

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 September 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:15 P.M., 06 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

■ Unaoil

Emily Thornberry:

[\[41958\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the meeting between her predecessor and Mr David Tinsley referred to in chapter 10, paragraph 5(h)-(i) of Sir David Calvert Smith's report into the Serious Fraud Office's handling of the Unaoil Case, if she will set out (a) when, (b) where, (c) for what purpose that meeting took place and (d) whether it was declared in her Department's transparency publications for ministerial meetings or hospitality.

Edward Timpson:

The then Attorney General (the Rt Hon member for Torridge and West Devon), met David Tinsley for 20 minutes in the waiting room of his barristers' chambers on 18 October 2018, after an acquaintance requested that he meet informally with an unnamed contact with links to the US government about a matter affecting the public interest.

It transpired that Mr Tinsley wished to draw the then Attorney General's attention to the value of his services and those of his company in facilitating a better working relationship between the English investigation and prosecution authorities and US authorities. The then Attorney General brought the meeting to an end, pointing out that he did not have responsibility for the issues Mr Tinsley had raised.

Neither the Serious Fraud Office's investigation into Unaoil, Mr Tinsley's involvement in it, nor the defendants in that case or any other case, were raised in the meeting or discussed. The then Attorney General took no action in connection with the meeting and had no further contact with Mr Tinsley.

The meeting was not declared in the transparency returns for the Attorney General's Office as the then Attorney General did not meet Mr Tinsley in his ministerial capacity.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Boiler Upgrade Scheme

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[40725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households applied for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme in the first three months after that scheme opened; and what proportion of those households applied for financial support for the cost and installation of (a) an air source heat pump, (b) a biomass boiler and (c) a ground source heat pump.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [40726]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households have applied for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme from each county in (a) England and (b) Wales since the commencement of that scheme.

Greg Hands:

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme application numbers were published on the 25th August 2022 on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website and include a breakdown by region and technology.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [40727]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department has spent on promoting the Boiler Upgrade Scheme to households.

Greg Hands:

There has been no paid marketing campaign for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS). The Department has released information and promotional communications about the scheme, and will continue to monitor demand.

Charlotte Nichols: [40963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department undertook behaviour change research to support the design and delivery of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme.

Greg Hands:

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme was informed by a host of consultations, evaluations and social research evidence into consumer and installer preferences and attitudes including:

- Transforming heat: public attitudes research

o <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transforming-heat-public-attitudes-research>

- BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker

o <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-attitudes-tracking-survey>

- RHI evaluation – synthesis report

o <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rhi-evaluation-synthesis-report>

- BUS Government Response

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-support-for-low-carbon-heat>

■ Boilers: Hydrogen

Dr Alan Whitehead: [40728]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the UK hydrogen strategy, published on 17 August 2021, when he plans publish the consultation on hydrogen-ready boilers; for what reason that consultation was not

published by the end of 2021 as set out in the UK hydrogen strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Government will publish in due course a consultation on the case for enabling or requiring new domestic gas boilers to be hydrogen-ready from 2026. This consultation has been informed by the Government-funded Hy4Heat R&D programme, the final report for which was published in April 2022.

■ **Bounce Back Loan Scheme**

Seema Malhotra: [\[40788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) prevent small businesses from defaulting on their bounce back loans and (b) support businesses that are in arrears.

Jane Hunt:

The Government has already taken action to give small businesses the space and flexibility to repay their bounce back loans through our “Pay as You Grow” measures.

These measures give all businesses that borrowed under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) the option to repay their loan over a period of up to ten years, as well as the option to move temporarily to interest-only payments for periods of up to six months, or to pause their repayments entirely for up to six months.

Further support is available through the Recovery Loan Scheme, which supports small and medium sized businesses to access the finance they need to grow and invest. Loans are available through accredited lenders.

■ **Carbon Emissions**

Caroline Lucas: [\[41976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason it was not reported to Parliament that the quantified policies in the Net Zero Strategy are projected to deliver approximately 95 per cent of the emissions reductions needed to meet the sixth carbon budget.

Greg Hands:

The Net Zero Strategy included a mix of quantified and unquantified policies. Depending on which accounting methodology would be adopted as the international standard at COP26, shortly after the Strategy’s publication, the quantified policies were projected to deliver either ~95% or, as under the now agreed standard, over 100% of the emissions reductions needed for the sixth carbon budget. It is also inherently difficult to quantify the emission reductions that a particular policy will generate over time.

Caroline Lucas: [\[41977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in the context of the weight given by Mr Justice Holgate to the advice of the Climate Change Committee

in the judgment on the case of Friends of the Earth, ClientEarth, Good Law Project vs. Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy handed down on 18 July 2022, if he will follow the Committee's guidance in relation to delivering on the UK's carbon budgets.

Greg Hands:

Government Ministers always carefully consider the Climate Change Committee's advice. The Climate Change Committee described the Net Zero Strategy as 'an ambitious and comprehensive strategy that marks a significant step forward for UK climate policy', and as 'the world's most comprehensive plan to reach Net Zero'. It also stated that 'It follows the transparent process for developing climate policy set out in the UK's Climate Change Act' and that 'The Net Zero Strategy fulfils the requirement in the Act for the Government to present policies and proposals to meet the UK's emissions targets'.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Agency Workers**

Jon Trickett:

[\[41935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department has spent on (a) agency workers and (b) agency retainer fees in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Jane Hunt:

The Department's Agency Staff spend is published annually in BEIS Annual Report and Accounts [here](#) under note 3 'Staff costs'. Agency spend is shown as financial years in the 'Wages and Salaries' line under the 'Others' column, representing non-permanent core BEIS staff. Annual spend on Agency spend is not held centrally and can only be obtained disproportionately.

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

We do not pay agency retainers as our policy is only to use Crown Commercial Framework contracts.

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

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[42210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each of the last five years; and if he will publish a breakdown of the (a) amount paid to each consultancy contracted, (b) name of each consultancy contracted and (c) specific matters on which they were consulted.

Jane Hunt:

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

The information requested on the specific matters consulted is not held centrally and can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Development Aid

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[40895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the results and recommendations set out in the 2022 Aid Transparency Index; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Hunt:

The [Aid Transparency Index](#) assessment takes place every two years. This is the first time that BEIS has been included and I am pleased the Department's performance has been ranked as 'Good'. BEIS remains committed to the transparency of its ODA spending and is examining how to improve its rating in future assessments. The International Development Strategy, published in May, recognised the importance of transparency and the Government has committed to the strengthening of transparency and accountability of UK ODA in its updated National Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership, updated in August.

■ Energy: Housing

Sarah Owen: [\[42231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the energy performance of homes to EPC band C or above.

Greg Hands:

The Government is investing £6.6 billion over this parliament to improve the energy efficiency of homes, including:

- £1.75 billion announced for Home Upgrade Grant and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund as part of the Spending Review 2021.
- Expanding the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme to £4 billion, improving an estimated 450,000 of the least energy efficient homes occupied by low income and vulnerable households in Great Britain.

In addition, the Government has launched a digitally led service <https://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency> launched in July to provide impartial, tailored advice to help people improve their homes.

■ Heat Pumps

Charlotte Nichols: [\[40962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will estimate (a) what proportion of heat pumps sold in the UK were (i) manufactured in and

(ii) imported to the UK and (b) the number of heat pumps imported from each country exporting to the UK in each of the last three years.

Greg Hands:

The latest data available is from the BEIS commissioned Heat Pump Manufacturing Supply Chain Research Project, which found that approximately 30 per cent of heat pumps sold in the UK in 2019 were manufactured domestically, and this is expected to increase over time as the market matures. The report also holds information on the origin of heat pumps imported into the UK, which come from more than 16 different countries.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[40964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will make an estimate of the number of trained heat pump installers there (a) were in each year between 2019 and 2021 and (b) will be in each year between 2022 and 2025.

Greg Hands:

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) estimates that the number of heat pump installers working for MCS Certified businesses in the UK was approximately 2,700 in 2019, 3,200 in 2020, 3,500 in 2021 and 4,000 as of July 2022. 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 numbers of installers are expected to continue to increase as demand grows between now and 2025; the Heat Pump Association estimates that we will need 6,800 installers in 2023, 9,400 in 2024 and 12,400 in 2025.

Sarah Owen:

[\[42229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has conducted or commissioned research on potential options for improving the public interest and acceptance of heat pumps.

Greg Hands:

The Government has been conducting research through the £16 million Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project on approaches to improving public interest and acceptance of heat pumps, with results due to be published later this year.

Sarah Owen:

[\[42230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the number of (a) engineers on the Gas Safe Register and (b) off-gas-grid installers were trained to install heat pumps in each year for which figures are available; and if his Department will make an assessment of whether there has been sufficient training uptake to deliver installation of 600,000 heat pumps per year by 2028.

Greg Hands:

Heating engineers are not required to report to Government when they undertake heat pump training. Microgeneration Certification Scheme estimates of the number of trained heat pump installers in the UK are in line with Heat Pump Association estimates of the number of installers needed for current levels of deployment. As demand for heat pumps increases, the number of trained installers will need to increase further. Industry groups are confident there is enough training capacity to meet demand for heat pump upskilling as heat pump deployment increases to meet the target of 600,000 installations per year by 2028.

■ National Grid: Scotland**James Cartlidge:**[\[40864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department made of the cost of delivering the Eastern Link HVDC scheme overland via traditional pylons; and what underlying assumptions were used in reaching that estimate.

Greg Hands:

The Eastern High Voltage Direct Current Link scheme is a joint project between the three private electricity transmission network companies in Great Britain, which are developing a Business Case, including consideration of different ways to deliver the link. Ofgem, as the regulator, is responsible for overseeing this. Government has no role in the costing of this project.

■ Private Rented Housing: Energy**Caroline Lucas:**[\[41975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish his conclusions from the public consultation on improving the energy performance of privately rented homes.

Greg Hands:

The Government is reflecting on the feedback received to ensure the policy is fair to both landlords and tenants. The Government will publish a response in due course.

■ Renewable Energy**Tim Farron:**[\[40752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to undertake an assessment of the contribution of community energy; and what discussions his Department has had with Ofgem on the value of community energy in helping to deliver (a) lower bills, (b) energy security and (c) net zero.

Greg Hands:

As promised in the Net Zero Strategy, the Government has created a Community Energy Contact Group to discuss policy and delivery issues relevant to community

energy, including the contribution that community energy can make, to strengthen engagement with the sector.

Ministers and officials regularly meet with Ofgem to discuss a range of issues relating to the energy market.

■ **Renewable Energy: Finance**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[41992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the upcoming Contract for Difference Auction Round 4 on energy bills.

Greg Hands:

The Government is committed to minimising energy costs for businesses and consumers.

The precise bill impact of Allocation Round 4 (AR4) will be dependent on future wholesale electricity prices, which remain uncertain. Although difficult to predict with certainty, the Government expects AR4 to have a relatively small impact on household bills. AR4 will deliver capacity which is a critical part of the Government's strategy to reduce system costs and will increase energy independence by contributing towards the transition to a low carbon electricity system.

■ **Research: Northern Ireland**

Stephen Farry: [\[42300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to increase the level of UK Research and Innovation funding that is spent in Northern Ireland.

Jane Hunt:

In Northern Ireland there are currently over 190 UKRI funded projects worth approximately £146 million. This includes project awards through the Strength in Places Fund, which is designed to build on existing strengths in research and innovation to support innovation-led regional growth.

UKRI and other Government R&D funders will continue to work with places across the UK, as part of the Government's mission to increase domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East by at least 40% by 2030.

■ **Sanctions: Russia**

Drew Hendry: [\[42065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has had recent discussions with representatives of the oil and gas industry on preventing third country purchasers from reselling UK oil and gas products to sanctioned Russian organisations as a means of enabling sanction evasion.

Greg Hands:

The Government has implemented multiple prohibitions on the export of energy-related goods and services to Russia, including on supply and delivery via third countries. The Government works routinely with both international partners and industry representatives to ensure sanctions are robustly enforced. The Government continues regular engagement with representatives from the oil and gas industry, including official level bilaterally and ministerially chaired monthly meetings of the Oil Taskforce, ensuring that industry is ready to comply with the ban on imports of all Russian oil and oil products by the end of 2022.

Small Businesses**Seema Malhotra:**[\[40786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason he has paused his Department's work on the proposed enterprise strategy.

Jane Hunt:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy strives to make the UK one of the best places in the world to start and grow a business. Supporting enterprise and an enterprise culture in the UK very much remains an enduring mission for the department, on which we work relentlessly every single day.

Small Businesses: Coronavirus**Seema Malhotra:**[\[40789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to help small businesses that cannot repay their covid-19 loan debt.

Jane Hunt:

The Government has already taken action to give small businesses the space and flexibility to repay their bounce back loans. Under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBS), no repayments were due from the borrower for the first 12 months of the loan. The Government also covered the first 12 months of interest payments charged to the business by the lender.

In order to give businesses further support, the Government introduced the "Pay as You Grow" (PAYG) measures, which allow individual businesses to tailor their repayments to their individual circumstances.

Small Businesses: Environment Protection**Seema Malhotra:**[\[40787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to take steps to encourage SMEs to (a) transition to green energy and (b) participate in the Government's green business schemes.

Greg Hands:

Ahead of COP26, the Government launched the Together for Our Planet Business Climate Leaders campaign, in partnership with the SME Climate Hub and the global Race to Zero. The aim of this campaign was to communicate the benefits and opportunities of net zero to SMEs. Currently, 3,490 UK small businesses have joined the UN's Race to Zero initiative, accounting for 75% of the current global total. Businesses who make the SME Climate Commitment receive communications directly from BEIS. The Business Climate Leaders newsletter provides updates on the Government's green business schemes, incentives and regulatory changes, and opportunities

■ Small Businesses: Government Assistance**Seema Malhotra:** [\[40785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to support growth for SMEs in levels of (a) production, (b) profit and (c) employment.

Jane Hunt:

Our Help to Grow schemes will help UK small businesses boost productivity and profits. Help to Grow Digital provides financial discounts of up to 50% on approved digital technologies up to £5000 and Help to Grow Management will boost leadership and management skills.

Businesses can get the finance they need through Start-Up loans, and the recent extension to the Recovery Loan Scheme, will help businesses to access loans of up to £2million so businesses can grow and invest.

As a result of government action, there are now more employees on payroll than ever, and we will continue to build a high skilled, high productivity, high wage economy.

■ Small Businesses: Production**Seema Malhotra:** [\[40783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that SMEs surpass pre-covid-19 outbreak production levels.

Jane Hunt:

Small businesses are benefitting from the £15 billion of targeted government support to help with the rising cost of living, bringing total cost of living support measures announced to £37 billion this year.

We have also announced an extension to the Recovery Loan Scheme, which will help smaller business access loans of up to £2 million to grow and invest. This is in addition to existing support through our Help to Grow schemes aimed at supporting business to grow and thrive.

■ Small Businesses: Staff**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [\[40887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to help small businesses find kitchen staff.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[40888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of job vacancies in the hospitality sector; and what steps his Department is taking to help fill those vacancies.

Jane Hunt:

We are in regular dialogue with the sector and are aware of the recruitment challenges facing businesses. The Hospitality Council is actively looking at this issue and the Government's Hospitality Strategy covers the sector's skills needs.

To help address labour shortages, the Department for Work and Pensions are currently using work coaches to help find local talent and Plans for Jobs programmes, as well as Sector-based Work Academy Programmes.

■ Uber**Sam Tarry:** [\[42278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials from his Department have held with representatives of Uber since 2017.

Jane Hunt:

Ministers and officials meet with a wide range of taxi and private hire vehicle stakeholders, including Uber. These meetings provide an opportunity to hear the views of the sector. Details of ministerial meetings from 2009 have been published and are available online. Meetings with officials are not published.

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

CABINET OFFICE**■ Blood: Contamination****Dan Carden:** [\[42184\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government has plans to make interim compensation payments to infected blood support scheme beneficiaries before a compensation scheme is established; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

On 16 August 2022, I wrote to Sir Brian Langstaff, Chair of the Infected Blood Inquiry, confirming that the Government accepts his recommendation in full. These interim

payments are the first step in addressing this historic wrong and recognise the urgent need of infected and affected people.

I have also made a Written Ministerial Statement ([HCWS279](#)) that was released on Monday, 5th September on this matter.

■ EU Law

Stewart Hosie: [\[45595\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether it his policy that there will be public consultations on the replacement of retained EU law with new legislative proposals.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

It is the responsibility of Government Departments to consult on policy or legislative change.

■ Government Departments: Mobile Phones

John Spellar: [\[45574\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what guidance has been issued to (a) Ministers and (b) officials on the retention of (i) social media and (ii) other content on phones provided to them for official use.

Michael Ellis:

Departments set guidance on the retention and disposal of information, for both their ministers and officials, based on the requirements of the Public Records Act 1958.

In order to support Departments, the Cabinet Office has previously published Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers and Guidance to departments on use of private emails. In addition, a revised Code of Practice on Records Management, issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, was laid on 15 July 2021 by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

■ UK Statistics Authority: Consultants

Kenny MacAskill: [\[40939\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the UK Statistics Authority has spent on external consultants in each of the last five years; and if he will publish a breakdown of the (a) amount paid to each consultancy contracted, (b) name of each consultancy contracted and (c) specific matters on which they were consulted.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

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

A response to the hon. Member's Parliamentary Question of 20th July is attached and below.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician

Kenny MacAskill MP House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

12 August 2022

Dear Mr MacAskill,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking how much the UK Statistics Authority has spent on external consultants in each of the last five years; and if we will publish a breakdown of the (a) amount paid to each consultancy contracted, (b) name of each consultancy contracted and (c) specific matters on which they were consulted (40939).

Table 1 provides the spend on externally contracted consultancy services for the UK Statistics Authority in each of the last five years.

Table 1: Spend on externally contracted consultancy services for the UK Statistics Authority in each of the last five years

2021/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
£6,065,000	£11,207,000	£12,028,000	£6,259,000	£924,000

Details of all Government contracts awarded from 2016 above £10,000 and £25,000 in the wider public sector are published on Contracts Finder[[1](#)]. Each award notice provides information on the name of the supplier, value of the contract, its purpose and information on the type of awarding procedure used. Government departments, their individual agencies and Arm's Length Bodies are required to publish all spend against individual suppliers above £25,000 on GOV.UK[[2](#)].

All Government Departments and their individual ALBs and agencies are required to follow the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 in awarding contracts.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Footnotes:

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

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/>

Attachments:

1. UKSA letter response to PQ40939 [UKSA_Response_to_PQ40939 (1) (1).pdf]

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey:

[41933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2022 to Question 36690 on Afghanistan: Refugees, what steps is he taking to ensure those 200 individuals with confirmed eligibility for relocation to the UK under the ARAP scheme and in third countries are safely relocated to the UK.

James Heappey:

The UK Government brings ARAP eligible individuals to the UK every week with the support of other Governments in the region.

■ **Armed Forces: Pastoral Care****Tommy Sheppard:**[\[42059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answers of 23 June 2022 to Questions 21223 and 21225 on Armed Forces: Pastoral Care and the Answer of 23 June 2022 to Question 21224 on Armed Forces: Ministers of Religion and Pastoral Care, if he will place the report of the review into the requirement for the provision of non-religious pastoral support to the armed forces in the Library of the House.

Leo Docherty:

The recommendations of the review are being considered by the Ministry of Defence and remain in use in support of the formulation of Government policy. For this reason, there are no plans to place a copy of the review in the Library of the House at present. When the review is no longer required for live policy formulation, the merits of making it more widely available will be given consideration in due course.

■ **Watchkeeper WK450****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[41955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 29920 on Watchkeeper WK450, how much from the public purse has been spent on Watchkeeper to date.

Jeremy Quin:

To date, £1.31 billion has been spent from the public purse on Watchkeeper. This includes all monies spent during the Assessment phase, during Demonstration Manufacture and Initial Support and as part of In-Service Support, out until 31 May 22.

In preparing the answer to this question issues have been uncovered about the accuracy of answers provided to previous Parliamentary questions. These are being urgently investigated and I will write to the right hon. Gentleman and other colleagues as soon as this has been concluded, and I will place copies of all such letters in the Library of the House.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **Lotteries****Alex Davies-Jones:**[\[42295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the effect of the increase in the annual sales limit for society lotteries from £10 million to £50 million on money returned to good causes.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[42296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the increase in the annual sales limit for society lotteries from £10 million to £50 million, if she will publish a breakdown of the distribution of overall returns to good causes across (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland.

Damian Collins:

The annual sales limit for society lotteries was increased from £10 million to £50 million in July 2020.

We published a review of the impact of these and other changes to society lottery sales and prize limits in March 2022 ([link](#)). Early indicators are positive, for example the increase in the annual sales limit has allowed some multiple licensed operators who previously had annual sales in excess of £10 million, to take advantage of the new limit to restructure and become single licence holders, and use the cost savings in doing so to increase good cause returns. The review concluded that it is too soon to reach any firm view on the impact of the changes, especially during a time that the effect of the Covid pandemic made any evaluation more difficult, given changes in consumer behaviour over this period which may have had a distorting effect. We want to see more data on annual growth of the sector to fully measure their impact. Since the review, the Gambling Commission has published further data which shows that the large society lottery sector is continuing to grow.

The Gambling Commission does not collect data on the location of beneficiaries of grant funding. Society lotteries are a helpful way of permitting non-commercial societies to fundraise for good causes. Funds raised by society lotteries are distributed within the stated purposes of that society, and it is for each operator to determine where the money raised is distributed. Larger lotteries may support local, national or international charities, but many others exist solely to support their own work, such as hospice lotteries.

Legislation regarding society lotteries in Northern Ireland is determined by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

EDUCATION

■ BTEC Qualifications: Finance

Catherine West:

[\[42143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the withdrawal of funding for BTEC courses on (a) Black students and (b) racial equality.

Andrea Jenkyns:

An assessment of the potential equalities impacts of the removal of funding for qualifications, which includes some BTEC qualifications, was carried out as part of the qualifications review.

The department expects all students to benefit from a more rigorous qualification system, with higher quality qualifications that better equip students with the necessary skills for progression into employment or further study. Students from black and other minority backgrounds are not expected to be disproportionately impacted by the removal of funding.

The department will continue to produce assessments of potential equalities impacts.

■ Department for Education: Public Expenditure

Bridget Phillipson: [\[42008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 17077 on Department for Education: Public Expenditure, if he will publish the financial figures in that Answer to the nearest £10 million.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[42009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 17077, on Department for Education, Public Expenditure, if he will publish, with figures to the nearest £10 million, the (a) 11th to 25th-highest areas of cross-departmental programme expenditure to which his Department plans to contribute over the spending review period 2022-23 to 2024-25 and (b) amount of programme expenditure allocated to each area over that period.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[42010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2022 to Question 17077, if he will publish the same information in respect of the names of all areas of cross-departmental programme expenditure to which his Department plans to contribute over the spending review period 2022-23 to 2024-25, but which are not individually in the top 25 areas of such expenditure, listing the (a) the line items thus included and (b) aggregate amount of programme expenditure allocated to all such areas over that period, with figures precise to the nearest £10 million.

Will Quince:

The ten highest areas of programme expenditure for the 2022/23 financial year are in the table below, to the nearest £10 million, where available.

TEN HIGHEST AREAS OF FORECAST DEPARTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR

Schools block of the dedicated schools grant	£40,540m
High needs block of the dedicated schools grant	£8,990m
16-19 education and T Levels	£6,480m
Early years block of the dedicated schools	£3,730m

**TEN HIGHEST AREAS OF FORECAST DEPARTMENT
PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2022/23 FINANCIAL
YEAR**

grant	
Pupil premium	£2,680m
Apprenticeships	£2,580m
Adult education budget	£1,340m
Strategic Priorities Grant	£1,400m
Schools supplementary grant (supporting schools with costs of the Health and Social Care Levy)	£1,200m
Education recovery programmes	£1,200m

Further information requested on contributions to cross-departmental programmes is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Free School Meals**

Dan Carden: [\[42185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government has plans to introduce an automatic registration process for free school meals.

Dan Carden: [\[42186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government has plans to reform the eligibility criteria for free school meals to ensure that children living in poverty are eligible.

Will Quince:

The department provides an Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible. We continue to use and refine a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for free school meals (FSM).

The department also provides guidance to Jobcentre Plus advisers so that they can make Universal Credit recipients aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including FSM.

The department continues to explore the delivery feasibility of introducing auto-enrolment functionality. There are, however, complex data, systems, and legal implications to such a change.

Under this government, eligibility for FSM has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century.

In setting eligibility for FSM, provision is targeted at supporting those who are out of work or on the lowest incomes. The department will continue to review FSM eligibility, to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them.

■ Free School Meals: Costs

Ian Byrne: [\[40991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an estimate of the cost of providing universal free school breakfast and lunch for all state school pupils in England.

Ian Byrne: [\[40992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the roll out of universal free school meals in Wales.

Will Quince:

Education, including free school meals (FSM), is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

The department is committed to continuing support for school food. We are investing up to £24 million to continue our national school breakfast club programme until July 2023, and over £1 billion per year in FSM provision, to provide healthy and nutritious lunches to pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals and to all infants. This equates to 37.5% of all pupils.

The department's priority has always been to target investment to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who are most in need of support. The significant costs associated with extending FSM eligibility to all pupils would have substantial knock-on impacts for the affordability of linked provision, such as entitlement for pupil premium.

In providing both breakfasts and FSM, the department's position remains that the current eligibility, which enables more children to benefit while remaining affordable and deliverable for schools, is the right approach in England, targeting those who need it most.

The department does not have any plans to extend provision in England, but it will continue to keep all FSM eligibility under review, to ensure that these meals are supporting those who most need them.

■ Further Education: Pay

Neil Coyle: [\[42042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will take steps to increase salaries in the Further Education sector.

Andrea Jenkyns:

Further education (FE) providers are responsible for setting pay rates in FE, and the department plays no direct role in this process.

The department recognises the fundamental role that the FE provider workforce plays in delivering valuable skills to young people, to help them progress in the labour market and support productivity. This is why we are increasing the funding available for FE and investing in workforce support and professional development.

The department is making an extra £1.6 billion available for 16-19 education in the 2024/25 financial year, compared with 2021/22. This is in addition to the £291 million extra for 16-19 education in 2021/22, and the £400 million that the government provided in 2020/21. The department is also investing nearly £52 million in the FE workforce in 2022/23, to continue to support the sector with the recruitment, retention, and development of teachers. This includes tax-free bursaries worth up to £26,000, which are available to support FE teacher training in priority subject areas for 2022/23.

■ National Tutoring Programme**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[42000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much money Virtual Class Ltd, company number 08260115, which trades as Third Space Learning, has received from his Department (a) directly and (b) through the National Tutoring Programme in the financial year 2022-23 to date; and for what purposes those monies have been disbursed in each of the last three financial years; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) provides schools with subsidised access to tutoring, supporting their pupils to recover from learning lost through the COVID-19 pandemic. Third Space Learning has not received any funding directly from the department. Up to 15 July 2022, it has received £3.8 million in the 2022/23 financial year from the NTP's delivery partner, Randstad, in payment for tutoring hours delivered to schools. Any funds disbursed to Third Space Learning over the last three financial years were paid for the purposes of providing tuition to schools.

■ Outdoor Education**Nadia Whittome:**[\[42315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will take steps to help tackle variations in offsite access to nature for school pupils.

Will Quince:

The department recognises the significant and wide-ranging benefits that access to nature can bring.

As announced at COP26 in November 2022, as part of the sustainability and climate change strategy for the education and children's services systems, the department is launching the National Education Nature Park in autumn 2022. This will provide

teachers, children and young people with access to activities and learning resources to further their knowledge of climate change and develop their scientific and digital skills whilst working in the natural environment.

For those schools in more urban areas with limited access to the natural environment, the Park's website will signpost opportunities in the local community to engage with nature, be that through local community groups, parks or allotments. There are many community groups that are keen to engage with schools and by mapping what is available in one portal, it will make it easier for teachers to source the venues and advice they need to ensure that all pupils have access to nature. As the Park matures, we also envisage that grants will be made available to enable those in more disadvantaged areas to participate in the Park's activities.

The Park will be accessed through a website which will showcase engaging activities and resources related to sustainability and climate change that could be undertaken by all education settings. These activities will be applicable to even the most limited sites, such as building 'bug hotels' or installing raised planting beds to increase biodiversity. Changes in biodiversity will be captured via a geospatial mapping tool which will enable staff, children and young people to identify, measure, report and monitor the progress of their own education setting over time. The department has been working closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to learn lessons from their Access to Nature programme, which will also be fed into the design of the Park.

The department is in the process of appointing a world class provider with outstanding expertise on these issues to deliver the Park and linked Climate Leaders Award, which will launch in autumn 2022.

■ **Qualifications: Ukraine**

Gavin Robinson:

[\[42041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the qualifications of Ukrainians who reside in the UK under resettlement schemes are recognised in the UK.

Andrea Jenkyns:

The UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills (ENIC) provides expert advice on the comparability of international qualifications at all levels of education with those of the UK, on behalf of the government. ENIC maintains an extensive database of international qualifications and education systems, including for Ukraine, and is fully prepared to assess and advise on the comparability of Ukrainian and other refugees' qualifications.

Organisations and individuals can apply for a Statement of Comparability through the standard UK ENIC portal. Within the portal, there is provision for individuals to be able to identify as refugees, which allows more flexibility for document submissions. Many organisations, including education institutions and employers, also subscribe to the UK ENIC service and use its database when assessing applications.

Higher education (HE) providers are autonomous institutions, independent from government, and they are responsible for their own admissions policies. The department has made clear to providers that they should be as flexible as possible when considering applications for students with difficult circumstances, such as those from Ukraine, and would encourage students to speak to their desired HE provider about their personal situation directly.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Hearing Impairment**

Zarah Sultana:

[\[42254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the National Deaf Children's Society policy briefing on the SEND review, published on 4 July 2022, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of that briefing's findings and proposals.

Will Quince:

Over the course of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review, and throughout the consultation period on the department's SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, the department has spoken to many children and young people, their families, and those working in the SEND sector to understand more about the challenges facing the system. This includes meetings with the National Deaf Children's Society.

The consultation on the Green Paper has recently closed and the department is carefully considering the responses we have received. This includes considering reports such as the one from the National Deaf Children's Society. The department has committed to publishing the department's response to the consultation alongside a national SEND and AP implementation strategy later this year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Chemicals: Regulation**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[42034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will extend the representation of (a) downstream users, (b) FMCGs, and (c) working groups when developing (i) UK REACH, and (ii) UK Chemical classification, labelling and packaging policy.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[42035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with downstream users across industries when developing (a) UK REACH, and (b) UK Chemical classification, labelling and packaging policy.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[42037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure the UK REACH Regulation does not create (a) bureaucracy and (b) additional costs for UK businesses.

Steve Double:

We are developing an Alternative Transitional Registration (ATR) model to address industry concerns about costs of transitioning to UK REACH, while still ensuring high levels of environmental and health protection. Alongside this work, Defra and the Devolved Administrations are beginning a project to consider how best to improve UK REACH and enable it to deliver UK priorities effectively.

We continue to engage with stakeholders throughout the chemicals supply chain as this work develops, for example through a small consultative Oversight Group on the ATR work. We are also engaging more widely with a broad range of stakeholders with relevant experience on a range of technical considerations as we develop the ATR model in more detail. Although it is too early to commit to a new model, any changes to the UK REACH legislation would also require public consultation as part of the legislative process.

The Health and Safety Executive holds the policy lead across government for the GB CLP Regulation and continues regular contact with stakeholders in the UK chemicals industry through GB CLP e-Bulletins as well as close engagement with stakeholders, including trade associations and duty holders, on the process for the GB mandatory classification and labelling of hazardous substances.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Mohammad Yasin:

[\[901315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to secure the release of British people detained abroad.

Rehman Chishti:

Consular staff work tirelessly and tenaciously to give support to British nationals overseas and their families. This includes around 5,000 individuals who are arrested or detained each year. Our support is tailored to the needs of the individual and their situation, doing more for those who need more help.

Mr David Davis:

[\[901316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the potential level of support required by Ukraine to rebuild and recover from Russia's invasion.

Graham Stuart:

We must support Ukraine's vision for rebuilding a sovereign, prosperous, democratic nation that is stronger than before Putin's invasion. Significant support will be required for Ukraine to recover and rebuild from the damage wrought by this war. In early July, the former Foreign Secretary presented our vision to support a Ukraine-led effort for recovery and reconstruction at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano. We will host the Conference in 2023 to galvanise further international support. The priority now is to address Ukraine's immediate economic needs and in the longer term, leverage UK private sector investment and work to support Ukraine's future economic growth.

Dave Doogan:[\[901317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when her Department next plans to update the guidance for UK nationals travelling to and living in Thailand.

Amanda Milling:

FCDO Travel Advice is under constant review. Alongside our travel advice, we have our "Living in Thailand" Guide, which provides additional comprehensive guidance for UK nationals resident in Thailand or planning to relocate to Thailand [last updated 4 April 2022].

James Gray:[\[901318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential contribution of the Arctic and Antarctic to British foreign policy objectives.

Amanda Milling:

As the nearest neighbour to the Arctic, we remain committed to working in partnership with our allied Arctic States to maintain the region as one of low tension, while continuing to make a significant contribution to Arctic science, security and environmental protection.

The UK is committed to upholding and strengthening the Antarctic Treaty System and maintaining our leadership on Antarctic policy and science, especially on the implications of climate change.

Philip Dunne:[\[901319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she plans to take to help Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery.

Graham Stuart:

We must support Ukraine's vision for rebuilding a sovereign, prosperous, democratic nation that is stronger than before Putin's invasion. Significant support will be required for Ukraine to recover and rebuild from the damage wrought by this war. In early July, the former Foreign Secretary presented our vision to support a Ukraine-led effort for recovery and reconstruction at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano. We will host the Conference in 2023 to galvanise further international support. The

priority now is to address Ukraine's immediate economic needs, and in the longer term, leverage UK private sector investment and work to support Ukraine's future economic growth.

David Linden: [\[901323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if her Department will make an assessment of the extent of polio immunisation in Malawi.

Vicky Ford:

I am delighted to say that since polio was detected in Malawi in February the government there has led an incredible vaccination campaign, reaching 3.5 million children and covering the full target population. I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to the government and health workers of Malawi for such an incredible achievement. I had the huge honour of meeting the Minister for Health when I visited in April. We discussed the UK's support for the wider sector and the challenges it faces.

Greg Smith: [\[901324\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in Gibraltar, Spain and the EU on the matter of the border between Gibraltar and Spain.

Graham Stuart:

The UK Government is in regular contact with the Government of Gibraltar, Spain and the EU as we look to conclude a UK-EU Treaty in respect of Gibraltar. Ensuring the fluid movement of people between Gibraltar and the EU has been a key area of discussion.

Michael Fabricant: [\[901325\]](#)

When she next plans to meet her counterpart in the government of Israel.

Amanda Milling:

The UK and Israel share a thriving relationship, working together on bilateral priorities, as well as regional issues of mutual concern, including the Middle East Peace Process. I last met my Israeli counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Roll, during my visit to Israel in June.

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

Caroline Lucas: [\[40759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate she has made of the potential total number of (a) Chevening Alumni, (b) British Council contractors and (c) GardaWorld contractors eligible for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway Three.

Graham Stuart:

Under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) Pathway 3, the FCDO has received an estimated 11,400 Expressions of Interest (EOIs). The window for EOIs under ACRS Pathway 3 closed on 15 August 2022 and we are in the process of

assessing EOIs in terms of eligibility. In the first year, we will offer up to 1,500 places to eligible at-risk British Council contractors, GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni, including their eligible family members.

Caroline Lucas:

[40760]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2022 to Question 35913 on Refugees: Afghanistan, whether the 4,500 expressions of interest under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathway Three have come from principal applicants.

Graham Stuart:

Under pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme the FCDO has now received an estimated 11,400 Expressions of Interest (EOIs). Each of these EOIs is from an individual seeking resettlement to the UK. The number does not include any dependents that may be seeking to have resettled with them.

■ Africa: Marburg Virus

Ms Lyn Brown:

[41965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing investment in health system strengthening in Africa in response to the recent outbreak of the Marburg virus.

Vicky Ford:

As outlined in the International Development Strategy, strengthening health systems is at the heart of the UK's long-term approach to improving global health. To make sure we can continue to lead with expertise and maximise the impact of our Official Development Assistance spend, we will increase our investment in research on 'what works' and science and technological innovations to accelerate progress on improving health and strengthening health systems.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Tackling Deadly Diseases in Africa programme and the Department for Health and Social Care's (DHSC) International Health Regulation Strengthening programme are working in nine African countries to improve their capacity to prevent, detect and respond to public health emergencies, including Marburg virus disease. The FCDO, DHSC and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has provided technical support to the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention to improve regional preparedness and response. Specifically in Ghana, including the regions affected by the current Marburg outbreak, the UK has recently trained 7,000 health workers on surveillance and response. This included simulated outbreak exercises to quickly detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks such as Marburg.

■ Central African Republic: Humanitarian Situation

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[41973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the level of humanitarian need specifically in relation to (a) food, (b) drinking water and (c) healthcare in the Central African Republic.

Vicky Ford:

About 2.2 million people in the Central African Republic (CAR) were projected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity between April and August 2022 due to conflict, population displacement and high food prices. Over half the population requires humanitarian assistance and one in four Central Africans have been displaced.

The UK is currently the fourth largest donor to CAR's Humanitarian Response Plan. In 2022 the UK is contributing £11 million to the CAR humanitarian which will address food security, healthcare as well as water and sanitation. Between 2014 and 2022, the UK provided £148 million in humanitarian funding to a variety of humanitarian agencies in CAR and for CAR refugees.

■ Chad: Democracy

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[41967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps she has taken to help support the transition to democracy in Chad.

Vicky Ford:

The UK seeks to promote Chad's transition back to civilian and constitutional rule in line with the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué of 14 May 2021. The UK is a member of the African Union's International Support Group for the Transition, alongside other partners. The UK has contributed to the United Nations Development Programme fund for the transition, in order to support the inclusion of women and youth in the National Dialogue, which opened on 20 August 2022. It is essential that the National Dialogue is as representative and inclusive as possible and that it leads to the development of a new constitution and free and fair elections according to the terms agreed by the African Union. I, [Minister Ford] have written to the Chadian Minister for Foreign Affairs congratulating him on the recent Doha Agreement on the participation of politico-military movements in the National Dialogue and setting out the UK position on the transition.

■ Development Aid: African Development Bank

Sarah Champion: [\[42038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 July 2022 to Question 35954 on Development Aid: African Development Bank, what those (a) policy commitments and (b) results targets were; what progress has been made by the African Development Bank on delivering those policy commitments and attaining those results targets; what the performance targets were on

which part of her Department's funding to the 15th Replenishment of the African Development Fund (ADF15) was contingent; and if she will publish the data that provides the basis for her statement that those performance targets have now been met.

Vicky Ford:

The policy commitments undertaken by the African Development Bank (AfDB) as part of the seventh General Capital Increase have been published as part of the Bank's Annual Report (Appendix 10, page 81 <https://www.afdb.org/en/annualreport>). This includes an update on progress against these commitments with the Bank assessing that 79 percent have been completed.

The policy commitments undertaken by the Bank as part of the fifteenth replenishment of the African Development Fund were published by the Bank as part of its report to Deputies on the replenishment (Annex 1, page 76 <https://adf.afdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ADF-15-Deputies-Report-.pdf>). The UK made a portion of its funding to the fifteenth replenishment of the African Development Fund contingent on the achievement of a selected sub-set of these policy commitments, covering the following areas:

- Provision of sustainable and quality infrastructure;
- Governance and institutional strengthening, including on domestic resource mobilisation and debt management;
- Support for fragile states;
- Climate change;
- Gender and private sector; and
- AfDB organisational and development effectiveness, including on safeguards.

We will publish the UK's detailed assessment of the Bank's progress against these commitments as part of the next Annual Review of the Fund in line with our normal approach to publishing programme performance assessments.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Agency Workers**

Jon Trickett:

[\[41951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much her Department has spent on (a) agency workers and (b) agency retainer fees in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Amanda Milling:

The FCDO spend on agency staff is contained in the published FCDO Annual Report and Accounts:

FINANCIAL YEAR	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Temporary Staff Costs	£12,086,112	£25,679,267	£39,575,855

The figures provided are inclusive of both the cost of the contingent labourer and the agency fee for provision of their services.

■ **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[41013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take steps to help ensure that US funding is mobilised in the context of the US Administration's pledge to match fund money from other donors towards the Global Fund's seventh replenishment target of US\$18 billion.

Amanda Milling:

We thank the US for the significant contribution they have signalled to the Global Fund's seventh replenishment and we will continue to work with the US and the Global Fund to support the organisation's seventh replenishment.

The UK is proud to be the Global Fund's third largest donor historically, investing over £4.1 billion since 2002. The decision on the UK's contribution to the Global Fund's seventh replenishment will be taken in due course.

We will continue to contribute financial and leadership support to the Global Fund as a key partner in the shared global fight against AIDS, TB and malaria, and encourage all donors and partners to play their part in helping the Global Fund to meet the \$18 billion replenishment target.

Sam Tarry:

[\[42269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK will continue its commitment to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria by maintaining its levels of investment at the 7th Replenishment later this year.

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 organisations third largest donor historically, and the second largest donor to the last replenishment with a pledge of up to £1.46 billion.

As set out in the International Development Strategy (IDS), global health will remain a top priority. The decision on the UK's contribution to the Global Fund's seventh replenishment will be taken in due course.

We will continue to contribute financial and leadership support to the Global Fund as a key partner in the shared global fight against AIDS, TB, and malaria.

Stephen Farry:

[\[42298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact of the Global Fund on global health outcomes.

Amanda Milling:

The Global Fund is a high performing organisation that, with partners, has reduced the mortality of AIDS, TB and malaria by 46% since 2002 and plays a key role in ending the preventable deaths of the three diseases, saving 44 million lives to date.

The UK is proud to be the organisation's third largest donor historically, investing over £4.1 billion since 2002.

The UK's significant investments in the Global Fund is our main channel to support ending the three epidemics. The organisation remains a key partner in strengthening health systems and supporting pandemic preparedness.

■ Greece: Turkey

Alberto Costa: [\[45511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps her Department is taking to help de-escalate tensions between Greece and Turkey.

Graham Stuart:

Greece and Turkey are close friends and allies of the UK. We encourage both countries to resolve issues through dialogue and we support measures aimed at de-escalation and reduction of tensions, including existing deconfliction mechanisms within NATO structures. The former Prime Minister reiterated these messages in his engagements with both President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Mitsotakis at the NATO Summit in Madrid and during calls on 21 June.

■ Iran: Guided Weapons

Mark Jenkinson: [\[42206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of Iran's ballistic missile programme.

Amanda Milling:

Iran continues to develop its ballistic missile programme, which is destabilising for the region and poses a threat to European security. UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (UNSCR 2231), which was unanimously adopted in the Security Council and underpins the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA), calls on Iran not to undertake activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering a nuclear weapon, including launches using such ballistic missile technology. Alongside France and Germany, we have written regularly to the UN Secretary-General, most recently on 24 May, to draw attention to Iranian missile activity inconsistent with UNSCR 2231 and raised this at the UN Security Council on 30 June. We urge Iran to fully abide by UNSCR 2231 and all other relevant resolutions.

■ Iran: NATO**Miriam Cates:** [\[42304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of Supreme Leader Khamenei's recent statement about NATO.

Graham Stuart:

We are aware of these comments. NATO is a defensive alliance and adheres to international law and to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. NATO's enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its Allies. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has gravely undermined our security environment. The Alliance shares our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We fully support Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence and to choose its own security arrangements.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Nadia Whittome:** [\[42316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations officials in her Department have made to the Israeli Government on reports of destruction of homes and farms in Masafer Yatta.

Amanda Milling:

We are aware of the decision by the Israeli Supreme Court on the Masafer Yatta eviction case and are monitoring the situation closely. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

I met with Palestinian families affected by the ongoing demolition and eviction orders at Masafer Yatta during my recent visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and raised our concerns with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Roll on 22 June.

■ Mali: Malnutrition**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[41971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help support children under the age of five who are suffering from acute malnutrition in the Menaka region of Mali.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is deeply concerned by rising humanitarian need across the Sahel, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine having a significant impact on the food security situation in Africa. We are a major humanitarian donor and have supported 6 million people with life-saving assistance in Mali since 2019. We are working with partners through our humanitarian programmes to address urgent food insecurity and respond to severe acute malnutrition. We continue to work closely with the UN and other donors to improve humanitarian access and deliver assistance to those most in need. We

recently announced roughly £20 million of aid to support displaced and malnourished women and children and to expand humanitarian access in the Sahel.

■ **Melilla: Asylum**

Nadia Whittome: [\[42314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions officials in her Department have had with their counterparts in the Spanish and Moroccan Governments on recent deaths at the Melilla border.

Graham Stuart:

We are concerned by the events of Friday 24 June on the border between Morocco and the Spanish enclave of Melilla, during which many migrants died. Senior FCDO officials have spoken to the relevant authorities in Spain and Morocco regarding the incident. We welcome the decision of both authorities to carry out investigations.

■ **Northern Ireland Protocol**

Stephen Farry: [\[42301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which (a) people and (b) organisations from Northern Ireland she has had official discussions with on the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill.

Graham Stuart:

The former Foreign Secretary and her ministerial colleagues regularly engaged with organisations from Northern Ireland on the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, including the Northern Ireland Business Brexit Working Group, other business representatives and political leaders from all parties. This included direct engagement when she visited Belfast earlier in the year.

■ **Russia: Diamonds**

Drew Hendry: [\[42061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her international counterparts on the potential merits of treating Russian diamonds as conflict diamonds under the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Drew Hendry: [\[42062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of the UK unilaterally treating Russian diamonds as conflict diamonds under the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Graham Stuart:

The Kimberley Process (KP) Certificate Scheme was originally designed to combat the trade in conflict diamonds, defined as rough diamonds being sold by rebel groups to fund conflict. While conflict diamonds now represent less than 1 per cent of the

global trade in rough diamonds, the narrow definition of conflict diamonds means the KP's ability to deliver on other issues is limited. The UK supports updating the definition of a conflict diamond so the Kimberley Process is better able to address the different types of conflict and actors of those conflicts, and will continue to play a role in discussions within the KP on this and other challenges it faces.

■ **Uganda: Cost of Living**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[41964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations she has made to her counterpart in Uganda on the (a) arrest and detention of six women who had been protesting about the high cost of living in that country on 30 May 2022 and (b) authorities' approach to handling protests in Uganda.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is concerned about the downward trajectory of democratic freedoms and rights in Uganda. Freedom of assembly and association, and of opinion and expression are integral to a functioning democracy. Ugandan citizens, should be able to question, inform and hold to account those in power. Though we have not raised the treatment of these specific people so far, our High Commission in Kampala has repeatedly raised concerns about freedom of expression issues with the Ugandan Government. I [Minister Ford] raised these concerns with President Museveni and Foreign Minister Odongo during my visit to Uganda on 19 January 2022. I [Minister Ford] stressed the importance of Uganda upholding their obligations under international human rights law and respecting democratic freedoms. The UK also reiterated these calls during Uganda's review under the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review Mechanism in February 2022. The UK will continue to work with all Ugandans to ensure democratic freedoms and respect for human rights.

■ **Ukraine: Armed Conflict**

Simon Fell:

[\[42205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of reports that Russia is to receive Iranian made drones for its invasion of Ukraine.

Graham Stuart:

Reports that Russia is buying drones from Iran illustrates that UK efforts with allies to isolate Moscow internationally and cripple its military are having an impact. Russia is struggling to source some vital military parts. We saw overwhelming opposition to Russia's behaviour at both the G7 and NATO Summits in May and the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in July. The UK is committed to working with allies to isolate Russia further, including through the use of sanctions. The reports also highlight Iran's continuing threat to international security and stability. We will continue to hold Iran to account for its destabilising activities.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

Martyn Day:

[\[45947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of conducting real world observational studies for assessing the (a) quality, (b) safety and (c) efficiency of medical cannabis products.

James Morris:

Observational studies with a small number of patients do not produce sufficiently robust results to inform routine clinical or commissioning decisions, as there is no robust way to compare findings in the absence of the intervention. Via the National Institute for Health and Care Research, the Department and NHS England are developing two randomised controlled trials into epilepsy in adults and children. The trials will start as soon as possible and results will be published once the trials have completed and the findings have been peer reviewed.

■ Coronavirus and Influenza: Vaccination

Rachael Maskell:

[\[42085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to roll out the (a) covid-19 booster and (b) flu vaccines; and if he will recommend that they are administered at the same time.

Maggie Throup:

The Government continues to be guided by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on COVID-19 and flu vaccinations. On 15 July 2022, the Government accepted the JCVI's advice for an autumn COVID-19 vaccination booster programme which commenced on 5 September 2022 in England and announced an expanded offer of free flu vaccinations which commenced on 1 September 2022.

As with previous COVID-19 campaigns, the oldest and most vulnerable will be offered appointments first. During the week of 5 September 2022, more than 700 care homes in England will be visited by COVID-19 vaccination teams. From 7 September, approximately seven million people, including people aged 75 years old and over, people who are immunosuppressed and health and care workers will be able to book an appointment online or by calling 119. The National Health Service will also launch the flu vaccine programme and encouraging eligible people to take up the offer where possible. Local NHS systems have been asked to maximise opportunities to co-promote and co-administer COVID-19 and flu vaccinations where possible and clinically advised, especially where this improves patient experience and uptake.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell: [\[42084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he taking to help the health and care workforce tackle covid-19 infections in the workforce.

Maggie Throup:

Symptomatic testing in high-risk health and care settings will continue for specific groups where infection can spread rapidly among those at higher risk of serious illness. Additionally, during periods of high prevalence, asymptomatic testing is available in these settings. The Government continues to provide free personal protective equipment to staff in National Health Service Trusts and adult social care services to protect against COVID-19 infection.

The Government has updated its guidance on COVID-19 measures for the NHS and the social care sector, which will continue to be reviewed to ensure these measures are effective and proportionate.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Rachael Maskell: [\[42080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the covid-19 testing regime in the context of existing levels of infection.

Maggie Throup:

The current testing regime in England focuses on those most at risk from serious outcomes from COVID-19, including those patients who could benefit from antiviral treatments. Universal free testing would not be a cost-effective method for those not at serious risk from the current COVID-19 variants.

The Government continues to keep this response under review to ensure it remains effective and proportionate and that measures are in place in the event of a dangerous new variant.

Rachael Maskell: [\[42081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to re-introduce free covid-19 testing.

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.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[42082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of continuing the covid-19 testing for health and care settings beyond autumn 2022.

Maggie Throup:

Symptomatic testing in high-risk health and care settings will continue at least until March 2023 for specific groups where infection can spread rapidly among those who may be at higher risk of serious illness. Additionally, during periods of high prevalence, asymptomatic testing will be available in such settings.

The Government will continue to keep the response to COVID-19 under review to ensure it remains effective and proportionate. Beyond autumn 2022, we will continue to monitor prevalence and other factors to determine whether asymptomatic testing is needed in high-risk settings.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Dr James Davies:

[\[42098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to extend the eligibility for the spring booster vaccine to people with motor neurone disease who are clinically extremely vulnerable to covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

On 21 February 2022, the Government accepted advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to offer a COVID-19 booster vaccination to specific vulnerable groups. This included residents in care homes for older adults; adults aged 75 years old and over; and individuals aged 12 years old or over who are immunosuppressed.

On 15 July 2022, the Government accepted advice from the JCVI to offer a booster vaccination to additional vulnerable patient cohorts in autumn 2022. This includes all clinical risk groups and those with motor neurone disease.

■ **Diabetes: Health Services**

Zarah Sultana:

[\[42253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to in response to the report entitled Recovering diabetes care: preventing the mounting crisis, published by Diabetes UK; and what estimate he has made of when the standard and speed of healthcare for people received with diabetes will return to pre covid-19 pandemic levels.

James Morris:

We are aware of the recent Diabetes UK report. NHS England's Diabetes Programme continues to work with systems on the restoration of routine care provision and to address health inequalities.

The '2022/23 priorities and operational planning guidance' asks that processes within diabetes care are restored to pre-pandemic levels by the end of March 2023. In 2022/23, we have allocated £36 million to integrated care systems (ICS), weighted by local levels of economic deprivation, to support the recovery of routine diabetes care. Each ICS is finalising operational plans for prioritised activities to support recovery.

■ Eating Disorders: LGBTQ+ People

Dan Carden: [\[42183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2022 to Question 31917 on Eating Disorders: LGBTQ+ People, if he will undertake a review of the (a) prevalence and (b) trends in the levels of eating disorders in the LGBTQ+ community.

Gillian Keegan:

There are no current plans to do so.

■ Hospitals: Buildings

Daisy Cooper: [\[42208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which NHS trust hospitals in England are fitted with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is shown in the following table.

WEST SUFFOLK NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Airedale NHS Foundation Trust

Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

WEST SUFFOLK NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

■ Mental Health Services

Christopher Pincher: [\[45795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his Department's policy to give the same priority to mental health as physical health.

Gillian Keegan:

Investment in National Health Service mental health services continues to increase each year from approximately £11 billion in 2015/16 to £15 billion in 2021/22.

The Health and Care Act 2022 includes clarification of the meaning of 'health' to include 'mental health'; provisions to strengthen accountability and transparency on decisions and spending relating to mental health; and ensuring integrated care boards have an appropriate skill mix and experience necessary to deliver its functions, including mental health services.

■ Miscarriage

Stella Creasy: [\[42033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the commitment in the Women's Health Strategy for England, published on 19 July 2022, to certify pregnancy losses occurring before 24 weeks, in what ways that certification will differ from informal certification practices already provided in some hospitals.

Maria Caulfield:

There is currently no formal process for parents to register the loss when a pregnancy ends before 24 weeks gestations. While some trusts have local arrangements, such as a book of remembrance or a certificate of loss, this is not consistent and is not available for the estimated 250,000 losses which take place outside medical settings. The introduction of pregnancy loss certificates in England will allow a non-statutory, voluntary scheme to enable parents who have experienced a pre-24 weeks pregnancy loss to record and receive a certificate to provide recognition of their baby's potential life.

■ NHS: Pay

Zarah Sultana: [\[42252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) provide an above inflation pay rise to NHS workers in 2022 and (b) ensure that that pay rise takes into

account real term changes in NHS workers' pay since 2010; and what assessment he has made of the potential impact of a below inflation pay rise on NHS staff (i) retention, (ii) vacancies and (iii) recruitment.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government has accepted the recommendations made by the independent Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) for National Health Service staff. The majority of NHS staff, including nurses, paramedics and midwives, will receive an increase in basic pay of at least 4% to 9.3%. The PRBs' recommendations are based on an assessment of evidence from a range of stakeholders, including NHS system partners, trades unions and the Government, which consider recruitment, retention and staff motivation.

The NHS People Plan focuses on retaining staff by improving the experience of working in the NHS, including measures which address health and wellbeing. The NHS Retention Programme also targets interventions to support staff to remain in the NHS and understand the reasons why staff leave.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Applications

Royston Smith:

[42103]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many decisions on asylum applications have exceeded the usual decision time of six months in the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

Information regarding the number of asylum applications which did not receive a decision within six months is published as part of the Government's Transparency agenda, the latest release of which can be found at table Asy_01 of the Asylum Transparency Data May 2022: [Immigration and protection data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/data-and-statistics/immigration-and-protection-data-q1-2022).

■ Asylum: Rwanda

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[42177]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has received any advice on the potential for fraud risk associated to the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda.

Simon Baynes:

As is standard for any new policy, comprehensive accounting officer advice was provided for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda which included fraud risk assessment.

■ Biometrics

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[41959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) accuracy of live facial recognition technology, (b) potential for biased outputs and decision-making from facial recognition technology system operators and (c) the adequacy of criteria for deployment of facial recognition technology.

Tom Pursglove:

The Government supports the police using new technologies like facial recognition to protect the public. Whether and how they use it is an operational matter for the police in accordance with the legal framework, and they have published the results.

The College of Policing has published an Authorised Professional Practice, which provides national guidance and addresses the Court of Appeal judgment on *Bridges vs South Wales Police*. This includes details on how to measure accuracy, the requirement to comply with the public sector equality duty in relation to possible bias, the need for a human decision on whether and how to intervene following an alert for a possible match, and the deployment criteria.

■ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

Gerald Jones:

[\[44996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Ministerial Statement of 17 May 2022 on Ratification of the Istanbul Convention, HCWS34, whether her Department plans to introduce safeguards to protect migrant women from gender-based violence in the context of the decision to apply a reservation to Article 59 of that Convention.

Amanda Solloway:

On 21st 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 UK applied two reservations, including one on Article 59 which relates to support for migrant victims of domestic abuse.

The last annual progress report on ratification of the Convention confirmed that the UK's position on Article 59 is "under review" pending the results and evaluation of the Support for Migrant Victims (SMV) Pilot Scheme. The Government will make a longer-term decision about the UK's position on Article 59, and whether the reservation on that article should be maintained or withdrawn, in the light of the findings of the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme pilot and wider policy considerations. Therefore, we decided to apply a reservation on Article 59, which nine other countries have also done, to enable the UK to ratify as soon as possible.

The Government is committed to supporting all victims of domestic abuse, including migrant victims, regardless of immigration status. Therefore, in the interim, £1.4

million of funding has been allocated in 2022-23 to continue to fund support for migrant victims of domestic abuse.

■ Domestic Abuse

Sam Tarry: [\[45045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent engagement her Department has had with charities helping to tackle violence against women and girls.

Sam Tarry: [\[45046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent engagement her Department has had with charities specialising in support for victims of domestic violence.

Amanda Solloway:

In July 2021, the Government published a cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy to help ensure that women and girls are safe everywhere – at home, at work, online and on the streets. This was followed by the complementary Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, published in March 2022.

In developing these strategies, we engaged closely with charities and organisations on the frontline supporting victims of VAWG, including domestic abuse. We also worked with police and other public agencies, as well as engaging victims with lived experience through the public Call for Evidence, which received an unprecedented 180,000 responses. We held stakeholder roundtables with representatives from both the charity and public sector, held focus groups with expert organisations and professionals and received written submissions from expert respondents which provided information on scope, scale, and prevalence of these crimes.

In November 2021, as part of wider Domestic Abuse Act 2021 implementation, the role of Domestic Abuse Commissioner was placed on a statutory footing to represent victims through engagement with the sector and promoting best practice in the response to domestic abuse. The Home Office also ran wide-reaching public consultations for the recently published Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance and draft Controlling or Coercive Behaviour Statutory Guidance, inviting all interested stakeholders to respond.

We also hold regular VAWG stakeholder engagement meetings to keep the sector directly informed of upcoming work and developments in this area, respond to questions and invite stakeholder feedback.

Sam Tarry: [\[45047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help tackle the root causes of violence against women and girls.

Amanda Solloway:

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a government priority. VAWG is an unacceptable, preventable issue which blights the lives of millions.

One year on from the publication of the Tackling VAWG Strategy, we have made significant progress and delivered a number of key commitments to help ensure that women and girls are safe everywhere - at home, online, at work and in public spaces. This includes action to tackle the causes of these crimes. We have:

- o supported the introduction of a new full-time National Policing Lead for VAWG, DCC Maggie Blyth, to help strengthen the police response;
- o ratified the Istanbul Convention on 21 July 2022, demonstrating to women in the UK and to our partners overseas our commitment to tackling VAWG;
- o launched the first phase of our national communications campaign, 'Enough', to challenge the harmful behaviours that exist within wider society, educate young people about healthy relationships and consent, and ensure victims can recognise abuse and receive support;
- o announced that we will add VAWG to the Strategic Policing Requirement meaning it will be set out as a national threat for forces to respond to alongside other threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse;
- o allocated £55 million to communities through the Safer Streets Fund and Safety of Women at Night Fund, including for extra CCTV, streetlighting and work to change attitudes and work to preventing VAWG in public spaces at night;
- o published a refreshed National Statement of Expectations and accompanying VAWG Commissioning Toolkit to outline the activity that local areas should undertake to ensure victims and survivors of VAWG get the help and support they need;
- o criminalised virginity testing, to send a clear message that this practice is wholly unacceptable in our society;
- o appointed joint Transport Champions to help make public transport safer for women and girls; and
- o piloted a tool, StreetSafe, which enables the public to anonymously report areas where they feel unsafe.

In addition, in May 2022, the Home Office launched a competition on What Works to prevent violence against women and girls. This will provide multi-year funding to providers and be accompanied by extensive evaluation to increase our understanding of what works.

■ Fire and Rescue Services and Police: Emergency Calls

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[40905]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many 999 calls for (a) fire services and (b) the police were received on (i) 11 and 12 and (ii) 18 and 19 July 2022.

Tom Pursglove:

On the 11th July, 4,541 calls were connected to the fire service and 35,197 calls were connected to the police.

On the 12th July, 4,044 calls were connected to the fire service and 33,581 calls were connected to the police.

On the 18th July, 8,215 calls were connected to the fire service and 35,173 calls were connected to the police.

On the 19th July, 13,295 calls were connected to the fire service and 35,089 calls were connected to the police.

The police figures are for England and Wales only, the fire figures are for the UK.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Staff

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[40904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the adequacy of firefighter numbers to be able to fully respond to the impact of extreme weather events in (a) the current climate and (b) in future years as the climate warms.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Government recognises the incredible work of the fire and rescue service, and in particular its response to the wildfires this summer.

Whilst it for individual Fire and Rescue Services to make decisions on recruitment and on how they deploy their resources, the Home Office has been working closely with the Fire and Rescue Authorities to ensure that they have the resources they need. Overall, fire and rescue authorities will receive around £2.5 billion in 2022/23.

In addition, we are always reviewing the national capabilities to improve and enhance response to the full range of threats and risk, including those from climate change.

■ Forced Marriage: Disadvantaged

Nadia Whittome: [\[45681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential relationship between deprivation and rates of forced marriage.

Nadia Whittome: [\[45683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help improve the recording of rates of forced marriage, including at a ward level.

Amanda Solloway:

Forced marriage is an all too often hidden crime and we are determined to tackle it and give more victims the confidence to come forward.

The joint Home Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Forced Marriage Unit leads on the government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. It operates both inside the UK (where support is provided to any individual) and overseas (where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals). The FMU publishes annual statistics of cases it has dealt

with, including broken down by geographical area. The latest statistics published in 2021 show the FMU provided advice and support in 337 cases of actual or potential forced marriage, with 22% of these referrals coming from the London region.

Understanding the potential relationship between deprivation and rates of forced marriage is challenging. However, as committed to in the 2021 Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, we are exploring options to better understand the prevalence of forced marriage in England and Wales.

We recognise the importance of cases being recorded accurately. That is why the Annual Data Requirement (ADR) for England and Wales now requires police forces to provide data returns to the Home Office on 'honour'-based abuse offences, including forced marriage. The Government publishes this data annually – the most recent data was published on 9 December 2021 and can be found at the following link: [Statistics on so called 'honour-based' abuse offences, England and Wales, 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-so-called-honour-based-abuse-offences-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021).

In addition, we recently published updated multi-agency statutory guidance on forced marriage and the FMU undertakes regular outreach activities to professionals, including police officers, to raise awareness of forced marriage and how best to support victims. Through these activities, the FMU reached over 1,000 professionals in 2021.

■ Gender Based Violence

Julian Knight:

[45380]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken towards implementation of the Government's Tackling violence against women and girls strategy.

Amanda Solloway:

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a government priority. VAWG is an unacceptable, preventable issue which blights the lives of millions.

One year on from the publication of the Tackling VAWG Strategy, we have made significant progress and delivered a number of key commitments to help ensure that women and girls are safe everywhere - at home, online, at work and in public spaces. This includes action to tackle the causes of these crimes. We have:

- o supported the introduction of a new full-time National Policing Lead for VAWG, DCC Maggie Blyth, to help strengthen the police response;
- o ratified the Istanbul Convention on 21 July 2022, demonstrating to women in the UK and to our partners overseas our commitment to tackling VAWG;
- o launched the first phase of our national communications campaign, 'Enough', to challenge the harmful behaviours that exist within wider society, educate young people about healthy relationships and consent, and ensure victims can recognise abuse and receive support;

- o announced that we will add VAWG to the Strategic Policing Requirement meaning it will be set out as a national threat for forces to respond to alongside other threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse;
 - o allocated £55 million to communities through the Safer Streets Fund and Safety of Women at Night Fund, including for extra CCTV, streetlighting and work to change attitudes and work to preventing VAWG in public spaces at night;
 - o published a refreshed National Statement of Expectations and accompanying VAWG Commissioning Toolkit to outline the activity that local areas should undertake to ensure victims and survivors of VAWG get the help and support they need;
 - o criminalised virginity testing, to send a clear message that this practice is wholly unacceptable in our society;
 - o appointed joint Transport Champions to help make public transport safer for women and girls; and
 - o piloted a tool, StreetSafe, which enables the public to anonymously report areas where they feel unsafe.
- In addition, in May 2022, the Home Office launched a competition on What Works to prevent violence against women and girls. This will provide multi-year funding to providers and be accompanied by extensive evaluation to increase our understanding of what works.

■ Genocide: Rwanda

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[40743]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 14 July to Question 29907, if she will increase Government resources for investigations of Rwandan nationals in the UK alleged to have taken part in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis.

Tom Pursglove:

Information about spend on investigations into war crimes committed abroad is not held by the Home Office.

The Metropolitan Police has national responsibility for carrying out UK police inquiries for the investigation of all allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and torture.

It will receive up to £3.24 billion in 2022/23 through the police funding settlement, an increase of up to £169.3 million when compared to 2021/22.

Decisions on how to allocate resources and distribute funding, including for investigation of alleged war crimes, is an operationally independent matter for Chief Constables, PCCs and Mayors with PCC functions, in this case the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Mayor of London.

■ HM Passport Office: ICT

Ian Byrne: [\[40995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether there are penalty costs for continued use of the legacy Application Management System system at HM Passport Office.

Kevin Foster:

No penalty regime exists for the continued use of the legacy Application Management System.

■ Immigration: Applications

Royston Smith: [\[42109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) people applied for indefinite leave to remain and (b) applications for indefinite leave to remain were processed in each month between July 2021 and July 2022.

Royston Smith: [\[42110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for indefinite leave to remain took longer than six months for a decision to be reached in (a) June 2019 and (b) June 2022.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the number of applications which were granted and refused for indefinite leave to remain in our Migration Statistics: [Migration statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Home Office transparency data contains data of our performance against service standard for indefinite leave to remain applications. This can be found in VC_02 of our transparency data: [Migration transparency data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Home Office does not publish data on the number of people who have applied for and have been processed under indefinite leave to remain. To obtain this information would require a manual trawl of cases and would incur a disproportionate cost.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Kirsten Oswald: [\[42048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2022 to Question 30043 on Immigration: EU Nationals, what steps she is taking to increase the level of satisfaction among landlords at the system for EU citizens with settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme to prove that they have the right to reside in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The Immigration Act 2014 put in place a requirement for landlords to make simple checks on tenants to evidence their right to rent property in the UK. The 2014 Act

applies the Right to Rent Scheme to the whole of the UK, however it is currently in force in England only. No decisions have been taken on rolling out the scheme to the rest of the UK.

Providing immigration status information online has enabled us to simplify and standardise the system of checks for landlords, by providing information about an individual's status in a format which is easy to understand and accessible to all users, removing the need for checkers to interpret various types of physical documents, complex legal terminology or confusing abbreviations.

We are committed to reviewing feedback on our services and, where necessary, making improvements. Feedback and user satisfaction scores for checkers and migrants are collected from our gov.uk services and are published as a part of our transparency data on a quarterly basis:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-data-q1-2022>

We analyse and review this feedback monthly and use it to improve the service. We also collate and conduct trend analysis on incidents which are reported to us by checkers and status holders in order to make improvements.

For example, we have added a prefix to the share code which users provide to checkers when they wish to share their status. This makes it clear whether a share code is generated for a right to work or right to rent check so landlords and employers can quickly determine if they have the right type of code. We also extended the validity of share codes from 30 to 90 days following feedback they expired too quickly.

We are also improving the multiple check process in response to checker feedback, adding a button which will take checkers to the start of the process, rather than forcing them to navigate backwards after making each check. This improvement is currently live in the View and Prove service, and we will add it to the right to rent and right to work check services shortly.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Alison Thewliss: [\[42053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of 24 June 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow Central on Mr Dandena.

Kevin Foster:

The Immigration Minister replied on 29 July 2022.

■ **Offenders: Deportation**

Alison Thewliss: [\[42054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much it costs to hold an individual under immigration powers in prison, per person per night.

Simon Baynes:

The average cost to detain an individual in immigration detention is provided on a per day basis. The current daily cost per individual in immigration detention, which includes individuals held under immigration powers in the prison estate, is £107.23.

Data can be found at the link: [Immigration Enforcement data: Q1 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-enforcement-data-q1-2022)

Organised Crime**Colleen Fletcher:****[40804]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of gang-related crime in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in each of the last three years.

Tom Pursglove:

Gang-related crime can include a wide variety of offences, such as serious violence offences and county lines drug crime, and there is no one metric which encompasses them all.

However, tackling these crimes is a priority for this Government. For example, the Government has made £130m available this financial year (22/23) to tackle serious violence, including murder and knife crime. In the West Midlands this includes £5.87m towards their Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), which delivers a range of interventions with those at risk of involvement in violence, and £3.02m towards their 'Grip' police enforcement programme, which delivers hotspot patrols in areas of risk.

In addition, to tackle county lines crime we are investing up to £145m over the next three years through the Drugs Strategy.

Passports: Fees and Charges**Gavin Robinson:****[42040]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many upgrade fees have been paid for British Passport applications in (a) each financial year since 2019 and (b) since 1 April 2022.

Kevin Foster:

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.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Rachael Maskell:

[\[42078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to find residential accommodation for Afghan refugees who are living in bridging hotels.

Kevin Foster:

Due to the scale and pace of the evacuation in Afghanistan we have had to use hotels as a temporary accommodation measure. We do not want to keep people in temporary accommodation for any longer than is absolutely necessary. We have moved – or are in the process of moving - over 7,000 people into permanent homes since June 2021. There is a huge effort underway to support the families into permanent homes as soon as we can so they can settle and rebuild their lives, and to ensure those still temporarily accommodated in hotels are given the best start to their life in the UK.

We continue to work with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible. We have set up a bespoke local engagement team within Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with named points of contact for each region across the country, to make it easier for local authorities to come forward with offers of accommodation – including larger properties to support bigger families - and develop strong local integration initiatives.

In addition, we are working on a number of alternative accommodation options including MOD properties, using education based accommodation and the private rented sector. This includes providing councils with additional resources for appropriate properties.

The government is working with councils to find families settled homes as quickly as possible. It is right we take time to ensure families are provided with suitable homes which support their integration alongside access to education and employment.

■ Refugees: Finance

Imran Hussain:

[\[42043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is applying the no recourse to public funds condition to refugees who are granted Temporary Protection Status under Section 12 of the Nationality and Borders Act.

Imran Hussain:

[\[42046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made projections for the number of refugees expected to be granted Temporary Protection Status under section 12 of the Nationality and Borders Act in the 12 months from 28 June 2022.

Imran Hussain:[\[42047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to provide sufficient administrative resources to process renewal applications for limited leave to remain for people with temporary protection status.

Kevin Foster:

The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 contains the powers to differentiate entitlements between two groups of refugees. Those who came to the UK directly, claimed asylum without delay, and are able to show good cause for any illegal entry or presence in the UK are Group 1 refugees. Where an individual fails to meet one or more of these requirements, they are a Group 2 refugee.

Changes to Part 11 of the Immigration Rules, which came into force for asylum claims lodged on or after 28 June 2022, implemented the differentiated asylum system. Section 12 of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 allows us to differentiate on the length of permission to stay, route to settlement, recourse to public funds and family reunion rights.

An individual who qualifies for refugee status as a result of an asylum claim made on or after 28 June 2022 will be recognised as a Group 1 or Group 2 refugee. Whilst, across the asylum system we work to a number of assumptions, we do not routinely comment on these as they can be affected by a number of external factors.

The Home Office have recruitment strategies in place to continually assess and maintain resources at the required levels to take prompt decisions at all points of the system, for example initial decisions, decisions on applications for further permission to stay for Group 2 refugees and decisions on applications for settlement for Group 1 refugees.

■ Sexual Offences**John McNally:**[\[45225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2022 to Question 37514 on Sexual Offences, whether (a) incentives and (b) penalties exist to encourage police departments to 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, and we expect cases to be dealt with sensitively and effectively. In June 2021, we published the End-to-End Rape Review Report and Action Plan which outlined a robust programme of work that aims to achieve a significant improvement in the way the criminal justice system responds to rape and sexual offences against adults.

As set out in the Rape Review, our ambition 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.

There are no set targets for the police on timeliness. The published crime outcomes data shows that for all sexual offences the median days for a charge outcome to be assigned in 21/22 was 261 days, down from 268 days in 20/21. For all rape, the median days for a charge outcome to be assigned in 21/22 was 467 days compared to 465 days in 20/21.

■ Slavery

Sarah Olney: [\[45271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her planned timetable is for bringing forward legislative proposals to reduce the prevalence of modern slavery in supply chains.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government is committed to strengthening our approach to modern slavery and building on the world-leading legislation on modern slavery in supply chains introduced in the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

As part of its response to the 2018 Independent Review of the Modern slavery Act, the Home Office conducted a public consultation on potential changes to the Modern Slavery Act's transparency legislation. Following the consultation, the government committed to taking forwards an ambitious package of measures to strengthen the Act's transparency legislation, including:

- Extending the reporting requirement to public bodies with a budget of £36 million or more;
- Mandating the specific reporting topics statements must cover;
- Requiring organisations to publish their statement on the Government modern slavery statement registry.

In January 2021 the Government further committed to introduce financial penalties for organisations who fail to meet their statutory obligations to publish annual modern slavery statements.

These measures require primary legislation and as announced in the Queen's Speech, a Modern Slavery Bill will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Personal Property

Owen Thompson: [\[45943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what means of redress are available to undocumented people who arrive in the UK by small boats whose personal items are not returned to them after being taken into the custody of Home Office agents on arrival.

Kevin Foster:

Dry clothing is provided after arrival at Dover, with the consequence people are parted from their wet clothing and possessions. These are bagged and logged, and go with the person during their journey through the reception process.

During the reception phase, people are searched for anything which might injure themselves or others as well as for documentation related to their journey to the UK. These items are retained during the reception process but, if not contraband, are returned to the individual upon release into accommodation and our aim is to reunite people with their possessions as quickly as possible. Identity documentation is retained until such time as an individual is either granted leave to enter or is removed from the UK. It should be noted no cash belonging to people arriving by small boat is retained by either HO staff or contractors, but is instead returned immediately unless the sum is of such a magnitude that an investigation into potential proceeds of crime is warranted.

Inevitably, with such large volumes of persons being processed and the challenging conditions in which journeys are made, items can be mislaid. Every effort is made to reduce the risk of this happening, and there is a lost property process to enable people to raise any concerns about missing possessions. The lost property cases which do occur represent a small percentage of overall arrival numbers, but there are no plans to publish this data at present.

■ War Crimes: Criminal Investigation**Mr Andrew Mitchell:****[40744]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 14 July to Question 29906, how much the Government has spent on investigations into war crimes committed abroad by suspects living in the UK over each of the last five years.

Tom Pursglove:

Information about spend on investigations into war crimes committed abroad is not held by the Home Office.

The Metropolitan Police has national responsibility for carrying out UK police inquiries for the investigation of all allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and torture.

It will receive up to £3.24 billion in 2022/23 through the police funding settlement, an increase of up to £169.3 million when compared to 2021/22.

Decisions on how to allocate resources and distribute funding, including for investigation of alleged war crimes, is an operationally independent matter for Chief Constables, PCCs and Mayors with PCC functions, in this case the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Mayor of London.

■ Windrush Compensation Scheme

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[41960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any applicants to the Windrush Compensation Scheme have been apprehended by immigration enforcement since the launch of that scheme.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[41961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential for the Windrush Compensation Scheme application form to serve as a barrier to people wishing to apply for compensation with particular regard to (a) its complexity and (b) the nature of information it requires.

Kevin Foster:

In response to question UIN: 41960

Any information provided as part of a compensation claim is solely used for the purpose of assessing that claim. Information provided as part of a compensation claim is held on a separate system, and is not shared outside of the compensation team. Information provided as part of a compensation claim would never be passed on to Immigration Enforcement or used as part of enforcement action.

Immigration Enforcement have put in place safeguards to ensure members of the Windrush generation are not subjected to enforcement action. Whenever a person is encountered who claims to be a member of the Windrush generation or to be in the UK lawfully, they are referred to the Windrush Help Team to consider their case and, if appropriate, issue documentation under the Windrush (status) Scheme confirming their right to be in the UK. No enforcement action is taken against individuals whose status is under review by the Windrush Help Team, or who have an ongoing Windrush (status) Scheme application.

Anyone is free to submit a claim to the Windrush Compensation Scheme, irrespective of whether they are actually eligible for compensation. It is possible for a person who is in the UK unlawfully, and who is not a member of the Windrush generation, to submit an unmeritorious compensation claim. They may, rightly, be subject to enforcement action on the basis of information obtained by Immigration Enforcement independently. We do not hold data on how many compensation claimants have later faced enforcement action.

In response to question UIN: 41961

Since its launch, the Home Office has continued to listen and respond to feedback from affected communities and stakeholders about how the Scheme operates and its accessibility. In response to feedback, we have re-designed the primary claim form to make it easier to complete.

We have designed the compensation scheme to be as clear and simple as possible, so people do not need legal assistance to make a claim. We have published a redesigned primary claim form which now has a Crystal Mark from the Plain English

Campaign, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring the scheme is accessible and as easy to use as possible.

The new form includes more targeted and closed questions to help people understand and provide the key information we need from them. We believe the new form will improve peoples' experiences of applying to the scheme and help to speed up the processing of claims by reducing the amount of additional information and evidence we must ask people to provide.

We have made the evidential threshold as low as possible. Our intent is to ask for the minimum evidence necessary to reduce the burden on individuals, whilst maximising the offers we can make. In doing so we are seeking to strike the right balance between ensuring the scheme is comprehensive and covers the broadest range of circumstances, whilst also making it easy to navigate.

However, for those who want or need support to make a claim, the Home Office provides free assistance in making applications through our independent claims assistance provider - We Are Digital. The Windrush Compensation Scheme Help Team can also assist individuals should they have questions about the claim form or process.

We continue to work extensively with communities and stakeholders to raise awareness of the Scheme and encourage affected individuals to apply.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Trade Agreements: Israel

Mr David Jones:

[\[41956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department is taking steps to help ensure that the interests of Palestinians are reflected in the negotiations for the free trade agreement with Israel.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Palestinian goods imported from the Occupied Palestinian Territories benefit from the trade preferences outlined in the bilateral agreement negotiated between the United Kingdom and the Palestinian Authority, which came into force on 1st January 2021. While the focus of these negotiations is trade with the State of Israel, we value our bilateral trade relationship with the Palestinian Authority too, and will continue to build upon our commercial links through our bilateral agreement.

JUSTICE

■ Aiding and Abetting: Autism

Zarah Sultana:

[\[42251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people with autism have been (a) convicted and (b) acquitted under joint enterprise since the Supreme Court judgement of

18 February 2016 in R v Jogee; and how many of those convicted were (i) first and (ii) secondary offenders.

Miss Sarah Dines:

The Ministry of Justice does not collect centrally, information on whether a defendant in criminal proceedings has autism or whether a conviction or acquittal related to joint enterprise. Such information may be held on court records but could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **HM Courts and Tribunals Service: ICT**

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[42134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many workarounds for the Common Platform (a) have been developed and (b) are in place.

Miss Sarah Dines:

We are developing the system in an agile way, which means that as we move through transition from the old system to the new or where there is further functionality to be delivered, we may temporarily introduce a workaround. The staff intranet pages, supported by email alerts and team stand up meetings, provide staff with an update on changes to workarounds ensuring they are aware of the latest changes.

82 workarounds have been developed to date and as of 24th August, there are 14 active workarounds in place.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[42135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases were resulted on the Common Platform where a financial order but no collection order was made.

Miss Sarah Dines:

A making of a collection order is subject to judicial discretion and there are circumstances where the court does not make such an order. For this reason, Common Platform reports on the total number of financial accounts requested / generated rather than providing separate reports based whether or not collection order was made.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[42138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many times a result recorded on the Common Platform has been lost in each of the last 21 months.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Common Platform does not lose results once a user has entered and shared them on the system. There may occasionally be anomalies with the display on user-facing screens; however, there are technical checks and measures which correct these display anomalies. Where an anomaly occurs, it is then investigated and resolved as soon as possible.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[42142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of time targets for urgent results have been missed in locations using the Common Platform.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Common Platform as well as the legacy systems do not have a built-in report which monitors the time targets for urgent results. Urgent results are managed and monitored locally at a court level against a Service level Agreement framework.

■ Legal Aid Scheme

Catherine West: [\[42144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid's recommendations on (a) a pay review body and (b) reforms to the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme in respect of criminal barristers being paid for written work.

Catherine West: [\[42145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the Criminal Bar Association on recent strikes.

Catherine West: [\[42146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department is taking steps to help improve the (a) retention and (b) recruitment of criminal junior barristers.

Miss Sarah Dines:

Criminal barristers play a crucial role in upholding the rule of law and are a fundamental part of our criminal justice system. Our plans to increase legal aid fees will put criminal legal aid on a sustainable footing and ensure there is a sustainable supply of practitioners. We have made proposals for wholesale reform of legal aid – including £115 million more on fees, £20 million for longer term reform and increased sitting days so that the Crown Court can get through more trials. This, combined, would take expected criminal legal aid spend to £1.2 billion per year.

On 20 July, the Government laid a statutory instrument to implement a 15% uplift to most fee schemes. This statutory instrument will come into force for new representation orders that begin from 30 September 2022 onwards. Criminal legal aid practitioners will start to receive the pay increase from October 2022 onwards for their work on these cases.

Since the consultation closed, my officials have been working hard to analyse all responses to deliver our full response in the Autumn and progress reform at pace. Our full response to the consultation will include our proposals to:

- Reform fee schemes so they properly reflect the way legal professionals work today.
- Invest in a diverse and sustainable profession.

- Create an Advisory Board (CLAIR explicitly did not recommend a pay review body as suggested in the question).

Written work is one of a number of activities constituting an advocate's typical preparation for a Crown Court trial. Most preparation is currently considered to be remunerated by the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme fixed basic ("brief") fee; the department does not currently collect the data necessary to isolate how many hours advocates normally commit to written work (or other preparatory activities). Officials are currently determining the optimal approach for exploring the nature of modern advocacy and establishing how best to reform the AGFS as a whole. We will outline next steps in the full response to consultation. We will also respond to the question asked about potential training grants for criminal legal aid chambers to help with recruitment and retention issues.

I am committed to work with the legal professions – both barristers and solicitors – to ensure that criminal advocacy remains an attractive profession which is open to all. This must be a long term, system-wide process, far beyond legal aid. This is an important task for the Government, but this is not something we can deliver alone.

My predecessor, James Cartlidge MP, met with representatives from the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) in May and I met with them in July. These meetings gave us the chance to discuss the positive changes proposed by the CLAIR consultation and the benefits of engaging with government constructively to ensure the sustainability of the sector. I have since offered to meet again with the CBA, which they are yet to respond to. Senior officials continue to meet with the CBA to discuss issues of mutual concern on a weekly basis.

■ Ministry of Justice: Agency Workers

Jon Trickett:

[\[41945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department has spent on (a) agency workers and (b) agency retainer fees in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

Miss Sarah Dines:

MOJ spend on agency workers (also commonly referred to as "Contingent Labour" or "Temporary Workers") in the periods requested is as follows.

We have interpreted the reference to agency retainer fees as the fees charged at the commencement of the provision of a search recruitment service. This is only applicable when recruiting for a permanent or fixed term post. Agency retainer fees are not applicable to the contingent labour market.

FINANCIAL YEAR	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	£197.6m	£233.3m	£196.0m

MoJ is taking several steps to reduce its reliance on agency workers. This includes monitoring resourcing levels and delivering recruitment campaigns which aim to

adequately address shortfalls in staffing numbers, aiming to recruit 1500 trainee Probation Officers per FY to qualify in the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) to reach the Target Operating Model by 2025, and running regional ready-qualified Probation Officer recruitment campaigns to incentivise agency workers to apply for permanent positions with HMPPS. We are also developing internal progression routes for existing Probation Services Officers (PSOs) to apply to the PQiP learning programme internally. Recruitment activity is underway to prioritise the backfilling of PSOs to continue the pipeline throughout.

■ Prison Officers: Pay

Steve Reed:

[\[42039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department has spent on (a) amber and (b) red market supplements to prison officers in each of the last five years.

Stuart Andrew:

We are working hard to improve retention of frontline officers at prisons across England and Wales, providing opportunities to progress their careers and significant investment to keep them safe. Together, this will ensure we can recruit vital staff to keep offenders off the streets and protect the public.

Market Supplements are an additional (non-pensionable) allowance in place to support recruitment and retention at certain prison sites.

The annual expenditure on amber and red market supplements to prison officers in each of the last five years is provided below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL MARKET SUPPLEMENT EXPENDITURE
2017/2018	£10,672,767
2018/2019	£17,015,739
2019/2020	£18,388,592
2020/2021	£17,935,894
2021/2022	£18,530,093

It has not been possible to separate the amber and red market supplement expenditure for each financial year.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Energy Bills Rebate

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[41928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to monitor arrangements made by councils to determine the

allocation of the discretionary fund for the Council Tax Energy Rebate; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The monitoring data published at www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-tax-rebate-monitoring-data-april-june-2022 includes data on the allocation of funds from the discretionary scheme. Decisions on how the funds should be used are a matter for the local councils concerned.

■ **HM Passport Office: Recruitment**

Mr Clive Betts:

[41926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to a situation where a landlord's name appears on a Council Tax direct debit and where that landlord is also the liable person, but where the tenant pays a rent to the landlord which is deemed to include council tax, whether such a landlord is entitled to keep the £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate payment.

Paul Scully:

In most circumstances, the occupant of a property is liable for council tax rather than the owner. Where the liable council tax payer for a chargeable dwelling does not occupy the property, for example in a house in multiple occupation or residential care home, nobody will be eligible for the rebate in relation to that property. Councils can consider supporting occupants in these circumstances through their discretionary fund.

■ **Housing: Care Leavers**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[40771]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to provide housing assistance to care leavers similar to that of the veterans scheme.

Eddie Hughes:

Local authorities have the freedom to tailor their allocation priorities to meet the need of their local communities, including care leavers. In framing their social housing allocation scheme, they must ensure that reasonable preference (priority) is given to people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.

Statutory guidance also makes clear that we expect local authorities to make provision for appropriate exceptions to their residency requirements for an allocation of social housing and take proper account of special circumstances, including the needs of care leavers.

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy confirmed £3.2 million funding in 2022/23 will provide targeted support to young people leaving care most at risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping, in 69 local authorities identified as having the greatest concentration of young people at risk. It will also provide on-going support for children's services and housing teams to improve partnership working.

The Government will also continue investment into the ‘Staying Put’ programme and scale up the number of local areas offering the ‘Staying Close’ programme, which enable young people leaving care to stay with, or in touch with, former foster families and children’s homes for longer – building their resilience as they transition to independent living.

■ **LGBTQ+ People: Alcoholic Drinks**

Mr Clive Betts: [\[41925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Department’s guidance on the Council Tax Energy Rebate which states that councils can choose whether to offer £150 credit to an eligible household’s council tax account as a payment option, whether a local authority can use that £150 payment to reduce the arrears of a council taxpayer.

Paul Scully:

Taxpayers can choose to accept the rebate as a credit on their Council Tax account in order to reduce Council Tax arrears. However, rebate payments should only be made as council tax credits in circumstances where the tax payer has elected to receive a credit rather than a BACS or voucher payment or where an application has not been made or a voucher has not been cashed after a reasonable period of time has elapsed.

■ **Unemployment Benefits**

Mr Clive Betts: [\[41924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many households had received the £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate payment on (a) 1 April, (b) 1 May, (c) 1 June and (d) 1 July 2022.

Paul Scully:

Monthly data on the delivery of the scheme are available at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-tax-rebate-monitoring-data-april-june-2022

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Public Expenditure**

Ruth Jones: [\[46047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the total budget was for his Department in each year since 2010.

Conor Burns:

The Northern Ireland Office’s budget for each financial year since 2010 is available in the Department’s Annual Report and Accounts. These are published on the Gov.uk website annually.

The Department's budget for 2022-23 is included in the Government's [Main Supply Estimates 2022 to 23](#), published on Gov.uk by HM Treasury.

PRIME MINISTER

■ British Irish Council

Ruth Jones: [\[46095\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, how many meetings of the British-Irish Council he has attended in person since July 2019.

Boris Johnson:

A list of ministerial delegates at each ministerial meeting or summit are included in the official communiques. These can be found on the British-Irish Council website <https://www.britishirishcouncil.org/publications>.

■ Employment

Sir Stephen Timms: [\[41922\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2022 to Question 37423 on Employment and with reference to the Answer to the Question from the Rt hon. Member for Holborn and St Pancras at Prime Minister's Questions on 20 July 2022, Official Report, column 951, whether he plans to correct the record in respect of his statement that there are more people in paid employment than at any time in the history of this country; and if he will make a statement.

Boris Johnson:

I am proud of this Government's record in protecting jobs and supporting employment across the country. As I leave Office, latest labour market statistics speak to the resilience of the UK economy: I am happy to clarify that we have a record number of employees on payrolls, unemployment close to its lowest point since 1974, and youth unemployment at a record low.

This resilience is, in no small part, thanks to the extraordinary interventions we made during the pandemic to protect over 14.6 million jobs through furlough and our self-employment income support scheme. It is because of these interventions, and the delivery of the fastest vaccine rollout in Europe, that we oversaw the fastest economic growth in the G7 last year.

■ G7

Damien Moore: [\[45135\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what recent discussions he has had with his G7 counterparts following the summit in Bavaria, Germany.

Boris Johnson:

Details of discussions with world leaders including members of the G7 are published on gov.uk.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Disability****Dr Luke Evans:**[\[45434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the impact of staff shortages in airlines and airports on the provision of special assistance for passengers with registered disabilities.

Robert Courts:

I have met weekly with the aviation sector over the summer and have taken every opportunity to remind them of their responsibility to support passengers who require special assistance and have sought assurances throughout the summer of their plans to increase recruitment in this area.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as the aviation regulator, wrote to airlines and airports on 9 June, to ensure industry is reaching standards expected for providing disabled and less mobile passengers with the assistance they require. In addition, the CAA published additional guidance to airports on providing assistance services. The CAA also continues to monitor airport performance on delivering special assistance, against legal obligations and publishes its findings annually.

We published the Aviation Passenger Charter in July, to provide consumers with the information they need on their rights and responsibilities for each stage of their journey, from booking to if things go wrong. This included specific information for disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility on accessibility and special assistance. We developed this alongside industry, consumer and disability groups.

Accessibility in aviation remains a key government priority, and we will continue to work closely with the CAA to ensure that air travel is accessible for all passengers.

■ Department for Transport: Data Protection**Louise Haigh:**[\[45931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22, HC 492, published on 20 July 2022, how many people were affected by the twelve data breaches that required notification to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Trudy Harrison:

Of the 12 data breaches that required notification to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) during 2021-22, a total of 1,738 people were affected.

Most of that number is attributable to a single breach involving 1,684 individuals, whose records were incorrectly changed following outdated information from a third-party. Eight of the 12 breaches involved information about a single individual.

■ Doncaster Sheffield Airport**Louise Haigh:** [\[45224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what meetings he has had in (a) July and (b) August 2022 with the Peel Group on Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

Robert Courts:

In terms of meetings with Peel Group on Doncaster Sheffield Airport, I refer the Right Hon. Member to the answer given to her question on 5 September 2022, Written Question 40860.

■ Electric Scooters**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[45568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has plans to legalise the use of private e-scooters.

Trudy Harrison:

It is our intention that the Transport Bill will create a Low-speed Zero Emission Vehicle category that is independent from the cycle and motor vehicle categories. New powers in the Bill would subsequently allow the Department to decide which vehicles will fall into this category, and how they should be regulated to ensure safe use. We intend to use these powers to legalise private and rental e-scooter use in the future, with robust technical requirements and clear expectations on users.

■ Heathrow Airport**Ruth Jones:** [\[46066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the route network operated at Heathrow Airport.

Robert Courts:

The UK aviation market operates predominately in the private sector. Airports invest in their infrastructure to attract passengers and airlines, while airlines are well placed to deliver services to their customers by responding to demand for different routes. The route network at Heathrow is determined by airlines based on their own assessments.

■ Hitchin Station**Bim Afolami:** [\[45450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will provide funding to facilitate the opening up of eastern pedestrian and cycling access to Hitchin Train Station.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government is committed to increasing walking and cycling, with £2 billion of funding available for active travel up to 2024/25. Local authorities will shortly be invited to bid for the next round of active travel capital funding, which will be

administered by Active Travel England on behalf of the Department. Deciding which measures to put forward in their bids is a matter for individual authorities.

■ Investment Portfolio and Delivery Committee

Louise Haigh: [\[45929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the high risk projects within the scope of consideration of the Investment, Portfolio and Delivery Committee.

Trudy Harrison:

The Investment, Portfolio, and Delivery Committee has a role in overseeing those twenty-three Department for Transport projects that are on the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP). These, alongside the rest of the Government's most complex, high risk, and strategically significant projects, were included in the recent Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Annual Report 2021-22. A copy of this report, which includes delivery confidence assessments, was published on 20 July 2022 has been provided with this response.

■ Luton Airport: Noise

Bim Afolami: [\[45465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the levels of noise pollution caused by operations at London Luton Airport in communities in Hertfordshire.

Bim Afolami: [\[45467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential levels of noise pollution caused by operations at Heathrow Airport on communities in Hitchin and Harpenden constituency.

Bim Afolami: [\[45642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help enforce noise restrictions in place at London Luton Airport.

Robert Courts:

The Government sets noise-related restrictions at the noise-designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) and ensures these airports assess their noise impacts on an annual basis. In the case of Heathrow Airport, the Civil Aviation Authority produces summer noise exposure contours. These inform Government of the areas most significantly affected by aircraft movements from Heathrow, and therefore those communities most likely to suffer aircraft noise-related health outcomes which should be prioritised by policy interventions.

At other airports, such as London Luton, restrictions are set locally, usually through the planning system. It is the responsibility of the local planning authority to conduct any necessary noise assessment and to enforce any restrictions.

As major airports with more than 50,000 movements per year, both Heathrow and London Luton Airports are also obliged under the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, as amended, to produce noise maps and Noise Action Plans. Current Noise Action Plans cover the period 2019-2023, while the next round of planning will cover the period 2024-2028

■ **Public Transport: Temperature**

Sam Tarry: [\[45025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will allocate additional funding to ensure that all modes of public transport are equipped to deal with extreme heat.

Trudy Harrison:

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

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

■ **Railways: Finance**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[45990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions has he had with rail industry stakeholders on the delayed publication of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

Wendy Morton:

The Secretary of State regularly meets with industry stakeholders and discusses a variety of topics. Although no meetings have specifically been about the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) publication, the RNEP would have been raised and discussed on some of these occasions.

■ **Railways: North of England**

Louise Haigh: [\[45930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the Infrastructure Projects Authority assurance of action plan in relation to the Transpennine Route Upgrade.

Trudy Harrison:

The most recent assurance review of the Transpennine Route Upgrade programme was conducted by the National Audit Office, which included the assessment of all

previous IPA action plan reviews. The full report was published on the 20th July 2022 and is available on the NAO website.

■ Railways: Passengers

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[42169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2022 to Question 25974 on Passengers, if he will publish the scenarios of possible rail demand developed by his Department to reflect uncertainty, including how passengers respond post-covid-19.

Wendy Morton:

As previously mentioned in line with our published guidance, the Department continues to develop a number of scenarios of possible long-term rail demand to reflect uncertainty including how passengers respond post-covid-19 as well as economic forecasts.

■ Railways: Public Consultation

Helen Hayes: [\[45351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he (a) has had and (b) plans to have discussions with rail operators on the role of public consultation prior to withdrawing services or reducing carriage numbers.

Helen Hayes: [\[45352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he (a) has had and (b) plans to have discussions with rail operators on plans to restore services that have been recently withdrawn in London at a future date.

Wendy Morton:

The pandemic has changed travel habits, and operators needed to adapt quickly to passengers' new travel patterns.

Train operators have been working with their local markets and key stakeholders, including passenger groups, to ensure the needs of local communities are prioritised in the development of all service offers.

Operators will continue to develop demand-led timetables that can adapt to passengers' evolving needs, whilst also providing stability and making the running of the railways fairer for taxpayers.

■ Shipping: Russia

Damien Moore: [\[45159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that UK seafarers impacted by the sanctions on Russia are adequately supported.

Robert Courts:

The Government has introduced a range of Transport Sanctions in response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. These measures are intended to ratchet up the economic pressure on Russia, signal our support to Ukraine, and to degrade the Russian shipping sector. We also recognise the importance of protecting seafarers and their welfare whilst achieving this goal.

The Government continually seeks to ensure sanctions measures are carefully targeted and avoid unintended consequences. Economic sanctions come under the remit and responsibility of HM Treasury and its Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI). If a person or organisation is subject to financial sanctions and requires access to frozen funds in order to pay for goods and services, it is incumbent on them to seek a licence from OFSI. This includes the release of funds for the purpose of paying seafarers.

OFSI prioritises cases where there are issues of personal basic needs and/or wider humanitarian issues at stake which are of material impact or urgency, or which are deemed to be of particular strategic, economic or administrative importance. My Department has engaged regularly with OFSI on this matter to ensure cases of seafarer remuneration are considered and prioritised where possible.

■ Train Operating Companies: Finance**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[42170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will set out how much public funding train operating companies are set to receive in line with his mandate on the current industrial rail disputes.

Wendy Morton:

It is not possible to provide a figure whilst the industrial disputes are ongoing.

■ Train Operating Companies: Industrial Disputes**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[42171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he is required to agree the mandate that train operating companies have in industrial disputes.

Wendy Morton:

Yes, the Secretary of State would be required to agree a final mandate and has responsibility over controlling limits on public funding only but does not determine local or national offers made by train operating companies.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[42172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether train operating companies impacted by industrial disputes can (a) communicate or (b) hold discussions with trade unions about changes to pay, pensions or other terms and conditions, or about redundancy or restructuring plans, without first seeking his mandate to ensure they do not incur any financial penalties.

Wendy Morton:

The current rail discussions are being held at a national level between industry representatives and trade union General Secretaries in advance of more specific negotiations within individual train operating companies.

TREASURY**■ Debts: Developing Countries****Drew Hendry:**[\[42073\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that buyers of distressed government debt from emerging markets enable the restructuring of that debt when emergent countries national circumstances change for the worse.

Richard Fuller:

The UK government is committed to ensuring that private sector creditors participate in debt restructurings. When undertaking a debt restructuring, a key principle for the UK and other Paris Club members is 'Comparability of Treatment'. This requires all bilateral and commercial creditors to participate in a debt reorganisation arrangement on terms comparable to those of the Paris Club.

The majority of sovereign bond contracts contain collective action clauses (CACs). These facilitate more orderly sovereign debt restructurings by reducing the possibility for one or a small number of holdout or non-responsive lenders to block a decision taken by the qualified majority of lenders. The UK is working closely with international partners and a range of private sector stakeholders to explore the introduction of similar clauses into private syndicated lending.

■ Financial Services: Regulation**Drew Hendry:**[\[45903\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the FCA's regulatory regime in the Azure Service Ltd. case, and what discussions his Department have had with the FCA on lessons to be learned in the licensing of financial services as a result of the Azure Service Ltd. case; and if he will make a statement.

Richard Fuller:

The Government recognises the impact on consumers as a result of Azure Services' business practices whilst it operated as a credit broker without the relevant Office of Fair Trading (OFT) licence and, later on, Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) authorisation. However, the Government notes the decision by Barclays Partner Finance to refund over £210m to customers who took out a loan following an introduction by Azure Services.

The FCA has been established as an independent regulator responsible for the supervision and regulation of conduct in financial services. The FCA's independence from Government does not mean it can act arbitrarily, rather it must operate within the framework of statutory duties and powers agreed by Parliament. As well as being required to operate within this framework, the FCA is fully accountable to Parliament for how it discharges its statutory functions.

This direct accountability to Parliament reflects the FCA's statutory independence and the fact that they are solely responsible for everyday operational decisions without Government approval or direction, and so are primarily accountable for them. That notwithstanding, the Treasury plays an important role in holding the FCA accountable, including through engaging closely with the FCA across all levels of seniority.

The FCA is currently part way through its Transformation Programme, which is accelerating an ongoing programme of reform to make the FCA a more innovative, assertive and adaptive regulator. Amongst other things, the Transformation Programme aims to ensure that the FCA can make fast and effective decisions, and prioritise the right outcomes for consumers, markets and firms. It also involves significant investment in the FCA's systems and capabilities to enable better use of data and intelligence to regulate 50,000 firms effectively and efficiently.

As part of its Transformation Programme, the FCA has enhanced its approach to authorisations, including by applying its standards more robustly.

WALES

■ Wales Office: Agency Workers

Jon Trickett:

[\[41947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department has spent on (a) agency workers and (b) agency retainer fees in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2022.

David T C Davies:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales spent the following on agency workers in the year 2020, 2021 and 2022.

AGENCY STAFF SPEND

Year	Amount
	£
2020	129,764.87
2021	83,823.71
2022 to June '22	24,275.32

We have interpreted your reference to agency retainer fees as the fees charged at the commencement of the provision of a search recruitment service, this is only applicable when recruiting for a permanent or fixed-term post.

Agency retainer fees are not applicable to the contingent labour market.

■ Wales Office: Consultants

Kenny MacAskill: [\[42214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each of the last five years; and if he will publish a breakdown of the (a) amount paid to each consultancy contracted, (b) name of each consultancy contracted and (c) specific matters on which they were consulted.

David T C Davies:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales spent the following on consultancy services in each of the last five financial years:

FINANCIAL YEARS	SPEND (£)	NAME OF CONSULTANTS	MATTERS CONSULTED
2017-18	Nil	N/A	N/A
2018-19	17,400	Professor Cole	Transport
2018-19	18,000	Actica Consultancy (contracted to Welsh Government)	City Deal
2019-20	6,600	Professor Cole	Transport
2020-21	Nil	N/A	N/A
2021-22	Nil	N/A	N/A

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Chemicals: Regulation

Alex Cunningham: [\[42036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to UK Chemical classification, labelling and packaging, whether her Department has made an assessment the potential impact of regulatory divergence on industrial users.

Chloe Smith:

Under the Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulation in Great Britain (known as the GB CLP Regulation), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) acts on behalf of the Government as the Agency.

While the UK continues to recognise the importance of the European Union (EU) market for Northern Ireland, following EU Exit, the UK must reach its own independent decisions regarding the classification and labelling of hazardous chemicals. HSE considers the potential impacts of regulatory divergence in the course of producing Agency Opinions under the GB mandatory classification and labelling (GB MCL) system.

As part of the GB MCL system, HSE publishes a Technical Report, which is a technical and scientific assessment of the data and evidence. Within six months of its publication, the Agency produces an Agency Opinion which considers the Technical Report and any direct policy and socio-economic impacts of the proposed GB MCL in an impact and policy assessment. This includes potential downstream legislation impacts as well as other impacts on areas such as business or Northern Ireland trade with GB.

Impact and policy assessments allow the Agency to propose whether GB MCLs should be implemented in a way that might reduce or mitigate impacts while maintaining levels of protection for people and the environment. They also enable the Agency and UK government ministers and ministers in Scotland and Wales to better understand potential policy impacts, wider socio-economic impacts and other aspects of the new or revised mandatory classifications under the GB MCL system before arriving at any decisions on mandatory classification and labelling.

■ Employment: Hitchin and Harpenden**Bim Afolami:****[45544]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will make a comparative assessment of levels of (a) employment, (b) unemployment and (c) economic activity in Hitchin and Harpenden constituency in the (i) 12 months prior to the covid-19 pandemic and (ii) most recent period for which data is available.

Julie Marson:

The information requested is published and available [here](#).

Guidance for users can be found [here](#).

■ Energy: Prices**Damien Moore:****[45100]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department is planning to provide additional support to people with disabilities to help them meet energy bills and the increase in living costs.

Chloe Smith:

In response to the increase in energy bills and the cost of living, around six million people who receive a non-means-tested disability benefit will receive a one-off Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150. This is only one part of the government's £15bn package of support and sits alongside Cost of Living Payments of up to £650 for means-tested benefits recipients, payments to those eligible for Winter Fuel Payments and the extension of the Household Support Fund. This is on top of the £22bn the government has already announced to support households with the cost of living.

In addition to specific targeted support, disabled people may also benefit from previously announced measures to help people tackle the cost of living, including:

- £150 council tax rebate
- £400 discount from energy bills
- cuts to the Universal Credit taper rate
- frozen alcohol duty and fuel duty and
- the further rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 an hour from April 2022.

■ Fuels: Prices**Ian Byrne:**[\[40993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people in the UK who may potentially move into poverty as a result of the predicted rise in fuel bills in Autumn 2022.

David Rutley:

No such assessment has been made.

This government is committed to supporting those on low incomes. We will spend over £242bn through the welfare system in Great Britain in 2022/23 including £108bn on people of working age and over £134 billion on pensioners. Of the total amount, around £64 billion will be spent on supporting disabled people and people with health conditions.

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, made in 2 instalments, 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). All households with a domestic electricity bill will also benefit from the £400 support being provided through the Energy Bills Support Scheme. 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 a year, on average, through our changes to the Universal Credit taper and work allowances.

We are also providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials, on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing the total funding for this support to £1.5 billion. In England, the current Household Support Fund is already providing £421m of support for the period 1 April – 30 September 2022 and will be extended until March 2023 with a further £421m.

■ **Vacancies: Hitchin and Harpenden**

Bim Afolami:

[\[45689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will make an estimate of the number of job vacancies in Hitchin and Harpenden constituency as on 2 September 2022.

Julie Marson:

Vacancies data produced by the ONS in partnership with Adzuna are indexed to February 2020. As of 26th August 2022, the index value for the East of England is 105.1, i.e. there are 5.1% more vacancies on the 26th of August 2022 than there were in February 2020. Please note there is no vacancies data for parliamentary constituencies nor published figures for the number of vacancies by region.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Trade Policy Update

Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS293\]](#)

Since the House adjourned for summer recess, the Department for International Trade (DIT) has made good progress on a number of areas. This statement provides Parliament with an update on progress with Ukraine reconstruction, the UK's trade negotiations with India, negotiations towards accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and the Developing Countries Trading Scheme.

Ukraine reconstruction

At the end of July, following a competitive procurement process, we appointed Mott MacDonald and Crown Agents on a 12-week programme to act as Ukraine Reconstruction Industry Advisors to the joint UK-Ukraine Infrastructure Taskforce. They will provide technical and logistical assessments, work with our counterparts in country identifying and prioritising current and future reconstruction projects, and provide technical support to the joint Taskforce. At this stage the joint Taskforce will focus on the Ukrainian government's immediate priorities - rapid replacement of essential housing and bridging infrastructure damaged by the conflict. Successful delivery of these projects is likely to support the Ukrainian economy and unlock new, larger mutually beneficial opportunities for UK businesses and Ukraine in later stages as we continue to support its post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. To ensure we can deliver the most effective reconstruction solutions through the Infrastructure Taskforce, we will work in close partnership with our brilliant UK businesses to unleash their full potential. UKEF remains open for business in Ukraine with £3.5 billion of financial capacity available for UK exporters and Ukrainian buyers, subject to Treasury approvals.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

The first in-person Accession Working Group following the United Kingdom's application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) took place in Tokyo, 24 - 28 July 2022.

The UK team negotiated market access with CPTPP Parties in the following areas: goods, services and investment, government procurement, financial services and temporary entry.

Negotiations will continue over the course of the autumn with planning currently underway for the next round of talks. The Government will ensure that membership of CPTPP is achieved on terms that work for UK businesses and consumers.

Joining CPTPP offers numerous benefits to the UK. It will provide greater market access for British goods and services to one of the world's largest free trading areas, with a

combined GDP of £9 trillion in 2021. Reductions in tariffs and investment barriers will give UK firms increased opportunities to a growing market.

Beyond the immediate economic opportunities there is a significant geostrategic case for joining CPTPP. Membership will demonstrate that the UK is a global leader in free and rules-based trade. It will further establish the UK's commitment to deeper engagement within the Indo-Pacific region in support in increased security and prosperity.

CPTPP will help the whole of the UK capture the benefits of global trade opportunities – by supporting jobs, wage growth and the levelling up agenda. The Department's preliminary analysis from the CPTPP scoping assessment suggests that every nation and region of the UK could be set to benefit from CPTPP membership.

The Government will keep Parliament updated as these negotiations progress.

UK- India Trade Negotiations

The fifth round of UK-India Free Trade Agreement negotiations took place between 18 - 29 July 2022. The negotiations, at official level, were conducted in a hybrid fashion, with some negotiators in a dedicated Indian negotiations facility, and others attending virtually.

Technical discussions were held across 15 policy areas over 85 separate sessions, with detailed draft treaty text discussions.

In addition, intense negotiations have continued throughout the summer, again in a hybrid fashion, with India hosting UK negotiators and the UK also hosting Indian officials.

We are continuing to work towards the target, as set out by both Governments on 22 April 2022, to conclude the majority of talks by end of October.

The Government will keep Parliament updated as these negotiations progress.

Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS)

On 16 August 2022 we launched the [Developing Countries Trading Scheme](#).

The Developing Countries Trading Scheme is a major milestone in growing free and fair trade with 65 developing nations that are home to more than 3.3 billion people. It is one of the most generous trade preferences schemes in the world and has been designed to boost trade with developing countries, helping them to grow and prosper. It delivers on commitments in the Integrated Review and [International Development Strategy](#) to harness the power of trade to support long lasting development and it benefits the UK through reduced import costs, greater choice and improved economic security.

The Developing Countries Trading Scheme demonstrates that, as an independent trading nation, the UK can go beyond what we were able to do as a member of the EU. It introduces more generous, less bureaucratic trading rules that reduce tariffs, simplify rules of origin and simplify the requirements to access better tariff rates. It has been designed to boost jobs, drive growth and make supply chains more resilient.

Developing countries in the scheme collectively export over £20 billion of goods to the UK each year, such as t-shirts from Bangladesh, flowers from Ethiopia and bicycles from Cambodia. The Developing Countries Trading Scheme reduces import tariffs on these

products and thousands more, saving businesses and consumers in the UK over £750 million per year and helping to tackle the cost of living.

The Developing Countries Trading Scheme proposals have been shaped by a public consultation held between July – September 2021. Responses were received from a broad range of stakeholders, including businesses and non-governmental organisations and overall supported a simpler, more generous Developing Countries Trading Scheme. A summary of consultation responses has also been published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/designing-the-uk-trade-preferences-scheme-for-developing-nations>

Key aspects of the Developing Countries Trading Scheme include:

- Least Developed Countries continue to get tariff free trade on everything but arms and ammunition and now benefit from more generous and simplified rules of origin, making it easier for them to participate in regional and global supply chains serving the UK.
- Low income and lower-middle income countries benefit from more tariff reductions and removals. Nuisance tariffs and some seasonal tariffs have been removed.
- Goods from India and Indonesia that are competitive in the UK domestic market are excluded from the scheme.
- Eight countries immediately benefit from more generous tariffs as access to these tariffs is now based purely on economic vulnerability and not on the ratification of international conventions.
- Powers to suspend countries from the scheme have been expanded. For the first time, climate change and environment related obligations are included in the grounds for suspension as well as those relating to human rights and labour rights.

For more detail on the new scheme and how it differs from the UK Generalised Scheme of Preferences which it replaces, please see the comprehensive government policy response:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-countries-trading-scheme-dcts-new-policy-report

The Developing Countries Trading Scheme will come into force in early 2023, giving businesses time to prepare for greater UK market access.