

## Daily Report

Friday, 2 September 2022

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 September 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (04:17 P.M., 02 September 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ **Belfast Agreement: European Convention on Human Rights**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[38567\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if she make assessment of the potential effect of the UK leaving the European Convention on Human Rights on the operation of the Good Friday Agreement.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[38568\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the compatibility of the UK leaving the European Convention on Human Rights with the continued operation of the Good Friday Agreement.

**Edward Timpson:**

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

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

#### ■ **Covid-19 Inquiry**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[37463\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether (a) she, (b) the Solicitor General or (b) his predecessor have had discussions with the First Treasury Counsel on (i) the UK Covid-19 Inquiry, (ii) disclosures to that inquiry and (iii) potential restrictions on the release of sensitive covid-19 related information.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[37464\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether (a) she, (b) the Solicitor General or (c) his predecessor have had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on (i) the UK Covid-19 Inquiry, (ii) disclosures to that inquiry and (iii) potential restrictions on the release of sensitive covid-19 related information.

**Edward Timpson:**

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

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**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[37465\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the likelihood of the Government being subject to claims for damages from bereaved families during or after the UK Covid-19 Inquiry.

**Edward Timpson:**

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

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

## ■ Legal Profession

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[37466\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the (a) application of legal professional privilege to (i) Ministers and (ii) Government employees and (b) the limits of that privilege.

**Edward Timpson:**

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

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

## ■ VAT: EU Law

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[38562\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the review of EU retained law, what discussions she has had with the Financial Secretary to the Treasury and her officials on the legal risk of (a) applying sunset clauses to and (b) attempting to codify the existing applications of VAT rules in the UK derived from EU case law concerning the (i) definition of business and (ii) abuse principle.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[38563\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the Government's review of EU retained law, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the legal risk of (a) applying sunset clauses to and (b) attempting to codify the existing applications of VAT rules in the UK derived from EU case law concerning the (i) definition of business and (ii) abuse principle.

**Edward Timpson:**

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

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

**■ War Crimes: Russia****Mark Pritchard:****[39789]**

To ask the Attorney General, whether her Department is providing support to the office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine in prosecuting war crimes.

**Edward Timpson:**

THE GOVERNMENT IS APPALLED BY THE ATROCITIES BEING COMMITTED IN UKRAINE BY RUSSIAN FORCES, INCLUDING THE TARGETING OF CIVILIANS, MASS GRAVES, AND RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE BEING USED AS WEAPONS OF WAR. WE STAND SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER WITH UKRAINE, AT THE FOREFRONT OF INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ENSURE THERE IS NO IMPUNITY. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL PERSONALLY HAD A LONG AND VERY FRUITFUL DIALOGUE WITH THE FORMER UKRAINIAN PROSECUTOR GENERAL IRYNA VENEDIKTOVA, HAVING SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION WITH HER TO UNDERLINE UK SUPPORT FOR HER OFFICE'S WORK INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING CRIMES COMMITTED IN THE COURSE OF THE CONFLICT. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL VISITED THE FORMER PROSECUTOR GENERAL IN UKRAINE AND HOSTED HER FOR A TWO-DAY VISIT IN LONDON AT THE END OF MAY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE. IMPORTANTLY, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL APPOINTED SIR HOWARD MORRISON QC, ONE OF THE UK'S LEADING WAR CRIMES LAWYERS, TO SUPPORT THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL DIRECTLY ON UKRAINE'S DOMESTIC INVESTIGATIONS. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ALSO CONVENED A MEETING OF THE QUINTET OF ATTORNEYS GENERAL FROM THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND, WITH PROSECUTOR GENERAL VENEDIKTOVA. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, WE PUBLISHED A JOINT STATEMENT WHICH MAKES CLEAR OUR COUNTRIES' SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE'S DOMESTIC WAR CRIMES INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS, AND OUR COMMITMENT TO WORK TOGETHER WITH THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL AND OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL TO ENSURE EVERY PERPETRATOR FACES JUSTICE. THE PRESERVATION AND COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE IS VITAL. THE UK, TOGETHER WITH THE UNITED STATES AND EU, HAS LAUNCHED THE ATROCITY CRIMES ADVISORY GROUP (ACA) TO DIRECTLY SUPPORT THE WAR CRIMES UNITS OF THE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL OF UKRAINE IN ITS INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CONFLICT-RELATED CRIMES. THE ACA SEEKS TO STREAMLINE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION EFFORTS TO ENSURE BEST PRACTICES, AVOID DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS, AND ENCOURAGE THE EXPEDITIOUS DEPLOYMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND SKILLED PERSONNEL TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL AS THE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY IN UKRAINE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH THE PROSECUTION OF WAR CRIMES ON ITS OWN TERRITORY. THIS SHOWS THE GOVERNMENT'S CLEAR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING UKRAINE IN ITS INVESTIGATIONS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH UKRAINE, PARTNERS AND INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS IN THEIR INVESTIGATIONS AND TO COLLECT AND PRESERVE EVIDENCE OF WAR CRIMES IN UKRAINE. THOSE RESPONSIBLE WILL BE HELD TO ACCOUNT.

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**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY****■ Alternative Fuels****Charlotte Nichols:****[40012]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of supporting the development of synthetic fuels.



**Greg Hands:**

The supply of low carbon fuels, including synthetic, will help reduce the environmental impact of transport. For example, Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), on average, could achieve over 70% emissions savings on a lifecycle basis. Presented in the Jet Zero Strategy, the Government aims to build a UK SAF industry that could support up to 5,200 jobs and Gross Value Added of up to £2.7bn.

The Industrial Energy Transformation Fund will support sites to switch to low carbon fuels (synthetic fuel production is not within scope). The Red Diesel Replacement competition has a Phase 1 project working towards producing synthetic fuel.

**Batteries: Climate Change****Owen Thompson:****[37566]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of sand batteries in tackling climate change.

**Greg Hands:**

BEIS has not made any specific assessment of the effectiveness of sand batteries. However, sand batteries form part of a class of technologies known as thermal storage, all of which play a similar role in supporting the changes to the energy system needed to address climate change. These technologies are in an early stage of development and BEIS fund innovation in thermal storage as part of the Longer Duration Energy Storage Demonstration Programme. A list of projects funded can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/longer-duration-energy-storage-demonstration-programme-successful-projects/longer-duration-energy-storage-demonstration-programme-stream-2-phase-1-details-of-successful-projects](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/longer-duration-energy-storage-demonstration-programme-successful-projects/longer-duration-energy-storage-demonstration-programme-stream-2-phase-1-details-of-successful-projects).

**Coal Authority****Caroline Lucas:****[39801]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2022 to Question 165 on Coal Authority: Climate Change, if he will make it his policy to revise the duties of the Coal Authority in respect of licensing, as set out in the Coal Industry Act 1994, to act in accordance with the UK's obligations under international climate treaties, including the (a) Paris Agreement and (b) Glasgow Climate Pact.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is committed to phasing out coal from electricity generation by 2024. Demand for new coal licences has fallen away as a consequence, and there are only a small number of potential coal projects that could result in new coal mining, and only with the consent of the relevant planning authorities.

The Government keeps the Coal Authority's duties under review, but in view of the low demand for new coal extraction projects, there are currently no plans to revise the duties with respect to licensing coal extraction.

## ■ **Delivery Services: Highlands of Scotland**

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[38707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will hold discussions with representatives of delivery companies on ending surcharges for deliveries to the Highlands.

**Jane Hunt:**

The Government recognises delivery costs can be higher in some parts of the UK and strongly encourages businesses to provide consumers with a range of affordable delivery options. The Royal Mail provides a universal parcel service at a uniform price throughout the United Kingdom thanks to rules the UK government put in place in the Postal Services Act 2011.

The Consumer Protection Partnership, which includes Ofcom, Government representatives, consumer advocates and training standards officials, runs a dedicated working group to collect evidence on the issue.

## ■ **Distributive Trade: Conditions of Employment**

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[39815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to protect workers' rights in the retail and distribution sector in response to the Taylor Review.

**Jane Hunt:**

We are committed to supporting all workers across the UK and have recently brought forward several reforms which will help protect workers in the retail and distribution sector.

In April 2022 we made sure 2.5 million people received a pay rise raising the National Minimum and National Living Wages. This was the largest ever cash increase to the National Living Wage and will put over £1,000 a year into a full-time workers' pay packet, helping to ease cost of living pressures.

Additionally, on 6 July we brought forward legislation to widen the ban on exclusivity clauses, which restrict staff from working for multiple employers, to contracts where the guaranteed weekly income is equivalent to or below the Lower Earnings Limit of £123 a week.

## ■ **Electric Vehicles and Heat Pumps**

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether officials in his Department have held discussions with representatives of network

operators on the adequacy of the network's capacity to meet demand for heat pumps from 2025 and electric vehicle charging from 2023.

**Greg Hands:**

While network regulation is a matter for Ofgem, the Government maintains regular dialogue with network operators including on their plans to prepare for heat pump and electric vehicle charging rollout. Effective integration of technologies such as heat pumps and electric vehicles will enable more flexible consumption, helping minimise network and system costs.

■ **Electricity Interconnectors: Norway**

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent conversations he has had with his counterpart in the Norwegian Government on the North Sea Link interconnector.

**Greg Hands:**

On 23 March 2022, my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State attended the International Energy Agency 2022 Ministerial meeting and met Mr Terje Aasland, Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Norway. Following this introduction, the Secretary of State wrote to Mr Terje Aasland on 1 April 2022 and copies of that letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ **Electricity: Prices**

**Tracey Crouch:**

[\[38615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of energy companies who have increased their electricity prices for customers with a renewable energy tariff in response to the general rise in energy costs.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government does not set electricity prices, because setting tariffs is a commercial decision for suppliers, within the constraints of the price cap.

The Government has recently published a consultation setting out options as part of its Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA). REMA is considering how the role of gas as a price setter for electricity could be reduced. This will include examining reforms for helping bring forward investment in low carbon generation, leading to less frequent use of gas so that it sets the price of electricity for shorter periods, as well as wholesale market reform options that could help to reduce the link.

## ■ Energy Intensive Industries

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[38557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to reduce energy costs for energy-intensive businesses.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government recognises the importance of securing a competitive future for its energy intensive industries (EIIs), and in recent years has provided them with extensive support, including more than £2 billion to help with energy costs and to protect jobs. As part of its British Energy Security Strategy, the Government recently announced to extend the EII Compensation Scheme for a further three years. The scheme's budget will be more than doubled. That strategy also announced plans to consider increasing support offered by the EII Exemption Scheme.

## ■ Energy Performance Certificates

**Dehenna Davison:**

[\[38842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to raise the minimum rentable Energy Performance Certificate rating from E to D.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government committed in the Clean Growth Strategy to improve as many privately rented homes as possible to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2030 where practical, affordable and cost effective. The Government consulted on raising the standard to EPC C for new tenancies from 1 April 2025 and for all tenancies by 1 April 2028. The Government has carefully analysed the responses received and will publish a response in due course.

## ■ Energy: Billing

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[38647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to ensure that energy customers using a preferred payment method are not disadvantaged compared with customers using other payment methods.

**Greg Hands:**

Under the terms of the supply licence enforced by Ofgem, gas and electricity suppliers cannot charge more for one payment method compared with another, unless it costs more to provide the preferred payment method to customers.

## ■ Energy: Conservation

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[38807]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the role of energy efficiency in meeting the UK's climate targets.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government believes that improving insulation measures in homes is one of the best long-term solutions for reducing household energy costs and fuel poverty. Improving insulation across the UK's housing stock also aligns with commitments to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The Government has committed £6.6 billion across the lifetime of this Parliament to decarbonise heat and buildings.

**Steve McCabe:**

**[40029]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason his Department's net zero expenditure plans for the energy efficiency of buildings is being reduced from £1.3 billion in 2021-22 to £0.7 billion in 2023-23.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is investing over £6.6 billion over this parliament to improve energy efficiency and decarbonise heating.

The spending profiles of Government schemes reflect the need for Local Authorities and Housing Associations to deliver over financial years, supported by their local supply chains. The ECO4 order has now been laid, and debates have taken place in both Houses. The Government expects regulations to come into force this month.

The scheme is worth £1bn per annum and will run from 2022 – 2026.

## ■ Energy: Housing

**Steve McCabe:**

**[37435]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of retrofit housing stock to help ensure it is energy efficient.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government believes that improving insulation measures in homes is one of the best long-term solutions for reducing household energy costs and fuel poverty. Improving insulation across the UK's housing stock also aligns with the commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The Government has committed £6.6 billion across the lifetime of this Parliament to decarbonise heat and buildings.

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[37436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock in the UK in addition to his Department's planned net zero expenditure on the energy efficiency of buildings.

**Greg Hands:**

In addition to providing £6.6 billion of funding, the Government is creating a long-term regulatory framework to help meet its aspiration that as many homes as possible are improved to EPC Band C by 2035, where practical, cost-effective, and affordable. The Government has consulted on raising the minimum energy performance rating for privately-rented homes and has committed to consult on options to upgrade homes in the owner-occupier sector.

The Government is also taking action to facilitate low-cost finance from retail lenders to drive investment in energy efficiency measures; and further improving its advice and information offer to help households improve the energy performance of their homes.

## ■ **Energy: Infrastructure**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[38731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the resilience of energy sector infrastructure to periods of extreme heat.

**Greg Hands:**

Great Britain's electricity infrastructure is highly resilient and designed to operate in hot weather. In the event that energy infrastructure is impacted by extreme heat, the energy sector has long-standing plans and procedures to respond and repair any damage to infrastructure.

## ■ **Energy: Standing Charges**

**Andy Carter:**

[\[40008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help protect consumers from significant increases by energy companies in standing charges.

**Greg Hands:**

For millions of households the level of standing charge is protected by the energy price cap rate set by Ofgem. While the setting of tariffs is a commercial matter for individual supply companies, the energy unit rate and the standing charge together must not exceed the price cap.

Ofgem have recently launched a consultation to review the component of the Standing Charge that consumers pay toward the Supplier of Last Resort levy. Ofgem expects to publish a response in August.

**■ Fracking****Chi Onwurah:** [\[38659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the review commissioned by his Department of the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction; if he will publish the evidence used in that review; and if he plans to issue a response.

**Greg Hands:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green on 6 July 2022 to Question [28901](#).

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[38660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether a social impact assessment was conducted as part of the review commissioned by his Department of the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the social licence to operate that is required for major shale gas operators.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government commissioned the British Geological Survey to advise on the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction. The Government has now received the report, which is under careful review, and will make any decisions on the next steps in due course.

The exploration of shale gas reserves in England could only proceed if the science shows that it is safe, sustainable and of minimal disturbance to those living and working nearby. Any exploration or development of shale gas would need to meet rigorous safety and environmental protections both above ground and sub-surface.

**Mr Steve Baker:** [\[R\] \[39817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to explore alternative methods to fracking for extracting shale gas.

**Greg Hands:**

The Ministerial Statement of 4 November 2019 makes clear that the pause on shale gas exploration and extraction applies specifically to operations that require Hydraulic Fracturing Consent. The definition of associated hydraulic fracturing is set out under section 4B of the Petroleum Act 1998 (inserted by Section 50 of the Infrastructure Act 2015), and involves the injection of more than 10,000 cubic metres of fluid in total, or more than 1,000 cubic metres of fluid per stage.

Activities outside of this definition are not included in the pause.

**Craig Mackinlay:** [\[39925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the review of the scientific evidence on shale gas extraction submitted to his Department by the British Geological Survey on 5 July 2022, when he plans to announce his Department's future shale gas policy.



**Greg Hands:**

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green on 6 July 2022 to Question [28901](#).

**Fuel Oil: Prices****Helen Whately:****[39919]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to support households that are reliant on domestic heating oil in the event of further rises in energy costs in winter 2022.

**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](#).

**Heat Pumps****Peter Aldous:****[39827]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has a record of the number of trained heat pump installers in 2021.

**Greg Hands:**

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) reports that over 1300 businesses are certified to install heat pumps under its scheme and estimates that this includes approximately 4,000 installers in the UK, up from approximately 3,500 at the end of 2021. The total number of trained installers is, however, likely to be greater than this, as MCS Certification is only required for installations receiving Government grant funding. The Government has commissioned further research into the existing heating and cooling installer workforce in England, which will be completed later this year.

**Peter Aldous:****[39828]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to provide support for gas boilers installers retraining as heat pump installers in advance of the implementation of the Future Homes Standard in 2025.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is working closely with industry to support gas boiler installers retraining to install heat pumps. In September 2020 the Government launched a £6 million skills competition to provide training opportunities for the energy-efficiency and low-carbon heating supply chains, including heat pump training for over 2000 heating engineers. The Government is developing plans for a further Skills Training Competition in 2022/23 and intends to continue work with industry to support retraining.

**Peter Aldous:** [39829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of a heat pump installer certification scheme, similar to the Gas Safe Register, to protect consumers who are purchasing heat pumps.

**Greg Hands:**

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Strangford on 1st July 2022 to Question [22437](#).

**Peter Aldous:** [39830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to increase consumer awareness of heat pumps in advance of the implementation of the Future Homes Standard in 2025.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is working to review and improve its communication to ensure that the public has access to the information and advice they need to make the right decisions. The Government has recently published a series of heat pump user case studies and heat pump user guides with Energy Systems Catapult. There is also further information and advice on heat pumps available through Simple Energy Advice service and the recently launched 'Check if your home could be suitable for a heat pump' calculator on GOV.UK.

## ■ Heat Pumps: Manufacturing Industries

**Peter Aldous:** [39826]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to support the domestic heat pump manufacturing industry in advance of the implementation of the Future Homes Standard in 2025.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is putting in place a package of measures to build a globally competitive UK heat pump manufacturing sector. This includes policies to help build demand for heat pumps, like the £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme, as well as those that incentivise inward investment in the supply chain, such as the Super Deduction Capital Allowance Scheme and the Heat Pump Investment Accelerator Competition. There has already been significant investment in the UK heat pump supply chain over the past 12 months from companies like Mitsubishi, Octopus Energy, Vaillant and Ideal Heating, and the Government expects this growth to continue.

## ■ Heating: Energy Performance Certificates

**Dehenna Davison:** [38841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason electric room heaters are considered less efficient than radiators powered by an

oil boiler for the purposes of an Energy Performance Certificate, given that electric heaters can be powered by renewable energy.

**Greg Hands:**

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) use an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) to score the energy performance of buildings based on their estimated running costs. Since energy costs can be a significant outlay, it is important that homeowners and occupiers are aware of the potential running costs of their building.

Given the higher cost of electricity relative to oil, the presence of an electric radiator may result in a low EER without added measures to reduce energy demand, such as insulation. The metrics on the EPC are kept under review as the Government develop policy to simultaneously tackle fuel poverty and decarbonise buildings.

■ **Horizon Europe**

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[38798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what consultation his Department has conducted with medical research charities on alternative funding arrangements to the EU's Horizon Europe programme.

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[38799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what further consultation he plans to conduct with medical research charities on alternative funding arrangements to the EU's Horizon Europe programme.

**Jane Hunt:**

The Government's preference is for the UK to associate to Horizon Europe. However, given the EU's persistence in delaying our association, it is only right and responsible that we are prepared for all outcomes, including one where we are not able to associate.

On 20 July we published proposals on how the UK would transition to a new R&D programme, should the EU's delays to our association to Horizon Europe continue. These include details of our proposed transitional measures and an overview of our longer-term alternative plans.

We will continue to engage with researchers from a diverse range of sectors to make sure that the UK is a desirable place for R&D in all future scenarios. Over the next few months, we plan to step up our engagement with businesses, universities and research institutions, to support them if association is not possible.

■ **Housing Associations: Natural Gas**

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[38890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to provide support to residents of housing associations who are impacted by the rises in commercial prices of the gas that housing associations procure.

**Greg Hands:**

On 29 July, the Government confirmed that funding will be available to provide equivalent support of £400 for energy bills for the 1% of households who will not be reached through the Energy Bills Support Scheme, including residents of housing associations who do not have a domestic electricity meter or a direct relationship with an energy supplier. An announcement with details on how and when these households across Great Britain can access this support will be made in the Autumn.

**■ Innovate UK: Expenditure****Chi Onwurah:**[\[38656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2022 to Question 33779 Innovate UK: Expenditure, for what reason the total awarded by Innovate UK reduced from £1,491m to £815m between 2020 and 2021; and whether that reduction will be matched by an equivalent increase in 2022 or 2023.

**Jane Hunt:**

The higher grant figure for projects starting in 2020 compared to 2021 was a combination of two large programmes (Strength in Places, and the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult Manufacturing Innovation Centre) and Innovate UK's part in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic which saw them launch three major programmes to help the UK business innovation ecosystem navigate the shock of the global pandemic.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[38657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 July 2022 to Question 33780 on Innovate UK: Expenditure, what data Innovate UK collects on the (a) types of companies it invests in and (b) the level of success of those companies; and if he will publish a breakdown of Innovate UK's annual spending by (i) technology and (ii) service sector.

**Jane Hunt:**

Data collected by Innovate UK includes self-declared enterprise size. Their focus for measuring success is through formal evaluation of their programmes which will include data at a company level. Innovate UK are in the process of embedding their impact management framework which will collect data from the organisation supported to provide throughout the project lifecycle enabling them to understand the impact journey of those they support.

Innovate UK support plays a key role in bringing together different sectors to solve challenges through innovative technology use. Their thematic programmes do focus on certain challenges but rarely specify the technology and often cross sectors.

## ■ Manufacturing Industries: Infrastructure

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[38556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support UK manufacturers when developing government infrastructure projects.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK Energy Supply Chain Taskforce will focus on ensuring UK supply chain companies can take advantage of clean growth opportunities in the UK and overseas. The Government will put UK at the forefront of manufacturing as opportunities grow from wind turbines to heat pumps as the Government set out the opportunity to develop the manufacturing base and expand supply chains for building efficiency.

## ■ Modern Working Practices Review

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department has made on implementing the recommendation of the Taylor Review to ensure that the same basic principles should apply to all forms of employment in the British economy.

**Jane Hunt:**

The Government is clear that everyone deserves to be treated fairly at work and rewarded for their contribution to the economy, both in terms of fair pay and fair working conditions.

We announced on the 9th May that we will bring forward employment status guidance to help clarify the existing status boundaries. This will make it easier for individuals and businesses, including for those in the gig economy, to understand which employment rights apply to them, enhancing worker protections whilst maintaining flexibility and ensuring a level playing field within the labour market.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made progress on implementing recommendation seven in the Taylor Review on ensuring that there are sectoral strategies to engage employers, employees and stakeholders so that people in low paid sectors do not continuously remain on the minimum wage.

**Jane Hunt:**

Earlier this year we increased the National Living Wage, putting £1,000 more a year in the pay packets of those who need it most. Programmes offered by the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions are helping to up-skill workers, allowing them to progress in work and thrive in the labour market.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[38643]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made progress on implementing the recommendation in the Taylor Review on ensuring a more proactive approach to workplace health.

**Jane Hunt:**

The Government is committed to supporting people living with disabilities and long term health conditions.

A range of Government initiatives are supporting disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work. These include the Work and Health Programme, the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. We will be investing £1.3bn in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions over the next three years.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[39805]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department has made on implementing the recommendation of the Taylor Review to ensure more attainable ways for employees to strengthen their future work prospects.

**Jane Hunt:**

The opportunity to progress in work is any integral part of job quality and the Government has taken steps since the publication of the Taylor Review to help workers improve their prospects to progress in work. The Department for Work and Pensions recently launched an in-work progression offer to support low paid universal credit claimants in work to progress and increase their earnings. This support will be provided by work coaches and will focus on removing barriers to progression, helping people identify skills gaps and relevant training, helping people look for progression opportunities in their current role, and consider changing roles or sectors. Furthermore, low-paid workers are eligible for training funded by the Department for Education, who maintain a suite of skills programmes to help all workers boost skills and prospects.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[39806]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department has made on implementing the recommendation of the Taylor Review to ensure that platform based employees should be clearly distinguished from those who are legitimately self-employed.

**Jane Hunt:**

The Government is clear that everyone deserves to be treated fairly at work and rewarded for their contribution to the economy, both in terms of fair pay and fair working conditions.

We announced on the 9th May that we will bring forward employment status guidance to help clarify the existing status boundaries. This will make it easier for

individuals and businesses, including for those in the gig economy, to understand which employment rights apply to them, enhancing worker protections whilst maintaining flexibility and ensuring a level playing field within the labour market.

## ■ **National Grid: Seas and Oceans**

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[38853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with the National Grid on the potential merits of building an offshore electricity grid instead of additional on-land energy pylons.

**Greg Hands:**

BEIS has worked with National Grid Electricity System Operator to bring together the design of connections for offshore wind with wider network reinforcements and consider the cumulative environmental and community impacts upfront.

Where the need for new reinforcements have been identified in the Holistic Network Design (HND) no decisions have yet been taken by National Grid Electricity Transmission. Any project will be subject to the relevant planning processes. Placing all new infrastructure offshore is not a feasible option. Electricity needs to get to where the demand is, which is onshore. Even with offshore cables, infrastructure is required at landing points.

## ■ **Park Homes: Energy Bills Rebate**

**Helen Whately:** [\[39918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that residents of park homes can benefit from the Government's energy support measures.

**Greg Hands:**

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for St Albans on 20th June 2022 to Question [18990](#).

## ■ **Post Offices: ICT**

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[38851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will extend the deadline of the Horizon compensation scheme to allow the estimated 170 branch managers who were not aware of the scheme and are reported to have missed the deadline to apply.

**Jane Hunt:**

The Department has held initial discussions with Post Office on this issue and is expecting to receive a formal proposal shortly. BEIS, supported by UKGI, will then work closely with Post Office to find an appropriate and fair solution.



**■ Remote Working: Weather**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[38726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to encourage workers to work at home if it is cooler during periods of extreme heat.

**Jane Hunt:**

This is a matter for employers to discuss with their employees, if appropriate. This is not a matter for Government.

**■ Research: Finance**

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[38664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department has spent on knowledge exchange activities; and with which organisations.

**Jane Hunt:**

The Government has committed significant funds to support knowledge exchange between universities and the wider economy and society. Through its constituent research councils and Innovate UK, UK Research Innovation (UKRI) provided £166 million in 2021/22 to support knowledge exchange and commercialisation activity.

In addition to this, Research England's Higher Education Innovation Funding and Research England Development Fund allocated £277 million to support knowledge exchange in universities in England in the same year. Research England manages the Connecting Capabilities Fund which has allocated £125 million.

**■ Small Businesses: Carbon Emissions**

**Alberto Costa:** [\[39896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to SMEs to move towards a net zero economy.

**Greg Hands:**

Taking action on climate change will help businesses to grow, seize new opportunities and adapt against the challenges of a changing planet. The first step SMEs can take is to visit the [UK Business Climate Hub](#) and sign up to the globally recognised [SME Climate Commitment](#). Here SMEs can also get [help and advice](#) on how to be greener and save money.

Additionally, almost £5 billion of funding is available to help UK businesses become greener as part of the government's commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The latest funding opportunities can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-funding-to-help-your-business-become-greener>.

## ■ Small Modular Reactors

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

[\[38541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the commencement of production of small modular reactors in the UK as soon as possible.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government has awarded up to £210m to support development of the Rolls Royce Small Modular Reactor (SMR) design. The Rolls-Royce SMR entered the Generic Design Assessment process in April becoming the first SMR to begin UK nuclear regulation.

The Government has also announced the Future Nuclear Enabling Fund (FNEF) of up to £120m to support future nuclear projects, including SMRs, addressing barriers to entry.

The British Energy Security Strategy sets out the Government's intention to take two Final Investment Decisions on new nuclear projects in the next parliament and to initiate a selection process for projects in 2023, including SMRs.

## ■ Solar Power

**John McNally:**

[\[37516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure energy providers pay fair prices for energy generated by private individuals' solar panels; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward a scheme to allow consumers to save the excess energy they generate during warmer months for when it is required during winter.

**Greg Hands:**

The Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) is a cost-reflective market led mechanism, helping to level the playing field for small-scale low-carbon generation.

To enable the SEG to be market based and encourage innovation, a key feature is to allow suppliers to set the tariff levels and structure. Whilst payment must be greater than zero at all times of export it is for suppliers to determine the value of the exported electricity. The retail cost of electricity would not be a fair price to pay because it includes not only the wholesale costs, but also network costs, levies and supplier operating costs.

## ■ Solar Power: Energy Performance Certificates

**Dehenna Davison:**

[\[38843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason the use of solar photovoltaic panels is not taken into account for the purposes of an Energy Performance Certificate.

**Greg Hands:**

The underlying methodology for producing an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assesses energy performance based on the fixed components of the building. This includes solar photovoltaic panels.

■ **Space****Owen Thompson:**[\[39910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government will develop a set of space sustainability targets.

**Jane Hunt:**

The Government has set out its commitment to space sustainability in the National Space Strategy, which commits to ensuring space remains safe, secure and sustainable.

We are already delivering that commitment - on 23 June we announced the first ever Plan for Space Sustainability. This encompasses a range of ambitious measures that show UK leadership to advance the sustainable future of space, including:

- Demonstrating continued regulatory leadership.
- Demonstrating UK global leadership.
- Leadership on meeting sustainability standards through the development of an industry-led standard for space sustainability.
- Continuing to enhance national and global capacity.

■ **Vacancies****Sarah Olney:**[\[38778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many times the Government has met with representatives of the (a) construction, (b) manufacturing and (c) hospitality industries specifically to discuss labour shortages, in the last three months.

**Jane Hunt:**

BEIS Ministers and officials regularly meet with construction, manufacturing and hospitality businesses and representatives from all three sectors to discuss a range of issues including labour shortages. Employment in the hospitality sector is now above pre-pandemic levels.

Additionally, BEIS officials recently met with the National Manufacturing Skills Task Force to discuss how Government and industry can work together to address the skills and workforce challenges of manufacturing employers. Officials are in active dialogue across all sectors.

## ■ Wind Power

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[37609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of onshore wind on (a) the price of energy bills and (b) energy security.

**Greg Hands:**

The costs of onshore wind have fallen dramatically, and it is around 50% cheaper than in 2015. More low-cost renewables like onshore wind on the system will limit household electricity bills by ensuring that Britain is less affected by fluctuations in volatile global gas prices. As set out in the Energy White Paper and Net Zero Strategy, a low-cost net zero system of the future will be predominantly comprised of wind and solar. To achieve this, the Government will require a sustained increase in locally supported onshore wind to 2030 and beyond, alongside other renewables such as solar and offshore wind.

## ■ Wind Power: North Sea

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it is the Government's policy to advocate for the UK's return to the North Sea Energy Cooperation.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement provides for the establishment of a specific forum for cooperation in relation to offshore grid development and the large renewable energy potential of the North Seas region, similar to the previous North Seas Energy Cooperation. The Government is currently negotiating the terms of cooperation with the European Commission, with a view to agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding that is acceptable to both sides as soon as possible.

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to engage his counterparts in other countries bordering the North Sea on energy cooperation in the North Sea.

**Greg Hands:**

The North Seas cooperation, as laid out by Government in its British Energy Security Strategy, will accelerate the development of offshore windfarms with links to continental power grids. This will unleash hundreds of gigawatts of clean energy into North Seas countries' electricity systems.

The Government has strong, cooperative relationships with North Seas partners and has recently concluded a Treaty with Norway on interconnection and a Memorandum of Understanding with Belgium on offshore cooperation.

The Government has also been working with Denmark to agree to formalise cooperation on the energy transition and is currently negotiating the terms of cooperation on North Seas Energy Cooperation with the European Commission.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Candidates: Elections

**Abena Oppong-Asare:** [\[36918\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to support people who have disabilities to stand for election.

**Johnny Mercer:**

It is the Government's ambition to see more disabled people in public office. The Government has been clear that the responsibility for supporting disabled candidates sits with political parties and that the EnAble Fund was an interim measure to give parties time to put their own support in place.

The government is committed to seeing more people with disabilities standing for local elections and becoming councillors. As part of the DLUHC funded 2022/23 local government sector support programme, delivered by the Local Government Association and launched in April this year, DLUHC supports a scheme which includes:

- a coaching programme for disabled councillors to support them as resilient and confident leaders of their communities;
- a campaign to attract more people with disabilities to stand for council elections and a new 'Be a Councillor' guide for disabled candidates who are considering standing for the 2023 elections;
- a bespoke leadership development programme for disabled councillors, which provides councillors with unique networking opportunities and support.

### ■ Chequers

**Matt Western:** [\[39966\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much money from the public purse has been spent on alcohol at Chequers in each year between 2019 and 2022.

**Matt Western:** [\[39967\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the cost of alcoholic drinks at Chequers is paid for by the public purse.

**Michael Ellis:**

I refer the hon. Member to my answer on 20 July 2022 to PQ [37503](#).

**Matt Western:**

**[39968]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average hourly rate of pay is for service staff at Chequers.

**Michael Ellis:**

I refer the hon. Member to my answer on 16 June 2022 to PQ [16972](#).

■ **Civil Service: Redundancy**

**Beth Winter:**

**[36129]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have met with the (i) PCS, (ii) Prospect and (iii) First Division Association civil service trades unions to formally consult those trade unions on the proposal to reduce civil service jobs by 91,000 over three years.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

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

Specific dates where meetings have taken place are:

7th April

11th April

12th April

17th April

20th April

25th April

28th April

12th May

17th May

31st May

16th June

27th June

30th June

14th July

■ **Coronavirus: Death**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[38578]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the increase in the number of deaths in people's own homes since the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Johnny Mercer:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. Accompanying dataset for PQ38578 [PQ\_38578\_dataset.xls]
2. UKSA letter response to PQ38578 [UKSA\_Response\_to\_PQ38578.pdf]

**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[38631\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many deaths his Department has recorded where the death certificate stated related to covid in each month since 2020.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

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

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

**Attachments:**

1. Letter from UKSA response to PQ38631 [UKSA\_Response\_to\_PQ38631.pdf]

**■ Drugs: Misuse****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[38626\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many drug-related deaths were recorded in (a) England and (b) each police service area in each of the last three years.

**Johnny Mercer:**

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

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

**Attachments:**

1. Dataset accompanying response to PQ38626 [PQ38626\_Dataset.xls]
2. UKSA Letter in response to PQ38626 [Letter response to PQ38626.pdf]

**■ Infected Blood Compensation Framework Study****Laura Trott:**[\[38868\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to publish its response to Sir Robert Francis QC's Infected Blood Compensation Framework study.

**Michael Ellis:**

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQ [35990](#) on 18 July 2022.

**■ Infected Blood Inquiry****Catherine West:**[\[39916\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to Sir Robert Francis QC's Infected Blood Compensation Framework Study, published in June 2022, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues and other stakeholders regarding funding the compensation recommended for people infected and affected by contaminated blood and blood products.



**Catherine West:**

**[39917]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to evidence presented to the Infected Blood Inquiry, what steps he is taking to (a) respond to and (b) implement Sir Robert Francis' recommendations.

**Michael Ellis:**

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQ [35990](#) on 18 July 2022.

■ **Nusrat Ghani**

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

**[38705]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the status of the investigation by Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests into the events related to the hon. Member for Wealden's departure from Government in February 2020 is; and with reference to the Cabinet Secretary's oral evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on 28 June 2022, Q448, whether his Department provided briefing to the Prime Minister on that matter.

**Michael Ellis:**

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

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

■ **Universal Credit**

**Ms Karen Buck:**

**[38493]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what date the findings of the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit's research into the experiences of potentially vulnerable people in receipt of Universal Credit was first presented to (a) the then Prime Minister, Rt Hon Theresa May MP and (b) the then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Amber Rudd.

**Johnny Mercer:**

We do not hold centrally those who were in receipt of the report (dated three years ago) but details about the report are available as a Deposited Paper in the Libraries of the House (Ref: [Dep2021-0836](#) Paper No. 7a).

## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ **Churches: Rural Areas**

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

**[26686]**

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, with reference to the Church of England Report, Released for mission, growing the rural church, published in 2015, which identifies that 17.6 per cent of the English population live in rural areas and 40 per cent of churchgoers attend parishes in

rural areas, and with reference to the Parish Finance Statistics 2020 which shows £471 million of parish giving for the whole of the Church of England in 2020, what proportion of that parish giving came from rural parishes.

**Andrew Selous:**

*[Holding answer 8 July 2022]:* A revised analysis based on ONS rural/urban land-use classifications and the latest (2019) mid-year population updates, gives a slightly different set of parishes classified as rural, totalling 24% of the English population. Analysis of church attendance has been complicated in recent years because of the effects of COVID and restrictions on in-person worship, but it is estimated that 37% of attendance is in these parishes. Analysis of the £471million giving reported in 2020 Parish Finance Statistics indicates that 44% came from these parishes in rural areas. Rural areas tend to be wealthier on average; of the population living in the most deprived 10% of parishes, 5% live in these rural areas, and 95% in urban areas.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**Kate Green:**

[R] [\[26762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people accepted under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy remain in Afghanistan as of 28 June 2022.

**James Heappey:**

As of 29 June 2022, we are aware of approximately 650 ARAP eligible principals who last reported their location as Afghanistan to the Ministry of Defence. It is not always possible to know whether all eligible persons are still in the country as some may be out of contact or have moved independently to a safe country.

Neighbouring countries are discouraging movement of Afghans without passports and visas. Whilst we have arrangements for moving people that are operationally sensitive, this can only be achieved at a rate that partners are content to support. The UK government continues to bring people out at the best pace possible.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

[\[26785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2022 to Question 19629 on Afghanistan: Refugees, if he will publish a list of the partners in the region referred to in that Answer; how many fully documented ARAP cases were awaiting processing in the latest period for which figures are available; on what date the oldest fully documented ARAP visa application case awaiting a visa was submitted; and how his Department determines whether an applicant has died before a visa is processed.

**James Heappey:**

We continue to work alongside international partners to relocate eligible Afghans through third countries. Beyond the obvious and hugely appreciated co-operation with Pakistan, other governments in the region have asked that their support is not made public. We respect their wishes and are grateful for their support.

As of 29 June 2022, we have approximately 200 ARAP principal applicants who have received their ARAP offer letters and whose relocation to the UK we are currently processing.

Every ARAP application, including those that are ARAP eligible, is complex with a range of individual circumstances to consider, and we are unable to provide a specific number of those who are documented and those who are not. We continue to support those eligible in their relocation to the UK, as required on a case-by-case basis.

The earliest case awaiting a visa relates to an ARAP visa application made on 19 October 2021.

As confirmed in my answer to Question 19629, no cases have been closed because of the death of an applicant. ARAP caseworkers are in regular contact with eligible persons and will take appropriate steps should they be notified of a death.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

**[38543]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to progress the delivery of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

**James Heappey:**

The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is one of the most generous relocation programmes in the world, and to date we have relocated more than 10,100 eligible individuals and their families to safety in the UK under ARAP.

We have received a very high number of ARAP applications, the vast majority of which are from individuals who are not eligible. However, we continue to be focused on identifying those who are eligible and in need of our support and will be increasing the resources dedicated to this.

We continue to work closely with other Government Departments and international partners to support moves of eligible persons out of Afghanistan and on to the UK. The Ministry of Defence also continues to work with our colleagues across Government to make sure that the Afghans arriving in the UK who have served alongside our Armed Forces over the last twenty years, are given the warmest of welcomes.

The effective operation of the scheme is kept under regular review within the Department, and it remains a priority for Defence and Her Majesty's Government.

■ **Agnes Wanjiru**

**Jess Phillips:**

**[R] [39867]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the case of the death of Agnes Wanjiru has been a barrier to the final ratification of the Defence Cooperation Agreement between the UK and Kenya.

**James Heappey:**

After engagement with the Kenyan Government, and the Defence and Foreign Relations Committee of the Kenyan Parliament, the ratification treaty was tabled on

13 July 2022. That session of the Kenyan Parliament was subsequently cancelled. The existing Defence Cooperation Agreement remains in place in the meantime.

■ **Air Force: HIV Infection**

**Luke Pollard:** [\[38830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2022 to Question 15762 on Air Force: HIV Infection, whether the revised policy to lift the restriction on PrEP use by aircrew and air traffic controllers in the Royal Air Force is on target to be implemented by August 2022.

**Leo Docherty:**

The RAF Manual of Medical Fitness (AP1269A) policy concerning the use of PrEP by military aircrew and controllers has now been ratified by the Aviation Medical Standards Steering Group. This revised policy is now in use and will be published in due course in AP1269A.

■ **Air Force: Military Bases**

**John Healey:** [\[39762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that runways at RAF bases are resilient to extreme temperatures.

**Jeremy Quin:**

All Ministry of Defence (MOD) runways are subject to an inspection and maintenance programme to ensure that MOD runways remain safe to operate.

Runway materials are produced to a specification for use in the UK and used in Cyprus and Gibraltar.

Material specifications are continually reviewed and updated for greater performance, including for use in higher operating temperatures.

■ **Armed Forces: Body Armour**

**John Spellar:** [\[37438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) effectiveness, (b) health and safety and (c) comfort of the current standard of military body armour.

**Jeremy Quin:**

VIRTUS is the current military body armour used by personnel across Defence.

Military body armour is designed to improve the wearer's survivability by protecting them from a variety of blast and fragmentation threats; but it also must be balanced against the wider system requirements – specifically mobility and lethality. Combat effectiveness is measured by the overall interaction between protection, mobility, and firepower.

The current military body armour (VIRTUS) has been developed with DSTL and assessed against industry standards. It was developed to address previously identified capability gaps. It was subjected to field and lab trials testing which concluded that the VIRTUS system increased agility and overall performance..

Military body armour (VIRTUS) complies with current UK Health and Safety at Work legal requirements and meets all other legal and Ministry of Defence obligations.

The current in service body armour (VIRTUS) was consistently rated more favourably in respect of comfort than the other systems in the majority of questions during initial trials, and subjective evaluations relating to usability and functionality were predominately positive. Defence is constantly seeking to refine the capability, and has recently developed a wider variety of body armour accessories for those with smaller statures.

## ■ Armed Forces: Criminal Investigation

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[37588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to combat victim blaming when investigating in-service bullying, harassment, sexual assault and rape cases.

**Leo Docherty:**

On 19 July 2022 the Ministry of Defence (MOD) published a series of new policies as part of our commitment to deal with unacceptable behaviour:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ministry-of-defence-policies-to-tackle-unacceptable-behaviour>

Among these new policies includes measures aimed at tackling victim blaming. The policy 'Zero Tolerance to Unacceptable Sexual Behaviour: A Victim/Survivor Focused Approach' outlines the MOD's policy on victim blaming at heading 3:

*"Supporting people who are victims of unacceptable sexual behaviour must be our priority. Defence wants to ensure that victims of unacceptable sexual behaviour trust that they can report such behaviour, that their report will be listened to, and that they will be supported throughout any investigation. Commanding Officers (COs) are to take this responsibility to victims extremely seriously and any indications that a sexual offence has taken place must be referred to the Service Police. Defence must ensure that victims have the confidence that that their complaint will be investigated in an appropriate and sensitive way and that appropriate action will be taken against any person displaying unacceptable behaviour."*

## ■ Armed Forces: Discharges

**John Healey:**

[38498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average age is for (a) male and (b) female service personnel to be discharged from the armed forces.

**Leo Docherty:**

The average age for male Regular Service personnel to leave the Armed Forces is 30. For female Regular Service personnel, the average age is 31.

■ **Artillery****Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[38545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of introducing longer range field artillery pieces into the British Army.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The British Army is planning to introduce a longer-range artillery system.

The Mobile Fires Platform (MFP) will deliver a 155mm 52 calibre self-propelled artillery system.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[38546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of expanding the number of L118 LIGHT GUN's in service with the British Army.

**Jeremy Quin:**

There is no current plan or requirement to increase the number of L118 Light Guns within the British Army.

■ **AWE: Staff****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[39969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the management arrangements in place for staff in the Atomic Weapons Establishment in ensuring (a) an inclusive and diverse working environment culture, (b) that staff are not subject to any unfair discrimination and (c) that disciplinary procedures are fairly and consistently applied.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) has an established non-discrimination policy, underpinned by a diversity, equality and inclusion strategy, including a behavioural framework for all company employees. The AWE Board, including a Shareholder Non-Executive Director as MOD's representative, holds the AWE Executive team to account on effective and fair staff management, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence.

■ **Defence: Procurement****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[38806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to reform the defence procurement system.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Department is committed to continuous reform of its procurement process to make it more agile and to ensure it delivers the best possible value for money. Our continuing improvement agenda across Defence acquisition covers five themes:

- \*Improving cost estimating and cost control
- \*Improving relationships with industry
- \*Delivering strategic intent and Defence priorities through our requirements
- \*Empowering and enabling programme leadership
- \*Streamlining acquisition and approvals processes and addressing project resourcing challenges.

Steps the Department is currently taking include:

- \*Enhancing the capability and capacity of Senior Responsible Owners
- \*Improving commercial and project delivery skills
- \*Streamlining investment decision-making processes to reduce duplication and drive pace
- \*Supporting the Cabinet Office-led reforms to the UK's public procurement regime, leading on sector specific rules for Defence and Security.

This is consistent with our commitment in the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy, published in March 2021, to increasing the pace and agility of our acquisition processes.

**■ F-35 Aircraft: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[39774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to update the RAF website in respect of the planned unit purchases of F-35b jets.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The RAF Website is continuously updated to reflect programme changes as they occur.

**■ Military Aid: Weather****John Healey:**[\[38505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many MACA requests his Department has received in response to extreme heat in each of the last three years; and of those how many his Department has accepted.

**James Heappey:**

In the last three years, the Ministry of Defence has received two Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) requests relating to extreme heat. In May and June 2020, Defence was requested to support fighting wildfires in Wareham Forest and Hatfield

Moor respectively. Both MACA requests were accepted but were subsequently cancelled by the requesting Department before they were activated.

■ **Military Operations: Safety**

**Matt Western:** [\[39965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many cattle were accidentally killed by military operations in 2021-22.

**James Heappey:**

This information is not held by the Ministry of Defence, and we have had no claims for compensation for cattle accidentally killed as a result of military operations in 2021-22.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Non-departmental Public Bodies**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[37595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department last reviewed the human resource policies of non-departmental public bodies within the defence sector; and what assessment his Department has made of the level of adherence to human resources best practice of those bodies.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[37596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the appraisal procedures in place for the performance of staff of non-departmental public bodies in the defence sector.

**Leo Docherty:**

For those Non-Departmental Public Bodies that employ public servants, responsibility for their human resources policy is delegated to the organisation.

■ **NATO Countries: Radar**

**John Healey:** [\[38503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many NATO allies use the European Common Radar System Mk 2 radar.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The UK is currently the only NATO nation investing in the European Common Radar System Mk 2 radar.

■ **RAF Coningsby: Typhoon Aircraft**

**Matt Western:** [\[39964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether approval by military staff was sought prior to the Prime Minister taking control of a Tycoon fighter jet.



**Jeremy Quin:**

Yes. Prior approval for the Prime Minister to take limited and temporary control of the aircraft was received. Once airborne this is dependent upon the pilot's assessment of circumstances and conditions, for safety reasons.

**Ranger Regiment: Training****Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[35881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service members have passed the new Ranger Regiment cadre course as on 8 July 2022.

**James Heapey:**

I am withholding the number of Service personnel who have completed the Ranger Assessment Cadre and Ranger Course, as disclosure would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness, or security of the Ranger Regiment and therefore the British Armed Forces.

**Satellites****John Healey:**[\[39761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 21 of the Integrated Review 2021, what recent assessment he has made of the possibility of being able to launch British satellites from the UK by 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The UK Spaceflight Programme is led by the UK Space Agency. It aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch from UK spaceports from 2022.

The Ministry of Defence is supporting this ambition. It has provided security and defence advice to the UK Space Agency-led launch programme and there will be Defence research and development payloads on the inaugural Virgin Orbit launch from UK soil later this year.

**Typhoon Aircraft: Environment Protection****Matt Western:**[\[39962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the environmental impact of a Typhoon fighter jet taking flight.

**Matt Western:**[\[39963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an estimate of the average amount of carbon dioxide that is emitted during a 30-minute flight of a Tycoon fighter jet.

**Jeremy Quin:**

There is no viable carbon-free fuel currently available to complete Typhoon's operational mission which is critical to the defence of the nation. However, the RAF has introduced measures to ensure that greater proportions of routine training can be achieved using flight simulators. This will be further enhanced through incremental

acquisition of Project Gladiator, which will allow the UK to undertake additional synthetic training for air, land and maritime forces, all on a secure network. This therefore enhances sustainability, as aircrew will require fewer live flying sorties to maintain combat effectiveness.

More broadly, the RAF is committed to achieving NetZero by 2040 and is leading efforts international efforts to harness collaboration between global air and space forces on the common challenges faced, working together to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and existing supply chains, using new technologies including sustainable and synthetic aviation fuels and alternative sources of energy.

### ■ UK Space Command: Employment

**John Healey:** [\[39759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of UK personnel that will be based at UK Space Command in each year until 2030.

**James Heappey:**

The current projected forecast for the number of UK Whole Force personnel at UK Space Command up to 2025, is as follows:

Financial Year (FY)2022-23 = 589

FY2023-24 = 602

FY2024-25 = 614

As the Command is still developing future workforce forecasts through to 2030 are still being established and will be dependent on the evolution of the Command.

### ■ UK Space Command: Finance

**John Healey:** [\[39760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the annual budget for UK Space Command in each year until 2030.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Defence Command Plan set out that we would spend an additional £1.4 billion on space over the next ten years. The Department does not routinely publicise forecast or breakdowns of future spend, however previous years spend will be captured and published in the Annual Report and Accounts.

### ■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**John Healey:** [\[33682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much (a) his Department and (b) the Navy has spent in total on planning and taking primacy for channel crossings in 2022.

**James Heappey:**

The cost of Defence activity relating to Channel crossings in financial Year 2022-23 will not be known until the accounts have closed in the summer of 2023.

Operation ISOTROPE is being fulfilled from naval assets currently assigned to tasks in UK waters and, as such, the additional costs to the Department for their tasking on ISOTROPE as opposed to other taskings in Home Waters is estimated to be relatively modest.

## ■ **Veterans: Identity Cards**

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

**[38542]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Veterans have received their Veteran ID card under the Veteran's Recognition Scheme as of 18 July 2022.

**Leo Docherty:**

As of 30 June 2022, 51,404 service leavers had received Veterans' Recognition Cards. As announced during Armed Forces week, more than £1 million in new money is being invested into a new digital service for veterans, due to be available for all veterans in 2023, which will make it easier and quicker to demonstrate military service in order to access a range of government and charity services. This, in turn, will help ensure that Recognition Cards are given only to those with verified service. The Government remains committed to delivering Veterans' Recognition Cards and will advise of a timescale for final delivery when this work is complete.

## **DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**

## ■ **BBC News**

**Munira Wilson:**

**[40007]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the merger of BBC News and BBC World News on the effectiveness of public service news broadcasting (a) in the UK and (b) overseas; and what discussions she has had with representatives of the BBC on funding to maintain those services.

**Matt Warman:**

The BBC's proposal to merge BBC News and BBC World News means that the BBC will continue to provide a 24 hour news channel both domestically and abroad. This forms part of the BBC's plan announced on 26 May to keep the BBC relevant and offer value to all audiences in an on-demand age, with a particular focus on plans to build a digital-first BBC.

We believe the recent licence fee settlement is a fair settlement for the BBC, which will see the BBC continue to receive £3.7bn in annual public funding to deliver its Mission and Public Purposes and continue doing what it does best. We recognise the BBC, just like individual households, businesses and other organisations across the UK, is having to make difficult financial decisions. But the BBC is operationally and editorially independent from the government, and decisions over its spending and services are a matter for them.

The Government strongly values the BBC's work in promoting UK values globally through its independent and impartial broadcasting. The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office will also continue to provide the BBC World Service with £94.4m p/a for the period 2022-2025.

## ■ BBC: Television Channels

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

**[38491]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment (a) her Department and (b) Ofcom have made of the impact on low income households without broadband of broadcast TV channels, including CBBC and other public service broadcast channels from the BBC, going online only.

**Matt Warman:**

The BBC is operationally and editorially independent from the government, and decisions over its spending and services are a matter for the BBC. We recognise the BBC, just like individual households, businesses and other organisations across the UK, is having to make difficult financial decisions.

However, the government is clear that the BBC must continue to deliver its Mission and Public Purposes, which includes providing high quality, distinctive content and services. The BBC must also comply with the requirements in their Operating Licence, as set and regulated independently by Ofcom. This includes ensuring an amount of children's television is shown prominently on television.

We note that Ofcom is currently conducting a public consultation on a new Operating Licence to give the BBC greater flexibility to deliver its Mission and Public Purposes rather than having to meet specific quantitative quotas. We will continue to discuss Ofcom's proposals with them as the consultation progresses.

## ■ Broadband: Misrepresentation

**Drew Hendry:**

**[39900]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of potential risks to the consumer of fibre to the cabinet products being sold as fibre products.

**Matt Warman:**

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all media.

In 2017, the ASA considered the case of whether fibre to the cabinet products could be marketed as fibre. Their [conclusion](#) was that 'the word 'fibre' is unlikely to mislead consumers as it is currently used in the advertising of part-fibre broadband services.'

The Government understands the significant benefits full-fibre broadband brings over fibre to the cabinet technologies, and that is why we are investing £5 billion in Project Gigabit to ensure at least 85% of the UK will have gigabit-capable connectivity by 2025.

## ■ Broadband: Prices

**Jamie Stone:**

[\[39959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to raise awareness of social tariffs on broadband packages for consumers in receipt of benefits.

**Matt Warman:**

Raising awareness of social tariffs amongst eligible households is a key priority for DCMS.

We are working closely with other departments including the Department for Education, and the Department for Work and Pensions, to share information on the availability of social tariffs with libraries, local authorities, schools and regional job centres. We have also engaged a number of charities to circulate social tariff messaging to help reach those who may qualify for support.

On 27 June, the Secretary of State secured a set of public [commitments](#) from the UK's major mobile and broadband providers to support families through the rise in the cost of living, which includes increasing efforts to promote their social tariff offers. To support the sector, the government is developing eligibility checking software which will allow a more efficient application process. We expect this work to conclude over the summer.

## ■ Broadband: Universal Service Obligation

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[38487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of changes in TV distribution methods on universal access to public service broadcasting, including for low income households that cannot afford broadband.

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[38490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the effect of the learning and development of young people where access to TV channels, including public service broadcast channels, are only available over the internet to those families who can afford to pay for those services.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government is supportive of a modern system of public service broadcasting that remains relevant and can continue to meet the needs of UK audiences in the future. In particular, the government believes that television audiences should continue to have access to a wide range of public service content on a free-to-air basis.

The rapid growth in the take-up of superfast broadband and the proliferation of devices capable of connecting to the internet is changing the way we access audiovisual content. For example, 79% of households with a TV set now choose to connect it to the internet, giving them access to a wide array of additional services. These include both free-to-air and subscription-based video-on-demand services.

As set out in our Broadcasting White Paper, the government is taking steps to support public service broadcasting and to protect audiences who cannot (or choose not to) access these additional services. In particular, we facilitated the extension of the DTT ("Freeview") platform until 2034, in recognition of the important role it will continue to play as a means of watching both public service and commercial television. This includes programmes intended to contribute to the learning and development of young people.

In addition, support is available for low-income households to access affordable broadband. A range of low-cost, broadband social tariffs are available in 99% of the UK. BT, Virgin Media O2, Sky, and other providers offer broadband social tariffs starting at £15 per month for households in receipt of Universal Credit and other means tested benefits. In addition, on 27 June, all the UK's major broadband and mobile operators agreed a set of public [commitments](#) to support households with their connectivity costs.

For these reasons, the government has not undertaken an assessment of the effect on the learning and development of young people of TV channels only being available over the internet to those families who can afford to pay for those services.

#### ■ Channel Islands: Internet and Satellites

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[31769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will hold discussions with her counterpart in the Channel Islands on (a) the potential merits of allowing Starlink to operate in the Channel Islands and (b) steps that could be taken to support faster internet speeds in remote parts of the Channel Islands.

**Matt Warman:**

You may know that Ofcom has recently implemented an updated licensing framework for non-Geostationary Satellite networks in the UK. My officials will liaise with your office, relevant colleagues in the Channel Islands and Ofcom to arrange an exploratory meeting between officials.

#### ■ Commonwealth Games 2022: Pollution Control

**Tim Farron:**

[\[38600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding has been allocated to Powell's Pool to ensure that it meets acceptable water quality safety standards for the Commonwealth Games Triathlon and Paratriathlon events.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Birmingham City Council is responsible for Powell's Pool as part of the wider operation, management and maintenance of Sutton Park. Birmingham City Council has been regularly monitoring the water quality in Powell's Pool and sharing this data with the Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee. Any funding allocated to ensuring the pool meets acceptable water quality safety standards for the Games comes from

Birmingham City Council's existing budgets and not from the budget for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

## ■ Gambling

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[39807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent progress her Department has made on publication of the White Paper following its review of gambling legislation.

**Damian Collins:**

The Gambling Act Review is wide-ranging and aims to ensure that the regulation of gambling is fit for the digital age. We will publish a White Paper setting out our conclusions and next steps in due course.

## ■ Internet

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[38486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has asked Ofcom to consider how its current review of net neutrality guidelines relates to the future of TV distribution and the enabling of affordable, inclusive reach of IP connectivity; and if she will make a statement.

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[38489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has asked Ofcom to set out what it considers to be the relationship between its current review of net neutrality guidelines and the plans set out in the Broadcasting White Paper to carry out a future review on market changes that may affect the future of content distribution.

**Matt Warman:**

In September 2021, Ofcom launched a review of how its net neutrality guidelines are functioning, noting that there have been significant changes since the rules were first introduced. The review takes into account the views of a variety of stakeholders, including broadcasters and content distributors, with a consultation on proposals expected later this year. We look forward to their findings.

The Government recognises that the future of digital and telecoms infrastructure in the UK, including issues around net neutrality, is linked to the future of TV distribution. In the Broadcasting White Paper, the government reaffirmed its commitment to the future of the Digital Terrestrial Television platform (Freeview) at least until the early 2030s. It also stated that before the end of 2025, it will ask Ofcom to undertake a review on market changes that may affect the future of content distribution before the end of 2025. Next steps will be set out in due course.



## ■ Listed Events: Welsh Language

**Ben Lake:** [\[38803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to bring forward legislative proposals for the Media Bill, as announced in the Queen's Speech 2022; and what assessment she has made of the potential merits of ensuring Welsh language free-to-air coverage of national sporting events.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government will introduce the Media Bill when Parliamentary time allows.

The listed events regime is designed to ensure that the nation's favourite sporting events – like Wimbledon and the Olympics – are available to be shown on free to air television and can be enjoyed by as wide an audience as possible.

In its [Broadcasting White Paper](#), the government announced its intention to make qualification for the listed events regime a Public Service Broadcaster (PSB) specific benefit. This will more clearly enshrine the important role our PSBs, including S4C the Welsh language public service broadcaster, play in distributing important and valuable content to UK audiences.

## ■ Mental Health: Emergency Services

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[28454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the Gratitude Games.

**Greg Smith:** [\[28494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the Gratitude Games.

**Derek Twigg:** [\[31250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will take steps to help support the organisation of the 2023 Gratitude Games.

**Greg Smith:** [\[35060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of plans for the Gratitude Games.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government recognises the impact that sport and physical activity has on physical and mental health, and the importance of welfare and wellbeing for everyone participating in sport at all levels.

The Government's role in the support of bidding for and hosting major sporting events is set out in the Gold Framework. The Gratitude Games do not meet the criteria as set out in the Gold Framework and therefore would not be within scope for support. We encourage all organisations to continue to work together to support mental health through sport and physical activity.



## ■ Mobile Phones: Fraud

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

[40015]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has received representations on unauthorised text messages causing charges for consumers.

**Matt Warman:**

DCMS regularly engages with industry, regulators and other government departments on the issue of nuisance communications, including unsolicited marketing communications.

Services which charge consumers for receiving text messages (premium SMS) are regulated by the Phone-paid Services Authority (PSA). In 2019, the PSA took enforcement action against companies for misleading and charging consumers for services without their consent, and introduced new rules to require a two-stage approval process before taking out a new subscription service. The PSA also extended these requirements to one-off purchases in their [2021 Code of Practice](#).

Under the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR), organisations must not send unauthorised marketing text messages to individuals without their prior consent, and consumers must be able to opt-out of future messaging, free of charge except for the cost of the initial transmission of refusal.

If consumers are concerned about receiving unauthorised marketing texts, they can report these to the [Information Commissioner's Office](#). In relation to SMS charging, we would encourage people to contact the [PSA](#) to seek advice.

## ■ Music: EU Countries

**Louise Haigh:**

[37553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support UK touring acts that are facing challenges as a result of being limited to making three stops in Europe.

**Louise Haigh:**

[37554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing a transitional support package to ensure that UK artists and crews have easy access to the European market.

**Louise Haigh:**

[37555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will support the enablement of unfettered movement of specialist vehicles transporting concert equipment and personnel between multiple points across the EU.

**Louise Haigh:** [37556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to ensure that musicians and their entourages are able to work across Europe without impediment.

**Louise Haigh:** [37557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps with her counterparts in EU member states to agree non-onerous, zero or low cost work and travel arrangements in Europe for musicians and other industry professionals.

**Louise Haigh:** [37558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will (a) make an assessment of the potential merits of streamlining entry routes into the UK for international artists and their entourages and (b) ensure that immigration guidance for that sector is up-to-date, comprehensive and accessible.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government is committed to supporting the touring sector to adapt to new arrangements with the EU. We have worked with the sector and directly with Member States to clarify arrangements, press for specific changes from Member States, and introduce unilateral measures where possible.

With regards to the movement of vehicles, the Department for Transport has implemented a Dual Registration measure. This enables specialist event hauliers who have an established haulage base outside Great Britain (GB) and who also maintain a GB haulage base and operate for hire and reward to temporarily transfer their vehicles between their two operator licences. We have also confirmed that 'splitter vans' that are carrying both equipment (which is not for sale) and up to 9 people do not fall in the scope of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), and their use is therefore subject to the applicable Member State law.

EU Member States are principally responsible for deciding the rules governing what work UK visitors can undertake. Following the Government's engagement, almost all EU Member States have confirmed they offer visa and work permit free routes for UK musicians and creative performers. This includes Spain and Greece, who introduced visa and work permit free touring routes in November 2021 and June 2022 respectively, following extensive Government and sectoral engagement.

We are working with Member States to ensure their guidance is clear and accessible. We have published [general business traveller summaries on GOV.UK](#), as well as ['landing pages' on GOV.UK](#) for the creative sectors.

The Government supports our world leading creative industries across the UK through a range of export support programmes, including the successful Music Export Growth Scheme and the International Showcase Fund. In addition, UK businesses, including touring professionals, can get answers to practical questions online and by telephone through the Export Support Service.

The UK's immigration rules for touring creative professionals are comparatively more generous than in many EU Member States. The UK's domestic rules allow musicians, entertainers and artists (and their technical staff) from non-visa national countries, such as EU Member States and the US, to undertake paid work in the UK through routes which are set out on specific pages for the creative sectors on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

## ■ National Lottery: Licensing

**Mr Steve Baker:**

**[38645]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Gambling Commission takes into account potential national security implications when awarding National Lottery licences.

**Damian Collins:**

The process of awarding the licence to run the National Lottery is governed by the National Lottery etc. Act (1993). Under the Act, the Gambling Commission has a duty to ensure that any person who either runs or benefits from the running of the National Lottery is fit and proper and that the Licensee's operation meets high standards of propriety. The award of the licence is distinct from an acquisition - at no point is the operator appointed to run the lottery the owner of the National Lottery as an asset. The 4th National Lottery licence is due to begin in 2024.

During the competition to run the 4th National Lottery licence, the Commission carried out fit and proper tests on all 4 final stage applicants. Fit and proper checks examine the identity, integrity, criminality and financial standing of those who run, or benefit from running, the National Lottery, or are applying to do so. As part of its duties under the Act, the Commission cannot award the licence unless it is satisfied that the proposed licensee is fit and proper. The Commission is also required to revoke a licence if it becomes satisfied that the licensee is no longer, or indeed never was, fit and proper.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Gambling Commission, as a responsible regulator, sought assurances that none of the final stage applicants were impacted by sanctions against the Russian regime. The Commission was satisfied that this was the case.

In addition, following the announcement of Allwyn as the preferred applicant in March 2022, standard vetting checks (Baseline Personnel Security Standard or BPSS level) are being carried out as planned, on behalf of the Commission, by UK Security Vetting on key people connected with the proposal. These include Qualifying Direct Shareholders, which is any person who holds at least 5% interest in the licensee. Full details of what is included in a BPSS level check is outlined on the UKSV [website](https://www.uksv.co.uk).

## ■ Scouts and Guides: Finance

**Kim Leadbeater:**

**[36143]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 30208 on Youth Organisations: Kirklees, what

assessment her Department has made of the potential role of scouting in the National Youth Guarantee scheme.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The National Youth Guarantee is this government's commitment that by 2025 every young person will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and volunteering opportunities.

As part of the National Youth Guarantee funding we intend to launch a Uniformed Youth Fund later this year to increase access to Uniformed Youth groups across the country. The fund will allow organisations such as the Scouts to increase provision in areas with unmet demand, improving the wellbeing of young people and helping them to develop skills for life and work.

■ **Sports Competitors: Gender Recognition**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[39850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to help ensure that people born male who are transitioning their gender cannot participate in female competitive sports.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As the UK sports councils concluded when they published transgender inclusion guidance for domestic sports last year, balancing transgender inclusion, safety and fairness at all times is not possible in every sport. When it comes to competitive sport, the government believes that fairness has to be the primary consideration. That is why in June 2022 the Culture Secretary convened a meeting of our domestic governing bodies to urge them to follow a policy that competitive women's sport must be reserved for people born of the female sex. Sports governing bodies each have their own rules on transgender issues and it is appropriate that they can determine the right position for their own sport.

The Government is clear that a way forward is needed that protects and shows compassion to all athletes, whilst being clear that the integrity of competition must be maintained. We want to ensure that everybody in this country has the opportunity to play and enjoy sport.

■ **Sports: Mental Health**

**Ian Lavery:**

[\[34935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of mental health and wellbeing training requirements for qualified sports coaches.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government recognises the importance of welfare and mental wellbeing for people participating in sport at all levels. An inclusive and professional sport and physical activity workforce is key to supporting people to be active. We want people taking part in sport and physical activity to have the best possible experience, which

means that the workforce must be recruited, developed and supported in the right way.

Sport England, our arm's length body for grassroots sport in England, funds a number of projects which aim to address knowledge and skills gaps of coaches in areas such as mental health. In 2019 they launched an e-learning course developed alongside Mind, UK Coaching and 1st4Sport which aims to help coaches and sport and physical activity providers increase their knowledge of mental health including how to support and engage people experiencing mental health problems. In 2020 Sport England also launched a duty of care toolkit with UK Coaching to equip coaches with the knowledge and skills to provide better coaching experiences and better look after themselves.

In recent years UK Sport, DCMS's arm's length body for elite sport, and the English Institute for Sport also have launched a programme of [mental health education](#) to promote positive mental health amongst coaches and support staff and encourage them to develop self-care strategies.

We will continue to work with our arm's length bodies, sports bodies, and sector partners to promote good coaching which benefits both participants and coaches.

## ■ Swimming Pools

**Kevin Brennan:**

**[35869]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional funding for local authorities to help them manage the impact of rising energy prices on the operating costs of swimming pools in public leisure centres.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

We recognise the importance of ensuring public access to leisure facilities, including swimming pools, which are great spaces for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy, and which play an important role within communities.

We also recognise the impact rising energy prices will have on businesses of all sizes. Ofgem and the government are in regular contact with business groups and suppliers to understand the challenges they face and explore ways to protect consumers and businesses.

The ongoing responsibility of providing access to public leisure facilities lies at Local Authority level, and the government continues to encourage Local Authorities to invest in leisure facilities. Sport, and local authorities, are devolved matters, therefore investment decisions concerning them in Wales are the responsibility of the relevant administration.

**Kevin Brennan:**

**[35870]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing capital funding to support the transition of swimming pools in public leisure centres to renewable energy sources.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme provides grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures. The scheme supports the aim of reducing emissions from public sector buildings by 75% by 2037, as set out in the Heat and Buildings Strategy and the Net Zero Strategy in October 2021. For example last year, during Phase 3a, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council was awarded £1,728,500 to decarbonise the swimming pool at Todmorden Sports Centre.

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund are open to public sector bodies in England and areas of reserved public services across the UK. Sport, and Local Government, are devolved matters, therefore investment decisions concerning them in Wales are the responsibility of the relevant administration.

**■ Telecommunications****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[37572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials in her Department have had with representatives of companies with powers under the Electronic Communications Code since March 2021.

**Matt Warman:**

The full list of Ministerial meetings is published on GOV.UK on a quarterly basis.

Ministers and officials meet with representatives of companies with powers under the Electronic Communications Code (the Code), on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of policy and delivery matters, including those related to the Electronic Communications Code.

**■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[37576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an estimate of the number of local authorities that have had reduced rental income from telecommunications apparatus following renegotiations with (a) network and (b) infrastructure providers after the Electronic Communications Code was reformed in 2017; and if she will make a statement.

**Matt Warman:**

The reforms made to the Code in 2017 were intended to make it cheaper and easier for digital infrastructure to be deployed, maintained and upgraded. These reforms recognised the increasing importance of digital communications services to UK consumers and businesses, and to the wider economy.

The Government recognised that the reforms would mean landowners receiving lower payments for allowing their land or buildings to be used than had previously been the case. However, these changes were only introduced following an extensive period of consultation and research, and were considered necessary to reduce operator costs and encourage the industry investment required for the UK to get the digital communications infrastructure it needs.

The 2017 reforms did not retrospectively alter the terms of agreements that had been completed before the 2017 reforms came into force. However, once a Code agreement expires, it is open to either the operator or the site provider to seek a renewal of that agreement and negotiate new terms.

Most Code agreements are agreed on a consensual basis and often include a confidentiality clause, which means that information about its financial terms agreed cannot be shared with others or made publicly available, except in limited circumstances or with the other party's permission. It is therefore not possible to estimate the number of local authorities which may have seen a reduction in rent following the expiry and renegotiation of Code agreements on their property since 2017.

## ■ **Television Channels: Competition**

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[38488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will bring forward the plans in the Broadcasting White Paper for Ofcom to undertake a review on market changes that may affect the future of content distribution before the end of 2025, in the context of (a) the nine channels leaving Freeview this year and (b) the BBC's plans to remove CBBC from broadcast TV.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government is committed to the future of the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) platform (better known as "Freeview") which remains popular with UK audiences and which plays an important role in supporting the delivery of public service broadcasting. It is our expectation that DTT will continue to be an important content distribution channel at least into the early 2030s. In recognition of this, the government has facilitated the long term renewal of DTT licences until 2034.

As set out in the Broadcasting White Paper, the government will ask Ofcom to undertake a review of market changes that may affect the future of content distribution before the end of 2025. Next steps in relation to this will be set out in due course.

## ■ **Theatre: Prescott**

**Ms Marie Rimmer:**

[\[33833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the Shakespeare North project in Prescott on arts



education and the local regeneration of the town for residents following her visit to that project.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Secretary of State visited Shakespeare North in Prescot last month so she could see personally the contribution the project has made and will continue to make to the local economy and the ambitious and extensive educational outreach that is planned. Shakespeare North provides many opportunities for children and young people to experience creative and cultural activities and works with education providers to ensure they can engage with the venue in a meaningful way. Education partnerships from Shakespeare North provide local schools with workshops, access to performances and Continuing Professional Development opportunities for teachers wanting to promote cultural learning and creative practice in their classrooms. Shakespeare North's community programmes are providing creative activities and opportunities to engage with their local culture and heritage through workshops for people of all ages. These activities exemplify the Secretary of State's priority to promote access to arts and culture and encourage residents to draw on the rich heritage of their local area.

Shakespeare North has received capital funding from central and local government, including: £5 million Treasury grant in 2016; £12 million Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (increased from £6 million); £10.5 million Liverpool City Region (LCR) (increased from £6.5 million); and £3 million from the Capital Kickstart fund.

The Government recognises that improving access to high-quality arts and culture in previously under-served areas of the country is critical to giving people pride in the cities, towns and villages in which they work and live, helping people in every part of the country to prosper and to fulfil their full potential. This is why the Government instructed Arts Council England to invest all the additional money (£43.5 million) agreed in the 2021 Spending Review outside London and where possible in Levelling Up for Culture Places – 109 areas that the Government and Arts Council England have jointly identified as having had historically low investment in arts and culture, which will be targeted for future investment. One of the areas is St Helen's, which has already received over £6 million in funding since 2018 for 36 projects, such as Heart of Glass, which works with artists and community groups to unlock stories, reimagine public spaces and forge new connections.

Earlier this year, the Department for Education's Schools White Paper shared their intention to work with DCMS to develop and publish a Cultural Education Plan, working in close collaboration with Arts Council England, Historic England and the British Film Institute. This plan will include how best to support children and young people to take part in cultural opportunities in their local areas and to support those who wish to pursue careers in creative and cultural industries.



## ■ Youth Services: Finance

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[36142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the National Youth Guarantee funds will become available.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

DCMS received £560 million to deliver the National Youth Guarantee over the Spending Review period.

The first phase of the Youth Investment Fund saw £12 million spent in financial year 21/22 in key levelling up areas, which has provided funding for over 400 youth organisations. Funding was used for a wide range of equipment to assist with youth activities, as well as capital improvements that will reduce overheads and running costs. Phase Two will fund the construction or redevelopment of up to 300 youth facilities, targeting investment in left-behind areas, where young people have the greatest need and lowest provision. £368 million has been allocated to Phase Two, which will open for bids in summer 2022.

DCMS also funds the National Citizen Service (NCS) which is running a range of activities during the 2022 summer holidays, providing access to adventures away from home, skills development, engaging in local community projects and volunteering opportunities for thousands of young people across the country. NCS has already received £72 million this year and will receive around £100 million in the following two years. Additionally, DCMS has already signed a grant agreement with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme for £4.2 million, enabling them to offer every state secondary school in England the chance to participate, in collaboration with the Department for Education.

Finally DCMS has committed £6 million to the #iwill fund, fully matched by the National Lottery Community Fund, to support tens of thousands more youth volunteering opportunities.

Further funding to tackle Uniformed Youth waiting lists will begin to be released later this year.

## ■ Youth Work: West Midlands

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[38794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many (a) youth centres and (b) youth workers there were in (i) Birmingham and (ii) the West Midlands in each of the last 12 years.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[38795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much the Government has spent on youth services in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands in each of the last 12 years.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

We currently do not hold information on the number of youth workers and youth centres in Birmingham, however we are working with the National Youth Agency to conduct the [National Youth Sector Census](#) to better understand the spread of services, and number of youth workers in different areas across the country.

As set out in section 507B of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to 'secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people'. This is funded from the Local Government settlement, which was over £12 billion last year.

DCMS is currently reviewing the statutory duty and its associated guidance to assess the effectiveness after a call for responses from key youth stakeholders. Local authorities are required by section 507B(12) to have regard to the statutory guidance when exercising their functions in relation to the statutory duty.

**EDUCATION****■ Adoption and Children in Care: Education****Rachael Maskell:**[\[39904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Adoption Barometer Report entitled a stocktake of adoption in the UK, published June 2022, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of (a) the finding that 68 per cent of established adoptive families struggle to get the support their children need in education and (b) the report's recommendation that all educational professionals be trained and resourced to understand the specific needs of care experienced children and young people in an educational setting.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

The department recognises the findings in the Adoption Barometer Report that children adopted from care may need additional support in education. The experiences and barriers that looked-after children face do not disappear when they leave care through adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Orders, which can mean they experience poorer outcomes than children who have never been in care.

That is why all local authorities in England are required to appoint a Virtual School Head, who has a statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children. This gives schools, parents, and guardians access to Virtual School Head expert advice on supporting the educational needs of previously looked-after children, including on how best to use Pupil Premium Plus funding to support them.

All maintained schools and academies must also appoint a designated teacher, who should be the central point of contact for parents or guardians about their child's progress at school. The designated teacher has a leadership role in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on

the school's roll, which involves ensuring the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matter and their personal, emotional, and academic needs are prioritised. This includes understanding the impact that pre-care and care adverse experiences can have on looked-after and previously looked-after children and how to access further support where necessary.

## ■ **Chemistry: GCE A-level**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[28920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with representatives of AQA about grade allocations following the reported leak of A level chemistry paper 2; and if he will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

The department has not had discussions with representatives of AQA about the alleged leak of material from an A level chemistry paper. While serious exam malpractice remains rare, it is vital that any breach is thoroughly investigated by the exam boards.

Exam boards have well established processes in place to manage such incidents. AQA have confirmed that their Exams Integrity team is investigating these reports and they will take any action necessary, including working with the police.

While such leaks are very rare, exam boards have demonstrated previously that they are able to effectively gather evidence about the students who had unauthorised access to any questions before the exam was taken. In the event of a leak, Ofqual will work with the exam board to minimise the impact on students.

## ■ **Children's Commissioner for England**

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[\[34942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the agreement which his Department has made with the Children's Commissioner for England allowing her to take up a director position on the School-Led Development Trust, which is funded by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the arrangements in place to ensure that the Children's Commissioner for England maintains independence from (a) Government and (b) organisations outside Government.

**Will Quince:**

The Children's Commissioner's role, functions, powers, and independence are set out in the Children Act 2004. Pursuant to Schedule 1 of the Children Act 2004, the Children's Commissioner for England is a Corporate Sole and, therefore, independent from government and not to be regarded as the servant or agent of the Crown.

The School-Led Development Trust (SLDT) is running the National Institute of Teaching under contract to the department. SLDT is currently a private limited company seeking independent charitable status and, as such, it is responsible for their own recruitment processes for staff and trustees.

The Children's Commissioner has declared her role as Trustee of SLDT on the Office of Children's Commissioner website under its register of interests.

## ■ Climate Change: Education

**Munira Wilson:** [\[33012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to (a) educate and (b) empower children and young people with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle the climate emergency.

**Munira Wilson:** [\[33013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he will make additional funding available to schools for the purposes of improving their environmental sustainability.

### **Will Quince:**

Within the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework, as well as the national curriculum, all children learn about nature, the causes and impacts of climate change and the importance of sustainability.

An environmental science A level is already available, and, by 2025, the department aims to introduce a natural history GCSE, giving young people a further opportunity to develop a deeper knowledge of the natural world.

By considering the whole physical education estate as a virtual National Education Nature Park, the department will engage children and young people with the natural world and directly involve them in measuring and improving biodiversity in their nursery, school, college, or university, thus developing knowledge and skills relevant for a changing world.

A Climate Leaders Award will complement classroom learning and allow the department to celebrate education providers, children, and young people for developing their connection with nature and making a contribution to a sustainable future.

The department recognises the importance of meeting the challenge to make schools sustainable. Our new Sustainability and Climate Change strategy, published on 21 April 2022, sets out how we are gathering evidence on new technologies and innovative approaches to retrofitting school buildings to make them greener.

Since 2015, the department has allocated over £13 billion in capital funding to improve the condition of school buildings, which can support improvements to energy efficiency. In addition, the school rebuilding programme will transform 500 schools over the next decade, with all new buildings being net zero carbon in operation. The department continues to work with the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to help education providers access the £1.4 billion Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

## ■ Department for Education: Consultants

**Jon Trickett:**

**[33694]**

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

**Will Quince:**

The department spent the following amounts on consultancy in the respective financial years:

- 2021/22: £6.8 million \*
- 2020/21: £8.7 million
- 2019/20: £12.7 million

*\* Unaudited. As a result, this value may change.*

Within the time and value for money considerations applicable, it has been possible to provide an analysis of the 2021/22 value, by supplier. This analysis is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. 33694\_table [33694\_table\_DfE\_consultancy\_expenditure\_2021\_22.pdf]

## ■ Department for Education: Contracts

**Jon Trickett:**

**[29881]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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.

**Will Quince:**

Details of government contracts from 2016 above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, are published on the GOV.UK Contracts Finder site which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>. As Contracts Finder was implemented in 2016, not all records before this time are held centrally.

For the July 2022 to June 2023 period, the total anticipated number of contracts for the department only (not including agencies and non-departmental public bodies) worth between £1 and £3 million is currently three. For the same period, the total number of contracts over £3 million is 136. This is the anticipated project pipeline and the department makes no commitment that the annual value of any contract will be as stated, or the timing of any future procurement exercises will be as stated. The sourcing route for any subsequent procurement has not been determined. For example, it could be via frameworks managed by Crown Commercial Services or open competitions. The department cannot therefore guarantee that these opportunities will be available to all suppliers.

We do not hold spend data on contract monitoring or how many officials work on monitoring in each year from 2010.

■ **Department for Education: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[31791\]](#)

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

**Will Quince:**

As of 8 July 2022, 77 officials hold electronic purchasing cards that allow them to make purchases on behalf of the Department for Education. This number comprises 57 officials in the department and 20 officials in its executive agencies.

While the population of officials holding cards is largely static, it has not been possible to verify the exact number on 31 March 2022 in the time available to respond.

■ **Department for Education: Official Hospitality**

**Jon Trickett:** [\[27521\]](#)

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

**Will Quince:**

The exact information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

■ **Department for Education: Pay**

**Jon Trickett:** [\[28386\]](#)

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

**Will Quince:**

The department's wage ratio, based on gross basic salary only, on 1 April each year (the date when any pay award is implemented) is as follows:

- 2020 – 8.0 : 1
- 2021 – 7.6 : 1
- 2022 – 7.4 : 1

**Abena Oppong-Asare:** [\[30189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Living Wage Foundation's real wage calculator, if he will make estimate of how many (a) direct employees, (b) contractors and (c) agency workers who work in his 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.

**Will Quince:**

The table below shows the department's estimate, including its agencies and arm's length bodies, of the number of direct employees, contractors and agency workers who receive a wage below either the UK Real Living Wage or the London Living Wage.

Table 1: Estimate of the number of people paid below the UK Real Living Wage or the London Living Wage.

	BASED OUTSIDE OF GREATER LONDON AND RECEIVE A WAGE BELOW THE UK REAL LIVING WAGE	BASED INSIDE GREATER LONDON AND RECEIVE A WAGE BELOW THE LONDON LIVING WAGE
Direct employees	Less than 1,500 employees	Less than 5 employees
Contractors	0	0
Agency workers	0	0

**Pat McFadden:**

[\[31806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

**Will Quince:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 25 July 2022 to Question [30189](#).

■ **Department for Education: Security**

**Julie Elliott:**

[\[32532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he holds information on the number of times the Secretary of State for Education's departmental pass was used to enter and exit the Department from 5 July to 7 July 2022 for the Secretary of State who served during that period.

**Will Quince:**

The Secretary of State for Education can enter and exit the department either by use of their departmental security pass to gain access electronically, or if they are afforded VIP access to enter and exit by reception staff.

Whilst our electronic records show that they did not use their pass to enter or exit the department, each individual holding the post of Secretary of State that week,

including my right hon. Friend the Member for Chippenham, the former Secretary of State for Education, were in their offices within the department during this period.

#### ■ Department for Education: Workplace Pensions

**Julie Elliott:** [32531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much his Department will spend on the pension entitlement of the Secretary of State for Education for her time served in position from 5 to 7 July 2022.

**Will Quince:**

Under Ministerial Pension Scheme rules, there are no pension contributions for the former Secretary of State for Education, funded by the department.

The scheme rules for the Ministerial Pension Scheme are available here [ministerial-pension-scheme-rules.pdf \(mycpfpension.co.uk\)](https://mycpfpension.co.uk/ministerial-pension-scheme-rules.pdf)

#### ■ Department for Education: Written Questions

**Emily Thornberry:** [39785]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he will respond to Question 34846 from the Rt. hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury, tabled on 12 July 2022.

**Will Quince:**

I can confirm that a response has been submitted to the right hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury to Question [34846](#).

#### ■ Developmental Language Disorder Awareness Day

**Geraint Davies:** [34787]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department's buildings will be lit up in purple to recognise Developmental Language Disorder Day on 14 October 2022.

**Will Quince:**

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

For all celebrations and awareness raising events where the department may light up its buildings, it reviews what equipment is necessary to support the event and assess any security implications. The department will then make a decision on how it can best use its building to reflect support for that particular cause. This review has not yet taken place.

#### ■ Educational Visits: Finance

**Ian Lavery:** [36768]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional funding to schools for school trips and residential visits during the cost of living crisis.



**Will Quince:**

Schools have the flexibility to make their own decisions on how to prioritise their spending to invest in a range of resources and activities that will best support their staff and pupils, which may include school trips and residential visits. There is no specific funding allocation provided to schools for the purpose of school trips or residential visits. Any costs incurred by the school must be funded from their own budget.

The department continues to monitor schools' financial health and we recognise that schools are facing cost pressures. This government continues to deliver year on year increases to school funding, with the total core school budget increasing to £56.8 billion by the 2024/25 financial year. This is a £7 billion cash increase compared with the 2021/22 financial year.

Increases in funding have been frontloaded to rapidly get money to schools, so that in the 2022/23 financial year alone, core schools funding is increasing by £4 billion compared to the 2021/22 financial year. This means that the total funding allocated to schools is seeing a 7% cash terms per pupil boost in the 2022/23 financial year, compared to the 2021/22 financial year, helping schools to meet the cost pressures that we know they are facing.

**■ Electronic Cigarettes: Health Education****Daisy Cooper:****[37605]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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 include the (a) risks of and (b) age restrictions for vaping in the school health education curriculum.

**Will Quince:**

The relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) statutory guidance includes content on drugs, as a supplement to drug education which is part of the national curriculum for science in key stages 2 and 3.

The guidance sets out that in both primary and secondary school, pupils should be taught the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use, and drug-taking. Additionally, in secondary school, pupils should be taught the associated legal and psychological risks of taking drugs.

To support schools, the department published a suite of teacher training modules and non- statutory guidance. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>. This includes a module on drugs, alcohol and tobacco, which makes specific reference to e-cigarettes (vaping) and includes information on the age restrictions and laws around both legal and illegal drugs to protect young people.

The department is developing plans for monitoring implementation of RSHE over time, including measuring teacher confidence in teaching the statutory requirements, and whether additions or other changes to the curriculum will be required.

## ■ Free School Meals

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [39784]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 18 July 2022 to Question 35936 on Poverty: Children, whether the 9 million most disadvantaged pupils are (a) eligible for and (b) claiming a free school meal.

**Will Quince:**

The number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals (FSM) is published in the National Statistics publication 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>. The latest published statistics show that in January 2022, 1.9 million pupils were eligible for and claiming FSM.

## ■ Free School Meals: Mental Illness

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [39926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of students receiving free school meals, who are suffering from a diagnosable mental illness, in each of the last three years.

**Will Quince:**

The department does not hold any information on the number of students receiving free school meals, who are suffering from a diagnosable mental illness.

## ■ Further Education: Staff

**Peter Aldous:** [39821]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer to Question 900784 in Prime Minister's Questions on 29 June 2022, Official Report, col 291, if he will publish a breakdown of the planned allocation of the £52m being invested to support the staffing situation in further education.

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

The department's £52 million investment in the 2022/23 financial year will allow us to continue to support the further education (FE) sector with the recruitment, retention and development of teachers. The programmes allocated funding from this investment include Taking Teaching Further, T Level Professional Development, bursaries, mentoring support, and the Teach in FE recruitment campaign and digital service.

## ■ GCE A-level and GCSE: Assessments

**Munira Wilson:** [38864]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the announcement made by the Chief Regulator of Ofqual on 30 September 2021 that exam results in 2022 will "reflect a midway point between 2021 and 2019", what recent estimate Ofqual has made of the likely distribution of (a) A-Level and (b) GCSE grades in summer 2022.

**Munira Wilson:**

**[38865]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the announcement by the Chief Regulator of Ofqual on 30 September 2021 that exam results in 2022 will "reflect a midway point between 2021 and 2019", whether (a) his Department or (b) UCAS have made a recent assessment of the number of students who will miss the requirements of their firm offer to study at university, relative to the numbers who missed such requirements in (i) 2021 and (ii) 2019.

**Munira Wilson:**

**[38866]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the announcement by the Chief Regulator of Ofqual on 30 September 2021 that exam results in 2022 will "reflect a midway point between 2021 and 2019", whether he is taking steps he is taking to inform parents of students that overall exam grades awarded for GCSEs, AS levels and A levels in summer 2022 are expected to be lower than those awarded in summer 2021.

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

The department is clear that exams are the best and fairest form of assessment for students to show what they know and can do. In 2022, students have taken exams and assessments in A levels, T Levels, and other post-16 qualifications for the first time since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. These examinations took place with adaptations to reflect the disruption young people have faced to their education throughout the pandemic.

The grading of GCSEs, AS, and A levels is a decision for Ofqual, as the independent regulator of qualifications. This summer, results will be higher than when summer exams were last sat, but lower than in 2021, when grades were awarded by teacher assessment. This means the bar for achieving an A, for example, will not be as high as it might have been in 2019.

The department has asked Ofqual's Chief Regulator, Jo Saxton, to write directly to the hon. Member about the distribution of A level and GCSE grades in summer 2022, and the steps they are taking to inform parents about grading. A copy of her reply will be placed in the library of both Houses.

The department has, in collaboration with Ofqual, worked closely with the higher education (HE) sector in shaping the decisions around exams and assessments in 2022. Following Ofqual's September 2021 announcement on grading, universities have set entry requirements and made offers to students according to this approach. Throughout the year, we have worked with the HE sector to brief providers on the approach to grading with extensive planning ahead of results day, including on operational readiness, and ensuring support is in place for students, whatever their next steps might be this summer.

Record numbers of students have applied to university this year. UCAS is expecting the majority of firm offer holders to gain a place at their firm choice university on A level and T Level results day. Students can have confidence that getting into HE is a fair process, with admissions teams taking into account the broad range of

information about a student in addition to their predicted grades, including teacher references, and for certain courses with a 15 October application deadline, their performance in admissions tests.

### ■ GCE A-level: Disadvantaged

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[39930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the number of A level exam results achieved by students on free school meals, separated by grade, for each of the last five academic years.

**Will Quince:**

The table below shows A level entries and results for students aged 16 to 18 at the start of the academic year, and eligible for free school meals, for the last five years. The data corresponds to the number of entries within a single academic year and refers to students in schools and colleges in England. X grades are awarded when there is no result and Q grades are awarded when the result is pending.

A LEVEL ENTRIES AND RESULTS					
Version	Provisional	Provisional	Revised	Revised	Revised
Time Period	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
<b>A*</b>	4,170	2,528	1,316	1,353	1,537
<b>A</b>	8,335	6,106	4,370	4,168	4,548
<b>B</b>	11,171	9,933	8,849	9,009	9,356
<b>C</b>	10,289	10,081	10,629	10,531	10,747
<b>D</b>	5,258	5,055	7,899	7,442	7,827
<b>E</b>	2,516	1,864	3,889	3,575	3,473
<b>U</b>	504	238	1,638	1,447	1,229
<b>X</b> <sup>3</sup>	157	103	201	177	123
<b>Q</b> <sup>4</sup>	16	15	1	7	2
<b>Total Entries</b>	42,416	35,923	38,792	37,709	38,842

### ■ GCSE: Assessments

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[36741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department made of the average number of examination papers taken by each student as part of the GCSE syllabuses.

**Will Quince:**

The department does not collect data on the average number of GCSE examination papers taken by students. The average number of GCSE qualifications per student in 2021 was 7.85. The number of examination papers per GCSE varies across subjects.

**■ GCSE: Disadvantaged****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[39929]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the number of GCSE exam results achieved by students on free school meals, separated by grade, for each of the last five academic years.

**Will Quince:**

The attached table shows the collective entries for students on free school meals, broken down by GCSE grades, for the last five academic years.

Discounting has been applied where pupils have taken the same subject more than once. In 2019/20 and 2021/21, only one entry per subject is counted and we count the entry with the highest grade for results received in summer 2022. Previously only the first entry grade would count, and this is still the case for any results received before summer 2021. Double grades refer to GCSE combined science, which was introduced in 2017/18. Therefore, this data is unavailable for 2016/17.

By 2019/20 and 2020/21, all GCSEs in England have been reformed and use the new 9 to 1 grading system (rather than A\*-G). Grade U refers to pupils' results which are ungraded or unclassified. Grade X refers to pupils who were absent or whose results are pending.

**Attachments:**

1. GCSE students eligible for free school meals [39929 GCSE students eligible for free school meals.pdf]

**■ Home Education: Registration****Ben Lake:****[36071]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to provisions in the Schools Bill, what steps he has taken to ensure that sufficient safeguards are in place around the (a) use and (b) protection of the data collected as part of the proposed requirements to create a register of home schooled children; what assessment he has made of the compatibility of those provisions with GDPR; and to whom that register will be accessible.

**Will Quince:**

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

The proposed 'children not in school' registers are intended to help with the identification of children being educated otherwise than at school, so that local authorities can undertake their existing responsibilities, to ensure all children are receiving a suitable education.

All local authorities will be required to process personal data they collect and store on their register in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. This legislation requires each local authority, as a data controller, only to collect and store the minimum personal data necessary and to protect and restrict access to the personal data by implementing appropriate technical and organisational measures.

Policy changes which require personal data processing, such as the 'children not in school' registers, are subject to scrutiny by the data protection officer (DPO) and their team, as part of the Data Protection Impact Assessment. The DPO will discuss requirement with the Information Commissioner's Officer as part of their duties under the 'prior notification' obligations in Article 36 of the UK GDPR. This will ensure there are safeguards in place to protect the data on local authority registers.

#### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Rosie Cooper:** [\[36725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he will respond to the correspondence of 23 May 2022 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on remote learning, reference ZA59785.

**Will Quince:**

I can confirm that a response has been sent to the hon. Member for West Lancashire on 19 July 2022.

#### ■ **Multi-academy Trusts: Operating Costs**

**Munira Wilson:** [\[30158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the SEND review proposals, whether it is his policy that multi-academy trusts will have the ability to use a proportion of SEND funding to cover operational costs.

**Will Quince:**

All school's core budgets include a notional budget for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), calculated by the school's local authority. These budgets give a non-binding indication to schools on how much of their funding they should consider spending on SEND provision.

Schools are responsible for managing their whole budgets to meet the needs of all their pupils, including those with SEND. Multi-academy trusts have the flexibility to manage budgets across all their academies, to ensure that they can fulfil their crucial role in promoting school improvement; that includes ensuring that all their pupils with SEND receive the education and support they need.

Where in future, as a result of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, there is any change to schools' responsibilities in respect of children with SEND, we will consult upon and make appropriate adjustments to the funding system, to reflect those changes. The Green Paper consultation closed on 22 July 2022. We are also currently consulting on

changes that will need to be made to the funding system, including in respect of SEND, to deliver our plans that all mainstream schools are funded directly through the national funding formula.

### ■ Primary Education: Class Sizes

**Sir David Evennett:**

[29903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average class size in primary schools was in (a) Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency, (b) the London Borough of Bexley, (c) Greater London and (d) England on 4 July 2022.

**Sir David Evennett:**

[29904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average class size in secondary schools was in (a) Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency, (b) the London Borough of Bexley, (c) Greater London and (d) England on 4 July 2022.

**Will Quince:**

The department does not hold figures on class sizes for dates throughout the year. Class size is recorded annually on the January school census day and is regarded as a representative sample of class size. The figures are published here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

The table below shows the average primary and secondary class sizes for the Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency, the London Borough of Bexley, Greater London and England and for the 2021/22 academic year.

LOCATION	CLASS TYPE	AVERAGE CLASS SIZE IN THE 2021/22 ACADEMIC YEAR
Bexleyheath and Crayford	Primary	27.9
	Secondary	24.4
London Borough of Bexley	Primary	27.5
	Secondary	22.3
Greater London	Primary	26.4
	Secondary	22.1
England	Primary	26.6
	Secondary	23.4

**■ Public Service: Conduct****Alex Davies-Jones:** [\[28513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether any teachers of politics and citizenship in England have made formal complaints to his Department on the need for public officials to uphold the standards of public life since 2010.

**Will Quince:**

This information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**■ Pupil Exclusions: Ethnic Groups****Daisy Cooper:** [\[38849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to tackle the disproportionate rates of school exclusions of black children.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[38850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support is available for parents to challenge the decision of school governing boards on student exclusions, in the event that parents consider racial discrimination to be a factor.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

Published in 2019, the Timpson Review of School Exclusions illustrated a complex picture and identified that there is no substantial difference in permanent exclusion rates, when comparing all ethnic minority children as a whole with white British children. However, the department recognises that certain groups of children are more likely to be permanently excluded, although local context means there will be different patterns across the country.

The updated suspension and permanent exclusion guidance, published 13 July 2022, sets out that it is vital that schools, local authorities, and local partners work together to understand what lies behind local trends. Local leaders should use this understanding to plan and put in place additional and targeted action. 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.

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools also have a legal duty not to discriminate against pupils. Ofsted's assessment of behaviour in schools includes specific consideration of rates, patterns, and reasons for exclusions, as well as any differences between groups of pupils.

If a parent believes that any form of discrimination has been a factor in their child's exclusion, they can make a claim to the first-tier tribunal in relation to disability, or a county court for other forms of discrimination.



## ■ Pupil Exclusions: Hertfordshire

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[38848]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of exclusions from schools in Hertfordshire were of (a) pupils with SEND and (b) black pupils in 2020-21.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

The requested information is not yet available for the 2020/21 academic year. This is due to be published on 28 July 2022.

Information for the 2019/20 academic year and earlier academic years is available in the Office for National Statistics' release 'Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England', available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england>.

The following data has been produced from the 'Explore data and files section'. It includes details of permanent exclusions and suspensions by characteristic (pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and black pupils), from 2006 to 2019 in Hertfordshire: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/9aa11aed-bd1a-43a2-9c3a-d891128d54b8>.

## ■ Pupil Exclusions: Travellers

**Jim Shannon:**

**[39848]**

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

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

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

The department has conducted several analyses into disparities in exclusion rates. The Timpson Review of School Exclusions (2019) illustrated that there is no substantial difference in permanent exclusion rates when comparing all ethnic minority children as a whole with white British children.

The Timpson Review also found that Gypsy and Roma pupils and Irish Traveller boys are more likely to be suspended than their white British peers, even when other factors are controlled for, such as poverty, special educational needs and absence. The Timpson Review noted that the impact of in and out-of-school factors will differ for each child and local context means there will be different patterns across the country.

The department's updated Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance, published 13 July 2022, sets out that schools, local authorities, and local partners should work together to understand what lies behind local trends. Local leaders should use this understanding to plan and put in place additional and targeted actions based on their own context. 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.

### ■ Pupil Premium: Adoption

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[39903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if Pupil Premium Plus will be made available for those children adopted from overseas from October 2022.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

Currently, children adopted from outside England and Wales do not get pupil premium plus.

The department is aware of this issue and is exploring the possibility of extending pupil premium plus to these children and will be including them in the school census from the 2022/23 academic year. In the meantime, schools should support the needs of all pupils, regardless of whether they are eligible to attract pupil premium plus, as support is not contingent on receipt of this funding.

### ■ Pupils: Assessments

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[38609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that political and Ministerial changes at his Department do not affect the (a) smooth running of this year's exams and (b) his Department's ability to address any issues arising from them.

**Will Quince:**

The responsibility for maintaining standards in exams lies with Ofqual, the independent regulator of qualifications. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education is assured that the exam boards and Ofqual have well established processes in place to manage any issues arising with the delivery of exams and awarding and are keeping the department informed. This is not affected by political or ministerial changes.

### ■ Pupils: Travel

**Sarah Olney:** [\[27709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of (a) inflation, (b) rising fuel prices and (c) other increases in the cost of living on the cost of children's journeys to school.

**Will Quince:**

The department understands that many people are worried about the impact of rising prices, with many households struggling to make their incomes stretch to cover the basics.

Although the department cannot insulate people from these cost rises completely, we are stepping up to provide support, as we did during the COVID-19 pandemic. The

government is providing £37 billion of support this year, targeted at those who are most in need. The package will see millions of the most vulnerable households receive at least £1,200 of support in total this year to help with the cost of living, with all domestic electricity customers receiving at least £400 to help with their bills.

The government's dedicated website provides more information about the broader cost of living support, which is available here:

<https://costoflivingsupport.campaign.gov.uk/>.

The department's home to school transport policy aims to ensure that no child is unable to access education because of a lack of transport. Local authorities must provide free home to school transport for children of compulsory school age who attend their nearest school and would not be able to walk there because of the distance, because of their special educational needs or disability, or because the route is unsafe. There are additional rights to free transport for low-income families, aimed at helping them exercise school choice. Home to school travel and transport guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>.

## ■ Pupils: Travellers

**Jim Shannon:**

**[39847]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the educational attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

**Will Quince:**

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

The department recognises the issues faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people, and how schools and others can make a positive difference.

The department has invested in research into academic progress over the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years with Renaissance Learning and the Education Policy Institute. The department's data and research consider the impacts on pupils with particular characteristics, as well as considering regional disparities and area-level deprivation.

The department knows one of the most significant factors affecting pupil attainment, which cuts across all ethnicities, is economic disadvantage. That is why we have consistently targeted support at the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, with schools continuing to receive additional funding through the pupil premium.

Total pupil premium funding will increase to over £2.6 billion this financial year (2022/23), from £2.5 billion last year. On top of this funding, schools serving pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds are likely to attract funding through additional needs factors in the schools national funding formula (NFF), specifically through the mobility factor.

The department is also working closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and will learn any lessons from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Education Area pilots in a number of areas in England.

### ■ School Meals: Prices

**Munira Wilson:** [37610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what was the average price paid for a school lunch in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in each local authority in England for each of the last five years for which data is available.

**Munira Wilson:** [37613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information his Department holds on the number of (a) state schools and (b) local authorities that plan to increase the price of school lunches for the 2022-23 academic year.

**Will Quince:**

The department does not collect or hold any data on this, including on any planned increases. School governing boards are responsible for the provision of both free and paid for meals and it is for them to decide on the price, depending on local circumstances.

### ■ School Rebuilding Programme: South West

**Anthony Mangnall:** [36696]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason only four schools of the 161 in the Schools Rebuilding Programme were located in the South West.

**Will Quince:**

Schools selected have been prioritised based on the condition of their buildings. Location was not a factor in the prioritisation process.

The department will select up to 300 schools in 2022 for the programme from the 1,105 nominations received from local authorities, academy trusts, and dioceses. We announced 61 of the 300 schools in July to maintain the pace of delivery and begin to address some of the schools in the poorest conditions. The department is still assessing all of the other nominations received, including those which showed evidence of exceptional need.

The 100 schools selected in February and July 2021 were also prioritised based on condition. An explanation of the methodology for each round is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme>.

### ■ Schools: Broadband and WiFi

**Ian Lavery:** [28421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 256 on Schools: Digital Technology, what factors are used to determine a priority area; and if he will publish further details on the work being undertaken by his

Department with commercial providers to accelerate gigabit capable broadband rollout to schools.

**Will Quince:**

Up to £150 million will be invested in our Connect the Classroom programme to upgrade schools that fall below our Wi-Fi connectivity standards in priority areas. At this time these are educational establishments within our 55 Education Investment Areas, which include the places where attainment is currently weakest. The qualifying criteria within these areas can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1051431/Education\\_Investment\\_Areas\\_selection\\_methodology.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051431/Education_Investment_Areas_selection_methodology.pdf).

Further details on the government's separate programme to accelerate the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband to schools can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-rural-primary-schools-to-get-huge-broadband-upgrade>.

■ **Schools: Bus Services**

**Ian Lavery:**

**[36769]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of supporting parents and carers with the rising cost of school bus transportation in the context of the increase in fuel prices.

**Will Quince:**

The department's home-to-school transport policy aims to ensure that no child is unable to access education because of a lack of transport. Local authorities must provide free transport for children of compulsory school age who attend their nearest school and would not be able to walk there because of the distance, because of their special educational needs or disability, or because the route is unsafe. There are additional rights to free transport for low-income families aimed at helping them exercise school choice. More detail is outlined in the home-to-school travel and transport guidance. This is available here:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance).

The department does not have plans for specific additional support for families with the cost of school buses.

■ **Schools: Coronavirus and Influenza**

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[39978]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government announcement of 15 July 2022 that over-50s will be offered a flu jab and covid-19 booster this autumn, whether he has made any representations to the (a) UK Health Security Agency, (b) Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and (c) Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential merits of prioritising school staff for vaccination.

**Will Quince:**

Identifying priority groups for vaccinations are clinical decisions taken by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), informed by advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation (JCVI). JCVI advised that the primary objective of the 2022 autumn booster programme is to augment immunity in those at higher risk from COVID-19 and thereby optimise protection against severe COVID-19, specifically hospitalisation and death, over winter 2022 to 2023.

Other school staff are currently not eligible to receive an autumn booster as part of this programme. However, staff who meet the central eligibility criteria are entitled to a free flu vaccination through the NHS, and schools can choose to provide flu vaccines for their staff through their occupational health services.

**Schools: Inspections****Peter Dowd:****[R] [38696]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with Ofsted on the potential merits of a protocol to enable formal confidential briefing to hon. Members by Ofsted on their results of local authority inspections in advance of publication.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

As set out in the guidance for inspecting local authority children's services, the report is embargoed until publication and local MPs have full access when reports are fully published. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services>.

Local council leaders should be made aware of the outcome of the inspections in advance of publication, as this is clearly set out in inspectors' feedback to senior officers (such as the director of children's services).

Current protocol enables the local authority to share this intelligence with their local MPs if they wish to do so at any stage before publication. It is not within Ofsted's powers to disclose such confidential information prior to publication and the decision sits firmly with the local authority.

**Schools: Repairs and Maintenance****Simon Jupp:****[30205]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to announce the schools selected from the third round of the School Rebuilding Programme.

**Will Quince:**

On 12 July 2022, the department announced the next round of 61 schools to be included in the school rebuilding programme. A list of these schools is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme-2022-to-2023-approved-schools/school-rebuilding-programme-2022-to-2023-prioritised-schools>.

The department is assessing all other nominations and we intend to make another announcement later this year to confirm additional schools, selecting up to 300 in total in the 2022/23 financial year.

## ■ Schools: Uniforms

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[28915]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of inflation on the cost of school uniforms.

**Will Quince:**

The department has made no recent direct assessment on the effect of inflation on the cost of uniforms, but we know expensive uniforms can create a financial burden for parents. The government is clear that school uniform should be affordable. No school uniform should be so expensive that pupils or their families feel unable to apply to or attend a school of their choice.

In November 2021, the department issued new statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms, to ensure their cost is reasonable and secures the best value for money for parents. The guidance can be found here:

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

The department understands that many people are worried about the impact of rising prices, with many households struggling to make their income stretch to cover the basics. It is therefore even more important that schools give careful consideration to the cost of their uniform and follow the guidance to ensure best value for money for parents.

## ■ Schools: Weather

**Catherine West:**

**[36048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has had recent discussions with schools leadership on student and teacher wellbeing during extreme heat in the UK.

**Will Quince:**

The department regularly meets with school leaders and their representative bodies to discuss issues impacting on the school workforce and pupils, this includes their wellbeing.

There is clear guidance on looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves, including the use of ventilation, keeping children hydrated, and avoiding vigorous physical activity. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/looking-after-children-and-those-in-early-years-settings-during-heatwaves-for-teachers-and-professionals>. Ahead of the extreme heat forecast for 18 and 19 July, the department wrote to education and childcare settings to remind them of the guidance and their responsibilities.



## ■ Selective Schools Expansion Fund

**Munira Wilson:** [38863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he expects that there will be further rounds of the Selective Schools Expansion Fund following that held in 2019-20.

**Will Quince:**

The department will not be running any further rounds of the Selective Schools Expansion Fund.

## ■ Sex and Relationship Education

**Sarah Champion:** [27622]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 1 July 2020 to Question 63300 on Sex and Relationship Education, what proportion of the (a) £2 million for 2019-20 and (b) £4 million for 2020-21 had been spent on relationship, sex and health education implementation by the end of those financial years.

**Will Quince:**

The expenditure by the department in the package of support to help schools implement the relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) curriculum is set out as follows: £1.2 million in the 2019/20 financial year, £1.8 million in the 2020/21 financial year and £0.2 million in the 2021/22 financial year.

The maximum investment of £6 million, referenced by the former Minister for School Standards in his response dated 1 July 2020, was based on the estimated costs for a package of support. This can be found here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-06-23/63300>.

## ■ Skin Cancer: Health Education

**Alberto Costa:** [39895]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness of (a) melanoma and (b) other skin cancers in schools.

**Will Quince:**

It is important to educate people about the causes and symptoms of cancer and the department is supportive of efforts to do this at an early age.

The statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education includes content on cancer awareness which should be taught in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>. At primary school, the guidance covers safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer. At secondary school, the guidance covers knowing the benefits of regular skin self-examination and screening for melanoma and other skin cancers.



To support schools, the department published a suite of teacher training modules and non-statutory guidance, including a module on health and prevention, which has a section on sun safety, self-examination and screening, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-training-health-and-prevention>.

Schools may also teach about cancer awareness in other areas of the national curriculum. For example, the secondary science curriculum ensures pupils are taught about non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, and the impact of lifestyle factors on the incidence of these diseases.

## ■ **Special Educational Needs**

**Lee Anderson:**

**[38844]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department plans to provide to parents of children who are unable to attend school due to their (a) special educational needs and (b) disabilities.

**Will Quince:**

Local authorities have a range of strategies for supporting parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities whose children are unable to attend school due to their specific needs. This will depend on the nature of the child's needs, but support services such as education welfare officers, educational psychologists and specialist teachers are often involved in such casework.

Where the child's needs relate to a special educational need and the child has an Education Health and Care plan, the local authority will work with the family and other agencies to secure the provision outlined in the plan. Depending on the nature of the child's needs, the local authority will also work with the family of securing attendance at school, where that is appropriate.

The department's guidance, 'Working together to improve School Attendance', published in May 2022, is designed to improve the monitoring and tracking of attendance to spot problems earlier and facilitate better, more targeted multi-agency support with improved join up of early help services, external partners and support services. This is intended to improve the consistency of support offered to pupils and families, replicating effective practices across England. The guidance is also clear that schools and local authorities should be working with pupils and parents to overcome barriers to attendance. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>.

## ■ **Special Educational Needs: Energy**

**Mrs Paulette Hamilton:**

**[36148]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support (a) Wilson Stuart School in Erdington and (b) other special academies to cover the costs of higher energy bills to ensure that they do not have to make cuts to other parts of their budget.

**Will Quince:**

The department is aware schools are facing cost pressures, especially around energy costs. Cost pressures should be seen in the wider context of funding for schools. This government continues to deliver year on year increases to the core schools budget with a £7 billion cash increase in funding by the 2024/25 financial year, compared with the 2021/22 financial year, taking total funding to £56.8 billion by 2024/25. As a result, we can announce that high needs funding for children and young people with complex needs, including funding for the special schools in which many of them are educated, is increasing in the 2022/23 financial year by £1 billion, to a total of £9.1 billion.

Special schools, including Wilson Stuart School, should discuss with the local authorities placing pupils in their schools, how much high needs funding is passed on to them for helping with energy and other cost increases. Birmingham will attract a high needs funding increase of 15.6% per head of their population aged 2 to 18 this year, compared to the previous financial year's allocation, bringing their total high needs funding allocation in the 2022/23 financial year to £243.5 million.

In addition, all schools can access the department's schools resource management (SRM) offer. This includes a range of practical tools and information to help schools unlock efficiencies, for example, by saving money on regular purchases and avoiding paying 'over the odds' for services like energy, insurance, or recruitment advertising, which they can then reinvest in line with their own priorities.

The SRM offer includes the Get Help Buying for Schools service, which provides specialist support, advice, and guidance for schools around their procurement activity. The service signposts schools to 'department-recommended' frameworks for schools and trusts to recommended deals for energy costs and services relating to energy, which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-for-schools/energy>.

**■ Special Educational Needs: Ipswich****Tom Hunt:****[36899]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils in Ipswich constituency are waiting for special school places.

**Will Quince:**

The department does not collect data on how many children are waiting for school places on a constituency basis. However, each January, the department collects data from local authorities, covering the number of children and young people and the type of provision attended. This includes mainstream schools, special schools, alternative provision, pupils educated elsewhere, and those awaiting provision.

The most recent return shows that in January 2022, there were 1,503 children of compulsory school age across England with education, health and care (EHC) plans who were not in education and awaiting provision. This is up from 1,460 in January

2021. In Suffolk, in January 2022, there were 36 children of compulsory school age with EHC plans not in education and awaiting provision, up from 26 in January 2021.

The department does not collect data about the specific circumstances of the children awaiting provision. The department knows that this category includes children and young people in a wide range of circumstances, including some who are in an education setting, but awaiting provision in another setting (including those currently attending a mainstream school who are to move to a special school), and some who have only recently moved into the area. The local authority keeps its special school place provision under continual review and has detailed plans for increasing the number of good places available in Ipswich and across Suffolk.

To support these plans, the department collaborates with Suffolk local authority on helping all schools in the county to continually improve their whole-school special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) approach, including ensuring that academies fulfil their obligations to pupils with SEND. While statutory responsibility for providing SEND places rests with Suffolk local authority, the department actively supports the local authority to secure sufficient, good quality SEND places in Suffolk, including in Ipswich.

**Tom Hunt:**

**[36900]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of places in special schools for children with SEND in Ipswich constituency.

**Will Quince:**

Local authorities must ensure there are sufficient good school places for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Children and Families Act 2014, requires local authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with SEND under review, including its sufficiency, working with parents, young people, and providers.

There are currently six special schools within Ipswich, providing 368 places to children up to the age of 16 with SEND, including social, emotional, and mental health needs and specific learning difficulties. Two of the six schools, The Bridge School and Sir Bobby Robson School, are yet to be inspected by Ofsted. Two schools, Thomas Wolsey Ormiston Academy and Stone Lodge Academy, are rated Good. The other two schools, West Lodge School and New Skill Centre, are rated Requires Improvement.

The department continues to support Suffolk local authority and academy trusts with special schools in Ipswich in a range of ways, to help their efforts with providing sufficient good special school places for children with SEND in Ipswich.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: West Midlands

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [38788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of vacancies in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools for roles with SEND responsibilities in (i) Birmingham and (ii) the West Midlands.

**Will Quince:**

Information on the school workforce in state-funded schools in England, including the number of teacher vacancies and temporarily filled posts, is published in the annual 'school workforce in England' national statistics site, which is available here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>. The latest information is as of November 2021.

Information on the role of staff vacancies, such as special educational needs and disabilities responsibilities, is not collected by the department.

## ■ Students: Finance

**Afzal Khan:** [37600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Answer of 20 October 2021 to Question 57279, what further consideration her Department has given to establishing a Takaful-based funding structure for financial support for students in higher and further education.

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

The department remains committed to delivering an Alternative Student Finance (ASF) product compatible with Islamic finance principles. We want all learners with the potential to benefit from a higher education to be able to do so.

We are introducing a Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE), which will significantly change the ways students can access learning and financial support. We are currently considering if and how ASF can be delivered as part of the LLE.

We believe it is sensible to align future delivery of an ASF product with these major reforms to ensure fair treatment for all students.

## ■ Students: Loans

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [39928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact on the mental health of students of the 11 per cent real-terms reduction to the student maintenance support loan by 2022-23.

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

Higher education (HE) providers are autonomous bodies independent from government and they have a responsibility to support students with mental health conditions, defined as a disability. As experts in their student population, HE providers are best placed to identify specific needs of their students.

The department considers changes to support arrangements for students in HE on an annual basis.

Maximum grants and loans for living costs were increased by 3.1% this academic year, and the department has announced that they will increase by a further 2.3% in the 2022/23 academic year.

As part of a package to support households with the rising cost of energy bills, the government is giving a council tax rebate payment of £150 to households that were living in a property in council tax bands A to D as their main home on 1 April 2022. This includes full-time students that do not live in student halls. In addition, we are making available discretionary funding of £144 million to support vulnerable people and individuals on low incomes, including students, to support those who do not pay council tax. Each council is responsible for the design of their discretionary support scheme and will publish further details on their website.

Many HE providers have hardship funds that students can apply for. Assistance and budgeting advice is available from HE providers themselves as well as from online sources such as Student Space and the Money Advice Service.

## ■ **Students: Mental Health Services**

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[39927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much on a per student basis universities will receive through the new funding commitment of £3 million provided for student mental health.

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

Supporting the mental health of students requires collaboration between higher education (HE) providers and the NHS. The Office for Students (OfS) will distribute £15 million to HE providers over the 2022/23 academic year to provide students with additional mental health support. £3 million of this will be used to build on the existing work of the Student Mental Health Partnerships project and establish, on a regional basis, new partnerships between HE and NHS providers.

This is in addition to the £33 million direct funding NHS England is providing in the 2022/23 financial year to improve the quality of mental health services for young adults.

As the OfS funding is being made available to support regional projects, it is not meaningful to calculate this funding on a per student basis.

## ■ **Teachers: Training**

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[28924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether ITT providers are given the same information when they apply for reaccreditation.

**Will Quince:**

All organisations that applied in the first or second accreditation round received the same guidance from the department. This guidance was set out in the 'How to Apply' guide and the accompanying frequently asked questions document, both of which were made available on Jaggaer, the online platform for application submission.

**Teachers: West Midlands****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[38789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of teacher training placements that have been filled for the 2022-23 intake in (a) chemistry, (b) computing, (c) mathematics and (d) physics in (i) Birmingham and (ii) the West Midlands.

**Will Quince:**

As of 19 June 2022, the number of candidates who have been recruited or have accepted offers (pending conditions) to start a postgraduate initial teacher training (ITT) course (excluding High Potential ITT) in the 2022/23 academic year with an ITT provider in the West Midlands is: 53 for chemistry, 47 for computing, 176 for mathematics and 37 for physics.[1]

ITT recruitment data is available by subject and region. The department does not hold analysis of the number of acceptances at a local authority district level.

[1] The data provided counts all acceptances by the area of the provider the student applied to. Provider areas are derived from their contact address. These areas may be different to where students do their training. The data provided is based on the region of the training provider, not the accrediting provider.

**Universities: Admissions****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[39931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the number of university applicants from deprived areas.

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access a world-class education remains a top priority and the department expects universities to do all they can to support disadvantaged students. Record numbers of high achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds progressed into higher education (HE) last year and we want this progress to continue.

While there has been a strong focus on ensuring more disadvantaged students get into HE, there has not always been as much consideration of the value of the courses they are admitted to.

We want to ensure that courses are of genuinely high quality, with support for students to both complete their studies and develop the skills and knowledge that will lead to rewarding graduate employment or further study.

In November 2021, we tasked the Office for Students (OfS) with creating an access and participation regime that supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they are equipped to make informed choices and are able to access and succeed on high-quality courses which lead to good graduate employment. We have appointed John Blake as Director for Fair Access and Participation at the OfS and he is playing a pivotal role in driving this work forward.

We have recently consulted on the design of a new National State Scholarship, worth up to £75 million, which will help the highest achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome barriers to attending and succeeding on the HE course that is right for them.

## ■ Young People: Unemployment

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[39905]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of Adoption UK's Adoption Barometer Report 2022 on the proportion of 16 to 25 year olds who were not in education, employment, or training at the end of 2021; and what plans he has to increase the impact of the Pupil Premium Plus funding on the outcomes of previously looked after children.

**Brendan Clarke-Smith:**

At the end of 2021, 10.5% of 16 to 24-year-olds were not in education, employment or training (NEET). This is the lowest percentage on record. Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and support young people who are NEET. Under the September Guarantee, all 16 and 17-year-olds are entitled to an offer of a suitable place in education or training, regardless of qualifications gained.

A range of provision is available for young people aged 16 to 24 to equip them with the skills and experience they need to progress. The government's Plan for Jobs includes a range of joined-up support to young people to help minimise time spent NEET, such as Youth Hubs and traineeships. These prepare young people for apprenticeships and work. Additionally, supported internships, which offer tailored support for young people with special education needs and disabilities.

Previously looked-after children attract pupil premium plus funding, or £2,410 per child per year in 2022/23, which is managed by the child's school. The 'Using Pupil Premium' guidance supports school leaders to use their funding effectively and explains that schools must ensure they consider the specific needs of previously looked-after children. There is also statutory guidance for designated teachers that includes information on both the use and management of the funding. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>.



**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Agriculture and Food Supply: Climate Change****Michelle Donelan:****[35022]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to (a) take steps to mitigate the impact of climate change on (i) agriculture and (ii) global food security and (b) revitalise the international trade of food in the context of the effect on global food production of (A) the international response to covid-19 and (B) global warming.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government is committed to take action to mitigate climate change and to adapt to its impact. We are introducing three schemes that reward environmental benefits: the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery. Together, these schemes are intended to provide a powerful vehicle for achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and our commitment to net zero emissions by 2050, while supporting our rural economy. Through them, farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for delivering public goods including adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

The Government has also published the Net Zero Strategy which sets the UK on a clear path to net zero by 2050 and set out key commitments such as ensuring 75% of farmers in England will be engaged in low carbon practices by 2030, rising to 85% by 2035. More recently in the Food Strategy we have set out the funding available for innovation in farming and agriculture.

The UK announced an Agriculture Breakthrough goal at COP26 - "to make climate-resilient, sustainable agriculture the most attractive and widely adopted option for farmers everywhere by 2030" - and the intention to build country support for this in 2022. This is part of the Breakthrough Agenda which was launched at the COP26 World Leaders Summit. The Breakthrough Agenda is a commitment from countries to work together internationally this decade to accelerate the development and deployment of the clean technologies needed to meet our Paris climate goals, ensuring they are affordable and accessible for all.

The UK provides funding to the CGIAR, the world's leading agricultural science and innovation organisation, which delivers cutting edge technology and evidence-based solutions to tackle global challenges in the food system, saving and improving millions of lives. CGIAR research is projected to deliver a reduction of 0.6 gigatonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e each year by 2030. CGIAR rice innovations alone have scope to reduce global emissions by 0.5% - equivalent to 40% of total UK emissions.

The Government has also announced specific measures to support farmers with rising input costs including changes to statutory guidance to the "Farming Rules for Water"; increased grants funding to boost R&D; and bringing the Basic Payment Scheme forward so that 50% of its payments are made this summer to improve cash flow for farmers.



The Food Standards Agency has provided guidance to Trading Standards Officers and businesses setting out how flexibility in enforcement of labelling rules may be applied to alleviate supply challenges and maintain supply of foods into retail. Feedback has been that industry welcomes these actions, and the main ask going forward is for us to carefully review the supply situation before reverting to a 'full compliance' model of enforcement.

Defra is taking a number of actions to maintain food security and reduce pressures on prices. The Government launched a package of measures to reduce the impact of cost of living concerns, including: nine new GMO authorisations to provide alternative sources for maize, removing tariffs on US maize, bringing forward BPS payments for farmers and delaying measures that would have imposed costs on businesses.

Furthermore, G7 Leaders have pledged to provide increased humanitarian assistance with priority recipients should include countries facing acute food insecurity (for example Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen), and countries facing potential food riots (such as Egypt).

The UK's ambitious Free Trade Agreement programme diversifies sources of supply, contributes to our food security and resilience and supplements our strong domestic production.

## ■ **Agriculture: Costs**

**Martyn Day:**

**[36828]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of the agricultural industry on the impact of the rising cost of (a) fuel, (b) grains and (c) fertiliser on that sector.

**Victoria Prentis:**

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

Agricultural commodity prices are closely linked to global gas prices. Farmers are facing increased input costs including for fertiliser, feed and fuel. We are working closely with the industry to identify where further mitigations are available to tackle the challenges they face.

The Secretary of State recently announced a range of measures in support of the current situation, such as delaying changes to the use of urea fertiliser to help farmers manage their costs and improving statutory guidance for use of slurry. There have been three meetings of the Fertiliser Taskforce (the latest of which was on 21 July) with key industry bodies to discuss potential mitigations to the challenges which global supply pressures are causing. Ministers will continue to meet with key industry bodies for further Fertiliser Taskforce sessions in the coming months, to help identify and mitigate potential risks.

In addition, the 2022 Basic Payment Scheme payment will be made in two instalments to give farmers an advance injection of cash. Farmers with eligible applications will receive half of their payment from the end of July, and the rest from December. By doing this, the Government intends to inject cash into farm businesses, helping them to make business decisions sooner, with more confidence.

We continue to keep the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade and recent developments.

## ■ Agriculture: Government Assistance

**Michelle Donelan:**

**[35008]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support farmers in (a) Wiltshire and (b) the UK with rising costs.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Farming in England is going through the biggest change in a generation. These unprecedented times mean that it is all the more important that the Government's approach to working with the farming sector changes too. Defra is continuing to improve its policies and services, making them more effective, fairer, flexible, accessible and more workable for farmers. The Government has announced a range of measures in England in response to the turbulence of the current market.

In response to the global rising costs around the price of fertiliser, Defra released new guidance to help farmers in limiting their use of slurry and other farmyard manure at certain times of the year.

Defra also announced changes to the use of urea fertiliser - delaying a planned industry farm assurance scheme which was due to start this year by at least a year. This will help farmers to manage their costs, giving them more time to adapt.

Defra has set up a Fertiliser Taskforce to address the impact of global supply pressures on farming, seeking to improve market confidence, whilst providing farmers with the information they need to make business decisions on fertiliser use.

Additionally, Defra announced a permanent change to the way we make payments under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). We know that the price of agricultural commodities has always been closely correlated to energy prices - meaning farmers carry an increased risk on their profit and loss account, creating increased pressure on short term cash flow. We will now make BPS payments in two instalments (one from the end of July, the other December). This will give farm businesses an advanced injection of cash - with the hope of enabling farmers to make business decisions with more confidence in these uncertain times. To provide further support we have also increased Countryside Stewardship rates by an average of 30%.

Farmers are now able to apply for funding under the Sustainable Farming Incentive. The initial offer pays farmers for taking care of their soil or assessing the condition of moorland. We have to set out plans to rollout payments for actions related to nutrient

management, hedgerows and integrated pest management, and will confirm the full details of these standards before the end of the year.

## ■ **Air Pollution: Weather**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[38835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the July 2022 heatwave on air quality around (a) schools and (b) care homes.

**Steve Double:**

Defra provides a five-day air pollution forecast and health advice in the form of recommended actions that could be taken according to current air pollution levels. The annual 'Air Pollution in the UK' report provides information and assessment of significant periods of air pollution across the UK. The report covering the 2022 heatwave period and any associated air pollution episode will be published in September 2023.

## ■ **Animals and Plants: Disease Control**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[32988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve the UK's biosecurity.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Biosecurity remains a top priority for the Government, not only to protect consumers, but also to ensure that trading partners and industry have strong assurance of the UK's standards of food safety, animal and plant health.

On 16 February 2022, the Government also announced the allocation of £200 million for a programme of investment into world-leading research facilities to boost the UK's fight against zoonotic diseases, including avian flu and bovine tuberculosis. The money will be spent on a state-of-the-art revamp of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) scientific laboratories at Weybridge – enhancing the UK's already world-leading scientific and veterinary capability.

We have established mechanisms in place to stop products from being exported to Great Britain from known areas with a significant pest or disease. We also constantly review whether further safeguards are needed and have a scientific process to assess and respond to changing biosecurity threats.

## ■ **Avian Influenza**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[39853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many cases of bird flu have been found in the UK as of 19 July 2022.

**Steve Double:**

As of 19 July 2022, 125 cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 have been confirmed in poultry and other captive birds in the UK (103 cases in England, 5 cases in Wales, 11 cases in Scotland, 6 cases in Northern Ireland).

In addition, through the Animal and Plant Health Agencies wild bird surveillance scheme as of 19 July 2022, there have been 1422 findings of avian influenza in wild birds, in 343 locations involving 61 bird species in 78 counties. This includes carcasses collected and submitted to APHA for testing up to the 8 July 2022. Findings of avian influenza in wild birds have predominantly been of the HPAI H5N1 strain with a single finding of HPAI H5N8.

We have a robust response in place in line with international best practice and continue to work with stakeholders to keep up to date with the latest evidence and any further steps that we can take.

Further details of findings of HPAI in wild birds and details of confirmed cases in poultry and other captive birds are published on [GOV.UK/bird-flu](https://gov.uk/bird-flu).

**■ Avian Influenza: Disease Control****James Cartlidge:****[38744]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to reduce the bureaucracy and restrictions imposed on farms that are subject to avian flu controls.

**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 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](https://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. Our approach aims to reduce adverse impacts on the rural and wider economy, the public, rural communities and the environment, whilst protecting public health and minimising the overall cost of any outbreak.

We recognise the significant impact the current avian influenza is having on bird keepers. In particular, the scale of the current avian influenza outbreak has led to large numbers of poultry and other captive birds being subject to movement restrictions as a result of being located within disease control zones surrounding infected premises. During the current outbreak, Government has been able to reduce the administrative burden on keepers associated with applying for movement licenses from disease control zones through the launch of an online [Avian Influenza Licensing Service](https://apply-for-an-outbreak-licence.defra.gov.uk/). ( <https://apply-for-an-outbreak-licence.defra.gov.uk/> )

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) are leading on a cross-government, cross-agency review of lessons from the recent outbreak with the aim of identifying

what went well and areas where further improvements can be made. This will include identifying areas where administrative burdens on keepers could potentially be eased if they do not impact the effectiveness of disease control measures.

### ■ **Beverage Containers: Recycling**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[39809]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the kerbside recycling rate of drinks (a) bottles and (b) cans in England in each of the last three years.

**Steve Double:**

We estimate that the average recycling rate is 70.0% for bottles, 70.6% for steel cans, and 70.5% aluminium cans for 2020-23.

### ■ **Cats and Dogs: Imports**

**Sir Mike Penning:**

**[38558]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2022 to Question 33729 on Cats and Dogs: Imports, if he will take steps to help animal rescue and rehoming organisations develop processes that meet biosecurity standards to allow those organisations to import cats and dogs from Romania whilst the ban on commercial imports remains in place.

**Steve Double:**

The Government appreciates the work of rescue and rehoming organisations to ensure that unwanted and abandoned animals are given the opportunity to find a forever home whilst complying with our animal health and welfare legislation. However, this measure is important to protect our biosecurity and the health of pets in this country. We would encourage organisations which are temporarily unable to import rescue dogs, cats, and ferrets into Great Britain to provide help and assistance to animals in situ.

We are regularly engaging with the rescue sector on the impacts of the temporary safeguarding measure on the import of cats, dogs and ferrets from Romania and on options to mitigate the biosecurity risks.

### ■ **CF Industries: Ince**

**Tim Farron:**

**[21153]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the (a) number and (b) dates of times Ministers in his Department have met with officials at CF Industries to discuss the closure of its Ince manufacturing plant.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra Ministers have not met officials at CF Industries to discuss the closure of its Ince manufacturing plant. However, officials from Defra and the Department for

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy have both held meetings with CF Fertilisers to discuss Ince.

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

**Jon Trickett:**

**[33695]**

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

**Victoria Prentis:**

The provisional consultancy spend for 2021-22 is £26.970m for the Core Department and Agencies.

The department's spend on consultancy is published each year in the Annual Report and Accounts.

2020-21

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defras-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021> (page 100)

2019-20

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defras-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020> (page 87)

The names of consultancies contracted are listed below

**A LUCK ASSOCIATES**

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Actica Consulting Ltd

Aether Ltd

ALCHEMMY CONSULTING LTD

Alexander Mann Solutions LTD

Amber Employment Services Ltd

Amec Foster Wheeler

ARCADIS CONSULTING UK LTD

Arpexas (Scotland) Ltd

Bankserve

Beamans Ltd

Biopharma Consulting (BPC)

BLUE BORDER LTD

## A LUCK ASSOCIATES

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Broadhead Global Ltd

Business Solutions Limited

Capita

Change Associates Ltd

Commercial Consultancy Ltd

Costain Ltd

CURRIE and BROWN UK LTD

Daisy Communications Limited

Deloitte LLP

Dirac Delta Solutions Ltd

Dr Gabriele Hesselbein

Dr Marion Simmons

Dr Vanessa Carn

DTA ECOLOGY LTD

EBC CONSULTING LTD

ENGINEERING SAFETY CONSULTANTS LTD

Eric Crutcher

Ernst & Young LLP (EY)

FINYX CONSULTING LTD

FIRST RESPONSE TRAINING and CONSULTANCY SERVICES LTD

Frontier Economics Ltd

G2 Recruitment Solutions

Government Legal Department

Health Management Ltd

Ingentium Ltd

IVIDEOLOGY LTD

## A LUCK ASSOCIATES

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J Weeks

JACOBS UK LTD

John Points

Jones P Consulting Ltd

JSA Services Ltd t/a Workwell

Julie Gibson

Keep IT Simple

KLIFOVET AG

KPMG

KPMG Safi Al Mutawa & Partners

L T S INTERNATIONAL LTD

Learning Light

Local Partnerships LLP

Lockhart-Garratt

Louisa Wood

LSSC Ltd

M Botony

Management and Risk Solutions Ltd

MCKINSEY & CO INC UNITED KINGDOM

Met Office

Methods Business Digital Technology

METHODS CONSULTING LTD

Mo Gannon & Associates Ltd

Modality Systems Ltd

Morgan Langley

Network Rail



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## A LUCK ASSOCIATES

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Nibiru Ltd

PA CONSULTING SERVICES LTD

Park Health & Safety Partnership LLP

Perfect Circle JV Ltd

Philippe Sabot Consultant (PSC)

PJM-HS CONSULTING LTD

PKM Digital Ltd

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS LLP

Proxima

PUBLIC DIGITAL LTD

RADMAN ASSOCIATES LTD

Rare Little Beastie Ltd

RBS

REED

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE LTD

Richard Parker

ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE.

RSK GROUP PLC

Seed Science

SGS UK Ltd

Silversands Ltd

Stentiford, Grant

THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP UK LLP

The Neoteric Tech Company Ltd

The Research Box Ltd

Triple G Consulting Ltd

**A LUCK ASSOCIATES**

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University Of Liverpool

VETERINARY VACCINES CONS LTD

Whiteball Ltd

WILLS TOWERS WATSON LTD

WRAP

WSP GLOBAL

**■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Pay****Abena Oppong-Asare:****[30190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Living Wage Foundation's real wage calculator, if he will make estimate of how many (a) direct employees, (b) contractors and (c) agency workers who work in his 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.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As of 6 July 2022, taking into account pay review process which will be effective from 1 July, it is expected there will be no direct employees (excluding students and apprentices) on rates lower than the Living Wage Foundation published rates.

Wage information relating to contractors is not held. The Agency Workers Regulations 2010 are complied with by all organisations, which ensure parity of pay for agency workers with rates paid to employees

**■ Electronic Cigarettes: Waste****Sarah Olney:****[38774]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department (a) has made an assessment of the environmental impact of disposable vapes and (b) plans to introduce recycling schemes designed to reduce the amount of electrical waste produced by those products.

**Steve Double:**

The Department has not undertaken an assessment of the environmental impact of disposable vapes in the UK.

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations place obligations on producers of electrical products to finance the collection and treatment of those products when they become waste. This would include disposable vapes.

At present, consumers are able to dispose of their electrical waste at a local household recycling centre or via retailer take back channels, where these are available.

Cigarette butts are one of the most frequently littered items. In a recent survey commissioned by Defra, they accounted for 66% of the total number of litter items collected.

## ■ **Electronic Training Aids**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[31776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it remains his Department's policy to ban hand-held remote controlled e-collar devices following the 2018 review of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which recommended a ban on those devices.

**Steve Double:**

The proposed ban on the use of electric shock collars controlled by hand-held devices was developed after considering a broad range of factors, including the effects of such a ban. When considered alongside the academic research, the public consultation responses, and direct engagement with the sector, the Government concluded that these devices present a risk to the welfare of dogs and cats and that their use should be prohibited.

We continue to work closely with the animal welfare sector, enforcement agencies and Governments across the four nations on this ban, which will be made via secondary legislation under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The legislation needed to ban electric shock collars controlled by hand-held devices in England will be laid before Parliament as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

## ■ **Fish: Conservation**

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which species the UK considers to be forage fish; and whether the Government will adopt a more precautionary approach to the management of the species based on their wider ecological importance.

**Victoria Prentis:**

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

## ■ Fisheries: Nature Conservation

**Peter Aldous:** [\[39832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of his policies on the protection of deep sea species from overexploitation.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Each year, the UK publishes the sustainability outcomes of the annual fisheries negotiations. This sets out the number of Total Allowable Catches (TACs) that have been set in line with the International Council for the Exploration Sea (ICES) advice. The UK is committed to promoting the sustainability for all fisheries stocks including deep sea species.

## ■ Fishing Catches: White Fish

**Peter Aldous:** [\[39831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to ICES Advice 2022 on UK cod stocks, if he will establish catch limits for cod at sustainable levels.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK advocates an approach towards setting total allowable catches (TACs) for cod stocks and other species that is founded on the best available scientific advice, which seeks to maintain or rebuild sustainable fish stocks and fisheries in the long term. For many whitefish stocks, such as cod, a further key consideration when setting the TAC is their interaction with other stocks caught in the same mixed fishery.

## ■ Food Supply: Northern Ireland

**Jim Shannon:** [\[27620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to produce local food producers in Northern Ireland.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We want to see a sustainable food system, from farm to fork and catch to plate, seizing on the opportunities before us; levelling-up every part of the country and ensuring that everyone has access to nutritious and healthier food. A key part of that is supporting local food produce. Responsibilities in food policy are devolved. However, engagement takes place with officials in Devolved Administrations to draw attention to the needs of local food producers.

## ■ Food Supply: Weather

**Ruth Jones:**

**[38834]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact that the July 2022 heatwave will have on the UK's food supply.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, as demonstrated throughout the Covid-19 response. Our high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources; strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. We produce 60% of all the food we need, and 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year. Through international trade, UK consumers have access to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

This year, early season grass growth has generally been sufficient for good cutting and grazing, with some regional variation. Whilst growth in some areas is now being impacted by the hot dry conditions, this is not unusual at this point in the summer and livestock farmers have a range of options available to them when grass growth declines. Some farmers will need to supplement livestock diets with additional conserved forage or cereals based feeds, but good early silage cuts and the current strong prices for the dairy, beef and sheep sectors should help support this. Promising forage maize crops across the majority of the UK should further bolster winter forage stocks when the maize harvest commences in the coming months.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board's first harvest report of the 2022/23 season reports that the dry weather has enabled farmers to make a good start on the winter barley and oilseed rape harvest, particularly in southern and eastern regions of England, and where possible on winter wheat. To overcome the high temperatures, farmers have been working late at night and early in the morning and grain cooling has been required. It is still too early to understand whether the hot weather has impacted yields or crop conditions.

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

We continue to keep the weather situation and any subsequent impact on grass growth and the arable harvest under close review, including through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which Defra and the Devolved Administrations set up to monitor the UK market situation across all key agricultural commodities. We have also increased engagement with the industry to supplement Government analysis with real-time intelligence. This provides the Government with the best possible intelligence on how the sector is performing.

## ■ Fossil Fuels: Exploration

**Hilary Benn:** [\[39766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of Shell's proposal to commence seismic blasting on the Wild Coast of South Africa on (a) whales and (b) other marine life in that area.

**Steve Double:**

The issue of seismic exploration off the east coast of South Africa is before the judiciary in South Africa. The UK will continue to track developments.

## ■ Horticulture and Poultry: Seasonal Workers

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[25881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the evidential basis is for his Department's decision that the appropriate number of operators for the seasonal worker visa route is five horticultural operators and two poultry operators.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The appropriate number of operators is a collaborative decision made by Defra and the Home Office. It is based on operator capacity to source seasonal workers and uphold sponsorship responsibilities, ensuring the visa route is well managed and worker welfare and exploitation risks are mitigated.

In 2019 and 2020, the Seasonal Workers visa route had two operators for 2,500 visas and 10,000 visas respectively. In 2021 and 2022 there were four operators for 30,000 visas and, to accommodate for the release of the extra 10,000 visas (8,000 visas going to the horticulture sector and 2,000 to the poultry sector) several additional operators will be required.

## ■ Incinerators: Recycling

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[39782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to (a) reduce incineration and (b) promote recycling.

**Steve Double:**

Through both our Resources & Waste Strategy and landmark Environment Act, we will transform our waste system.

We recently consulted on a statutory target, required under the Environment Act 2021, to cut residual waste (excluding major mineral waste) per person by 50% by 2042. It is proposed that this will be measured as a reduction from 2019 levels, estimated to be approximately 560 kg per capita. To meet this target we will drive down the amount of waste we produce, that sent for disposal and recovery (including incineration), and encourage re-use and recycling

To promote recycling, we are introducing consistent recycling collections across England, creating a deposit return scheme for drinks containers and introducing

extended producer responsibility for packaging to ensure that packaging producers cover the cost of recycling and disposing of their packaging.

These reforms will reduce confusion around recycling, provide higher quality recyclate for reprocessors, increase recycling rates and reduce unnecessary and difficult-to-recycle packaging. Through these measures, our ambition is to reach a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035.

## ■ **Lighting: Pollution Control**

**Tony Lloyd:**

[\[37447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many actions under the statutory nuisance regime have been taken regarding light pollution since that regime came into force.

**Steve Double:**

Defra does not hold information about Light Pollution cases investigated under the Environmental Protection Act. This information is only held at Local Authority level.

**Tony Lloyd:**

[\[37448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of his Department's policies for reducing light pollution.

**Steve Double:**

We take a broad approach to tackling all impacts on biodiversity, such as artificial light, and have indicators set out through the 25 Year Environment Plan reporting mechanisms which assess the effectiveness of this wider work towards nature recovery.

## ■ **Litter**

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

[\[38548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help protect wildlife and nature reserves from littering in the context of summer tourism.

**Steve Double:**

Defra published the Litter Strategy for England in April 2017, setting out our aim to deliver a substantial reduction in litter and littering within a generation. The Litter Strategy brings together communities, businesses, charities and schools to bring about real change by focusing on three key themes: education and awareness; improving enforcement; and better cleaning and access to bins.

In response to COVID-19, Defra developed a 'Respect the Outdoors' campaign to encourage people to follow the Countryside Code and to highlight the impacts of littering. We also supported, and provided funding for, Keep Britain Tidy's Love Parks campaign, which encouraged people to treat our parks with respect.



We have also consulted on introducing a deposit return scheme. Our current impact assessment assumes that the scheme can reduce drinks containers being littered by an estimated 85%.

Furthermore, the Chewing Gum Task Force, established by Defra, has recently launched a grant scheme to help local authorities clean gum off pavements in their local areas and invest in long-term behaviour change to prevent gum being dropped in the first place. It is the first project of a five-year programme that will see chewing gum producers invest up to £10m to tackle gum staining.

Natural England supports the Countryside Code campaign through a range of communications channels including social media and engaging with commercial partners who help to promote the Code. In addition, Natural England also supports these efforts across its National Nature Reserves through on-site wardens and volunteers who engage with visitors as well as holding community litter pick days.

#### ■ **Litter: Coastal Areas**

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[39780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect coastal areas from litter.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[39781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) reduce littering offences and (b) protect coastal areas from litter.

**Steve Double:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 25 July 2022 to PQ [38548](#).

#### ■ **Meat: UK Trade with EU**

**Darren Jones:** [\[37594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of altering the existing Export Health Certificate requirements so that monthly compliance attestations from EU suppliers can be accepted as part of the sign-off requirements for those certificates for imported meat goods from the EU into Great Britain.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Health certification is a biosecurity measure related to the consignment subject to export. The certification conditions relate to physical parameters for a specific consignment such as vaccination, health tests status, time of slaughter, production details and disease status at time of production.

The certifying Official Veterinarian signs the certificate to confirm the status of the consignment. The act of signing their name on documents should be approached with care and accuracy. An Official Veterinarian would not be able to put their name to a consignment, for example, at the start of the month covering products that might

be produced and shipped later that month as they would not have the necessary data to support their signature and professional responsibility.

We are keeping our GB import certification requirements under review to minimise the burden on trade while maintaining our high biosecurity standards.

## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Mr John Baron:**

**[32482]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 31 March, (b) 29 April, (c) 9 June and (d) 23 June from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay, reference JB37073.

**Victoria Prentis:**

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 19 July.

I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon. Member.

## ■ **Olive Oil: UK Trade with EU**

**Drew Hendry:**

**[35984]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has taken steps to assess the impact on supply chains of additional agri-good paperwork for the importation of olive oil from the EU for independent retailers.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra routinely engages with stakeholders on a wide range of food issues including olive oil, but has not undertaken any formal assessment on this point.

## ■ **Pets: Weather**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[38723]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to ensure that domestic pets are not put at risk during a period of extreme heat.

**Steve Double:**

We are acutely aware of the potential risks that hot weather creates for pets. Defra has issued communications over the last week to give tips to pet owners on steps to take in hot weather to keep their pets safe. This includes social media posts on how to keep your dog or cat cool, encouraging pet owners to know the signs of heatstroke: <https://twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1548215892692963329?s=20&t=eQ0yptnzMwIN0QIkDXa8sA> and guidance on caring for horses in extreme weather: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-farm-animals-and-horses-in-extreme-weather>.

A number of veterinary and animal welfare organisations have also published advice and guidance for pet owners on caring for their pets during periods of extreme heat. For example, The British Veterinary Association issued advice to pet owners on keeping pets safe during hot weather which you can find here:

<https://www.bva.co.uk/news-and-blog/news-article/sunscreen-shade-and-sunset-walkies-vets-issue-urgent-heatwave-advice-as-temperatures-set-to-rival-2018->

[record/](#). World Horse Welfare also provided advice on caring for horses:  
<https://int.worldhorsewelfare.org/news/hot-weather-and-horses>.

## ■ Rivers

**Tim Farron:** [38597]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on how many occasions he and Ministers from his Department have visited chalk streams since 1 April 2022.

**Steve Double:**

Several present and former Defra ministers are lucky to have globally rare chalk streams in their constituencies and visit them regularly. I intend to visit a chalk stream at my earliest opportunity following recess.

## ■ Rivers: Sewage

**Tim Farron:** [38592]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many meetings (a) he and (b) Ministers from his Department have had with representatives of water companies since 1 April 2022 on the discharge of raw sewage into waterways.

**Steve Double:**

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 13 July 2022 to PQ [31060](#).

## ■ Rivers: Swimming

**Tim Farron:** [38596]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to increase the number of sites with designated bathing water status.

**Steve Double:**

Bathing waters are designated through an application process and Defra welcomes applications for designation for both coastal and inland waters such as rivers. Local authorities, groups and individuals can apply for sites to be designated. Defra encourages this by writing to the Chief Executive of every local authority in England and other key stakeholders such as swimming associations. It is these local authorities and stakeholders who will best know which popular bathing areas may be suitable for designation. My department provides guidance to assist those in making an application for a new bathing water designation. As part of the review of bathing waters policy in England, we plan to produce revised guidance this year to make it easier for applicants to understand the criteria for bathing water status and ensure only necessary information is requested.

For further information, please visit our web page on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bathing-waters>

**Tim Farron:**

**[38599]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many applications for bathing water status (a) have been made, (b) are pending, (c) have been granted and (d) have been rejected since January 2021.

**Steve Double:**

Since January 2021, Defra has received five applications for designated bathing water status. Two of these applications resulted in designations, one did not meet the required criteria as set out in the Bathing Water Regulations 2013, and the remaining two applications did not contain the required supporting evidence, however we expect both applications to be resubmitted at some point this year. We provide feedback and advice to all applicants whose application does not get taken forward.

## ■ Saltwater Fish: Conservation

**Peter Aldous:**

**[39833]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in light of its assessment as critically endangered by the IUCN, if the Government will work towards a zero Total Allowable Catch for roundnose grenadier (a) in UK-EU negotiations and (b) at the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK relies on advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) when negotiating sustainable total allowable catches for fish stocks, including for roundnose grenadier. We are committed to restoring stocks to healthy states including taking a precautionary approach where necessary. To reflect this, the UK unilaterally applies a bycatch provision and does not actively target this stock. The UK will continue to make use of the best available science in developing our approach for deep sea stocks in both the UK and EU consultations, and our representations at the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission.

**Peter Aldous:**

**[39834]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in light of recent scientific advice published by ICES, whether the Government will (a) support a position of zero catch of blackspot seabream, (b) introduce additional unilateral measures for their conservation in UK waters and (c) introduce closures to protect spawning sites.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Blackspot seabream (western red seabream) is recognised as seriously depleted by the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The recent catch advice issued by ICES, for zero catches of blackspot seabream, will form a central part of the UK position for this stock for the forthcoming consultations. This approach is consistent with the UK's commitments to make the best use of scientific advice for the management of fishing activities. Blackspot seabream is a shared stock with the EU. The UK and EU are developing improved management measures to support its long-term recovery through the Specialised Committee on Fisheries.

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government has plans to replace combined turbot and brill and witch and lemon sole total allowable catches (TACs) with single species TACs in the context of recent scientific advice published by ICES that multi-species TACs prevent effective management.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We have asked ICES to update its advice from 2018 on the effectiveness of management arrangements for these stocks which are managed by joint TACs. ICES have indicated their advice will be available during the autumn and we expect to make it our policy for the annual fisheries negotiation with the EU to manage these stocks based on the updated advice provided by ICES. This request to ICES is an example of the work we are doing through the Specialised Committee for Fisheries to address challenges where we think new or different advice is needed.

## ■ **Sewage: Waste Disposal**

**Tim Farron:**

[\[38593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has carried out an impact assessment on the potential impact of sewage discharged in areas at risk of drought.

**Steve Double:**

There are currently nine Environment Agency (EA) operational areas (Yorkshire, West Midlands, East Anglia, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, Thames, Wessex, East Midlands, Solent and South Downs, and Devon and Cornwall) that are experiencing prolonged dry weather, which is the early stage of drought. The EA has provided advice to water companies to reduce the potential impact of this on wastewater treatment as well as any potential use of sewage overflows, should there be any imminent heavy rainfall.

## ■ **Silk Stream**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who is the riparian owner of the Silkstream River as it passes through the CSB and CSC polling districts in the Colindale South ward in Hendon constituency.

**Steve Double:**

There are numerous riparian owners along the Silk Stream in the CSB and CSC polling districts in the Colindale South ward. In most cases, owners of properties next to the river are the riparian owner along their property boundary. In some and less common scenarios, property boundaries fall short of the river channel and the section of river may be on land owned by a third party. A Land Registry search is necessary to determine riparian ownership in these instances.

## ■ Soil: Droughts

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[34968]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps is he taking to protect soil health from the impact of drought.

**Steve Double:**

Several soil health measures are currently being developed to improve and protect the resilience of our soil, so that it functions effectively to enable water to be retained through increased organic matter content and allowing aquifers to remain fuller for longer during prolonged dry seasons.

Measures include the new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and Local Nature Recovery which support sustainable approaches to farm husbandry that will improve and protect soil health. For example, SFI will incentivise management practices such as the use of herbal leys, and grass-legume mixtures or cover crops. These actions help to build levels of organic matter and avoid compaction to allow soil to function effectively.

## ■ Tree Planting

**Kerry McCarthy:**

**[32938]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the number of trees that have been planted through Government-funded schemes in each year since 2019.

**Steve Double:**

The Forestry Commission produces statistics on all new planting of woodland for the UK. These can be found in [Forestry Statistics](#) and in [Provisional Woodland Statistics: 2021 edition](#) on the Forest Research website. These statistics are reported for each financial year in thousands of hectares. The latest available figures are for 2021-22.

## ■ Urban Areas: Water Supply

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[38722]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the adequacy of the supply and provision of drinking water for people in town and city centres during periods of extreme heat.

**Steve Double:**

Water companies in England are reporting that water storage levels are adequate for water supply this summer, including for the supply of drinking water in towns and cities. Water companies have a statutory duty to provide a secure supply of wholesome water at all times, in particular for essential uses, such as the provision of drinking water. Water companies are legally required to have robust plans in place to maintain the supply of water in a range of hazards, including heatwaves.

Water companies use a range of measures to manage higher water demand expected during heatwaves and respond to any disruption. These measures include

ensuring their networks are prepared, customer communications to help manage demand, re-routing of water via their networks, and the provision of alternative water supplies, for example via tanker deliveries. In the event of disruptions, water companies also maintain priority access registers, which vulnerable customers can register with for provision of bottled water.

The Government is communicating frequently with water companies to monitor their performance and re-iterate the importance of maintaining supplies to customers.

Water companies also support the Refill campaign, a scheme which makes it easier for people to find places to refill water bottles, wherever they are, shops, businesses, fountains and transport hubs, for free.

### ■ Volatile Organic Compounds

**Alex Norris:**

[\[39973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has any plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the use of volatile organic compounds in (a) paints and (b) other coatings.

**Steve Double:**

The UK is currently meeting, and on track to meet, the 2030 statutory emissions ceilings for volatile organic compounds. We are not considering legislative changes at this stage.

### ■ Water Companies: Environment Protection

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[37598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Environment Agency's environmental performance report 2021 in respect of water and sewerage companies in England, published on 14 July 2021; and what steps he plans to take in response to the findings of that report.

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[37599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Environment Agency's environmental performance report 2021 in respect of water and sewerage companies in England, published on 14 July 2021, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the (a) statutory powers and (b) resources it has to ensure water and sewerage companies meet their environmental performance targets and obligations.

**Steve Double:**

The Environment Agency (EA) published the latest Environmental Performance Assessment of water companies on 14 July ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-environmental-performance-report-2021/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-environmental-performance-report-2021](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-environmental-performance-report-2021/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-environmental-performance-report-2021)). This report showed that most water



companies' performance had declined. This is simply unacceptable and the Government, Ofwat, and the EA share a joint commitment to tackling this issue.

We have been clear about our expectations that the sector cleans up their act. Where they are found to not be complying with legal obligations as a minimum, government will work with regulators to ensure they take robust action. The EA and Ofwat have powers under the Water Industry Act 1991, Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016, and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 that allow Ofwat to issue fines of up to 10% of annual turnover, and the EA to prosecute water companies and their directors, leading to Court imposed fines.

Since 2015, the Environment Agency has brought 54 prosecutions against water and sewerage companies securing fines of over £139 million. Following an EA investigation, in July 2021 Southern Water were fined a record £90 million after pleading guilty to the thousands of illegal discharges of sewage. Upon our request, the independent sentencing council have also agreed to review guidelines to ensure fines applied by the Courts remain an effective deterrent.

The Environment Act 2021 set new duties and transparency mechanisms into place to further drive up the environmental performance of water companies. If we do not start to see the changes we expect rapidly, we will not hesitate to take further action.

## ■ Weather

**Ruth Jones:**

**[38838]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to ensure the UK was adequately prepared for the level 4 alert issued for 18 and 19 July 2022 under the Heatwave Plan for England.

**Steve Double:**

Water companies have a statutory duty to provide a continuous supply of wholesome water. They are legally required to have robust plans in place to maintain the supply of water in a range of hazards, including heatwaves. Water companies use a range of measures to manage higher water demand expected during heatwaves and respond to any disruption. These measures include ensuring their networks are prepared, customer communications to help manage demand, re-routing of water via their networks, and the provision of alternative water supplies, for example via tanker deliveries. In the event of disruptions, water companies also maintain priority access registers, which vulnerable customers can register with for provision of bottled water.

We issued reminders to animal owners that it is their responsibility to have plans in place to ensure their animals' welfare in extreme weather. This included publishing content on protecting companion animals in hot weather, and direct messaging from the Chief Veterinary Officer and the Animal and Plant Health Agency focused on transporting livestock and horses. Comprehensive guidance is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-farm-animals-and-horses-in-extreme-weather> on protecting animals in hot weather, including advice on checking on animals more

regularly, ensuring all animals have easy access to water on a daily basis, and not transporting animals in temperatures over 30 degrees.

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, built on supply from diverse sources including strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes ensuring that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply. Defra has well-established ways of working with the industry and across Government to monitor risks that may arise. We continue to keep the extreme weather situation under close review, including through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which Defra and the Devolved Administrations set up to monitor the UK market situation across all key agricultural commodities. We have also increased engagement with the industry to supplement Government analysis with real-time intelligence. This provides the Government with the best possible intelligence on how the sector is performing.

Given the health threat and the impacts observed in summer 2021, additional work has been taken forward by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Department of Health and Social Care to raise awareness of the health consequences of hot weather and enable professionals, organisations and individuals to plan, mitigate and respond to hot weather episodes effectively. These include:

- Updating the materials related to hot weather risks on the [Heatwave Plan for England collection page](#). These provide sector specific guidance on actions to take during a heatwave to safeguard patients and service users.
- Publishing the 2022 Heatwave communications toolkit and social media assets which have been shared with UKHSA regional communications, cross-government partners and local government to support consistent and clear messaging on heat-health.
- Holding a Heatwave and Summer Preparedness Stakeholder event in April 2022 to around 1000 participants across the health and social care sector and other Government departments to allow them to take early mitigating action.
- The Extreme Heat [National Severe Weather Warning Service](#) (NSWWS) warnings, operated by the Met Office, are intended to warn the public and emergency responders and include the impacts of severe heat outside of the health sector. An Extreme Heat NSWWS will only be issued should a severe or prolonged hot weather episode be forecast.
- Ensuring all Local Resilience Forums have the guidance, sector specific action sheets and related resources from the Heatwave Plan for England before summer to allow time for incorporation into their wider planning for summer 2022.
- UKHSA weekly situational awareness meetings with the Met Office feeding into the cross-government Summer Resilience Network, chaired by the Cabinet Office to ensure awareness and a wider system response across the Government.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ Abduljalil al-Singace****Claudia Webbe:**[\[37636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the press release entitled Middle East Minister visits Gulf to deepen economic ties, published on 7 July 2022, whether the Minister of State for Asia and the Middle East held discussions with her Bahraini counterpart on the case of Dr Abduljalil al-Singace.

**Amanda Milling:**

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

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

**■ Afghanistan: Armed Forces****Mr David Lammy:**[\[39742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on allegations of crimes committed by SAS troops in Afghanistan.

**Graham Stuart:**

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ministers and officials have regular discussions with the Ministry of Defence on a range of foreign policy issues, including Afghanistan.

**■ Afghanistan: Development Aid****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[39952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much her Department spent on programmes targeted at women and girls in Afghanistan in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

**Graham Stuart:**

The majority of spending on women and girls is integrated into other programmes, rather than through discrete programmes specifically designed to target women and girls. For example during the period 2019 to 2022, the UK provided £190m to the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund which targets women and girls. We also fund programmes specifically targeted at women and girls. The UK spent £0.9m, in 2019/20, £0.8m in 2020/21 and £4.3m 2021/22 on programmes in Afghanistan aimed at tackling gender-based violence, sexual reproductive health services, health protection and empowerment.

## ■ Afghanistan: Diplomatic Relations

**Mr David Lammy:** [\[39738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her international counterparts on re-opening diplomatic missions in Afghanistan.

**Mr David Lammy:** [\[39739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she has taken to evaluate the feasibility of re-opening the British embassy in Afghanistan.

**Graham Stuart:**

The British Embassy in Kabul has suspended operations. The UK Mission to Afghanistan based in Doha is leading our diplomatic, security and humanitarian engagement. We intend to establish a diplomatic presence in Kabul as soon as the security and political situation in the country allows and are coordinating this effort with allies.

## ■ Afghanistan: Disaster Relief

**Mr David Lammy:** [\[39741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the £2.5 million pledged to Afghanistan following the earthquake of 21 June 2022 has been delivered.

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK was one of the first donors to offer its support in response to the earthquake that struck Afghanistan on 22 June, disbursing £2.5 million in full to the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Red Cross to provide life-saving shelter, medication, water and sanitation assistance to affected communities.

## ■ Afghanistan: Earthquakes

**Jim Shannon:** [\[39849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the impact of the provision of £2.5 million of aid to people in Afghanistan affected by the earthquake in that country in June.

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK responded quickly to the earthquake that struck Afghanistan on 22 June, disbursing £2.5 million in full to the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Red Cross to provide life-saving shelter, medication, water and sanitation assistance to affected communities. The delivery of life-saving assistance through this funding is contributing to a collective response which has reached 138,000 people to date.

## ■ Afghanistan: Embassies

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[39740\]](#)

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

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK Government continues to support those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan. We are aware of a small number of former British Embassy staff who remain in Afghanistan. We continue to do all that we can to enable those who are eligible to relocate to the UK.

## ■ Afghanistan: Visits Abroad

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[39737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans (a) she and (b) Ministers in her Department have to visit Afghanistan in the next twelve months.

**Graham Stuart:**

Neither the Foreign Secretary, nor any other Minister, has any plans to travel to Afghanistan. As with other G7 countries, our engagement with the Taliban is conducted by officials, not by Ministers.

## ■ Africa and Middle East: Overseas Workers

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[39736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people from her Department were working in (a) the Middle East and (b) Africa in each year since 2010.

**Amanda Milling:**

### FCDO UK BASED STAFF WORKING OVERSEAS HEADCOUNT

Locations	Mar-14	Mar-15	Mar-16	Mar-17	Mar-18	Mar-19	Mar-20	Mar-21	Mar-22
Africa	540-559	540-559	500-519	500-519	520-539	540-559	560-579	580-599	560-579
Middle East	140-159	140-159	180-199	200-219	240-259	260-279	220-239	180-199	180-199

## ■ Africa and Middle East: Visits Abroad

**Mr David Lammy:**

**[39735]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many overseas visits were undertaken by Ministers from her Department to (a) the Middle East and (b) Africa in each year since 2010.

**Amanda Milling:**

Details of ministerial commercial travel are published quarterly on gov.uk. Please see the link below for the FCDO return.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fcdo-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings#full-publication-update-history>

The latest data was published on 14 July with an accompanying Written Ministerial Statement made in both Houses of Parliament on 15 July:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-07-15/debates/2207152000007/GovernmentTransparencyAndAccountability#>

Earlier travel data from 2011-2021 for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and from 2009 for the Department for International Development can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/minister-data> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-with-external-organisations-in-the-department-for-international-development>

The 2010 FCO information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Alaa Abdel Fattah

**Mr David Lammy:**

**[39750]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking with her Egyptian counterpart to secure (a) consular access to and (b) the release of Alaa Abdel Fattah.

**Graham Stuart:**

Since his sentencing in December 2021, FCDO officials have consistently called on the Egyptian Government urgently to grant consular access to Alaa Abdel-Fattah. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, the Minister of State for North Africa, raised the case with Foreign Minister Shoukry during a call on 21 May; Lord (Tariq) Ahmad and the Foreign Secretary also raised the case with Minister Shoukry during the Foreign Minister's recent visit to London. As the Foreign Secretary said in the House on 21 June, we are working to secure his release.

**Alexander Lebedev****Mr David Lammy:**[\[39733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when (a) Ministers and (b) officials in her Department were first notified by the then Foreign Secretary of his meeting with Alexander Lebedev in April 2018.

**Graham Stuart:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the Prime Minister's letter to the Liaison Committee of 21 July; a copy of this letter has been placed in the Library of the House.

**Mr David Lammy:**[\[39743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) other relevant stakeholders on imposing sanctions on Alexander Lebedev.

**Graham Stuart:**

We do not speculate on future designations, or on cross-government discussions on potential targets. To do this could reduce the impact of designations. We have now sanctioned over 1000 individuals, and over 100 businesses since Putin's invasion of Ukraine including oligarchs worth £117 billion. We will not stop targeting Russia's economy until Ukraine prevails. The UK Government, along with our international allies, is working to ensure that happens.

**Bahrain: Human Rights****Claudia Webbe:**[\[37637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the press release entitled Middle East Minister visits Gulf to deepen economic ties, published on 7 July 2022, on what basis the Minister of State for Asia and the Middle East congratulated the Bahraini Minister of Foreign Affairs for that country's continued progress in human rights.

**Amanda Milling:**

My visit to Bahrain from 2-3 July provided an opportunity to discuss a wide range of human rights issues with senior Bahraini counterparts. This included the introduction by Bahrain of alternative sentencing legislation, which has so far benefitted over 4,300 individuals and the passing of a new Restorative Justice Law for children which, among other things, raises the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 15. We welcome the entry into force of this legislation and continue to support Government of Bahrain efforts to ensure the law is fully and effectively implemented.

**Bangladesh: Genito-urinary Medicine****Feryal Clark:**[\[40020\]](#)

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



**Amanda Milling:**

The UK is a leading development partner in Bangladesh. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) 'Better Health in Bangladesh Programme' provides financial and technical assistance to the Government of Bangladesh's national health sector programme. The programme helps to ensure that women have access to safe gynaecological care in Bangladesh through interventions including cervical cancer screening, post abortion care, midwifery training and technical assistance to strengthen Bangladesh's health system. It also aims to strengthen the Bangladeshi health system, including combatting issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ending preventable deaths of mothers and new-borns. In targeted districts of Bangladesh, the FCDO tests new methods of cervical cancer screening and treatment, and provides basic emergency obstetric care. The UK's technical health assistance has also resulted in new midwifery training programmes in Bangladesh. The FCDO's £12.29 million midwifery programme has supported the training of 8,475 midwives, of which, 2,557 have been deployed in public primary health care facilities over the last five years. These midwives have assisted over 300,000 natural births, and served almost one million family planning users through post-partum and post abortion care.

**China: Carbon Emissions****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[40011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her counterparts in the Chinese Government on cutting carbon emissions.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Foreign Secretary spoke to her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi shortly before COP26 in Glasgow and pressed for China to submit an ambitious Chinese nationally determined contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ahead of the Summit. In March this year, the Prime Minister reiterated the importance of action and cooperation on climate change in his call with President Xi Jinping. COP President Alok Sharma has engaged regularly with China's Special Representative for Climate Change Affairs, Xie Zhenhua, most recently in a bilateral meeting in June, where they discussed progress in implementing our respective climate commitments. This included the Glasgow Climate Pact, and how to deliver further climate action and ambition ahead of COP27. The Minister for Pacific and the Environment, Lord Goldsmith, has also discussed climate and biodiversity issues with the Chinese Ambassador to the UK.

**Development Aid: Females****Sarah Champion:**[\[39856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how her Department calculated that £745 million was needed to restore ODA spending on bilateral women and girls programmes this financial year.



**Vicky Ford:**

As set out in the International Development Strategy, we intend to restore our level of dedicated bilateral FCDO Official Development Assistance (ODA) to women and girls programming. This restoration is based on FY20/21 spend against a set of input sector codes aligned with the '3 Es' - Educating girls, Empowering women and girls, and Ending violence against women and girls.

**Development Aid: Fossil Fuels****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[39949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the compatibility of British International Investment's (BII) £123 million commitment to ABSA Bank with Government policies on financing fossil fuels; and what progress has been made towards excluding fossil fuel related activities from trade finance commitments by BII.

**Amanda Milling:**

British International Investment (BII)'s support of trade finance facilities - such as Absa Bank's Trade Loan Facility committed to in 2019 - help businesses in developing countries to get access to essential goods including food commodities, inputs for agriculture and raw materials for manufacturing.

All of BII's new investments are aligned with HMG's Fossil Fuel Policy and since 2021 BII has acted to exclude its trade finance capital being used for coal and crude oil trades.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[39950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the energy generated by British International Investment's portfolio was generated by fossil fuels in 2021.

**Amanda Milling:**

British International Investment (BII) publishes information on total power generated by portfolio companies in its Annual Review. The information request was published on 5 July 2022 on page 37 of 2021 BII's Annual Review.

The amount of power generated and distributed from renewable sources by BII's investments has more than doubled in two years and as of end of 2021 stands at 37 per cent. It will increase further as other renewables projects that BII has committed to become operational.

**Development Aid: Health Services****Dr Dan Poulter:**[\[38612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the policy paper entitled UK Government's strategy for international development, published in May 2022, what funding has been allocated to programmes

focused on delivering universal, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights.

**Amanda Milling:**

As set out in the International Development Strategy, the Foreign Secretary has said 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.

**Chris Law:**

[\[39885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much and what proportion of UK ODA her Department has allocated to sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes in 2022-23.

**Amanda Milling:**

As set out in the International Development Strategy, the Foreign Secretary has said 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.

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

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[34827\]](#)

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

**Amanda Milling:**

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

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

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[35855\]](#)

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

**Amanda Milling:**

Details of ministerial commercial travel is published quarterly on gov.uk. Please see the link below for the FCDO return. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fcdo-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings#full-publication-update-history>

The latest data was published on 14 July with an accompanying Written Ministerial Statement made in both Houses of Parliament on 15 July:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-07-15/debates/2207152000007/GovernmentTransparencyAndAccountability#>

Air travel costs for officials in financial year 2020-21 was £3.9m and for financial year 2021-22 was £7.4m. These figures are taken from the FCDO's financial systems and should exclude travel incurred by Ministers, and any non-air travel costs. These figures are for flights taken as part of duty travel; travel taken as part of staff members' overseas allowance packages are excluded as these costs are not split on the system between air travel and other types of travel.

#### ■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Consultants**

**Jon Trickett:**

**[33702]**

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

**Amanda Milling:**

FCDO consultancy spend in financial years 2021-22 and 2020-21 was £5.7 million and £2.7 million respectively. Total FCO plus DFID spend for 2019-20 was £3 million.

More detailed information can be found on a contract by contract basis at <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder> Contracts Finder records details of contracts worth over £10,000 with the government and its agencies.

#### ■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Operating Costs**

**Mr David Lammy:**

**[39734]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the fall in the value of Sterling on her Department's total operating budget.

**Amanda Milling:**

Where possible we seek to make our commitments in British Pound Sterling (GBP) to de-risk the impact of foreign currency fluctuation exposure for example the majority of our ODA programme budget is committed in GBP. Where we cannot commit in GBP, in particular across our operating budget, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has a Foreign Currency mechanism agreed with HM Treasury to maintain the department's spending power despite changes in the value of Sterling.

#### ■ **FSO Safer**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[39957]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential risk of a major oil spill from the FSO Safer supertanker in the Red Sea.

**Amanda Milling:**

FSO SAFER represents an extremely dangerous environmental risk, brought to international attention by UK-funded research that identified the threat posed by the tanker.

The UK has provided technical support to the UN's risk assessments of the SAFER salvage mission, with the most recent risk assessment taking place on 27 February 2022. On 18 July, the UK pledged a further £2 million to the UN SAFER plan to salvage the ship and its oil, removing the risk of spillage and environmental damage - taking our total pledge to £6 million.

We are also working with the UN to put in place detailed contingency plans in the event a spill occurs. We are coordinating with our partners to press the Houthis to facilitate the UN's vital work.

**■ Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria****Derek Thomas:**[\[38750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the level of the UK's pledge to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria on the UK's international reputation.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Global Fund is a high performing organisation that, with partners, has saved 44 million lives to date. The UK is proud to be the organisation's third largest donor historically, investing £4.1 billion since 2002. We are currently reviewing the Global Fund's 7th replenishment investment case in line with delivering the International Development Strategy.

**■ Gulf Strategy Fund****Claudia Webbe:**[\[37635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, on what date she plans to publish the 2022 annual Gulf Strategy Fund Programme Summary.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Gulf Strategy Fund Programme Summary will be published on the August cross-Whitehall publication day, which is scheduled to take place on 25 August.

**■ Horn of Africa: Famine****Mr David Lammy:**[\[39745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans the Government has to allocate additional emergency funding to mitigate the risk of famine in the Horn of Africa before the end of 2022.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region. In financial year 2022/2023 (ending 31 March 2023) we will provide at least £156 million to address humanitarian requirements across East Africa.

**Iran: Nuclear Power****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[38628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the Iran nuclear deal.

**Amanda Milling:**

Iran has been non-compliant with its nuclear commitments since 2019. Iran's nuclear programme has never been more advanced than it is today. Iran's escalation of its nuclear activities is threatening regional and international peace and security and undermining the global non-proliferation system.

We have reached the end of talks in Vienna to restore the nuclear deal. There is a viable deal on the table which would return Iran to compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments, and return the US to the deal. The deal would reverse Iran's nuclear escalation, return Iran's nuclear programme to strict JCPOA limits and restore extensive monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency. If Iran fails to conclude the deal its nuclear escalation will cause the collapse the JCPOA. In this scenario we would carefully consider all options in partnership with our allies.

**Jagtar Singh Johal****Mr David Lammy:**[\[39749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she last made representations to her Indian counterpart on the case of Jagtar Singh Johal.

**Amanda Milling:**

The British Government has consistently raised its concerns about Mr Johal's case with the Government of India, including his allegations of torture and mistreatment and his right to a fair trial. The Prime Minister raised the case with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi when they met in Delhi on 22 April 2022. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Johal's detention with India's Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, when they met in Delhi on 31 March 2022. The Foreign Secretary met Mr Johal's family and MP on 9 June 2022. Ministers and officials have raised Mr Johal's case on almost 100 occasions and will continue to do so.

## ■ Lebanon: Economic Situation

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[39747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she last met her Lebanese counterpart to discuss the economic situation in that country.

**Amanda Milling:**

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South and Central Asia, North Africa, UN & the Commonwealth, met Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib on 6 July. Lord Ahmad underlined the need for swift government formation and economic reforms. The UK Government is clear that the Lebanese Government must deliver economic reforms, which are the only way to rebuild the confidence of the international community and secure a critical International Monetary Fund rescue package.

## ■ Lebanon: Humanitarian Aid

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[39746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the (a) short- and (b) medium-term humanitarian needs of the people of Lebanon.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK has allocated over £799 million in humanitarian, development and security funding to Lebanon since 2011, providing humanitarian assistance since 2016. This funding benefits both Syrian refugees in Lebanon and vulnerable Lebanese. We make funding decisions based on regular assessment data collected by the humanitarian community. Since the economic decline over the last two years, additional assessment data has been collected on the humanitarian needs of the Lebanese, Palestinian refugees, and migrant communities, to complement the data on Syrian refugees. Short and medium-term needs across all population groups are myriad, covering basic needs including food, healthcare, and protection. Long-term needs can only be met through long-term solutions.

The UK is at the forefront of the international community in ensuring humanitarian support to Lebanon is principally based on humanitarian need, rather than refugee status, under a 'whole of Lebanon' response. We also continue to make clear that Lebanon's leaders must implement a credible reform process as the only sustainable way to address the ongoing crisis in Lebanon.

## ■ Maira Shahbaz

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[37608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with the Home Secretary on the case of Maira Shahbaz.

**Graham Stuart:**

It is longstanding Government policy not to comment on individual cases, where to do so may put individuals or their family members in danger.

■ **Morad Tahbaz****Mr David Lammy:**[\[39748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she last made representations to her Iranian counterpart on the case of Morad Tahbaz.

**Amanda Milling:**

On 27 July the Tahbaz family confirmed Morad has been released from Evin prison on furlough and is at their home in Tehran. This welcome development follows intensive diplomatic efforts at all levels, by the UK and our partners. Morad Tahbaz is a UK-US-Iranian tri-national, and we will continue to work closely with the United States to secure his permanent release and departure from Iran. We urge the Government of Iran to end its practice of unfairly detaining British and other foreign nationals, and we will continue to work with likeminded partners to that end.

■ **Nigeria: Health****Ruth Jones:**[\[40001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she is taking steps to address the impact of rising temperatures and air pollution on maternal health in Nigeria.

**Vicky Ford:**

Climate change and exposure to air pollution, caused through the effects of desertification, excessive deforestation, poor public waste management and bush burning, are major health risks for the population of Nigeria. Within this context, a robust and sustainable health system is crucial to provide access to essential healthcare, including lifesaving maternal and child health services.

As part of our Presidency of COP26, the UK developed and is delivering the COP26 Health Programme, which aims to enable transformational change in health systems globally that protects both people and the planet. Under this programme, Nigeria made an ambitious commitment to build a climate-resilient and low-carbon sustainable health system. This includes a plan to achieve net carbon zero and to minimise human exposure to air pollution by 2035. Through our core voluntary contribution to the World Health Organization and The Global Fund, the UK is now supporting Nigeria's Ministry of Health to design and develop a climate resilient health strategy that includes management of medical waste and use of renewable energy at primary health care facilities for maternal and newborn services.



## ■ São Tomé and Príncipe: Elections

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[39793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Sao Tome and Principe Government on planned legislative elections in that country; and whether she has received any requests for technical support.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK has a close, constructive relationship with President Vila Nova and his Government in São Tomé and Príncipe. The country is the highest-scoring in Central Africa on governance according to the Ibrahim Index. No request for technical assistance for the legislative elections has been received, but the UK Government would be open to considering possible support should it be requested.

## ■ Somaliland: Media

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[39790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has held recent discussions with her counterparts in Somaliland on restrictions on international media in that country, including the BBC.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK Government is committed to media freedom and freedom of expression; they are essential components of a democratic society.

Diminishing media freedom in Somaliland is evidenced by the growing number of arrests of journalists and the recent ban on the BBC. We regularly raise these issues at all levels with the Somaliland Government, including with the Somaliland Foreign Minister. We also continue to defend media freedom by encouraging the Somaliland Government to pass a stalled media law that would help secure greater protections for journalists and improve standards for journalism.

## ■ Sri Lanka: Economic Situation

**Mr David Lammy:** [\[39751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking with its international counterparts to resolve the political and economic situation in Sri Lanka.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government are encouraging all sides to find a peaceful, democratic, and inclusive approach to resolving the current political and economic challenges in Sri Lanka. We are closely monitoring the fast-moving situation, including the recent appointment of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as President. We call on all parties to respect the rule of law, and refrain from violence and damage.

The UK is providing economic support through multilateral institutions such as the World Bank (WB), and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The UK has the joint fifth



largest shares in the IMF, and is a major contributor to the UN and WB. The World Bank have announced assistance of US\$400 million which includes funds to provide economic as well as health support.

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

## ■ **Sudan: Conflict Resolution**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[39791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support de-escalation of recent violence in Blue Nile State of Sudan.

**Vicky Ford:**

The recent violence in the Blue Nile State is troubling and my thoughts are with those affected. We urge all parties to avoid escalation and engage in dialogue to prevent further conflict; a message our Ambassador to Sudan delivered publicly on 18 July. The UK is providing humanitarian support to those affected through our partners, including the multi-donor Sudan Humanitarian Fund. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and press Sudanese authorities to deliver their obligation to protect civilians.

## ■ **Sustainable Development**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[38797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of conducting a second voluntary national review of the UK's progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

**Graham Stuart:**

The International Development Strategy and Integrated Review reaffirm the UK's commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The UK brings powerful economic and political tools to its development partnerships: aid, diplomacy, trade, investment, expertise and influence. Our programme of activity at this year's High Level Political Forum demonstrated how we will use these to meet the evolving needs of our partners and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UK's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) provided a comprehensive account of actions being taken across the UK by government and other actors. No decision has been made about a follow-up to the 2019 VNR.

**■ Ukraine: Armed Conflict**

**Mr David Lammy:** [\[39744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the number of Ukrainian civilians forcibly transferred to Russia.

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK has supported multilateral fact-finding mechanisms to monitor Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including two OSCE Moscow Mechanism reports, which found evidence of clear violations of international law by Russian forces in Ukraine. These reports also noted with concern the issue of large-scale deportations of Ukrainian civilians to Russia. However, we are unable to verify the exact number of Ukrainian civilians forcibly deported to Russia, due to lack of access by international human rights and humanitarian institutions.

**■ Uzbekistan: Politics and Government**

**Michael Fabricant:** [\[38496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of (a) recent events in and (b) access to (i) international journalists, (ii) human rights organisations and (iii) telephone and internet connections in the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK is saddened by the loss of life that occurred during recent events in Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan. We understand that initially peaceful protests against plans to change Karakalpakstan's autonomous status within Uzbekistan developed into violent unrest with casualties among civilians and law enforcement personnel. The situation now seems calm. Although there are reports of internet and telephone communications being blocked, we understand that communications in Karakalpakstan have mostly been reinstated, and international and local journalists have been given limited access to the region. The Uzbek authorities have announced an official investigation involving Parliament and civil society.

On 7 July, Lord Ahmad raised the unrest in Karakalpakstan with the Uzbek Deputy Foreign Minister and the British Ambassador and his team in Tashkent are also in contact with the Uzbek authorities. We have been clear in our communications that the right to peaceful protest and respect for media freedom should be protected. In discussion of these events in multilateral fora, we urged the Uzbek authorities to adhere to their international commitments and due process, as they seek to understand what happened. We will continue to monitor developments closely.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[38507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of recent events in the autonomous republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK is saddened by the loss of life that occurred during recent events in Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan. We understand that initially peaceful protests against plans to change Karakalpakstan's autonomous status within Uzbekistan developed into violent unrest with casualties among civilians and law enforcement personnel. The situation now seems calm. The Uzbek authorities have announced an official investigation, involving Parliament and civil society.

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**Vaccination****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[38585\]](#)

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

**Amanda Milling:**

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

UNGA 77 and G20 discussions this year provide opportunities to maintain momentum on global health. The UK will continue across international fora to champion health system strengthening and the critical role of strong, resilient and accessible health systems in supporting primary health care and essential services, including routine immunisation.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****Accident and Emergency Departments: Barnet Hospital and Royal Free Hospital****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[25833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is at the accident and emergency unit at (a) Barnet and (b) Royal Free Hospitals in the latest period for which data is available.

**Maria Caulfield:**

This information is not held in the format requested. However, the average median waiting time to treatment in accident and emergency (A&E) at the Royal Free Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in May 2022 was 92 minutes. The average median waiting time in total in A&E for the Trust for all patients in May 2022 was 486 minutes.

■ **Ambulance Services****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[36857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which ambulance services in England (a) have and (b) have not declared the highest critical incident level in the week commencing 11 July 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

In the week commencing 11 July 2022, all ambulance trusts in England moved to Resource Escalation Action Plan level 4.

■ **Ambulance Services: Emergency Calls****Munira Wilson:**[\[38859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of Category 1 calls to NHS Ambulance Trusts in England did not require emergency treatment in (a) the third quarter of 2021, (b) the fourth quarter of 2021, (c) the first quarter of 2022 and (d) the second quarter of 2022, by NHS Ambulance Trust.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The data requested is not collected centrally.

■ **Ambulance Services: NHS 111****Munira Wilson:**[\[38860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of 999 calls to NHS Ambulance Trusts were redirected to NHS 111 in (a) the third quarter of 2021, (b) the fourth quarter of 2021, (c) the first quarter of 2022 and (d) the second quarter of 2022, by NHS Ambulance Trust.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The data requested is shown in the following table. Data for the second quarter of 2022 from July to September is not yet held centrally.

QUARTER 3 2021	0.8%
Quarter 4 2021	0.9%
Quarter 1 2022	1.0%

Source: Integrated Urgent Care Aggregate Data Collection, NHS England

## ■ Ambulance Services: Staff

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[36010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent discussions with stakeholders on increasing the number of personnel available to support ambulance services in (a) York and (b) England.

**Maria Caulfield:**

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care met with all National Health Service ambulance trusts on 16 July 2022 to discuss capacity and workforce matters ahead of the heatwave, including additional staffing. This meeting included Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[39937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support ambulance staff with their mental health, in the context of the recent increase in call volumes.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Ambulance sector staff have access to mental health and wellbeing hubs which offer rapid access to assessment and local evidence-based mental health services and support, where needed.

## ■ Ambulance Services: Standards

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[39936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time for an ambulance was during the Level 4 heatwave alert on (a) 18 July and (b) 19 July 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information requested is not currently held in the format requested. Data for ambulance response times in July 2022 is currently being collated and validated and will be published in August 2022.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[39984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have died while waiting for an ambulance in (a) the South West and (b) England in (a) 2022 so far, (b) 2021, (c) 2020 and (d) 2019.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information requested is not collected centrally.

## ■ Antidepressants: Pregnancy

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[36135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the safety of mirtazapine for use during pregnancy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

While there is currently limited data on the use of mirtazapine in pregnant women, the data available do not indicate an increased risk of congenital malformations. Caution is advised when used during pregnancy, particularly as until or shortly before the birth, the baby should be monitored for any possible side effects relating to withdrawal or toxicity.

The product information also includes information about the potential risk of persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn, which is known to be associated with the use of some antidepressants with a similar mechanism of action as mirtazapine.

The safety of mirtazapine use in pregnancy is continually monitored and assessed through the periodic review of the latest available data from scientific studies and side effects reported through the Yellow Card Scheme. The product information is updated in response to these ongoing data assessments to reflect the most up to date advice for patients and prescribers.

**■ Arthritis: Medical Treatments****Feryal Clark:****[40018]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Inequality of access to advanced therapies for patients with inflammatory arthritis: a postcode lottery? published in Rheumatology Advances in Practices in November 2021, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of that report's finding that 59 per cent of clinical commissioning groups have a limit on the number of advanced therapies they would commission.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific assessment has been made. Since July 2022, the majority of services for people with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions, including arthritis, are commissioned locally by integrated care boards (ICBs), which plan the provision of services subject to local prioritisation and funding.

In England, the National Health Service is legally required to make funding available for all treatments recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), usually within three months of the publication of its final guidance. This includes any recommended advanced therapies. In addition, we are working with NHS England to implement the Best MSK Health Improvement Programme. The Programme addresses MSK conditions in primary, secondary and community services to reduce any variance in patient access, outcomes and experience.

**■ Arthritis: Surgery****Ian Paisley:****[37491]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure integrated pre-operative, operative and post-operative care for people with arthritis.

**Gillian Keegan:**

NHS England's Best MSK Health Collaborative is working with local systems, those with direct lived experience, patient groups and organisations representing clinicians to deliver integrated musculoskeletal services, including for those with arthritis.

Through the Health and Care Act 2022 integrated care boards have a duty to promote integration where it would improve the quality of services and reduce inequalities of access or outcome.

**Blood Tests: Halton****Derek Twigg:****[35862]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2022 to Question 31020 on Blood Tests: Halton, at what level data on waiting times for blood tests and appointments for suspected cancer diagnosis is collected.

**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 18 July 2022]:* Data on waiting times for blood tests for patients with suspected cancer symptoms is not collected centrally. Waiting time data on the two-week cancer referral pathway is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancer-waiting-times/>

**Bowel Cancer: Bevacizumab****Andy Carter:****[40009]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to take steps to make Avastin available on the NHS for people with stage 3 or 4 bowel cancer.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Bevacizumab (Avastin) is not routinely funded on the National Health Service in England. In 2012, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) considered the clinical and cost-effectiveness of bevacizumab for the treatment of metastatic colorectal cancer in adults. However, it was unable to recommend the drug as an effective use of resources. NICE monitors new evidence which may affect its guidance and would consult on proposed changes with stakeholders if any such evidence emerges.

Where a treatment is not routinely commissioned by the NHS, a patient's clinician may submit an individual funding request if they consider it is in the patient's best interests.

**Breast Cancer: Screening****Holly Mumby-Croft:****[40023]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness of the NHS's Breast Screening Programme.

**James Morris:**

NHS England works with stakeholders such as cancer charities, to raise awareness of breast screening, including planning for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October 2022. NHS.UK provides information on the breast screening process, including 'surveillance screening' for individuals at higher risk of breast cancer. It also provides information on checking breasts regularly and any signs of concern.

**■ Cancer: Drugs****Dr Luke Evans:**[\[28496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of joint working between the (a) Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, (b) the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, (c) NHS England and (d) NHS Improvement in the context of supporting access for patients to products licenced through Project Orbis.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We routinely work with system partners to assess the effectiveness of processes to support access to new medicines for National Health Service patients. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England ensure there is an integrated approach to enable access to new medicines, including those licensed through Project Orbis. NICE commits to publishing draft recommendations on new medicines approximately at the time of licensing, with final guidance within three months of licensing wherever possible. NHS England and NICE have also agreed principles to allow potential interim access ahead of NICE's guidance where timely guidance is not possible, which has supported early access for a number of medicines licensed through Project Orbis.

**■ Cancer: Health Services****Wes Streeting:**[\[36033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in England with suspected cancer have waited 52 weeks or more for NHS care in the most recent month for which data is available.

**Wes Streeting:**[\[36034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in England with suspected cancer have waited 90 days or more for NHS care in the most recent month for which data is available.

**Wes Streeting:**[\[36035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what is the longest period a patient in England with suspected cancer has waited for NHS care in the most recent month for which data is available.



**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 20 July 2022]:* This information is not collected in the format requested.

■ **Cancer: Medical Treatments**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

**[35910]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) ensure that cancer patients in Ealing, Southall constituency begin their treatment within a maximum of 62 days of an urgent GP referral and (b) reduce average waiting times for cancer care treatment in that constituency.

**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 18 July 2022]:* London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust has established rapid diagnostic clinics to allow patients presenting with non-specific symptoms to obtain rapid diagnostics. This includes magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography scans to detect potential cancers at the earliest opportunity. Since April 2022, the Trust has focus on lower gastrointestinal care pathways to improve waiting time performance.

**Henry Smith:**

**[38616]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what provision the 10 Year Cancer Plan will make for expanding system infrastructure to deliver radioligand therapy and other innovative cancer treatment.

**Dr James Davies:**

**[38733]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the 10 Year Cancer Plan will include provisions on expanding system infrastructure to deliver innovative cancer treatment such as radioligand therapy.

**James Morris:**

I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for St Albans (Daisy Cooper MP) on 19 July 2022 to Question [33937](#).

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[39906]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to help ensure that patients do not experience delay to cancer treatment caused by staffing shortages.

**James Morris:**

The Department is investing an additional £50 million in 2022/23 to increase the cancer and diagnostics workforce. This will contribute to the expansion of postgraduate medical training for cancer-related medical professions, such as pathologists and histopathologists, clinical radiologists and oncologists. Individual budgets for each specialty will be determined by Health Education England's business planning in due course.

## ■ Care Homes: Carers

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[37509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of care home residents who have an essential care giver; what assessment he has made of whether that proportion has increased during the covid-19 outbreak; and what estimate he has made of the proportion of adults in England who have a close relative in a care home who has been informed that care home residents are entitled to visits from an essential care giver in the event that that home is in lockdown.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 July 2022]:*

No specific estimate has been made as the Government's guidance no longer refers to essential care givers. The Government's updated guidance now states that residents should receive visits from loved ones, including during outbreaks of infectious diseases within a home or when a resident is in isolation, where the guidance states each resident may have at least one visitor.

However, in the week ending 29 June 2022, 95.4% of care homes in England accommodated residents receiving visitors.

## ■ Care Homes: Physiotherapy

**Karin Smyth:** [\[37520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the average time taken for care home residents to see a physiotherapist.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific estimate has been made as the information requested is not collected centrally. Integrated care boards are responsible for commissioning physiotherapy services locally.

## ■ Care Homes: West Midlands

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[38783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the timely discharge of patients back into the care sector from (a) Heartlands Hospital, (b) Queen Elizabeth Hospital, (c) Good Hope Hospital and (d) Solihull Hospital Birmingham.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department's hospital discharge guidance sets out that local systems should adopt discharge processes to meet the needs of the local population. Birmingham City Council uses a discharge to assess model which enables patients in the Heartlands, Good Hope and Queen Elizabeth hospitals to be discharged with care and support whilst the full assessment is undertaken outside of hospital.

This guidance states that local areas may select the appropriate funding mechanisms to support timely hospital discharge, such as the Better Care Fund (BCF). Through the BCF, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council is establishing initiatives to support timely hospital discharge from Solihull Hospital Birmingham. A home discharge service has been established to support 95% of those ready to be discharged to return home on the same day and an early response service to prevent hospital admissions by providing care visits. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council is also working with the voluntary sector to deliver a 'Home from Hospital' service, which provides support to newly discharged patients through such tasks as shopping.

### ■ **Care Workers: Conditions of Employment and Pay**

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[37527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with private sector providers on improving pay and conditions for care workers.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We have had no specific discussions. However, we recently met with a provider reference group to discuss workforce pressures in adult social care and the planned workforce reforms, which was attended by representatives from the sector. A further meeting with independent care providers is planned shortly.

### ■ **Carers: Finance**

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[37521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support local authorities in meeting the needs of carers who require financial support as a result of rising energy prices.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Government is providing support of over £37 billion to assist with rising costs of living, including higher energy costs. Unpaid carers living in low-income households claiming an income-related benefit may be entitled to receive the £650 Cost of Living Payment. Disabled carers on an eligible disability benefit may receive the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment.

Domestic energy customers will receive a £400 rebate through the Energy Bills Support Scheme and those paying Council Tax in Bands A to D in England have received a £150 rebate.

### ■ **Childbirth: Ethnic Groups**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[37622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the long-term impact of traumatic birth experiences on Black and Black mixed women.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, in order to reduce the risk of traumatic birth experiences for women, there are projects underway to increase the personalisation of maternity care and provide standardised information to support informed decision making. In 2021, NHS England published 'A good practice guide to support implementation of trauma-informed care in the perinatal period' which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/BBS-TIC-V8.pdf>

**Chronic Fatigue Syndrome****Vicky Foxcroft:****[32983]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) organisations and (b) individuals his Department has consulted as part of the development of the delivery plan on myalgic encephalomyelitis and chronic fatigue syndrome.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are currently unable to provide this information requested as it relates to the formulation of Government policy. However, to date we have engaged people with lived experience of those with myalgic encephalomyelitis and chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and carers, staff working in specialist ME/CFS services, relevant charities, other specialist organisations, academic experts, professional membership organisations, other relevant bodies and representatives from the devolved administrations and other Government departments. Further information will be provided in due course.

**Chronic Illnesses: Ethnic Groups****Feryal Clark:****[37617]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to improve knowledge on identifying and diagnosing conditions that are (a) specific to and (b) disproportionately affect Black women.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Through the call for evidence for the Women's Health Strategy, we received responses which highlighted limited research into women's health issues and a lack of diversity in clinical trials. We also received feedback on the need for improved education and training for healthcare professionals on women's health issues and how health issues in the general population can affect women differently.

The recently published Women's Health Strategy aims to work with the National Institute for Health and Care Research to encourage high quality research in women's health, support women to lead research studies and participate in trials and maximise the impact of this research. We will work with the General Medical Council, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, Health Education England and others to ensure health and care professionals receive adequate training in women's health, particularly for those women experiencing health disparities.

During the implementation of the Women's Health Strategy, the recently appointed Women's Health Ambassador for England will ensure that population groups experiencing disparities are represented.

## ■ Chronic Illnesses: Medical Treatments

**Feryal Clark:** [\[40016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2022 to Question 23448 on Chronic Illnesses: Medical Treatments, whether his Department has undertaken a comparative assessment of international access to innovative medicines for people with long-term health conditions.

**James Morris:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, the Office for Life Sciences produces the annual 'Life Science Competitiveness Indicators' which includes international comparisons on the percentage of new medicines available, time to availability for new medicines and uptake of new medicines recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, which measures relative adoption of new medicines in the United Kingdom in comparison to other countries.

In 2021, NHS England published the International Comparison Medicines Uptake report on treatments for cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, varenicline-assisted smoking cessation and hepatitis C, which aims to establish a methodology in order to make international comparisons of medicines uptake.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[40017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2022 to Question 23448 on Chronic Illnesses: Medical Treatments, when he plans to publish the life sciences roadmap; and whether that roadmap is planned to tackle unwarranted variation in the uptake of innovative medicines.

**James Morris:**

We intend to publish an implementation update for the Life Sciences Vision in the autumn. Further measures to address unwarranted variation in the uptake of innovative medicines will be available following the publication of the implementation update.

## ■ Clinical Trials

**Anthony Browne:** [\[38876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many participants were recruited to industry sponsored clinical trials supported by the NIHR Clinical Research Network in (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20, (d) 2020-21 and (e) 2021-22.

**James Morris:**

The information requested is shown in the following table.

2017/18	24,073
2018/19	29,416
2019/20	15,006
2020/21	28,560
2021/22	18,425

**Anthony Browne:**

[\[38877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of clinical trial participants were recruited to industry sponsored clinical trials supported by the NIHR Clinical Research Network in (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19, (c) 2019-20, (d) 2020-21 and (e) 2021-22.

**James Morris:**

The information requested is shown in the following table.

2017/18	3%
2018/19	3%
2019/20	2%
2020/21	1%
2021/22	1%

'The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery', published in March 2021, sets out the ambition to increase participation of patients to clinical trials, including industry sponsored trials. 'The Future of Clinical Research Delivery: 2022 to 2025 implementation plan', published on 30 June 2022, summarises progress to date and the actions which will be taken over the next three years to increase participation in clinical trials.

**Anthony Browne:**

[\[38878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of participants recruited to interventional studies supported by the NIHR Clinical Research Network were recruited to non-covid-19 clinical trials in (a) 2019-20, (b) 2020-21 and (c) 2021-22.

**James Morris:**

The information requested is shown in the following table.

2019/20	99.5%
2020/21	10%

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2019/20	99.5%
2021/22	42%

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■ **Clinical Trials: Genetically Modified Organisms**

**Chris Green:** [\[39882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on introducing a genetically modified organisms derogation to enable clinical trials for advanced therapies.

**James Morris:**

We have had no specific discussions.

■ **Community Diagnostic Centres**

**Dan Carden:** [\[31211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the sites of community diagnostic centres that are (a) open and (b) planned as of 5 July 2022.

**Dan Carden:** [\[31212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) tests and (b) checks have been delivered by each community diagnostic centre since the rollout of those centres began.

**Dan Carden:** [\[31213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many community diagnostic centres are (a) operated in full or in part by private sector organisations and (b) offering services that have been outsourced to the private sector.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 11 July 2022]:* The attached table shows the operational community diagnostic centres (CDCs) as of 5 July 2022 and the overall activity levels at each site where available, including tests and checks, as of 19 June. The table also shows the activity levels of early adopter sites which are no longer operational.

NHS England is currently reviewing the definitions of CDC sites and how each type of site reports activity. In the first year, 'hub' and 'spoke' sites jointly reported activity data. Therefore, the attached data may not include activity where sites formerly reported through this joint model and have since separated into a distinct 'hub' or 'spoke' site. The reporting of activity data for separate spoke sites will commence from September 2022.

We have committed £2.3 billion for the launch of up to 160 CDCs by March 2025. While future CDC locations have not yet been confirmed, regions are working with integrated care systems, diagnostic networks and primary care services to determine the location and configuration of services, based on the needs of the local population.

Information on the number of CDCs operated in part or in full by the private sector or offering services which have been outsourced to the private sector is not held centrally.

**Attachments:**

1. Attachment [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE PQs31211-31213 CDCs & Activity (1).xlsx]

■ **Community Diagnostic Centres: Medical Equipment**

**Peter Dowd:** [\[39875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of the community diagnostic centres operating in England are equipped with diagnostic equipment purchased in the last (a) 12 months, (b) five years and (c) ten years.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information is not held centrally in the format requested.

The majority of equipment for community diagnostic centres (CDCs) was purchased in the last 12 months with the launch of the programme in July 2021. However, some sites may have used existing equipment to increase capacity and reduce waiting times for diagnostic tests. NHS England plans to equip CDCs with new facilities, including those located on existing National Health Service estate, through purchasing new equipment rather than upgrading existing equipment.

**Peter Dowd:** [\[39877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to upgrade equipment in community diagnostic centres.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Community diagnostic centres (CDCs) were launched in July 2021 with the majority of locations provided with new equipment. NHS England continues to purchase new equipment for each CDC as it is established to ensure facilities are digitally connected across integrated care systems.

■ **Community Diagnostic Centres: Tomography**

**Peter Dowd:** [\[39876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) CT, (b) MRI, (c) X-ray, and (d) PET machines his Department plans to purchase to support the expansion of community diagnostic centres in England.

**Maria Caulfield:**

This information is not currently held in the format requested as the specification of services for future community diagnostic centres (CDCs) has not yet been confirmed. Business cases for the next cohort of CDCs are being finalised and decisions on the procurement of computerised tomography, magnetic resonance imaging and X-ray scanners will be made following the outcome of this process.

Positron emission tomography machines are not used within CDCs.



## ■ Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients: Mental Health Services

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[33843]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of assessment and treatment pathways that are available for people who are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 14 July 2022]:* 'The Independent Review of the Mental Health Act' assessed the provisions in the Mental Health Act 1983, including the assessment and treatment pathways available for those detained. We are implementing the majority of the Independent Review's recommendations in the draft Mental Health Bill, which proposes reforms to improve assessment and treatment pathways. This includes revisions to the criteria for detention under the Act, to ensure that detention is based on providing a therapeutic benefit to the individual and the introduction of new treatment safeguards to ensure that treatment is based on the patient's wishes, preferences and individual needs as far as possible and that compulsory medication is only used in limited circumstances.

## ■ Coronavirus and Influenza: Vaccination

**Stephen Hammond:**

**[R] [18855]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of narrowing the eligibility criteria for influenza vaccination and the JCVI's advice to reduce the age cohort for the autumn covid-19 booster programme; and whether that change would place increased pressure on NHS capacity during the winter season.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 15 July 2022, the Government provided an update on the COVID-19 autumn booster programme and flu vaccination programme. This included the expansion of the eligibility criteria for flu vaccinations to be offered to all adults aged 50 years old and over and secondary school children in Years 7, 8, and 9 in England. These additional groups will be eligible once the most vulnerable, including previously announced pre-school and primary school children, those aged 65 years old and over and those in clinical risk groups have been offered the vaccination. This expansion aims to reduce the level of serious illness and subsequent pressure on the National Health Service.

the Government accepted the JCVI's advice to offer an autumn booster vaccination to increase immunity in those at higher risk from COVID-19 and protect against severe illness, hospitalisation and death in winter 2022/23. The booster dose will be offered to residents and staff in a care home for older adults; all adults aged 50 years old and over; those aged five to 49 years old in a clinical risk group or who are household contacts of someone with immunosuppression; frontline health and social care workers; and carers aged 16 years old and over. This aims to increase immunity

in those at higher risk from COVID-19 and protect against severe illness, hospitalisation and death in winter 2022/23.

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[39979]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement of categories other than the over 50s who will be eligible for a flu jab and a covid-19 booster this autumn, what assessment he has made of the implications for (a) the health of school staff, (b) the transmission of covid-19 in educational settings, (c) the health of children of the decision not to include teachers and school support staff in the list of eligible categories.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Government is guided by advice from the independent expert Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on COVID-19 and flu vaccinations. The JCVI advises that the primary objective of the autumn booster vaccination programme is to increase immunity in those at higher risk from severe illness and offer protection against severe illness, hospitalisation and death in winter 2022/23.

Serious outcomes are disproportionately seen in older people or those with certain underlying health conditions. The JCVI advise that eligibility for the autumn programme should be towards those most vulnerable to such outcomes. Health and social care workers are included in the autumn campaign due to the high risk of exposure to COVID-19 and transmission to the clinically vulnerable individuals they care for. The JCVI's advice is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jcvi-updated-statement-on-the-covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-autumn-2022/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation-jcvi-updated-statement-on-the-covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-autumn-2022>

## ■ **Coronavirus: Hospitals**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[36824]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the number of patients who are in (a) hospital and (b) an intensive therapy unit with covid-19 as on 14 July 2022.

**Maggie Throup:**

We continue to monitor prevalence of COVID-19 and other factors, such as hospital and intensive care unit admissions to ensure the response remains effective and proportionate. However, the success of the COVID-19 booster and vaccination programme and the availability of antiviral treatments for those most vulnerable to infection has ensured a reduced risk of severe illness or hospitalisation.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

**Justin Madders:**

[\[33819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of reintroducing free covid-19 lateral flow tests in the context of the increasing infection rate.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Government regularly reviews the response to COVID-19 to ensure it remains effective and proportionate. Given the variants which are currently dominant, it would not be cost-effective to provide universal free testing for those not at risk of serious illness. We will continue to make sure that we are prepared in the event of a dangerous new variant, including with testing infrastructure and capabilities.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Steve Brine:**

[\[31828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has requested guidance from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on the potential merits of an autumn booster covid-19 vaccine programme for the general population.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Government continues to be guided by the advice of the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on COVID-19 vaccinations.

On 15 July 2022, the Government accepted the JCVI's advice to offer an autumn booster vaccination to increase immunity in those at higher risk from COVID-19 and protect against severe illness, hospitalisation and death in winter 2022/23. The booster dose will be offered to residents and staff in a care home for older adults; all adults aged 50 years old and over; those aged five to 49 years old in a clinical risk group or who are household contacts of someone with immunosuppression; frontline health and social care workers; and carers aged 16 years old and over.

**Kim Johnson:**

[\[33966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the reported covid-19 vaccine deaths to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency Yellow Card Scheme have (a) been investigated and (b) been found to be related to the vaccines.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) investigates all reports of fatal or serious adverse drug reactions (ADRs) related to the COVID-19 vaccines as a priority.

However, an ADR report associated with a fatal outcome does not determine that the vaccine was the cause of death. The MHRA assesses information received through the Yellow Card scheme to determine the likelihood of an association between the vaccine and any suspected ADR. This involves consideration of the overall pattern of reports and whether more events than would normally be expected have occurred in

the general population. However, the MHRA does not assess whether an individual's death was directly caused by a vaccine.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[34897]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to implement a covid-19 vaccination programme in autumn 2022.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Government accepted the JCVI's advice to offer an autumn booster vaccination to residents and staff in a care home for older adults; all adults aged 50 years old and over; those aged five to 49 years old in a clinical risk group or who are household contacts of someone with immunosuppression; frontline health and social care workers; and carers aged 16 years old and over.

The National Health Service is working with providers to plan for the autumn campaign to establish a network of sites which are accessible to local populations. On 22 June, NHS England wrote systems setting out plans for COVID-19 and routine vaccination, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2022/06/C1666-next-steps-for-covid-19-vaccination-22-06-22.pdf>

Further information on the delivery of the programme, including details on the invitations for patient cohorts, will be available in due course.

**Miriam Cates:**

**[40021]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 17162 on Coronavirus: Vaccination for children, for what reason the covid-19 vaccination for five- to 11-year-olds was included in the NHS.UK vaccination schedule information for the purposes of raising awareness with the public; who made that policy decision; what the set criteria are for including vaccines on the NHS routine children's immunisations schedule; and whether the threshold for long-term benefit in otherwise healthy children has been met for the Pfizer covid-19 vaccine.

**Maggie Throup:**

While the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's one-off advice for a non-urgent offer of the Pfizer vaccine in this age group was publicised on NHS.UK to raise awareness, it does not reflect a change in policy.

COVID-19 vaccination is not included in the UK Health Security Agency's routine childhood immunisation schedule, which provides immunisation information for health professionals and immunisation practitioners.

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

**Kate Osborne:**

[\[31927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made to the number of acute psychiatric beds in the Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust.

**Gillian Keegan:**

As of 10 July 2022, there were 223 acute psychiatric beds in the Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust.

**Kate Osborne:**

[\[31928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many inpatients for mental health services had to be moved outside of the Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust area in the last (a) 6 months, (b) 12 months and (c) 5 years.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The information requested is shown in the following table.

LAST SIX MONTHS	27
Last 12 months	44
Last five years	167

Those who require inpatient care are treated as close to home as possible. The NHS Long Term Plan committed to eliminate all inappropriate acute out of area placements for people aged 18 years old and over. We continue to work with NHS England to monitor the implementation of this commitment. All systems which have inappropriate out of area placements are required to refresh local plans to ensure these placements are eliminated as soon as reasonably possible.

## ■ Cystic Fibrosis: Prescriptions

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[36935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report from Cystic Fibrosis UK entitled The cost of cystic fibrosis 2022, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of prescription charges for people with (a) cystic fibrosis and (b) other health conditions.

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[36936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report from Cystic Fibrosis UK entitled The cost of cystic fibrosis 2022, whether he has plans to change the arrangements for charging people with long term conditions for their prescriptions.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We have no plans to do so and no specific assessment has been made.

Approximately 89% of prescriptions are dispensed free of charge and arrangements are in place to help those with the greatest need. Eligibility depends on the patient's age, whether they are in qualifying full-time education, whether they are pregnant or have recently given birth, or whether they are in receipt of certain benefits or a war pension. Some people with cystic fibrosis may meet the eligibility criteria for prescription charge exemptions and may therefore be in receipt of free prescriptions.

To support those who do not qualify for a medical exemption, the cost of prescriptions can be capped by purchasing a prescription pre-payment certificate, which can be paid for in instalments. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

**■ Defibrillators and First Aid****Dr James Davies:**[\[38732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to increase public access to (a) first aid kits and (b) defibrillators in public locations.

**James Morris:**

With St John Ambulance, NHS England is co-ordinating skills development to increase the use of automated external defibrillators by individuals in community settings, supported by confident cardiopulmonary resuscitation skills. This will include a national network of community advocates to champion the importance of first aid and training 60,000 people to save up to 4,000 lives each year by 2028.

The Government encourages organisations in England to consider purchasing a defibrillator as part of first-aid equipment, in particular for locations where there are high concentrations of people. Many community defibrillators have since been provided through national lottery funding, community fundraising schemes, workplace funding or by charities in public locations, such as shopping centres.

**■ Dementia and Menopause****Carolyn Harris:**[\[31883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness amongst clinicians that brain fog can be a symptom of both dementia and menopause.

**Maria Caulfield:**

A Women's Health Ambassador for England has been appointed to raise the profile for women's health, including the menopause and long term conditions, such as dementia. The Ambassador will support implementation of the Women's Health Strategy, in which the menopause is a priority area.

NHS England is supporting clinicians to deliver improved menopause care through a clinical pathway being developed by a menopause clinical reference group, which will include the symptoms of concentration-loss or 'brain fog'.

The NHS Health Check for adults in England aged 45 to 74 years old is designed to identify early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. Since 2018, dementia risk reduction has been incorporated within the NHS Health Check to increase awareness and motivate people to reduce their risks. In addition, those aged 65 years old and over are made aware of the signs and symptoms of dementia and guided to memory clinics.

## ■ Dementia: Diagnosis

**Karin Smyth:** [37524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people awaiting a dementia diagnosis.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The information is not held in the format requested.

However, as of June 2022, NHS Digital estimates there are 698,345 people over 65 years old living with dementia, of which 447,415 have a recorded dementia diagnosis.

**Mark Menzies:** [38624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to dementia diagnosis services in rural areas.

**Gillian Keegan:**

NHS England has commissioned the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' Dementia Intelligence Network to investigate the underlying variation in dementia diagnosis rates in targeted areas in England. This will include on social and economic deprivation; rurality; demographic characteristics including age, ethnicity and educational attainment; and general health and life expectancy.

In 2021, factsheets were published to encourage local conversations on understanding local patterns and potential reasons for trends in dementia diagnosis rates and identifying specific areas for support. In 2021/22, £17 million was made available to clinical commissioning groups to address dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses.

## ■ Dementia: Health Services

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [38544]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the quality of dementia care in England.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department has issued guidance 'After diagnosis of dementia: what to expect from health and care services', which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/after-a-diagnosis-of-dementia-what-to-expect-from-health-and-care-services/after-diagnosis-of-dementia-what-to-expect-from-health-and-care-services>



The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence's Quality Standard on Dementia, includes guidelines for offering activities such as exercise, aromatherapy, art, gardening, baking, reminiscence therapy, music therapy, mindfulness and animal assisted therapy to help promote wellbeing. The Quality Standard is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/QS184>

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

## ■ Dental Services

**Charlotte Nichols:** [38874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of routine check-up appointments for NHS dental patients in England.

**James Morris:**

No specific assessment has been made, as the information requested is not held centrally. Appointments for National Health Service treatment are managed locally by dental practices. NHS regional teams are responsible for commissioning of local NHS dental services and for assessing and monitoring dental activity with service providers. This includes ensuring that contracted practices deliver an adequate service.

Since July 2022, NHS England has asked practices to deliver 100% of contracted units of dental activity to safely improve access for patients. The Department and NHS England recently announced improvements to the NHS dental system, to increase access, target patients with higher oral health needs and make NHS dentistry a more attractive place to work for dentists and their teams.

## ■ Dental Services: Coventry

**Colleen Fletcher:** [39873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to NHS dentistry in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry.

**James Morris:**

Since July 2022, NHS England has asked practices to deliver 100% of contracted units of dental activity to improve access for patients safely, including in Coventry. The National Health Service regional team in the Midlands is planning to invest further in community dental services to support the most vulnerable patients with special needs and paediatric services reduce waiting times.

The Department and NHS England have recently announced improvements to the NHS dental system to increase access, target patients with higher oral health needs



and make NHS dentistry a more attractive place to work for dentists and their teams, including in Coventry.

#### ■ **Dental Services: Faversham and Mid Kent**

**Helen Whately:**

**[39924]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of NHS dentist appointments available for people in Faversham and Mid Kent constituency.

**James Morris:**

In 2019, a review of mandatory dental services in Kent identified Faversham as an area of significant need. Following this review, National Health Service dental contracts were agreed with five new dental practices with an overall increase of 19 whole-time equivalent dentists.

NHS England is currently preparing to procure further mandatory dental services in Kent, based on the current areas of greatest need. This will be aligned to the review being undertaken by NHS England and the South East Region Consultant in Dental Public Health.

Since July 2022, NHS England has asked practices to deliver 100% of contracted units of dental activity to safely improve access for patients, including in Faversham and Mid Kent.

The Department and NHS England have recently announced improvements to the NHS dental system to increase access, target patients with higher oral health needs and make NHS dentistry a more attractive place to work for dentists and their teams, including in Kent.

#### ■ **Dental Services: Finance**

**Emma Hardy:**

**[19662]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the correspondence of 15 June 2022 from the Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, how much and what proportion of the £50 million funding for increasing access to dental care was taken up by practices in (a) Yorkshire, (b) the North East and (c) England since that funding was announced in January 2022.

**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 22 June 2022]:* The information requested is not yet held centrally as under the standard contract, dental contract holders have 60 days to submit claims for activity. This data is currently being centrally validated and quality assured prior to ensure accuracy and we anticipate it will be available shortly.

Of the additional £50 million, £8,633,000 was allocated to the North East and Yorkshire regions for the last quarter of 2021/22.

**■ Dental Services: Plymouth**

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than three months.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than six months.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than one year.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than 18 months.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than two years.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than 30 months.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than 42 months.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[39991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than 54 months.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[39992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than three years.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[39993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than four years.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[39994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been on the NHS dentistry waiting list in Plymouth for more than five years.

**James Morris:**

No specific estimate has been made. The information requested is not held centrally, as appointments for National Health Service treatment are managed locally by dental practices. The Department and NHS England have recently announced measures to improve the NHS dental system to increase access for patients, target those with higher oral health needs and make NHS dentistry more attractive place to work for dentists and their teams.

#### ■ **Dental Services: Rural Areas**

**Bob Seely:**

[\[38824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to NHS dental treatment in rural and isolated communities.

**James Morris:**

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

This will assist regional commissioners to address the needs of NHS dental patients in rural and isolated communities through focused commissioning. It also aims to support practices to utilise members of the dental team to deliver care, particularly where there may be challenges in recruiting and retaining NHS dentists. Since July 2022, NHS England has asked practices to deliver 100% of contracted units of dental activity to safely improve access for patients, including in rural and isolated areas.

## ■ Dental Services: South West

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

[\[38537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to NHS dentistry in (a) Bournemouth East constituency and (b) the South West.

**James Morris:**

Since July 2022, NHS England have asked practices to deliver 100% of contracted units of dental activity to safely improve access for patients, including in Bournemouth East and the South West. The South West Dental Team are currently commissioning additional mandatory dental services in the region. Priority areas have been identified for access, based on replacing activity which ceased in 2021/22. Contract performance criteria for these new contracts will include the measurement and assessment of the number of additional new patients accepted for treatment and delivery against the Starting Well Core initiative. Contracts with a duration of four years will be awarded to commence in late summer 2022

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

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Aviation

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[35847\]](#)

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

**Maria Caulfield:**

The total cost of commercial flights taken by DHSC Officials are shown in the following table:

### DHSC OFFICIALS (STAFF)

Calendar Year	Value
2020	£13,391
2021	£14,826
2022 up to the 31 <sup>st</sup> May	£49,061

Spend on Ministerial commercial travel is published quarterly on gov.uk.

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Contracts

**Jon Trickett:**

**[31011]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 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.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Details of Government contracts from 2016 above £10,000 and £25,000 in the wider public sector are published at the following link:

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

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Legal Costs

**Jon Trickett:**

**[31732]**

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

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information is not collected in the format required and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[38570]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 29972, tabled by the hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury on 4 July 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We replied to the hon. Member on 22 July 2022.

## ■ Diabetes and Obesity: Medical Treatments

**Jim Shannon:**

**[39854]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using technology based on breathing lower amounts of oxygen while asleep to treat type 2 diabetes and weight loss.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has provided guidance to NHS England on the clinical and cost effectiveness of selected new and established technologies.

## ■ Doctors: Training

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[40003]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to extend the NHS Bursary to trainee doctors from low-income backgrounds to include the final two years of training to help ensure completion of their medical course.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We have no specific plans to do so. From year five of an undergraduate course and from year two of a graduate-entry course, students can access the non-repayable NHS Bursary. This comprises payment for tuition fees a non-means-tested grant and a further means-tested award. Students from low-income backgrounds typically qualify for a larger means tested maintenance award. An additional hardship grant is available where they may be eligible to claim a sum between £100 and £3,000, depending on current financial circumstances.

## ■ Drugs: High Wycombe

**Mr Steve Baker:**

**[39816]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle disparities in regional medicine supply in High Wycombe in comparison to other areas in NHS England.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department has established processes to prevent, manage and mitigate medicine shortages in England, including in High Wycombe. We work with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the pharmaceutical industry and the National Health Service to maintain overall supply. Local pharmacies have specific commercial arrangements in place to ensure the continuity of supplies.

## ■ Drugs: Labelling

**Derek Thomas:**

**[38749]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to help ensure that medicines are labelled to indicate whether they are suitable for (a) vegetarians and (b) vegans.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Part 13 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 states that the primary purpose of the label is to unambiguously identify the medicine and to convey key warning statements in relation to safe and effective use of the product. There is no legal requirement for a pharmaceutical manufacturer to state whether a medicine is suitable for vegetarians or vegans. However, the legislation allows for the inclusion of a statement such as 'suitable for vegetarians/vegans' where a manufacturer can provide evidence to demonstrate that no products of animal origin have been used in the manufacture of the ingredients or the medicine. Where such a statement on the labelling or in the patient information leaflet is proposed, the Medicines and

Healthcare products regulatory Agency will evaluate the evidence supporting this statement to determine its validity.

## ■ **Electroconvulsive Therapy**

**Sir Gavin Williamson:**

**[34917]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to ensure that Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation is available in all NHS Trusts in England.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) interventional procedures guidance on repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation for depression, published in December 2015, found the procedure was safe and effective for use in the National Health Service, although the benefits vary among patients. There is no legal requirement for the National Health Service to implement this specific form of NICE's guidance. While it is considered best clinical practice, NHS commissioners and providers are responsible for commissioning services to meet the needs of the local population.

**Marco Longhi:**

**[37615]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of electroconvulsive therapy; and what his policy is on whether that therapy should be a (a) voluntary or (b) mandatory treatment.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) assessment found electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) to be an effective treatment for certain subgroups of individuals with mental disorders. However, it recognised that there remained a number of uncertainties, including a lack of information on longer term outcomes and the negative experiences of some individuals who have undergone ECT.

NICE recommends that ECT is used only to achieve rapid and short-term improvement of severe symptoms, after an adequate trial of other treatment options has proven ineffective and/or when the condition is considered to be potentially life-threatening, in individuals with catatonia or a prolonged or severe manic episode. These guidelines recommend that a decision should be made on case by case basis and that a risk–benefit assessment is made of the individual to determine if ECT is appropriate. NICE's 'Guidance on the use of electroconvulsive therapy' and 'Depression in adults: treatment and management' are available at the following links:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta59>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng222/chapter/Recommendations#electroconvulsive-therapy-for-depression>

The Mental Health Act 1983 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005 allow for ECT to be administered in particular circumstances, without the person's consent. The Independent Review of the Mental Health Act recommended further safeguards

around the use of urgent ECT without the patient's consent or where it conflicts with an advance decision, which the draft Mental Health Bill seeks to address.

## ■ Endometriosis

**Dehenna Davison:**

**[38840]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in the context of the forthcoming Women's Health Strategy, what steps his Department plans to take to help ensure adherence to NICE guidelines for (a) diagnosing and (b) treating endometriosis.

**Maria Caulfield:**

As set out in the Women's Health Strategy, we will work with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) on its five-year strategy to ensure that guidelines can be implemented and accessible to healthcare professionals and commissioners of local services. NICE's guidelines describe best practice which healthcare professionals are expected to take fully into account in the care and treatment of patients. However, these guidelines are not mandatory and do not override a clinician's responsibility to make appropriate decisions for individual patients.

NICE reviewed its endometriosis guideline in 2021, which was amended to highlight that those with endometriosis outside the pelvic cavity should be referred to a specialist endometriosis centre. NICE has begun a review of its guidelines on endometriosis to consider whether it should be updated.

## ■ Epidermolysis Bullosa

**Holly Mumby-Croft:**

**[40022]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness of Epidermolysis Bullosa in (a) the NHS workforce and (b) the health research sector.

**James Morris:**

The 2021 UK Rare Diseases Framework aims to improve the awareness of all rare diseases, including Epidermolysis Bullosa. England's Rare Diseases Action Plan, published in February 2022, sets out how we will increase knowledge and improve the resources available to health care professionals. This includes education and training programmes and developing innovative digital resources, which are integrated into existing digital platforms or websites to provide easily accessible information on rare diseases, such as Epidermolysis Bullosa.

## ■ Females: Health Services

**Feryal Clark:**

**[14655]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what dates (a) she or her Ministerial colleagues and (b) officials in her Department have met sector stakeholders on the development of the (i) Women's Health and (ii) Sexual and Reproductive Strategies since December 2021; and which organisations attended those meetings.



**Maria Caulfield:**

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published quarterly at GOV.UK at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?organisations%5B%5D=department-of-health-and-social-care&parent=department-of-health-and-social-care>

This information requested on meetings with officials is not available in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**Food: Labelling****Caroline Lucas:****[39800]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 27574 on Food: Labelling, what methods he is using to evaluate the impact of the Calorie Labelling (Out of Home Sector) (England) Regulations 2021, including on people living with eating disorders; and when he plans to publish the post-implementation review.

**Maggie Throup:**

The post-implementation review will use methods such as structured observations, intercept surveys, national survey analysis and qualitative interviews. The Department is commissioning additional research to ensure that the impact of the Regulations on those with lived experience of eating disorders is considered. The review will be conducted within five years of the implementation of the policy.

**Gambling: Suicide****Scott Benton:****[20328]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report by Public Health England entitled Gambling-related harms evidence review: the economic and social cost of harms, published in September 2021, if he will publish the full numerical mathematical calculation that was the basis for stating that there were 409 deaths by suicide associated with problem gambling only.

**Scott Benton:****[20329]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report by Public Health England entitled Gambling-related harms evidence review: the economic and social cost of harms, published in September 2021, if he will publish the full numerical mathematical calculation that was the basis for the estimate of the £619.2m annual cost of suicides associated with problem gambling.

**Scott Benton:****[20330]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report by Public Health England entitled Gambling-related harms evidence review: the economic and social cost of harms, published in September 2021, if he will publish the full

numerical mathematical calculation that was the basis for the estimate of the £335.5m cost of depression associated with gambling only.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department is reviewing the evidence published in Public Health England's 'Gambling-related harms evidence review: the economic and social cost of harms' report. We plan to publish an addendum in the autumn setting out the specific calculations and modelling assumptions in the report.

■ **General Practitioners**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[37632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to expand the use of multi-disciplinary teams in general practice.

**James Morris:**

To support [Primary Care Networks](#), the [Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme \(ARRS\)](#) provides funding for 26,000 additional roles to create multi-disciplinary teams in general practice. There are 15 roles available under the ARRS to assist practices to provide patients with a range of services to meet local need.

'Next steps for integrating primary care: Fuller stocktake report' states that primary care teams should provide personalised care for patients to improve outcomes. The report recommends the formation of integrated neighbourhood teams, with primary care and community services working with partners on health prevention.

■ **General Practitioners: Buildings**

**Chris Green:**

[\[31138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the adequacy of GP premises in England, including alternative models of partnership owning, and (b) the cost needed to modernise such premises.

**James Morris:**

In 2019, NHS England conducted a general practitioner (GP) premises policy review, which sought to identify potential needs and proposals for GP premises. NHS England is also currently undertaking a formal assessment of all primary care surgery premises under a primary care data collection programme. This will provide local and national oversight of the current capacity, suitability and ownership of all premises.

The data collection programme is expected to be completed by March 2023, with infrastructure strategies completed by December 2024. This will provide an evidence-based assessment of the national cost to modernise GP premises.

## ■ General Practitioners: Labour Turnover

**Imran Hussain:**

[\[31126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of GP retention programmes in retaining GPs (a) in Bradford, (b) in Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) nationally.

**James Morris:**

A number of retention programmes operate in West Yorkshire and Bradford. These are overseen, monitored and assessed for effectiveness by NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB). The number of general practitioners (GPs) and primary care teams accessing retention programmes is regularly reviewed and assessed through engagement with participants. NHS Humber and North Yorkshire ICB and NHS South Yorkshire ICB also assess the effectiveness of retention schemes through workforce boards. In England, we are working with the National Health Service and the profession on the implementation of and feedback received on the GP retention schemes, which will be used to evaluate effectiveness and determine potential further opportunities.

## ■ General Practitioners: Surveys

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[37623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of the GP Patient Survey 2022; and if he will make a statement.

**James Morris:**

The results of the 2022 GP Patient Survey were published on 14 July 2022 and we are currently considering the outcomes.

## ■ General Practitioners: Vacancies

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[35951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the shortage of GPs in (a) Hounslow (b) London (c) England.

**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 18 July 2022]:* No specific estimate has been made as there is no recommended minimum number of general practitioners (GPs) within a practice. GPs form part of a multidisciplinary team in primary care and ensuring that the appropriate skills are available in general practice can address workloads and deliver high quality patient care. Through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme, we are recruiting 26,000 primary care professionals, with over 18,000 currently in post.

In 2016, we launched the Targeted Enhanced Recruitment Scheme in 2016 which provides a one off financial incentive of £20,000 to attract doctors to train in locations where it has been difficult to recruit staff. In 2021, 550 places were available through

the Scheme, with additional Government investment ensuring there will be 800 places in 2022, with six posts in Hounslow and 77 across London.

## ■ General Practitioners: West Midlands

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[38785]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of GPs per capita in (a) Birmingham, (b) the West Midlands and (c) the UK.

**James Morris:**

The information is not held in the format requested. However, the following table shows the median number of full time equivalent (FTE) general practitioners (GPs) per 10,000 registered patients in Birmingham, the West Midlands and England in May 2022.

BIRMINGHAM	5.3
West Midlands	5.7
England	5.3

Notes:

1. GP FTE is for all doctors in general practice.
2. FTE refers to the proportion of full time contracted hours that the post holder is contracted to work. One would indicate they work a full set of hours (37.5), 0.5 that they worked half time. In GPs in Training Grade contracts 1 FTE equals 40 hours and this information shows FTEs converted to the standard Workforce Minimum Data Set measure of 1 FTE equals 37.5 hours for consistency.
3. This data does not include staff working in prisons, army bases, educational establishments, specialist care centres, including drug rehabilitation centres, walk-in centres and other alternative settings outside of traditional general practice such as urgent treatment centres and minor injury units.
4. Data includes estimates for practices that did not provide fully valid staff records.
5. Full Estimation: Estimates are made for both headcount and FTE for those practices which did not provide any valid data for one or more of the four staff groups or in the case of practices providing no valid direct patient care (DPC) data, DPC estimates are made for those practices also failing to provide valid data for at least one other staff group. The absence of data for a staff group could be due to poor data quality or no submitted data. For these practices, clinical commissioning group-level estimations are made.
6. Partial Estimation: In some cases, practices provide valid records about their staff but do not include information about their working hours. In these cases, the records are retained to calculate estimates for working hours and full-time

equivalence based upon the national averages for the job role. This is referred to as 'partial estimates' and the scale of these estimates varies by staff group.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[38786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Government policies to tackle disparity in access to GP appointments in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands compared to the national average.

**James Morris:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, in the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS) area, there were 28,668 general practice appointments on average per working day in May 2022, excluding COVID-19 vaccinations. This is an increase of 7.9% from May 2021, compared to the national increase of 5.8% in the same period.

The proportion of face-to-face appointments in the Birmingham and Solihull ICS area was 74% in May 2022, excluding COVID-19 vaccinations. This compares to 45% in May 2021 and 64.1% nationally.

Birmingham and Solihull ICS, Coventry and Warwickshire ICS, Herefordshire and Worcestershire and the Black Country ICS are working with practices locally to improve patient access. This includes measures such as procuring cloud-based telephony solutions, participating in the Accelerate Access Improvement Programme, communications campaigns to explain the general practice services available and developing access hubs.

## ■ Gynaecology: Diagnosis

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[36937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to allocate funding to diagnostic services for menstrual health.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We are investing £2.3 billion to increase capacity in National Health Service diagnostic services in England. This will support the launch of up to 160 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) by March 2025. These CDCs will offer additional capacity for checks and tests, such as urology tests, ultrasound, and blood tests to support gynaecological patient pathways.

Some gynaecological services, such as menstrual health services, are predominantly provided by general practitioners (GPs). We have invested £520 million to improve access to general practitioner capacity, in addition to £1.5 billion to create a further 50 million GP appointments by 2024 to address waiting times for gynaecological services.

## ■ Gynaecology: Health Services

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

**[31064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish examples from within the NHS of (a) innovative care and (b) best practice for patients receiving treatment on NHS England's Gynaecology Service; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 11 July 2022]:* NHS England's Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme published a national report for maternity and gynaecology services for National Health Service clinical teams in September 2021. This outlined opportunities for improvement in the provision of gynaecology services for women in England and sharing best practice for providers.

Gynaecology is also one of six specialties prioritised through GIRFT's high volume low complexity programme, which supports the establishment of surgical hubs for high-volume procedures and the development of standardised patient pathways to support the recovery of elective services. Standardised pathways of care and best practice for gynaecology patients are available through the Best Practice Library at the following link:

<https://www.gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk/bpl/>

Such examples of best practice include a transition to day-case surgery for a number of gynaecological procedures, including hysterectomy where appropriate, which minimises the patient's time under anaesthetic and ensures a faster recovery.

## ■ Gynaecology: Waiting Lists

**Feryal Clark:**

**[33958]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department (a) is taking and (b) plans to take to tackle waiting lists for gynaecology care.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' sets out how we will increase capacity in elective services, such as gynaecological care and reduce waiting times for patients. This will include identifying alternate capacity in other trusts or the independent sector and engaging with patients on the choices available to receive this care. We have allocated more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund made available to systems in 2021/22 to reduce waiting times for elective services, including gynaecology.

We are working with the National Health Service to eliminate the longest waiting times of two years or more for elective procedures by the end of July 2022, which will include patients awaiting gynaecological care.

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[33961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to tackle regional variation in gynaecological waiting lists.

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[35091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department will take steps to tackle the regional variation of the size of gynaecological waiting lists.

**Maria Caulfield:**

National Health Service regional teams and integrated care systems will collaborate to standardise how care is delivered care, ensure best practice is adopted and share capacity and resources to reduce unwarranted regional variation in waiting times for gynaecological services. We have allocated £8 billion for the next three years £8 billion over the next three years to increase activity in elective services in England and reduce waiting times, including for gynaecology services.

We have also provided an additional £2.3 billion to establish up to 160 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) to provide further capacity for those waiting for clinical tests, such as ultrasound scanning, blood tests and hysteroscopy to investigate heavy menstrual bleeding or post-menopausal bleeding. Funding for CDCs has been allocated to ensure that regions with unmet need receive additional resources to address regional variation.

#### ■ **Health Professions: Huntington's Disease**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[39889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of healthcare professionals trained to deliver specialist (a) nursing and (b) social care support for Huntington's patients.

**James Morris:**

No specific assessment has been made.

#### ■ **Health Professions: Parkinson's Disease**

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[37529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that there are sufficient (a) physiotherapists, (b) occupational therapists, (c) speech and language therapists, (d) neurologists and (e) other health care professionals to provide care to the projected increase of people being diagnosed with Parkinson's.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Individual National Health Service employers are responsible for planning local staffing levels in line with service priorities, including providing care to people living with Parkinson's disease. The Department has commissioned NHS England to develop a long term workforce plan, including supply and demand projections. The conclusions of this plan will be available in due course.



We are also increasing the supply of nurses and allied health professionals (AHPs), including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists, by providing all eligible students with a non-repayable training grant of a minimum of £5,000 per academic year. Further financial support is available for childcare, accommodation and travel costs. There are currently more than 30,000 students in training to become AHPs. We are also expanding the number of postgraduate neurology training posts in England by 10 from August 2022.

From March 2010 to March 2022, the number of full-time equivalent physiotherapists working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups has increased by 24.6%, with increases of 17.4% for occupational therapists, 19.1% for speech and language therapists, and 62.9% for doctors working in the speciality of neurology. The number of professionally qualified clinical staff has increased by 21.1% over the same period.

## ■ Health Professions: Vacancies

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[39804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the number of advertised physician posts in England and Wales going unfilled.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific assessment has been made.

The Department has commissioned Health Education England to review long term strategic trends for the health and regulated social care workforce. This will ensure we have the appropriate skills and behaviours to deliver high standards of care. In addition, we have commissioned NHS England to develop a long term plan for workforce, which will include assessments of supply and demand. The outcomes will be available in due course.

## ■ Health Services and Social Services: Training

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[38579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure all health and care staff are adequately trained to support (a) people who are dying and (b) their families.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Individual National Health Service employers are responsible for ensuring that staff are trained and competent for the role they perform. NHS England has developed training for staff on personalised care planning for those in the last year of life, which can include the individual's family and others, where appropriate. This allows health and care staff supporting those at the end of life and their loved ones to address any concerns and identify the appropriate services.

To ensure that health and social care workforce, including volunteers, are equipped to deliver personalised care, Health Education England host the End of life care for all



e-learning programme, which includes nine modules on improving care for people at the end of life. The e-learning modules are available at the following link:

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/end-of-life-care/>

## ■ Health Services: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:**

[36825]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to ensure that NHS capacity is maintained in the event of staff sickness or bed occupancy over the winter months due to covid-19.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England is currently working with local systems to review capacity and pressures. Further guidance for the National Health Service on winter planning and priorities is expected to be issued in due course.

## ■ Health Services: Females

**Feryal Clark:**

[35095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government will develop dedicated women's health hubs in local communities.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Integrated care boards are responsible for commissioning services to meet the health needs of the local population. We encourage local commissioners and providers to consider if such models would improve access to services and patient experience.

**Feryal Clark:**

[36136]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his planned timetable is for publishing the Women's Health and Sexual and Reproductive Strategies.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 July 2022]:* The Women's Health Strategy for England was published 20 July 2022. It is available at the following link:

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

An action plan will set out how we will improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes later this year, which will complement the HIV Action Plan published in December 2021.

**Feryal Clark:**

[36938]

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

**Maria Caulfield:**

Through the National Institute for Health and Care Research, the Department has commissioned the Birmingham, RAND Europe and Cambridge (BRACE) Rapid

Evaluation Centre to scope an evaluation of existing women's health hubs. This evaluation is expected to conclude in early 2023.

## ■ Health Services: Temperature

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[36078]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to help ensure that NHS services are available to vulnerable people, in the context of the Met Office extreme heat warning.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 18 July 2022]:* The UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) 'Heatwave Plan for England' provides guidance for the National Health Service and other professional bodies to reduce the risks to health from prolonged exposure to severe heat, including for vulnerable people. The UKHSA and the Met Office issue heat alerts to relevant health and social care professionals, providing advance warning of high temperatures to ensure that the impact of heat on people's health is minimised.

**Wera Hobhouse:**

**[36850]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to prepare for potential increased pressure on the health service in the context of forecasted heatwaves in July 2022.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) 'Heatwave Plan for England' provides guidance for the National Health Service and other professional bodies to reduce the risks to health from prolonged exposure to severe heat. The UKHSA and the Met Office issue heat alerts to relevant health and social care professionals, providing advance warning of high temperatures to ensure that the impact of heat on people's health is minimised.

All NHS organisations have contingency plans for extreme heat, which are tailored for local needs. Regional NHS bodies can provide additional support during periods of higher demand for services, where this is required.

## ■ Health: Equality

**Imran Hussain:**

**[39874]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will publish the Health Disparities White Paper.

**Maggie Throup:**

Further information on the timing and plans for the white paper will be available in due course.

**■ Health: Females**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[36939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a list of the meetings his Department has had with stakeholders in women's health since January 2019.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[36942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with NHS providers at a local level on integrating women's health services.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We have had no specific discussions.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[36943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of women's health of the split commissioning of women's health services.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Health and Care Act 2022 will contribute to greater integration between health and social care and prevention and generate significant health benefits to the population. These include increased independence, improved quality of care, reduced preventable admissions and re-admissions into hospitals and higher patient satisfaction. The Act will remove barriers to data sharing, enabling joint decision-making and increase workforce integration. It will also embed more power and autonomy for local systems.

The recently published Women's Health Strategy and the forthcoming Sexual and Reproductive Health Action Plan set out plans to improve health outcomes for women and the general population. We continue to engage with stakeholders, including local authorities and commissioners, NHS England and integrated care systems in the development of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Action Plan.

**Feryal Clark:** [\[36944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what impact Integrated Care Systems will have on improving women's health.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Integrated care systems (ICSs) will strengthen partnerships between the National Health Service, local authorities and partners. The recently published Women's Health Strategy for England recommends that ICSs take the Strategy's ambitions and actions into account when developing local strategies and plans.

Integrated care boards (ICBs) must have regard to the need to reduce inequalities in access and outcomes of health services, including the quality of experience of patients. This will address health disparities between men and women and between groups of women. In five year plans, ICBs must set out proposals to address the particular needs of victims of abuse, including domestic and sexual abuse.

## ■ Heart Diseases: Health Services

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[36134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to implement a new referral to treatment pathway for patients with severe aortic stenosis.

**James Morris:**

We have no specific plans to do so as there is an existing referral to treatment pathway for patients with severe aortic stenosis. The National Health Service is investing in cardiac networks to support improvements to the care pathway from prevention, diagnosis, treatment and end of life care.

We have committed £2.3 billion to launch at least 100 community diagnostic centres by 2024/25, to improve the early detection and diagnosis of heart valve disease in England.

Adults requiring an aortic valve replacement will be assessed to determine the appropriate procedure. Treatment usually involves surgical aortic valve replacement or transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI). Cardiac centres have increased the number of TAVI procedures, which have a lower requirement for intensive care beds and a shorter length of stay in hospital.

## ■ HIV Infection: Screening

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[38845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the HIV Action Plan for England - 2022 to 2025, published in December 2021, if he will publish his planned timetable for the expansion of opt-out HIV testing, including details of the locations testing will be extended to.

**Maggie Throup:**

NHS England are investing £20 million over the next three years to expand opt-out testing in emergency departments in 21 local authority areas with the highest prevalence of HIV, in line with guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. All sites are preparing to establish opt-out testing during 2022/23, with sites in London due to be fully operational by September 2022. The following table shows a list of these local authority areas.

LAMBETH

Southwark

City of London

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**LAMBETH**

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Kensington and Chelsea

Camden

Westminster

Lewisham

Brighton and Hove

Hammersmith and Fulham

Hackney

Islington

Haringey

Greenwich

Manchester

Newham

Croydon

Tower Hamlets

Barking and Dagenham

Wandsworth

Salford

Blackpool

■ **Hospitals: Admissions**

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[40002]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when NHS England will begin publishing 12-hour data measured from the time of arrival on the wait for admission to hospitals.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS Digital collects information from National Health Service providers on the number of patients waiting more than 12 hours from arrival in emergency departments, which is published annually. While NHS England is considering arrangements for further publication of data on waiting times of 12 hours from arrival, it is currently unable to confirm a specific timetable.

## ■ Hospitals: Air Conditioning

**Daisy Cooper:** [40005]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the existing guidance on the use of air conditioning units in hospitals wards in England was last reviewed.

**Daisy Cooper:** [40006]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to review the existing guidance on the use of air conditioning units in hospital wards in England.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Guidance is kept under review and updated as appropriate. The existing guidance 'Specialised ventilation for healthcare buildings' was updated in June 2021 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/specialised-ventilation-for-healthcare-buildings/>

## ■ Hospitals: Basingstoke

**Dame Maria Miller:** [38536]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on plans to build a new hospital in Basingstoke as part of the £3.7 billion funding for infrastructure investment; and what the timescale is for the public consultation phase of the process.

**Maria Caulfield:**

A new hospital for Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust forms part of the Government's commitment to deliver 40 new hospitals by 2030.

Delivery of the new hospitals is grouped into cohorts based on an assessment of readiness to progress and the extent to which new hospitals can benefit from advantages of delivery through a national programme. The new hospital for Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is in a later cohort, with delivery expected in the latter half of the decade. We are working with Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and currently anticipate a consultation to begin at the end of 2022, which will be subject to standard processes and timings.

## ■ Hospitals: Buildings

**Daisy Cooper:** [40004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the climate resilience of hospital buildings in England.

**Maggie Throup:**

NHS England routinely monitors National Health Service facilities using integrated risk assessments. The 'Third Health and Care Adaptation Report', published in

December 2021 by NHS England and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), sets out the approach to assessing and responding to climate risks in the health sector.

The climate resilience of hospital buildings is assessed in the 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022' (CCRA3). The Department, NHS England and the UKHSA are developing plans to address the risks in the CCRA3 and improve the climate resilience of the health sector in the third National Adaptation Programme, in line with the United Kingdom's commitments made through the COP26 Health Programme.

## ■ Hospitals: Children

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

[\[38473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of hospital stays of more than two months for children in each of the last three years for which records are available.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The following table shows the number of hospital stays where the duration was greater than 60 days for patients aged between 0 and 17 years old in each of the last three years where data is available. Data for 2021/22 is currently being collated and centrally validated.

2018/19	4,598
2019/20	4,562
2020/21	3,894

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Digital

1. Hospital Episode Statistics figures are available from 1989-90 onwards. Changes to the figures over time should be interpreted in the context of improvements in data quality and coverage and changes in National Health Service practice. The decrease in the number of hospital stays of more than two months for children for 2020/21 is due to the overall reduction in hospital activity in 2020/21.
2. Hospital Episode Statistics include activity ending in the year in question from 1 April to 31 March 2013. A discharge episode is the last episode during a hospital stay (a spell), where the patient is discharged from the hospital or transferred to another hospital. Discharges do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one discharge from hospital within the period.

## ■ Hospitals: Young People

**Ian Lavery:**

[\[34926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide funding for the creation of tier four young peoples' hospitals outside of the South of England.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We have confirmed funding to build 40 new hospitals, including two in Dorset which will deliver mental health services. We also launched a competition for a further eight hospitals, a proportion of which will be mental health hospitals. However, there are no plans for new hospitals specifically to deliver tier four children and adolescent mental health services.

NHS England commissions tier four children and adolescent mental health services from over 50 mental health providers, which operate within National Health Service and independent hospitals in England. There are no current plans to expand the provision of such services.

**Huntington's Disease: Health Services**

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[39890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the time taken for specialist referrals for people with suspected symptoms of Huntington's disease on those people's (a) condition and (b) wellbeing.

**James Morris:**

No formal assessment has been made.

**Huntington's Disease: Mental Health Services**

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[39888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the provision of mental health support for people with Huntington's disease.

**James Morris:**

There are no plans to make a specific assessment. However, we will review the specification for the Clinical Genomic Service, which offers specialised neurology services for people with Huntington's disease. This will include improving access to mental health services. The revised specification will be subject to public consultation before receiving final approval. In addition, the neuropsychiatry service specification is in development, which will outline the multi-disciplinary approach to caring for patients with complex neurological conditions who require specialised assessment and mental health support.

**Incontinence: Surgery**

**Emma Hardy:** [\[33897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many colposuspension surgeries were performed between (a) July 2018 and July 2019, (b) July 2019 and July 2020, (c) July 2020 and July 2021 and (d) July 2021 to date.



**Maria Caulfield:**

The following table shows the number of colposuspension surgeries performed in the periods requested to 31 May 2022, the most recent data available. While data from 31 March 2021 is published, it remains provisional.

1 JULY 2018 TO 1 JULY 2019	791
2 July 2019 to 1 July 2020	682
2 July 2020 to 1 July 2021	480
2 July 2021 to 31 May 2022	470

**■ Incontinence: Surgical Mesh Implants****Emma Hardy:**[\[36869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many colposuspension surgeries were performed by University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust between (a) 1 July 2018 and 1 July 2019, (b) 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020, (c) 2 July 2020 and 1 July 2021 and (d) 2 July 2021 and 11 July 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 July 2022]:* NHS England has advised that no colposuspension surgeries were performed at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust between 1 July 2018 and 11 July 2022.

**Emma Hardy:**[\[36870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review entitled First Do No Harm, published on 8 July 2020, how many people with stress urinary incontinence have been treated with mesh (a) slings and (b) tapes at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust between (i) 1 July 2018 and 1 July 2019, (ii) 2 July 2019 to 1 July 2020, (iii) 2 July 2020 to 1 July 2021 and (iv) 2 July 2021 to 11 July 2022.

**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 20 July 2022]:* We are unable to provide the information requested on the number of patients with stress urinary incontinence treated with slings at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust from 2 July 2019 to 1 July 2020. This is due to the small number of patients involved which could lead to the identification of individuals. However, no patients were treated with slings between 1 July 2018 and 1 July 2019 or between 2 July 2020 and 11 July 2022.

No patients with stress urinary incontinence were treated with mesh tape at the Trust between 1 July 2018 and 11 July 2022.

## ■ Influenza And Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[32969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for the rollout of (a) winter flu and (b) covid booster vaccinations.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 15 July 2022, the Government provided an update on the COVID-19 autumn booster programme and flu vaccination programme. This included the expansion of the eligibility criteria for flu vaccinations to be offered to all adults aged 50 years old and over and secondary school children in Years 7, 8, and 9 in England. These additional groups will be eligible once the most vulnerable, including previously announced pre-school and primary school children, those aged 65 years old and over and those in clinical risk groups have been offered the vaccination.

The Government has accepted the JCVI's advice to offer an autumn booster vaccination to increase immunity in those at higher risk from COVID-19 and protect against severe illness, hospitalisation and death in winter 2022/23. The booster dose will be offered to residents and staff in a care home for older adults; all adults aged 50 years old and over; those aged five to 49 years old in a clinical risk group or who are household contacts of someone with immunosuppression; frontline health and social care workers; and carers aged 16 years old and over.

Further information on the delivery of the programme, including details on the invitations for patient cohorts, will be available in due course.

## ■ Integrated Care Systems: Innovation

**Derek Thomas:**

[\[38752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to ensure that a dedicated Chief Innovation Officer is appointed into every Integrated care system.

**James Morris:**

The Health and Care Act 2022 requires integrated care boards to consider the necessary skills, knowledge and experience required in its membership, including in its duty to promote innovation.

**Derek Thomas:**

[\[38753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether plans to promote innovation within Integrated care systems will include the development of an innovation strategy within every ICS.

**James Morris:**

The Health and Care Act 2022 places a legal duty on integrated care boards (ICBs) to promote innovation and set out how this will be achieved in forward planning and annual reports. In addition, ICB chief executives and chairs are accountable for fostering a culture of innovation.

Innovation has been embedded in the National Health Service's implementation guidance for the development of integrated care systems (ICSs). The Department is currently exploring how innovation can be included in statutory guidance, including for integrated care strategies. The Department is also working with the NHS, the Accelerated Access Collaborative and Academic Health Science Networks to ensure that priorities for innovation over one to three years are agreed with ICSs.

■ **Jack Hurn**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

**[39754]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2022 to Question 14408 on Jack Hurn, for what reason his Department does not proactively make an assessment of coroners' verdicts without prior receipt of a Prevention of Future Deaths Report; and whether he has had discussions with the Chief Coroner on that approach.

**Maggie Throup:**

A Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) report is issued under Regulation 28 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013. It is the established legal process through which a coroner reports any findings which have given rise to concern that future deaths might occur unless action is taken. The PFD report is sent to a person or organisation the coroner considers has the power to take action, which they are obliged to respond to.

The Department follows this legal process and awaits the coroner's expert report before responding. The Ministry of Justice is responsible for the relevant regulations and a coroner may send a PFD report to any and all Government Departments they consider appropriate. There have been no recent discussions with the Chief Coroner in relation to this approach.

■ **Joint Replacements: Surgery**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[38787]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of average waiting times for joint replacement surgery in University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust; and what steps his Department is taking to (a) clear backlogs and (b) reduce average waiting times for joint replacement surgery in that area.

**Maria Caulfield:**

As of May 2022, the median average (median) waiting time for trauma and orthopaedic treatment at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, including joint replacement surgery was 34.3 weeks.

The High Volume Low Complexity programme plans to increase surgical activity through a £1.5 billion investment in dedicated surgical hubs. Through £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund, the Trust was awarded £13.8 million to deliver an expected 164 additional adult inpatient beds.

## ■ Life Expectancy

**Feryal Clark:** [\[36945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of regional disparities in life expectancy; and if he will make a statement.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities publishes health indicators at regional and local authority level in the Public Health Outcomes Framework and other related profiles. These indicators include life expectancy, healthy life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy at birth and at 65 years old and within-area inequality in life expectancy at birth and 65 years old. This assists national and local government and health services to reduce health disparities.

## ■ Life Sciences

**Neale Hanvey:** [\[33948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what further steps he is taking to promote the UK as a global life sciences superpower.

**James Morris:**

The Department's forthcoming Medtech Strategy will set out further actions to promote competition, transparency and innovation and the United Kingdom's life sciences sector.

It will align with the Life Science Vision, which prioritised building capability in research and development, supporting the role of the National Health Service in innovation and creating a business environment which encourages investment in life sciences.

In addition, the Department and the Medicines and Health products Regulatory Agency will implement regulatory reforms to enable the early adoption of innovative medical devices and treatments and enhance the attractiveness of the UK as a place to do business.

## ■ Maternity Services: Research

**Feryal Clark:** [\[35084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to undertake research into alternative methods of (a) maternity and (b) early post-natal care.

**James Morris:**

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) funds research in maternal and neonatal health, focussing on the safety of maternity and neonatal services and the national maternity ambition to halve maternal deaths, stillbirths and neonatal deaths and brain injury by 2025. The NIHR has funded a study to evaluate acupuncture and standard care for pregnant women with back pain. It also supports the Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth group, which has reviewed alternative methods of maternity

and post-natal care. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including alternative methods of maternity and early post-natal care.

## ■ **Medical Records: Ethnic Groups**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[37618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve ethnic coding in health records.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The National Health Service Data Model and Dictionary reflects the latest approved Information Standard for the data submission of ethnicity categories in the NHS, using the Office for National Statistics' 2001 categories. The content of these categories is updated when the Information Standards are amended.

The NHS Data Model and Dictionary Service has contributed to a project to update these Standards. The project is currently finalising a report supporting the development of a 'Unified Information Standard for Protected Characteristics'. This project is considering the update to the 2001 ethnicity categories and other protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010.

## ■ **Medical Treatments**

**Chris Green:** [\[39883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the future projected need for Advanced Therapy Medicinal Technologies; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the proposed NHS England/NICE Innovative Medicines Fund to meet that need.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific estimate has been made. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recommended several advanced therapeutic medicinal products (ATMPs) which are now routinely funded for National Health Service patients.

The Innovative Medicines Fund was recently launched to allow patients to benefit from early access to the most promising medicines where NICE is unable to recommend routine funding due to clinical uncertainty. This will support the rapid introduction of effective new medicines, including ATMPs.

## ■ **Medical Treatments: Rare Diseases**

**Chris Green:** [\[39884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the suitability of the NICE highly specialised technologies evaluation process for advanced therapy medicinal products used to treat a range of rare and ultra-rare diseases.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has recommended all of the advanced therapy medicinal products it has evaluated through its highly specialised technologies programme, which are now available to National Health Service patients.

**Medicine: Research****Chris Green:**[\[31140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the UK's medical translational research capabilities; and what steps he is taking to improve those capabilities.

**James Morris:**

No specific assessment has been made as the United Kingdom's capability to deliver medical research is dependent on a variety of organisations, including funders, regulators, and research organisations.

The majority of the Government's investment in medical research is made through the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). In 2016, the NIHR reviewed its performance in health research in the previous 10 years and identified areas to improve the UK's research capabilities. In 2019, the MRC reviewed its support for translational research over the past 10 years and how this could be enhanced.

**Neale Hanvey:**[\[33944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with his counterparts in the Devolved nations to discuss the role of clinical research in (a) driving better patient outcomes and (b) fostering better innovative treatments for patients.

**James Morris:**

We continue to meet regularly with the devolved administrations to discuss clinical research in the United Kingdom. 'The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery: 2022 to 2025 implementation plan' has been developed by the UK Government and the devolved administrations in collaboration with the clinical research community and delivery partners through the UK Clinical Research Recovery Resilience and Growth programme.

**Neale Hanvey:**[\[33947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what further steps he is taking to (a) increase the participation of patients within clinical trials, (b) integrate clinical research within health and social care practice and (c) further embed clinical research within the NHS.

**Neale Hanvey:**[\[33949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what further steps he is taking to (a) reduce approval times for clinical trials and (b) enable innovative research to be carried out more quickly; and what discussions he has had for the purposes of informing

policy and practice with representatives of (i) the National Health Systems of the UK, (ii) the Devolved administrations, (iii) academia, (iv) medical royal colleges, (v) patient advocacy groups, (vi) research institutes and (vii) health care professional bodies.

**James Morris:**

‘The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery’ published in March 2021 set out the ambition to create a patient-centred, pro-innovation and digitally enabled clinical research environment. ‘The Future of Clinical Research Delivery: 2022 to 2025 implementation plan’ published on 30 June 2022 summarises the progress made and the actions required in the next three years to achieve these ambitions by 2031.

The National Health Service and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) are investing in data and digital platforms to increase the identification of people who meet the eligibility criteria for specific studies and to deliver virtual and decentralised studies to increase participation of patients within clinical trials. NHS England and the devolved administrations are developing plans to embed responsibility and accountability for research in healthcare delivery and introduce new measures to increase recognition for undertaking and supporting clinical research. This will include the implementation of the Health and Care Act 2022 with enhanced duties on research for NHS England and integrated care boards.

A single, simplified approval service for clinical trials in the United Kingdom will be developed, including the implementation of a fast-track ethics review in the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency’s (MHRA) and the Health Research Authority’s combined process. NHS England is implementing the National Contract Value Review to expedite the costing elements of the contracting process in NHS trusts to prevent delays. Following public consultation on proposals for legislative changes for clinical research, the MHRA is preparing the Government’s response and secondary legislation. The NIHR is expanding its support through its Clinical Research Network to assist researchers with the design of studies.

These measures will be delivered through the Recovery, Resilience and Growth Programme involving representatives from NHS, the devolved administrations, academia, Royal Colleges, patients and the public, research institutes, health care professional bodies and research charities, funders and industry.

■ **Medicine: Training**

**Navendu Mishra:**

**[30182]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with representatives of the British Medical Association on the suitability of financial support for medical students.

**Maria Caulfield:**

While there have been no specific discussions, the Department continues to engage with the British Medical Association on a range of topics.



**Stephen Morgan:**[\[39975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Royal College of Physicians' 2021 consultant census findings that 52 per cent of advertised consultant posts in England and Wales went unfilled, whether he is taking steps to increase the number of medical school places.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We have funded an additional 1,500 undergraduate medical school places each year for domestic students in England – a 25% increase over three years. This expansion was completed in September 2020 and has delivered five new medical schools in England. In addition, the Government temporarily lifted the cap on medical school places for students who completed A-Levels in 2020 and in 2021 and who had an offer from a university in England to study medicine, subject to grades.

**Members: Correspondence****Stephen Morgan:**[\[32625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care plans to respond to the correspondence of (a) 9 June and (b) 22 June 2022 from the hon. Member for Portsmouth South.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We apologise for the delay in replying to the hon. Member. A reply will be sent as soon as possible.

**Mental Health Services****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[38766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce barriers that prevent patients being discharged from mental health services; and if he will undertake a review of the provision of mental health rehabilitation services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

In 2021/22, we provided an additional £116 million to support safe and appropriate discharge from mental health inpatient units. NHS England is investing approximately £1 billion in new models of community mental health services in England by 2023/24 to prevent admissions occurring and enable patients to be discharged more quickly when an admission is necessary. These models will also deliver dedicated community-based services for people with mental health rehabilitation needs, which aims to support more people within less restrictive settings locally and reduce the number of out of area placements.

NHS England's Getting It Right First Time programme recently published a report following a national review of mental health rehabilitation services. NHS England is currently reviewing the report's recommendations. The report is available at the following link:



<https://www.gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk/medical-specialties/mental-health/>

## ■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

**[38538]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for mental health support for children and young adults.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are investing an additional £2.3 billion a year to enable a further two million people in England, including 345,000 young people, to access National Health Service-funded mental health support by 2023/24.

In 2021/22, we also provided £500 million to target those groups most affected by the pandemic, including children and young people. Of this funding, £79 million was allocated to allow approximately 22,500 additional children and young people to access community health services; a further 2,000 to access eating disorder services; and accelerate the coverage of mental health support teams in schools and colleges. We have also invested £13 million to ensure young adults aged 18 to 25 years old, including university students, can receive tailored mental health support.

There are currently 287 mental health support teams in place in approximately 4,700 schools and colleges, offering support to children experiencing anxiety, depression and other common mental health issues. This will increase to 399 teams, covering 35% of pupils, by April 2023, with more than 500 teams planned by 2024.

In February, NHS England published the outcomes of its consultation on the potential to introduce five new access and waiting time standards for mental health services. This includes a standard for children, young people and their families or carers presenting to community-based mental health services, should receive care within four weeks from referral. We are now working with NHS England on the next steps.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[39935]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for treatment in Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services in England.

**Gillian Keegan:**

This information is not held in the format requested as there are currently no waiting time standards for these services. Data is available where a waiting time standard is in place, including early intervention in psychosis and children and young people's eating disorder service, which is available at the following link:

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

In February 2022, NHS England published the outcome of a consultation on the potential to introduce five new access and waiting time standards for mental health services, including for children, young people and their families and carers presenting

to community-based mental health services to receive care within four weeks from referral. We are now working with NHS England on the next steps.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Finance

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [39934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Long Term Plan, how much and what proportion of the £2.3 billion funding for mental health has been distributed; and what that funding has been spent on.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The NHS Long Term Plan allocated a minimum £2.3 billion a year for the expansion of mental health services in England by 2023/24. However, this information is not held in the format requested.

The "NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24" provides a summary of this investment which is available at the following link:

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/nhs-mental-health-implementation-plan-2019-20-2023-24.pdf>

The NHS Mental Health Dashboard provides annual spending plans for National Health Service commissioning organisations, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/taskforce/imp/mh-dashboard/>

## ■ Mental Health Services: Out of Area Treatment

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [38758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of mental health patients admitted to out of area placements.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [38765]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number inappropriate out of area placements as a result of no appropriate mental health services being available locally, including the provision of additional and appropriately staffed inpatient beds in some local areas.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [38769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to tackle the use of inappropriate out of area placements as a result of no appropriate mental health services being available locally.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are providing an additional £2.3 billion a year for mental health services by 2023/24 to expand adult community, crisis and acute mental health services to prevent avoidable deterioration and hospital admission and ensure sufficient mental health bed capacity. We are also investing £150 million in the mental health estate to increase system capacity and reduce pressures, including non-medical alternatives to admission, step-down community beds and supported living services. All systems

with inappropriate out of area placements are required to refresh local plans to ensure these placements are eliminated as soon as reasonably possible.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[38759]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS Digital's report, Out of Area Placements in Mental Health Services, published in April 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for 205,990 days being spent by patients in inappropriate out of area placements in 2021-22 as a result of no appropriate mental health services being available locally.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, NHS England has advised that many local systems are experiencing high levels of acuity, new presentations and the backlog of treatment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, some areas are experiencing staff absences and delayed discharges which has caused local beds to be unavailable in a timely way. All systems which have inappropriate out of area placements are required to refresh the local plans to ensure these placements are eliminated soon as reasonably possible. We continue to monitor such placements with NHS England.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[38760]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact on patients of being admitted to inappropriate out of area placements as a result of no appropriate mental health services being available locally.

**Gillian Keegan:**

On average, hospital admissions out of area result in a longer length of stay than for local admissions. Evidence shows that being treated out of areas can impact the continuity of care of patients, with disruptions to their care and reduced contact with family, carers and support networks, all of which are critical to recovery.

We continue to work with NHS England to monitor the use of such placements. All systems which have inappropriate out of area placements are required to refresh local plans to ensure these are eliminated as soon as reasonably possible.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[38761]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish data on the number of patients in inappropriate out of area placements as a result of no appropriate mental health services being available locally, broken down by primary diagnosis, for each year between 2010 and the most recent period for which figures are available.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The information is not held in the format requested. While data on out of area placements is collected, this does not record a primary diagnosis. This data is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/out-of-area-placements-in-mental-health-services/april-2022>

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [38762]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to improve the quality of data reporting on patients being admitted to inappropriate out of area placements as a result of no appropriate mental health services being available locally.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [38763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has taken steps to encourage NHS trusts to collect data on patients being admitted to inappropriate out of area placements as a result of no appropriate mental health services being available locally.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department works with NHS England and NHS Digital to provide governance for the development of the Mental Health Service Dataset (MHSDS) and improve data quality, including data for out of area placements.

NHS England and NHS Digital are working with trusts to ensure that the high submission rate of data for out of area placements continues and with NHS England and NHS Digital, we aim to improve the submission of data from private providers for the MHSDS.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [38764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS Digital's report, Out of Area Placements in Mental Health Services, published in April 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for regional variations in the number of patients being admitted to inappropriate out of area placements as a result of no appropriate mental health services being available locally.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, NHS England works with local areas to manage local capacity and understand the challenges which may result in out of area placements.

To prevent out of area placements, efforts are made to reduce the number of patients in mental health beds experiencing long stays; ensure investment in and operation of community based and local authority mental health services; and enable senior clinical and operational leadership to manage patient flow on a daily basis.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [38767]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide an estimate of the number of patients with (a) a learning disability and (b) autism who were admitted to an inappropriate out of area placement because appropriate local services were not available in each year since 2010.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[38768]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the average length of stay in an inappropriate out of area placement by patients with (a) a learning disability and (b) autism who were admitted to that placement because appropriate local services were not available.

**Gillian Keegan:**

This information is not held centrally in the format requested.

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Refugees**

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[39943]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support Ukrainian refugees with their mental health.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Guidance for Ukrainian arrivals has been developed on accessing health services, including mental health support, in addition to guidance for health care professionals. Arrivals on the Ukraine Family and Homes for Ukraine visa schemes are entitled to free health care, including mental health services. Where arrivals experience symptoms of poor mental health, evidence-based treatment is available via a general practitioner and the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[39944]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of refugees relocated to the UK under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme who have requested access to mental health services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific estimate has been made as this information is not collected centrally. Local areas have established trauma-informed psychological and emotional support services for Afghan refugees led by clinicians with expertise in trauma-informed care. In 2021, £3 million was provided to the National Health Service for an enhanced healthcare offer for people arriving through Afghan resettlement schemes. All Afghan refugees have now registered with a general practitioner or are being helped to do so.

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Staff**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[38808]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of staffing numbers in mental health services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

As of March 2022, there were 133,391 full-time equivalent staff in the National Health Service mental health in NHS trusts and foundation trusts. This is an increase of over 24,200 since March 2016.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Vacancies

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[39932]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff vacancies there are within Mental Health Trusts, by job role, as of 19 July 2022.

**Gillian Keegan:**

This information is not held in the format requested. While NHS Digital collects data on vacancies in National Health Service trusts, it does not record information on all job roles other than registered nursing and medical staff.

In March 2022, there were 22,677 full-time equivalent vacancies in mental health trusts. Of this, there were 11,239 registered nursing vacancies and 1,515 vacancies for medical staff.

## ■ Miscarriage

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[33938]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make it its policy to record and include miscarriages in official statistics for the purposes of (a) setting targets for reducing baby loss and (b) informing the forthcoming Women's Health Strategy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are no official statistics reported for miscarriages. The accurate reporting of miscarriages in England is challenging due to the significant number of miscarriages not reported to a healthcare provider, particularly those that take place at an early gestation.

Pregnancy loss is a priority area within the recently published Women's Health Strategy for England, which is available at the following link:

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

## ■ Monkeypox: Health Services

**Feryal Clark:**

**[38883]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to provide additional financial support to sexual health services to meet the demands of (a) assessing, (b) treating, (c) caring for, and (d) vaccinating people who are (i) affected by and (ii) at risk from monkeypox.

**Maggie Throup:**

While no additional funding is planned, we have provided more than £3.4 billion to local authorities through the Public Health Grant to invest in essential frontline services, including sexual and reproductive health. The UK Health Security Agency (UKSHA) is working with local authorities and system partners to contain the monkeypox outbreak, including the identification and management of infected cases.

The UKHSA has also published a vaccine strategy, which includes advice on vaccination of individuals at increased risk.

## ■ **Monkeypox: Vaccination**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[38882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many additional doses of Imvanex, for protection against the monkeypox virus, have been ordered to date; and when those doses are planned to be available.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency has procured more than 100,000 doses of the smallpox vaccine Jynneos, which is pharmaceutically identical to Imvanex. This is in addition to approximately 30,000 doses of Imvanex vaccine previously procured. The first of the doses of Jynneos will arrive in July, with the remainder expected by September 2022.

## ■ **NHS 111**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[36896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many calls to NHS 111 were abandoned in (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021 and (d) 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The following table shows the number of NHS 111 calls abandoned after 30 seconds or more between January and March 2019.

JANUARY TO MARCH 2019	153,692
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Source: NHS England, NHS 111 Minimum Data Set

Since April 2019, data has been collected on the total number of abandoned calls, which is shown in the following table.

APRIL TO DECEMBER 2019	716,154
2020	2,490,663
2021	3,531,186
January to May 2022	1,174,159

Source: NHS England, Integrated Urgent Care Aggregate Data Collection

**■ NHS and Social Services: Sick Leave****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [\[39933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of staff who work in (a) the NHS and (b) social care who have been placed on sick leave due to mental health illness in each month since March 2020.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

**■ NHS Trusts: Telecommunications****Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[37573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of NHS Trusts in England whose rental income from telecommunications apparatuses has reduced as a result of renegotiations with network or infrastructure providers since reforms of the Electronic Communications Code in 2017 came into effect; and if she will make a statement.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We have no plans to make a specific assessment as this information is not collected centrally. Local National Health Service organisations are responsible for the installation of electronic communications networks and the maintenance of related infrastructure.

**■ NHS: Contracts****Jon Trickett:** [\[27516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much money in total was paid by the National Health Service in England to private contractors in 2021.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

**■ NHS: Facsimile Transmission****Wes Streeting:** [\[33870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of fax machines that are in use across NHS England as of 11 July 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 18 July 2022]:* We have no plans to make a specific estimate.

**■ NHS: Health Professions****Rachael Maskell:** [\[39907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to assess the workforce requirements for clinical specialisms in the NHS.



**Maria Caulfield:**

We have no plans to make a specific assessment. However, the Department has commissioned Health Education England to review long term strategic trends for the health and regulated social care workforce. This will ensure the appropriate skills and behaviours are available to deliver high standards of care. In addition, we have commissioned NHS England to develop a long term plan for the workforce, which will assess supply and demand. The outcomes will be available in due course. We are also considering the workforce implications within a number of forthcoming strategies including cancer, maternity and mental health services.

**NHS: ICT****Feryal Clark:**[\[37626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department has allocated to (a) local, (b) regional and (c) national NHS IT services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Spending Review in 2021 provided a national settlement for IT of £1.7 billion. We have allocated £0.5 billion for the maintenance of live services, with the balance supporting digital transformation programmes within health and social care. Funding will be released throughout the year in accordance with business case approvals. The information requested on local and regional allocations is not held centrally, as each integrated care system will determine the level of allocation to support digital and technology locally.

**NHS: Innovation****Derek Thomas:**[\[38751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Health and Care Act 2022, what steps the Government plans to take to drive innovation within the NHS.

**James Morris:**

The Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC) works with leaders from the life sciences sector to increase innovation within the National Health Service. The AAC aims to ensure that innovation is accelerated and available to clinicians and patients and that the sector in the United Kingdom benefits patients, industry and the economy.

Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) are commissioned by the AAC to support the NHS to address health and care challenges. The AHSNs work with industry to obtain evidence of the benefits of new products and support early implementation in the NHS.

The Department continues to work with the NHS and the AAC to ensure that best practice in enabling innovation is communicated to integrated care boards and to support AHSNs' engagement to increase the adoption of innovation adoption.

**Derek Thomas:**

[\[38754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help (a) align the Medical Technologies Directorate's upcoming Strategy with the NHS's duty to promote innovation, including within integrated care systems and (b) ensure that medical technologies and digital health solutions are included in plans to tackle NHS backlogs and level up health and care outcomes across the country.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Medical Technology Directorate's forthcoming Strategy aims to establish frameworks to ensure consistency in the use of medical technology in the National Health Service and increase the sharing of expertise.

The strategy intends to assist with the identification, development and promotion of new medical technologies and digital solutions to reduce health inequalities and improve patient outcomes. This includes working with NHS England on the launch of community diagnostic centres to reduce backlogs for diagnostic tests through new technologies to increase efficiency.

## ■ NHS: Locums and Temporary Employment

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[11754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on locum and agency staff used by the NHS (a) at a national level, (b) at a Trust level and (c) at York Teaching hospital.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 8 June 2022]:*

NHS England collects agency data on shift numbers, including off-framework shifts which override the agency rules, and data on expenditure for agency staff. While this data is collected at trust level, integrated care system and national level it is not currently validated.

## ■ NHS: Staff

**Michelle Donelan:**

[\[35021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to (a) recruit more NHS staff, (b) ensure that requests of medical staff to work overnight shifts are reasonable and (c) reduce appointment backlogs.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Local National Health Service trusts have responsibility for ensuring appropriate staffing levels and recruiting the number of health professionals required to meet local service need. We have committed to recruiting NHS staff and investing in the workforce. As of April 2022, there were more than 9,600 additional nurses and 4,000 doctors working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups. We are currently on schedule to meet the commitment for a further 50,000 nurses. We have

established a programme to improve retention and support return to practice, invest in and diversify the training pipeline and ethically recruit internationally.

Eligible new and continuing nursing students on pre-registration courses at English universities will also receive an additional grant of £5,000 for each year of their course. Further funding of up to £3,000 is available for costs such as childcare or to encourage recruitment in specific specialisms. The NHS has also established a People Recovery Task Force to provide assurance on the safety and wellbeing of staff. However, it is the responsibility of individual employers to ensure that requests for medical staff to work overnight are reasonable.

Through the 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care', we have allocated more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to address waiting times in elective services. This is in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund made available to systems in 2021/22.

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[39976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Royal College of Physicians' 2021 consultant census finding that 52 per cent of advertised consultant posts in England and Wales went unfilled, what recent assessment he has made of the size of the NHS workforce relative to patient demand.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department has commissioned Health Education England to review long term strategic trends for the health and regulated social care workforce. This will ensure that we have the appropriate skills and behaviours in the workforce to deliver high standards of care and meet patient demand. In addition, we have asked NHS England to develop a long term plan for workforce, which will include assessments of supply and demand. The outcomes of this plan will be available in due course. We are also considering workforce requirements within a number of forthcoming strategies including cancer, maternity and mental health services.

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[39977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the long-term workforce strategy commissioned by his Department earlier this year will be published.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Work on the long term workforce plan is continuing, including engagement with stakeholders. The outcomes will be available in due course.

## ■ **NHS: Telecommunications**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[37574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions officials in his Department have had with officials in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the effect of reforms to the Electronic Communications Code in 2017 on NHS properties (a) before and (b) after the commencement of those reforms.

**Gillian Keegan:**

There have been no specific discussions. Local National Health Service organisations are responsible for the installation of electronic communications networks and the maintenance of related infrastructure.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[37575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether her Department has had discussions with representatives of telecommunications network (a) operators and (b) infrastructure providers on the impact of the 2017 reforms to the Electronic Communications Code on NHS property income.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We have had no specific discussions. Local National Health Service organisations are responsible for the installation of electronic communications networks and the maintenance of related infrastructure.

**■ North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust****Dehenna Davison:**[\[38839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he expects the independent review into the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) to be completed; if he will publish the report of that review; and what steps he plans to take to help ensure that the standard of service provided by NEAS improves as quickly as possible.

**James Morris:**

NHS England is establishing governance arrangements for an independent review to formally commence as soon as is practicable. The families and staff affected will have an opportunity to contribute to the review's Terms of Reference in due course. Once the review is completed, its report will be published independently of the National Health Service. Local commissioners and the NHS will support the implementation of any recommendations to improve the culture within and the quality of service provided by the North East Ambulance Service as soon as possible. Further details will be available shortly.

NHS England advises that the North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust has measures in place to improve the standards of service it provides. An investment of £38 million has been agreed for 2022/23 to improve clinical care, recover ambulance response times, increase the operational and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) workforce and the establishment of an additional EOC in the south of the Trust's area.

**■ Numed Healthcare: Medical Equipment****Hilary Benn:**[\[39768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2022 to Question 11557 on Numed Healthcare: Medical Equipment, whether NHS Supply Chain has received communication from Numed Inc Products' United Kingdom distributor as of 19 July 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS Supply Chain has received routine communication from NuMED Inc Products' United Kingdom distributor.

■ **Obesity****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[39808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact on levels of obesity of provisions in Health and Care Act 2022 relating to (a) a pre-watershed television advertising ban and total online advertising ban for less healthy food, (b) the prevention of shops from displaying less healthy food at the entrance, exit and end-of-aisles and (c) a ban on volume price discounts for less healthy food.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Health and Care Act 2022 contains measures to restrict the advertising of less healthy food and drink on television and online which are expected to reduce the number of obese children by approximately 20,000.

Restrictions on the promotion of products high in fat, sugar or salt by volume price and location were made in The Food (Promotion and Placement) (England) Regulations 2021. The impact assessment shows that over the 25-year appraisal period for the location restrictions, the health benefits expected to accrue due to lower calorie consumption in overweight and obese people are estimated to be £57,600 million, with £2,390 million for volume price promotions. In this period, it is estimated that these measures would provide savings for the National Health Service of £4,364 million in relation to location restrictions and £180 million for volume price promotions.

■ **Out-patients: Monitoring****Feryal Clark:**[\[40019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2022 to Question 23446, what assessment he has made of the potential (a) cost savings and (b) clinical benefits of increasing funding for remote monitoring in all integrated care systems in 2023-24.

**Gillian Keegan:**

A recent study of 507 people, with a control group, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association showed shorter lengths of stay, fewer readmissions and reductions in visits to emergency departments for those in receipt of home monitoring. These measures reduced costs and patients rated their care more highly. A regional programme is underway until the end of March 2023 to increase home monitoring and virtual wards to enable more people to recover at home supported by the appropriate technology.

While there are no current plans to increase central funding, it is expected that integrated care systems will continue to invest in these areas.

## ■ Palliative Care

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[38577]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of palliative and end of life care in the community.

**Gillian Keegan:**

During the pandemic, we have made more than £400 million available to palliative and end of life care providers, including hospices. This included funding for community contacts to provide support to those at the end of life being cared for at home.

Palliative and end of life care services are commissioned by integrated care boards to meet the needs of the local population. NHS England has developed seven palliative and end of life care Strategic Clinical Networks, working with commissioners to implement sustainable commissioning models. This includes the development of service specifications and an investment framework which incorporates community services.

## ■ Patients: Rehabilitation

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[39908]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to help ensure that families are involved in the rehabilitation of patients in the NHS.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The 'RightCare: Community Rehabilitation Toolkit' recognises the importance of the involvement of families and carers in the rehabilitation of patients in the National Health Service. The Toolkit is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/rightcare/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2020/03/nhs-rightcare-community-rehab-toolkit-v12.pdf>

NHS England has established a Care Partner Advisory Board comprised of people with lived experience including family carers, third sector groups, the Royal College of Nursing, clinicians, nurses, and specialists. The Advisory Board will support the development of a care partner policy for implementation from 2023. This will emphasise the partnership role of families, carers and those important to the patient with staff in achieve personalised and person-centred outcomes.

## ■ Personality Disorders: Diagnosis

**Ian Lavery:**

**[34933]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of diagnosis of personality disorders in (a) adults and (b) adolescents in the last five years.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific assessment has been made. The 'Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England, 2014' records the prevalence of and trends in personality disorders in those aged 18 to 64 years old. The Survey is available at the following link:

[Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England, 2014. - NHS Digital](#)

The next Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey is expected to commence in 2022, with the final report to be published in 2024.

The 'Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2017' survey provides estimates of the prevalence of specific disorders, including behavioural disorders for children and young people. These disorders are generally only diagnosed in children and young people and the presence in childhood is required for certain adult psychiatric diagnoses, such as antisocial personality disorder. The survey is available at the following link:

[Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2017 \[PAS\] - NHS Digital](#)

**■ Pregnancy: Drugs****Feryal Clark:****[37631]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Healthy Mum, Healthy Baby, Healthy Future: The Case for UK Leadership in the Development of Safe Medicines for Use in Pregnancy, published in May 2022, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the recommendations in that report.

**James Morris:**

The Department has noted the recommendations of the report. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency recently completed a public consultation on legislative powers to support diversity in clinical trial populations, including pregnancy and individuals who are breast feeding. The responses are being analysed and the Government's response will be published later this year.

The Clinical Practice Research Datalink is currently being developed as a resource for studying the safety of medicines use in pregnancy via a new expanded Pregnancy Register. This includes anonymised data on 24.5 million pregnancy episodes in seven million women. The Registry will increase the ability to study rare exposures and outcomes and improve healthcare advice for women.

**■ Prescription Drugs: Addictions****Cat Smith:****[39893]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 125 of Public Health England's report entitled Dependence and withdrawal associated with some



prescribed medicines, published in December 2020, for what reason a helpline or website has not been funded for people who are dependent on prescription drugs.

**Maggie Throup:**

The 2019 review recommended that the Department consider the development of a time-limited national helpline and associated website. However, the Department's recent Spending Review settlement did not allow for funding to be allocated to this recommendation.

To support those dependent on prescription medication, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has issued guidelines on chronic pain and medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal symptoms. NHS England is developing a framework to support integrated Care boards on prescribing medicines which can cause dependence and withdrawal. This will inform the development of services which can offer alternatives to medicines and support patients experiencing prescribed drug dependence or withdrawal. The framework is expected to be published in autumn 2022.

■ **Prescription Drugs: Fees and Charges**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[34895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to charge private medicinal prescriptions at pharmacies at the same cost to the patient as others.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are no plans to do so, as the Department has no responsibility for prescribing in the private sector.

■ **Primary Health Care**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[34975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of how to optimise the triaging of patients in primary care.

**James Morris:**

No specific assessment has been made, as triage is based on clinical need. However, NHS England and the Royal College of General Practitioners have published guidance for practices on how to perform triage and remote consultations effectively.

■ **Primary Health Care: Buildings**

**Chris Green:**

[\[31139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will amend the rules on building utilisation to maximise use of modern, fit-for-purpose primary care estate, including that which was delivered under the NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust programme.



**Maria Caulfield:**

There are no specific rules on the utilisation of buildings. A specific lease may limit the use of estate, such as the sharing of services. These leases are locally determined and as independent contractors, general practitioner partnerships negotiate the specific terms.

NHS England has provided an online toolkit to support Primary Care Networks to develop estates requirements. In addition, NHS England will shortly ask all integrated care systems to undertake an Estates Infrastructure Strategy informed by local population health needs. These will include maximising utilisation of the current estate to ensure primary care is provided in fit-for-purpose premises, such as Local Improvement Finance Trust programme sites. This will develop of capital investment plans for local systems to deliver a model of care determined by Population Health Management and informed by 'Next steps for integrating primary care: Fuller stocktake report'.

**■ Primary Health Care: Faversham and Mid Kent****Helen Whately:**[\[39923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase access to primary care services for people in Faversham and Mid Kent constituency.

**James Morris:**

We have committed to recruit an additional 26,000 primary care staff in Primary Care Networks. In Kent and Medway, more than 400 additional roles staff have been recruited, including pharmacy technicians, first contact physios and mental health practitioners.

NHS England is working with local partners to attract general practitioners (GPs) to the area and encouraging trainees to undertake placements in Kent. In Kent and Medway, 19 GP trainees are being funded through the Targeted Enhancement Recruitment Scheme. Kent Medical School has 100 medical students hosted in Kent and Medway general practices. NHS England is procuring new mandatory dental services, based on the current areas of greatest need in Kent.

**■ Primary Health Care: Genetics****Feryal Clark:**[\[38884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of the use of genomic data in primary care settings on (a) patient outcomes and (b) the accuracy of diagnoses; and what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of that use.

**James Morris:**

No formal assessment has been made. Genomic testing in the National Health Service in England is provided through the NHS Genomic Medicine Service as outlined in the National Genomic Test Directory. Healthcare professionals in primary

care settings can refer a patient for genomic testing according to the eligibility and referral criteria in the Test Directory, which may involve a referral to the relevant specialist service, including clinical genetics services.

NHS England has a policy in place to ensure that genomic testing continues to be available for all patients where it would be of clinical benefit, which considers any impact on primary care.

### ■ **Primary Health Care: Recruitment**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[34899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many primary care staff have been recruited by the NHS since December 2019.

**James Morris:**

As at December 2021, there were a further 1,672 full time equivalent (FTE) doctors working in general practice and an additional 11,097 FTE direct patient care staff in general practice and Primary Care Networks compared to December 2019.

### ■ **Protective Clothing: Storage**

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[37500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 April 2022 to Question 125078 on Protective Clothing: Storage, how many units of personal protective equipment were in storage in warehouses as of 14 February 2022; and what the cost is to the public purse of that storage.

**Maria Caulfield:**

As of 14 February 2022, there were 6.2 billion items of personal protective equipment in warehouse storage in the United Kingdom and China at a cost of £4 million per week.

### ■ **Protective Clothing: Waste Disposal**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[28492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the total cost of disposing unusable personal protective equipment between 29 June 2020 and 29 June 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We have no plans to make a specific estimate. However, 3% of personal protective equipment (PPE) purchased during the pandemic is not fit for any purpose, a small proportion of which will be disposed of. The Department is redistributing excess stock through selling, repurposing, donating, recycling and disposal, following the Government's waste hierarchy.

## ■ Radioligand Therapy

**Alex Norris:**

[\[32996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2022 to Question 23788 on radioligand therapy, what central funding will be made available for regional teams to expand services to meet the potential increase in NICE-approved radioligand therapies.

**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 13 July 2022]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for St Albans (Daisy Cooper MP) on 19 July 2022 to Question 33934.

**Dr James Davies:**

[\[38734\]](#)

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

**James Morris:**

NHS England is appointing a new National Specialty Advisor for Nuclear Medicine to ensure the opportunities for radioligand therapies approved by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence are realised.

**Chris Green:**

[\[39880\]](#)

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

**James Morris:**

No specific assessment has been made.

Where treatments, such as radioligand, are approved via the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's technology appraisals, NHS England seek to ensure appropriate access for patients within the license of the treatment. NHS England is appointing a new National Specialty Advisor for Nuclear Medicine to ensure the opportunities for approved radioligand therapies are realised.

## ■ Skin Cancer: Health Education

**Alberto Costa:**

[\[39894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness of melanoma.

**James Morris:**

The National Health Service 'Help us help you' campaign focuses on the barriers which prevent people from seeking advice for symptoms in all cancer types. The symptoms of melanoma are not a specific focus in this campaign, as it is more likely to be diagnosed at an early stage than many other cancer types. Those searching for NHS advice online on the potential signs of melanoma will be directed to the

appropriate information and encouraged to consult their general practitioner as soon as possible.

## ■ Strokes

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[35950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have suffered a stroke in hospital after admission for other conditions in each month from May 2021 to April 2022.

**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 18 July 2022]:* The information requested is not collected in the format requested. While data on the number of finished consultant episodes in 2021/22 is currently being collated and audited, this does not record the number of individual patients. A person may have more than one episode of care within the same stay in hospital or in different stays in the same year.

## ■ Surgery: Temperature

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[38718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has advised for elective procedures to be halted over periods of extreme heat to ensure that there is sufficient bed capacity for people who are medically unwell as a result of the heat.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No such advice has been given. NHS England works with local National Health Service organisations to plan and prioritise resources to meet the needs of patients.

The updated 'Heatwave Plan for England' aims to prepare, alert and protect people from the preventable health impacts from severe heat through advice for the NHS, local authorities, social care and other public agencies.

## ■ Surgical Mesh Implants

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [\[33728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential health implications of the continued use of mesh slings for incontinence by Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals Trust despite a pause on the use of that type of surgery due to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report, published July 2018.

**James Morris:**

NHS England has confirmed that following an internal review, Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has not inserted mesh slings for incontinence since July 2018.

**Emma Hardy:** [\[33896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many autologous fascia sling procedures were performed between (a) 1 July 2018 and 1 July 2019, (b) 2 July

2019 and 1 July 2020, (c) 2 July 2020 and 1 July 2021 and (d) 2 July 2021 and 11 July 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The following table shows the number of autologous fascia sling procedures performed in the periods requested to 31 May 2022, the most recent data available. While data from 31 March 2021 is published, it remains provisional.

1 JULY 2018 TO 1 JULY 2019	7
2 July 2019 to 1 July 2020	10
2 July 2020 to 1 July 2021	15
2 July 2021 to 31 May 2022	52

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[36867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on its decision to remove the link from its website to the report it commissioned by York University Health Economics Consortium which reviewed the available literature on complication rates for mesh implants.

**James Morris:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) archives information published on its website to ensure that the most recent information is displayed. When archiving information, the MHRA considers whether the information or updated information is available via other sources.

A summary of the report produced by York University Health Economics Consortium in 2012 is available within the 'Summary of the evidence on benefits and risks of vaginal mesh implants', which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaginal-mesh-implants-summary-of-benefits-and-risks>

The MHRA continues to keep all information relating to the safety of mesh implants under review.

■ **Temperature: Health Hazards**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[34969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help protect (a) elderly and (b) all people from the negative health effects of high temperatures.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) 'Heatwave Plan for England' provides guidance for the National Health Service and other professional bodies to reduce the

risks to health from prolonged exposure to severe heat, including elderly people. The UKHSA and the Met Office issue heat alerts to relevant health and social care professionals, providing advance warning of high temperatures to ensure that the impact of heat on people's health is minimised.

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have engaged with local resilience forums to raise awareness of the latest guidance, including heat health toolkits.

**Wes Streeting:**

**[34991]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support the NHS in dealing with additional pressures due to extreme heat in summer 2022.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) 'Heatwave Plan for England' provides guidance for the National Health Service and other professional bodies to reduce the risks to health from prolonged exposure to severe heat. The Plan promotes long-term planning and preparations which aim to reduce pressure on the NHS during periods of extreme heat. The UKHSA and the Met Office issue heat alerts to relevant health and social care professionals, providing advance warning of high temperatures to ensure that the impact of heat on people's health is minimised and address any increased demand for services.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[38714]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what contingency plans he has in place to support the health needs of people during periods of extreme heat.

**Maggie Throup:**

The health and social care system has well-established contingency plans in place to respond to increasing temperatures, through the 'Heatwave Plan for England' and National Health Service hot weather plans. The Heatwave Plan for England outlines how individuals and organisations can reduce health risks and includes specific measures to protect at-risk groups.

■ **Tumour Treating Fields Therapy**

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[38858]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations he has received from (a) NICE, (b) patient groups or (c) other bodies about making additional funds available for tumour-treating fields such as Optune.

**James Morris:**

A search of the Department's centralised correspondence database for 'tumour-treating fields' returns 16,051 cases. However, to identify specific cases relating to additional funding could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

On 30 March 2022, the Department responded to an e-petition on funding for OPTUNE brain cancer treatment for National Health Service patients, which is available at the following link:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/610898>

■ **University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust: Surgical Mesh Implants**

**Emma Hardy:** [36868]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many autologous fascia sling procedures were performed by University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust between (a) 1 July 2018 and 1 July 2019, (b) 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020, (c) 2 July 2020 and 1 July 2021 and (d) 2 July 2021 and 11 July 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England has advised that autologous fascia slings procedures were performed at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust between 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020. However, we are unable to provide the information requested for this period due to the low patient numbers, which could identify individuals. No procedures took place from 1 July 2018 to 2 July 2019 and 2 July 2020 to 11 July 2022.

■ **Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme**

**Kirsty Blackman:** [35968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of claims submitted to the Vaccine Damages Payment Scheme have (a) started processing, (b) been referred for medical assessment and (c) been settled as on 13 July 2022.

**Maggie Throup:**

As of 13 July 2022, there are 2,249 registered active claims relating to all vaccinations, with all active claims processed in accordance with the criteria of the Scheme. Of these, 167 claims or 7% have been referred for medical assessment, following the award of the contract for medical assessments in March 2022 to increase capacity. As of 13 July 2022, 25 claim decisions or 1% had been communicated to claimants.

**Sir Christopher Chope:** [38896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many claims for payments under the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme have been (a) assessed and (b) concluded by the Government contractor Crawford and Company.

**Maggie Throup:**

[Holding answer 21 July 2022]: As of 15 July 2022, NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) had submitted 174 claims relating to the COVID-19 vaccinations containing full medical records to Crawford and Company for assessment. Of these, 11 claims had been fully concluded and claimants had been notified of the outcome.

NHSBSA and the Department have reviewed the definitions used in correspondence for the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS). To ensure consistency of reporting, from July 2022, VDPS claims will only be classed as 'concluded' once NHSBSA have notified the applicant of the outcome of their claim. Previously, claims had been classed as "concluded" as soon as NHSBSA had received an initial decision from the third-party medical assessor.

■ **Veterans: Mental Health Services**

**Alberto Costa:** [\[37517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of Op COURAGE.

**Gillian Keegan:**

No specific assessment has been made. However, as of April 2022, there have been more than 19,000 referrals to Op COURAGE. This includes 19,673 referrals to the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service since April 2017; 2,533 referrals to the Complex Treatment Service since April 2018; and 1,121 referrals to the High Intensity Service between 2020 and April 2022. From April 2023, an integrated Op COURAGE service will be available, incorporating the three current strands into a single service.

■ **West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust: Standards**

**Daniel Kawczynski:** [\[36728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average time for West Midlands Ambulance Service to respond to category 2 emergencies was in Shropshire in each month of (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

**Maria Caulfield:**

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ **West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust**

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[38782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date he last met the CEO of the West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust.

**Maria Caulfield:**

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care met with the Chief Executive Officer of West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust on 16 July 2022.



## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Armed Forces: Families

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[39997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the impact on armed forces families of the £2,404 fee per family member to obtain Indefinite Leave to Remain in the context of the rise in the cost of living.

**Kevin Foster:**

Fees charged for Indefinite Leave to Remain and other immigration products are kept under review. Income from fees charged plays a vital role in the Home Office's ability to run a sustainable migration and borders system and it is the government's policy that those who use and benefit most from the immigration system should contribute towards the cost of operating the system, reducing reliance on the UK taxpayer.

The fees and policies which apply to the dependants of HM Forces are closely aligned with those apply to dependents of British citizens and settled persons under the standard family rules. Further support for armed forces families in planning for the cost of visa fees is provided by the Joining Forces Credit Union service.

Some dependants of serving HM Forces may also acquire or be eligible for British citizenship which would negate the need to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain or any other visas.

From 6 April this year, settlement fees for eligible non-UK serving personnel have been waived. This fee waiver will reduce the overall cost to some family units who choose to settle in the UK.

### ■ Asylum

**Shabana Mahmood:**

[\[38604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made in directing local authorities, which have previously not been involved, to participate in asylum dispersal.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* Since the Full Dispersal Scheme was announced in April 2022 we have begun procuring asylum accommodation in cooperation with local authorities (LAs). We have seen an increase in dispersed accommodation capacity, with new areas now engaged. We are committed to working collaboratively with local authorities to implement the full dispersal model and an informal consultation with partners to shape the redesign of the asylum dispersal system closed on 1 July.

As part of the informal consultation, we developed regional plans incorporating contributions from LAs across the UK and to support implementation of a reformed asylum dispersal model which is fair, sustainable, innovative and responsive to changing demands and needs over the long term. We have taken on board the representations made during the informal consultation period and are building the

feedback into our plans for regional allocations. We will communicate these to Local Authority partners as soon as we can.

## ■ Asylum: Applications

**Chi Onwurah:**

[38662]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made in the last six months on providing decisions for outstanding asylum claims made in 2020; and whether targets are in place to reduce outstanding applications for (a) leave and indefinite leave to remain, (b) citizenship and (c) passports.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* The Home Office are progressing decisions for outstanding asylum claims made since 2020 by investing in a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives that will speed up and simplify our processes, reduce the time people spend in the asylum system and decrease the number of people who are awaiting an interview or decision.

We continue to develop existing and new technology to help build on improvements such as digital interviewing and are streamlining and digitising the case working process to increase the numbers of decisions made.

The Home Office has prioritised capacity to Ukraine Visa Schemes applications in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Resources are now being returned to focus on visa routes impacted by these prioritisation decisions. The Home Office continues to prioritise any urgent and compassionate cases across all visa routes.

Citizenship continues to work through cases as quickly as possible and the latest transparency data shows 98.4% of straightforward applications are decided within Service Standard.

<https://gov.uk/government/publications/visas-and-citizenship-data-q1-2022>

Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to 10 weeks when applying for their passport from the UK. The vast majority of people continue to receive their passport within this timeframe, with 97.7% of UK standard applications completed within 10 weeks between January and June.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[39956]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the total cost of processing asylum applications in the (a) 2022 calendar and (b) 2022-23 financial year; and how much and what proportion of this cost will come from the Official Development Assistance budget.

**Kevin Foster:**

The last estimate of costs that we have published was for 2020/21, where the total cost of the Asylum system amounted to £1,359,145,699, with an average unit cost of £11,819. These costs show why our asylum system is in need of the reform our New Plan for Immigration will deliver.

The Home Office routinely publish information on the total cost and breakdown of Asylum costs and productivity and can be found at Asy\_04: [Immigration and protection data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/data-and-data-sets/immigration-and-protection-data-q1-2022)

We do not hold nor calculate the costs for this on a calendar year basis, nor do we have an estimate of costs for 2022/23, as the calculation of costs are collated from across the Home Office, once a year only, after the annual accounts have been published. This is still ongoing for 2021/22, and they will be available in the autumn.

ODA-eligible expenditure for asylum support is up to twelve months and covers all direct expenses for temporary sustenance (food, shelter, and training). ODA expenditure is published on a calendar year basis, the latest publication covers 2021, provisional 2022 calendar expenditure will be published in the spring 2023.

As defined by the OECD DAC Directives, none of the costs of processing asylum claims or other costs for personnel who are not involved in the direct execution of temporary sustenance in the UK are ODA eligible .

## ■ Asylum: Hotels

**Shabana Mahmood:**

[\[38606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her Department's policy to consult with local authorities before procuring hotels to use as asylum accommodation in their area.

**Kevin Foster:**

When any new site has been identified, the Home Office will write to the Local Authority Chief Executive and the MP for the area to inform them of our plans to house Asylum Seekers within the hotel/alternative accommodation identified. This is normally done in advance of a hotel being used, but where an urgent need for accommodation occurs, this may take place retrospectively.

The Home Office always gives as much notice as possible of our intention to use sites, however, the fluctuating nature of intake, coupled with the imperative to meet our statutory obligation, may mean we need to establish sites quickly to avoid people becoming destitute. Home Office officials would be in contact with appropriate Local Authority officers and all other relevant stakeholders to discuss the operational arrangements and share the necessary information. This would include our providers working with the emergency services to mitigate any risks to our service users and the wider community.

## ■ Asylum: Mental Health

**John McNally:**

[\[38700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to protect the mental health of vulnerable asylum seekers.

**Kevin Foster:**

Asylum seekers have full access to the NHS upon arrival in the UK.

All Home Office staff and contractors engaging with asylum seekers are trained to adopt a risk-based approach towards potential indications of vulnerability and to refer relevant cases onto the Safeguarding Hub, a dedicated resource assigned to identifying and safeguarding vulnerable asylum seekers.

The Safeguarding Hub works closely with the statutory agencies to signpost vulnerable customers for support with their health and social care needs.

The Government is planning to provide an additional £2.3 billion a year for mental health services by 2023/24, the largest increase in mental health funding in NHS history.

### ■ Asylum: Rwanda

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[30051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential risks for individuals applying for UK refugee status who are transferred to Rwanda under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership of (a) arbitrary detention by Rwandan security services and (b) forced recruitment into either non-state actor or state actor armed organisations; and if she will make an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of that matter.

**Simon Baynes:**

*[Holding answer 7 July 2022]:* People who are relocated to Rwanda under the Migration and Economic Development will not be detained. Rwanda will process their asylum claims in accordance with national and international human rights laws, and will ensure their protection from inhuman and degrading treatment or being returned to the place they originally fled.

Rwanda is a safe country with a track record of providing opportunities for refugees. Those relocated will be given all the support they need, with accommodation, food, healthcare, and help to integrate into the local community. They will be free to come and go.

This Partnership will be underpinned by a monitoring system put in place to ensure that the scheme is successfully relocating people to Rwanda to rebuild their lives and their welfare needs are being adequately addressed.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[34881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether reports made by the Monitoring Committee set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership will be laid before the House of Commons; and what the (a) frequency and (b) purpose of those reports will be.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[34882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Monitoring Committee set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership will have representatives with experience of applying for asylum in (a) the UK and (b) Rwanda as part of its membership.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[34883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which (a) individuals and (b) organisations her Department has contacted to form the Monitoring Committee set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[34884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Monitoring Committee set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership will be able to intervene in individual cases.

**Simon Baynes:**

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

The terms of reference of the Monitoring Committee for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership have been agreed and will set out how the Monitoring Committee will report its findings. The Monitoring Committee is due to become established over the next few weeks and the membership is in the process of being agreed. More details on this will be set out in due course.

As set out in paragraph 15 of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Monitoring Committee will monitor the entire relocation process, and the conditions it will report on will include pre-screening process, reception conditions, accommodation, processing of asylum claims and treatment and support of individuals at all times. The Monitoring Committee will have unfettered access for the purposes of completing assessments and reports.

## ■ Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

**John McNally:**

[\[37513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department makes an assessment of the (a) location and (b) cost of temporary accommodation when determining the order in which asylum seekers in that accommodation are given interviews.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office do not make an assessment of the location or cost of temporary accommodation when determining the order in which asylum seekers are given interviews; our usual tasking priorities are followed.

We are currently concentrating on deciding older claims, cases with acute vulnerability and those in receipt of the greatest level of support, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Additionally, we are prioritising cases where an individual has already received a decision, but a reconsideration is required.

Asylum Operations have also introduced a digital interviewing capability as part of the wider Home Office digital transformation programme. This enables us to maximise our capacity to conduct interviews in locations across the UK and progress cases in a more efficient and cost-effective way.

## ■ Asylum: Turkey

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[38682\]](#)

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

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* The UK is interested in working with multiple international partners to break the business model of people smuggling gangs and fix the broken asylum system.

We continue to pursue multiple Third Country Asylum Partnerships with those countries who are interested but we will not be drawn into speculation on which nations this includes.

## ■ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

**Caroline Nokes:**

[\[39813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Istanbul Convention will be ratified by 31 July 2022.

**Amanda Solloway:**

On 21<sup>st</sup> July the UK ratified the Istanbul Convention, sending a strong message to women and girls across the UK, and around the world, that the Government is committed to tackling VAWG.

The Istanbul Convention is the gold standard for combating violence against women and girls (VAWG). The UK signed the Convention in 2012 and the Government has always remained committed to ratifying it as soon as possible. This commitment was reiterated in our Tackling VAWG Strategy, published last July.

Since signing the Convention in 2012, we have significantly strengthened the legislative framework and introduced a range of new measures, including new offences on domestic abuse, forced marriage and stalking; tools such as Domestic Violence, Stalking and FGM Protection Orders; and a range of guidance and support for professionals.

## ■ Drugs: Misuse

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many offences were recorded for drug possession in each of the last three years in England.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The number of possession of drugs offences recorded by the police forces in England (including those recorded by the British Transport Police) in each of the last three years is presented in the table below.

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER:	POSSESSION OF DRUGS OFFENCES, ENGLAND
2019	137,423
2020	156,556
2021	136,019

**■ Fire and Rescue Services****Rachael Maskell:**[\[38712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the capacity of the Fire and Rescue Service to manage periods of extreme heat and related fires.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

Fire and rescue authorities in England are required to assess foreseeable fire and rescue related risks (including wildfires) that could affect their area, and how they will respond.

In this period of extreme heat I am monitoring fire and rescue authorities, and their ability to continue to protect the public. I am confident that fire and rescue authorities are continuing to maintain essential services, and that specialist capabilities to fight wildfires, including equipment and expert advisers, are in place.

**■ Fire and Rescue Services: Finance****Caroline Lucas:**[\[38611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to incorporate the building safety grant agreed following phase one of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry into the base funding provided to fire and rescue services; and if she will make a statement.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

The Protection Uplift fund is not currently incorporated into Fire and Rescue Services' core spending power as it is a ring-fenced grant provided to fund specific capabilities. The Home Office will continue to review how Fire and Rescue Services are best supported to increase fire protection capability and capacity.



## ■ Fires

**Tim Farron:** [\[38594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the potential number of wildfires in 2022; and what recent assessment she has made of the potential impact of summer heatwaves on that estimate.

**Tim Farron:** [\[38595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans the Government has for (a) preventing and (b) tackling wildfires during heatwaves.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

**38594:** The Home Office has been working closely with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to provide monitoring and reporting of wildfires during this unprecedented heat.

**38595:** A coordinated multi-agency approach is essential in the prevention and tackling of wildfires. This includes government departments such as Defra, Cabinet Office, Met Office and DLUHC.

As of 0700 21<sup>st</sup> July, according to NFCC data, Fire and Rescue Services have responded to 462 wildfire incidents in England and Wales in 2022. These were incidents that met the national thresholds for reporting.

We anticipate further wildfire incidents to occur this year as the warm dry weather continues.

At a local level – each Fire and Rescue Authority is required to plan for the foreseeable risks in their area (including wildfires) through their Integrated Risk Management Plan. This will include plans to prevent and respond to incidents and Fire and Rescue Services will have regard in their planning to other key local responders including landowners and other emergency services.

## ■ High Rise Flats: Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[38852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish (a) all correspondence that she and her Department have had with (i) developers and (ii) housing associations on the Grenfell Inquiry's recommendation to make it mandatory for owners of high-rise flats to arrange personal emergency evacuation plans for disabled people and (b) the Government's position on that recommendation.

**Miss Sarah Dines:**

The Department has engaged with many stakeholders in relation to recommendation 33.22e in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 report – that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised (such as persons with reduced mobility or cognition).



These stakeholders include Fire & Rescue Services, Local Government, fire safety experts, leaseholders, housing associations, disability groups, residents' groups, individual residents and members of the public.

Summaries of many these discussions are detailed in the [Government's response to the PEEPs consultation](#). That document and the ongoing [live public consultation](#), sets out the Government's position on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendation in question.

#### ■ **HM Passport Office: Labour Turnover and Recruitment**

**Stephen Kinnock:**

**[35969]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) new staff have been hired by and (b) existing staff have left HM Passport Office since 1 May 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

THE TABLE BELOW SHOWS THE NUMBER OF STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN HIRED AND LEFT HM  
PASSPORT OFFICE SINCE 1 MAY  
2022.HMPOHEADCOUNTJOINERS294HMPOHEADCOUNTLEAVERS62

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#### ■ **HM Passport Office: Recruitment**

**Stephen Kinnock:**

**[36774]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many new staff her Department plans to appoint to roles within HM Passport Office in (a) July 2022 and (b) August 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 19 July 2022]:* Since April 2021, Her Majesty's Passport Office has added over 850 additional staff to help meet the current unprecedented demand for passports.

A further 350 staff will be added across the summer, which delivers against both the capacity plan for the remainder of this year, and in preparation for 2023.

#### ■ **HM Passport Office: Staff**

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[39797]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) permanent, (b) full-time equivalent, (c) agency and (d) other status staff were working in HM Passport Office in each year since 2016.

**Kevin Foster:**

Staffing numbers at Her Majesty's Passport Office has increased by over 1200 since April 2021. Its recruitment will continue to cover any attrition, to ensure the passport service remains fully resourced.

We are committed to ensuring public services are run as efficiently and effectively as possible. Given the elevated demand will not continue indefinitely and is directly linked to the estimated 5m passports not renewed during the pandemic period, it is appropriate to have flexible resources available. Therefore, while there has been recruitment of civil servants, the use of agency workers is appropriate in this context.

#### ■ **HM Passport Office: Teleperformance**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[39798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what monitoring her Department is undertaking in respect of the contract with Teleperformance to handle HM Passport Office enquiries; what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the delivery of the terms of that contract; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

The service provided by Teleperformance is monitored daily to a pre-defined Service Level Agreement.

In light of Teleperformance's delivery not meeting the required standard earlier this year, they have been responding to a formal rectification plan. The service has significantly improved in response.

Weekly meetings have been held between Her Majesty's Passport Office and Teleperformance's CEO, where technical innovation to support the rectification has been discussed and subsequently implemented.

#### ■ **HM Passport Office: Vacancies**

**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[35970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many vacancies there were within HM Passport Office; and how many of those vacancies were advertised as of 13 July 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

HM Passport Office staffing numbers have been increased over 1200 since April 2021.

HM Passport Office will continue to recruit to cover attrition, ensuring it remains fully resourced.

#### ■ **Home Office: Advertising**

**Jon Trickett:** [\[34826\]](#)

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

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Home Office does not publish the information sought to the level of granularity required and identifying spending on advertising specifically from our management systems can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Home Office: Aviation

**Jon Trickett:**

**[35854]**

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

**Amanda Solloway:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* The Home Office does not hold the information in the format requested. This is because we do not have separate codes or fields for Ministers' and Officials' travel in our management systems.

However the Home Office does report expenditure on total official business travel (including domestic air travel) and domestic air travel separately in the Annual Report and Accounts, which includes both Ministers and Officials.

Please refer to page 53 of the 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts.

[Home Office ARA 21-22 Final - Gov.uk.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## ■ Home Office: Legal Costs

**Jon Trickett:**

**[31735]**

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

**Amanda Solloway:**

*[Holding answer 15 July 2022]:* The Department has interpreted a "legal dispute" to be a claim brought in a tribunal or court, either against or by the department. Spending on legal disputes can include a range of costs, including fees for external representation before a court or supporting the preparation of the litigation.

The Department does not keep a central record of all of its spend on legal disputes and neither does it keep a record of such spending by its associated agencies. Accordingly, the Department considers the disproportionate cost threshold applies for the collection of this additional information.

However, where the Department is represented by the Government Legal Department in legal proceedings before most Courts and Tribunals in England and Wales, it does have a record of the charges levied on it for those costs. These figures take into account:

- (a) that they are charges levied by the Government Legal Department for representing the Department in legal disputes during the relevant periods whenever the legal dispute may have arisen;
- (b) That the charges can be subject to retrospective changes;
- (c) The figures are inclusive of Value Added Tax where this is payable;
- (d) The figures do not include sums awarded in costs against the Department or sums awarded to the Department as a result of legal disputes.

2020 - £35,616,827

2021 - £37,286,712

2022 (for the period 1 January – 30 June) - £18,634,689

■ **Home Office: Public Relations**

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[\[36712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much the Home Office has spent on communications and public relations agencies in (a) 2019, (b) 2020, (c) 2021 and (d) 2022.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Home Office does not publish the information sought to the level of granularity required and identifying spending on communications and public relations specifically from our management systems can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Homes for Ukraine Scheme**

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[36096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a Ukrainian national on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme without a Ukrainian passport who holds a Form for Affixing a Visa which has now expired is able to travel to the UK on their expired visa.

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[36097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a Ukrainian national on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme who has been issued a visa on the form for affixing a visa FAV can be issued with a permission to travel letter if they subsequently obtain a Ukrainian passport.

**Kevin Foster:**

UKVI would not normally issue a visa on a Form for Affixing a Visa (FAV) to someone who has a passport or travel document valid for travel to the UK.

Yet to avoid delaying Ukraine Scheme applicants' travel to the UK, it has been agreed UKVI not reissue the visa in the new passport and will allow them to travel with the visa still attached to a Form for Affixing a Visa (FAV), to be carried alongside their valid passport.

A Form for Affixing a Visa (FAV) with an expired visa is no longer valid for travel.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[38665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2022 to Question 31838 on Visas: Applications, for what reason her Department did not inform Homes for Ukraine applicants regarding the IT incident; how many applicants were affected by the IT incident; and what the average time taken was to resolve affected cases.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* A small number of Ukraine Scheme Visa applications were affected by an IT issue on 20 th May 2022, which resulted in a delay.

The root cause was quickly identified and was fixed for all new applications, with those applications that had been affected proceeding through to casework consideration.

Those who were required to take any action were contacted to do so. Of 16 cases which were formerly unresolved, 13 cases have now been decided or are in the process of being decided, with 3 still to upload a valid photograph, for which support is being offered.

## ■ Identity Cards: EU Nationals

**Kevin Brennan:**

[\[38526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of European Union identity cards seized by Border Force since 2010 were in the possession of people (a) under the age of 18 and (b) on organised visits from educational institutions.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* Border Force does not hold this data in an easily accessible format.

For the financial year beginning from 01/04/2021 to 31/03/2022, there were 1235 forged/counterfeit documents, and 153 imposters encountered at the UK Border.

## ■ Knives: West Midlands

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[38792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands on tackling knife crime.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[38793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding has been made available for early intervention and prevention programmes to support young people at high risk of involvement in serious violence in the West Midlands in each of the last 12 years.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Tackling knife crime is a priority and the Government is determined to crack down on the scourge of violence devastating our communities.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands attended a recent Home Secretary visit to Birmingham on 29 June in preparation for the Commonwealth Games.

Home Office officials are in regular contact with police forces and PCCs, including the West Midlands, about their local response to knife crime. For West Midlands, this has included recent detailed examination of local data on violent crime, and police plans to tackle it.

On 2 February 2022, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £16.9 billion in 2022/23, an increase of up to £1.1 billion when compared to 2021/22.

It is for Chief Constables, directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Mayors with PCC functions to make operational decisions including how to allocate resources based on their local knowledge and experience.

West Midlands' funding will be up to £695.6m in 2022/23, an increase of up to £40.1m when compared to 2021/22.

In addition, the West Midlands has benefited from a wide range of funding intended to intervene early and divert young people from involvement in violence. Current intervention and prevention programmes were largely initiated from 2018 / 2019 and 12 years of figures are unavailable for these programmes. The funding includes:

- £1.831m between 2018/19 and 2019/20 from the Early Intervention Youth Fund (EIYF). The EIYF was designed to support and prevent young people from becoming involved in violence through positive activities.
- £10.11m between 2019 and 2022 to develop the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). VRUs bring together key local partners to identify the drivers of serious violence and deliver a coordinated and cohesive response. This includes a range of interventions to support young people at high risk of involvement in serious violence.
- £7m through the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) for a range of projects to reduce serious violence. The YEF is supporting our response to serious violence by identifying what works in diverting children and young people away from involvement in serious violent crime.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Dan Carden:**

[\[33900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter of 20 June 2022 from the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton on seasonal workers.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office responded to the Honourable Member on 19 July.

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[39753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when a reply will be sent to the hon. Member for Christchurch in response to his email to the Immigration Minister of 5 January 2022; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 20 July 2022

## ■ Passports

**Mark Tami:**

**[37451]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) median and (b) mean response time has been to passport queries sent by hon. Members on behalf of constituents to her Department in each of the last six months.

**Kevin Foster:**

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

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

## ■ Passports: Advisory Services

**Stephen Kinnock:**

**[38687]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the passport advice service provided by Teleperformance under the terms of her Department's contract with that organisation; what recent discussions she has had with representatives of Teleperformance on potential improvements to the passport advice service; when the contract between her Department and Teleperformance is due to expire; and whether she plans to renew that contract.

**Kevin Foster:**

The service provided by Teleperformance is monitored daily to a pre-defined Service Level Agreement.

In light of Teleperformance's delivery not meeting the required standard earlier this year, they have been responding to a formal rectification plan. The service has significantly improved in response.

Weekly meetings have been held between Her Majesty's Passport Office and Teleperformance's CEO, where technical innovation to support the rectification has been discussed and subsequently implemented.

The initial expiry of the Teleperformance contract is set for October 2024, with an optional extension period of two years.

## ■ Passports: Applications

**Yvette Cooper:**

**[38515]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of passport applications have been waiting for a decision for more than six weeks as of 13 July 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

The published processing time for the standard UK service is up to ten weeks.

However, the vast majority of applications continue to be processed within six weeks.

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[39767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number and proportion of applications for British passports that have been (a) replacements for existing passports and (b) applications for first time passports over the last 12 months.

**Kevin Foster:**

Applications for a first passport typically represent 10-15% of the passport applications processed by Her Majesty's Passport Office.

Since April 2021, people have been advised to allow up to ten weeks when applying for their British passport from the UK. This includes all application types, including first time applications. Across the first 6 months of 2022 HMPO processed 97.7% of UK standard applications within 10 weeks.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[39796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to (a) ensure that all passport application systems align, (b) enable a faster roll out of Digital Application Processing to (i) help support the clearing of the passport application backlog and (ii) ease the transition from the Application Management System; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

We have already transitioned 75-85% of applications to the new digital application processing service. We will continue to transition the remaining applications gradually as new capability is developed and business changes can be implemented.

The ability to work across two stable systems has enabled us to process record numbers of applications during this period of exceptionally high demand.

## ■ Passports: Fees and Charges

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[38708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of removing fees for priority passport services when individuals have already waited beyond the stated usual service standard time of 10 weeks for their passport application to progress.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* Upgrades to urgent services are only required where an applicant needs a passport sooner than ten weeks. For the small percentage of customers whose applications take longer than ten weeks, there is an expedited service at no additional cost to help ensure they receive their passport ahead of any planned travel.



## ■ Passports: Lost Property

**Wera Hobhouse:**

[\[36061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the number of passports handled by the Passport Office lost in the post each year since 2019.

**Kevin Foster:**

The data held for documents lost in the possession of our providers of secure delivery services does not distinguish between newly issued passports and documents which were sent in support of an application.

The table below shows the number of passports and supporting documents that have been confirmed as lost in the possession of a provider of secure delivery services in the UK for each year from 2019:

YEAR	CONFIRMED LOSSES	VOLUME OF CONSIGNMENTS	PERCENTAGE OF CONFIRMED LOSSES
2019	168	7,548,768	0.002%
2020	111	3,634,320	0.003%
2021 (01/01/2021 – 31/10/2021) *	312	5,260,013	0.006%

\*Confirmed losses for the whole of 2021 will be available from September 2022.

The data held for deliveries overseas are not broken down between those items reported as 'lost', and those that declared as 'stolen'.

The table below shows the number of passports and supporting documents that have been confirmed as lost in the possession of a provider of secure delivery services overseas for each year from 2019:

YEAR	LOSS AND THEFT	VOLUME OF CONSIGNMENTS	PERCENTAGE OF LOSS AND THEFT
2019	103	1,007,981	0.01%
2020	85	1,198,954	0.007%
2021	157	856,742	0.019%

## ■ Police: Early Retirement

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[37541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of police staff have retired earlier than their pensionable age in each of the last five years.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Government does not hold this information.

The normal pension age of police staff will be governed by the relevant pension scheme. The majority of police staff have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Police staff in the Metropolitan Police Service have access to the Civil Service pension schemes.

**Police: Finance****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[38784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she last (a) conducted a review of the Police Allocation Formula (PAF) and (b) made an assessment of the impact of the PAF on the West Midlands; and if she will publish a breakdown of the effect of damping on police funding allocations to West Midlands Police in each of the last 10 years.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The government is currently conducting a review of the Police Funding Formula. We recognise that the current police funding formula is out of date and no longer accurately reflects demand on policing. We intend to introduce a new funding formula before the next General Election.

Floor damping was applied by the then Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG - now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) before DCLG funding for local policing bodies was transferred to the Home Office in 2013/14. Funding allocations were confirmed through the 2013/14 Police Grant Report, and the floor damping calculation for policing bodies was set out in "Calculating the 2013/14 Formula Funding" which accompanied the Provisional Local Government Finance Report (England) 2013/14.

The annual Police Grant Report published by the Home Office provides information on how allocations have been made from 2013/14 to 2022/23. Damping applied to funding for local policing bodies before 2013/14 by the then-DCLG is set out in the annual Local Government Finance settlements.

**Police: Labour Turnover****Rachael Maskell:**[\[37542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help retain police officers.

**Tom Pursglove:**

We are recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers in England and Wales by March 2023. The increase over three years is unprecedented and reflects the biggest recruitment drive in decades.

As at 31 March 2022, 13,576 additional officers have been recruited as part of the Police Uplift Programme in England and Wales, 68% of the 20,000 officer target.

We are working hard with policing partners during this unparalleled recruitment drive to ensure that the right support is in place across forces. This includes ensuring new officers get the training and support they need to thrive and supporting the retention of valuable skills and experience.

The retention of experienced police officers is a priority for the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs' Council. Voluntary resignation rates, at two percent, are low compared to other sectors. We have also invested £1.1m for the College of Policing to create a National Leadership Centre to develop standards and a leadership development framework at all ranks and support better talent management across policing.

We have also enshrined in law the Police Covenant, which will focus on improving the protection, health and wellbeing of officers, staff and their families.

## ■ **Police: Mental Health**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[37539]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to assess the effect of occupational pressures on the mental health of police and police community support officers.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Government and police leaders take the mental health and wellbeing of all police officers and staff very seriously. We recognise that policing by its very nature is challenging and we are doing all we can to support our police. This includes providing ongoing funding to the National Police Wellbeing Service in England and Wales, which is helping forces to identify the impacts of the role on mental health, developing work around building resilience, as well as supporting those who need it in response to traumatic events.

On the 28 April, the Police Covenant for England Wales was enshrined in law as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The Covenant will focus on health and wellbeing, physical protection and support for families, with a real emphasis on mental health support. Our initial priorities for the Covenant also include ensuring occupational health standards are embedded in forces and the appointment of a Chief Medical Officer for policing in England and Wales - and we have already ensured pre-deployment mental health support is embedded across all training providers.

## ■ Police: Misconduct

**Neil O'Brien:**

**[38823]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers were at some point on suspended duty pending a misconduct hearing in each of the years since 2016.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Home Office does not hold data centrally on how many police officers were suspended pending a misconduct hearing.

The Home Office collects and publishes data on misconduct proceedings, including hearings (and accelerated hearings) in the 'Police misconduct, England and Wales year ending 31 March 2021', available here: [Police misconduct, England and Wales year ending 31 March 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005764/open-data-table-police-workforce-absence-280721.ods) However, information on whether the officer was suspended pending a misconduct hearing is not collected.

Separately, the Home Office also publishes information on the number of officers who are absent due to being suspended in the annual 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, available here: [Police workforce England and Wales statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005764/open-data-table-police-workforce-absence-280721.ods). The information in this release is a snapshot of those absent on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 only, and does not cover all absences within the year. Information on the number of absences on both a full-time equivalent (FTE) and headcount basis, as at 31 March each year, since 2007 can be found in the 'Leavers Open Data Table' available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005764/open-data-table-police-workforce-absence-280721.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005764/open-data-table-police-workforce-absence-280721.ods)

These open data tables will be updated at 9.30am on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

## ■ Police: Sick Leave

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[37540]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the latest data her Department holds on the level of sickness absence among police (a) officers, (b) community support officers and (c) support staff (i) nationally and (ii) in York.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the number of police officers on long-term absences, in England and Wales on an annual basis in March the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, available here: [Police workforce England and Wales statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005764/open-data-table-police-workforce-absence-280721.ods)

These data are a snapshot of officers on long-term sick absence as at 31 March each year. Long-term sickness includes any recognised medical condition, physical or psychological, as reported by the officer or a medical practitioner, which has lasted for more than 28 calendar days.

The absence data in the release covers police officers only, and are available by Police Force Area. Lower levels of geography are not collected.

Data on the number of police officers on long-term sick absence in North Yorkshire and England and Wales, on both a full-time equivalent (FTE) and headcount basis, as at 31 March each year, since 2007 can be found in the 'Absences Open Data Table' available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005764/open-data-table-police-workforce-absence-280721.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005764/open-data-table-police-workforce-absence-280721.ods)

The next release of 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, which will cover the situation as at 31 March 2022, is scheduled for release at 9.30am on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July.

## ■ Radicalism: Qatar

**Jim Shannon:**

[37495]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what security assessment she has made of the implications of the State of Qatar potentially sponsoring extremist Islamist organisations and its acquisition of UK cultural landmarks.

**Stephen McPartland:**

We are committed to working with Qatar across a range of areas, including investment, sport, culture and education. As in all our international engagement, we ensure our relationships are calibrated to protect our national security. We do not routinely comment on security assessments.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Alison McGovern:**

[38651]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan refugees remain in hotels following their arrival in the UK in summer 2021.

**Alison McGovern:**

[38652]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan refugees have found permanent accommodation since arriving in the UK following the Taliban taking control of Afghanistan.

**Alison McGovern:**

[38653]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost to the public purse is of temporary housing for Afghan refugees.

**Kevin Foster:**

In 2021, the UK Government undertook the biggest and fastest emergency evacuation in recent history, helping over 15,000 people to safety from Afghanistan. Since the end of Op PITTING, we have brought a further c.4,000 Afghans to the UK. Due to the scale and pace of the evacuation we were not able to source appropriate

accommodation in the normal way, so we have had to use hotels as a temporary measure.

As of 18 July 2022, we are currently providing temporary accommodation for c.9,500 individuals resettling in the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), whilst they await permanent accommodation.

Over 7000 Afghans have already moved or are in the process of being moved into their permanent accommodation. In addition to the work, we are doing to provide appropriate accommodation for Afghans, a number of families have, in recent months, taken steps to secure their own accommodation.

The cost of accommodating those resettling under ACRS or ARAP, whilst they await permanent accommodation, is estimated at £1 million a day. The Home Office works to secure contracts which offer the best value for money, whilst providing an appropriate level of support to those under its care.

We do not want to see Afghan families in temporary accommodation for any longer than is absolutely necessary. We are therefore working with local authorities across the UK to identify more opportunities for those being housed in bridging hotels to move into permanent accommodation.

## ■ Refugees: Temporary Accommodation

**John McNally:**

**[38699]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of a scheme allowing refugees to temporarily stay with members of the public while awaiting permanent dispersal.

**Kevin Foster:**

For those claiming asylum in the UK, we support and house those who would otherwise be destitute whilst they await a decision on their claim.

We have no plans to house those who require our accommodation in this way with members of the public. Where someone is then subsequently granted refugee status, whilst in the United Kingdom, we would provide advice to them on onward accommodation and Local Authorities would provide housing advice and support.

For those who are granted refugee status abroad and then resettled in the UK, our Community Sponsorship Scheme enables civil society - including friends, charities and faith groups - to directly support families through both our UK Resettlement Scheme and now the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. Those brought to the UK under Community Sponsorship must have accommodation arranged in advance.

## ■ Repatriation: Afghanistan

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[37445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an estimate of the number of (a) British citizens and (b) accompanying family members who have travelled to the UK directly from Kabul since 1 September 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

Given the situation in Afghanistan at this time there is no directly travel link between Kabul and the UK.

Any travel to the UK from Afghanistan will involve making a journey to a neighbouring country from which direct travel links to the UK operate.

## ■ Rescue Services

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[36891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has a responsibility to support Mountain Rescue teams alongside the other emergency services.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Mountain Rescue Teams in England and Wales currently receive no direct government funding. The Home Office currently has no plans to review this.

## ■ Seasonal Workers: Ukraine

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[35930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Ukrainian nationals in the UK on the agricultural Seasonal Workers visa have had their visas extended until the end of 2023.

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[35931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Ukrainian nationals in the UK on the agricultural Seasonal Workers visa, who have had their visas extended until the end of 2023, have also received their biometric residency permits displaying details of the extended right to be in the UK under this scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office does not routinely publish data on these matters and a manual trawl would be required to determine these figures which would not be feasible.

To date the seasonal work providers have nominated 2914 individuals eligible for the Seasonal Worker Ukrainian Extension Scheme. These workers are also eligible for the more favourable Ukrainian Extensions Scheme which provides for 36 months of leave and does not tie individuals to a specific employer.

## ■ Sexual Offences

**John McNally:**

[\[37514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a framework is in place to ensure that the police meet the Rape and Serious Sexual Offences target of reaching a charging decision within 30 days of beginning work on a sexual assault case.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Protecting women and girls from violence and supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence is a key priority for this Government.

In June 2021, we published the End-to-End Rape Review Report and Action Plan. The action plan outlined a robust programme of work to achieve a significant improvement in the way the criminal justice system responds to rape and sexual offences against adults.

Our stated ambition in the Rape Review is to more than double the volume of adult rape cases reaching court over the Parliament, and we are using the Criminal Justice System (CJS) Delivery Dashboards to monitor progress towards this ambition.

On 16 June, we published our second six-monthly Rape Review Progress Update and third national CJS Delivery Dashboard. There are no set targets for the police on timeliness, but the Dashboard showed that in the year to December 2021 the median days from offence recording to the police charging an offender was 374, which was a reduction of 29 from 403 days in the years to June and September 2021.

The Rape Review Progress Update also outlined progress that has been made on key actions to improve the police's response to adult rape in the year since the Rape Review, including:

- The Home Office is providing £6.65m in 2021-3 to support the expansion into a further 14 police forces of Operation Soteria, which will develop a new national operating model for the investigation of rape for police forces to adopt by June 2023. The Crown Prosecution Service will also expand Operation Soteria into the corresponding areas to those 14 police force areas.
- Running a public consultation on police requests for third-party material, which can sometimes be unnecessary and disproportionate; and

Continuing to make progress towards the target of recruiting 20,000 additional police officers by March 2023. As of March 2022, the Home Office had supported the recruitment of 13,578 police officers, and in 2022/3 we have allocated £550m to achieve the target of 20,000 officers by March 2023.

## ■ UK Border Force: Contracts

**Ms Diane Abbott:**

[\[38481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what due diligence is undertaken by Border Force in relation to sub-contracting of private security services to deliver public contracts.



**Kevin Foster:**

Due diligence is an ongoing process carried out during a procurement exercise and varies depending upon the nature and size of the contract being procured. Typical areas considered as part of the selection and due diligence of a potential supplier could include:

- Financial standing
- Past performance
- Capability
- Experience
- Security/Cyber Security
- Whether there are grounds to exclude a supplier

**■ UK Border Force: Dover Port and Manston Airport****Ms Diane Abbott:**[\[38482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport since 17 March 2022 on Border Force's private security contractors in (a) the Port of Dover and (b) Manston Airport.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Department for Transport is not involved in the asylum operations at Dover or Manston. There have therefore been no discussions with the Department for Transport about the use of private security contractors at the Home Office facilities at Dover and Manston.

**Ms Diane Abbott:**[\[38484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what Border Force's staffing levels were in (a) the Port of Dover and (b) Manston Airport in each quarter since January 2019 to date.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office does not routinely publish information relating to the number of staff working in specific locations as this would publicise operational practises which, in the wrong hands, could be used to attempt to evade controls at the border and compromise border security.

However, resource and staffing requirements at every port are continually reviewed by Border Force and we work closely with all port operators to try and anticipate demand. Resources are deployed flexibly as and when they are required.

## ■ UK Visas and Immigration: Correspondence

**Gerald Jones:** [\[36027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when UK Visas and Immigration will respond to the correspondence of 14 June 2022 from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, reference MPAM/0350603/22.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office replied on 18 July 2022.

## ■ UK Visas and Immigration: Vacancies

**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[36776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many vacancies there are for roles within UK Visas and Immigration; and what proportion of those vacancies are being advertised for.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 19 July 2022]:* The information requested on the number of vacancies is not readily available in the format requested as a manual trawl would have to be conducted, which would infer disproportionate costs.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: Dover Port

**Ms Diane Abbott:** [\[38479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will list the (a) value and (b) length of the contracts Border Force holds with (i) MITIE, (ii) Interforce and (iii) Definitive PSA in connection with the processing of undocumented migrants arriving in the Port of Dover.

**Ms Diane Abbott:** [\[38480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will list the private security companies (a) contracted or (b) sub-contracted to process undocumented migrants in (i) the Port of Dover and (ii) Manston Airport.

**Ms Diane Abbott:** [\[38483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current minimum staffing levels are on contracts between the Border Force and private security contractors in (a) the Port of Dover and (b) Manston Airport.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has a number of arrangements in place to provide security, and custodial staff at the Port of Dover, and at its site in Manston. Details of these arrangements are as follows.

- Mite Care and Custody provide staff at both Port of Dover and Manston under the pre-existing Escorting and Related Services Contract, details of which can be found at the link below.

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/8e94f338-6049-48f7-8b82-9dea24af8857?p=1>

In respect of staffing provided at Port of Dover and Manston this contract provides for

- a) 16 general security staff at Port of Dover working shifts over a 24 hour period (8 per shift)
- b) 40 general security staff at Manston working shifts over a 24 hour period (20 per shift)
- c) A total staffing complement of 335 custodial staff who work across a number of shifts to provide security services 24hrs a day 365 days a year at Manston
- Definitive PSA (trading as Interforce) provide security staff at both Port of Dover and Manston. This supplier has provided services under two contracts, one directly with them (August 2021 to March 2022) valued at £3.78m, and one via Bloom Procurement Services (April 2022 to September 2022) valued at £6.84m

In respect of staffing this is demand lead and has changed over time. The current contract provides for

- a) Up to 130 security staff working shifts over a 24 hour period at Port of Dover
- b) Up to 30 security staff working shifts over a 24 hour period at Manston
- Management & Training Corporation (UK) Ltd provides security staff at Manston. These services are provided under a 6 month contract (July 2022 to December 2022) valued at £3.92m

In respect of staffing this contract provides for

- a) A total staffing complement of 65 custodial staff who work across a number of shifts to provide security services 24hrs a day 365 days a year at Manston.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[32958]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information her Department holds on the number of (a) attempted and (b) successful cross-channel journeys by migrants in small boats in each of the last five years.

**Simon Baynes:**

The Home Office publishes data on small boat arrivals in the quarterly migration statistics release on <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/irregular-migration-to-the-uk-year-ending-march-2022>

## ■ Visas: Afghanistan

**Imran Hussain:**

[20259]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will introduce universal visa fee waivers for Afghan national spouses and dependents of British nationals.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 23 June 2022]:* The Home Office publishes data on entry clearance grants by nationality in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of visas granted to Afghan nationals is published in table Vis\_D02 of the 'entry clearance visa applications and outcomes detailed datasets'. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending March 2022. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on entry clearance visas.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'

**■ Visas: Tourism****Chi Onwurah:****[38663]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of delays in issuing tourist visas on the UK's tourism industry.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office publishes data on its performance against its service level agreement for Visitors, which can be found on the GOV.UK webpage: [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-transparency-data)

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) recognises the impact of delays to customers can be significant. UKVI resources are focussed on reducing the current processing times and will continue to prioritise urgent compelling or compassionate cases across all workstreams. UKVI encourages all customers to apply in good time ahead of intended travel dates.

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

Additionally, UKVI has recently reintroduced a limited priority service in all markets where the service can be offered, which customers can also make use of.

In addition, our Electronic Visa Waiver scheme was expanded in June to include Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. This means most nationals of these countries wishing to visit the UK as a tourist can now do so without applying for a full UK visa

**■ Visas: Ukraine****Ms Nusrat Ghani:****[34960]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) full-time and (b) part-time staff employed by her Department (i) in the UK and (ii) overseas are assigned to dealing with outstanding Ukrainian refugee visa applications as of 12 July 2022.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 15 July 2022]:* Currently there are approx. 450 staff working on these schemes which are a mixture of resource from the Home Office and other government departments.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[36042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of her Department's record keeping for the (a) Ukraine Family Visa Scheme and (b) Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

All applications made under Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family Scheme are recorded on Home Office systems.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ **Department for International Trade: Advertising****Jon Trickett:**[\[34812\]](#)

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

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) purchases all its advertising through Omnicom Media Group, the sole supplier for such services appointed by the Crown Commercial Service. Our expenditure with Omnicom was as follows:

- a) £13.94m in 2019/2020
- b) £15.47m in 2020/2021
- c) £12.88m in 2021/2022
- d) £1.11m to date in 2022/23

■ **Department for International Trade: Aviation****Jon Trickett:**[\[35843\]](#)

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

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Department for International Trade spent the following on air travel for the years ending 31 March 2020, 2021 and 2022 for both Ministers and officials.

2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
£2,826,000	£148,000	£1,510,000

DIT Ministerial travel, gifts, hospitality and meetings are published on [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dit-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dit-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

## ■ Department for International Trade: Legal Costs

**Jon Trickett:** [31728]

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

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is unable to provide spend on legal disputes, as this is not recorded separately to other forms of legal spend incurred by the Department.

Legal and other professional services costs incurred by the Department are included within note 4 of DIT's Annual Report and Accounts found [here for financial year 2021/22](#), and [here for financial year 2020/21](#).

## ■ English Language: Education

**Sarah Olney:** [38772]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the impact of leaving the European Union on the UK's English language teaching sector.

**Andrew Griffith:**

I am aware of the importance of the European market for the UK's English language teaching sector with three of the top 10 source markets EU member countries. My Department will continue to work closely with the sector through the International Education Strategy, including by providing support for English UK's 'English with Confidence' campaign, and by hosting a number of European English language teaching (ELT) agents for an upcoming familiarisation visit.

**Sarah Olney:** [38773]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to English UK's position paper Teaching the World: how the government can support our rebuilding strategy for UK ELT, published in May 2022, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the findings of that report.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) works very closely with English UK, who are members of the Education Sector Advisory Group that I co-chair with the Department for Education's Skills Minister. DIT has provided support for English UK's English with Confidence campaign, including through the production of promotional material and will be hosting around 50 overseas English language teaching (ELT) agents during an upcoming familiarisation visit. We will continue to ensure that the ELT sector's recovery and ambition is captured in the Government's International

Education Strategy and will work through, with English UK, the implications of their recent position paper.

## ■ **Iron and Steel: Import Duties**

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[39769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with trade partners on the Government's decision to extend steel import tariffs until mid-2024.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Department has so far held discussions with Brazil, the EU, Switzerland and Japan. These discussions have included giving an overview of the UK trade remedies legislation and answering questions on how this relates to the extension of the safeguard measure.

## ■ **Trade Agreements: Human Rights and Religious Freedom**

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[37607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of (a) the human rights records and (b) any potential reports of religious persecution in countries with which the UK is pursuing a trade agreement before entering negotiations.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The UK assesses and considers appropriate action in response to egregious human rights violations and abuses globally, and this goes much wider than considering trade alone, drawing on the wider tools and levers at our disposal.

Our strong economic relationships with trading partners allow the Government to have open discussions on a range of difficult issues, including human rights and religious freedom.

## ■ **Trade Agreements: India**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[40013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the UK's free trade agreement with India on whisky exports from the UK to India.

**Andrew Griffith:**

A free trade agreement (FTA) with India offers the opportunity to deepen our already strong trade relationship, which was worth £24.3 billion in 2021.

The UK is a competitive supplier of whisky, having exported £146 million worth of whisky to India in 2021. However, Indian most favoured nation (MFN) tariffs on whisky are high at up to 150%. A comprehensive FTA would assist UK whisky exporters by addressing tariff barriers as well as non-tariff barriers such as customs provisions, helping to increase their competitiveness in the Indian market.

**■ Trade Agreements: Japan****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[38572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the UK's Free Trade Agreement with Japan since 23 October 2020, what assessment she has made of the effect of that agreement on UK (a) small and medium enterprises, (b) financial services, (c) car manufacturers, (d) food safety, (e) animal welfare and (f) digital commerce.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) published an impact assessment of the long-term effects of UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on 23 October 2020. This included an assessment of the potential impacts on small and medium enterprises, and across sectors – including automotive and financial services – alongside consideration of digital trade provisions. The Government has been clear that we will not compromise on our high food safety standards and animal welfare – CEPA is no exception to this.

DIT has committed to publishing a biennial free trade agreement monitoring report starting in 2023 and a comprehensive evaluation report for CEPA within 5 years of its entry into force. The evaluation report will focus on specific sectors that monitoring suggests may have been particularly affected by the agreement.

**■ Trade Agreements: Zimbabwe****Ruth Jones:**[\[36878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the trading relationship between the UK and Zimbabwe.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The UK continues to support trade and investment with Zimbabwe. In 2021, trade between the UK and Zimbabwe was £126 million. The UK-Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Economic Partnership Agreement signed in 2020 ensures Zimbabwean companies continue to enjoy duty free and quota free exports to the UK. This agreement means shoppers in the UK can continue to enjoy Zimbabwean products like blueberries, peas and tea. The UK is also working with the Government of Zimbabwe to attract British investment in sectors such as renewable energy and financial services.

**Ruth Jones:**[\[36879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she last spoke to her Zimbabwean counterpart on UK-Zimbabwe trade links.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Secretary of State for International Trade has not had recent discussions with her Zimbabwean counterparts. The Minister for Africa met with Foreign Minister Shava and Finance Minister Ncube in London on 30<sup>th</sup> June and discussed political and economic issues including trade and investment. The Minister for Africa noted



that the UK would like to see Zimbabwe reach arrears clearance, and that this can happen if Zimbabwe successfully completes an IMF Staff Monitored Programme and makes reasonable progress on political reform. The UK remains open to constructive engagement with the Government of Zimbabwe on these issues.

## ■ Trade: USA

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[35920]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has discussed with her US counterpart (a) the potential merits of reducing market barriers between the UK and US and (b) increasing levels of trade with that country.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Secretary of State regularly raises increasing trade with her counterpart. In the last year, we've reduced market barriers through resolving the Large Civil Aircraft dispute, lifting the ban on the import of British beef and lamb, and removing tariffs on UK steel and aluminium. Removing the steel and aluminium tariffs support 80,000 jobs across the UK. At the recent Trade Dialogues, both parties agreed to develop a roadmap for further UK-US Trade. In parallel to our federal US strategy, the UK has signed two state-level MOUs that seek to reduce market barriers and hope to sign more in the coming months.

## ■ UK Trade with EU

**Ruth Jones:**

**[38833]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of trade links between the UK and the European Union.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Statistics regarding UK trade with the EU are publicly available information which can be found online here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/balanceofpaymentsukjanuarytomarch2022>

## ■ Whisky: Scotland

**David Linden:**

**[35038]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has made an assessment of the role of the Scotch whisky industry in supporting trade relations with international markets.

**Andrew Griffith:**

UK food and drink, including Scotch whisky, is renowned worldwide for its quality and provenance. It underpins the UK's strong reputation in global trade of goods. In 2021, global Scotch whisky exports were worth £4.5bn to the UK economy. The Department for International Trade works closely with trade associations in the drinks industry, business representative organisations and the UK's whisky producers to maximise opportunities in overseas markets for this outstanding British industry and to support UK trade relations in international markets.

**David Linden:**

**[35039]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has made an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the impact of rising shipping costs on the Scotch whisky industry.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The importance of the Scotch whisky industry to the UK economy is recognised, providing £5.5bn Gross Value Added (GVA) to the economy and supporting more than 42,000 jobs across the country. The Department for International Trade engages regularly with The Scotch Whisky Association and individual whisky producers to support opportunities in overseas markets through Free Trade Agreements and understand challenges the industry may face. We closely monitor global trading conditions to assess the impact of factors such as shipping costs on our key export industries.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Drugs: Crime

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[38894]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were convicted of drug offences in each of the last three years in England.

**Simon Baynes:**

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on the number of offenders convicted, for the years 2017 to 2021, in the [Outcomes by Offence data tool 2021 \(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 21 MB\)](#).

In the Outcomes by Offence data tool:

- Select the 'Prosecutions and Convictions' worksheet.
- Filter by Offence group and select '06: Drug offences'.
- For figures in England, filter by Police Force Area excluding the following areas:
  - o North Wales
  - o Gwent
  - o South Wales
  - o Dyfed-Powys

The number of offenders convicted for drug offences will populate row 25.

## ■ Knives: Crime

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[38791]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time has been between arrest and appearing in front of magistrates for people charged with knife possession in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands in each of the last 12 years.

**Simon Baynes:**

The Ministry of Justice routinely publishes timeliness estimates of the key stages of the criminal justice system as part of the Criminal Court Statistics quarterly National Statistics release.

The published estimates cover the periods from offence to charge, charge to first listing and through from first listing to completion (at either magistrates' and Crown Court).

The latest published information is available to March 2022 and can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>.

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Contracts

**Ellie Reeves:**

**[37591]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has an agreed staffing level for contracts.

**Ellie Reeves:**

**[37592]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether there is an agreed staffing level for upcoming contracts for (a) HMP Fosse way and (b) HMP Wellingborough.

**Ellie Reeves:**

**[37593]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Ministry of Justice sets minimum staffing levels as Key Performance Indicators for (a) HMP Lowdham Grange and (b) other rebids.

**Simon Baynes:**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) does not mandate minimum staffing levels for privately managed prisons as staffing is the responsibility of the contract operators who will be responsible for operational delivery within those prisons. Staffing levels are specific to each individual prison and competition, and each contract provider's individual operating model.

However, as part of the procurement exercise for any privately managed prison and, prior to the award of the contracts for Five Wells, Fosse Way and all other prisons competed under the Prison Operator Services Framework (including any expiring PFI prison such as HMP Lowdham Grange), we robustly scrutinise all aspects of each bid. This includes a rigorous assessment of their resourcing model to test its resilience and ability to deliver the regime they propose, and to deliver a safe, decent and secure operating environment at all times.

These agreed staffing levels are contractualised and we hold bidders to account to them. The amount of detail and information about staffing, including numbers and grades of staff, in the new contracts is significantly improved from the old style PFI contracts. These new contracts include HMP Five Wells, HMP Fosse Way and any other prison that is competed under the Prison Operator Services Framework (including any expiring PFI prison such as HMP Lowdham Grange). Staffing levels are monitored against those contained in the contract as Management Information (MI), not as a KPI.

Each year the contract operator is required to show how it will provide the Custodial Service and Sustainability Requirements in the Annual Custodial Service Delivery Plan. As part of this, an Annual Resourcing Plan is drawn up, highlighting any departure from the Plan for the preceding Contract Year and giving reasons for such departure. This must be approved by HMPPS.

The approach taken through the competitions ensures that staffing levels contained in the contract deliver the service and maintain a safe, decent, and secure operating level. Management throughout the life of the contracts against that resource model is undertaken by HMPPS and MoJ Commercial contract management teams who continually assess the capability of the operator, taking action if the operator should fail to deliver in accordance with the Contract.

## ■ Pre-sentence Reports: Ethnic Groups

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

**[37577]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the report by HM Inspectorate of Probation, Race equality in probation: the experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic probation service users and staff, published in March 2021, which states that pre-sentence reports prepared for people from a BAME background were of insufficient quality, what steps he is taking to improve the quality of those reports.

**Simon Baynes:**

While the decision of whether to order a pre-sentence report (PSR) is up to the discretion of the judiciary, we recognise their importance and are working to improve their quality, targeting and timeliness.

In March 2021 HMPPS published [a response to the HMIP report](#) in the form of a detailed Action Plan responding to the recommendations within it. This document sets out how the Probation Service is improving the quality of PSRs for ethnic minority individuals.

An example of this work is demonstrated through the [PSR pilot](#) which is running in 15 magistrates' courts across England and Wales. Amongst other activities the pilot has:

- Identified priority cohorts understood to have more complex needs (female offenders, young adult offenders, and offenders who are deemed to be at risk of custody). Ethnic minority service users have made up a proportion of the initial three priority cohorts but as of August 2022 we are going further to include these

individuals explicitly as an additional priority cohort. The pilot will deliver more comprehensive, written PSRs rather than oral reports for these cohorts.

- Seen more PSRs delivered to these courts in comparison with national counterparts.
- Captured data relating to PSRs completed for ethnic minority individuals to better understand what changes are required from both an operational and policy perspective.
- Created a learning and development package focussed on building communications and advocacy skills, tackling racial disparities in the criminal justice system and learning how to become trauma informed and responsive to better support defendants.

More widely the HMPPS Race Action Programme is working to tackle the racial disparities that persist in the Criminal Justice System by increasing the diversity of our workforces, addressing the risk of bias in our policies, and improving training delivered to staff on race issues in probation, prison, and youth custody settings.

## ■ Prisoners: Weather

**Ellie Reeves:**

**[38802]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that conditions in (a) prisons, (b) police cells, (c) immigration detention and (d) escort vans are safe during the level 4 heat-health alert.

**Simon Baynes:**

We have worked closely with the prison estate during this period of hot weather to ensure they are appropriately prepared. Heatwave guidance in line with the Heatwave Plan for England was issued to the whole prison estate on 15th June in anticipation of hot weather, and further advice issued on 15th July to all prison governors to support them with managing the situation at the local level. We remain in close contact.

As well as providing information on safety for the general prison population and for staff, the guidance covers support for vulnerable groups identified by the UK Health Security Agency as at greater risk in heatwaves. The guidance encourages joint working with NHS prison health services to identify and support people with vulnerabilities.

The vehicles providing Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) were introduced in 2020/21, and all have air conditioning. Court custody suites are routinely monitored with calibrated temperature monitoring equipment. HMCTS and PECS have an agreed process in place for the management of extreme temperatures and work closely together to ensure a safe operating environment. When appropriate measures can include the closure and the use of alternative courts.

The Home Office manage Immigration Detention Centres (IRCs). They have confirmed that, in line with the Detention Centre Rules 2001 and Short-Term Holding

Facility Rules 2018, detained individuals are given the opportunity to spend at least one hour in the open air each day. As part of planning for the level 4 heat health alert all IRCs have adequate stocks of bottled water for residents. Summer clothing and sun cream are also provided on request.

As part of the planning for the level 4 heat health alert all police forces should have sufficient availability of food and water in custody suites and contingency plans in place for maintaining operational capability. In addition, local plans may include the effective use of bail or voluntary attendance to ensure that periods in police detention are kept to a minimum.

The Home Office publish guidance on Gov.uk (at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accommodation-lighting-heating-and-ventilation>) regarding accommodation standards for those in detention, which includes minimum requirements for space and ventilation

## ■ Prisons: Location

**Kate Green:** [39843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2022 to Question 31829 on Prisoners: Location and the Answer of 24 March 2022 to Question HL6866 on Prisoners: Females, what the average travelling distance between (a) female and (b) male prisons and the prisoner's home address was in each year since 2010.

**Simon Baynes:**

Although travelling distance from home was historically provided on an ad hoc basis for specific time frames, this calculation method was discontinued in 2019 and replaced with straight-line modelling.

Straight-line modelling is the most consistent calculation method. Attempts to model based on travelling distance are subject to high levels of temporal and geographical variation (e.g. inner city travel time).

As such, the information requested is deemed less useful than straight-line modelling data. It is therefore not routinely calculated and is not currently held.

## ■ Prisons: Weather

**Gareth Thomas:** [38485]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what (a) safety measures and (b) additional support his Department has put in place to ensure the wellbeing of people in prisons during current extreme temperatures; and if he will make a statement.

**Simon Baynes:**

Prisons are appropriately prepared and are well-versed at managing situations such as heatwaves. Heatwave guidance aligned to the Heatwave Plan for England was issued to the whole prison estate on 15th June and further advice issued on 15th July to all prison governors to support them with managing the situation at the local level.

As well as providing information on safety for the general prison population and for staff, the guidance covers support for vulnerable groups identified by the UK Health Security Agency as at greater risk in heatwaves. The guidance encourages joint working with NHS prison health services to identify and support people with vulnerabilities.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ **Building Safety Fund: West Midlands**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[39955]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many buildings that have successfully applied to the Building Safety Fund have (a) received funding and (b) started cladding remediation work in (i) Birmingham Edgbaston constituency, (ii) Birmingham and (iii) the West Midlands.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

In Birmingham (using the boundary of Upper Tier Local Authority) 26 buildings have been assessed as eligible for the Building Safety Fund. Of these, 19 buildings have received funding and 6 have started cladding remediation work.

In the West Midlands (using Local Fire Authority boundaries) 32 buildings have been assessed as eligible for the Building Safety Fund. Of these, 22 buildings have received funding and 6 have started cladding remediation work.

In the constituency of Edgbaston, the number of eligible applications to the Building Safety Fund is below the threshold at which we can publish data without the risk of identifying individual buildings.

### ■ **Coastal Areas: Litter**

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

**[38549]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department takes steps to ensure that the impact of littering on coastlines is taken into account when calculating funding for local councils.

**Paul Scully:**

The Local Government Finance Settlement makes available £54.1 billion in 2022/23 for local government in England, an increase of up to £3.7 billion on 2021/22. The allocation of this funding takes into account the different needs and resources of councils across the country, including the need for waste related services. Further information on how funding is allocated to local authorities is available here:

<http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/1314/CalcFFs.pdf>. The majority of this funding is un-ringfenced in recognition of local authorities being best placed to understand local priorities.



## ■ Community Development: Infrastructure

**Helen Whately:**

**[39920]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has plans to increase community benefits for people living near (a) large scale solar plants and (b) other nationally significant infrastructure projects.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

In the British Energy Security Strategy, the Secretary of State for Energy committed to consult on community benefit options for the network infrastructure we need to meet net zero targets. This will ensure that communities that host network infrastructure are recognised for their vital role in ensuring a cheaper, cleaner and self-sufficient energy supply in Britain. Any new community benefit options will not replace community engagement with developments through the existing planning and consultation processes. Local communities will continue to be able to have their say on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and the benefits they can deliver for their local area, including: environmental enhancements; job schemes; energy discounts; and investment in local infrastructure, such as faster broadband, electric vehicle charging points or energy efficiency measures. Applicants are required to set out in their Statement of Community Consultation how they propose to consult those living in the vicinity of the land. When deciding whether to accept an application for a Development Consent Order, the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the relevant Secretary of State) must have regard to this consultation report. Where applications are accepted for examination, members of local communities can also make written representations on the proposed infrastructure, often also providing oral evidence at hearings.

## ■ Empty Property: Urban Areas

**Anthony Browne:**

**[38875]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill on local authority powers regarding empty high street properties with owners and leaseholders residing overseas.

**Lia Nici:**

This Government is committed, through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, to empower local authorities to reinvigorate their high streets and town centres.

High Street Rental Auctions will seek to increase cooperation between landlords and local authorities to make town centre tenancies more accessible and affordable for tenants, including SMEs and community groups.

Through the Register of Overseas Entities which is being developed by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, local authorities will be able to gather information on overseas landlords. If overseas landlords own UK property via an overseas entity in scope of the Register of Overseas Entities, they will be



required to register details with Companies House, including about their beneficial owners.

■ **Homelessness: York**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[37549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the value of NAPpad in providing temporary accommodation to homeless people in York.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[37550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he make an assessment of the potential merits of supporting the implementation of NAPpad accommodation in local authority areas other than York.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

This Government is committed to ending rough sleeping within this Parliament and believes everyone deserves a roof over their head

We recognise that local authorities are best placed to make decisions on what local services they provide, based on local priorities and circumstances. We welcome innovative ideas to reduce rough sleeping and would be interested to hear from the City of York Council and the Salvation Army on the results this initiative is having in the area.

■ **Homes for Ukraine Scheme**

**Alison McGovern:** [\[38650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the Government's plans are for supporting Ukrainians who have been rehoused through the Homes for Ukraine scheme after six months.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

I refer the Hon Member to the answer to Question UIN 30150 on 11 July 2022.

■ **Housing Associations: Service Charges**

**Hilary Benn:** [\[39765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the reasonableness and value for money of service charges levied by housing associations on their tenants.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

The Government believes very strongly that service charges should be transparent and communicated effectively. The way a service charge is organised (for example, what it covers and how it is worked out) is set out in the lease or tenancy agreement. The law is clear that variable service charges must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, the work or services must be of a reasonable standard.

The Government believes that there should be a clear route to challenge or redress if things go wrong.

The Government's policy statement on rents for social housing (published in February 2019) encourages registered providers of social housing to keep increases for services charges in line with inflation, within CPI+1% per annum, to help keep charges affordable. It also states that tenants should be supplied with clear information on how service charges are set, and in the case of social rent properties, providers are expected to identify service charges separately from the rent charge.

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

## ■ Housing Estates: Planning

**Damian Hinds:** [\[37479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of requiring or incentivising developers to make an early commitment to seeking adoption for roads, drainage and open spaces on new housing estates, as part of the Government's planning reform programme.

**Damian Hinds:** [\[37480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact on residents of new housing estates of developers not offering roads, drainage or open spaces on those estates for adoption.

**Damian Hinds:** [\[38618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of granting local planning authorities power to refuse the grant of planning permission for new housing until such time as it is known whether or not the roads, drainage and open spaces on the proposed development will be adopted.

**Damian Hinds:** [\[38619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent estimate his Department has made of the proportion of new housing being built on estates where the roads, drainage and open spaces are to remain unadopted; what the recent trends are in that proportion; and what the reasons are for those trends.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

When a new development is granted planning permission, local authorities can use section 106 planning obligations to secure a commitment from developers to provide and maintain communal spaces and facilities. It is up to developers and local planning authorities to agree appropriate funding arrangements for developments with common areas or shared services.

Planning obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Section 38 agreements facilitate the adoption of new roads built by developers to become highways maintained by the public purse. Whether a road is offered up for adoption is determined by the developer. Where a road is offered for adoption, the Highways Authority will assess whether the road has been constructed to the correct standard and will make a decision whether or not to adopt the road. This department does not hold data on unadopted roads.

In all cases, the Government believes that it should be clear to potential purchasers what the arrangements are for the maintenance of roads and upkeep of open space, public or otherwise. Where a road is not adopted by the local authority the responsibility for maintaining the road rests with third parties, which are usually the owners of properties that front onto it. Estate rent charges are one way that residents cover the unadopted road's maintenance. However, it is not appropriate that these homeowners have limited rights to challenge these costs. That is why the Government intends to legislate to give freeholders on private and mixed tenure estates equivalent rights to leaseholders to challenge the reasonableness of estate rent charges, as well as a right to apply to the First-tier Tribunal to appoint a new manager to manage the provision of services covered by estate charges.

## ■ Housing First

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[37551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what progress has been made on the Housing First pilots.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

The Housing First pilots are now in their fifth year and by the end of May 2022 have cumulatively supported over 1,060 of the most entrenched and cyclical rough sleepers across 23 local authorities. Each client has access to critical wrap-around support including mental health, drugs and alcohol misuse support

We also commissioned a consortium, led by ICF, to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the programme, which will run for the duration of the pilots. Four reports have been published to date, with the final report due at the end of 2023.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[37552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to implement the housing and support approach, Housing First, in (a) York and (b) England.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

The Government is committed to Housing First, which is why we committed to £28 million for three sub-regional Housing First pilots. We recognise that rough sleeping is

a nationwide challenge, and that is why it is important that we consider the findings of our evaluation, together with our experiences from the three pilots, to ensure that we know how it could work best on a larger scale.

The Spending Review committed over £2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years, including through the Rough Sleeping Initiative. This funds local authorities across England to provide a range of specialist services to help the most vulnerable people in society off the streets and into secure accommodation, which could include setting up Housing First or housing-led solutions.

## ■ Housing: Construction

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[39783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to ensure that new housing in rural areas comes with necessary improvements to local infrastructure.

**Helen Whately:** [\[39921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to ensure that new housing in rural areas comes with necessary improvements to local infrastructure.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

The provision of the right infrastructure at the right time is very important to new and existing communities, including those in rural locations. Where infrastructure is required as a result of new development, local planning authorities can require contributions from developers towards that infrastructure. Contributions can be sought through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

To create a more efficient, effective and transparent system, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill proposes a new Infrastructure Levy. This will be a mandatory, non-negotiable charge, set and collected locally, to largely replace the complex and discretionary Section 106 regime and CIL charge.

The Bill will require local authorities to prepare infrastructure delivery strategies. These will set out a strategy for delivering local infrastructure through spending Levy proceeds. They will create a more transparent process for local people on how funds will be spent and what infrastructure will be delivered to support development. It will be for local councils to decide which infrastructure projects they spend the proceeds on.

The Levy will be brought forward through regulations that will set out the detail of how it will operate. We intend to consult on this detail, prior to any publication of regulations.

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has carried out an impact assessment on the impact of the Future Homes Standard on new house build completions from 2025.

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward the technical consultation on the Future Homes Standard from 2023 to provide greater certainty to housing developers and companies in their supply chains.

**Peter Aldous:**

[\[39824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the transitional arrangements for implementing the Future Homes Standard, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of a phased implementation of those arrangements to enable developments to proceed based on planning permission already granted and energy infrastructure already laid.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

We have listened to calls for a swifter and more certain pathway to 2025 and have already accelerated our work on a full technical specification for the Future Homes Standard, which is planned for Spring 2023. In the meantime, to provide greater certainty for all stakeholders, we have published a draft notional building specification for the Future Homes Standard. The specification is not final but provides a basis on which we are already beginning to engage with industry on the indicative technical detail of the Future Homes Standard.

A full impact assessment on the Future Homes Standard will be carried out ahead of implementation and published online. Government's intention is to publish a draft impact assessment alongside the consultation in 2023.

As part of the consultation, we will consider what transitional arrangements are appropriate. Transitional arrangements are important as they provide all developers with certainty about the standards they are building to, and assurance that they should not have to make material amendments to work which is already underway when new Regulations came into force.

**Helen Whately:**

[\[39922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing housing density for the purposes of reducing the requirement to build new homes on greenfield sites.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

This Government strongly encourages the efficient and effective use of land. Our National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) already sets out that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land and make as much use as possible of previously-developed land in meeting the need for homes and other uses,

while safeguarding and improving the environment, and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

The NPPF sets out that local plans should establish density standards for city and town centres which seek a significant uplift in density in those areas. Furthermore the NPPF is clear that where there is a shortage of land for meeting housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site.

We have introduced a number of measures to support increased density including new permitted development rights to allow more buildings to be extended upwards to create new homes, and to make it easier for existing buildings to be converted to residential use. This will further support residential densification while avoiding the need to build on other types of land.

We are also bringing forward further reforms to support density through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, including a duty for local authorities to produce design codes to help shape the design of their area, giving greater certainty to communities and developers. In addition 'Street Votes' will incentivise communities to consider the potential for development and support a gentle increase in densities through well-designed and locally supported proposals.

## ■ Housing: Students

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[38856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what representations he has received from landlords of HMO student accommodation on the potential impact of the Renters Reform Bill on their properties.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

In July 2019, the Department published a consultation - '*A New Deal for Renting*', on the implications of removing assured shorthold tenancies, which included a question on student accommodation. 19,697 consultation responses in total were received from a range of individuals and organisations. Since then, the department has used consultation feedback and extensive stakeholder engagement to understand the impact of proposals in the forthcoming Renters Reform Bill, including on the availability and supply of student accommodation in the private rented sector. We will continue to consider the impact of our reforms as we move towards legislation and will publish a full impact assessment in due course.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[38857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to ensure that students in houses in multiple occupation will continue to have access to fixed-term, rather than periodic, tenancies in the provisions of the forthcoming Renters Reform Bill.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

The Government's commitment to abolish section 21 evictions and move to periodic tenancies will mean tenants enjoy greater security and feel empowered to challenge poor practice and unreasonable rent rises. We want as many tenants as possible to benefit from these reforms, including students living in the private rented sector.

We expect most students will continue to move in-line with the academic year.

However, the proposed reforms will support student households who have children or local roots to remain in their properties after studying if they wish to. It will also mean that students are not locked into contracts when their circumstances change or if property standards are poor.

**■ Playgrounds: Disability****Julian Knight:**[\[39886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to encourage local authorities to provide playgrounds that are accessible for children with disabilities.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

Through our national design guidance we encourage public spaces, including play areas, to be designed in an accessible and inclusive way.

The Local Government Finance Settlement makes available £54.1 billion in 2022/23 for local government in England, an increase of up to £3.7 billion on 2021/22. The majority of this funding is un-ringfenced in recognition of local authorities being best placed to understand local priorities, such as local playgrounds.

**■ Regional Planning and Development: Shropshire****Mark Pritchard:**[\[39788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of supporting semi-rural market towns in (a) Shropshire and (b) Telford and Wrekin as part of the next round of levelling up funding.

**Lia Nici:**

I am delighted to have opened the application portal for the second round of the Levelling Up Fund on the 15 July. We recognise that what constitutes priority investment will vary across local authorities and geographies, including in rural areas of the UK. I am keen to see a diverse range of bids come forward so that this government can continue to invest in Levelling Up urban and rural communities across the UK.

**■ Regional Planning and Development: West Midlands****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[38790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many applications have been received for the position of West Midlands Levelling Up Director.



**Lia Nici:**

We are in the process of recruitment and more details will be available in due course.

■ **Scotfield Group: Leeds**

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[39764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has had discussions with Scotfield Ltd about unsafe cladding at the Gateway Building in Leeds.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

The department has not held discussions with Scotfield Ltd about unsafe cladding at The Gateway Building in Leeds. The Government is providing £5.1 billion, including £4.5 billion from the Building Safety Fund, to address the fire safety risks caused by unsafe cladding on high-rise residential buildings.

The Gateway Building has applied to the Building Safety Fund and has been allocated £1.9 million upfront funding for pre-tender support to help get the remediation project out-to-tender. The overall expected cost of the remediation project at the Gateway Building to be funded by the Building Safety Fund is estimated at £16 million.

■ **Supported Housing**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[39953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a statutory definition of support for residents of exempt supported accommodation.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[39954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent steps he has taken to improve standards in the exempt supported accommodation sector.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

On 17 March we announced our intention to bring forward a package of measures to put an end to a minority of unscrupulous supported housing landlords exploiting some of the most vulnerable in our society. This includes the intention to introduce standards for support.

We are actively engaging with stakeholders to develop the detail of the measures and will introduce any measures requiring legislation when parliamentary time allows.

We have also announced that we will provide £20 million for a Supported Housing Improvement Programme to drive up quality in the sector in some of the worst affected areas. The funding call for the programme opened on 2 July.



## ■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[38886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the timetable for commencement of the Shared Prosperity Fund on community and voluntary sector groups that are in receipt of European Social Fund resources.

**Lia Nici:**

This Government recognises the role that EU Structural funding plays in supporting people and businesses up and down the UK. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will continue this through empowering places to identify local priorities and deliver investment for their communities, where it is needed most.

There remains a long tail of investment from EU Structural Funds, tapering off in 2024/25 to be replaced solely by UKSPF.

Lead authorities have the freedom to invest across a range of interventions, which includes specific support for community and voluntary sector groups. This funding can be backdated to the 1st April 2022. Further detail can be found on GOV.UK.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Bus Services: Finance

**Justin Madders:**

[\[38698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when Bus Service Improvement Plan funding will be delivered to that programme's recipients.

**Karl McCartney:**

A total of 31 Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs), representing 34 local authority areas, have been selected for funding from over £1 billion new dedicated funding - as part of the £3 billion being invested in buses over the course of this Parliament.

We aim to issue final grant funding letters, before commencing payments in due course.

### ■ East West Rail Line

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[39971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it remains the Government's position to support the building of East West Rail to completion.

**Wendy Morton:**

Connection Stage 1 (CS1) of East West Rail (Oxford to Bletchley and Milton Keynes) is currently in construction with Entry into Service by 2025. Connection Stage 2 (Bletchley to Bedford) and Connection Stage 3 (Bedford to Cambridge) of East West Rail are at development stage and next steps for the project will be set out in due course.

**■ East West Rail Line: Finance****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[39972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the (a) projected total spend and (b) actual spend to date is for East West Rail project.

**Wendy Morton:**

The projected total costs for East West Rail will be driven by the scope and design choices which are yet to be made on Connection Stage 2 and 3.

**■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points****Jim Shannon:** [\[39851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has held with the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland on taking steps to increase the installation of charging points to support drivers switching to electric vehicles.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Government works closely with the devolved administrations on supporting the rollout of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the whole of the UK. UK government officials are currently working with Northern Irish counterparts on a bid into the On-street Residential Charging Scheme. In addition, £3.27m from the Levelling Up Fund will expand and enhance the EV charging network in the country.

**■ Motorcycles: Driving Tests****Mark Pritchard:** [\[38575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help reduce waiting times for a motorcycle theory test.

**Mark Pritchard:** [\[38576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact on people's (a) socio-economic wellbeing and (b) job opportunities of waiting lists for a motorcycle theory test.

**Karl McCartney:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency operates a six month forward booking window and tests are not available to book beyond this. All available theory test appointments are shown on the live booking system and any additional tests are added as soon as they become available. There is capacity available to book motorcycle theory test appointments within this window.

**■ Public Transport: Rural Areas****Mark Pritchard:** [\[39787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take into account the impact of reduced public transport in (a) The Wrekin and (b) other rural areas on levels of (i) rural peripherality and (ii) socio-economic deprivation as part of his assessment of (A) the

Telford and Wrekin Sustainable Transport Package and (B) other integrated transport bids.

**Karl McCartney:**

When assessing bids for local transport projects, the Department considers a range of factors including alignment to strategic priorities, local context, deliverability, as well as financial, economic and commercial cases.

■ **Railway Network: Climate Change**

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[39786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on building greater resilience into the rail network as a result of climate change.

**Wendy Morton:**

My department takes resilience of the railway very seriously. The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail includes a priority for long-term investment in climate resilience supported by smarter forecasting, planning and technology. The Department is working closely with Defra and the Climate Change Committee to ensure infrastructure risks are identified and addressed. Defra is the lead government department for climate change adaptation and is regularly in contact with the Treasury on the associated costs.

Network Rail has made significant progress in developing its understanding of weather risks and how these will shift as the climate changes into the future. Network Rail has developed a Weather Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation (WRCCA) Strategy which has helped improve governance, knowledge and practices throughout its business. There are a number of mechanisms through which it identifies, records and controls its risks, including its updated Control Period 6 Route WRCCA Plans and recent Asset Management WRCCA Plan. Further information can be provided on this is required. Network Rail is also working on implementing the recommendations of the Mair and Slingo reports.

Furthermore, 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.

■ **Railways: East of England**

**James Wild:**

[\[38870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many lorry journeys would be replaced by rail freight under the preferred option in the outline business case submitted by Network Rail for the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement under the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline.

**Wendy Morton:**

An update on the scheme will be provided in an updated Rail Network Enhancements Portfolio (RNEP) in due course.

**James Wild:**[\[38871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many additional (a) passenger and (b) freight services would be provided under the recommended option submitted by Network Rail in its outline business case for the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement under the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline.

**Wendy Morton:**

An update on the scheme will be provided in an updated Rail Network Enhancements Portfolio (RNEP) in due course.

**Railways: Franchises****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[39970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has received representations from hon Members on (a) creating a new franchise model and (b) reverting to the previous model for train services in the last 12 months.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Department for Transport has received representations from hon. Members regarding rail transformation, including on the new Passenger Service Contract model and interim National Rail Contracts. As set out in the Williams Shapps Plan for Rail, our reforms will better incentivise train operators to provide punctual and reliable services for passengers.

**Roads: Repairs and Maintenance****Andy Carter:**[\[40010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Government funding allocated to local authorities for repairing potholes is used effectively; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that those repairs are of a good standard.

**Karl McCartney:**

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. The Government does not intervene or override local decisions in these matters.

Well-planned maintenance to prevent potholes and other defects from forming in the first place is vital, and the Department advocates a risk-based, whole life-cycle asset management approach to all aspects of the local highway network.

To assist local authorities in treating potholes and other road defects, the Department worked with the Association of Directors, for Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) to publish in 2019 Potholes: a repair guide.

The Government has committed £915 million per year for local highways maintenance for local highway authorities outside London and Mayoral Combined Authorities, for the three years starting 2022-23, which includes pothole funding.

## ■ Transport for London: Concessions

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[38646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with the Mayor of London on extending the eligibility for Freedom Passes for the (a) Elizabeth Line and (b) London Underground to (i) pensioners and (ii) people with disabilities who live outside London but whose local services are connected to Transport for London services.

**Karl McCartney:**

Transport in London is devolved and responsibility for it lies with the Mayor of London and Transport for London, including decisions on concessions offered and the terms attached to those concessions.

Local authorities can choose to make cross border arrangements with neighbouring authorities for discretionary concessions.

## ■ Unadopted Roads: Housing Estates

**Damian Hinds:**

[\[39802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if officials in his Department will hold discussions with representatives of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport on standardising procedures and requirements across local highways authorities to increase the number of housing estate roads for adoption by specifying minimum adoption standards and enable developers to offer those roads for adoption.

**Damian Hinds:**

[\[39803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of amending the Advance Payment Code to empower local highway authorities to resolve unresolved section 38 Highways Act 1980 negotiations.

**Karl McCartney:**

Local authorities are responsible for the setting their own design standards for their streets. It is not possible to design national standards as every community is different. It is entirely a matter for individual authorities to decide the standards for their network. The Department provides good practice guidance to assist local authorities in setting design standards

Where a developer obtains planning permission for a new development they will consider how or if they wish the roads on that development to be adopted. They may seek to have roads on that development adopted by entering into an agreement with

the highway authority under the Highways Act 1980, or they may decide that their development will remain private and that the roads will not become public highway – for example as in a gated community.

Local authorities can use planning conditions or section 106 planning obligations to secure a commitment from developers to provide and maintain communal spaces and facilities. It is up to developers and local planning authorities to agree appropriate funding arrangements for developments with common areas or shared services. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities are responsible for planning policy.

No assessment has been made of amending the advance payment code to resolve section 38 Highways Act 1980 negotiations. We have previously published an advice note on the process of adopting private roads into the public road network and an updated version is to be published shortly.

### ■ **Vehicle Number Plates: Clones**

**Sarah Olney:**

**[38779]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to support victims of car registration cloning; and what resources are available to victims to help them to resolve issues relating to that cloning.

**Karl McCartney:**

The law requires that anyone who supplies number plates for road use in the UK must, by law, be registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). It is a legal requirement for number plate suppliers to carry out checks to ensure that plates are only sold to those who can prove they are entitled to the registration number. Number plate suppliers must also keep records of the plates they have supplied.

The DVLA visits number plate suppliers to monitor compliance with the legal requirements and works closely with the police and trading standards to share intelligence and support investigations and prosecutions of suppliers who do not comply.

Anyone who suspects that their number plate has been cloned should report this to the police, who are responsible for on road enforcement. Any fines or correspondence received for offences which have not been committed should be returned to the issuing authorities for investigation. Vehicle keepers can also write to the DVLA, who can issue a new registration number for a vehicle where necessary.

**TREASURY**■ **ABN AMRO****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[38638\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to publish any assessment his Department made of (a) TCI interactions with ABN Amro in 2007 and (b) the subsequent takeover by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[38639\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of shares held by the TCI hedge fund in the Royal Bank of Scotland in each of the last 15 years.

**Richard Fuller:**

HM Treasury does not routinely monitor the shareholdings of private-sector firms, and has not made an estimate of the amount of shares held by the TCI hedge fund in NatWest Group (previously the Royal Bank of Scotland). I am also not aware of any HM Treasury assessments of TCI interactions with ABN Amro or the subsequent takeover by RBS.

■ **Armed Forces: Carers****Luke Pollard:**[\[39995\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the cost of living support offered to carers within the armed forces community.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[39996\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that carers within the armed forces community are supported when faced with an increased cost of living.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The government values the vital contribution made by carers to society and continues to provide financial support to unpaid carers – including members of the Armed Forces community – through Carer's Allowance, the Carer Element in Universal Credit and through other benefits. Carers within the Armed Forces community have access to various channels of government support. Carers may be eligible for Carer's Allowance if the person for whom they care receives disability benefits or related qualifying payments such as Armed Forces Independence Payment and the War Pension Constant Attendance Allowance.

The government understands that the rising cost of living has presented additional financial challenges to many people, and particularly to the most vulnerable members of society such as disabled people and their carers. That is why the Cost of Living package announced on 26 May includes UK-wide support to help disabled people with the particular extra costs they are facing, with 6 million people who receive non-



means-tested disability benefits due to receive a one-off Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150. Veterans in receipt of a disability benefit through the Department for Work and Pensions, such as Personal Independence Payment, or in receipt of similar support specifically for veterans – such as Armed Forces Independence Payment, the War Pension Mobility Supplement or War Pension Constant Attendance Allowance – are eligible for the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment. Carers of these veterans will also benefit from this payment if they live in the same household.

Carers may also be able to benefit from other elements of the £37 billion of support for the cost of living the government has announced this year, which include: a one-off Cost of Living Payment of £650, paid in two instalments, for over 8 million households across the UK in receipt of means-tested benefits; an extra one-off £300 this year for over 8 million pensioner households, to cover the rising cost of energy this winter; and £400 off the bills of all domestic electricity customers in Great Britain from October, through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS).

Previously announced measures to help people tackle the cost of living will also benefit carers, including frozen alcohol duty and fuel duty, raising the NICs threshold, council tax rebates and the rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 an hour. For people that are not eligible for Cost of Living Payments or for those that still need additional support, the government is providing an extra £500 million of local support, via the Household Support Fund. The Fund will be extended from this October to March 2023, bringing total funding for the scheme to £1.5 billion.

## ■ Business Rates: Reform

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[\[38613\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of comprehensive business rates reform rather than the introduction of an online sales tax.

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[\[38614\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a total online sales tax exemption for SMEs, regardless of the type of business and value of remote or online sales they transact.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Business Rates Review reaffirmed the importance of business rates for raising revenue for essential local services. The review concluded there is no alternative which would raise sufficient revenue to replace business rates without significant trade-offs. The review delivered meaningful reform to the system, reducing the burden of business rates with a package of changes worth £7 billion to business over the next five years and committing to more frequent revaluations from 2023, which will make the system fairer and more responsive for all ratepayers.

In the final report of the Business Rates Review, the Government also announced that it would continue to explore the arguments for and against an Online Sales Tax,



the revenue from which would be used to provide business rates relief for in-store retail. The consultation, which was published on 25 February and ran for 12 weeks, has now closed.

The Government conducted extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and is currently reviewing the feedback received. It will publish a response to the consultation on the Government's website in due course.

## ■ Children: Day Care

**Neil O'Brien:**

[\[39980\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the average annual costs to Government of (a) tax free childcare, (b) the universal 15 free hours entitlement, (c) the extended 30 hours entitlement, (d) the childcare support element of universal credit, (e) employer supported vouchers and (f) other expenditure on childcare.

**Neil O'Brien:**

[\[39981\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the take-up, as a proportion of eligibility, of (a) tax-free childcare, (b) the universal entitlement to 15 hours of free childcare, (c) the extended entitlement to 30 hours of free childcare, (d) the childcare element of universal credit and (e) employer supported childcare vouchers.

**Alan Mak:**

An estimated 1.3 million families are eligible for Tax Free Childcare (TFC). The TFC Official Statistics show that 384,000 families (30%) used TFC in March 2022. 512,000 families (39%) used TFC at some point in 2021-22. TFC spend for the financial year 2021-22 was £411.3 million.

In 2022-23, the Department for Education is planning to spend approximately £2.3 million for the universal entitlement for all three and four year olds, and approximately £900 million for the extended entitlement for working parents of three and four year olds (also known as 30 hours free childcare). The Department for Education is also planning to spend approximately £400 million for the 15 hours free early education entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds, approximately £52 million on supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools, approximately £39 million for Early Years Pupil Premium, and approximately £18 million for the Disability Access Fund.

In January 2022, 92% of all three and four year olds were receiving some form of funded early education (1.2 million children in total), and 384,100 eligible three and four year olds were registered for a 30 hours place in January 2022.

In the latest month for which data is available (February 2022) 119,900 Universal Credit (UC) households were paid the UC childcare cost element. Overall, 13% of households on UC with all parents earning and children aged between 0 to 16 were paid the childcare element in February 2022. Spending on the Universal Credit childcare element is calculated as part of the total Universal Credit spend and separate figures are not available.

There were an estimated 470,000 recipients of all forms of Employer Supported childcare in 2021-22. There is no estimate of the eligible population. Spend on all forms of Employer Supported childcare is estimated to be £460 million in 2020-21 and forecast to be £340m in 2021-22. Employer Supported Childcare is closed to new entrants.

## ■ Companies: Fraud

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38627\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of corporate fraud in each of the last three years; and in what sectors that fraud has been identified.

**Richard Fuller:**

The outcomes of investigations into fraud, scams and economic crime are not centrally collated and we do not assess trends in corporate fraud.

Investigations into suspected fraud against the public sector are conducted by the appropriate Department with responsibility for policy delivery. Investigations and enforcement activities are also undertaken by regulatory or enforcement agencies, such as the Financial Conduct Authority and National Crime Agency.

Departments publish an Annual Report and Accounts including estimates of COVID-19 fraud and these are now being published for the 2021-22 financial year. The Counter Fraud Function in Cabinet Office publishes an annual estimate of the level of fraud and error in the public sector. Action Fraud records reported financial losses experienced by businesses, this can be found at

<https://colp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/0334150e430449cf8ac917e347897d46>.

## ■ Debts: Civil Proceedings

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[39951\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with international counterparts on the risk of countries facing litigation by bondholders in the English courts in the event that they seek to restructure their debts, including through the G20 Common Framework.

**Richard Fuller:**

The UK regularly discusses sovereign debt issues with its international counterparts, including G7 and G20 partners and International Financial Institutions.

Under the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, private creditors, including bondholders, are expected to provide a debt treatment on terms at least as favourable as bilateral creditors, in line with the Comparability of Treatment principle

## ■ Employment: Taxation

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38641\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department has made on implementing the recommendation of the Taylor Review on ensuring that the taxation of labour is consistent across all employment forms.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government recognises that differences in tax treatment for individuals across employment forms can have a fiscal impact and affect how people and businesses choose to provide or take on labour.

Good progress has been made in ensuring different forms of labour are taxed more consistently by, for example, addressing non-compliance with the off-payroll working rules, also known as IR35, which are designed to ensure that individuals working like employees but through their own company, usually a personal service company, pay broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance contributions as those who are directly employed.

The Government announced a 1.25 percentage point increase in all dividend tax rates alongside the Health and Social Care levy, to ensure that those with dividend income make a contribution on that income in line with the contribution made by employees and the self-employed on their earnings.

The Government continues to keep all aspect of the tax system under review and any decisions on future changes will be taken as part of future fiscal events and in the context of wider public finances.

## ■ Energy: Price Caps

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

[\[38540\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to offer support to households in September 2022 in the event that the energy price cap increases.

**Alan Mak:**

The Government recognises that millions of households across the UK have been impacted by rising energy bills and the wider cost of living. That is why the Government is providing support for the cost of living now totalling over £37 billion this year. The package includes:

- £400 off GB energy bills from October through the expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS);
- A £650 Cost of Living Payment for over 8 million households across the UK in receipt of means tested benefits;
- A £150 one-off disability Cost of Living Payment for 6 million people who receive non-means tested disability benefits;
- An extra one-off £300 this year for over eight million pensioner households to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter;

- An extra £500 million of local support, via the Household Support Fund, for households that are not eligible for Cost of Living Payments or for families that still need additional support.

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

## ■ Monetary Policy: Inflation

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38630\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of quantitative easing since 2020 on the rate of inflation.

**Richard Fuller:**

The Bank of England's independent Monetary Policy Committee is responsible for the operation of monetary policy, including decisions on Bank Rate and quantitative easing. The separation of fiscal and monetary policy is a key feature of the UK's economic framework, so the Government does not comment on the conduct or effectiveness of monetary policy. Since the MPC were given independence over monetary policy CPI inflation has averaged around the 2% target.

The Government continually monitors economic developments, including inflation, to consider their impact on businesses and households. The Government also remains committed to monetary policy independence, and we retain full confidence in the Committee.

## ■ Money Laundering

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[39947\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of anti-money laundering regulations on insurance brokering firms that hold client monies in undesignated client accounts.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[39948\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of anti-money laundering regulations on estate agents that use undesignated client accounts.

**Richard Fuller:**

HM Treasury recently published a review of the Money Laundering Regulations (MLRs) 2017 in June 2022 which assessed the effectiveness of the UK's anti-money laundering regime. The review noted the challenges faced by businesses that use undesignated client accounts, commonly referred to as pooled client accounts (PCAs), such as estate agents and insurance brokers. The Government has concluded that broadening the circumstances in which simplified due diligence (SDD)

can be considered would be beneficial in improving access to PCAs, while still maintaining that SDD can only be done in low-risk situations.

The Government plans to consult on options aiming to address the difficulties in accessing PCAs, including the option of broadening the range of low-risk circumstances in which PCAs may be provided without checks being required on the clients whose funds are held in the account.

## ■ **Poverty: Portsmouth South**

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[39974]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to research by the End Child Poverty Coalition and the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University, published July 2022, what fiscal steps his Department is taking to help reduce the number of children in poverty in Portsmouth South constituency.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Government is committed to tackling poverty through a long term, sustainable approach and believes that the best way to support people out of poverty is to help them get into work. A child growing up in a home where all the adults work is four times less likely to be in absolute poverty (after housing costs) than a child growing up in a home where nobody works.

That is why the Government is focused on supporting people by helping them get into work through the multi-billion-pounds Plan for Jobs. To continue to boost employment, wages and living standards, the Government is continuing or enhancing the most successful Plan for Jobs schemes and introducing a new package of measures, taking the total DWP spend on labour market support to over £6 billion over the next three years.

The Government has also taken decisive action to make work pay by cutting the Universal Credit taper rate from 63p to 55p, and increasing Universal Credit work allowances by £500 a year. This is effectively a tax cut for the lowest paid households worth around £1.9 billion in 2022-23. 1.7 million households will keep, on average, around an extra £1000 a year.

Furthermore, the government is supporting over 8 million households across the UK in receipt of means tested benefits with a one-off Cost of Living Payment of £650, paid in two instalments. This package builds on the over £22 billion announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37 billion this year.

## ■ **Small Businesses: VAT**

**Tim Farron:**

**[37474]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of temporarily increasing the VAT taxable turnover threshold from £85,000 to help small businesses with the rise in the cost of living.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The UK has the highest VAT registration threshold in the OECD and as compared to EU Member States at £85,000. This keeps the majority of UK businesses out of VAT altogether.

Whilst the Government keeps all taxes under review, it was announced at Budget 2021 that the VAT threshold will be maintained at its current level of £85,000 until 31 March 2024.

**Small Modular Reactors****Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[38539\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to approve plans for small modular reactor production in the UK.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Nuclear has an important role to play in the UK energy system as we strive to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

The Government has awarded up to £210m to support development of the Rolls Royce Small Modular Reactor (SMR) design. The Rolls-Royce SMR entered the Generic Design Assessment process in April becoming the first SMR to begin UK nuclear regulation.

The Government has also announced the Future Nuclear Enabling Fund (FNEF) of up to £120m to support future nuclear projects, including SMRs, address barriers to entry.

The British Energy Security Strategy sets out the Government's intention to take two Final Investment Decisions on new nuclear projects in the next parliament and to initiate a selection process for projects in 2023, including SMRs.

**Trader Support Service****Stephen Farry:**[\[38887\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has for the extension and future funding of the Trader Support Service.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government is currently considering options for the future of the Trader Support Service and will ensure customers continue to receive support in meeting customs requirements under the Northern Ireland Protocol. Traders and businesses will receive further updates in due course.

**Treasury: Electronic Purchasing Card Solution****Emily Thornberry:**[\[38571\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in HM Revenue and Customs held electronic purchasing cards that allowed them to make purchases against that Department's budget as of 31 March 2022.

**Lucy Frazer:**

184 people within HMRC held electronic purchasing cards as at the 31 March 2022.

■ **Unemployment: Mortality Rates**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38636\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of unemployment on the mortality rate in England.

**Alan Mak:**

The government remains focussed on maintaining near record-low unemployment, whilst providing the necessary support to help the most vulnerable to find work.

The unemployment rate has fallen to 3.8% in the three months to May and is close to historic lows. We are building on the success of the Plan for Jobs, investing a total of £6 billion for the three years from 2022-23 to 2024-25: providing targeted additional support to help at risk groups find work, including younger and older age groups, the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Adoption: Self-employed**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[39891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the (a) impact of not extending statutory maternity allowance to self-employed adopters on parents' ability to take time off work to bond with their newly adopted child and (b) subsequent impact that has on (i) parents and (ii) children.

**Guy Opperman:**

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Maternity Allowance (MA) are primarily health and safety provisions relating specifically to pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. They provide a measure of financial security to help women who have worked during or close to their pregnancies to stop working towards the end of their pregnancy and in the months after childbirth, in the interests of their own and their babies' health and wellbeing. As there is no associated period of pregnancy for adopters, it is not appropriate that they are able to make a claim for either SMP or MA regardless of their employment status.

■ **Children: Maintenance**

**Alison McGovern:**

[\[38648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of increases in the cost of living on payments made by non-resident parents.



**Guy Opperman:**

Child maintenance payments made by the non-resident parent are designed to be fair and affordable whilst ensuring they contribute a significant amount of their income to support any children they no longer live with.

A banding system ensures that the very lowest earners pay a flat rate of £7 per week, and those with no income pay nothing. Those that can afford to make a bigger contribution do so at a rate that reflects what they earn.

**Alison McGovern:****[38649]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the current amount of unpaid payments by non-resident parents is; and what steps the Child Maintenance Service is taking to recoup outstanding monies.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Child Maintenance Service actively pursues all outstanding child maintenance using a variety of enforcement options including deductions from earnings, deductions from benefits and identifying and securing cash balances and assets through its enforcement actions. If non compliance persists then sanctions including commitment to prison or the disqualification of a driving licence and removal of passport is considered.

The Child Maintenance Service has focussed efforts to influence and enforce payment where a paying parent refuses to pay but has an ability to pay. The department has reduced its unpaid debt through the collect and pay service to an all time low of 8.3% of the total liabilities raised as at March 2022 compared to 9.9% in March 2020.

*(Child Maintenance Service statistics: data to March 2022, National tables: Child Maintenance Service statistics, date to March 2022 table six).*

Link attached showing the unpaid child maintenance through Collect and Pay from March 2015 to March 22 for your convenience.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-statistics-data-to-march-2022-experimental>

**■ Debts: Disclosure of Information****Owen Thompson:****[39915]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is her Department's Debt Management's policy to include full details of relevant debt in (a) email and (b) other written correspondence advising individuals of the debt.

**David Rutley:**

All benefit overpayments are notified to claimants. The notification sets out why the overpayment occurred, the amount overpaid and the period of overpayment, along with the debtor's appeal rights. For other claimant liabilities, such as advances and loans, the amount to be paid and repayment terms are agreed in advance.



Once any debts or other liabilities are transferred to Debt Management for recovery, any notifications will typically show the current overall balance outstanding for all debts and liabilities, rather than listing individual debts.

We are currently developing an on-line service whereby individuals are able to go and view their outstanding balances. A number of claimants are already accessing this service.

## ■ Employment

**Ms Karen Buck:**

**[39731]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the number of unemployed Universal Credit and Job Seeker's Allowance claimants who moved into work between 31 January and 26 June 2022 (a) in total and (b) through the Way to Work campaign.

**Ms Karen Buck:**

**[39732]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's press release entitled Half a million benefit claimants get jobs in under 6 months, dated 30 June 2022, if she will publish the analysis her Department used to determine that it had delivered on its target to get 500,000 more people into work in less than six months.

**Julie Marson:**

On 26 January 2022, the Government launched the Way to Work campaign to move 500,000 job-ready claimants into work by the end of June 2022. Using the strength of the jobs market and building on the success of Kickstart, the campaign saw us working closely with employers to help claimants into jobs quicker, whilst strengthening our core support for jobseekers.

Due to the nature of the campaign, the total number of unemployed Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants who moved into work during the campaign period is the same as the number who moved into work through the Way to Work campaign.

As of 25 July, we estimate that 523,500 unemployed Universal Credit claimants and JSA claimants have moved into work during the Way to Work Campaign between 31 January and 26 June 2022.

This total figure is composed of our into work measure to 26 June for Universal Credit claimants (484,300) and the equivalent information for JSA claimants (39,200). We have included those claimants with a sanction in place that moved into work during the period of the campaign up to 26 June (25,600). Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics but is provided in the interests of transparency and timeliness.

A description of the data used to show that it had achieved this target has been published previously – most recently in the following response found [here](#).

## ■ Employment: Ethnic Groups

**Ruth Jones:** [\[38832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps she has taken to encourage black and minority ethnic women into work in (a) Newport West constituency, (b) Wales and (c) the United Kingdom.

**Julie Marson:**

We want everyone to be able to find a job, progress in work and thrive in the labour market, whoever they are and wherever they live.

The latest Office for National Statistics update for the first quarter of 2022 shows that there are 2 million more women in work compared to in 2010 and a record high 2.0 million ethnic minority women in work, a significant increase of 180,000 since the same quarter in 2021. The ethnic minority employment rate for women was 61.7%, a 1.1% increase since the same quarter in 2021.

Our Plan for Jobs is providing broad ranging support for all Jobseekers with our Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs), Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) and Restart scheme. In Southeast Wales, our Jobcentres are working with Adult Learning Wales to deliver 'Prepare for the Civil Service' recruitment support sessions, supporting customers from groups with lower social mobility, including ethnic minority jobseekers, to apply for positions with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. We are extending this initiative to support more diverse recruitment in all other government departments in Wales.

## ■ Food Banks: Mental Illness

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [\[39942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate with Cabinet colleagues of the number and proportion of foodbank users who have been diagnosed with a mental health condition in the latest period for which figures are available.

**David Rutley:**

The data is unavailable to make that assessment.

Foodbanks are independent, charitable organisations and the Department for Work and Pensions does not have any role in their operation.

## ■ Poverty: Children

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[37567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the level of children living in poverty in Lewisham Deptford constituency.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[37568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the level of child poverty in Lewisham Deptford constituency.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

**[37569]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the End Child Poverty Coalition and the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University report, published July 2022, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the number of children in poverty.

**David Rutley:**

The latest statistics on the number and proportion of children who are in low income families by local area, covering the seven years, 2014/15 to 2020/21, can be found in the annual publication: [Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](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. In October to December 2021 there were nearly 1 million fewer workless households and almost 540,000 fewer children living in workless households in the UK compared to 2010. 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 Jobseekers 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. Lewisham Council has been allocated £2,668,537.62

**Feryal Clark:**

**[37634]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle child poverty in (a) England and (b) Enfield North constituency.

**David Rutley:**

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. Enfield Council has been allocated £9,436,542.83.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: EU Law

**Ben Lake:**

**[38804]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people fall under Article 30 of the EU Withdrawal Act 2018, and are therefore subject to EU Social Security Coordination rules in respect of benefit support in (a) the UK, (b) Wales and (c) Ceredigion constituency.

**David Rutley:**

The Department does not hold this information.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Mental Health

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [39938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the impact on the mental health of people receiving benefits of the recent increase in the cost of living.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [39939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what resources her Department has allocated to improving the mental health of people receiving benefits.

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [39940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people on benefits who have received mental health support in each year since 2010.

**Chloe Smith:**

No specific assessment has been made on the impact on the mental health of people receiving benefits of the recent increase in the cost of living. The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living: that is why it is providing over £37 billion of support this year. This includes the £650 Cost of Living Payment which is designed to target support at low-income households on means-tested benefits. In addition, 6 million eligible disabled people will receive a one-off, disability Cost of Living Payment of £150. And pensioner households will receive a separate one-off payment of £300 (through and as an addition to the Winter Fuel Payment).

People that are receiving benefits can access mental health support in a number of ways such as seeking a referral from GP in the first instance. In addition, all NHS mental health providers have established 24/7 all-age urgent mental health helplines for people in crisis or for those worried about someone who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. Details of these helplines are available on the NHS website at: [Where to get urgent help for mental health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk). Administrative data on mental health support and benefit receipt are not routinely linked so we cannot estimate the number of people on benefits who receive mental health support.

Evidence suggests that good, appropriate paid work can be beneficial for individuals' health and wellbeing. We offer specialist support for people with mental health conditions to stay in and return to work, often working jointly with the health system, through:

- our Employment Advice in Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (EAs in IAPT) services. Since 2017 we have invested a total of £82million on expanding the number of EAs in IAPT services and we have committed to expand the service across England. Evidence on EAs in IAPT found that those receiving employment support in addition to mental health support showed greater improvements to their mental health compared to those receiving mental health support alone. In addition, those out of work on entry to the EAs in IAPT service were more likely to



be active in the labour market (through employment or looking for employment) at the end of their treatment than those receiving mental health support alone.

Employment Advisers (EAs) work with JCP colleagues to ensure that JCP clients who could benefit from IAPT treatment are signposted to receive an IAPT assessment.

- the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service
- the Mental Health and Productivity Pilot across the Midlands Engine region, which seeks out opportunities to improve productivity through improving employee's mental health.
- our trials of Individual Placement and Support for people with common mental health and/or physical health conditions.

We will also work closely with DHSC and other government departments in supporting the new cross government 10-year plan for mental health and wellbeing for England.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Mortality Rates

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[38637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of the number of people claiming social security benefits on the mortality rate in England.

**David Rutley:**

The Department for Work and Pensions has not made an assessment.

## ■ Unemployment Benefits

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[\[39730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the (a) total number of claimants of out-of-work benefits and (b) gross off-flow of claimants from out-of-work benefits into employment was for each month from January 2013 for data is available.

**Julie Marson:**

The total out-of-work benefit caseload is published on a quarterly basis from February 2013 to November 2021 in the Benefit Combinations statistics on the Stat-Xplore website:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users of Stat-Xplore is available at:

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

Monthly out-of-work benefit destinations are only available for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants and are published by Office for National Statistics. The statistics for January 2013 to June 2022 can be found on the NOMIS website:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk>

Guidance for users can be found at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/home/newuser.asp>

## ■ Universal Credit

**Ms Karen Buck:**

**[37431]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total number of people claiming Universal Credit whose Transitional Protection was stopped entirely in 2021-22 was; and what the total value of Transitional Protection payments that were paid in that year was.

**David Rutley:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2022]:* All claimants will be assessed for transitional protection at the point the Department moves them over to Universal Credit from legacy benefits and paid this where appropriate. The vast majority will either be better off, or no worse off.

Transitional protection will be paid to eligible claimants who would see a lower entitlement on Universal Credit. The aim of this temporary payment is to maintain the same level of entitlement at the point of transition so that claimants will have time to adjust to the new benefit system. To align with the entitlement of Universal Credit claimants in similar circumstances who were not managed migrated, Transitional Protection will be reduced by the award of any new Universal Credit element or an increase in an existing Universal Credit element, other than the childcare costs element. It will end if the Universal Credit award is terminated, there is a change in a claimant's single or couple status or if the claimant has a sustained drop in earnings. If a claimant's Universal Credit ends due to earnings, transitional protection can be reapplied to their Universal Credit award if they return to Universal Credit within 4 months of their previous Universal Credit claim ending.

## ■ Universal Credit: Housing

**Ms Karen Buck:**

**[37429]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether claimants moving to Universal Credit by managed migration will be able to choose to have their Housing Element paid directly to their landlord from day one of their claim.

**David Rutley:**

Payments of housing costs can be made direct to landlords at any point during a Universal Credit claim where the claimant is vulnerable, has rent arrears or there is a risk of eviction. The need for such arrangement may be identified by DWP staff or requested by the claimant, their appointee, caseworker or landlord.

For those migrating to Universal Credit who had Housing Benefit paid direct to their landlord, the need for payment to landlord is always considered from the start of the Universal Credit claim.



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■ **Universal Credit: Lewisham Deptford**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

**[37570]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact that the total amount deducted from Universal Credit is having on families living in poverty in Lewisham Deptford constituency.

**David Rutley:**

The standard deductions cap of 25% of a claimant's Universal Credit Standard Allowance strikes the right balance of ensuring priority debts are repaid whilst ensuring claimants retain most of their award to meet day-to-day needs.

In recent years, the standard deductions cap has been reduced twice – from 40% to 30% of the Standard Allowance in October 2019, and down to 25% in April 2021. Reducing the threshold further would risk key social obligations such as Child Maintenance not being met.

For DWP Debt deductions, if a claimant is struggling financially, they can contact DWP Debt Management to discuss a reduction in their repayment, or temporary suspension, depending on financial circumstances.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### DEFENCE

#### ■ Agnes Wanjiru

**Jess Phillips:**

[R] [\[39867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the case of the death of Agnes Wanjiru has been a barrier to the final ratification of the Defence Cooperation Agreement between the UK and Kenya.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**James Heappey:**

After engagement with the Kenyan Government, and the Defence and Foreign Relations Committee of the Kenyan Parliament, the ratification treaty was tabled on 13 July 2022. That session of the Kenyan Parliament was subsequently cancelled. The existing Defence Cooperation Agreement remains, **with a bridging agreement**, in place in the meantime.

### EDUCATION

#### ■ Higher Education: Admissions

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[31811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether UCAS plans to analyse its data to track young people who (a) receive lower A Level grades in the 2021-22 academic year than predicted as a result of their academic performance having been adversely affected by lockdown and other restrictions introduced to prevent the spread of covid-19 during 2020 and 2021 and (b) will consequently be without any Higher Education place at the end of the 2022 admission round; what discussions she has had with UCAS on steps to take to support young people in that position; and if she will make a statement.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 19 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) operates as an independent charity and is separate from the government. The department will continue to work closely with UCAS, schools, colleges, awarding organisations, and the higher education (HE) sector to support the 2022 intake of students, so they can go on to their next step in life, whether that is university, further training, or work.

In November 2021, my right hon. Friend, the former Minister for Higher and Further Education, wrote to Vice Chancellors to recognise the hard work and dedication that the sector has shown to students throughout the 2021 and 2022 admissions cycles.

The former Minister asked that additional resilience is built into strategies for the 2022 HE admissions cycle. HE sector bodies were engaged through the HE Taskforce to commend them on their efforts to date and to ask that they continue to put students first.

In June 2022, UCAS reported that 281,500 UK 18-year-olds were holding a firm offer, up 7,000 on last year and the highest on record. UCAS expect more students than in previous years to gain a place at their firm choice institution. It expects that on A level and T Level Results Day ~~around 80%~~ **the majority** of students are likely to be confirmed at their firm choice. However, it is important to note that the exact numbers will not be known until 18 August, A level and T Level Results Day.

If students do not get the required grades, their preferred HE provider may still offer them a place. In the first instance, students are encouraged to talk to their school or college, or to their preferred university, who may be able to offer some flexibility. Students can also seek advice from the Exam Results Helpline run by the National Careers Service. UCAS will help thousands of students to find places through Clearing or explore other options once they have received their grades and predict that over 30,000 ~~places~~ **courses** will be available. Last year, 56,225 students (10%) entered university via Clearing.

While HE opens many doors for those who study at this level, it is by no means the right option for everyone, including those with the highest grades. There are multiple options for students to progress, including HE but also traineeships, T Levels, apprenticeships, the Kickstart scheme, and higher technical qualifications.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[31812]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an estimate of how the number of finally unplaced young people at the end of the 2022 university admission round will compare to years prior to the covid-19 outbreak; if she will make it her policy to (a) fund additional and specific careers guidance and pastoral support, (b) make available an additional year of full further education funding, (c) provide additional access provision in Higher Education and (d) undertake any other measures needed to support young people in that position; and if she will make a statement.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 19 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) operates as an independent charity and is separate from the government. The department will continue to work closely with UCAS, schools, colleges, awarding organisations, and the higher education (HE) sector to support the 2022 intake of students, so they can go on to their next step in life, whether that is university, further training, or work.

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While HE opens many doors for those who study at this level, it is by no means the right option for everyone, including those with the highest grades. There are multiple options for students to progress, including HE but also traineeships, T Levels, apprenticeships, the Kickstart scheme, and higher technical qualifications.

## ■ Schools: Broadband and WiFi

**Ian Lavery:**

**[28421]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2022 to Question 256 on Schools: Digital Technology, what factors are used to determine a priority area; and if he will publish further details on the work being undertaken by his Department with commercial providers to accelerate gigabit capable broadband rollout to schools.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 22 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Will Quince:**

Up to £150 million will be invested in our Connect the Classroom programme to upgrade schools that fall below our Wi-Fi connectivity standards in priority areas. At this time these are educational establishments within our 55 Education Investment Areas **(EIAs)**, which include the places where attainment is currently weakest. ~~The qualifying criteria within these areas can be found here:~~

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1051431/Education-Investment-Areas-selection-methodology.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051431/Education-Investment-Areas-selection-methodology.pdf).

**The qualifying criteria within these areas is: All schools in our 24 Priority EIAs, as part of our intensive investment to address entrenched causes of**

underperformance and barriers to improvement; and Those within EIAs below the Ofsted rating of Good, i.e. rated Requires Improvement or Inadequate at their last assessment. These schools are most in need of the benefits improved connectivity can offer, so that they have more tools at their disposal to ensure high-quality teaching and drive improvement. More information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-investment-areas-selection-methodology>.

Further details on the government's separate programme to accelerate the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband to schools can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-rural-primary-schools-to-get-huge-broadband-upgrade>.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Hospitals: Staff

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

**[18874]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost to NHS hospitals was of using (a) agency staff and (b) bank staff in (i) 2020-21 and (ii) 2021-2022.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 June 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Edward Argar:**

The following table shows the expenditure on bank and agency staff in 2020/21. The information requested for 2021/22 is currently being collated and centrally verified.

	2020/21
Agency staff	£2,436,415,000
Bank staff	£4,663,858,942

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ UK Border Force: Dover Port and Manston Airport

**Ms Diane Abbott:**

**[38483]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current minimum staffing levels are on contracts between the Border Force and private security contractors in (a) the Port of Dover and (b) Manston Airport.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has a number of arrangements in place to provide security, and custodial staff at the Port of Dover, and at its site in Manston. Details of these arrangements are as follows.

- Mite Care and Custody provide staff at both Port of Dover and Manston under the pre-existing Escorting and Related Services Contract, details of which can be found at the link below.

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/8e94f338-6049-48f7-8b82-9dea24af8857?p=1>

In respect of staffing provided at Port of Dover and Manston this contract provides for

- a) 16 general security staff at Port of Dover working shifts over a 24 hour period (8 per shift)
- b) 40 general security staff at Manston working shifts over a 24 hour period (20 per shift)
- c) A total staffing complement of 335 custodial staff who work across a number of shifts to provide security services 24hrs a day 365 days a year at Manston

- Definitive PSA (trading as Interforce) provide security staff at both Port of Dover and Manston. This supplier has provided services under two contracts, one directly with them (August 2021 to March 2022) valued at £3.78m, and one via Bloom Procurement Services (April 2022 to September 2022) valued at £6.84m

In respect of staffing this is demand lead and has changed over time. The current contract provides for

- a) Up to 130 security staff working shifts over a 24 hour period at Port of Dover
- b) Up to 30 security staff working shifts over a 24 hour period at Manston

- Management & Training Corporation (UK) Ltd provides security staff at Manston. These services are provided under a 6 month contract (July 2022 to December 2022) valued at £3.92m

In respect of staffing this contract provides for

- a) A total staffing complement of 65 custodial staff who work across a number of shifts to provide security services 24hrs a day 365 days a year at Manston.

The Home Office does not routinely publish information relating to the number of staff working in specific locations as this would publicise operational practises which, in the wrong hands, could be used to attempt to evade controls at the border and compromise border security.

However, resource and staffing requirements at every port are continually reviewed by Border Force and we work closely with all port operators to try and anticipate demand. Resources are deployed flexibly as and when they are required.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: Dover Port

**Ms Diane Abbott:**

**[38479]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will list the (a) value and (b) length of the contracts Border Force holds with (i) MITIE, (ii) Interforce and (iii) Definitive PSA in connection with the processing of undocumented migrants arriving in the Port of Dover.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:**

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has a number of arrangements in place to provide security, and custodial staff at the Port of Dover, and at its site in Manston. Details of these arrangements are as follows.

- Mite Care and Custody provide staff at both Port of Dover and Manston under the pre-existing Escorting and Related Services Contract, details of which can be found at the link below.

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The Home Office has a number of arrangements in place to provide security, and custodial staff at the Port of Dover, and at its site in Manston.

These arrangements include the pre-existing Escorting and Related Services Contract with Mite Care and Custody, a contract with Management & Training Corporation (UK) Ltd, and a contract with Bloom Procurement Services who contracts with Definitive PSA Ltd (trading as Interforce) to deliver services for the Department.

Providing number of staff based at Dover and Manston, would reveal information on the security of our borders. It is not possible to provide the level of detail requested on volumes and patterns without impacting national security.

#### ■ Undocumented Migrants: Dover Port and Manston Airport

Ms Diane Abbott:

[38480]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will list the private security companies (a) contracted or (b) sub-contracted to process undocumented migrants in (i) the Port of Dover and (ii) Manston Airport.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 July 2022. The correct answer should have been:

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has a number of arrangements in place to provide security, and custodial staff at the Port of Dover, and at its site in Manston. Details of these arrangements are as follows:

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