



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 November 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:36 P.M., 22 November 2022). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Redundancy

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88846\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2022 to Question 77333, how many special advisers working in her Department had their employment terminated after their appointing Minister ceased to hold office between 29 June and 9 November 2022.

Michael Tomlinson:

In line with the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and the Model Contract for Special Advisers, a Special Adviser's appointment automatically terminates following a change of Administration; when their appointing Minister leaves office; or in the event of a General Election. Between 29 June and 9 November 2022, the employment contracts of four Special Advisers in the Attorney General's Office were automatically terminated following the cessation of their appointing Minister's tenure in the department. Information on Special Adviser numbers and costs, including pay bands, is published annually in the Annual Report on Special Advisers as per the requirements of the 2010 Act.

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[89933\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether she plans to introduce a voluntary exit programme for civil servants serving in his Department.

Michael Tomlinson:

There are no plans to introduce a voluntary exit programme for civil servants at the Attorney General's Office.

■ Attorney General: Social Clubs

Gareth Bacon:

[\[89047\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the Answer of 7 March 2022 to Question 132398 on Attorney General: Social Clubs, what recognised staff groups there have been in her Department in the last three years.

Michael Tomlinson:

There have been no recognised staff groups in the Attorney General's Office in the last three years.

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Police**Tom Hunt:****[87997]**

To ask the Attorney General, whether she is taking steps to reduce the time spent by police officers collecting information which must be redacted before it is shared with the Crown Prosecution Service to comply with data protection law.

Michael Tomlinson:

The recently published revised Disclosure guidelines for 2022 includes a new annex on data protection and redaction which provides clear, practical advice on data protection and redaction. The annex supports investigators in making more refined decisions about what material is necessary to provide to the CPS unredacted, and to make proportionate decisions regarding when personal information must be redacted. The redaction annex was developed with the support of the Information Commissioner's Office, and robustly complies with data protection law.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ Business: Billing****Angela Rayner:****[89828]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many companies which have failed to comply with regulations under (a) the Reporting on Payment Practices and Performance Regulations 2017 and (b) the Limited Liability Partnerships (Reporting on Payment Practices and Performance) Regulations 2017 have been challenged in the last three years.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Payment Practices Reporting duty creates transparency in payment behaviour. To date, over 55,000 reports on payment practices have been submitted by over 9,000 large businesses.

As with all regulations, it is mandatory for businesses to establish if they need to report, and they must comply if they are required to do so. We regularly communicate informally with businesses identified as potentially meeting the requirements to report under the regulations.

The last time formal enforcement procedures were used was in 2019. Eighteen companies were issued formal procedures by BEIS for non-compliance with the requirements in the regulations.

■ **Business: Working Hours**

Munira Wilson: [\[86618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to take steps to support businesses that want to implement a 32-hour four-day working week.

Kevin Hollinrake:

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to work arrangements. The Government supports flexible working in all its forms, where it has benefits for, and is agreed between, both individuals and employers.

The existing legal framework provides a statutory right to request flexible working, where employees can request a change to their hours, pattern or place of work. Between September and December 2021, the Government consulted on changes to this framework to better support the uptake of flexible working arrangements. We will respond in due course.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Disclosure of Information**

Layla Moran: [\[86582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) non-disclosure and (b) other confidentiality agreements relating to (i) employment, (ii) bullying, (iii) misconduct and (iii) harassment cases have been agreed by their Department in each year since 1 January 2010; and how much money from the public purse has been spent on (A) legal costs and (B) financial settlements for such agreements in each year since 1 January 2010.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy was created in July 2016. Since our creation we have not agreed any non-disclosure or other confidentiality agreements relating to employment, bullying, misconduct and harassment cases.

As we have not agreed any such agreements, there have been no associated legal costs or financial settlements.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Cost of Living**

Alex Norris: [\[86571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on the hospitality sector after April 2023.

Kevin Hollinrake:

This Department is working with the Hospitality Sector Council to deliver on our 2021 Hospitality Strategy to improve the resilience of hospitality businesses.

The Government recognise that hospitality businesses are facing cost pressures driven by global factors, including high energy and cost of living pressures.

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme ensures that all businesses and other non-domestic customers are protected from excessively high energy bills over the winter period.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer recently announced in his Autumn Statement that there will be an extended and increased relief for retail and hospitality businesses worth almost £2.1 billion. This is the most generous in year business rates relief in over 30 years, outside of Covid-19 support.

■ **Industry: Sefton Central**

Bill Esterson: [\[88860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which industry in Sefton Central constituency receives the highest level of Government funding.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

We do not collect data on industrial investment at constituency level. Levelling Up will be achieved through empowering our regions by devolving money, resources, and control away from Westminster. As part of the Liverpool City Region MCA, Sefton benefits from several streams of devolved funding, including £30m pa to support local priorities and £52m through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

■ **P&O Ferries: Redundancy**

Louise Haigh: [\[89863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he expects the Insolvency Service to deliver its conclusions on the civil investigation into redundancies made by P&O Ferries.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Insolvency Service has confirmed that the civil investigation into the circumstances surrounding the redundancies made by P&O Ferries is ongoing.

As such no further comment or information can be provided at this time .

■ **Post Offices: Rural Areas**

David Warburton: [\[86544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure effective provision of post office services in rural areas.

David Warburton: [\[86545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to (a) retain and (b) invest in post offices in uncommercial parts of the network.

Kevin Hollinrake:

The Government has provided over £2.5 billion in funding to support the Post Office network over the past 10 years and is further providing £335 million for the Post Office over the next three years. This package includes funding to ensure the viability of rural and community branches. Since 2019 funding for the network has been maintained at £50 million a year and will remain at the same level until 2025.

Additionally, the Government-set access criteria requires 95% of the population in rural areas to be within three miles of the nearest branch. The Post Office network meets and exceeds this at a national level.

■ **Research: Sefton Central****Bill Esterson:**[\[88861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding the Government has provided for research and development in Sefton Central constituency in financial year 2022-23.

George Freeman:

Government R&D investment will support the delivery of the 2021 Innovation Strategy, which aims to boost R&D investment across the whole of the UK by creating the conditions for all sectors to innovate and giving them the confidence to do so. In the past 5 years, UK Research and Innovation has invested £1.75 million in business R&D in Sefton Central through Innovate UK.

The Government also supports a wide range of activity to drive innovation, including through providing tax relief such as R&D Tax Credits. The regional distribution of R&D tax credit claims by the company's registered address for the tax year 2020 to 2021 can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/corporate-tax-research-and-development-tax-credit/research-and-development-tax-credits-statistics-september-2022#regional-analysis>.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Cabinet Office: Directors****Angela Rayner:**[\[89825\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether it is his policy to appoint new Non-Executive Directors.

Jeremy Quin:

The Governance Code on Public Appointments has been in place since December 2016 and states that appointments, reappointments and extensions for Non Executive Directors require the agreement of Ministers.

Subject to any statutory provisions relating to the body to which the appointment is being made, it is for Ministers to decide on length of tenure. However there is a

strong presumption that no individual should serve more than two terms or serve in any one post for more than ten years. This remains government policy.

The regulation of public appointments against the requirements of this Code is carried out by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

■ **Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests**

Angela Rayner: [\[89824\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November to Question 86502 on Former Ministers: Complaints, what progress his Department has made on Appointing an Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[89912\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when an Ethics Advisor to the Prime Minister will be appointed.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the Rt. Hon Member to my earlier response (PQ79302).

The Prime Minister has confirmed that he intends to appoint an Independent Adviser and that further details will be announced in due course.

The process to appoint an Independent Adviser is already taking place. It is an important role which needs to be considered carefully; this is happening at pace.

■ **Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[89853\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Autumn Statement's commitments made on 17 November 2022 on the defence spending and the Integrated Review, if he will confirm a date for the publication of the Integrated Review refresh.

Jeremy Quin:

The Government will refresh the Integrated Review. The date of publication will be confirmed in due course.

■ **Julian Assange**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[89037\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether anyone employed by his Department were involved in Operation Pelican.

Jeremy Quin:

Seven officials in the Cabinet Office were involved in Operation Pelican.

■ UK Commission on Covid Commemoration: Publicity

Fleur Anderson: [\[88006\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to publicise the Covid Commemoration Consultation.

Fleur Anderson: [\[88007\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many responses to the Covid Commemoration Consultation his Department has received.

Fleur Anderson: [\[88008\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the maintenance of the covid-19 memorial wall opposite the Palace of Westminster.

Jeremy Quin:

In July 2021, the Government established the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration to consider how the COVID-19 pandemic should be remembered and commemorated across the UK. It is independent of the Government and it will report to the Prime Minister by the end of March 2023. As part of its work, it has launched a public consultation which will close on 5 December. The results of the consultation, including the number of responses will be set out in the Commission's final report.

We are aware of the call for the National Covid Memorial Wall to become a permanent memorial. The UK Commission on Covid Commemoration is considering the appropriate way to remember those who have lost their lives during the pandemic.

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Refugees**

John Healey: [\[86395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) C-130J, (b) C-17 and (c) A400m aircraft were used for Operation Pitting.

James Heapey:

Two C130J, seven C-17 and four A400M airframes were used during Operation PITTING, in support of the evacuation of Afghan citizens and the UK military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[86514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many months are required to have passed without correspondence from the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme to an ARAP applicant for his Department to provide an update to (a) an Member and (b) an ARAP applicant on an individual case.

James Heappey:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answers I gave to Questions 84903, 84904, and 84907.

Attachments:

1. Afghanistan: Refugees [84903 - Afghanistan Refugees.docx]
2. Afghanistan: Refugees [84904 - Afghanistan Refugees.docx]
3. Afghanistan: Refugees [84907 - Afghanistan Refugees.docx]

Stephen Kinnock:**[89835]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications are outstanding as of 16 November.

James Heappey:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 21 November to Question 77550 to the hon. Member for Slough (Mr Singh Dhesi).

Attachments:

1. Afghanistan: Refugees [77550 - Afghanistan Refugees.docx]

Stephen Kinnock:**[89836]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, by which date a (a) category four and (b) other applicant to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy would need to have applied if they were to have received a decision before 1 November 2022.

James Heappey:

Due to the way Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) applications are processed, it is not possible to provide a response to the hon. Member's question asked as decision making timeframes can vary considerably. This is due to numerous factors, including the initial amount of evidence received, level of complexity of the case, the need to conduct checks with other Government Departments, or the length of time it takes an applicant to respond to follow-up queries. This particularly applies to those under Category Four, which are considered on a case-by-case basis and need to meet the criteria as stated on Gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Stephen Kinnock:**[89837]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications are considered in date order; and whether applications that are lost by his Department and subsequently resubmitted would be considered according to the date on which they were initially submitted.

James Heappey:

Rather than being processed in the order in which they were received, new Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) applications are triaged to separate out those that are clearly ineligible and those more likely to be eligible. These are then allocated to separate casework teams to process.

The system used by casework teams ensures that applications are not lost, by collating applications made on the UK government website and providing all ARAP applications are provided with a unique reference number at the point of submission, which is recorded. Significant progress has been made to accelerate the decision-making process in recent months, including uplifts in resourcing and investment in the aforementioned system.

■ **Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pensions: Inflation**

John Healey:

[\[89733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department will increase Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pension scheme payments each financial year to take into account levels of inflation until 2024-25.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Payments under the War Pension Scheme are uprated annually each April, applying the same principles that the Department for Work and Pensions uses for uprating equivalent social security disability benefits. Since 2011 this has been achieved using the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

Every year annual amendments are made to increase the Armed Forces Independent Payment, which is payable as part of some Armed Forces Compensation Scheme awards, in accordance with the CPI.

For financial year 2023-24, the CPI figure is 10.1 per cent. The CPI figure for 2024-25 will not be confirmed until Autumn 2023.

■ **Armed Forces: Discharges**

Owen Thompson:

[\[87910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of Armed Forces personnel were discharged on medical grounds in each of the last ten years.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces involve a series of practices and protocols, which differ in each Service to meet their specific employment requirements. Due to these differences, data is presented separately for each Service.

The following table provides the numbers and rates per 1,000 of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel who were medically discharged between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2022, by Service and financial year.

ROYAL NAVY		ARMY		RAF		
Year	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2012-13	430	12.4	1,670	15.5	214	5.6
2013-14	323	9.6	2,222	21.9	152	4.2

ROYAL NAVY		ARMY		RAF		
2014-15	374	11.3	2,109	22.3	161	4.7
2015-16	442	13.6	1,750	19.1	140	4.2
2016-17	443	13.6	1,881	20.9	143	4.3
2017-18	486	15.0	1,701	19.4	190	5.8
2018-19	390	12.0	1,273	15.0	159	4.8
2019-20	365	11.2	1,042	12.3	169	5.2
2020-21	335	10.1	662	7.7	122	3.7
2021-22	484	14.2	670	7.6	168	5.0

Army Regular personnel include Gurkha and Military Provost Guard Service. The Royal Navy includes both Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Owen Thompson:

[\[87911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of medical discharges from the Armed Forces were for mental and behavioural disorders in each of the last ten years.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces involve a series of practices and protocols, which differ in each Service to meet their specific employment requirements. Due to these differences, data is presented separately for each Service.

The table below provides the numbers and percentage of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel who were medically discharged with a principal cause of mental and behavioural disorders between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2022, by Service and financial year.

ROYAL NAVY		ARMY		RAF		
Year	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2012-13	45	10%	188	11%	30	15%
2013-14	36	11%	279	13%	29	19%
2014-15	40	11%	282	13%	37	25%
2015-16	72	17%	363	21%	38	28%
2016-17	62	14%	385	20%	42	30%

ROYAL NAVY		ARMY		RAF		
2017-18	89	18%	418	25%	68	36%
2018-19	83	21%	359	29%	52	33%
2019-20	92	25%	350	35%	73	43%
2020-21	80	24%	311	47%	56	46%
2021-22	127	26%	306	46%	72	43%

Figures include trained and untrained UK Regular personnel. Army Regular personnel include Gurkha and Military Provost Guard Service. The Royal Navy includes both Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Percentages presented are the percentage of all cause coded medical discharges.

Medical discharges due to mental and behavioural disorders were identified as personnel discharged with a principal or contributory cause of discharge coded as F00 - F99 according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems Tenth Revision (ICD-10).

Figures for cause information between 2019-20 and 2021-22 are provisional and subject to change.

■ Armed Forces: Families

Andrew Selous:

[\[89767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many of the 106 partly and wholly accepted recommendations from the June 2020 *Living in Our Shoes* report have been implemented.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Government responded to the 110 recommendations of the comprehensive *Living in Our Shoes* report in March 2021. This response, which set the baseline for the new Armed Forces Families Strategy, included input from the Devolved Administrations.

Since the publication of the Strategy in January of this year, a great deal of work has taken place to formulate the priorities under the Action Plan, to understand what changes can be delivered in the short, medium and longer term. As the *Living in Our Shoes* report acknowledged, many of the recommendations are ambitious and will be delivered towards the middle or latter part of the 10-year programme. However, there is much we can do now and indeed many of the recommendations from *Living in Our Shoes* have in effect already been delivered. There will be an update on progress with the implementation of the Strategy in the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report, which is due to be published by the end of the calendar year.

■ **Armed Forces: Neurodiversity**

Tom Hunt:

[89028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to increase access for neurodiverse people to serve in the Armed Forces.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Entry requirements are kept under continual review. This ensures they are fair to everyone with aspirations of an Armed Forces career and are informed by the latest evidence.

We value diversity and are committed to recruiting and retaining the best people possible. It is also essential that all new entrants to the Armed Forces have the capacity to serve in all respects for the period of their engagement, ensuring operational efficiency, safety for the individual and safety for others. Consequently, there are a number of conditions that are a bar to Service

Candidates with Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia can serve in the Armed Forces, if they meet the selection, training and performance standards. While other conditions such as Autism and ADHD may be a bar to Service entry, this is not automatically the case. Every application is considered on a case by case basis by recruiting clinicians, who will make an individual assessment of the condition, its severity and the need for treatment. If an application is rejected on medical grounds, a candidate can appeal the decision to the recruiting Service, providing additional medical evidence if required.

There is also an executive waiver process where the employing Service may, exceptionally, recruit someone who does not meet the existing entry standards. This may include individuals with unique specialist skills. Again, this would be determined on a case by case basis.

■ **Army Foundation College: Admissions**

Carol Monaghan:

[89849]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) boys and (b) girls began training at the Army Foundation College in each of the last five years; and how many recruits of each gender dropped out before the end of their course in those years.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The number of Junior Soldier (JS) recruits, by gender, who commenced training at the Army Foundation College (Harrogate) and claimed their Discharge As Of Right (DAOR) prior to the completion of the course in the last five complete training years (1 April to 31 March) can be found below.

Training Year	FEMALE JS		MALE JS	
	Basic Training Starts	DAOR	Basic Training Starts	DAOR
2021-22	139	22	1,259	375
2020-21	149	18	1,511	261
2019-20	184	24	1,571	220
2018-19	129	9	1,259	85
2017-18	134	10	1,251	88

Source: Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command

Notes/caveats:

1. These figures are single Service estimates based on management information which is not gathered for statistical purposes or subject to the same level of scrutiny as official statistics produced by Defence Statistics. The figures provided may therefore be subject to data quality issues affecting their accuracy.
2. "Dropped out" has been interpreted as JS recruits who chose to leave, and the figures therefore do not reflect those who were discharged for other reasons, e.g., medical or discipline.

■ Artificial Intelligence: Investment

Andrew Rosindell:

[86423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to invest in artificial intelligence.

Alex Chalk:

The Defence AI Strategy, published in June this year, signalled our objective to transform into an AI-ready organisation that can exploit AI technologies at pace and with ambition. The new Defence AI Centre is central to our efforts, working with teams across the Department to champion and enable the wide-scale adoption of these technologies. A wide range of Research and Development projects are underway, exploring opportunities to transform our front-line military capabilities and 'back-office' corporate systems.

We are also continuing to invest in the Defence Science & Technology Laboratories (Dstl) science & technology programme, which has focus areas that include AI, autonomy, and data science.

■ Defence: Innovation

John Healey: [\[89723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 35 of his Department's Annual Reports and Accounts 2021-2022, what proportion of the money that the Defence and Security Accelerator allocated to SMEs was allocated in (a) grants and (b) loans since April 2021.

Alex Chalk:

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) does not award grants but research contracts. The contract funding is allocated through two main mechanisms, the Open Call for Innovation and Themed Competitions.

Between 1 April 2021 and 18 November 2022, DASA awarded 64% of available funding to SMEs. The breakdown is as follows:

Open call - DASA has awarded 72% of the contracts (number of contracts) to SMEs with 76% of the funding (£) going to SMEs.

Themed - DASA has awarded 50% of the contracts (number of contracts) to SMEs with 45% of the funding (£) going to SMEs.

DASA and Innovate UK also allocate funding through Defence Innovation Loans, a mechanism designed exclusively for SMEs, with 100% of Loan funding allocated to SMEs.

■ Defence: Technology

John Healey: [\[88814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total funding has been from the Defence and Security Accelerator since it was established; and how much and what proportion of that funding was given to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Alex Chalk:

As of 31 October 2022, since the Defence and Security Accelerator was established in 2016, it has awarded £199.6 million of funding across 1,154 contracts; £115.7 million (57.8%) of this funding was awarded to small and medium-sized enterprises.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships

John Healey: [\[89734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of work to construct the Fleet Solid Support ships will take place in the UK.

John Healey: [\[89735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the supply chain for the Fleet Solid Support Ships contract will be based in the UK.

Alex Chalk:

The majority of the shipbuild will take place in the UK.

The manufacture contract for the Fleet Solid Support ships has not yet been signed and so supply chain sub-contracts have also not yet been signed. It is therefore too early to be able to provide a precise estimate of the proportion of the supply chain that will be UK-based. However, the majority of contract spend will occur in the UK and it is expected that around 800 jobs will be sustained in the UK supply-chain for equipment, design and support services.

■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships: Belfast**

John Healey:

[\[89736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has placed contractual guarantees on Team Resolute to ensure the final assembly for all three ships under the Fleet Solid Support Ships programme is completed in Belfast.

Alex Chalk:

No contract has yet been signed. The manufacture contract will, however, reflect the bid proposal put forward by Team Resolute during the competition to build the Fleet Solid Support ships.

Navantia UK, which will hold the manufacture contract on behalf of Team Resolute, will be contractually held to account to follow this plan of manufacture in the same way as any other contractor.

■ **Fleet Solid Support Ships: Contracts**

John Healey:

[\[88821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Team Resolute has met the required 10 per cent investment in social value to be awarded the Fleet Solid Support Ships contract; and what contractual guarantees are in place to ensure they deliver this.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[89757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the social value criteria of the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

Alex Chalk:

The procurement of the Fleet Solid Support ships exceeded the Cabinet Office policy to provide 10 per cent Social Value in the tender evaluation criteria. The recapitalisation and Social Value programme will be a contractual requirement alongside the ships and will be subject to milestone payment evidence and other mechanisms to ensure financial incentives and compliant delivery.

Progress will be monitored through regular reporting and joint-governance forums, with additional on-site monitoring of activities by the MOD.

There are no plans to publish the social value criteria for the Fleet Solid Support ship contract as to do so may be prejudicial to the MOD's commercial interests in relation to the running of future defence procurement programmes.

John Healey: [\[88827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expects the final contract for the Fleet Solid Support Ships programme to be signed.

Alex Chalk:

It is planned that the manufacture contract for the Fleet Solid Support Ships will be signed within two years of competition launch in May 2021.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[89761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Fleet Solid Support Ship Contract, where the first ship of that contract will be built.

Alex Chalk:

All three Fleet Solid Support ships will be assembled and integrated at the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast. Some build work will also take place at Navantia's shipyard in Cadiz in Spain.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[89762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract, how many jobs will be created in Spain as a result of that contract.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[89766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an estimate of the number of people who will be employed at (a) Appledore and (b) Harland and Wolff Belfast at the peak of the fleet solid support ship contract.

Alex Chalk:

I refer the right hon Member to the answer I gave on 21 November 2022 to Question number 88807 to the right hon. Member for Warley (John Spellar).

The Fleet Solid Support ship contract will create a significant number of new jobs, including around 1,200 high quality manufacturing jobs. The precise distribution of these jobs between UK sites through the duration of the contract is a matter for Harland & Wolff.

Attachments:

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships: Contracts [88807 - Fleet Solid Support Ships.docx]

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[89763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Fleet Solid Support Ship Contract, which company is the prime contractor of Team Resolute.

Alex Chalk:

It is intended that Navantia UK, a UK registered company, will hold the prime contract on behalf of Team Resolute.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Iron and Steel

John Healey: [\[88822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of the steel required as part of the Fleet Solid Support Ships programme will be sourced from UK steelyards.

John Healey: [\[88826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has placed contractual obligations on Team Resolute to source the majority of the steel required to complete the Fleet Solid Support Ships programme from the UK.

John Healey: [\[88828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the steel products he expects to be required for the construction of the Fleet Solid Support ships.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[89759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract, whether the contract with Team Resolute requires that company to use UK steel in the fulfilment of that contract.

Alex Chalk:

Responsibility for sourcing steel for the ships will rest with the prime contractor, who will make their steel requirements known to the UK steel industry and procure the steel in accordance with Cabinet Office guidelines.

Team Resolute has indicated that it intends to use UK-sourced steel wherever it is practicable to do so, and in any event for the majority of the build.

■ Harland and Wolff: Contracts

John Healey: [\[88823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date his Department last awarded a contract to Harland and Wolff to construct a naval vessel.

Alex Chalk:

Harland and Wolff was last awarded a Ministry of Defence contract to build RFA Fort Victoria in 1986. The ship was launched in 1990 and completed in 1994.

■ Hercules Aircraft

John Healey: [\[86396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Defence Operational Capability Team undertook an audit of the decision to scrap the C-130J Hercules aircraft.

Alex Chalk:

I am withholding the information as its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

■ HMS Quorn

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[89764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 15 November to Question 83546 on HMS Quorn: Harland and Wolff, for what price HMS Quorn was sold.

Alex Chalk:

HMS Quorn was sold for £1 million.

■ Military Aid

John Healey: [\[86666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Military Aid to Civilian Authority (MACA) requests have been (a) received and (b) approved by his Department, each month since January 2022.

James Heappey:

As of January of this year, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has received 85 requests for Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA), of which 63 met approval. These include requests in support of large-scale events such as the Commonwealth Games and the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Several MACA requests received by the MOD were subsequently withdrawn.

The MACA framework is governed by long-standing principles. Military aid may be authorised where there is a definite need to ask and the tasks are clear; other options - including mutual aid and commercial alternatives - have been discounted, and the civil authority lacks the necessary capability to fulfil the task or it is prohibitively expensive to develop one.

The table below shows the number of MACA requests broken down by each month of this year.

MACA REQUESTS **RECEIVED** BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN **2022**

MACA REQUESTS **APPROVED** BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN **2022**

Month	Count of MACA	Month	Count of MACA
Jan	22	Jan	16
Feb	6	Feb	4
Mar	6	Mar	4
Apr	15	Apr	6
May	3	May	3
Jun	3	Jun	3
Jul	9	Jul	8

MACA REQUESTS RECEIVED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN 2022		MACA REQUESTS APPROVED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN 2022	
Aug	5	Aug	4
Sep	8	Sep	7
Oct	5	Oct	5
Nov	3	Nov	3
Grand Total	85	Grand Total	63

John Healey:

[\[86682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Military Aid to Civilian Authorities (MACA) requests have been (a) received and (b) approved by his Department in the last three months.

James Heapey:

In the time period referred to, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has received 21 requests for Military Aid to Civilian Authorities (MACA), of which 19 met approval. It is the MOD's continued policy that any request for military support should be a last resort.

The table below, covering a period of 1 August to 16 November, shows the number of MACA requests broken down by each month.

MACA REQUESTS RECEIVED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS		MACA REQUESTS APPROVED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS	
Month	Count of MACA	Month	Count of MACA
Aug	5	Aug	4
Sep	8	Sep	7
Oct	5	Oct	5
Nov (as of 16 th)	3	Nov (as of 16 th)	3
Grand Total	21	Grand Total	19

■ Ministry of Defence: Disclosure of Information

Layla Moran:

[\[86580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) non-disclosure and (b) other confidentiality agreements relating to (i) employment, (ii) bullying, (iii) misconduct and (iii) harassment cases have been agreed by their Department in each year since 1 January

2010; and how much money from the public purse has been spent on (A) legal costs and (B) financial settlements for such agreements in each year since 1 January 2010.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Ministry of Defence does not routinely use non-disclosure agreements or other confidentiality agreements. Information regarding their use is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Small Businesses**

John Healey: [\[88816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made in meeting the target of 25 per cent of MOD expenditure being with SMEs in 2022.

Alex Chalk:

The figures for 2021-22 financial year are not yet available. These will be published in spring 2023 on the gov.uk website [here](#).

■ **Nuclear Weapons: Armed Conflict**

Justin Madders: [\[82351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) relevant stakeholders on (i) the threat of nuclear war and (ii) possible de-escalation strategies.

James Heapey:

The Government considers the avoidance of war between Nuclear-Weapon States and the reduction of strategic risks as our foremost responsibilities.

The Secretary of State regularly holds discussions with the Cabinet colleagues and relevant stakeholders on a range of national security and defence issues. For security reasons, I cannot publicise the detail of these discussions.

■ **Social Security Benefits**

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[89700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to provide equivalent pensions and other benefits to Ghurkas and members of the Nepalese community living in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces involve a series of practices and protocols, which differ in each Service to meet their specific employment requirements. Due to these differences, data is presented separately for each Service.

The table below provides the numbers and percentage of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel who were medically discharged with a principal cause of mental and behavioural disorders between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2022, by Service and financial year.

ROYAL NAVY			ARMY		RAF	
Year	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2012-13	45	10%	188	11%	30	15%
2013-14	36	11%	279	13%	29	19%
2014-15	40	11%	282	13%	37	25%
2015-16	72	17%	363	21%	38	28%
2016-17	62	14%	385	20%	42	30%
2017-18	89	18%	418	25%	68	36%
2018-19	83	21%	359	29%	52	33%
2019-20	92	25%	350	35%	73	43%
2020-21	80	24%	311	47%	56	46%
2021-22	127	26%	306	46%	72	43%

Figures include trained and untrained UK Regular personnel. Army Regular personnel include Gurkha and Military Provost Guard Service. The Royal Navy includes both Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Percentages presented are the percentage of all cause coded medical discharges.

Medical discharges due to mental and behavioural disorders were identified as personnel discharged with a principal or contributory cause of discharge coded as F00 - F99 according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems Tenth Revision (ICD-10).

Figures for cause information between 2019-20 and 2021-22 are provisional and subject to change.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department is taking steps to (a) fund the development of and (b) increase use of advanced drone technology in the armed forces.

Alex Chalk:

Across the Armed Forces we are taking steps to invest in the development, experimentation and exploitation of Unmanned Air Systems (UAS). They form a key part of our future capability plans and our ISR capability. Focussing specifically on small UAS, the Royal Navy already employs fixed and rotary wing UAS across the fleet to fulfil surveillance and resupply tasks. The Royal Air Force has a dedicated

workstream and allocated funding to develop Swarming Uncrewed Aerial System capabilities. Through project TIQUILA, the Army is procuring Miniature Uncrewed Aerial Systems to enhance Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance capabilities at the tactical level. The Army is also investing in the experimentation of small UAS to better understand current and potential future capabilities and technology working alongside the Expeditionary Robotics Centre of Expertise within Defence Equipment and Support.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Competition and Markets Authority: Staff

Lucy Powell:

[\[87849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many staff work as part of the Digital Markets Unit at the Competition and Markets Authority; and what proportion that is of the total number of Authority staff.

Paul Scully:

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) currently has around 70 employees working in the Digital Markets Unit (DMU). The CMA currently has a total headcount of 960 individuals across all roles and functions.

EDUCATION

■ Care Homes: Children and Young People

Rachael Maskell:

[\[88927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help reduce the costs of residential care placements with private providers for children and young people.

Claire Coutinho:

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring there are sufficient places to meet the needs of looked after children in their area, including commissioning places from private or voluntary sector providers as required. They are responsible for agreeing prices with providers accordingly.

The department is supporting local authorities to expand their own provision, which will reduce reliance on the private sector, without reducing the number of placements. We have announced £259 million of capital funding up to 2025 to address concerns in the children's homes market and create a market that is more attuned to the needs of local children.

This builds on work that has already started to maintain capacity and expand provision in existing secure children's homes, alongside new capital funding to help councils create new children's homes places.

■ Children: Social Services

Rachael Maskell: [\[86529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will allocate £2.6 billion to the reform of the children's social care system as recommended by the Independent Review for Children's Social Care.

Claire Coutinho:

The department is devising an implementation strategy in response to the Independent Review for Children's Social Care. We are determined to respond to the challenges set by the review, and the issues must be considered carefully.

The department is currently assessing the Review's recommendations and cost implications with relevant government departments, including HM Treasury, who bear responsibility for funding.

■ Confucius Institutes: Higher Education

Neil Coyle: [\[87856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of Confucius Institutes on UK universities.

Claire Coutinho:

Like all similar bodies, Confucius Institutes should operate transparently and with a full commitment to the department's values of openness and freedom of expression. Universities have a responsibility to ensure that any partnership with a Confucius Institute is managed appropriately and that the right due diligence is in place. We encourage any providers with concerns to contact the department.

The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill will address concerns about the possible influence of overseas money in higher education (HE) in the UK, without reducing the ability of our world-class universities to work with global partners.

The Bill will empower the Office for Students (OfS) to require registered HE providers to report certain overseas funding, including of educational partnerships, such as arrangements with Confucius Institutes. The Bill will also allow the OfS to take appropriate action, including issuing penalties, if there is evidence that an HE provider has breached its freedom of speech duties.

The department will continue to review its measures as appropriate.

■ Curriculum: British Overseas Territories

Andrew Rosindell: [\[86431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her policy is on including teaching about the British Overseas Territories in the curriculum.

Nick Gibb:

There are opportunities within the themes and eras of the history curriculum for schools to include the Overseas Territories at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. At Key Stage 1,

pupils should be taught changes within living memory and events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally. At Key Stage 2, the curriculum requires pupils to be taught aspects or themes in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066. At Key Stage 3, the teaching of the British Empire, the end of Empire, and Britain in the twentieth century can include the British Overseas Territories.

■ Department for Education: Disclosure of Information

Layla Moran: [\[86584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) non-disclosure and (b) other confidentiality agreements relating to (i) employment, (ii) bullying, (iii) misconduct and (iii) harassment cases have been agreed by their Department in each year since 1 January 2010; and how much money from the public purse has been spent on (A) legal costs and (B) financial settlements for such agreements in each year since 1 January 2010.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has not used non-disclosure or other confidentiality agreements with current or former employees from 2014 onwards.

The Government is clear that confidentiality clauses should not be used to prevent staff from raising or discussing allegations of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.

The Department did enter into some such agreements between 2010 and 2013. The table below shows the number of such agreements and the financial settlements agreed in each financial year.

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF AGREEMENTS	COST OF SETTLEMENTS
2010/11	Fewer than 10	£35,750
2011/12	Fewer than 10	£117,398
2012/13	Fewer than 10	£122,885

The Department does not hold information on the legal costs during that period.

■ Department for Education: Redundancy

Angela Rayner: [\[89826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to introduce a voluntary exit programme for civil servants serving in his Department.

Nick Gibb:

The Department grew to address recent challenges, including its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but now some of that extra capacity is no longer necessary. Rather than top down numbers targets, the Department is concentrating on having an effective workforce for the future that allows it to do the best it can for children and young people.

To do that, the Department has taken the decision to launch a selective Voluntary Exit Scheme. This will support those who wish to leave the Department, and who may not necessarily have the key skills needed. This is an approach that many organisations use and it will help the Department to retain those staff needed to deliver its programme.

■ Hospitality Industry: Apprentices

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[87926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of increasing the flexibility of the apprenticeship levy on the level of (a) staff and (b) skill shortages in the hospitality sector.

Robert Halfon:

The apprenticeship levy supports employers in all sectors, including those in hospitality, to invest in high-quality apprenticeship training. Employers in the catering and hospitality sector have developed 10 apprenticeship standards to help them to develop their workforces, including Level 2 Hospitality Team Member, Level 3 Chef De Partie and Level 4 Senior Culinary Chef. In the 2020/21 academic year, there were 8,870 starts in the hospitality sector.

The department is committed to enhancing the quality of apprenticeships and improving the system, so that apprenticeships continue to meet the needs of employers in all sectors.

The department is also supporting employers to make greater use of their levy funds by helping them choose more flexible training models, such as portable, flexi-job and accelerated apprenticeships. Improvements have been made to the levy transfer system, to enable larger employers to more easily support apprenticeship starts in other employers in their own or different sectors. In addition, employers can also access a range of other government-funded skills programmes, including T-levels, Skills Bootcamps, and our free Level 3 courses for jobs, which can help people gain the skills that employers value.

There are no current plans to reform the apprenticeship levy, and as such, no assessment has been made of changes to the levy and the impact on the level of staff or skill shortages in the hospitality sector.

■ Multiply Programme

Ben Lake:

[\[86563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether unspent funds from the Multiply Programme will be returned to HM Treasury.

Robert Halfon:

Local authorities in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland can access up to £430 million across the three years of the Multiply programme. Multiply is provided as a Section 31 ringfenced grant in England. The grant arrangements for Scotland,

Wales, and Northern Ireland are set out in the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) prospectus.

There is flexibility for places to approach the delivery of interventions in response to their local needs so they can effectively support a critical skill area.

The department's prospectus for Multiply set out a menu of interventions for local areas to draw from. Each local authority in England has submitted an investment plan, which outlines their annual predicted spend. Payments in Year 1, the 2022/23 financial year, have been made on that basis.

The department will monitor delivery against these investment plans, including facilitating peer support across local areas and sharing best practice. It is important that local interventions deliver value for money. Any underspends will be recovered by the department. Further information on how underspends will be managed is set out in our technical guidance available to all local areas.

HM Treasury rules stipulate that the department cannot carry underspends between financial years. This also applies to the wider programme.

■ **Overseas Students: British Overseas Territories**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what (a) grants, (b) bursaries and (c) other assistance her Department provides to students residing in the British Overseas Territories for tertiary education in the UK.

Robert Halfon:

Students who have settled status on arrival in the UK, who come to the UK from specified British Overseas Territories and who are starting designated full-time and part-time undergraduate courses in the 2022/23 academic year or after are eligible for home fee status and tuition fee loans in England, subject to meeting the residency requirement. This requires that they have been ordinarily resident in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and/or specified British Overseas Territories throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course, with at least part of that period having been spent in the British Overseas Territories.

■ **Pre-school Education: Staff**

Sara Britcliffe:

[\[88032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of reducing staff-to-child ratios in early years settings on (a) the fees charged by those settings for early years provision and (b) staff retention and recruitment in those settings.

Claire Coutinho:

The consultation on 'Childcare: regulatory changes' closed on 16 September. The department will respond in due course.

Alongside the consultation, the department ran a survey of early years providers to establish the likely impact of the changes on providers, should government guidelines be changed. This survey will be published in due course.

Responses from the consultation and the survey will help to build the evidence base, including understanding more around the potential impact of any changes to the fees charged by settings and to staff recruitment and retention.

The department's priority continues to be to provide safe, high-quality early years provision for young children.

■ **School Meals: Nutrition**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[89890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the nutritional guidance for school dinners.

Nick Gibb:

The standards for school food are set out in the Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014, to ensure that schools provide children with healthy food and drink options, and to make sure that children gain the energy and nutrition they need across the school day.

The Department believes that the current standards provide a robust yet flexible framework to ensure that pupils in the UK continue to receive high quality and nutritious food, building healthy eating habits for life.

The Department's current focus is on promoting compliance with the School Food Standards and this will be kept under review. In February 2022, the Levelling Up White Paper outlined what the Department is doing to strengthen adherence, including piloting work with the Foods Standards Agency, investing up to £200,000 in a pilot Governor Training Scheme, and encouraging schools to complete a statement on their school websites setting out their whole school approach to food.

■ **Schools: Disability and Special Educational Needs**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[87819]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help increase the number of school places available for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Claire Coutinho:

The department is investing £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025 to support local authorities to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities or who require alternative provision. This represents a significant, transformational investment in new high needs provision. It will support local authorities to deliver new places in mainstream and special schools, as well as other specialist settings, and will also be used to improve the suitability and accessibility of existing buildings.

As part of this commitment, in March 2022 the department announced High Needs Provision Capital Allocations amounting to over £1.4 billion of new investment, focused on the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. It is ultimately up to local authorities to determine how to best prioritise their funding to address their local priorities.

The £2.6 billion capital investment in high needs provision announced in October 2021 will also help to deliver up to 60 new special and alternative provision free schools. This is in addition to the 48 special free schools already in the pipeline and 90 special free schools already opened.

■ Schools: Energy

Navendu Mishra:

[\[86627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of high energy prices on school budgets.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is prioritising further funding for schools. The Autumn Statement has provided an additional increase in the core schools' budget of £2.3 billion in both 2023/24 and 2024/25. After adjusting budgets down to account for the removal of the compensation for employer costs of the Health and Social Care Levy, this brings the core schools budget to a total of £58.8 billion in 2024/25, £2.0 billion greater than published in the 2021 Spending Review. Schools' funding is already £4 billion higher this year than last year, and this additional funding means it will rise by another £3.5 billion next year. Taken together, that means a 15% increase in funding in two years. This should help schools to tackle the inflationary pressures that they are facing.

Schools have also received significant support from the Government's Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which will run until April 2023. An HM Treasury led review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) will determine support for non-domestic consumers in the UK from 1 April 2023, with results to be published by the end of 2022. Schools will continue to receive the EBRS until 31 March 2023.

The Department knows that each school's circumstances are different, and where schools are in serious financial difficulty, they should contact their Local Authority or the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

Munira Wilson:

[\[86617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of state-funded schools that have buildings affected by the rusting of steel reinforcements in concrete, so-called concrete cancer; and if she will provide a list of those schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is currently asking all responsible bodies of state funded schools in England to complete a questionnaire about reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in their estates. RAAC is a type of concrete component containing a steel

reinforcing bar, although this is a separate issue from 'concrete cancer'. The information collected is actively being used to help the Department target and provide appropriate support to help responsible bodies manage RAAC in their estates.

Between 2017 – 2019, the Condition Data Collection (CDC) programme collected information on the condition of 22,031 government funded schools in England.

CDC assessed the condition of the construction types in a school, grading elements such as roofs, windows, and heating systems with a condition grade from A (good/new) to D (poor/life expired).

CDC was a visual, non-intrusive data collection and did not collect the level of detail like presence of rust, so would not have necessarily identify issues with the structural frame of a building which will often be hidden. Bodies responsible for school buildings, such as academy trusts and local authorities, are expected to carry out their own surveys to effectively manage their estates and had the opportunity to submit professional evidence on structural issues as part of nominations to the School Rebuilding Programme.

The Department published a summary report of the CDC findings in May 2021 and plans to publish school level data for CDC by the end of the year. The summary report can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/989912/Condition_of_School_Buildings_Survey_CDC1_-_key_findings_report.pdf.

Well maintained, safe school buildings are a priority for the Department. The Department has allocated over £13 billion for improving the school estate since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed in 2022, and is also rebuilding 500 schools through the School Rebuilding Programme. The Department also provides a range of guidance, tools and support to help schools and responsible bodies effectively manage their school buildings and keep them safe.

■ **Schools: Sefton Central**

Bill Esterson:

[86464]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to increase funding for schools in Sefton Central constituency.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is prioritising further funding for schools. The 2022 Autumn Statement has provided an additional increase in the core schools' budget, including £2.3 billion in funding for both mainstream schools and high needs in 2023/24 and 2024/25. After adjusting to take account of the removal of the compensation for employer costs of the Health and Social Care Levy, this brings the core schools budget to a total of £58.8 billion in 2024/25, £2 billion greater than published in the 2021 Spending Review.

The Department will set out plans for allocation of the additional funding provided by the Autumn Statement, including plans for funding in Sefton Council, in due course.

■ Schools: Speech and Language Therapy

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to provide further speech and language support in schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises the importance of speech and language in pupils' development. The Department has invested £17 million to deliver the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme, which supports children in reception with their language. Over two thirds of eligible mainstream primary schools are taking part in this programme. This benefits around 90,000 children most in need of language support.

The Department has committed £24 million to boost literacy in schools this academic year. The majority of this funding will be distributed via the English Hubs Programme. Providing support for early language is one of the founding aims of the English Hub Programme and in January 2023, the Hubs will begin delivering a new early language support to schools, which has been designed by Hubs and external experts.

In July 2021, the Department published 'The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy', for teachers and school leaders. The document focuses on the early stages in the teaching of reading, and the contribution of talk and stories, in addition to phonics. It advises that teachers help children articulate their ideas in well-formed sentences, by scaffolding, extending, and developing their ideas.

The Department's new National Professional Qualification for Leading Literacy and National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership launched in October 2022. Developing pupils' language capability and wider understanding of language to support their studies, is a key element of both qualifications, including how to identify pupils whose language learning difficulties might impact on their ability to understand the curriculum.

The Department also knows that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) frequently require additional support from a broad specialist workforce across education, health and care, including speech and language therapists. The Department is already taking steps to increase the capacity of the specialist workforce, as set out in the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper.

■ Special Educational Needs

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[89698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to increase the number of school places available for pupils with special educational needs; and if she will make a statement.

Claire Coutinho:

The department is investing £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025 to support local authorities to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who require alternative provision (AP). This represents a significant, transformational investment in new high needs provision. This funding will support local authorities to deliver new places in mainstream and special schools, as well as other specialist settings, and will also be used to improve the suitability and accessibility of existing buildings.

As part of this commitment, in March 2022 the department announced High Needs Provision Capital Allocations amounting to over £1.4 billion of new investment, focused on the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. It is ultimately up to local authorities to determine how to best prioritise their funding to address their local priorities.

The £2.6 billion capital investment in high needs provision announced in October 2021 will also help to deliver up to 60 new special and alternative provision free schools. This is in addition to the 48 special free schools already in the pipeline and 90 special free schools already opened.

Mr Laurence Robertson:**[89701]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the attendance record of pupils with special educational needs; and if she will make a statement.

Claire Coutinho:

The overall absence rate for pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan was 12.1% for the 2021/22 autumn and spring terms. For those with special education need (SEN) support, the overall absence rate was 9.7% for the 2021/22 autumn and spring terms, compared to 6.8% for pupils with no identified SEN. A further breakdown of the autumn and spring term attendance statistics for 2021/22 can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-and-spring-terms>.

Looking forward, the department has a comprehensive attendance strategy that has been implemented since the beginning of this academic year, to ensure that absence is minimised. The department recognises attendance improvement does not happen in isolation and we are making significant investment in the special education needs and disabilities (SEND) system.

Annual statistics on the absence of pupils with SEN are available on Explore Education Statistics, which can be found at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>.

The table found here provides absence rates by SEN provision from 2018/19 and 2020/21: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/dbdff1dd-64aa-4742-6e80-08dac7adbea1>.

Data for 2019/20 is not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[89702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the number of children with special educational needs who do not attend school; and if she will make a statement.

Claire Coutinho:

Between 6 October and 4 November 2022, the department requested that local authorities aggregate data on electively home educated children and children missing education. This is to improve our understanding of these cohorts, including the number of these children who are on Education, Health and Care plans or who require special educational needs (SEN) support. This data is currently being analysed and will be published in due course. The department wants to give all children and young people, including those with SEN, the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support in the right place and at the right time, to fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Finance**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[89699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will increase the amount of funding paid to mainstream schools for each pupil they have with special educational needs; and if she will make a statement.

Claire Coutinho:

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported in mainstream schools from the allocations of funding mainstream schools receive for all their pupils. These allocations are calculated under funding formulae that reflect the characteristics of the pupils in the school, including those with SEND.

Core schools' funding is £4 billion higher this year than last year. The additional funding announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement means it will rise by another £3.5 billion, on top of that, next year. Taken together, that means a 15% increase in funding in two years. The department will set out plans for the allocation of the additional £2 billion of funding shortly.

This extra funding, on top of significant increases already announced, demonstrates that schools are a key priority for the government, especially in the context of wider fiscal challenges.

■ **Special Educational Needs: North West Norfolk**

James Wild:

[\[88001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage schools in North West Norfolk constituency to participate in the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme.

Claire Coutinho:

The department has invested £17 million on the Nuffield Early Language Intervention, improving the language skills of reception-age children who need it most following the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme targets children needing extra support with their speech and language development and is proven to help them make around three months of additional progress. An estimated 90,000 reception-age children will get extra support with their speech and language development from this proven programme.

All state-funded schools in North West Norfolk with a reception class were invited to apply for the programme. To encourage participation, every primary school in North West Norfolk and nationwide has been directly contacted at least twice by a dedicated contact centre team. Additional written communication has been undertaken by the department and its delivery partners to encourage all primary schools to apply.

In total, over 11,100 schools (two thirds of all primary schools) have signed up for the programme. Registered schools are eligible to continue to receive the funded programme during the 2022/23 academic year.

The full list of registered schools is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neli-nuffield-early-language-intervention-programme>.

■ Students: Finance**Caroline Lucas:****[86446]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 10 November 2022 to Question 77588 on Students: Cost of Living, if she will make it her policy to increase the maximum loans and grants for student living costs in line with the consumer price index of September 2022 for the (a) remaining period of the 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24 academic year; if she will increase maintenance loan thresholds to reflect changes to the family income for students who are not eligible to apply for their entitlement to be reassessed in the 2022-23 academic year; if she will increase (i) student premium funding and (ii) hardship funds available to universities; and if she will make a statement.

Robert Halfon:

The department continues to monitor the consequences of the rising cost of living and is working with other government departments to provide support to students. Decisions on student finance will have to be taken alongside other spending priorities, to ensure the system remains financially sustainable.

The decisions on student support for higher education courses are taken on an annual basis and changes for the 2022/23 academic year were made through regulations laid in December 2021.

The government is currently considering options for changes to loans and grants for living and other costs for the 2023/24 academic year. An announcement will follow in due course.

There is £261 million of student premium funding available this academic year to support disadvantaged students who need additional help. The department has worked with the Office for Students to ensure universities support students in hardship, including by drawing on the student premium.

■ Training: Sefton Central

Bill Esterson:

[\[88862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on improving skills training in Sefton Central constituency.

Robert Halfon:

The department regularly discusses skills matters with other government departments, including the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, but not specifically about individual constituencies.

The department is investing £3.8 billion more in further education (FE) and skills over the Parliamentary session to ensure people nationwide, including in Sefton, have access to the skills they need to build a fulfilling careers in jobs the economy needs.

Funding has been boosted by an extra £1.6 billion for 16-19 education in the 2024/25 academic year, compared with 2021/22. This is the biggest increase in 16-19 funding in a decade, and will help to fund the additional students anticipated in the system, 40 extra hours per student, and an affordable increase in funding rates per 16-19 student.

This additional funding will help providers such as Hugh Baird College in South Sefton, which is a very strong general FE college, focused on technical education that engages employers locally to co-design their curriculum and offer opportunities for learners in the Sefton area.

Hugh Baird College is also delivering T levels, which are new qualifications for 16 to 18-year-olds that have been developed with employers to ensure that young people will have the skills they need to get good jobs. It is currently delivering Digital, Education and Health and Science T levels. Other colleges in the surrounding area are also delivering T levels.

The department is increasing investment in apprenticeships to £2.7 billion by 2024/25 and supporting employers in all sectors and all areas of the country, including Sefton, to use apprenticeships to develop the skilled workforces they need. Since May 2010, there have been a total of 32,990 apprenticeship starts in Sefton local authority.

There is also the introduction of the Free Courses for Jobs scheme. This enables adult learners without a level 3 qualification (or learners with any qualification level but earning below the National Living Wage) to gain a qualification for free.

In addition, the department has also introduced Skills Bootcamps, which are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with an employer. Skills Bootcamps are

being delivered in digital, green, HGV driving, and rail and engineering across Liverpool City Region through the combined authority. These will target skills gaps and shortages highlighted by local employers for local people.

Investment in education and skills training for adults is continuing through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) at £1.34 billion in the 2021/22 academic year. The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to help them gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning.

Currently, approximately 60% of the AEB is devolved to nine Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Mayor of London. This includes Liverpool City region which covers Sefton. This gives Liverpool City Region direct control over adult education provision for their residents and provides the local area with the opportunity to meet local needs.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Animals: Antibiotics**

Henry Smith:

[\[86448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7936 on Animals: Antibiotics, what progress has been made on amending and supplementing the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013; and if she will make a statement.

Mark Spencer:

The UK Government and Devolved Administrations remain committed to reducing unnecessary use of antibiotics in animals.

Over the past year the Veterinary Medicines Directorate has engaged in a comprehensive dialogue with stakeholders about a broad range of changes that we propose to the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 as they apply in Great Britain. These changes will help us to improve the operating environment for industry, improve prescription and supply of veterinary medicines and ensure safe and effective medicines continue to be available, including by reducing the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance.

As required by the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021, we are preparing to publish a consultation paper setting out our proposals for changes to the Regulations. This will provide the opportunity for all affected stakeholders to express their views on the proposed changes. Following the mandatory consultation period, we anticipate laying new legislation in 2023.

■ Avian Influenza: Compensation

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[87857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much compensation has been paid to poultry farmers for birds culled due to avian influenza; and how many compensation claims were (a) made and (b) processed by 15 November.

Mark Spencer:

Compensation paid for birds culled by HM Government for disease control purposes is designed to promote prompt reporting of suspicion of disease and is only payable for healthy birds as set out in the Animal Health Act 1981. There is no compensation available for sick birds or birds that have died. Compensation is not paid for consequential losses, including business interruption caused by control measures, nor for eggs or poultry meat. Compensation is also not paid for other things that have to be seized because they pose a risk of transmitting disease.

To date we have processed payments of £2.48 million in compensation to support keepers on premises where avian influenza has been confirmed in poultry or other captive birds since 1 October 2022.

■ Biodiversity

Rachael Maskell:

[\[83683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has taken recent steps to establish a cross-Government committee to help tackle the loss of biodiversity.

Trudy Harrison:

The cross-Government 25 Year Environment Plan Board was established in December 2020 and is responsible for overseeing, coordinating and driving forward action to implement the 25 Year Environment Plan.

■ Biodiversity: Climate Change and Planning

Rachael Maskell:

[\[83681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact of (a) climate change and (b) planning, building and development on biodiversity.

Trudy Harrison:

The UK's third Climate Change Risk Assessment, published in January this year, provides the Government's assessment of the main 61 climate change risks and opportunities facing the UK. 18 of those risks are to the natural environment, with impacts on biodiversity a central aspect. These include risks of drought, flooding, extreme heat and of pests, pathogens and invasive species to terrestrial, freshwater and coastal habitats and species. It also includes risks to our marine biodiversity, such as from ocean acidification.

Development affects biodiversity in a variety of ways. The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment. Amongst the most serious impacts is habitat loss, which was considered by government in the impact assessment for biodiversity net gain which is published online. Biodiversity assessments are routinely carried out by local authorities and developers covering other impacts in addition to habitat loss but these are not aggregated nationally.

■ Biodiversity: Planning

Rachael Maskell:

[\[83682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on amending the planning regulations to help (a) safeguard biodiversity and (b) enable population growth in areas where species have declined.

Trudy Harrison:

My department has worked closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on measures to transform the planning system in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and we continue discussions on how best to implement those changes. Government has made it clear that it wants the reformed planning system to support the implementation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain to capitalise on their potential and ensure the new planning system can play a proactive role in promoting environmental recovery. We are currently drafting the regulations that will be needed to implement biodiversity net gain through the planning system, which will mean that new developments must improve habitats for wildlife.

■ Birds: Bricks

Drew Hendry:

[\[83667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the inclusion of Swift bricks in public construction programmes.

Trudy Harrison:

All local authorities have a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. As well as this duty, national planning policy states that the planning system should minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. Planning Practice Guidance published to help implement planning policy makes clear that relatively small features can often achieve important benefits for wildlife, such as incorporating 'swift bricks' and bat boxes in developments and providing safe routes for hedgehogs between different areas of habitat. Specific biodiversity features, such as swift bricks, would normally be required of developments through either the relevant local plan or through the local authority's development control team.

Through the Environment Act 2021 we have introduced a mandatory duty for developers to deliver a biodiversity net gain, which will mean that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than they were before any development.

■ **Convention on Biological Diversity**

Rachael Maskell: [\[83680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what are his Department's priorities for UN Biodiversity Conference COP15.

Rachael Maskell: [\[83685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what criteria she will use to make an assessment of the success of COP15 of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Trudy Harrison:

Global biodiversity loss is as urgent as climate change. The United Kingdom is committed to securing an ambitious outcome at COP15, which means agreement to: halt and reverse biodiversity loss globally by 2030; protect at least 30% of the global land and 30% of the global ocean; secure a significant increase in the mobilisation of resources from all sources to fund the global effort to halt nature loss; secure positive outcomes for the ocean; and strengthen mechanisms for holding countries to account for implementing the framework.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Disclosure of Information**

Layla Moran: [\[86585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) non-disclosure and (b) other confidentiality agreements relating to (i) employment, (ii) bullying, (iii) misconduct and (iii) harassment cases have been agreed by their Department in each year since 1 January 2010; and how much money from the public purse has been spent on (A) legal costs and (B) financial settlements for such agreements in each year since 1 January 2010.

Mark Spencer:

No payments for non-disclosure or other confidentiality agreements relating to employment, bullying, misconduct or harassment cases have been agreed by the department since 2019. Information for the years prior to that is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

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

Florence Eshalomi: [\[89932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to introduce a voluntary exit programme for civil servants serving in his Department.

Mark Spencer:

Defra currently has no live voluntary exit schemes. Voluntary exit schemes are a commonly used workforce management process available to departments based on their specific workforce needs.

■ Infrastructure: Public Expenditure**Alex Sobel:****[72443]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the expected annual (a) resource and (b) capital expenditure will be on the Major Projects Portfolio projects entitled (i) Bridgwater Barrier, (ii) Nature for Climate Fund, (iii) Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme, (iv) Leeds Phase Two Flood Scheme and (v) River Thames Scheme in each financial year of those projects; and if he will place that information in the House of Commons Library.

Rebecca Pow:

The information requested can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/infrastructure-and-projects-authority-annual-report-2022.

■ Nature Conservation: Finance**Rachael Maskell:****[83684]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of increasing funding for the creation of habitats designed to maintain and grow populations of certain species.

Trudy Harrison:

The Nature for Climate Fund provides £750 million for the creation, restoration and management of woodland and peatland habitats. The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is estimated to deliver 0.6mha of habitat creation and restoration within & outside SSSIs. We have also set a target to raise at least £500 million in private finance to support nature's recovery every year by 2027 in England, rising to more than £1 billion by 2030. This includes investment in protected sites and other landscape-scale action through delivery of the Nature Recovery Network.

Across the Countryside Stewardship scheme, there are a range of actions to create, manage and restore habitats which are beneficial to a broad range of species including actions like establishing nectar flower mixes, building beetle banks, and managing species-rich grassland. Our new Environmental Land Management schemes will also pay farmers and land managers for environmentally sustainable actions, support local nature recovery and deliver landscape and ecosystem recovery, all of which will help us to recover species and increase wildlife-rich habitat.

■ Pets: Animal Welfare**Caroline Lucas:**[\[82231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to protect companion animal welfare while in transport; and if she will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

HM Government is committed to improving the welfare standards of all animal journeys. We published our wide-reaching Action Plan for Animal Welfare in May 2021, setting out our current and future work to build on our already high standards of animal welfare.

When companion animals are transported for a commercial purpose, their transportation must comply fully with legal requirements aimed at protecting their welfare, including the provision of sufficient space, feed and water. All transporters who wish to operate in Great Britain, including importing animals into or transiting through Great Britain, must hold a GB issued transporter authorisation. The Animal and Plant Health Agency acts as national regulator for the welfare of animals in transport rules and is able to take regulatory action following any non-compliance. Over the last year, one transporter authorisation relating to a cat or dog transporter has been revoked and two have been suspended.

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill will allow us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation. In August 2021, HM Government launched a consultation on how these powers should be used. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a response in due course.

Caroline Lucas:[\[82232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she is planning legislative changes of health requirements for the (a) commercial and (b) non-commercial movement of companion animals into Great Britain; and if she will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

We take biosecurity seriously and operate one of the most rigorous and robust pet travel checking regimes in Europe. All pets entering Great Britain must be vaccinated against rabies, with a minimum 21 day wait period, and all dogs entering Great Britain must be treated for tapeworm no less than 24 hours and no more than 120 hours (5 days) before entry unless coming from tapeworm free countries. All non-commercial dogs, cats and ferrets entering Great Britain on approved routes under the Pet Travel rules and all commercial imports of pets undergo 100% documentary checks, and this includes checking animal health records to ensure compliance with these requirements.

In addition, within 48 hours prior to the time of departure all commercial movements of dogs, cats and ferrets must undergo a clinical examination carried out by an official veterinarian, who must verify that the animals show no signs of diseases.

We remain aware of the concerns around non-endemic diseases and continue to monitor the disease situation carefully. Our future policy will be guided by risk assessment.

■ Poultry: Animal Welfare

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[87813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make it her policy to change the requirement for ducks to be swabbed before each movement and instead require only a visual inspection.

Mark Spencer:

Defra requires assurance that birds, poultry products or materials associated with their keeping are not affected by avian influenza prior to them being moved out of disease control zones. Testing for avian influenza prior to movement is not required outside disease control zones.

Ducks can be sub-clinically infected with avian influenza and clinical inspection alone would not provide sufficient evidence that birds were not infected hence swabbing and negative results from diagnostic testing undertaken at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) avian influenza national reference laboratory are required prior to each movement as a condition of a movement licence being granted.

However, we do not require testing of day-old ducklings prior to movement because we can rely on the success of hatching of a batch of ducks to indicate whether avian influenza is present in the eggs.

■ Seed Potatoes: UK Internal Trade

Carla Lockhart:

[\[80966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to support the transit of seed potatoes from Scotland to Northern Ireland.

Mark Spencer:

Defra continues to view lifting the EU prohibition on GB seed potatoes as a priority, and we continue to raise this issue in our engagements with EU SPS officials. I can confirm that the most recent meeting of the Trade Specialised Committee on SPS Measures was on 19 October and the issue regarding securing equivalence for seed potatoes was raised. HM Government challenged the TCA compliance of the EU's prohibition and repeated our desire to find a solution to resume trade. Unfortunately, the Commission has yet to respond to a UK request for a risk assessment justifying the EU's prohibition of GB seed potatoes. When challenged on a timeline for a response during the SC meeting, the Commission indicated that a draft response was under consideration. This will help inform our next steps. On the movement of seed potatoes from Great Britain to Northern Ireland specifically, HM Government has

been clear there is no biosecurity justification for them to be prohibited as set out in the UKG Command Paper.

■ **World War II: Medals**

David Warburton: [\[86546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when applications for the Women's Land Army and Timber Corps veteran's badge will be reopened.

Mark Spencer:

The Women's Land Army and Timber Corps veteran's badge scheme is currently paused due to administrative changes. As soon as these changes have been concluded, the re-opening of the scheme will be made clear on the appropriate gov.uk page and communicated to any stakeholders who have made enquiries whilst the scheme has been paused. In the meantime, Defra has been processing outstanding and extraordinary applications. We value all veterans' valuable service to the war effort and want to ensure that HM Government continues to recognise all those who served the home front during the war.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[86427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Chagossian community in (a) the UK, (b) Seychelles and (c) Mauritius on the International Court of Justice's ruling of 2019 concerning the British Indian Ocean Territory.

David Rutley:

We have regular contact with Chagossian communities, but have not had any recent discussions regarding the ICJ ruling of 2019.

■ **British Overseas Territories: Development Aid**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[86426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the provision of joint aid in the Caribbean region to respond to extreme weather phenomena impacting British Overseas Territories.

Leo Docherty:

The United Kingdom works closely with partners across the region, including the US, to coordinate multinational responses to major disasters affecting the Caribbean and British Overseas Territories. The UK Government supports the Overseas Territories to prepare for and respond to the impacts of major natural hazard events.

The Royal Navy supported the US led response to hurricanes in Central America in 2020 and the Haiti earthquake in 2021. UK-US cooperation here is primarily coordinated through our military partnership, and through the Multinational Coordination Cell for the Caribbean.

■ **British Overseas Territories: Disaster Relief**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what disaster relief measures he has in place to mitigate the impact of extreme weather phenomena on British Overseas Territories in the Caribbean region.

David Rutley:

The UK Government supports the Overseas Territories to prepare for and respond to the impacts of major natural hazard events. The UK supports Overseas Territories to strengthen local disaster response capability and critical national infrastructure.

Royal Navy ship HMS Medway is deployed to the Caribbean for North Atlantic Hurricane Season. Embarked disaster relief engineers have specialist capabilities to reopen ports and deliver emergency supplies. In September, HMS Medway and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Tideforce supported the Turks and Caicos Islands and Cayman Islands to respond to Hurricanes Fiona and Ian.

■ **Chagos Islands: Sovereignty**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to help ensure that Chagossians are consulted in any future decisions on the sovereignty of the Chagos Islands.

Leo Docherty:

The UK and Mauritius have decided to begin negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago. We know there are a wide range of views among Chagossian communities about the future of the British Indian Ocean Territory / Chagos Archipelago and will ensure we do have conversations with Chagossian communities.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his policy is on a referendum for the Chagossian community on whether they wish to be governed by the UK or Mauritius.

Leo Docherty:

We know there are a wide range of views among Chagossian communities about the future of the British Indian Ocean Territory / Chagos Archipelago and will ensure we have conversations with the community. The UK and Mauritius have decided to begin negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean

Territory/Chagos Archipelago and it would not be appropriate to comment at this time.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: British Indian Ocean Territory**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[86428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many officials in his Department in (a) the UK and (b) overseas work solely on the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Leo Docherty:

Staffing numbers can fluctuate; at the moment there are 7 officials working full time across the FCDO network on a range of issues relating to the British Indian Ocean Territory. Additional officials work most or part of their time on issues relating to the British Indian Ocean Territory.

■ **FSO Safer**

Gill Furniss: [\[88981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July to Question 34800, on FSO Safer, whether his Department has committed additional funding to the UN-led oil transfer and salvage of the FSO Safer; and how much of the funding committed has been provided to the UN.

Leo Docherty:

The UK has committed and disbursed a total of £6 million toward the UN plan to mitigate the environmental and humanitarian risk posed by the FSO Safer. In addition, the UK is coordinating with other donors to support the UN fundraising campaign and has provided technical assistance to the UN throughout the development of their response plan.

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

Neil Coyle: [\[87855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of reducing UK funding to the Global Fund on the target to eliminate transmissions of HIV by 2030.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK has been a strong supporter of the global fund since its inception, having contributed over £4.4 billion to date and remaining the third-largest historic donor. Together with other donors, we have supported the Global Fund in saving over 50 million lives to date. Building on our previous contributions, our new pledge of £1 billion towards the Global Fund's latest replenishment will help to save over 1.2 million lives and avert 28 million cases and infections.

■ Iran: Nuclear Power

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[86457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether a renewed Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal will include terms addressing Iran's ballistic missile program.

Leo Docherty:

Iran continues to develop its ballistic missile programme, which is destabilising for the region and threatens European security. UN Security Council Resolution 2231 calls on Iran not to undertake activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering a nuclear weapon.

A viable deal was put on the table in March to restore the JCPoA. Iran refused to seize the critical diplomatic opportunity in August to conclude the deal, and continues to make demands beyond the scope of the JCPoA. We are considering next steps with our partners. Iran's recent actions have made progress much more difficult.

■ Iran: Refugees

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[89839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much aid the UK has provided to Iran to support Afghan refugees in that country.

David Rutley:

FCDO officials have engaged with regional governments to allow Afghan nationals to cross borders from Afghanistan on humanitarian grounds. Regional countries are vital to the response. Iran is reviewing its position, but has a register of all Afghans in Iran and recognises the Afghan population as legitimate migrant labour. The UK has provided £4.5 million to the UN Refugee Agency, £1 million to the World Food Programme, and £1 million to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, for life-saving assistance, including shelter, sanitation, protection, food security and health services, for vulnerable Afghan refugees in Iran.

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[89840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the safety of Afghan refugees in Iran.

David Rutley:

FCDO officials have engaged with regional governments to allow Afghan nationals to cross borders from Afghanistan on humanitarian grounds. Regional countries are vital to the response. Iran is reviewing its position, but has a register of all Afghans in Iran and recognises the Afghan population as legitimate migrant labour. The UK has provided £4.5 million to the UN Refugee Agency, £1 million to the World Food Programme, and £1 million to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, for life-saving assistance, including shelter, sanitation, protection, food security and health services, for vulnerable Afghan refugees in Iran.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[86458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason the UK abstained in the UN vote to seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legality of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories on 11 November 2022.

Leo Docherty:

This is an annual UN General Assembly resolution that the UK traditionally supports because it is consistent with our longstanding concerns over the impact of the Israeli occupation on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. However, the UK abstained on the resolution this year because of the inclusion of a referral to the international Court of Justice (ICJ). We support the ICJ, but we do not believe that a referral to the ICJ is helpful to bringing the parties back to dialogue. It is also our longstanding position that it is inappropriate, without the consent of both parties, to ask the Court to give an advisory opinion in what is essentially a bilateral dispute.

■ Montserrat: Volcanoes**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[86424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what disaster relief measures he has in place to mitigate the impact of a further volcanic eruption on the British Overseas Territory of Montserrat.

Leo Docherty:

The UK continues to invest in capability and resilience building to mitigate the impact of natural hazard events in Montserrat. The FCDO is currently supporting Montserrat by providing specialist equipment to respond effectively to natural disasters. The FCDO are also supporting the work of the Montserrat Volcano Observatory who monitor volcanic activity, and funding a Scientific Advisory Committee who visit Montserrat annually to assess volcanic activity. The wider package of FCDO support to Montserrat includes the building of a new port and hospital which will improve local resilience.

■ Pakistan: Forced Marriage**Jim Shannon:**[\[86654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Pakistani counterparts on the (a) kidnap and (b) forced marriage of underage girls.

Leo Docherty:

The UK Government regularly raises the issue of violence against women and girls at a senior level with the government of Pakistan. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, the Minister for South Asia and Minister for Human Rights, last raised women's rights on 14 October, in his meeting with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada.

Lord Ahmad also conducted a roundtable discussion in Pakistan with human rights stakeholders on 15 October, discussing gender-based violence. Domestic violence against women and girls in Pakistan is a focus area in the British High Commission Gender Strategy and we are tracking progress on the Domestic Violence bill in Pakistan.

■ **Qatar: Baha'i Faith**

Bob Blackman: [\[86450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief on the Baha'i community in Qatar as set out in the Annex to the report entitled A/HRC/49/44: Rights of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities in situations of conflict or insecurity, published in March 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Bob Blackman: [\[86451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief on (a) discrimination, (b) administrative deportations and (c) blacklisting resulting in the loss of employment, income, and separation of families faced by the Baha'i community in Qatar as set out in the Annex to the report entitled A/HRC/49/44: Rights of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities in situations of conflict or insecurity, published in March 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Leo Docherty:

As a longstanding human rights priority, the UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. FCDO Officials, both in the UK and in Doha, have and will continue to engage with members of the Baha'i community in Qatar. Officials in Doha raised the challenges faced by some members of the Baha'i community with the Director for Human Rights from the Qatari Ministry of Interior and Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The UK Ambassador to Qatar has also raised the issue with Qatari Ministers. We will continue to raise these issues with the Qatari Government, including in light of the Special Rapporteur's for Freedom of Religion or Belief's report 'Rights of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities in situations of conflict or insecurity' published in March 2022.

■ **Qatar: Diplomatic Service**

Neil Coyle: [\[87853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what guidance the Government has provided to consular staff in Qatar on supporting British citizens or dual nationals arrested during the World Cup.

Leo Docherty:

The assistance the FCDO can provide to those who are arrested abroad is detailed in our publication: [Support for British Nationals Abroad](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/support-for-british-nationals-abroad) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/support-for-british-nationals-abroad>). Consular staff are contactable 24/7, 365 days a year and strive to provide the right tailored assistance to those who request our help, doing more for those who need more help. The FCDO has existing, detailed guidance and training for consular staff who assist British nationals abroad. As with all major sporting events, we are working closely with the host authorities to support the safety of British nationals attending. Any fans considering travel to the World Cup should read the Qatar Travel Advice page (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/qatar>) and sign up for email alerts to stay up to date on the latest information.

■ Qatar: Freedom of Expression**Sarah Champion:****[86498]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Qatari counterpart on the importance of freedom of expression.

David Rutley:

The UK government stands up for and strongly supports freedom of expression. People must be allowed to freely discuss and debate issues, peacefully challenge their governments, exercise the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and speak out against violations of human rights wherever they occur. As part of the FCDO's preparations for the FIFA World Cup, we have raised and discussed a broad range of issues with our Qatari counterparts including freedom of expression. Most recently, Lord Ahmad raised this issue with Qatar's Ambassador to the UK on 9 November.

■ Sahel and West Africa: International Assistance**Ms Lyn Brown:****[83591]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to coordinate the implementation his policies on (a) security, (b) human rights, democracy, and civilian rule, (c) development and (d) climate change resilience in the Sahel and West Africa with (i) France and (ii) other European partners.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The UK is committed to working with partners in Europe, the Sahel and West Africa to foster long-term stability, address drivers of conflict, call out human rights abuses and violations, promote democracy and tackle climate change. On 11 November, the Foreign Secretary travelled to Paris to meet France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs where they discussed climate change and Russia's invasion of Ukraine which we know is exacerbating food and fuel prices in the region. The Foreign Secretary's visit reaffirmed the essential partnership between France and the UK, and the importance of cooperation in addressing global challenges.

■ Syria: Crimes against Humanity and Human Rights**Daisy Cooper:**[\[86610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2022 to Question 64377 on Syria: Crimes against Humanity and Human Rights, whether he had discussions with his international counterparts at the UN Security Council meeting in October 2022 on the release of detainees at Sednaya prison; and if he will make a statement.

Leo Docherty:

On 25th October, we used our position at the UN Security Council to draw international attention to the human right violations in Syria, in particular regime prison Sednaya. We called for the release of detainees at Sednaya during the UK statement to the Security Council <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/russian-and-regime-intransigence-continues-to-preclude-progress-in-syria>

We co-sponsored UN General Assembly resolution on human rights on 9 November, which includes language calling for the release of arbitrary detained persons. We continue to strongly condemn all human right violations in Syria and make statements across multilateral fora, while contributing funding to support efforts to gather evidence and assist victims of human rights violations.

■ Tigray: Armed Conflict**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[86665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the conflict in Tigray.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

We welcome the recent agreement between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front to end the conflict in northern Ethiopia.

■ Tigray: Humanitarian Aid**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[86647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to provide the Tigray region with humanitarian support.

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

We welcome the recent peace agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. The agreement provides for unfettered humanitarian access and for the resumption of essential basic services. In the last eighteen months the UK has provided almost £90 million of humanitarian support to people affected by crises throughout Ethiopia including in Tigray. The recently announced £14 million package of humanitarian funding will deliver support to 150,000 people in Tigray and other regions of Ethiopia.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Addictions**

Dan Carden: [R] [\[89014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the level of support provided by his Department to families affected by addiction.

Neil O'Brien:

There are a number of programmes in place to support families impacted by addiction, including family support within specialist gambling clinics and the Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents Programme, which was supported by £7.2 million over four years. This investment in drug and alcohol treatment services through the drug strategy enables local authorities to embed learning from this programme into family-based interventions.

■ Air Pollution: Death

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[87823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of The Public Health Outcome Framework 3.01 fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution in (a) the London Borough of Barnet, (b) Greater London and (c) England.

Neil O'Brien:

In 2020, the fraction of mortality assessed as attributable to particulate air pollution was 6.6% in the London Borough of Barnet, 7.1% in Greater London and 5.6% in England.

We have consulted on a revised plan for reducing national emissions of key pollutants by 2030 and we will also set two targets to improve air quality, as required under the Environment Act 2021. The London Air Quality and Health Delivery Group has been established, with membership from health bodies, national and local government and the Greater London Authority, to deliver joint efforts on air quality across the health and care system.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[89743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 2nd November 2022 to Question 72439 on Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse, for what reason his Department has not made a specific assessment on the independent review of alcohol harms; and whether he intends to meet with Alcohol Change UK when his Department conducts an independent review of alcohol harms.

Neil O'Brien:

The Government is addressing alcohol-related harms through commitments in the 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s' green paper, the NHS Long Term Plan, improvements to the substance misuse treatment system through the drugs strategy 'From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives' and action to reduce alcohol-related crime.

We regularly engage with stakeholders from the third sector, including Alcohol Change UK, which is a member of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' Alcohol Advisory Group. The Group meets quarterly and informs the approach to the Department's work on reducing alcohol-related harms.

Arthritis: Medical Treatments**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[87913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November to Question 76019 on Arthritis: Medical Treatments, if his Department will collect data on regional variations in access to advanced therapies for patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

Helen Whately:

There are no plans to do so.

Autism**Helen Hayes:**[\[88960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many adults in the UK have ASD without intellectual capability.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Breast Cancer: Screening**Peter Dowd:**[\[75962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the publication of his Department's long-term transformation plan for the Breast Screening Programme.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 November 2022]: Further information will be available in due course.

Cancer: Waiting Lists**David Warburton:**[\[86543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the waiting times for cancer patients between urgent GP referral and treatment.

Will Quince:

The 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care' sets out how the National Health Service will recover and expand elective services over the next three years, including cancer services. We have allocated more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25, in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund already made available in 2021/2022 to increase elective activity.

The plan also sets out how NHS England will return the number of people waiting more than 62 days to start treatment following an urgent referral due to suspected cancer to pre-pandemic levels by March 2023. We have established 91 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) to ensure patients receive earlier diagnostic tests closer to home, including for cancer. We will deliver up to 160 CDCs to support the NHS to undertake up to 17 million tests by March 2025, with capacity for a further nine million per year once fully operational.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[83514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2022 to Question 77274 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, if he has made an assessment of the potential impact of full marketing authorisation being granted to the Comirnaty covid-19 vaccine on Comirnaty's (a) indemnity against product liability and (b) partial immunity against civil liability; and if he will make a statement on the expected timeframes for meeting the post-authorisation conditions of the GB Conditional Marketing Authorisation for that vaccine.

Will Quince:

Indemnities do not affect the routes available to an individual to pursue a legal claim against the manufacturer. It establishes that in certain circumstances, one party to the agreement will pay the other party's losses arising from a claim.

Regulation 345 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 provides partial immunity from civil liability for suppliers when there is a temporary authorisation in place to supply a product under regulation 174. Supply of the vaccine was authorised under regulation 174 as a temporary measure before the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency granted the conditional marketing authorisation. This partial immunity would only have applied in relation to the product supplied under the regulation 174 authorisation. It would not have applied in relation to the product that was authorised by the Conditional Marketing Authorisation. And the grant of a full Marketing Authorisation would not affect any partial immunity under the Regulations.

There are still conditions to be met for the bivalent Comirnaty products, where currently the target resolution dates are before the end of 2023. There are also post-approval measures relating to drug safety monitoring through the pharmacovigilance process, as for all licensed products on the market.

Sir Christopher Chope:**[83516]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2022 to Question 73786 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, which covid-19 booster vaccines have been subject to clinical trials; when did these trials (a) start and (b) finish; and whether the results of those trials were (i) scrutinised and (ii) approved.

Neil O'Brien:

All approved COVID-19 booster vaccines have been trialled and assessed to ensure efficacy and safety for the public. Booster doses help to improve the protection obtained from earlier doses of the vaccine and help give longer-term protection against getting seriously ill from COVID-19. For the UK Autumn booster campaign, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) advises people to come forward for their booster vaccination when invited to do so.

There are 2 Phase 1/2/3 studies with Comirnaty:

- C4591001: Phase 1/2/3 study in younger than 12 years old: started initially in May 2020. Due to finish in December 2023
- C4591007: Phase 1/2/3 study in children (6 month to 12 years old): started initially early 2021. Due to finish in December 2024.

Both of these trials include booster studies. The adult study includes multiple booster studies, the first started in April 2021, some more recent data in Feb 2022. All the sub-studies will finish on the same date (Dec 2023).

The children booster study (5-12 year olds) started in January 2022. It will finish at the same date as the whole study (December 2024).

All studies have been evaluated and discussed at MHRA's Expert Working Group and Commission for Human Medicines.

Daisy Cooper:**[85015]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which vaccination centres are able to deliver the Nuvaxovid covid-19 vaccine.

Daisy Cooper:**[85016]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on which dates (a) new vaccination centres were established for and (b) existing vaccination centres were able to begin delivery of the Nuvaxovid covid-19 vaccine.

Neil O'Brien:

On 15 September 2022, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advised that in exceptional circumstances the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine, Nuvaxovid, may be used as a primary course and off-label as a booster vaccine when no clinically suitable United Kingdom-approved alternative is available. The deployment of Nuvaxovid began on 28 September 2022.

NHS England has requested that regional teams nominate sites. As this vaccine is available to those who have experienced allergic reactions to mRNA vaccines, the

sites are based in complex case clinics which exist in hospitals where patients are referred routinely for allergies. There are currently 56 nominated sites in England with assurance for Nuvaxovid, which consists of 50 hospital hubs and six vaccination centres. A further five sites are currently undergoing assurance processes.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[86537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had any recent meetings with representatives from the OCTAVE study; and what the timescale is for the publication of the findings from that study.

Will Quince:

Departmental officials recently met with representatives of vaccines studies, including OCTAVE, to discuss the scientific evidence to support routine antibody testing for immunocompromised patients and options for a programme. The OCTAVE study of COVID-19 vaccine responses in patients with immunosuppressed conditions released preliminary data in August 2021. The OCTAVE DUO study has examined whether a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine will improve immune responses in the immunosuppressed. While results from each study will be published following submission and acceptance in an academic journal and following the peer review process, we are currently unable to confirm a specific timetable.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[88797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS website on cavernous sinus thrombosis, last reviewed on August 2021, which outlines that this blood clot can occur in very rare cases between four days and four weeks after covid-19 vaccinations, which types of covid-19 vaccination this applies to; and if he will reference this risk in all covid-19 vaccination patient information leaflets.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: The Summary of Product Characteristics and patient information leaflets for COVID-19 vaccines list the risks associated with these products. The product information for the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine warns that extremely rare cases of blood clots with low levels of blood platelets have been observed following vaccination. When these blood clots do occur, it may be in unusual or atypical locations. Blood clots in the brain, not associated with low level of blood platelets, have also been observed very rarely following vaccination with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Blood clots with thrombocytopenia including in unusual locations have also been reported with the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine in other countries and are included as very rare side effects in its product information. Blood clots in veins have also been observed very rarely with the Janssen vaccine. This vaccine is similar to the AstraZeneca vaccine as it is an adenoviral vaccine and while is authorised in the United Kingdom, it has not been deployed in the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has monitored these events with the other vaccines used in the UK COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Following administration of over 80 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and over 11 million doses of the Moderna vaccine, the available evidence does not suggest an increased risk of blood clots, with or without thrombocytopenia, following administration of either of these mRNA vaccines. Therefore, this risk is not included as a side effect in the product information for the Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. Safety experience with the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine, mainly from other countries, does not suggest that this vaccine is associated with an increased risk of blood clots and so these events are not listed as side effects in the product information.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[88798]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will hold discussions with representatives of University Hospital Marburg in Germany on the (a) diagnosis and (b) treatment of post-vaccination syndrome resulting from covid-19 vaccines; and if he will take steps to establish a similar facility in the UK.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: There are no current plans to do so.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[88800]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2022 to Question 83513, which post-authorisation conditions relating to the conditional marketing authorisations of the Comirnaty products specified have been met; and if he will place in the Library a copy of the Marketing Authorisation together with the evidence that the conditions had been met.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: The Commission on Human Medicines considered that, based on the large body of clinical data now available on these vaccines from clinical trials and real-world experience, the safety profile and efficacy of the products are now considered comprehensively characterised and meet the requirements for conversion to a full Marketing Authorisation and that the remaining conditions could therefore be downgraded to Risk Management Plan or Post-Authorisation Measures. On 9 November, the Comirnaty Original/Omicron BA.4-5 (15/15 micrograms)/dose dispersion for injection line extension application was also licensed and has a full Marketing Authorisation.

The following table shows the cumulative conditions during the Conditional Marketing Authorisations.

DESCRIPTION	DUE DATE
1. In order to complete the characterisation of the active substance and finished product, the Marketing Authorisation Holder (MAH) should provide additional data.	July 2021 Interim reports: 31 March 2021

DESCRIPTION	DUE DATE
2. In order to ensure consistent product quality, the MAH should provide additional information to enhance the control strategy, including the active substance and finished product specifications.	July 2021. Interim reports: March 2021
3. In order to confirm the consistency of the finished product manufacturing process, the MAH should provide additional validation data.	March 2021
4. In order to confirm the purity profile and ensure comprehensive quality control and batch-to-batch consistency throughout the lifecycle of the finished product, the MAH should provide additional information about the synthetic process and control strategy for the excipient ALC-0315.	July 2021 Interim reports: January 2021, April 2021
5. In order to confirm the purity profile and ensure comprehensive quality control and batch-to-batch consistency throughout the lifecycle of the finished product, the MAH should provide additional information about the synthetic process and control strategy for the excipient ALC-0159.	July 2021 Interim reports: January 2021, April 2021
6. In order to confirm the efficacy and safety of Comirnaty, the MAH should submit the final Clinical Study Report for the randomized, placebo-controlled, observer-blind study C4591001.	December 2023
7. In order to confirm the safety of Comirnaty in individuals aged 12 to 15 years of age, the MAH should submit six-month safety follow-up data in subjects aged 12 to 15 years from study C4591001.	October 2021
8. In order to confirm the efficacy and safety of Comirnaty, the MAH should submit the final Clinical Study Report for the randomized, placebo-controlled, observer-blind study C4591007.	July 2024
9. In order to confirm the safety of Comirnaty in individuals aged 5-11 years of age, the MAH should submit 6-month safety follow-up data in subjects aged 5-11 years from study C4591007.	July 2022

By the conversion of the Conditional Marketing Authorisations to full Marketing Authorisations, these conditions were all met with the exception of '6' and '8', which

were converted to Risk Management Plan measures. Condition '9' was converted to a Post-Authorisation Measure with an extension until 31 December 2022 to submit the data.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[89693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2022 to Question 73786 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, where the public registers are at which trial sponsors of covid-19 booster vaccines registered their clinical trials; and if he will make it his policy that summary results are published within 28 days of the conclusion of each trial .

Neil O'Brien:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) instructed sponsors of COVID-19 trials to register studies in a World Health Organization (WHO) compliant public register. The MHRA also provided guidance that, as requested by the WHO, the official acronym COVID-19 is entered in the trial registration data set to facilitate finding and extracting clinical trials related to COVID-19. The relevant public registers are ISRCTN and ClinicalTrials.gov and for trials in European Union states, EudraCT or the Clinical Trials Information System.

Good practice guidance states that summary results should be published in the applicable register in 12 months following the end of the study. While there are no plans for a policy where summary results are published within 28 days of the conclusion of each trial, timely and rapid publication is encouraged.

■ **Death**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[80859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of preventable deaths in the NHS that (a) occurred in the last 12 months and (b) are forecasted to occur due to (i) winter pressures, (ii) NHS waiting list backlogs and (iii) ambulance delays in the next 12 months.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 14 November 2022]: There are no plans to make a specific estimate.

While an analysis of excess deaths at a population level compared with the period before the pandemic is available, this is not a measure of the number of current deaths which may be preventable. There is no direct connection between observed numbers of excess deaths and measures of National Health Service performance.

■ **Dementia: Research**

Dan Carden:

[\[77574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is Government policy to double funding for dementia research.

Helen Whately:

In our 2019 manifesto we committed to double funding for dementia research. We will double funding for dementia research to £160 million a year by 2024/25.

■ **Dental Services****Dean Russell:**[\[86632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the availability of NHS dental services in (a) Watford and (b) nationally.

Neil O'Brien:

No specific assessment has been made.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Disclosure of Information****Layla Moran:**[\[86590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) non-disclosure and (b) other confidentiality agreements relating to (i) employment, (ii) bullying, (iii) misconduct and (iii) harassment cases have been agreed by their Department in each year since 1 January 2010; and how much money from the public purse has been spent on (A) legal costs and (B) financial settlements for such agreements in each year since 1 January 2010.

Will Quince:

The Department does not hold any records of non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements between 2010 and 2013. Between 2014 and 2022, there were no non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements. While the Department paid £13,013 in settlement payments during this period, we are unable to provide the information in the format requested as it relates to personal information and could identify the individuals concerned.

■ **Diabetes: Children****Sir Gary Streeter:**[\[87730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the guidance by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence on the treatment of diabetes in children, published in March 2022, whether his Department has taken recent steps to ensure that all type 1 diabetic children have access to (a) rtCGM and (b) isCGM; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

Local integrated care boards (ICBs) are responsible for the implementation of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) recommendations. ICBs develop commissioning policies for clinicians to determine eligibility and clinicians must have regard to NICE's guidance.

■ General Practitioners: British Nationals Abroad

Daisy Cooper:

[\[86611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2022 to Question 77619 on General Practitioners: Negligence, if he will provide guidance to GPs setting out their obligations to provide (a) telephone consultations and (b) advice to registered patients who are temporarily abroad on holiday.

Neil O'Brien:

General practitioner (GP) practices have a contractual obligation to provide essential services, which includes telephone consultations, at such times during core hours as are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of registered patients. There are currently no plans to provide additional guidance.

If a GP practice is not providing adequate provision to meet the terms of its contract, patients may raise a complaint with the practice, with the local commissioner or with NHS England.

■ General Practitioners: Greater Manchester

Tony Lloyd:

[\[77302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve GP retention in the NHS Greater Manchester ICS area.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 16 November 2022]: We are working with NHS England, Health Education England and the profession to increase the general practice workforce in England, including in Greater Manchester. This includes measures to improve recruitment, address the reasons why doctors leave the profession and encourage them to return to practice.

The updated GP Contract Framework announced a number of new schemes, alongside continued support for existing recruitment and retention schemes for the general practice workforce. This includes the GP Retention Scheme, the GP Retention Fund, the National GP Induction and Refresher, the Locum Support Scheme, the New to Partnership Payment and the Supporting Mentors Scheme.

■ General Practitioners: North West Norfolk

James Wild:

[\[88003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GPs there are per 10,000 patients in North West Norfolk constituency as of 15 November 2022.

Neil O'Brien:

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Health Professions

Florence Eshalomi: [89080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure there are enough genitourinary doctors and nurses.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: We are considering actions to ensure that the sexual health workforce has the capacity required to meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of the population in multiple settings. Further information will be available in due course.

■ Global Tobacco Regulators Forum

Ben Bradley: [87970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the 2022 Global Tobacco Regulators Forum will take place.

Neil O'Brien:

The Sixth meeting of the Global Tobacco Regulators Forum took place virtually from the 14 to 17 June 2022.

■ Health Services

Peter Aldous: [88865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to bring forward regulations under the Health and Care Act 2022 to establish a new NHS Provider Selection Regime.

Will Quince:

The Department and NHS England are working to establish the Provider Selection Regime and further information on the relevant regulations will be available in due course.

■ Health Services: Weather

Wes Streeting: [88957]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the NHS winter plan 2022-23.

Will Quince:

NHS England published 'Next steps for urgent and emergency care letter and framework' on 12 August 2022, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/next-steps-for-urgent-and-emergency-care/>

Additional measures were set out in 'Going further on our winter resilience plans' published on 18 October 2022 and available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/going-further-on-our-winter-resilience-plans/>

■ Health: Disadvantaged

Andrew Gwynne: [\[88836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many full-time equivalent staff from his Department worked on the Health Disparities White Paper.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: This information is not held in the format requested.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[88837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the estimated cost to the public purse was of drafting the Health Disparities White Paper.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: No specific estimate has been made.

■ Health: Females

Kate Osamor: [\[88970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to publish an annual report on its progress on delivering the commitments outlined in the Women's Health Strategy.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department will provide annual updates on the implementation of the Women's Health Strategy.

Kate Osamor: [\[88971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Women's Health Ambassador has accountability for the delivery of the commitments outlined in the Women's Health Strategy.

Maria Caulfield:

The Women's Health Ambassador for England is an independent advisor and does not have accountability for the delivery of the commitments in the Women's Health Strategy. The Ambassador's role is to raise the profile of women's health, addressing stigmas which surround specific women's health topics and collaborating with stakeholders to support implementation of the Strategy.

Kate Osamor: [\[88972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle stigmas associated with women's health.

Maria Caulfield:

We have appointed the first Women's Health Ambassador for England to work with women and girls, health and care professionals, professional bodies, the voluntary sector, industry and Government to champion women's health and address stigmas

which surround particular areas of women's health, such as the menopause, endometriosis and mental health.

■ Hospital Beds

Chloe Smith: **[86444]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help move patients from hospital into social care settings in order to reduce backlogs and delayed discharge in (a) Norfolk and (b) England.

Helen Whately:

The Government is providing £500 million to reduce delays in discharges from hospital to social care, which will be distributed to local authorities and integrated care boards (ICBs). The allocations were published on 16 November 2022 and are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-discharge-fund-local-authority-and-integrated-care-board-icb-allocations>

■ Immunotherapy and Stem Cells

Mark Tami: **[88833]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help stem cell transplant and CAR-T therapy recipients with the cost of travel to hospital appointments.

Neil O'Brien:

The NHS Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme assists those on a low income with travel costs to hospital.

■ Integrated Care Systems

Sir George Howarth: **[80609]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what platforms currently exist for NHS England's Integrated Care Systems to share best practice within (a) clinical practice, (b) pathway management and (c) the use of medical technology at (i) local, (ii) regional, and (iii) national levels; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

FutureNHS is an online collaboration platform which enables all health and social care professionals to connect through 'workspaces'. These workspaces create a safe network of online communities to share knowledge and collaborate on projects. There are currently over 1,000 different workspaces across all 42 integrated care systems in clinical practice, pathway management and the use of medical technology.

■ Learning Disability: Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[86535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of health professionals working with people with learning difficulties and complex needs.

Will Quince:

NHS England is currently working with local systems to understand the health workforce supporting those with a learning disability and autistic people. In 2020, the Chief Nursing Officer for England launched the 'All-England Plan for Learning Disability Nursing'. In the last three years, there has been an annual increase in the number of registrations to the learning disability nursing programmes.

Since September 2020, all eligible nursing, midwifery and allied health profession students have received a non-repayable training grant of a minimum of £5,000 per academic year, with further financial support available to students for childcare, dual accommodation costs and travel. Additional funding worth £1,000 per academic year is also available for those studying certain courses, including learning disabilities nursing.

■ Long Covid: Health Services

Geraint Davies:

[\[88779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS England guidance entitled Long COVID: A framework for nursing, midwifery, and care staff, published in September 2022, whether NHS England plans to publish a similar framework for allied health professionals and other health staff.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: There are no plans to develop specific guidance for allied health professionals.

■ Medical Equipment: Manufacturing Industries

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[88842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with (a) other Government departments and (b) businesses to ensure that energy supply to businesses that manufacture healthcare products is maintained in the case of energy rationing this winter.

Neil O'Brien:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: The Department engages with businesses which manufacture healthcare products on a range of issues, including energy security. We continue to support the sector's business continuity planning and contribute to cross-Government planning.

■ Menopause: Medical Treatments

Kate Osamor: [\[88969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the menopause treatments available in (a) NHS and (b) private practice; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. NHS England's national menopause care improvement programme is working to improve clinical menopause care in England and reduce disparities in access to treatment.

■ Mental Health Services

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[86695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to address the needs of people with complex mental health issues who are experiencing drug addiction and substance abuse problems.

Neil O'Brien:

The 10-year drug strategy commits to ensuring the better integration of services, including ensuring people's mental health needs are addressed to reduce harm and support recovery. We are working closely with NHS England to develop a joint action plan to improve treatment for co-occurring mental health conditions, as recommended in Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs.

On 3 August 2022, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities published guidance for local authorities to support them in commissioning effective alcohol and drug treatment and recovery services in their areas. This commissioning quality standard includes a requirement for commissioning partnerships to engage with other services, including mental health and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-quality-standard-alcohol-and-drug-services>

Rachael Maskell: [\[87885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Trieste model of mental health care delivery; and how his Department could help local communities transition towards it.

Maria Caulfield:

The vision for community mental health services in England has similarities with the model developed in Trieste, particularly around offering holistic, person-centred care and building partnerships between mental health services and voluntary and social enterprises. Through the NHS Long Term Plan, we will invest an additional £1 billion in community mental health care for adults with severe mental illness by 2023/24. This will allow 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illnesses, including eating disorders, greater choice and control over their care and support them to live well in their communities.

'The Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults', published in 2019, describes the Long Term Plan's vision for a place-based community mental health model and how community services should transform, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/community-mental-health-framework-for-adults-and-older-adults.pdf>

These models will be fully integrated across primary and community mental health services and centred around Primary Care Networks. This will deliver improved access to psychological therapies, improved physical health care, employment support, personalised and trauma informed care, medicines management and support for self-harm and co-existing substance use.

■ **Mental Health Services: Darlington**

Peter Gibson:

[89025]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much and what proportion of funding for NHS mental health services in the NHS Long Term Plan (a) has been or (b) will be allocated to those services in Darlington constituency; and what assessment he made of the potential impact of that funding on average waiting times for those services in that constituency.

Maria Caulfield:

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out a minimum of £2.3 billion growth a year by 2023/24. However, the amount and proportion of this funding and its distribution among commissioning bodies is not held in the format requested.

A national access and waiting times standard for adults and children and young people's mental health services has not yet been defined. NHS England has consulted on the potential to introduce five new mental health related waiting time standards. We are now working with NHS England on the next steps.

■ **NHS and Social Services: Protective Clothing**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[86434]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his policy to extend the provision of free personal protective equipment for eligible health and social care providers beyond 1 April 2023.

Will Quince:

The Department will update providers once a decision has been taken on extending the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for COVID-19 free of charge beyond the end of March 2023. Providers should continue to procure PPE for non-COVID-19 purposes through the usual channels.

■ NHS Blood and Transplant: Stockport

Navendu Mishra:

[\[86631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of available NHS Blood and Transplant appointments in Stockport (a) constituency and (b) borough.

Neil O'Brien:

NHS Blood and Transplant continually monitor and review how blood donation sessions are delivered, including evaluating venue suitability and ensuring accessibility, size and space for donor sessions to operate in a safe manner.

NHS Blood and Transplant currently plans to visit Stockport on 17 occasions between November 2022 and March 2023 and donor sessions will be reintroduced elsewhere in Stockport borough in 2023.

■ NHS: Carbon Emissions

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[87822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to help reduce the carbon footprint across the NHS estate.

Will Quince:

We have committed to achieve net zero emissions from the National Health Service by 2045. We have invested more than £280 million in the NHS estate through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, with a further £329 million over the next two years. We are also providing a 3.8% increase in capital over the next three years, including for upgrading and maintaining the NHS estate.

'Delivering a 'Net Zero' National Health Service', published in October 2020, sets NHS England's ambitions, including improving energy efficiency and reducing energy consumption. In addition, NHS England has issued a net zero estates delivery plan to all NHS trusts on actions which must be taken to decarbonise its estates and facilities.

■ NHS: Pensions

Feryal Clark:

[\[86635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of freezing the pension lifetime allowance on the retention of senior clinicians in the NHS.

Will Quince:

Freezing the lifetime allowance has been a progressive measure to restrict the £54 billion annual cost of tax relief, affecting only those with pensions worth over a million pounds. The generosity of the NHS Pension Scheme and well-remunerated careers means that some senior clinicians exceed their allowances for tax-free pension saving. This may be a factor in personal decisions around working patterns and retirement. The Department is working with NHS England to encourage National

Health Service trusts to explore local solutions for senior clinicians affected by pension tax charges, including the option of employer pension contribution recycling

Feryal Clark: [\[86636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of negative pension input amounts on the retention of senior clinicians in the NHS.

Will Quince:

The generosity of the NHS Pension Scheme and well-remunerated careers means that some senior clinicians exceed their allowances for tax-free pension saving. This may be a factor in personal decisions around working patterns and retirement. 'Our plan for patients' announced that we will change Pension Scheme rules to ensure the current high inflation environment does not expose National Health Service staff to higher annual allowance tax charges on the pension they earn this year.

Feryal Clark: [\[86637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of making the NHS Pension Scheme tax unregistered on the (a) pensions and (b) retention rate of senior clinicians in the NHS.

Will Quince:

The majority of NHS Pension Scheme members can build their pensions tax-free. An unregistered NHS Pension Scheme tax would result in lost tax relief on contributions for members and the loss of a tax-free lump sum of up to 25% of the value of the pension on retirement. We are implementing pension flexibilities to support senior clinicians, including partial retirement, amending the revaluation date for career average benefits to address the impact of high inflation and working with NHS England to support National Health Service trusts to explore local flexibilities, such as employer contribution recycling.

■ NHS: Protective Clothing

Wes Streeting: [\[87914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department has spent work by government lawyers on PPE contracts since March 2020.

Will Quince:

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ NHS: Staff

Rachael Maskell: [\[87876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Home Office on the potential impact of housing asylum seekers in hotels on hotel accommodation used by NHS staff.

Neil O'Brien:

There have been no specific discussions.

■ Nutrition: Cost of Living**Beth Winter:**[\[89055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of trends in the nutritional value of food consumed by people during the cost of living crisis.

Neil O'Brien:

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities monitors the available data on population diets and nutrient intakes, including through the National Diet and Nutrition Survey. The impact of increasing food prices and changes in food purchasing behaviour on population health and nutrition will not be known for some time, due to the time taken for the collection and analysis of sufficient data.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Waiting Lists**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[86453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of ophthalmology waiting times on patient outcomes.

Will Quince:

No formal assessment has been made. Since April 2020, NHS England has required all commissioners to agree service development and improvement plans for ophthalmology with providers. This includes the implementation of the recommendations made by the Health Safety Investigation Branch.

NHS England has published practical guides, pathways and tools to support local teams to increase service productivity through the Getting It Right First Time and the National Eye Care Recovery Programmes. NHS England has also appointed a National Clinical Director for Eyecare and is developing a national eyecare transformation programme to work with eye care stakeholders.

■ Parkinson's Disease: Health Services**Caroline Lucas:**[\[87806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to help improve access to specialist services for people with Parkinson's Disease; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

NHS England's Neuroscience Transformation Programme is developing optimum clinical pathways, including for movement disorders such as Parkinson's disease. NHS England has also published a service specification for providers on the delivery of specialised neurological care for people with Parkinson's disease.

■ PHE Reproductive Health, Sexual Health and HIV Innovation Fund

Caroline Lucas:

[\[88855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the findings of the review into the HIV Prevention Innovation Fund will be published; and whether future funding will be agreed to support innovations such as making PrEP available in other NHS settings.

Neil O'Brien:

The findings of the review will be published before the end of the year. We have invested £33 million to deploy pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in sexual health services in the last two years and it is now commissioned as a routine service through the Public Health Grant. We are considering how equity and access to PrEP can be improved, including the role of community and other alternative settings.

■ Prescription Drugs

Catherine West:

[\[86542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the impact of people who do not take their medicines as frequently as prescribed on (a) those patients, (b) ambulance and emergency services, (c) the wider NHS and (d) the economy.

Will Quince:

No recent assessment has been made. Clinicians are responsible for working with patients to determine the appropriate course of treatment and should provide information to patients on the medicines they prescribe, including on dose and frequency, benefits, risks and any potential side effects.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[89696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2022 to Question 75762 on Prescription Drugs, with reference to the estimated £300 million of NHS prescribed medicines wasted each year as detailed in the NHS report entitled Pharmaceutical waste reduction in the NHS, published on 18 June 2015, if he will make a revised estimate; and whether his Department has taken recent steps to implement the recommendations of that report.

Will Quince:

The estimated wastage derives from the 2010 report 'Evaluation of the scale, causes and costs of waste medicines' by the York Health Economics Consortium and the School of Pharmacy, University of London. The Department has no plans to commission a revised estimate.

The 2015 report 'Pharmaceutical waste reduction in the NHS' recommended the introduction of national pharmacist-led interventions to improve adherence and prevent waste. We have introduced a number of such interventions in community pharmacy and in general practitioner practices.

■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Catherine West: [\[86541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of removing NHS prescription charges for all chronic conditions on (a) costs to the NHS and (b) the wellbeing of society.

Neil O'Brien:

No specific assessment has been made.

■ Radioligand Therapy

Sarah Champion: [\[86496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2022 to Question 33936 on Radioligand Therapy, whether NHS England will undertake an expansion programme for radioligand therapy to help meet anticipated demand in the next two years.

Will Quince:

NHS England reviews service provision when new treatments are recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) through technology appraisals or due to the development of new clinical commissioning policy.

NICE is currently considering the use of lutetium vipivotide tetraxetan to treat certain types of prostate cancer after two or more treatments. Draft guidance published in October 2022 states that the treatment is not recommended and a final decision is expected in March 2023. If the treatment is recommended, this will inform any decisions on the provision of radioligand therapy, subject to demand and other access considerations.

■ Radiotherapy

Sarah Champion: [\[86497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to avoid regional variations in patient access to (a) radioligand therapy and (b) other specialised radiotherapy services, once specialised commissioning responsibility is delegated to integrated care boards in April 2023.

Helen Whately:

NHS England is currently the accountable and responsible commissioner for prescribed specialised services, which includes a range of cancer treatments. Following delegation to local systems, NHS England will remain the accountable commissioner for these services and maintain its role in setting national standards and holding systems to account.

■ Smoking**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[87789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 80658 on Smoking, whether his Department has conducted its own assessment of whether England is on track to be smoke-free by 2030.

Neil O'Brien:

No formal assessment has been made.

■ Social Services: Staff**Wes Streeting:** [\[88956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the number of filled social care workforce posts was in each of the last five years.

Helen Whately:

Skills for Care estimates that the number of filled social care posts was 1.60 million in 2017/18, 1.61 million in 2018/19, 1.63 million in 2019/20, 1.67 million in 2020/21 and 1.62 million in 2021/22.

■ Surgical Mesh Implants: Death**Emma Hardy:** [\[89011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of deaths related to complications from pelvic mesh implants; and what steps he is taking to help ensure that data on instances of mesh related deaths is (a) recorded and (b) made available.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is not held centrally. NHS Digital is producing a report related to the incidence of re-operations and mortality following pelvic floor procedures and aims to release the results by spring 2023, following consultation with clinicians.

HOME OFFICE**■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers****Esther McVey:** [\[87833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason the Seasonal Workers visa scheme does not include ornamental crop growers.

Robert Jenrick:

The Seasonal Worker route already enables growers in the UK ornamental horticulture sector to recruit seasonal workers. This provision was implemented on 1 January 2022.

■ Asylum**Jim Shannon:****[86486]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time is between the issuing of a notice of intent of inadmissibility and (a) an inadmissibility decision or (b) the asylum claim entering the asylum system for substantive consideration.

Robert Jenrick:

Published statistics on inadmissibility can be found online at [How many people do we grant asylum or protection to? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to)

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of these statistics which provide an average length of time to reach a decision. Those figures are not available in a reportable format and the information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Jim Shannon:**[86487]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of the inadmissibility process on (a) the speed of asylum decision making and (b) the provision of asylum accommodation and support.

Robert Jenrick:

[Holding answer 22 November 2022]: This system will not introduce significant delays either for individuals entering the asylum system, or the asylum system as a whole.

In recent years we have made progress in prioritising older claims, high harm cases, those cases with extreme vulnerability, children and new flow cases following the introduction of the Nationality & Borders Act, whilst those in receipt of support are a priority for caseworkers considering legacy cases.

The significant increase in dangerous journeys across the Channel is placing unprecedented strain on our asylum system and it has made it necessary to continue to use hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers. The use of hotels is a short-term solution and we are working hard with local authorities to find appropriate accommodation.

Statistics relating to supported asylum seekers temporarily residing in contingency accommodation are published here: [Asylum and resettlement datasets](#).

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers accommodated in specific types of accommodation, or the number at specific stages of the asylum process. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost. Further information on the inadmissibility process can be here: [Inadmissibility: safe third country cases](#).

■ Asylum: Employment

Chloe Smith: [\[86436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing asylum seekers to work while their applications are being processed.

Robert Jenrick:

Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own. Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List.

Any further right to work could undermine legal routes and act as a pull factor to those seeking to come to the UK.

■ Asylum: English Channel

Mark Logan: [\[86634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of asylum seekers who have crossed the Channel in 2022 to date.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office publishes statistics on small boat arrivals to the UK in the '[Irregular Migration to the UK statistics](#)' report. Data on asylum claims from small boat arrivals are published in the '[asylum claims from arrivals](#)' section of the 'Irregular migration to the UK' publication. The latest data relates to the end of June 2022. Future irregular migration publication release dates can be found on the [research and statistics calendar](#).

■ Asylum: Hotels

Chloe Smith: [\[86435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department provides additional funding to local authorities where hotels have been block booked for an indeterminate period for the sole use of asylum seekers.

Robert Jenrick:

Local authorities are key partners in enabling us to procure sufficient accommodation to end the use of hotel contingency. The Full Dispersal model, announced on 13 April 2022, aims to reduce then end the use of hotels by allowing the Home Office to procure dispersal properties within the private rental sector in all local authority areas across England, Scotland and Wales, rather than the minority of local authorities which currently participate. This more equitable approach is supported by £21million of un-ringfenced grant funding to make sure eligible local authorities can provide wraparound support locally. Local authorities will also receive £3,500 for each new dispersal accommodation bed space in the 22/23 financial year.

Caroline Nokes: [86462]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has spent on transport services to relocate asylum seekers to hotel accommodation in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

Caroline Nokes: [86463]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on transportation to move those in the asylum application process to dispersed accommodation in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022 to date.

Robert Jenrick:

Total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ho-annual-reports-and-accounts>. This was last updated on 14 July 2022.

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

■ **Asylum: Location****Mark Logan:** [86633]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure that asylum seekers settling in England are shared evenly between parliamentary constituencies.

Robert Jenrick:

On 13th April this year, it was announced that with immediate effect we would move to a model of full dispersal for asylum seekers to ensure a fairer distribution of asylum seekers across the UK. Full dispersal means that all local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales can be expected to participate in the new model. This approach will reduce relative pressures on those local authorities who accommodated asylum seekers prior to April 2022. We have been working collaboratively with LAs through our Strategic Migration Partnerships to generate regional plans that will support the implementation of full dispersal.

■ **Asylum: Rwanda****Andrew Rosindell:** [86413]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take in response to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on her proposals to deport migrants who cross the Channel in small boats to Rwanda.

Robert Jenrick:

The European Court of Human Rights has not issued a final judgment in the relation to the UK's Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda. In June 2022, the European Court of Human Rights granted last-minute interim measures which prohibited the removal of individuals set to be relocated to Rwanda on 14 June 2022. An interim measure remains in place until three weeks after the end of ongoing judicial review proceedings in the UK in relation to this policy. In making these interim

measures, the European Court of Human Rights did not rule that the policy or removals were unlawful. There were three hearings in the ongoing judicial review proceedings in the UK courts in September and October. We are awaiting judgment in those cases.

■ Barbeques: Fires

Selaine Saxby: [\[88035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential impact of disposable BBQs on wildfires.

Chris Philp:

The Government is looking at the impact of disposable barbecues, as part of a research project led by Defra. The contract has now been awarded and the research is underway, due to report early next year.

Should the evidence indicate that these items represent a risk, we will of course examine the most appropriate options available to protect our precious natural environment for ours and future generations.

■ Detention Centres: Manston

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[87792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much the operation of the Manston immigration facility has cost the Government each month in 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

[Holding answer 18 November 2022]: This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. The costs of running Manston immigration facility sit across multiple different DG-led commands within the Home Office and are attributed to a number of different budgets and funding streams. The work to reconcile these figures is complex and requires careful separation from other BAU costs which are already borne by the Department. Additionally, and in keeping with normal commercial practices, some contracted activity for recent months has not yet been billed by the suppliers in question. However, we are working at pace to be able to provide this information at the upcoming Home Secretary's' Home Affairs Select Committee attendance.

Caroline Lucas: [\[87807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) women and (b) children passed through Manston short-term holding facility between (i) 1 April and 30 June 2022 and (ii) 1 July and 15 November 2022.; and how many of those people were held at Manston for more than 24 hours in each of those periods.

Caroline Lucas: [\[87808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what was the longest period of detention for a (a) woman and (b) child at Manston short-term holding facility between (i) 1 April and 30 June 2022 and (ii) 1 July and 15 November 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office does not hold the data in the format requested

Caroline Lucas:[\[87809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many women known to be pregnant passed through Manston short-term holding facility between (a) April and June 2022 and (b) July 2022 and 15 November 2022; and how many such women were held at Manston for more than (i) 24 hours and (ii) 72 hours in each of these periods.

Caroline Lucas:[\[87810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what was the longest period of detention for a woman known to be pregnant at Manston short-term holding facility between (a) 1 April and 30 June 2022 and (b) 1 July and 15 November 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

The Home Office does not hold the data in the format requested.

■ Fraud: Pedestrian Areas**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[86419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has taken recent steps to help tackle scammers operating on pedestrian thoroughfares in London.

Chris Philp:

The Government recognises that fraudsters will use any means they can to trick people into handing over their hard-earned money. We recognise these crimes can have significant and devastating impacts on people's lives, particularly the most vulnerable in society.

We know the best way to tackle these scams is to ensure the public have all the advice and support they need to detect these frauds and avoid them. This is why we have published guidance on [GOV. UK](#) containing easy-to-follow steps and useful resources.

As well as this, Action Fraud, the national reporting service for all victims of fraud and cybercrime, also regularly provide fraud alerts via their website including on common and newly seen fraud schemes: www.actionfraud.police.uk/news

Tackling fraud requires a unified and co-ordinated response from government, law enforcement and the private sector to better protect the public and businesses from fraud, reduce the impact of fraud on victims, and increase the disruption and prosecution of fraudsters which is why, we will publish a new strategy to address the threat of fraud this year.

■ Home Office: Email

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[73795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any staff in her Department were dismissed for misuse of the email system in each of the last five years.

Tom Tugendhat:

The Home Office disciplinary database has several broad categories to group cases for identification and management information purposes.

However, the categories are not sufficiently detailed to identify particular elements of a case. Therefore, this information can only be supplied by disproportionate effort.

■ Home Office: Public Appointments

Angela Rayner: [\[89832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what public appointments have been made by ministers in her Department since she took office.

Chris Philp:

The complete list of Home Office public appointments are set out in the Public Appointments Order in Council.

<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Public-Appointments-No.-2-Order-in-Council-2019.pdf>

Since the Home Secretary took up office, Ministers have appointed one new Security Industry Authority Non Executive Board member .

■ Immigration: Applications

Wes Streeting: [\[87919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current average waiting time is for an application for Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK.

Robert Jenrick:

Please note there is no standalone application for Discretionary Leave: instead, Discretionary Leave is considered when an individual does not qualify for leave under the Immigration Rules or for Leave outside the Rules (LOTR) for Article 8 reasons. Discretionary Leave applies to those who provide evidence of exceptional compassionate circumstances or there are other compelling reasons to grant leave on a discretionary basis.

The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the ‘ [Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#) ’. Data on those issued with Discretionary leave following an asylum application can be found in table Asy_D02 of the ‘ [asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#) ’, and data on asylum applications awaiting a decision can be found in table Asy_D03. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the ‘Notes’ page of the workbooks.

Please note the data on applications awaiting a decision show a snapshot as at the last day of each quarter, rather than the number of asylum applications awaiting a decision over the entire quarter. The latest data relates to as at 30 June 2022. Data as at 30 September 2022 will be published on 24 November 2022.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper: [\[86651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will assist with obtaining a response to a letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire to the Director General for UKVI of 17 May 2022, reference ZA59732 in relation to a passport application.

Rosie Cooper: [\[86652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will assist with obtaining a response to a letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire to the Director General for UKVI of 8 September 2022, reference ZA60582, regarding a visa application.

Rosie Cooper: [\[86686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will assist with obtaining a response to a letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire to the Director General for UKVI of 25 April 2022 reference ZA59545 in relation to a passport issue.

Robert Jenrick:

PQ 86652

MPAM reference – MPAM/0434291/22 – The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 15 November 2022.

PQ 86686

MPAM reference – MPAM/0297828/22 – The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 15 November 2022.

PQ 86651

MPAM reference – MPAM/0311479/22 – The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 15 November 2022.

■ **Migrant Workers: Vacancies**

Charlotte Nichols: [\[89050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to make it easier for foreign citizens to work in the UK in sectors experiencing shortages of labour.

Robert Jenrick:

The points-based immigration system (PBS) was introduced in 2021 to ensure the UK attracts the best talent from around the world

For those roles which do not meet the skills threshold, there is the domestic labour market which includes UK workers and migrants with general work rights. We must see long-term solutions to labour and skills shortages delivered by employers through automation, improved training, hiring and better pay and working conditions

The Home Office keeps all immigration routes introduced under the points-based immigration system under review and regularly makes changes to the immigration rules accordingly.

■ **Migrants: Employment**

Emma Hardy:

[\[89896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answers of 16 November to Question 83744, and of 31 October to Question 72434, on Migrants: Employment, if she will make available the data she has on the record of the Employer Checking Service in meeting the response times set out in its Service Level Agreement.

Robert Jenrick:

A reliable calculation of response times would require a case by case review, which would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **Police: British Overseas Territories**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help support the training of police officers in British Overseas Territories.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office supports the training of police offices across the British Overseas Territories through various areas based on the assessed requirement.

This ranges from investigatory training to enhance operational capability or the deployment of UK police officers for short term secondments. In addition, the College of Policing makes its training syllabus readily available to all the British Overseas Territories.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers from UK constabularies are currently seconded to British Overseas Territories; and in which Territories they are seconded to.

Chris Philp:

There are currently 3 Police Officers seconded to Anguilla, Montserrat, and the British Virgin Islands.

■ Police: Conduct**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[89903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether current police regulations prevent the immediate suspension of an officer who is under investigation for a serious crime.

Chris Philp:

Police officers are governed by a statutory set of standards of professional behaviour. Regulation 11 of The Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 sets out the procedure that should be followed when an officer is suspended.

Decisions, whether or not to suspend officers, are made by the appropriate authority of individual forces

■ Police: Workplace Pensions**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[86560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to ensure that retired police officers are not disadvantaged by potential errors in pension scheme administration.

Chris Philp:

Responsibility for the administration of the police pension schemes lies with individual Chief Constables, who are the scheme managers.

The Home Office has no role in this process. However, the Home Office works closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council representing scheme managers to provide assistance where possible to minimise the risk of errors in pension administration.

■ Refugees**Jim Shannon:** [\[86485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to expand safe routes for refugees to travel to the UK.

Robert Jenrick:

The UK welcomes refugees and people in need of protection through a range of resettlement schemes. These include the UK Resettlement Scheme, Community Sponsorship, Mandate Resettlement Scheme, the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and the Afghanistan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

These schemes have provided safe and legal routes for tens of thousands of people to start new lives in the UK. We have resettled more than 27,000 refugees across all schemes since 2015 directly from regions of conflict and instability – around half of whom were children.

In addition to our refugee resettlement schemes, family reunion policy allows a spouse/partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country.

There are currently no plans to expand the existing safe and legal routes we already provide.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Caroline Lucas:

[\[86447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals who applied from (a) Afghanistan (b) within the UK after coming to the UK via Operation Pitting have been resettled in the UK under pathway 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme since June 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

ACRS pathway 3 is intended to offer a route to safety for those in Afghanistan and the region. This pathway is FCDO led for the first year. We will offer up to 1500 places to eligible, at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni, including their eligible family members.

The FCDO have been assessing over 11,400 Expressions of Interest against the eligibility criteria for Pathway 3 in the order in which they were received. Some groups within the three cohorts will be prioritised for consideration because the role they performed or the project they worked on mean they are particularly at risk. The FCDO has begun notifying eligible individuals with advice on the next steps.

Work is underway to assure information relating to all the individuals resettled under the ACRS and relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) on case working systems. Once this work concludes, statistics on both schemes - including the number of people resettled under each - will be included in the published Immigration Statistics.

■ Skilled Workers: Commonwealth

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[87771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to help support high skilled immigration from Commonwealth countries.

Robert Jenrick:

Attracting the brightest and best from the Commonwealth and the wider world is a key feature of our global points-based immigration system.

We want the UK to be the preferred destination for global talent, such as scientists, engineers and academics, and we have reformed and expanded the Global Talent route to accommodate them.

We continue to enhance our offer for those looking to come to the UK to undertake high skilled employment, including those who demonstrate high potential at an early

career stage through introducing routes such as the High Potential Individual route which opened for applications earlier this year.

■ Stop and Search

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[86663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether police will have the power to stop and search citizens at protests without suspicion under the Public Order Bill.

Chris Philp:

The Public Order Bill will enable an officer of or above the rank of inspector to authorise suspicionless stop and searches in a defined geographical area if they reasonably believe the following:

1. That specific protest related offences listed in the Public Order Bill will be committed within the officer's area.
2. That individuals are carrying prohibited items within the respective officer's locality
3. That the authorisation of a suspicion-less stop and search power is necessary to prevent the commission of the protest related offences.

The use of a suspicion-less stop and search power would only be authorised if each of these criteria are met and, in doing so, the authorising officer must specify the locality and time period (not exceeding 24 hours) in which it is to be used. The specified area and time period must be no greater than is absolutely necessary.

A "prohibited item" refers to an item which is made or adapted to facilitate, or to commit, an offence. Alternatively, a prohibited item is an item which an individual intends to use to facilitate or to commit an offence.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Prosecutions

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[88895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been (a) prosecuted and (b) convicted of a criminal offence under section 40 of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022.

Robert Jenrick:

[Holding answer 22 November 2022]: Since the Nationality & Border Act became law, under section 40, there have been to date, 184 individuals charged (a) and 101 of that number, so far, convicted (b).

Please note that a number of individuals charged (a) will still be in the court process.

The above information has been taken from local management information and is subject to change.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ Food: Parliament**

Sarah Olney: [\[84944\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, pursuant to the Answer of 16 May 2022 to Question 389, how much public money was spent on subsidising food and drink in outlets on the parliamentary estate in 2021-22.

Sir Charles Walker:

Parliament provides a range of catering services to Members, House staff, journalists and a large number of visitors. As a workplace this includes staff canteens that are available for people who work in Parliament. The services aren't directly subsidised, but they unavoidably come at a cost due to the irregular hours that Parliament works. The service has a commitment to continuously seek to reduce costs where possible.

The net cost of catering for the latest available financial year, April 2021–March 2022, was £7.5m.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: Redundancy**

Florence Eshalomi: [\[89934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she plans to introduce a voluntary exit programme for civil servants serving in her Department.

Nigel Huddleston:

As of 18 November 2022, my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade has no established plans to introduce a Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) Programme for Civil Servants within the Department for International Trade (DIT).

■ World Expo: United Arab Emirates

Douglas Chapman: [\[88906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will make an estimate of the number of people who attended the UK pavilion during the EXPO 2020 in Dubai.

Douglas Chapman: [\[88907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make an estimate of whether the number of people who attended the UK pavilion during the EXPO 2020 in Dubai was higher than her Department had anticipated in advance of that event.

Douglas Chapman: [\[88908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make an estimate of the number of business contacts that were made at the UK pavilion during the EXPO 2020 in

Dubai in each month of that event; and whether her Department adjusted its forecast of the number of business contacts that would be made during that event.

Douglas Chapman:

[\[88909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much the UK pavilion at the EXPO 2020 in Dubai cost to (a) design, (b) build and (c) maintain; and whether that pavilion is still being utilised to promote UK exports and trade.

Andrew Bowie:

The UK pavilion recorded 1.1 million visits. To note 'visits' does not necessarily equate to separate individuals, who may have visited more than once. The number of individual visitors is not known.

Although not directly comparable, for planning purposes, the UK at Expo 2020 anticipated 10% of overall visits to the wider Expo event which was based on visitor attendance at the previous Expo. The organisers of Expo in Dubai announced 24.1m actual visits, whilst the UK registered 1.1m, equating to 4.6%. Our assessment is that this was due to the much larger scale of the Dubai Expo, and the site configuration which resulted in less overall footfall past the UK Pavilion.

The number of business contacts was not set or captured as a key success metric.

The cost to design the pavilion was £2.83m. The cost to build and maintain was covered under one contract and therefore these costs are being finalised as decommissioning (including dismantling) of the pavilion has only recently been completed.

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Closures

Neil Coyle:

[\[88897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons the legal cases relating to the closure of the Prospero House Nightingale Court on Borough High Street have been delayed.

Mike Freer:

The closure of Prospero House will not cause cases to be delayed. Those cases listed to be heard after the closure will now take place at Southwark Crown.

■ Crown Court: Criminal Proceedings

Afzal Khan:

[\[89902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce the increase in the backlog of criminal cases in the Crown Court.

Mike Freer:

The Government is committed to supporting the recovery of the courts and our decisive action kept justice moving during the pandemic. Now that barristers have

returned to work, we can work together to drive down the backlog and ensure victims see justice served sooner.

To increase capacity in the Criminal Justice System, we have removed the limit on sitting days in the Crown Court for the second year in a row, extended Nightingale courtrooms and increased Magistrates' courts sentencing powers.

We are investing a significant amount of funding for the Criminal Justice System, to help improve waiting times for victims of crime and reduce the Crown Court backlog.

Across all jurisdictions we are maximising judicial recruitment, recruiting around 1,000 judges and tribunal members for 2022/23 to enable us to sit at the maximum possible level over the coming years.

■ Legal Opinion: Finance

Afzal Khan:

[89900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of funding structures for legal advice (a) centres and (b) networks.

Damian Hinds:

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) understands the importance of access to justice and the vital role that legal advice and support services play in helping people resolve their legal issues.

Since 2014, the MoJ has invested more than £25 million in support for litigants in person in both the civil and family courts. This includes over £7 million in funding from 2020-2022 which supported organisations providing specialist legal advice services following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding enabled organisations to remain operational and recognised the impact of the pandemic on the sector.

The department has also funded a £1 million Cost of Living Legal Support grant in 2022/23 to provide essential support to individuals impacted by the cost of living situation. Alongside this, the MoJ launched a £3.2 million grant in 2022/23 to support litigants in person. The grant is being delivered at local, regional and national levels and encourages partnership working between front-line organisations, which continues to be a key success of MoJ grants in this sector.

In addition, the MoJ is providing £585,000 to fund two projects to consider the impact of health justice partnerships. The first project will part fund a new health justice partnership in the Wirral, the second is evaluating existing health justice partnerships across England and Wales. Both projects will conclude in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

We also intend to launch a review of the civil legal aid market to identify any changes that can be pursued in the longer-term to make the market more effective and efficient.

■ Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022**Mrs Pauline Latham:****[902364]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to prepare for the commencement of the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Minimum Age) Act 2022.

Mike Freer:

The Act is planned to come into force on 27 February 2023.

In advance, officials at the General Register Office have been working to ensure that their IT systems are updated so that it is no longer possible for Registrars to accept notice for 16 and 17 year olds to marry or enter into a civil partnership.

Secondary legislation required as a result of the Act has been drafted and is currently being reviewed and agreed across Government.

Officials have been working to ensure impacted groups such as the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and schools are aware of the change in law.

■ Ministry of Justice: Redundancy Pay**Christine Jardine:****[88994]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to the public purse has been of Ministerial severance pay in his Department in each year since 1 January 2016.

Mike Freer:

Under the Ministerial and Other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991, eligible Ministers who leave office are entitled to a one-off payment equivalent to one quarter of their annual salary at the point at which they leave Government.

This applies only where a Minister is under 65 and is not appointed to a ministerial office within three weeks of leaving government.

Details of such payments are published in departmental annual reports and accounts, and ministerial salaries are published on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministerial-salary-data>.

■ Prison Accommodation: Repairs and Maintenance**Ellie Reeves:****[89889]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many closed prisons are owned by his Department; and how much his Department has spent on (a) utility and (b) other maintenance costs for closed prisons in each of the last five years.

Damian Hinds:

The Ministry of Justice owns four closed prisons.

In each of the last five years, utility costs for the Department were:

2017/18 - £278,159.55

2018/19 - £231,913.92

2019/20 - £306,616.57

2020/21 - £248,107.64

2021/22 - £103,774.57

Other maintenance costs over those same years were:

2017/18 – £16,039.74

2018/19 – £44,684.70

2019-20 – £51,719.08

2020/21 – £39,403.36

2021/22 – £28,664.63

We have successfully sold a number of closed sites and vastly reduced the cost to the taxpayer. This decline in utility costs is down to HMPPS successfully offloading surplus properties and the utilities at sites which are 'closed' for development (such as Glen Parva and Wellingborough) becoming the responsibility of developers during works.

■ Young Offenders

Dean Russell:

[\[902362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help tackle youth offending.

Damian Hinds:

We are investing £55 million across the country, including £520,692 in Hertfordshire, in the new 'Turnaround' programme to divert 17,000 young people away from offending and crime.

We are providing £5 million to grassroots organisations to get troubled children into sports and to learn discipline and respect.

We have completely redesigned the Key Performance Indicators used to measure local Youth Offending Teams' performance, to ensure they are as effective as possible in preventing and tackling crime.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Affordable Housing

Lisa Nandy:

[\[89802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to amend the budget for the Affordable Homes Programme following the Autumn Statement 2022.

Lucy Frazer:

We remain committed to the Affordable Homes Programme, which will deliver thousands of affordable homes for both rent and to buy right across the country.

■ Council Housing: Energy Performance Certificates**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[86455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when local authority properties will be required to achieve Energy Performance Certification Level C.

Lee Rowley:

In the Net Zero and Heat and Buildings Strategies (both October 2021), Government committed to consider setting a long-term regulatory standard to improve social housing to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C. No date has yet been fixed where compliance will be required. We will consult with social landlords in due course to seek their views on setting minimum energy efficiency standards, the details of the standards and compliance date.

■ Elections: Proof of Identity**John Spellar:**[\[88808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2022 to Question 84800 on Elections: Proof of Identity, where the watermarked paper for voter ID documents will be produced.

Lee Rowley:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: Further to the answer given to Question UIN 84800, HH Associates Ltd, a British based company, have been awarded the contract to provide the watermarked paper and the specialist security printing. The initial paper product will be outside of the United Kingdom; the printing and production of the voter ID document will be undertaken within the United Kingdom.

■ European Regional Development Fund: Brexit**Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[83567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much European Regional Development Funding has not been received in (a) England and (b) Scotland since the UK left the European Union; and how much of that potential funding was replaced by the Government funding in (a) England and (b) Scotland.

Dehenna Davison:

[Holding answer 16 November 2022]: As a result of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement, the UK continues to participate in the EU programmes funded through the current 2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework (MMF) which includes European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Agreement ensures that ERDF funding is available until the end of 2023. England and Scotland continue to receive the same levels of funding under the 2014-20 MMF.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) acts as the successor to the ERDF. At Spending Review 2021, the UK Government announced that funding for the UKSPF will ramp up so that total domestic UK-wide funding will at least match receipts from EU structural funds, on average reaching around £1.5 billion per year by March 2025. This upholds the UK Government's commitment to match EU structural fund receipts for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

■ Fire Prevention: High Rise Flats

Alec Shelbrooke:

[\[86449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that developers (a) sign building repairs safety pledges and (b) commit to remediate fire safety works in buildings over 11 metres.

Lee Rowley:

Further to the answer given in response to Question [UIN82386](#), 49 of the largest developers have signed a pledge to take responsibility for all necessary work to address life-critical fire-safety defects on buildings 11 metres and over that they had a role in developing or refurbishing, as of 15 November 2022. We have published the names of the developers who have signed the pledge on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

We are also in ongoing discussions with several developers who have not yet signed the pledge, and we will invite them to sign the finalised contract. We have made clear that developers that fail to do the right thing face significant consequences. In August 2022, we made commencement regulations that are an important step towards giving Ministers powers to stop developers that fail to do the right thing from commencing developments for which they have planning permission, and from being granted building control sign-off. The Government expects all developers to do the right thing, irrespective of whether they have signed the building safety repairs pledge.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[86620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the costs for the average leaseholder in a block of flats who has both cladding issues and other fire safety issues to rectify.

Lee Rowley:

The leaseholder protections in the Building Safety Act 2022 will ensure that the majority of leaseholders will have to pay no more than £10,000 (£15,000 in Greater London) over ten years for non-cladding remediation and interim measures, and zero for cladding remediation.

■ Freeports: Scotland

Douglas Chapman:

[\[88905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his expected timetable is for the announcement of the successful bids for Green Freeports in Scotland.

Dehenna Davison:

The UK Government hopes to announce the outcome of the competition jointly with the Scottish Government shortly.

■ Housing: Construction**John Healey:**[\[86402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 83528 on Ministry of Defence: Land, how many homes have been built on the 912 parcels of land formerly owned by the Ministry of Defence.

Lucy Frazer:

Where sites were disposed of as part of the Public Land for Housing Programmes which ran from 2011-2015 and 2015-2020 the department monitored build out. The Department published the concluding summary report and corresponding data, correct as of 31 March 2020, on 01 September 2022. This data release can be found [here](#).

■ Motor Vehicles: Carbon Emissions**Jim Shannon:**[\[73840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing funding to local authorities to replace older refuse vehicles with new zero emission vehicles.

Dehenna Davison:

My Rt. Hon. Friend, The Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, and her department lead on this policy area.

■ Property Development: Architecture**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[86676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to encourage developments in keeping with the historic architecture of the UK.

Lucy Frazer:

We want to ensure that the planning system creates more beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. We underlined this in the updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the publication of the National Model Design Code, published in July 2021. The NPPF asks all local councils to set design standards in design guides and codes that reflect local character and design preferences. The NPPF also requires that local councils take account of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, when determining planning applications.

In addition, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is seeking to strengthen the requirement for the use of local design codes so that clear rules are set locally about the design of new development. The delivery of sustainable development which protects and enhances our natural and built environment is, therefore, at the heart of the existing NPPF and underpins our ambitions for how the planning system – both national and local policy and decisions – are strengthened through the Bill and future updates to the NPPF. However, real progress is already being made through the Government's National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, which provides local councils with a toolkit to help them set standards that take account of local history, culture and heritage, based on effective community engagement. The National Model Design Code sets out the importance of respecting local history and character when planning for new development, as well as encouraging the use of materials that reflect the local character and identity. We are now working with a number of local authorities in the preparation of locally developed design codes through our Pathfinder programme and sharing the learning as they progress.

■ **Property Development: Land**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[86452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he has taken to reduce the practice of developers aggregating parcels of land for future sale or development.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government is clear that we must tackle the practice of 'land banking', where developers buy up land and leave it undeveloped for years, with no sign of building work taking place.

It is completely wrong that land with planning permission is left idle and undeveloped, with developers waiting for prices to rise and putting the profits of investors above the needs of local communities and families, who are deprived of desperately needed housing.

Through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, we will be taking new powers to fix 'land banking' and slow build out.

First, the Bill will make developers commit to a build out trajectory and report annually to councils on their progress so they can be held directly to account. Second, when builders have missed their deadlines, our new streamlined approach to commencement notices will mean that councils can compel developers to 'use or lose' the permission. Third, councils will have new powers to block planning proposals from builders who fail to deliver.

Together, these measures will tackle slow build out - making sure that the market provides the new homes that communities need, rather than only lining the pockets of developers and investors.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Health Services and Social Services: Northern Ireland

Peter Kyle:

[\[89876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment he has made of the success of the New Decade New Approach investment in Health services in (a) implementing the Bengoa, the Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together, and the Power to People reports and (b) delivering more care in the community.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is acutely aware of the pressures facing the health service in Northern Ireland. A programme of reform at the devolved level is needed to tackle long-standing and systemic problems. Consecutive Executive Ministers have failed to adequately address this issue.

Through the New Decade, New Approach Agreement, the Government is providing additional funding of £245m to the Northern Ireland Executive for public sector transformation.

The absence of a functioning Executive is exacerbating severe delays to health reform in Northern Ireland. I outlined to Parliament on Wednesday 9 November, my intention to introduce legislation to enable Northern Ireland Departments to maintain delivery of all vital public services, including health and social care, until an Executive can be restored.

The Government's immediate priority remains facilitating the restoration of a fully functioning Executive that can progress long-term solutions to transform healthcare in Northern Ireland and maximise value from the UK Government funds announced in the Autumn Statement which will see the budget to the Northern Ireland Executive increase by £650m over the next two financial years.

■ Northern Ireland Government

Peter Kyle:

[\[89875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many times the New Decade New Approach Joint Board has met since 22 July 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Joint Board has met three times since 22 July 2020.

■ Social Security Benefits: Northern Ireland

Peter Kyle:

[\[89877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he plans to uprate benefits in Northern Ireland in line with inflation in the absence of an Northern Ireland Executive.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Welfare policy and the provision of benefits is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland. The UK Government will protect the most vulnerable in society by increasing benefits

in Great Britain in line with inflation from April 2023. I am supportive of benefits being uplifted in Northern Ireland in line with the rest of the UK.

In the absence of locally accountable leadership in Northern Ireland, my department will work with the Northern Ireland Civil Service on the approach to benefits uprating in Northern Ireland, as has been the case throughout previous periods without a functioning Northern Ireland Executive.

TRANSPORT

■ Department for Transport: Disclosure of Information

Layla Moran: [\[86588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) non-disclosure and (b) other confidentiality agreements relating to (i) employment, (ii) bullying, (iii) misconduct and (iii) harassment cases have been agreed by their Department in each year since 1 January 2010; and how much money from the public purse has been spent on (A) legal costs and (B) financial settlements for such agreements in each year since 1 January 2010.

Jesse Norman:

Exit packages are published in DfT Annual Reports and Accounts and all redundancy, severance and other department costs, are paid in accordance with the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (except where instances are detailed in the accounts as otherwise).

In 2015 Cabinet Office guidance outlined that confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements should not be applied in settlement agreements as a matter of course. Since that time, fewer than 5 have been agreed and the values of the packages were reported in the relevant year's accounts.

■ Department for Transport: P&O Ferries

Karl Turner: [\[89792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what meetings (a) he and (b) his officials have had with representatives from transport trade unions to discuss P&O Ferries since he entered office on 25 October 2022.

Mr Richard Holden:

Officials meet with representatives from relevant transport trade unions on a regular basis to discuss progress with the seafarer protections nine-point plan and Seafarers' Wages Bill. So far, the Secretary of State has not had the opportunity to do so.

■ Department for Transport: Redundancy

Florence Eshalomi: [\[89935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to introduce a voluntary exit programme for civil servants serving in his Department.

Huw Merriman:

There is currently one small-scale targeted exit scheme in progress, impacting up to 10 staff. There are no plans to widen this approach at this time.

■ East West Rail Line**Louise Haigh:**[\[89865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to page 33 of the Autumn Statement, CP 751 published on 17 November 2022, whether the commitment to Build East-West Rail includes building connection stages 2 and 3.

Huw Merriman:

The Autumn Statement recommitted to the government's transformative growth plans for our railways including East West Rail. Connection Stage 2 (Bletchley to Bedford) and Connection Stage 3 (Bedford to Cambridge) of East West Rail are at development stage, and options for the sections were consulted on as part of a wide-ranging non-statutory consultation from March-June 2021. An update on the project will be provided in due course. As a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), EWR Co. is planning to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) to secure the relevant planning and permitted development powers.

■ Electric Scooters**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[\[89691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals on light powered vehicles to enable the creation of appropriate legal standards for e-scooters.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:[\[89692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to publish the results of its e-scooter trials research.

Jesse Norman:

Government intends to create a Low-speed Zero Emission Vehicle (LZEV) category that is distinct from the cycle and motor vehicle categories. The first beneficiaries of this new system will be e-scooters. No final decisions about e-scooter regulations have been made and the Department will consult publicly before any new arrangements come into force.

A full set of findings from our evaluation of the e-scooter trials will be published in due course.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Louise Haigh:**[\[87896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the policy paper by his Department entitled Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy, published

on 25 March 2022, whether the consultation on the design of the Rapid Charging Fund has been launched.

Jesse Norman:

The Department is looking to launch the consultation on the design of the Rapid Charging Fund in Spring 2023, in line with the Taking Charge strategy.

Louise Haigh:

[\[87897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy report published on 25 March 2022, whether the pathfinder projects for the Rapid Charging Fund have been launched.

Jesse Norman:

The Department is planning to launch a pilot for the Rapid Charging Fund in early 2023.

Louise Haigh:

[\[87898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy report published on 25 March 2022, when the next tranche of funding for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure will be released.

Jesse Norman:

The Government currently expects to launch the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund in Spring 2023. This will build on this year's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure pilot scheme, which was backed by £20 million of government and industry funding.

Louise Haigh:

[\[87899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy report published on 25 March 2022, whether amendments to the Transport Planning Practice Guidance relating to chargepoints have been completed.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework is clear that planning applications for development should enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, and convenient locations.

As part of our proposed changes to the planning system, and as committed in the Net Zero Strategy, we intend to review National Planning Policy to make sure it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation. As part of this, we will consider any further changes to planning guidance to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Louise Haigh:

[\[87900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the policy paper by his Department entitled Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy, published on 25 March 2022, how many charging companies have signed up to the British Standards Institute accessible charging standards as of 15 November 2022.

Jesse Norman:

As the transition to electric vehicles (EV) accelerates it is important that public chargepoints are designed to be easily accessible to all those who need to use them, including disabled and elderly people. Working alongside the national disability charity Motability, the Government commissioned the British Standards Institution (BSI) to produce a new accessibility standard – a world first. This standard, for the first time, lays out best practice on designing and installing accessible public EV chargepoints. The Publicly Available Standard (PAS) 1899 was published on 11 October 2022.

Compliance with the PAS 1899 Standard is voluntary, and the Government does not measure the specific level of uptake. However, Government will be actively encouraging its uptake and monitoring to assess whether further intervention is needed. This will inform the 24-month review of the standard, which will be led by the BSI.

Louise Haigh:[\[87901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the policy paper by his Department entitled Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy, published on 25 March 2022, what his planned timetable is for the publication of the Government response to the future of transport regulatory review.

Jesse Norman:

The Government plans to publish its response to the Future of Transport regulatory review shortly.

■ Electric Vehicles: Vans**Louise Haigh:**[\[87902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many purchases of small vans have been supported by the plug-in grant since 1 January 2022.

Jesse Norman:

Since 1 January 2022, 3,483 small van orders have been supported by funding from the Plug In Van Grant.

■ European Aviation Safety Agency**Douglas Chapman:**[\[87862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he is taking steps to agree a reciprocal arrangement for (a) pilot and (b) engineer licences with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency.

Jesse Norman:

Whilst the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement provisions on aviation safety provide a framework under which arrangements for the reciprocal recognition of personnel licences could be agreed, the EU has indicated that it is not currently minded to enter into discussions on this issue.

■ Ferries: Freight**Karl Turner:** [\[89791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the Critical Freight Grant has been granted to (a) P&O Ferries and (b) each other operator receiving the grant since it was introduced.

Mr Richard Holden:

The proportions paid under the scheme active between January and June 2021 were, to the nearest percentage: P&O Ferries 18%; Brittany Ferries 29%; DFDS 32%; Stena Line 21%. All contracts under this Framework have now been terminated.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway**Helen Hayes:** [\[89878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of (a) passenger numbers during (i) peak and (ii) off-peak hours on Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) services in London and (b) fare revenue collected by GTR for those services in the most recent period for which data are available.

Huw Merriman:

For the most recent rail period, the number of weekday journeys on GTR totalled 76 per cent of pre pandemic levels whilst weekend journeys were 86 per cent. Peak travel has recovered much more slowly than off peak. Overall revenue for GTR reached 76 per cent compared to 2019 levels.

Helen Hayes: [\[89879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to model the impact of service reductions from GTR; and what modelling his Department has received from GTR on the planned service reductions.

Huw Merriman:

GTR have been working at pace to respond to changing passenger travel patterns since the pandemic. Their train service is regularly reviewed to ensure it provides sufficient capacity to meet passenger demand whilst delivering good value for the taxpayer.

■ High Speed 2 Line: Cost Effectiveness**Louise Haigh:** [\[89864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Second Report of the Transport Committee entitled The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, published on 27 July 2022, if he will publish an updated benefit-cost ratio for the (a) full HS2 project and (b) proposals for the Eastern leg of HS2 Phase 2b by March 2023; and if he will take steps to ensure that HS2 benefit-cost ratios take into account impacts on regional inequalities.

Huw Merriman:

The latest assessment of the BCR for Phases One, 2a and 2b (Crewe to Manchester) of the HS2 network was published in June 2022. This assessment concluded that the scheme delivers positive value for money to the taxpayer with a BCR above 1.

The Government intends to provide a full response to the Transport Select Committee's report by March 2023 and to continue providing updated economic assessments of HS2 at key decision points for the programme, as it has done to date.

■ P&O Ferries: Finance

Mike Kane: [\[89823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether P&O Ferries was considered for funding through round two of the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition; and whether P&O Ferries will be barred from round three.

Mr Richard Holden:

P&O Ferries did not bid into either Round 2 or Round 3 of the CMDC and will therefore not directly receive any CMDC funding.

■ P&O Ferries: Freight

Mike Kane: [\[89822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much money P&O has received from contracts under the Freight Capacity Framework Agreement since it was introduced.

Mr Richard Holden:

Payments under the Freight Capacity Framework Agreement to P&O Ferries Holdings Ltd have totalled approximately £11M. Eligibility of services ceased at the end of July 2021; all the contracts under the Framework have terminated and there is no intention to let further contracts under it.

Angela Rayner: [\[89833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department's contract with P&O Ferries awarded through the Freight Capacity Framework Agreement in October 2019 is active.

Mr Richard Holden:

Since termination of the Government Secured Freight Capacity contracts, no further such contract has been awarded to P&O Ferries. There is no intent to let further contracts under the Framework Agreement.

■ Ports: Crown Dependencies

Mike Kane: [\[87851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Secretary of State for Justice on developing minimum wage corridors between UK ports and ports in Crown Dependencies.

Mr Richard Holden:

There have been no discussions with the Secretary of State for Justice on this matter.

Railways: Contracts

Daisy Cooper: [\[86614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many passenger service contracts were in place with rail operators as of 14 November 2022.

Huw Merriman:

As of November 2022 no Passenger Service Contracts (as defined in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail) were in place.

Railways: Fares

Daisy Cooper: [\[86613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many stations in the South-East of England have been given access to pay-as-you-go fares since December 2019.

Huw Merriman:

Pay-As-You-Go has been extended to sixteen stations and options for further stations in the South-East are under consideration.

Railways: Midlands and North of England

Louise Haigh: [\[89861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Second Report of the Transport Committee entitled The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, published on 27 July 2022, HC 292, if he will implement the recommendation to publish the full technical appraisals of the feasibility of the time reductions identified in the Integrated Rail Plan.

Huw Merriman:

The Government is considering the Transport Committee's report. We intend to provide an update later this year, and a full response by March 2023.

Railways: North of England

Louise Haigh: [\[89862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the three options for Northern Powerhouse Rail identified by Transport for the North on (a) the economy, (b) train reliability and performance, (c) the environment, (d) the residual value of investments and (e) location decisions of (i) households and (ii) businesses.

Huw Merriman:

As set out in the Autumn Statement last week, Government is committed to delivering the Northern Powerhouse Rail core network as outlined in the Integrated Rail Plan.

The Government carefully assessed the three proposals presented by Transport for the North last year. Updated analysis will continue to be included in future business cases where relevant, and we intend to respond to the Transport Select Committee's recommendations by March,

■ Road Traffic

Bridget Phillipson: [\[89793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2022 to Question 68524 on Road Traffic Act 1988, when his Department will announce the (a) scope and (b) timings of the call for evidence on the Road Traffic Act 1988, due to be published by the end of 2022.

Mr Richard Holden:

The Department for Transport is continuing to consider the publication of a call for evidence on motoring offences, with work continuing as to its precise scope and timings.

TREASURY

■ Alcoholic Drinks and Tobacco: Excise Duties

Rachael Maskell: [\[86530\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will use alcohol and tobacco duties to support programmes to reduce harm from those products.

James Cartlidge:

The Government keeps the duty rates under review during its yearly budget process and aims to balance the impact on businesses with its public health objectives.

■ Business Rates: Sheffield

Olivia Blake: [\[89924\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the potential impact of the changes to business rates announced in the Autumn Statement 2022 on Sheffield City Council revenues.

Victoria Atkins:

At Autumn Statement 2022, the Government announced a package of business rates support worth £13.6 billion over the next five years. This includes a freeze to the multiplier for 2023-24 and a Government funded Transitional Relief scheme to support businesses with increasing bills at the revaluation. The Government also announced further relief for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors and targeted support for small businesses.

All English Local Authorities will be fully compensated for the loss of income as a result of these business rates measures and will receive new burdens funding for administrative and IT costs.

■ Cooperatives

Seema Malhotra:

[\[88885\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department is taking steps to encourage the growth of the consumer co-operative sector.

Andrew Griffith:

The Government is committed to having a thriving co-operative sector and helping to support and establish further businesses which serve local communities up and down the country.

The Government has provided significant support to the co-operative sector in recent years and has sought to improve the business environment for co-operatives and mutuals. The Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 helped cut through the legal complexity involved in running a co-operative, improving their competitiveness. The ability of co-operatives to raise £100,000 of withdrawable share capital per member, increased from £20,000 in 2014, has also ensured that co-operatives have the necessary flexibility to raise funding and compete more effectively with companies.

Most recently, the Government is supporting a Private Members' Bill on Co-operatives, Mutual Insurers, and Friendly Societies, which will grant HM Treasury the power to bring forward regulations to give those mutuals further flexibility in determining for themselves the best strategies for their business regarding their surplus capital.

The Government also aims to continue to develop a modern and supportive business environment to set mutuals up for success, and as part of this, it is currently exploring options for reviewing key legislation underpinning the sector.

■ Cost of Living: Chronic Illnesses

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[86420\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal support the Government has provided for people with long term medical conditions during the cost of living crisis.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that the rising cost of living has presented additional financial challenges to many people, and especially to the most vulnerable members of society, such as disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. That is why the Government is taking decisive action to support households while ensuring we act in a fiscally responsible way.

At Autumn Statement 2022, the Government announced that it will provide a further Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 in 2023/24 to people in receipt of extra-costs disability benefits such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA). This is additional to the £150 payment for recipients of disability benefits in 2022 already announced as part of the Cost of Living package in May.

These payments can be received in addition to the other Cost of Living Payments for households on means-tested benefits, namely the £650 payment announced in May and the additional £900 payment announced at Autumn Statement. Individuals who have limited or no ability to work because of their disability or long-term health condition, and are in receipt of means-tested benefits such as income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the Universal Credit Health top up, are eligible for this support.

Disabled people and people with long-term health conditions will also benefit from other forms of non-means-tested support which the Government is providing to assist with household energy bills. We have taken decisive action to support millions of households with rising energy costs through the Energy Price Guarantee, which limits the price suppliers can charge customers for units of gas and electricity. In addition to the Energy Price Guarantee, millions of the most vulnerable households will receive further support this year through the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme. The £150 Council Tax rebate will also mean that all households in Council Tax bands A-D will receive a rebate, and 99% of eligible households have already received this.

■ **Cost of Living: Newport West**

Ruth Jones: [\[87981\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Government on the effect of rising costs of (a) food, (b) fuel and (c) energy on (i) church and (ii) mosques in Newport West constituency.

John Glen:

HMT continues to engage regularly with the devolved administrations. The Chancellor met with the devolved administration First Ministers Mark Drakeford MS and Nicola Sturgeon MSP on Thursday 10 November where discussion included cost of living and rising energy costs and the First Ministers had the opportunity to set out their priorities to the Chancellor.

I also met with the Welsh Government's Finance Minister Rebecca Evans MS on Monday 14 November and also on Thursday 17 November to provide an overview of the current economic situation in the UK and to hear her priorities for the people of Wales.

■ **Development Aid: Government Departments**

Mr David Lammy: [\[87723\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of Official Development Assistance was spent by other government Departments in each of the last five years.

John Glen:

The UK's calendar year Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending is reported in its annual Statistics on International Development publications, including the amount of ODA spent by each government department. These publications can be

found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development#statistics-on-international-development:-2017>.

■ **Disguised Remuneration Loan Charge Review: Repayments**

Jim Shannon:

[86484]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people seeking refunds as a result of changes made in response to the Morse Review have been refunded by HMRC.

Victoria Atkins:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to UIN 80825.

■ **Economic Policy: Mortgages**

Dr Julian Lewis:

[89686]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Autumn Statement 2022 on the sustainability of existing mortgages; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Griffith:

As the Chancellor has said, sound money and a stable economy are the best ways to deliver lower mortgage rates, more jobs and long-term growth. Economic stability relies on fiscal sustainability – and the Autumn Statement puts the public finances onto a sustainable footing, with debt as a proportion of the economy falling by the end of the forecast period.

Indeed, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has said that without the measures announced at Autumn Statement, underlying debt would be rising by £108bn in 2027-28. The OBR has also noted that the net effect of the Government's package supports the economy in the aggregate, by "reducing the fall in output when the economy is in recession and unemployment rising".

To support mortgage borrowers with rising interest rates, it was announced at Autumn Statement that, from spring 2023, the Government will allow those on Universal Credit to apply for a Support for mortgage Interest (SMI) loan to help with interest repayments after three months, instead of nine. We will also abolish the zero earnings rule to allow claimants to continue receiving support while in work and on Universal Credit.

In addition to SMI, the Government also provides protection in the courts through the Pre-Action Protocol, which makes it clear that repossession must always be the last resort for lenders. It is also worth noting that, if mortgage holders are struggling to keep up with their payments, FCA guidance requires firms to offer tailored support. This could include a range of measures depending on individual circumstances.

■ Economic Situation: UK Relations with EU

Rachael Maskell: [\[86522\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) European Commission and (b) his European counterparts on steps to help improve the UK's economic situation.

Andrew Griffith:

The Chancellor maintains regular contact with his counterparts from other countries over the course of the year. Since taking office, he has spoken with representatives from the US, Ukraine and the IMF. He has not met or spoken with any of his European counterparts or counterparts from the European Commission yet but will be doing so in the near future to collaborate on shared priorities and challenges.

■ Home Shopping: Taxation

Emily Thornberry: [\[89772\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much money his Department has spent on (a) staff activity, (b) external research and advice, (c) public consultation and (d) stakeholder engagement related to the proposed introduction of an Online Sales Tax since the start of the 2021-22 financial year.

Victoria Atkins:

On 25 February the government launched a consultation considering the case for an Online Sales Tax. This was an open consultation exploring the design options as well as the economic impacts of such a tax. The Government conducted extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, as well as internal research on the various design options. There was no additional expenditure on this outside of normal policy development costs, such as officials' time.

Following the consultation, the Government has decided not to introduce an online sales tax. This decision reflects concerns raised about its complexity and the risk of creating unfair outcomes between different retail business models. Stakeholders also expected it would lead to higher prices for consumers. The Government will shortly publish the Response to the Online Sales Tax consultation, explaining in detail the complexities of implementing such a tax.

■ Motor Vehicles: Taxation

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[87750\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the report by the Campaign for Better Transport entitled Pay-as-you-drive: The British public's views on vehicle taxation reform, published in September 2022, whether he has had recent discussions with the Alliance of British Drivers on a pay-as-you-drive scheme.

James Cartlidge:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

■ Night-time Economy: Government Assistance

Fleur Anderson: **[88017]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps the Government has taken to support the night-time economy.

James Cartlidge:

In the past, the Government has taken unprecedented action to support the hospitality industry. Autumn Statement delivers further on our support for the sector.

The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) Relief has been extended and increased from 50% to 75% in 2023-24 – a relief of up to £110k per business. This means around 230,000 properties in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors will receive a tax cut worth almost £2.1 billion in 2023-24.

We are freezing the business rates multiplier in 2023-24 instead of increasing in line with inflation. Businesses in the hospitality and retail sectors will also benefit from the Energy Price Guarantee until April 2023. In addition, the April increase to the Employment Allowance from £4,000 to £5,000, means that any businesses with employer NICs bills of £100,000 or less in the previous tax year can claim up to £5,000 off their NICs bill.

All of which means that the Government is exceeding stakeholder expectations for further support for retail and hospitality and to protect businesses such as pubs, cafes, and nightclubs.

■ Project Gigabit

Lucy Powell: **[89820]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his announcement in the Autumn Statement 2022 on 17 November 2022, that gigabit broadband rollout will be funded, whether the £5 billion committed to project gigabit will (a) be maintained in cash terms, or (b) rise with inflation.

Lucy Powell: **[89821]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his announcement in the Autumn Statement 2022 on 17 November 2022 that gigabit broadband roll-out will be funded, if the investment of £1.2 billion of the £5 billion Project Gigabit will be allocated to

the period from 2021-22 to 2024-25, and when the allocation of the further £3.8 billion will be announced.

John Glen:

The Autumn Statement maintains the level of economic infrastructure spending as set out at the Spending Review 2021. That Spending Review confirmed investment of £1.2bn for Project Gigabit from 2021-22 to 2024-25 as part of the wider £5 billion commitment to the programme. The government remains committed to its targets to reach at least 85% gigabit-capable broadband coverage by 2025 and to reach nationwide coverage by 2030. Significant progress has been made towards these targets since 2019, with gigabit-capable access rising from 6% of premises in 2019 to 72% as of today. The government will confirm spending allocations beyond 2024-25 at the next Spending Review.

■ **Railways: North of England**

Naz Shah:

[\[89846\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2022, CP 751, published on 17 November 2022, whether the commitment to Northern Powerhouse Rail will retain the same route as previously announced.

John Glen:

The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP), published in November 2021, set out a £96 billion package to improve rail connections across the North and Midlands over the next 30 years.

Autumn Statement 2022 confirmed the Government's commitment to delivering the Northern Powerhouse Rail core network, as set out in the IRP. This includes building 40 miles of new high-speed line between Warrington, Manchester and Yorkshire, and upgrading and electrifying the rest of the route between Liverpool and York, as well the existing line between Leeds and Bradford.

The IRP is the largest ever single Government investment in the rail network and is expected to start delivering benefits from as early as this decade.

■ **Refuges: Newport West**

Ruth Jones:

[\[87980\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he is taking steps to provide financial support to women's refuges in Newport West constituency with the cost (a) food, (b) fuel and (c) energy.

John Glen:

This year the government has announced the Energy Price Guarantee, to support household with their energy bills over the winter, and a further £37 billion of support for the cost of living. Next year, vulnerable households in Great Britain will see their benefit payments rise by 10.1% from April 2023.

When people face higher bills in winter, when usage is higher, additional Cost of Living Payments will be made available across the UK in autumn 2023-24 to over 8 million of the most vulnerable households. The government is also providing another £1 billion funding to enable an extension to the Household Support Fund over 2023-24, which will continue to support English Local Authorities in delivering local welfare to vulnerable households.

The UK Government has provided significant support this year to help non-domestic consumers across the UK, including public sector organisations and voluntary sector organisations, such as women's refuges, with rising energy costs through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS).

Through the EBRS, the government will provide a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 to provide them with the certainty they need to plan through the acute crisis this winter.

An HMT-led review of the scheme will determine support beyond 31 March 2023. Results of the review will be published by the end of this year, with further support to be targeted at those most affected.

■ Revenue and Customs: Nottingham

Lilian Greenwood: [\[89786\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 82252 on Revenue and Customs: Offices, whether the HMRC building at Unity Square is fitted with solar panels.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[89787\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 82253 on Revenue and Customs: Staff, what the (a) average and (b) peak number of HMRC staff working in the Unity Square building was in each day in October 2022.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[89788\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 82251 on Treasury: Offices, what systems are used to (a) heat and (b) cool the building at Unity Square.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[89789\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 82251 on Treasury: Offices, how many units of electricity were used in the Unity Square building for (a) lighting, (b) mechanical and (c) small power in each month from April to September 2022; and what the price paid per unit was in each of those months.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[89790\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 82251 on Treasury: Offices, what the average energy consumption per hour at the HMRC offices at Unity Square was in October 2022.

Victoria Atkins:

HMRC's Unity Square building has 110 square metres of photovoltaic panels providing solar generated energy.

Details of the average and peak numbers of HMRC staff working in Unity Square for each day in October is set out in the table below.

The table does not include where civil servants from other Government departments who were also working in the building throughout October, together with a number of HMRC contractors, including cleaning and security staff.

Figures are provided for both HMRC's standard operating hours (7am to 8pm) and for normal office hours (9am to 5pm).

DATE	WEEKDAY	HMRC 7AM - 8PM	HMRC 9AM - 5PM	HMRC MAX CONCURRENT
01/10/2022	Saturday	Less than 5	5	8
02/10/2022	Sunday	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
03/10/2022	Monday	751	1,010	1,266
04/10/2022	Tuesday	942	1,274	1,584
05/10/2022	Wednesday	679	915	1,135
06/10/2022	Thursday	700	954	1,196
07/10/2022	Friday	457	621	809
08/10/2022	Saturday	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
09/10/2022	Sunday	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
10/10/2022	Monday	758	1,023	1,266
11/10/2022	Tuesday	924	1,255	1,578
12/10/2022	Wednesday	883	1,197	1,506
13/10/2022	Thursday	752	1,022	1,289
14/10/2022	Friday	467	632	818
15/10/2022	Saturday	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
16/10/2022	Sunday	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
17/10/2022	Monday	555	744	929
18/10/2022	Tuesday	685	920	1,138
19/10/2022	Wednesday	796	1,085	1,351

DATE	WEEKDAY	HMRC 7AM - 8PM	HMRC 9AM - 5PM	HMRC MAX CONCURRENT
20/10/2022	Thursday	763	965	1,190
21/10/2022	Friday	477	598	782
22/10/2022	Saturday	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
23/10/2022	Sunday	0	0	0
24/10/2022	Monday	652	872	1,081
25/10/2022	Tuesday	850	1,148	1,422
26/10/2022	Wednesday	778	1,053	1,317
27/10/2022	Thursday	692	943	1,161
28/10/2022	Friday	465	629	800
29/10/2022	Saturday	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
30/10/2022	Sunday	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
31/10/2022	Monday	713	958	1,192

Unity Square is heated by gas fired boilers and electric chillers are used for cooling the building.

HMRC does not hold data on the split of electricity consumption between lighting, mechanical and small power elements.

The overall electricity consumption for the building and price paid per unit between April and September 2022 is set out in the table below:

The average energy consumption per hour at Unity Square during October 2022 is set out in the table below:

PERIOD	ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION (KWH)	COST PER KWH DAY RATE (PENCE)	COST PER KWH NIGHT RATE (PENCE)
01/04/22 -14/04/22	130,441	59.66	59.66
15/04/22 -30/04/22		35.28	28.74
01/05/22 – 31/05/22	148,292	35.28	28.74
01/06/22 – 30/06/22	164,824	35.28	28.74
01/07/22 -31/07/22	204,877	35.28	28.74
01/08/22 -31//0822	224,217	35.28	28.74
01/09/22 -30/09/ 22	162,172	35.28	28.74

■ Schools: Finance

Munira Wilson: [\[89910\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.41 of the Autumn Statement 2022, published on 17 November 2022, if he will publish the methodology by which the core schools budget in England will receive an additional £2.3 billion of funding in 2023-24 and in 2024-25 and how that equates with the figures for schools published in table 2.1, after an adjustment is made for the removal of compensation for employer costs of the Health and Social Care Levy.

Munira Wilson: [\[89911\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.41 of the Autumn Statement, CP 751 published on 17 November 2022, if he will publish the core schools budget figures after their adjustment to account for the removal of the compensation for employer costs of the Health and Social Care Levy.

John Glen:

Overall core schools funding will increase by £2.3 billion in both 2023-24 and 2024-25. After adjusting Spending Review 2021 budgets down to account for the removal of the compensation for employer costs of the Health and Social Care Levy, this brings the core schools budget to a total of £57.3bn in 2023-24 and £58.8 billion in 2024-25.

£BN	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Spending Review 2021 Core Schools Budget	53.8	55.3	56.8
<i>Spending Review 2021 Budget With Health and Social Care Levy Funding Removed</i>	53.8	55.0	56.5
<i>Additional Autumn Statement 2022 Funding</i>	0	+2.3	+2.3
Autumn Statement 2022 Core Schools Budget	53.8	57.3	58.8

■ Tax Avoidance

Jim Shannon: [\[86482\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the amount of tax avoided through disguised remuneration schemes that will be paid back by people who recommended, promoted and operated these schemes.

Victoria Atkins:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to UIN 59955 on 18 October.

■ Tax Avoidance: Prosecutions

Jim Shannon: [\[86483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) promoters and (b) operators of schemes now subject to the loan charge have been prosecuted for those schemes.

Victoria Atkins:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer that was given on 3 November 2021 to the Question [UIN 62867](#)

I also note that you have recently asked a similar question ([13728](#)) and so thought it prudent to add the following context;

It is important to consider the complexities of criminal investigations of this nature when reflecting on progress to date. Whilst legislation came into force from 2016, the Loan Charge was a new charge on disguised remuneration loan balance outstanding at 5 April 2019.

Investigations (and any resulting trials) into circumstances like these are typically complex and lengthy. These cases often involve multiple participants, so require thorough investigation.

■ Treasury: Disclosure of Information

Layla Moran: [\[86577\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) non-disclosure and (b) other confidentiality agreements relating to (i) employment, (ii) bullying, (iii) misconduct and (iii) harassment cases have been agreed by their Department in each year since 1 January 2010; and how much money from the public purse has been spent on (A) legal costs and (B) financial settlements for such agreements in each year since 1 January 2010.

James Cartlidge:

Where the number of complaints is fewer than five, we consider that to provide an exact category and figure, would constitute the disclosure of personal data. To this end, we are also withholding the financial value of the agreement. This would constitute an absolute exemption for personal data which falls to be dealt with under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data of third parties can only be disclosed in accordance with the data protection principles. In particular, the first data protection principle requires that

disclosure must be lawful and fair and must comply with one of the conditions in Article 6 of the GDPR. We do not think that it is fair to release this information and do not think that any of the relevant conditions apply.

■ VAT: Business

Emily Thornberry: [\[89769\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many additional businesses are forecast to become registered for VAT as a result of the decision to freeze the VAT registration threshold at £85,000 for an additional two years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026, compared to a baseline scenario where the VAT registration threshold was revalorised over that period.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89770\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many additional businesses (a) are estimated to have become or (b) are forecast to become, registered for VAT as a result of the decision to freeze the VAT registration threshold at £85,000 from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024, compared to a baseline scenario where the VAT registration threshold was revalorised over that period.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89771\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of additional businesses that have become registered for VAT as a result of the decision to freeze the VAT registration threshold at £85,000 from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2022, compared to a baseline scenario where the VAT registration threshold was revalorised over that period.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK has a higher VAT registration threshold than any EU Member State and the second highest in the OECD at £85,000. This keeps the majority of businesses out of VAT altogether. At Autumn Statement it was announced that the threshold would remain at £85,000 for two further years until 31 March 2026. It is estimated this will bring around 60,000 businesses into VAT.

Previous forecasts for number of businesses brought into VAT can be found at the following links for [2018](#), [2020](#) and [2022](#). The total number of VAT registered traders in each year can be found [here](#).

■ VAT: Deposit Return Schemes

Martyn Day: [\[87912\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with the Scottish Government on VAT on deposits in relation to the forthcoming Deposit Return Scheme in Scotland.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK Government supports the drinks deposit return schemes (DRS) being introduced across the UK and their environmental aims. The Government is continuing to work with stakeholders to ensure that the schemes operate effectively.

HM Treasury Ministers regularly engage with their Scottish Government counterparts on a range of issues, including DRS.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES■ **Conversion Therapy**

Dr Jamie Wallis: [\[89906\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she has had recent discussions with (a) medical, (b) counselling and (c) psychological organisations that support the Government's policy on conversion therapy for transgender people.

Stuart Andrew:

Equality Hub Ministers and officials have engaged widely on the issue of conversion practices with victims, LGBT groups, healthcare professionals, faith groups, groups advocating for sex-based rights and parliamentarians. This engagement was an important part of developing proposals for the public consultation that closed earlier this year and many such organisations responded to that consultation.

We are carefully considering all the responses to that consultation and will respond in due course. We will continue to work closely with a full range of stakeholders.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Armed Forces: Pensions**

John Healey: [\[86401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether an Armed Forces pension is considered income when an individual applies for Universal Credit.

Guy Opperman:

War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Payments are not taken into account in Universal Credit. Guaranteed Income Payments, Service Attributable Pensions and service-attributable, non-taxable Service Invalidity Pensions are also not taken into account.

■ **Bereavement Benefits: Cohabitation**

Gill Furniss: [\[86692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to lay before Parliament the draft Remedial Order extending (a) Bereavement Support Payment and (b) Widowed Parent's Allowance to surviving cohabittees with dependent children.

Mims Davies:

On 13 October 2022, we laid the draft Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2022 to extend Widows Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Support Payment to cohabittees with dependent children. It will lay in Parliament for a 60-day period. The draft Order will be debated, and voted upon, in both Houses of Parliament before the Order can become law.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Complaints**Alison McGovern:**[\[86473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long her Department takes on average to process a complaint referred to the Independent Case Examiner.

Mims Davies:

The Independent Case Examiner (ICE) service standards set out how long it should take the office to deal with complaints. These service standards are published on gov.uk. The ICE Annual Report for 2021-22 will be published shortly.

The ICE process has a number of stages. Once a referral has been accepted as a complaint, the ICE office initially considers whether, without undertaking a detailed examination of the evidence, a resolution can be brokered with the relevant department or its supplier. If resolution cannot be achieved, the case awaits allocation to an investigator who, following a review of the evidence, will first consider if settlement is appropriate. This requires the relevant department or its supplier to agree action with the complainant. Full investigation reports of detailing findings and any recommendations for redress are based on a thorough examination of case evidence. (Cases are currently brought into investigation according to the date on which the complaint was accepted.)

The office aims to resolve complaints within 8 weeks of the complaint being accepted for examination, settle complaints within 15 weeks of the complaint being allocated to an investigator and complete a full investigation within 20 weeks of the complaint being allocated to an investigator.

Details of the ICE office performance from 1 April 2022 – 31 October 2022 (YTD) are below:

Resolution:

The average clearance time in those cases that were resolved was 8.31 weeks from the point the complaint was accepted for examination.

Settlement:

The average clearance time in those cases that were settled was 6.19 weeks from the point the complaint was allocated to an Investigation Case Manager.

Investigation Reports:

The average clearance time in those cases that resulted in an ICE investigation report was 27.4 weeks from the point the complaint was allocated to an investigator.

There is no service standard for the time a complaint awaits allocation to an investigator, as allocation is dependent on multiple factors, including the volume and complexity of complaints received, as well as available investigative resource.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Disclosure of Information

Layla Moran: [\[86589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) non-disclosure and (b) other confidentiality agreements relating to (i) employment, (ii) bullying, (iii) misconduct and (iii) harassment cases have been agreed by their Department in each year since 1 January 2010; and how much money from the public purse has been spent on (A) legal costs and (B) financial settlements for such agreements in each year since 1 January 2010.

Mims Davies:

DWP follows the: [Cabinet Office Guidance on Settlement Agreements, Special Severance Payments on Termination of Employment and Confidentiality Clauses](#), launched in 2015 and revised in 2019. The Government is clear that confidentiality clauses should not be used to prevent staff from raising or discussing allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

DWP does not hold confidentiality agreement data between the periods 1 January 2010 and 31 March 2020 but has been reporting this information to the Cabinet Office annually since 1 April 2020 following the revision to the guidance. DWP has not agreed any non-disclosure or other confidentiality agreements in the financial years ending April 2021 and April 2022, nor the current financial year to date.

■ Employment: Economic Growth

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[89816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department plan to spend on the workforce participation review announced in the Autumn Statement 2022.

Guy Opperman:

The Department will work across Government in order to conduct work looking at workforce participation, utilising existing budgets.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[89818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to hold discussions with relevant stakeholders on the workforce participation review announced in the Autumn Statement 2022.

Guy Opperman:

The government has been engaging with stakeholders throughout 2022 and that will continue.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Business**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[86559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to support businesses which have not received the Kickstart Scheme wages and related costs for employers from the gateway.

Guy Opperman:

Gateway organisations have a responsibility to carry out their obligations in accordance with all applicable law. If a concern is raised, DWP will investigate any organisation where there is evidence of a failure to meet obligations, which may result in rescinding grant agreements where appropriate.

■ Maternity Allowance: Data Protection**Wera Hobhouse:** [\[86556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the note on his Department's website, dated 17 October 2022, on the loss of Maternity Allowance statistics for May 2022, for what reason this data was lost; and whether his Department (a) has received and (b) expects to receive financial compensation for the data loss.

Mims Davies:

The 5% Maternity Allowance data scan for May 2022 has not been produced following an administrative error by data suppliers in the scheduling of the run of the data. The scan containing MA data was run a month ahead of schedule and therefore reflected an incomplete count.

Since discovery, suppliers have implemented safeguards to prevent a reoccurrence.

Data for the next data point, August 2022, were created successfully using the new safeguards and will be released at 9:30 on 14 February 2023.

Provision of this data is core funded with an internal Service Level Agreement with no financial compensation in the agreement. Therefore, no compensation is expected.

■ Parental Pay**Stella Creasy:** [\[90791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether statutory parental pay will be uplifted in line with inflation from April 2023.

Mims Davies:

The Secretary of State has completed his annual review of pensions and benefits. Subject to parliamentary approval, all statutory parental payments, including statutory maternity pay, will increase by September's CPI figure of 10.1% from April 2023. the new rate for statutory maternity pay will be £172.48.

■ Pension Credit

Navendu Mishra:

[\[86628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to encourage greater take-up of Pension Credit among families that are eligible to receive that benefit.

Laura Trott:

Pension Credit provides vital financial support to our most vulnerable pensioners and we want all those who are eligible to claim it.

To raise awareness of Pension Credit and increase take-up, the Department launched a £1.2m nationwide communications campaign in April. The campaign included:

- Promotion of Pension Credit on social media, via internet search engines and sponsored advertising on targeted websites that pensioners, their friends and family are likely to visit;
- Information screens in Post Offices and GP surgeries across GB;
- Advertising in regional and national newspapers and on national and local broadcast radio;
- Advertising on the sides of buses, interior bus panels and digital street displays;
- Leaflets and posters in Jobcentres, as well as digital versions which could be used by stakeholders and partners across local communities;
- Engagement with Local Authorities nationwide through the Government Communication Service local network and promotional materials to enable them to support the campaign; and
- In June, we held a second Pension Credit awareness media 'day of action' working in close collaboration with broadcasters, newspapers and other partners such as Age UK, Independent Age and the private sector to reach out to pensioners to promote Pension Credit through their channels.
- An updated digital toolkit with information and resources that any stakeholder can use to help promote Pension Credit.

The campaign will continue in December with press and radio advertising, and social media channels.

We will be urging eligible pensioners to claim Pension Credit as it is not too late to qualify for the second Cost of Living Payment of £324 – part of the package of Help for Households which the Government announced earlier this year. This is because a claim for Pension Credit can be backdated for up to three months, provided the entitlement conditions are met throughout that time. To ensure that a successful backdated claim falls within the qualifying period, claims should be made as soon as possible and by no later than 18 December.

In the new year, DWP will again write to over 11 million pensioners as part of the annual uprating of State Pension. The accompanying leaflet has been updated to include the prominent campaign messaging promoting Pension Credit.

■ Poverty: Children

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[88882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the two-child benefit limit on child poverty.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the effect of the impact of the two-child limit on the number of children in poverty.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[88883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the benefit cap on trends in the level of child poverty.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the effect of the impact of the benefit cap on the number of children in poverty.

■ Restart Scheme

Alison McGovern: [\[86672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to publish regular performance data on the Restart programme, including the number of people (a) starting on the programme and (b) securing a job outcome.

Alison McGovern: [\[86691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many starts there have been since the Restart programme started, by month.

Alison McGovern: [\[86693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what job outcomes have been achieved each month since the Restart programme started.

Guy Opperman:

The department is continuing to develop its plan to publish official statistics on the Restart Scheme.

■ Social Security Benefits: Armed Forces

John Healey: [\[86399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many former armed forces personnel are claiming legacy benefits.

Guy Opperman:

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

John Healey:[\[86400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 14 September 2020 to Question HL7707, whether any elements of the (a) War Pension Scheme and (b) Armed Forces Compensation Scheme are taken into account as income when an ex-service member applies for a legacy benefit.

Guy Opperman:

The Government acknowledges the contribution ex-service personnel have made.

In Pension Credit and the legacy income-related benefits, the first £10 of War Disablement Pension or a Guaranteed Income Payment from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme is disregarded when calculating a person's weekly income.

Furthermore, four additions to the War Disablement Pension are completely disregarded in the benefit assessment; these are Constant Attendance Allowance, Mobility Supplement, Severe Disablement Occupational Allowance and dependency increases for anyone other than the applicant or their partner.

For Pension Credit, War Pensions are also considered as qualifying income for the Savings Credit.

■ Social Security Benefits: Cancer**Alex Norris:**[\[86570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made a comparative assessment of the potential impact of uprating benefits in line with (a) earnings and (b) inflation on people living with cancer.

Guy Opperman:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has completed his annual up-rating review of State Pension and benefit rates will increase in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for the year to September 2022. This means that they will increase by 10.1% from 10 April 2023.

In 2022/23, the government will spend over £65.8 billion on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions in Great Britain.

Mr Barry Sheerman:[\[89744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has held recent discussions with Macmillan Cancer Support on the potential impact of raising benefits in line with inflation for people (a) with and (b) related to people with cancer.

Tom Pursglove:

I have, and will, regularly meet stakeholders to discuss a range of disability related issues, including the Disability Benefit Consortium of which Macmillan Cancer Support is a member.

The Government is protecting the most vulnerable in society, many of whom face the biggest challenge making their incomes stretch, by increasing benefits in line with inflation. This means that they will rise by September's Consumer Prices Index – 10.1% from April 2023.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Chris Stephens: [R] [88916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claims were subject to sanctions in the last three months for which data is available by constituency; and how much was the (a) total and (b) average sum of benefit income lost by claimants due to sanctions in each constituency.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: Monthly Universal Credit full service sanction rate statistics are published every three months on Stat-Xplore.

The information requested for part a) and b) is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. 88916 workbook [88916 wo.xlsx]

■ Social Security Benefits: Maladministration

Ms Karen Buck: [88785]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help reduce the number of errors made by his officials in the administration of the benefits system.

Tom Pursglove:

The Department maintains vigorous control of Official Error via its Quality Assurance Framework, which provides an assurance that the necessary quality controls are in place.

■ Social Security Benefits: Ukraine

Thangam Debbonaire: [86513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department plans to extend the special dispensation for people arriving from Ukraine to claim benefits until the end of 2023.

Guy Opperman:

In March 2022, Parliament passed The Social Security (Habitual Residence and Past Presence) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, which exempted those who were residing in Ukraine immediately before 1 January 2022, and who had fled in response to the Russian Invasion on 24 February 2022, from having to satisfy the Habitual Residence Test (HRT) and Past Presence Test (PPT). A link to the regulations can be found here -

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/344/contents/made>

This meant that those individuals covered by the regulations were eligible for income-related and disability and carer benefits from day one of their arrival, subject to all other entitlement conditions being met.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Uprating**

Alison McGovern: [\[89803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2022, CP 751, published on 17 November 2022, whether contribution based benefits will increase in line with inflation.

Guy Opperman:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has completed his annual up-rating review and announced that State Pension and benefits rates will increase in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for the year to September 2022. This means they will increase by 10.1% from 10 April 2023. This includes the contribution-based benefits: Employment and Support Allowance and Jobseeker's Allowance.

A full table of rates will be published in the House libraries and on gov.uk in due course.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Veterans**

John Healey: [\[86397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many veterans applying for income-based welfare support have had their claims reduced due to their military pension in each year since 2019.

John Healey: [\[86398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what is the average amount deducted from income-related benefits for ex-Armed Forces personnel due to their armed forces pension.

Guy Opperman:

This information is not readily available.

■ **Unemployment**

Alison McGovern: [\[87831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential causes of increases in economic inactivity.

Guy Opperman:

No such assessment has been made.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[88881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps his Department has taken to help reduce unemployment in the context of trends in the level of

unemployment in the last three months published in the Office for National Statistics statistical bulletin entitled Labour market overview, UK: November 2022.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 21 November 2022]: As recommended by the Office for National Statistics, the Government does not compare overlapping quarters. For the period July to September 2022 the unemployment rate was 3.6%, 0.2 percentage points lower than the previous quarter.

To reduce unemployment, our comprehensive labour market offer gives claimants the best possible chance to move into work, and we're investing £900 million each year of this Spending Review period, in our work coaches to support this.

■ **Universal Credit: Employment**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[89817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 32 of the Autumn Statement, CP 751 published on 17 November 2022, whether he has made an estimate of the number of Universal Credit claimants that will be asked to meet with a work coach that (a) have children, (b) have limited capacity to work, and (c) are women.

Guy Opperman:

No such specific assessment has been made.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[89819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Autumn Statement 2022, published on 17 November 2022, whether his Department is providing additional resources to work coaches to support the increased workload of adding 600,000 Universal Credit claimants to the in-work conditionality requirement.

Guy Opperman:

The Department continually impacts and assesses the service being offered to customers. Staff numbers are reviewed on an ongoing basis, in line with the latest economic and benefit forecasts. The Department has governance controls in place at all levels of forecasting and modelling to ensure the estimated numbers of staff needed to meet demand for our services are robust and affordable.

■ **Universal Credit: Overpayments**

Seema Malhotra:

[\[88884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many times his Department has used its discretionary waiver for Universal Credit overpayments in the last year.

Tom Pursglove:

The Department for Work and Pensions waived 25 Universal Credit overpayments in the last year.

Waivers are only granted in exceptional circumstances, usually where the recovery of the overpayment is causing substantial medical and/or financial hardship, and it can

be clearly demonstrated that the debtor's circumstances will only improve by waiver of the debt.

However, any claimants struggling with the proposed rate of deductions are encouraged to contact DWP Debt Management to discuss affordability, so that a lower repayment rate can be negotiated as appropriate.

More information on the waiver process can be found at Chapter 8 of the department's Benefit Overpayment Recovery Guide:

[Benefit overpayment recovery guide - GOV.UK\(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/benefit-overpayment-recovery-guide)

■ **Universal Credit: Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[87733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether vaccine damage payments made in respect of covid-19 vaccines are treated as payments for personal injury and qualify for a twelve-month disregard in the calculation of entitlement to Universal Credit; and if he will make a statement.

Guy Opperman:

The Vaccine Damage Payments made to individuals who have been severely disabled as a result of a vaccination against certain diseases, including Covid-19, will be considered to be a sum awarded to a person due to personal injury. For the purposes of any claim for Universal Credit, this sum awarded will be disregarded as capital for 12 months following the award of the payment. In that period it is expected that the injured person will place this sum into an appropriate trust fund, or use it to purchase an annuity to support them. If these funds are placed into a personal injury trust then the capital value of that trust and any income received from the trust will be disregarded for the calculation of their Universal Credit entitlement indefinitely. If the payment is used to purchase an annuity, then payments received from that annuity will be disregarded for the calculation of their Universal Credit entitlement indefinitely.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ FCDO Update

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly): [\[HCWS379\]](#)

As set out in the Autumn Statement 2022, reflecting the significant shock to the economy and public finances, the independent OBR's forecasts show that the principles for a return to spending 0.7% GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA) confirmed by Parliament in 2021 have not been met. Consequently, HMG will continue to spend around 0.5% of GNI on ODA until the principles for a return are met.

Recognising the significant and unanticipated costs incurred to support the people of Ukraine and Afghanistan escape oppression and conflict and find refuge in the UK, the government is providing additional resources of £1 billion in 2022-23 and £1.5 billion in 2023-24.

FCDO's latest estimate of its planned ODA spending for this Financial Year, 2022-23, is £7,584m. FCDO will also plan on the assumption of a similar FCDO ODA budget for next year, 2023-24, to aid financial and operational planning, though this remains indicative. This is in the context of the support we are providing to those fleeing the war in Ukraine and insecurity in Afghanistan.

We will need to decide on the distribution of planned ODA allocations over the remainder of the Spending Review. I want to update the House on how we will do this.

First, I have instructed officials to focus spend according to the priorities set out in the International Development Strategy while maximising value for money and our flexibility to respond to new or emerging priority issues.

Second, we will meet the financial commitments we have made to multilateral organisations. They will remain essential partners in achieving our goals. We will work with them on the profile of these commitments to get the balance right with our bilateral programme spending.

Third, we are now able to lift the pause on ODA spending and activity and will act swiftly to manage our bilateral programmes this financial year. We will approach this in a proportionate way, with experts on the ground in country empowered to determine which programmes to continue in line with our approach to prioritisation.

We are committed to being more transparent about our ODA spend. The FCDO can only meet our development aims when we work closely with our delivery partners, when we listen to, and engage with people in developing countries, and when we explain to the British public how every penny spent helps improve lives around the world and is in our national interest.

In order to maximise value for money of ODA across Government and deliver greater reliability to our partners, we will strengthen ODA governance arrangements, ensuring that the Minister for International Development and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury can more effectively scrutinise ODA spend.

The UK will remain a world leader in development, not just through the impact of our ODA spend but also through our business, trade, civil society, research and technology expertise. For example, new vaccines, nutrition enhanced and drought resistant crops have been developed by the best brains in UK science and universities collaborating globally. This is one of the many ways the UK is partnering with countries to take control of their own future.

TRANSPORT

■ **Draft Legislation: Ship Safety – the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Regulations 2023**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Richard Holden):
[\[HCWS378\]](#)

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Regulations 2023 were today published as a draft, along with an accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum. The draft Regulations revoke and replace the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Large Ships) Regulations 1998 (S.I. 1998/1012) (“the 1998 Regulations”), the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/2950) (“the 2003 Regulations”) and makes other consequential amendments to implement the most up to date requirements of Chapter II-2 in the Annex to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (“the Convention”), relating to safety measures for fire protection on ships.

The draft Regulations are being published for 28 days. Following the conclusion of this period, and once any observations on the draft Regulations have been taken into account, they will be laid for approval by each House of Parliament. This procedure is required under paragraph 14 of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 because these Regulations revoke an instrument, the 1998 Regulations, that was made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972. Statutory statements explaining the steps taken to publish the draft Regulations and the reasons for the revocation of the provision made by section 2(2) are contained in the Annex to the draft Explanatory Memorandum.

The draft Regulations implement requirements for fire protection on ships in Chapter II-2 of the Annex to the Convention, including previously unimplemented requirements to improve fire detection and suppression on cabin balconies for tanker ships to carry an oxygen measuring meter and portable gas detector and other measures.

The updated measures in Chapter II-2 are in force internationally, but the measures must also be incorporated into our national legislation to enable them to be enforced effectively, most notably to discourage non-compliance by non-UK flagged ships in UK waters, which would be detrimental to the safety of shipping in UK coastal areas. The

draft Regulations will ensure that UK law includes increased safety standards for fire protection on both UK flagged ships and non-UK flagged ships within the scope of the Convention operating in UK waters.

The draft Regulations also include an ambulatory reference provision to ensure that future amendments to Chapter II-2 referred to in the draft Regulations will automatically become UK law when they enter into force internationally. As described in the accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum, a Ministerial Statement will be provided to both Houses of Parliament ahead of any amendment to Chapter II-2 referenced in the draft Regulations, prior to it coming into force in UK law by way of the ambulatory reference provision.

The draft Regulations and the accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulations-for-fire-protection>