal College of Surgeons and (b) other stakeholders on the classification of menstrual health conditions.

Maria Caulfield:

There have been no specific discussions. However, menstrual health and gynaecological conditions, including heavy menstrual bleeding, are a priority within the Women's Health Strategy. The Strategy was published on 20 July 2022 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/womens-health-strategy-for-england>

■ Health Services: Equality**Feryal Clark:** [\[36948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether research his Department has undertaken into the specific causes of ethnic disparities in healthcare.

James Morris:

Through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the Department has funded research to understand the causes of health disparities in ethnic communities. The NIHR's Policy Research Programme is currently funding the study 'Digital interventions for cardiometabolic disease in South Asians - a case study for opportunities, risks and inequalities in digital health', to explore the causes of differential uptake, use and effectiveness of digital health interventions between ethnic groups and how this can be addressed.

The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including the causes of ethnic disparities in healthcare. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on

the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

■ Health: Females

Feryal Clark: [36941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of heavy menstrual bleeding on the wellbeing of women.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. However, through the call for evidence for the Women's Health Strategy, we sought views on women's experiences of gynaecological conditions, such as heavy menstrual bleeding. The results of the call for evidence analysis is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/womens-health-strategy-call-for-evidence>

Menstrual health and gynaecological conditions, including heavy menstrual bleeding, are a priority within the Women's Health Strategy, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/womens-health-strategy-for-england>

■ Heart Diseases

Jim Shannon: [37493]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to increase the prioritisation attached to heart failure within the NHS.

James Morris:

NHS England is resourcing cardiovascular leadership roles in each integrated care system to ensure that improvements to the care of patients with heart failure are prioritised within the National Health Service.

Through Primary Care Networks, multi-disciplinary teams will provide support to those with heart failure and access to echocardiography in primary care will improve the investigation of those with breathlessness for the early detection of heart failure and heart valve disease. In addition, we have committed £2.3 billion to launch at least 100 community diagnostic centres by 2024/25 to increase the volume of diagnostic activity and reduce waiting times for patients, including those with heart disease.

■ Heart Diseases: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon: [37494]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made on the potential for improving diagnosis rates in heart failure through increasing the use of (a) BNP or (b) NTpro BNP testing for people who are suspected of having the condition as set out in NICE guidelines NG106.

James Morris:

NHS England is working with regions and cardiac networks to increase access to the BNP blood test and echocardiography, with early adopter sites testing clinical pathways to improve the early detection and optimum management of heart failure. This includes supporting earlier diagnosis of using screening and population health management, to identify patients at risk of heart failure and education on heart failure coding.

Through the 2022/23 Direct Enhanced Service specification, Primary Care Networks (PCNs) must improve diagnosis of patients with hypertension, according to guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. This includes supporting the earlier identification of heart failure, building awareness among PCN staff on the appropriate heart failure diagnostic pathway and improved early identification processes, such as the timely use of N-terminal pro B-type natriuretic peptide testing.

Investigo: Contracts**Emily Thornberry:**[\[29972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the statement of required works agreed by his Department with Investigo Ltd on 21 March under framework contract RM6160 order number C81123, published on 1 July; and the timetable for completion of those works.

Maria Caulfield:

There is no specific statement of required works for this contract, as a suitably qualified and experienced individual was identified through existing resources.

The contract with Investigo provides this individual to undertake a number of functions in the Contract Dissolution Team. The team ensures that suppliers of personal protective equipment meet contract obligations and service level agreements; facilitates the resolution of contractual disputes and agrees, processes and publishes any resulting agreements or improvement commitments; and provides analysis of supplier performance.

The Contract Dissolution Team is contracted to provide these functions until end of March 2023. However, this could be extended based on the progress of contract dissolution.

Joint Replacements: Waiting Lists**Ian Paisley:**[\[37490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for joint replacement surgery; and what steps his Department is taking to support people awaiting that surgery.

Ian Paisley:

[\[37492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for joint replacement surgery for arthritis; and what steps his Department is taking to support people awaiting that surgery.

Maria Caulfield:

Joint replacement surgery is being prioritised through the High Volume Low Complexity programme, which focuses on improving clinical pathways and quality of care. The programme adopts best clinical and operational practice and aims to establish fast-track surgical hubs for high volume elective procedures, such as hip and knee joint replacements, to reduce waiting times. An additional £1.5 billion is being invested in elective services, including for new surgical hubs and increased bed capacity, including for joint replacement surgery.

In the 'Delivery Plan for tackling the Covid-19 backlog of elective care', sets out how care pathways will be simplified for patients and their carers. The pathway improvement programme will focus on the most common types of care, including musculoskeletal (MSK) services. NHS England is currently working with Versus Arthritis on the development of new MSK pathways and a MSK strategy. This includes long-term conditions, pain management, personalised care and supporting patients waiting and preparing for surgery.

Through collaboration with the British Orthopaedic Association, the British Society for Rheumatology, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance and Versus Arthritis, NHS England has also developed self-management resources for patients awaiting surgery to manage the physical and mental aspects of their condition at home.

■ Maternity Services: Equality

Feryal Clark:

[\[37621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to ensure that people involved in the training of health care professionals are aware of disparities in maternity outcomes.

James Morris:

NHS England funds MBRRACE-UK which raises awareness of the disparities in maternity outcomes for women from different ethnic backgrounds. These findings are incorporated into training schemes developed by NHS England.

Training for maternity staff includes the importance of addressing health inequalities experienced by mothers and babies from ethnic minority groups and those living in the most deprived areas through the Safety Culture training programme for Maternity and Neonatal Board Safety Champions and Non-Executive Directors; the Perinatal Leadership Development Programme for senior leaders in maternity and neonatal services; and the Midwifery Continuity of Carer training package offered to maternity services in 2021/22.

■ Maternity Services: Ethnic Groups

Feryal Clark: [\[37616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will create an annual maternity survey specifically for Black women.

James Morris:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) undertakes a regular maternity survey of women giving birth in all National Health Service acute trusts providing maternity services. In 2021, respondents could complete an online questionnaire, which increased the response rate, including from Asian and Asian British women and from those describing themselves as having 'no religion' or 'Muslim'.

In preparing the 2023 survey, the CQC has engaged with other bodies to increase responses from black women and women from minority ethnic backgrounds. The CQC will also undertake engagement and communications activity to improve the survey's profile and completion rate amongst ethnic minority groups with lower survey completion rates. The survey responses are analysed at a national level by ethnicity and other factors.

■ Maternity Services: Safety

Feryal Clark: [\[37630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's National Maternity Safety Ambition, revised in November 2017, whether it remains his Department's policy to halve the rates of (a) stillbirths, (b) neonatal deaths and (c) maternal deaths by 2025.

James Morris:

We remain committed to the National Maternity Safety Ambition, which includes reducing the rate of pre-term births from 8% to 6%. Since 2010, the rate of stillbirths has reduced by 25%; the rate of neonatal mortality for babies born over 24 weeks gestational age of viability has reduced by 36%; and maternal mortality has reduced by 17%.

■ Maternity Services: Standards

Feryal Clark: [\[37619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of community-based models for delivering maternity care in respect of improving maternal outcomes.

James Morris:

NHS England are implementing the outcomes of 'Better Births: Improving outcomes of maternity services in England. A Five Year Forward View for maternity care', which called for safer, more personalised and family-centred care which offers women choice across organisational boundaries. This is supported by midwifery continuity of carer provided by teams based within communities.

■ NHS: Complaints

Feryal Clark: [\[37620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to improve the NHS complaints system.

James Morris:

The Government is working with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to improve the complaints process in the National Health Service. The PHSO's NHS Complaints Standards provide guidance for complaints handlers, including how complaints and concerns can be responded to efficiently and effectively. Following the launch of the NHS Complaint Standards in 2021, the PHSO is currently developing and piloting supporting materials and training with a range of NHS organisations, to embed the Standards in local complaints processes. This is due for completion by the end of 2022, with the final materials deployed in the NHS in 2023.

■ Primary Health Care: Standards

Feryal Clark: [\[37624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to improve patient satisfaction in respect of primary care services.

James Morris:

We have committed to delivering an additional 50 million general practice appointments a year by 2024 to improve access for patients. NHS England's Access Improvement Programme is also supporting general practitioner practices experiencing the greatest challenges in improving patient access.

The Department and NHS England have recently announced improvements to the National Health Service dental system to improve access for patients, target patients with higher oral health needs and ensure that NHS dentistry is a more attractive place to work for dentists and their teams.

■ Refugees: Ukraine

Munira Wilson: [\[37606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of funding intensive English language courses for Ukrainian refugees who are (a) healthcare professionals or (b) qualified to fill positions on the Shortage Occupation List.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. We are working with NHS England, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Refugee Employment Network to identify and support healthcare professionals who wish to practise in the United Kingdom.

Those aged 19 years old and over who have entered the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme or the Homes for Ukraine Scheme have free access English for speakers of other languages courses.

■ Social Services: Waiting Lists

Karin Smyth: [\[37523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of patients awaiting transfer from hospital to a care setting.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific estimate has been made.

■ Sodium Valproate: Compensation

Cat Smith: [\[36801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will introduce a redress scheme for those affected by sodium valproate.

James Morris:

The Government response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, published in July 2021, did not accept the recommendation to establish separate redress schemes for the three interventions addressed by the Review. We are considering this issue and will update Parliament in due course.

■ Temperature: Health Hazards

Rachael Maskell: [\[38713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people in communities have adequate support to deal with periods of extreme heat.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 July 2022]: The 'Heatwave Plan for England' is a guide to prepare, alert and prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of severe heat in England. It advises the public, health and care providers, local authorities and public agencies on specific measures to protect the general public including vulnerable people and the elderly. The Plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england>

A heat-health alert system operates from 1 June to 15 September. Depending on the level of alert, a response will be triggered to communicate advice and information on general preparation for hot weather and more specific advice when a severe heatwave has been forecast. An agreed lead body, usually the local resilience forum, will co-ordinate multi-agency collaboration, direct the response, work with the media to provide timely advice to the public, work with service providers in health care, education, voluntary organisations and housing providers and engage with local communities to provide additional help to care for those most at risk.

■ Weather: Health Hazards

Rachael Maskell: [\[34970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to assess the impact of extreme weather events on (a) hospital admissions and (b) death rates.

Maggie Throup:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) collaborates with other agencies to provide information on mortality and morbidity due to extreme weather events. The UKHSA's surveillance routinely monitors emergency department attendances, NHS 111 calls and online assessments, general practitioner consultations and ambulance calls related to extreme heat. Regular syndromic surveillance reports are published weekly at GOV.UK, which are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/syndromic-surveillance-systems-and-analyses>

The UKHSA also publishes an annual heatwave mortality monitoring report.

HOME OFFICE

■ HM Passport Office: Staff

Wera Hobhouse: [\[36844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff have been employed at HM Passport Office in each year since 2015.

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
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

■ Immigration: Ukraine

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[36716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has plans to waive fees for immigration applications for Ukrainian nationals who have leave to remain in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The Government has launched a number of schemes aimed at helping those fleeing from the war in Ukraine. These include the Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the Ukraine Extension Scheme

Ukrainian nationals who had permission to stay in the UK on or before 18 March 2022, or are in the UK with permission that expired after 1 January 2022, are eligible to apply to the Ukraine Extension Scheme. Those applying under this scheme do not have to pay visa fees.

Those granted permission under any of the Ukraine schemes have access to public funds as well as permission to work and study for up to three years.

We continue to keep the UK Government's support under review and will adapt and develop the visa routes in place to ensure they keep pace with the situation in Ukraine and the needs of those who have sought sanctuary here.

Stephen Farry: [\[36957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many full time equivalent staff in her Department work on Ukraine-related immigration cases.

Kevin Foster:

There are approximately 450 staff, with a range of FTE's, working on Ukraine Schemes, including resource from other Government Departments.

■ Passports: Applications

Jo Churchill: [\[36781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional steps her Department is taking to ensure people receive their passports within published timescales.

Kevin Foster:

Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks to get their passport. Across the first 6 months of 2022 HMPO processed 97.7% of UK standard applications within 10 weeks.

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

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

■ Slavery

Rachael Maskell:

[\[35996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will an assessment of the potential merits of extending the requirements of Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act to public sector organisations.

Amanda Solloway:

[Holding answer 21 July 2022]: The Government is committed to continuously strengthening our approach to modern slavery and building on the world-leading legislation introduced in the Modern Slavery Act 2015. In 2018, the Home Office commissioned an Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act to understand where the Act has worked well and where it could be more effective.

The Government has previously consulted on areas to strengthen the supply chains legislation in the Modern Slavery Act 2015 as part of its response to the Independent Review. The public consultation included a question on extending requirements to public sector organisations; 98% of respondents responded positively to this question in support of extension.

The government response to the Transparency in Supply Chains consultation announced that we will introduce legislation to require public sector organisations with a budget of £36 million or more to report on how they prevent and address modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chain. As announced in the Queens Speech, we intend to bring this measure forward in the forthcoming Modern Slavery Bill

Many public sector organisations are already publishing modern slavery statements voluntarily, but this new duty will ensure parity between private and public sector organisations.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Telephone Services

Justin Madders:

[\[36799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the average waiting time in minutes for the MP UK Visas and Immigration helpline in (a) April and (b) May 2022.

Kevin Foster:

We provided this data in 22455 on 22 June 2022.

The average wait times to the MP UK Visas and Immigration Helpline in April were 01h 09m 33s (69 minutes 33s), in May 00h 44m 04s and in June 00h 22min 39s.

We have been reviewing staff numbers and have added an additional 40 support staff who are supporting with the HMPO and Ukraine calls. We continue to review resource and wait times to reduce these even further.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Department for International Trade: Consultants

Jon Trickett:

[33696]

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

Penny Mordaunt:

As per the Department for International Trade (DIT) Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002839/DIT-annual-report-2020-to-2021.pdf) consultancy spend in 2020/21 was £5,782k and in 2019/20 was £897k. This relates to the provision of objective advice to DIT relating to strategy, structure, management or operations in pursuit of its purposes and objective. This has been subject to audit.

The 2021/22 consultancy spend will be published in the 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts in the coming weeks.

■ Department for International Trade: Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[29883]

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

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) was formed in July 2016 so represents the earliest date for DIT contracts. The number of contracts signed since this date is as below:

	£1M-£3M+ CONTRACTS SIGNED	£3M+ CONTRACTS SIGNED	£1M-£3M NEXT 12 MONTHS	£3M+ NEXT 12 MONTHS
DIT	35	45	1	3
Trade Remedies Authority	1	0	0	0

DIT is a leading department in the implementation of contract management capability in seeking to ensure that contracts are managed by appropriately trained personnel

but it does not hold the information pertaining to the amount spent or number of officials monitoring these contracts over this period.

Jon Trickett:

[31007]

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

Penny Mordaunt:

Details of Government contracts above £10,000 are published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has awarded contracts to Capita worth approximately £2.7 million in 2020; and approximately £61,000 in 2021.

DIT has not awarded any contracts to Serco or G4S since 2020.

■ Department for International Trade: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution

Emily Thornberry:

[31789]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many people held electronic purchasing cards that allowed them to make purchases against the budgets of (a) the Department for International Trade and (b) UK Export Finance as of 31 March 2022.

Penny Mordaunt:

The number of people that hold electronic purchasing cards for the Department for International Trade (DIT) and UK Export Finance (UKEF) are as follows:

DIT – 180

UKEF - 5

■ Department for International Trade: Living Wage

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[30191]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Living Wage Foundation's real wage calculator, if she will make estimate of how many (a) direct employees, (b) contractors and (c) agency workers who work in her Department and relevant agencies and public bodies receive a wage below that of either (i) the UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London or (ii) the London Living Wage inside of Greater London.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department for International Trade does not have any direct employees, contractors or agency workers that receive a wage below the UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London or the London Living Wage inside of Greater London.

■ **Department for International Trade: Official Hospitality**

Jon Trickett: [\[27523\]](#)

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

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department does not separately record expenditure on hospitality.

■ **Department for International Trade: Pay**

Jon Trickett: [\[28387\]](#)

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

Penny Mordaunt:

Below are the ratios between the highest and lowest paid earner at the Department for International Trade for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22:

PERIOD	ROUNDED RATIO
2019/20	14:1
2020/21	16:1
2021/22	Figures will be published in the July 2022 ARA.

Below are the ratios between the highest and lowest paid earner at UK Export Finance for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22:

PERIOD	ROUNDED RATIO
2019/20	12:1
2020/21	12:1
2021/22	13:1

Pat McFadden: [\[31808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, 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.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department for International Trade does not have any direct employees, contractors or agency workers that receive a wage below the UK Real Living Wage outside of Greater London or the London Living Wage inside of Greater London.

Department for International Trade: Staff**Nick Thomas-Symonds:** [\[23775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her Department's allocated budget and (b) staff headcount is for the trade and investment hubs in (i) Scotland, (ii) Wales, (iii) Northern Ireland and (iv) Darlington.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has allocated the following budget in 2022-23 financial year:

Scotland: £1,358,373;

Wales: £918,950;

Northern Ireland: £756,145; and

Darlington: this is a DIT Office location but we do not have an allocated budget for Darlington as a trade and investment hub.

As of 31st May 2022, DIT employed:

Scotland: 29 staff including staff based in the regional offices in Edinburgh and Glasgow;

Wales: 23 staff;

Northern Ireland: 9 staff; and

Darlington: 58 staff.

These figures do not include UK Export Finance staff, Trade Remedies Authority Staff, and those who are on loan or secondment out of DIT, or on unpaid special leave or career break.

Department for International Trade: Travel**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[34952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much her Department has spent on (a) flights, (b) accommodation and (c) food and drink for officials travelling to Indiana in the last 12 months.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 19 July 2022]: The Department for International Trade (DIT) has spent a total of £9,900 on both flights and hotel accommodations from August 2021 to July 2022 for officials visiting the US state of Indiana.

The figure above relates to all bookings made through DIT's Travel Management Company. DIT Ministerial travel is published on www.gov.uk -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dit-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

■ **Department for International Trade: Visits Abroad**

Emily Thornberry: [38560]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Minister of State for Trade Policy was officially representing her Department when she attended the Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue convened by the Hoover Institution and Annenberg Foundation Trust in California between 5 and 7 December 2021; and whether she was supported at that event by (a) officials and (b) briefing from her Department.

Penny Mordaunt:

[Holding answer 21 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.

■ **Diamonds and Gold: Russia**

Drew Hendry: [35993]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has made a recent estimate of the amount of (a) gold and (b) diamonds originating from Russia which has entered the UK as components of items of jewellery that have been produced in other countries.

Andrew Griffith:

The Department for International Trade does not collect data on components used in the production of finished goods imported from partner countries.

■ **Trade Agreements: Australia**

Catherine West: [28903]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that food imported from Australia under the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement will meet domestic environmental standards.

Penny Mordaunt:

All food imported from Australia will continue to have to meet our current and future food safety standards and import requirements.

Moreover, under the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) we have agreed ambitious provisions on the environment which go further than Australia has gone before. This includes commitments to not derogate from environmental laws and to deepen cooperation in areas such as forests, fisheries, and biodiversity.

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.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia and New Zealand

Gareth Thomas: [\[23703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she received advice from the Digital Regulation Cooperation Forum on trade negotiations with (a) Australia and (b) New Zealand; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

Throughout the course of any Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiation the Department engages with various regulators and other public bodies as appropriate.

However, I am not aware of the Department receiving any advice from the Digital Regulation Co-operation Forum on the Australia and New Zealand FTAs.

■ Trade Agreements: Human Rights

Ruth Jones: [\[36881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she plans to include provisions regarding human rights in a free trade agreement with the Gulf Co-operation Council; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The United Kingdom 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.

■ Trade Agreements: Indiana

Ruth Cadbury: [\[33803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has carried out an economic impact assessment on a sterling basis of the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Indiana which was signed earlier this year.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[33804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will provide details of the economic impact assessment conducted by her Department of the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Indiana.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[33805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many officials at her Department based in the (a) UK and (b) United States worked on the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Indiana.

Penny Mordaunt:

In relation to questions 33803 and 33804, I refer the Hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth to the answer I gave on 5th July, UIN: 21213 and 21214.

In relation to question 33805, the Bilateral Trade Relations Directorate in the Department for International Trade has over 100 full time equivalent (FTE) staff working flexibly, together with our international network, on a range of trade issues as part of our drive to demolish bureaucratic barriers to international trade, opening up markets worth over £20 billion for businesses across the UK. Seeking Memorandum of Understandings to provide a framework to address barriers with US states is part of this agenda.

Trade Agreements: Small Businesses**Steve McCabe:**[\[38497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help SMEs benefit from free trade agreements.

Andrew Griffith:

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are vital to increasing UK trade. That is why we are seeking SME chapters and SME-friendly provisions throughout all our Free Trade Agreements. These chapters and provisions signpost SMEs towards the information they need to make informed decisions and take advantage of new opportunities.

In addition, the Department worked across Whitehall to deliver the refreshed Export Strategy, which focuses on barriers faced by UK businesses, particularly SMEs. HM Government supports exporters at every stage of their journey, through the Export Support Service, the UK Export Academy, UK Export Finance, and our International Trade Advisers and global networks.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**Affordable Housing and Social Rented Housing: Construction****Lisa Nandy:**[\[26752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 6749 on Affordable Housing and Social Rented Housing, for what reason his Department has not set a target for the numbers of affordable homes; and what the key performance indicators for the Affordable Homes Programme for 2021-2026 are.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 4 July 2022]: As the Levelling Up White paper set out, getting people onto the housing ladder means making housing more affordable now and in the future. The Government has committed to deliver 1 million new homes by the end

of this Parliament and continue working towards its ambition of delivering 300,000 new homes per year to create a more sustainable and affordable housing market.

The Government does not set a national target for affordable housing delivery. Whilst the Government's standard method is used to identify the total number of homes needed in a local area, the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that it is for local authorities to identify the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community, including those who require affordable housing, and reflect this in planning policies.

Our £11.5 billion 2021 – 26 Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) will provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country.

Around half the homes will be for affordable and social rent and we will deliver more than double the amount of social rent compared to the current programme, with around 32,000 social rent homes due to be delivered.

Approximately half of the homes delivered will be for affordable home ownership, supporting aspiring homeowners to take their first step on to the housing ladder.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[36724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 20 May 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on housing for Ukrainian refugees, reference ZA59780.

Mr Marcus Jones:

A response has been issued to the Hon Member's correspondence.

■ **Multiple Occupation: Regulation**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[36833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of Houses of Multiple Occupancy regulations on the ability of private renters to access affordable accommodation; and what steps he is taking to increase the availability of regulated multiple occupancy private accommodation.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are a valuable part of the housing market, particularly for tenants who may not have the opportunity or ability to rent a single-family home. All HMOs are subject to management regulations which impose duties on managers. Duties include adequate means of escape and other fire precautions, maintaining services such as electrics, gas and water supplies. There has been no formal assessment of the impact of HMO regulations on access to affordable accommodation.

Under national permitted development rights a dwelling house (a standard home) is able to change use to a smaller HMO for up to six people sharing facilities without the

need for a planning application. This enables the change of use without placing unnecessary burdens on landlords and local planning authorities.

TRANSPORT

■ Bus Services: Concessions

Taiwo Owatemi:

[36907]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to implement free nationwide bus travel for people aged under 22 in the context of the introduction of free bus travel for people of that age by the devolved Administration in Scotland from the start of 2022.

Karl McCartney:

Under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), the Government supports council spending of around £1 billion a year to offer free bus travel to those who have reached State Pension Age and those with eligible disabilities.

Concessionary travel legislation gives local authorities the flexibility to offer further local travel concessions such as free or discounted travel to young people. Bus operators can also offer discounted travel for young people. In 2020/21 operators in 80% of the travel concession authority areas in England, outside London, offered some form of discounted travel for young people.

■ Bus Services: Fares

Wera Hobhouse:

[36851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the average cost of bus travel in each year since 2000, broken down by region.

Karl McCartney:

The Department does not hold the information that is being requested on the estimate of average cost of bus travel since 2000, broken down by region.

The Department does however publish a quarterly index of local bus fares, by metropolitan area status and country, from 2005 onwards.

Data for the bus fares index is collected through a sample survey of around 100 operators and TfL. The index provides an estimate of the change in the average cost of bus travel to the passenger but not the actual fare levels paid as the data are not collected.

The information can be found in the table at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086052/bus0415.ods

■ Doncaster Sheffield Airport**Louise Haigh:****[36826]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding from the public purse Peel Holding has received for operating Doncaster Sheffield Airport in each year since 1999.

Robert Courts:

Subsidies provided by Government over certain amounts are published online. In 2021 the Department for Transport provided £1,758,720 to Doncaster Sheffield Airport in grant payments as part of the Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme. During the pandemic the government has also provided around £8bn in support through package of measures during the pandemic to support the air transport sector. This includes support through loan guarantees, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Doncaster Sheffield Airport may have drawn from that wider support.

During the UK's membership of the European Union and the EU Exit Implementation Period, any subsidies exceeding an amount of approximately €500k made available to organisations were published on

<https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/search.do?locale=en>.

Following the United Kingdom's departure from the EU, any subsidies exceeding an amount of approximately £368k are now published on

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/view-subsidies-awarded-by-uk-government>.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Suffolk**Jo Churchill:****[36783]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve facilities for HGV drivers on the A14 in Suffolk.

Karl Turner:

The Government recognises the need to ensure hauliers have access to appropriate services and facilities.

We will be investing £52.5 million in roadside facilities for HGV drivers on the road. The funding will go towards supporting operators to make improvements such as improving security and eating facilities as well as possibly increasing spaces for lorry drivers.

We have commissioned a 'National Lorry Parking Survey' which commenced in January 2022 and will be used as our primary evidence base to understand what improvements are most needed and where they are needed. The A14 in Suffolk is included in this survey and its output will be used, both to set criteria for government funding and will be available to support planning applications for new lorry parking.

The Department continues to engage with key stakeholders to encourage the development of more safe, secure, and high-quality lorry parking to improve driver welfare.

■ Litter: A14**Jo Churchill:** [\[36785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that National Highways is delivering on its duty to clear litter on the A14.

Karl McCartney:

The responsibility for clearing highway litter and sweeping carriageways is governed by the Environmental Protection Act (1990). National Highways' responsibility for clearing litter is limited to motorways, with a small number of exceptions. Litter picking on most trunk roads, including the A14, lies with the relevant local authority.

National Highways has committed to keep the Strategic Road Network predominantly free from litter, without compromising safety and delivered in an affordable way. To continuously improve collaboration with local authorities and partnership working, National Highways shares forward maintenance and traffic management plans with local authorities to allow for litter collection to be carried out safely and simultaneously to maintenance.

■ Park and Ride Schemes: Urban Areas**Tom Hunt:** [\[36897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made on the impact of park and ride schemes on congestion in Town centres.

Karl McCartney:

The details of how park and ride schemes operate are a matter for local authorities and bus operators concerned.

As set out in the National Bus Strategy published last year, the Government want to see an expansion of park and ride sites in local areas. We have asked Local Transport Authorities to consider parking proposals in their Bus Service Improvement Plans, to improve bus services and encourage modal shift to public transport.

New Local Transport Plan guidance, that we plan to consult on later this year, will also encourage local authorities to consider park and ride sites in their local transport plans if this is something that is appropriate for their area.

■ Railway Network: Weather**Rachael Maskell:** [\[38729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, to what temperature is the rail network heat resilient.

Wendy Morton:

The UK's railway network has traditionally been engineered to withstand a temperate climate. However, with weather patterns changing, we have taken steps to increase the temperatures that the railway can safely operate at, with a particular focus on improving the resilience of our track and electrification assets. We have also adapted

the way in which we maintain and operate the railway, to enable us to keep as many services as possible running during incidents of extreme weather.

■ Railways and Roads: Weather

Rachael Maskell: [\[38730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) rail and (b) roads are future proofed against extreme heat.

Wendy Morton:

The Department for Transport has plans in place and underway to adapt to and mitigate the risks of climate change. The Road Investment Strategy includes a commitment to enhance all-weather resilience of the Strategic Road Network, to minimise the risk of incidents and their impact for road users. Similarly, the Williams-Shapps Rail Plan includes a priority for long-term investment in climate resilience supported by smarter forecasting, planning and technology.

The third National Adaptation Programme is due in 2023. It will showcase the government's strategy and plans to tackle the effects of climate change, including how to protect people, infrastructure and the environment in heatwaves. For transport, this means working closely with transport infrastructure operators to take meaningful and measurable action to address risks posed by our changing climate.

■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions

John McNally: [\[38701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on implementing the Clydebank Declaration launched at COP26; and what steps his Department is taking to support UK businesses to develop green shipping corridors.

Robert Courts:

The Clydebank Declaration for Green Shipping Corridors was launched at COP26 to help drive the decarbonisation of the maritime sector and 24 countries have now signed the Declaration.

Establishing green shipping corridors is a multi-year endeavour, and we are now moving, with other States and the industry, to explore and then deliver corridors involving the UK. As a first step, we recently invited funding proposals for detailed feasibility studies on UK green corridors under the second round of the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition which was launched in May. The winners of the competition will be announced in due course.

■ Shipping: Private Sector

John McNally: [\[38702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to provide (a) support and (b) incentives for private-sector investment in (i) low-carbon maritime fuels, (ii) engine technologies, and (iii) storage facilities.

Robert Courts:

The UK has set a net zero by 2050 target across the economy. The 2019 Clean Maritime Plan and the 2021 Transport Decarbonisation outline the Department for Transport's pathway to net zero in the UK maritime sector. The department is taking a two-pronged approach to maritime decarbonisation: a comprehensive policy and regulatory programme; and R&D funding and investment. In January 2022, we extended the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), making renewable fuels of non-biological origin for marine use, such as hydrogen and ammonia, eligible for incentives under the RTFO.

Between March 2021 and March 2022, we ran the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition (CMDc), which allocated over £23m of research and development funding to 55 projects across the UK. The competition included projects focusing on low-carbon fuels, engine technologies and storage facilities.

In March 2022, we announced a further £206m research and development funding for a newly established UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE), which will deliver a suite of interventions aimed at addressing different barriers to maritime decarbonisation over a range of technology-readiness levels. This will help unlock an industry-led transition to clean maritime.

Travel: Weather**Rachael Maskell:**[\[38728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of periods of extreme heat on (a) rail, (b) roads, (c) shipping and (d) air travel.

Wendy Morton:

Extreme heat can cause disruption on the railway due to issues such as overhead powerlines sagging in the heat, the increased likelihood of lineside fires, and rail buckling (when rails expand and curve). The department continues to support the rail industry as they work to ensure mitigations, such as emergency speed restrictions, are implemented to protect infrastructure and ensure both passenger and staff welfare.

National Highways' motorways and major A roads are highly resilient to extremes of weather, including hot weather. The design and build standards applied to these roads are considered best practice and are adopted by other countries around the world. Where issues occur, such as heat damage on the A14 on 18 July, repairs are carried out so that roads can re-open as soon as possible.

Local highway authorities have a duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended, to maintain the highways network in their area. The Act does not set out specific standards of maintenance, as it is for each local highway authority to assess which parts of its network need repair and what standards should be applied, based upon their local knowledge and circumstances.

Ports all have contingency plans in place and, where necessary, will suspend operations if weather conditions pose a risk to safety. Ultimately, the decision rests with the port as they all operate on a commercial basis.

Safety is an utmost priority and therefore in extreme heat airports have increased monitoring of operations, including the aerodynamics of an aircraft, runway temperatures and the operational environment for staff and passengers. The sector has well-rehearsed plans in place to manage with heat and mitigate the effect upon operations.

TREASURY

■ Bicycles: VAT

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[36908\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of (a) reducing and (b) removing VAT on the sale of new bicycles.

Lucy Frazer:

VAT has been designed as a broad-based tax on consumption, and the twenty per cent standard rate applies to the vast majority of goods and services, including the sale of new bicycles.

According to OBR forecasts, VAT will have raised approximately £135 billion in 2021-22, helping to fund key spending priorities. Any reduction in tax paid is a reduction in the money available to support important public services.

The Government keeps all taxes under review.

■ 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:

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.

■ Energy: Taxation

Wera Hobhouse: [\[36845\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the additional revenue the energy profits levy would raise each year in the event that it were extended until 2030.

Lucy Frazer:

The Energy Profits Levy (EPL) is expected to raise around £5 billion in its first 12 months. The final costing will be subject to scrutiny by the Office for Budget Responsibility and will be set out at the next fiscal event.

In future years, if oil and gas prices return to historically more normal levels, the Government will phase out the Energy Profits Levy. The legislation also includes a sunset clause, effective at the end of December 2025.

No assessment of additional revenue the Levy would raise each year in the event that it were extended until 2030 has been made.

■ Exports: Russia

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[36742\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the number of cars that were exported to Russia during the 12 months before sanctions were imposed against that country.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[36743\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the number of gas turbines that were exported to Russia during the 12 months before sanctions were imposed against that country.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[36744\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the number of packaged medicaments that were exported to Russia during the 12 months prior to sanctions being imposed against that country.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[36745]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make an estimate of the number of large construction vehicles that were exported to Russia during the 12 months prior to sanctions against that country being imposed.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC is responsible for the collection and publication of data on imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC releases this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics (OTS), which is available via their dedicated website: www.uktradeinfo.com. From this website, it is also possible to build your own data tables based upon bespoke search criteria:

<https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/ots-custom-table>.

Classification codes (according to the Harmonised System) are available to assist with accessing published trade statistics data in the UK Global Tariff:

https://www.trade-tariff.service.gov.uk/find_commodity.

Trade data about cars, gas turbines, packaged medicaments, and construction vehicles exported to Russia prior to sanctions being imposed is publicly available on: www.uktradeinfo.com.

The site also contains a 'Help' function with information on how to extract trade data. Further assistance can also be obtained via the Customer Services team on phone number: 03000 594 250 or via email: uktradeinfo@hmrc.gov.uk.

■ Rescue Services: Finance

Peter Gibson:

[36892]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing Government funding for the provision of Entonox cylinders for Mountain Rescue teams.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Mountain Rescue England and Wales are a charitable organisation. They currently receive no direct government funding and the government is not responsible for making equipment decisions.

■ Revenue and Customs: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper:

[36723]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with the Chief Executive of HM Revenue and Customs on when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 19 May 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on a query about tax credits, reference ZA59766.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Treasury Minister's maintain a regular dialogue with HMRC's CEO about all aspects of HMRC's performance, including correspondence.

I have been assured that a response to the honourable Member's letter will be issued imminently.

■ Tax Avoidance

Ruth Jones: [\[36886\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to close potential loopholes in the tax system.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government is committed to tackling tax avoidance and evasion to ensure everyone pays the right amount of tax at the right time.

Since 2010, the Government has introduced over 150 new measures and invested over £2 billion extra in HMRC to ensure it has the resources it needs to tackle tax avoidance and evasion. The Government is not complacent, which is why we have introduced an additional 20 measures since 2021, forecast to raise £6.3 billion over the next five years.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Employment: Religious Discrimination

Jim Shannon: [\[39852\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment her Department has made of the prevalence of religion and belief discrimination in the workplace.

Amanda Solloway:

The prevalence of any alleged discrimination by employers because of religion or belief is not routinely monitored by government. However, there are clear provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010 which prevent employers from discriminating against an employee, or a prospective employee, because of religion or belief (including any lack of religion or belief).

The Government sponsors the Equality Advisory & Support Service, which is a free service offering help and advice to anyone who feels that they have suffered discrimination, and the EASS statistics for contacts to the service relating to religion or belief discrimination within employment over the last five years are:

YEAR	NUMBER OF CONTACTS	% OF ALL CONTACTS TO THE SERVICE
2018	150	0.83%
2019	179	0.97%
2020	110	0.71%
2021	193	1.17%

YEAR	NUMBER OF CONTACTS	% OF ALL CONTACTS TO THE SERVICE
2022 (to date)	59	0.84%

The year 2021 saw an increase in contacts, partly due to a number of people claiming that it was their philosophical belief to object to having a vaccination against Covid. Such concerns would be registered by the service under the 'religion or belief' protected characteristic category.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Child Maintenance Service: Telephone Services

Hywel Williams: [\[36705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many calls were made to the Child Maintenance Service telephone line in each of the last three years.

Guy Opperman:

Calls made to the Child Maintenance Group over the last three years:

- In the reporting year April 2019 to March 2020 there were 3,464,411 calls offered to CMG lines and 2,750,564 calls answered.
- In the reporting year April 2020 to March 2021 there were 1,494,693 calls offered to CMG lines and 1,098,457 calls answered.
- In the reporting year April 2021 to March 2022 there were 1,853,671 calls offered to CMG lines and 1,403,895 calls answered.

Calls Offered. - The total volume of calls entering a queue to await answer.

Calls Answered - The total volume of calls successfully connected to agents from the queue.

Source: Operational MI System (OPMIS) / Historical Management Information (HMI).

■ Children: Maintenance

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[36717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to improve child maintenance services for parents attempting to access unpaid maintenance payments from parents on with high income.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) already has strong enforcement powers in place to recover unpaid child maintenance, including powers to deduct directly from earnings and from a wide range of bank accounts, seizing goods and forcing the sale of a property.

The CMS can also pursue sanctions against those parents who are unwilling to meet their responsibilities such as disqualification from driving, confiscating a UK Passport or commitment to prison. Curfew powers are currently being consulted on which will help ensure CMS can use the right lever to obtain compliance.

Child Maintenance payments are considered a high priority and paying parents are encouraged to prioritise these against other outgoings.

■ Cost of Living Payments

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[35945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish a breakdown of the number of cost of living payments provided to (a) households and (b) individuals on each day since that payment was introduced.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: Since the 14 th July, the department has processed over 7.2m cost of living payments worth around £2.4 billion. This accounts for 99% of eligible claimants who are due to receive the £326 support from DWP. The remaining DWP payments will be issued by the end of July.

The table below sets out the payments issued each day rounded to the nearest £0.1 billion. Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

	14 JULY	15 JULY	18 JULY	19 JULY	20 JULY	TOTAL
Great Britain	1.6m	1.6m	1.6m	1.6m	0.6m	7.0m
Northern Ireland	-	-	-	-	0.3m	0.3m
UK	1.6m	1.6m	1.6m	1.6m	0.8m	7.2m

There will be some cases – such as those who gained entitlement to the DWP cost of living payment at a later date – that will be paid after July. This is unavoidable and they will be paid automatically as soon as possible.

Over 1m further £326 cost of living payments will be paid by HMRC in the autumn to eligible Tax Credit claimants.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[35947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have received cost of living payments as of 13 July 2022.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 20 July 2022]: As we have been clear, the start date was always 14 July 2022. We are on track to process this first instalment to seven million low-income households by the end of July.

We will process every eligible claimant's payment by the end of this month, and over 99% of the seven million claimants being paid by DWP will receive their money this month. There will be some cases – such as those who were not entitled for the qualifying period, but then gained entitlement upon appeal – that will be paid after July.

■ **Jobcentres: Staff**

Sir Stephen Timms: [\[38475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made towards its target of increasing the number of Disability Employment Advisors, as announced in April 2021.

Sir Stephen Timms: [\[38476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Disability Employment advisers were employed by her Department as of 18 July 2022.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 21 July 2022]: Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) are an integral part of our services and we are absolutely committed to supporting disabled people, including ensuring that every work coach in every jobcentre across England, Scotland and Wales continues to have access to a DEA. Since April 2021, we have increased the number of DEAs and DEA Leaders to 941 FTE.

Our DEA and DEA leaders are one part of our offer to help disabled people into work. There are a range of Government initiatives to support our customers, including the Work and Health programme, the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident, and supporting partnerships with the health system.

Please note that the data supplied is derived from unpublished management information which was collected for internal Departmental use only and has not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. The data should therefore be treated with caution.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Poverty: Children

Alex Cunningham:

[35933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the 7,300 children reported to be living in poverty in Stockton North constituency.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106222/Children_in_low_income_families_local_area_statistics_2014_to_2021_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf).

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.

Alex Cunningham:

[35934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her department has made on the level of child poverty in Stockton North constituency.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2021).

This Government is committed to reducing child poverty and supporting low-income families, and believes work is the best route out of poverty. With a record 1.3 million vacancies across the UK, our focus is firmly on supporting people to move into and progress in work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of parental employment - particularly where it is full-time – in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for families and children.

The latest available data on in-work poverty shows that in 2019/20, children in households where all adults were in work were around six times less likely to be in absolute poverty (before housing costs) than children in a household where nobody works. Compared with 2010, there are nearly 1 million fewer workless households and almost 540,000 fewer children living in workless households in the UK. In 2020/21, there were 200,000 fewer children in absolute poverty before housing costs than in 2009/10.

To help parents into work, our Plan for Jobs is providing broad ranging support for all jobseekers with our Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP), Job Entry Targeted Support and Restart scheme. Our plan for jobs is providing results. As of 6 July, we estimate that at least 520,400 unemployed Universal Credit claimants and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31 January and the end of 30 June 2022.

We are also extending the support Jobcentres provide to people in work and on low incomes. Through a staged roll-out, which started in April 2022, around 2.1m low-paid benefit claimants will be eligible for support to progress into higher-paid work. This is on top of the support we have already provided by increasing the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour and giving nearly 1.7 million families an extra £1,000 (on average) a year through our changes to the Universal Credit taper and work allowances.

To further support parents to move into and progress in work, eligible UC claimants can claim back up to 85% of their registered childcare costs each month up to a maximum of £646.35 per month for one child and £1,108.04 per month for two or more children. This is on top of the free childcare offer in England which provides 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3- and 4-year-olds and disadvantaged 2-year-olds, doubling for working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds to 30 hours a week.

Around 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.

Alex Cunningham:

[35935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help families with children in poverty in Stockton North.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2021).

This Government is committed to reducing child poverty and supporting low-income families, and believes work is the best route out of poverty. With a record 1.3 million vacancies across the UK, our focus is firmly on supporting people to move into and progress in work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of parental employment - particularly where it is full-time – in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for families and children.

The latest available data on in-work poverty shows that in 2019/20, children in households where all adults were in work were around six times less likely to be in absolute poverty (before housing costs) than children in a household where nobody works. Compared with 2010, there are nearly 1 million fewer workless households and almost 540,000 fewer children living in workless households in the UK. In 2020/21, there were 200,000 fewer children in absolute poverty before housing costs than in 2009/10.

To help parents into work, our Plan for Jobs is providing broad ranging support for all jobseekers with our Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP), Job Entry Targeted Support and Restart scheme. Our plan for jobs is providing results. As of 6 July, we estimate that at least 520,400 unemployed Universal Credit claimants and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31 January and the end of 30 June 2022.

We are also extending the support Jobcentres provide to people in work and on low incomes. Through a staged roll-out, which started in April 2022, around 2.1m low-paid benefit claimants will be eligible for support to progress into higher-paid work. This is on top of the support we have already provided by increasing the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour and giving nearly 1.7 million families an extra £1,000 (on average) a year through our changes to the Universal Credit taper and work allowances.

To further support parents to move into and progress in work, eligible UC claimants can claim back up to 85% of their registered childcare costs each month up to a maximum of £646.35 per month for one child and £1,108.04 per month for two or

more children. This is on top of the free childcare offer in England which provides 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3- and 4-year-olds and disadvantaged 2-year-olds, doubling for working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds to 30 hours a week.

Around 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.

Alex Cunningham:

[35936]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the level of child poverty in (a) Stockton South, (b) Redcar (c) Middlesbrough South and (d) East Cleveland and Hartlepool constituency in the latest period for which data is available.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/108222/Children_in_low_income_families_local_area_statistics_2014_to_2021_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf).

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.

Afzal Khan:

[36101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to help reduce the numbers of children living in poverty in Manchester Gorton constituency.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107122/Children_in_low_income_families_local_area_statistics_2014_to_2021_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf).

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. Manchester City Council has been allocated £6,453,163.20.

Afzal Khan:

[36102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the number of children living in poverty in Manchester Gorton.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/108444/Children_in_low_income_families_local_area_statistics_2014_to_2021_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf).

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. Manchester City Council has been allocated £6,453,163.20.

Afzal Khan:

[36103]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps her Department has taken to help support families with children who are in poverty, in the context of the level of child poverty in Manchester Gorton constituency.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103421/Children_in_low_income_families_local_area_statistics_2014_to_2021_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf).

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. Manchester City Council has been allocated £6,453,163.20.

Alex Cunningham:

[36757]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking which are specifically intended to help families with children in poverty in Stockton North.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/105447/Children_in_low_income_families_local_area_statistics_2014_to_2021_-_GOV.UK.pdf).

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.