



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 28 November 2022 and the information is correct at the time of publication (08:20 P.M., 28 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

#### ■ Crime: Victims

**Priti Patel:**

[\[92193\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Crown Prosecution Service's support of victims of crime.

**Michael Tomlinson:**

Improving the experience of victims is a priority for the CPS and is an important part of building public confidence. His Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) independently assesses the CPS to help drive improvement and build public confidence in the prosecution process. Last year, in response to findings from HMCPSI about CPS communication with victims, the CPS commissioned independent research to better understand victims' needs and have since committed to transforming the service they provide to every victim. A long-term victim transformation programme is underway to improve the way the CPS communicates and engages with victims. This includes plans for a new universal service to improve the minimum level of service that all victims receive and an enhanced service offer for victims with the greatest need. As part of this transformation programme, the CPS has also committed to innovate and pilot new ways to strengthen engagement with victims. Building on the work of Operation Soteria to improve the support victims of rape receive, the CPS has extended the number of CPS Areas testing new approaches. Over half of CPS Areas are now testing new activities to improve the way they communicate and engage with rape victims. This includes introducing more contact points, different methods of communications, better information sharing and collaborative working with partners. In addition to the CPS online guide for victims of rape and sexual offences published in December 2021, a new guide specifically for all victims of crime has been prepared and is available on the CPS website. The guides clarify the role of the CPS within the wider Criminal Justice System, explain how the CPS makes decisions in cases, what support is available to victims to help them give their best evidence and what their Rights are under the Victims' Code.

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Alternative Fuel Payments

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[84825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the £100 Alternative Fuel Payment to support off-gas grid customers in winter 2022-2023.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government has doubled support to £200 for alternatively fuelled households, in recognition of the pressures caused by rising fuel costs. The Government is committed to delivering this payment to households as soon as possible this Winter. The Government will announce further information on the delivery and timing of these payments in due course.

**Dave Doogan:**[\[85004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to issue the £100 Alternative Fuel Payment to households who are not on the mains gas grid.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2022]:* The Government has doubled support to £200 for alternatively fuelled households, in recognition of the pressures caused by rising fuel costs. The Government is committed to delivering this payment to households as soon as possible this Winter. The Government will announce further information on the delivery and timing of these payments in due course.

**■ Business: Finance****Esther McVey:**[\[87832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he will take to take to support remote rural businesses in 2023 to help assist those organisations with financial planning for 2024.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

At the Autumn Statement, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £13.6 billion of support for businesses over the next five years, reducing the burden of business rates for SMEs.

The Government is providing a range of support to help small and medium-sized businesses across the UK with rising costs, including those in rural communities. Government has cut fuel duty for 12 months, raised the Employment Allowance to £5,000, and is zero-rating VAT on energy-saving materials.

The 'Help to Grow' schemes help SME businesses learn new skills, reach more customers and boost profits. The Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) provides a price reduction to ensure that all businesses and other non-domestic customers are protected from high energy bills.

Furthermore, the British Business Bank's Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, Midlands Engine Investment Fund and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Investment Fund all work with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), combined authorities and Growth Hubs, as well as local accountants, fund managers and banks, to provide a mixture of debt and equity capital to SMEs across their entire regions, including in rural locations.

**■ Carbon Emissions: North West****Bill Esterson:** [\[94741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the work of the Net Zero North West local hub through the Local Authority Delivery Scheme.

**Graham Stuart:**

Assessment of the impacts of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme are made as standard practice and will be published once complete administrative data from the scheme are made available. This will be at least two months after the scheme completes delivery.

**■ China Electronics Corporation: Octopus Energy****Siobhain McDonagh:** [\[86391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in the context of Octopus Energy's takeover of Bulb, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of Octopus Energy's commercial links with the China Electronics Corporation.

**Graham Stuart:**

In the context of the sale of Bulb to Octopus Energy, the Government has assessed commercial aspects of Octopus. This review has not identified any areas for concern.

The Government's priority is to ensure continued energy supply to Bulb's customers at the lowest practicable cost.

**■ Companies House: Staff****Seema Malhotra:** [\[93546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many staff worked for Companies House in October 2022.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

As of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, Companies House headcount was 1213 staff (1129.63 full time equivalents). These figures exclude all contractors, non-executives and people on loan or secondment.

**■ Construction: Contracts****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [\[92305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help protect consumers from potentially fraudulent JCT minor works contracts.



**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[92306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of consumers have been subject to fraudulent smash and grab JCT Minor Works contracts.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Government is aware that JCT Minor Works Building Contracts are generally unsuitable for domestic clients. The Government recommends that homeowners carefully read the requirements of any construction contract, and it is also advisable that homeowners consider obtaining legal advice before signing a contract.

If consumers have suffered from malpractice in relation to building work under any form of contract, they can report this to Local Authority Trading Standards. The Department does not collect statistics on the use of JCT Minor Works Building Contracts by domestic clients, or adjudications or disputes relating to these.

## ■ District Heating

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[94671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to Answer of 23 November 2022 to Question 89687 on District Heating, when he expects people on heat networks to receive the benefits of this financial assistance; and what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that any savings are passed onto the consumer by the administrators of heat networks.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) provides a price reduction to eligible Heat Suppliers on non-domestic tariffs. Energy supplies to communal heat networks use commercial contracts. The prices being charged on non-domestic contracts are already being reduced by the Energy Prices Act and accompanying regulations. The EBRS Pass-through Requirement (Heat Suppliers) Regulations 2022 requires eligible heat suppliers to pass on the benefits of the discount in a just and reasonable way. Heat suppliers should start to receive any EBRS discounts for October energy usage in their November bills and must inform their customers within 30 days of themselves receiving the discount. The regulations appoint the Energy Ombudsman to resolve disputes about the pass-through of these discounts in Great Britain.

## ■ District Heating: Price Caps

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[86385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 October 2022 to Question 55021, by what mechanism heat network customers will receive support equivalent to the Energy Price Guarantee; and when those support payments will begin.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 17 November 2022]:* Heat network customers are benefiting from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. These customers will therefore not receive the

Alternative Fuel Payment of £200, which has been designed to support households using fuels such as oil, LPG or coal.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has said that the EBRS will be reformed from April 2023. The Government will bring forward a route to deliver bespoke support for on heat network consumers from this date.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[86386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 October 2022 to Question 55021 on District Heating: Price Caps, whether his Department has established the mechanism they will use to ensure customers on heat networks will receive the £400 payment as part of the Energy Bills Support scheme; and what his expected timetable is for when customers will receive that payment.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 17 November 2022]:* Heat network customers with a domestic electricity meter will already be in receipt of the EBSS. The Alternative Funding will provide a £400 discount off energy bills for the small percentage of households who do not have a domestic electricity meter or a direct relationship with an electricity supplier. Eligibility, timescales and method of delivery will be announced in the coming weeks.

#### ■ Energy Bills Rebate: District Heating

**Ian Mearns:**

[\[84873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish details on the additional £100 Energy Bills Support payment for households who are part of a local domestic heat network.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2022]:* Heat network customers are benefiting from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. These customers will therefore not receive the Alternative Fuel Payment of £200, which has been designed to support households using fuels such as oil, LPG or coal.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has said that the EBRS will be reformed from April 2023. The Government will bring forward a route to deliver bespoke support for on heat network consumers from this date.

#### ■ Energy Bills Rebate: Park Homes

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[92316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on ensuring those in park homes are able to access the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[92317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on ensuring those who are off grid are able to access the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government confirmed that further funding would be available to provide equivalent support of £400 for energy bills for the small percentage of domestic energy consumers not reached by the Energy Bill Support Scheme. This will include those who do not have a domestic electricity meter or a direct relationship with an energy supplier. The Government has had initial engagement with the Welsh Government on this Alternative Funding and will engage with relevant parties over the coming weeks.

**Anne McLaughlin:**

[\[94786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to introduce legislation which requires park home owners in receipt of energy support to pass on savings to residents of those parks.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Energy Bill Relief Scheme will provide an energy price reduction for eligible non-domestic customers, including park home owners, over the winter. Regulations covering pass-through requirements came into force on 1 November (GB) and 5 November (NI), requiring any park site owner to pass these reductions on to park residents in a just and reasonable way.

In addition, Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) Alternative Funding will provide a £400 discount on energy bills for the small percentage of households who are not reached through the main EBSS fund, such as park home residents. The Government will announce more details shortly.

## ■ Energy Bills Rebate: Rural Areas

**Helen Morgan:**

[\[94930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the (a) mechanism and (b) date by which those in homes off the gas grid will be able to access the support announced by the Chancellor.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) will be delivered via electricity bills, under a similar delivery model to the Energy Bills Support Scheme. Eligible households will receive payment this winter. Further details on the timing and delivery of these payments will be announced in due course.

Households that are eligible for the payment, but do not receive it directly, because they do not have a relationship with an electricity supplier for example, will receive the £200 via the AFP Alternative Fund which will be provided by a designated body. The Government will confirm details of the AFP Alternative Fund shortly.

## ■ Energy Charter Treaty

**Patrick Grady:**

[93567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Departments position on the UK's membership of the Energy Charter Treaty of the withdrawal of (a) Germany, (b) France, (c) the Netherlands, (d) Spain, (e) Poland and (f) Luxembourg from that treaty.

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK is closely monitoring the situation surrounding the Energy Charter Treaty's modernisation process, including the positions taken by other Contracting Parties.

## ■ Energy Company Obligation

**Bill Esterson:**

[94739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of whether the Energy Obligation Company Scheme has met its policy goals as of 23 November 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

The [Energy Company Obligation](#) (covering Great Britain) has been one of the Government's key domestic energy efficiency policies, improving 2.4 million homes since it began in 2013. The current iteration of the scheme, ECO4, will last until March 2026 and is focussed on providing support to low-income and vulnerable households living in the least efficient properties. The Government estimates that around 800,000 measures may be installed in around 450,000 households during the course of ECO4.

ECO4 has installed an estimated 37,600 measures in around 20,700 households since it commenced in April 2022. This is reflective of industry's adjustment to the new scheme's requirements and the Government will monitor this progress. A long-term evaluation of the ECO scheme is underway. The initial findings have been published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eco-evaluation-wave-1-interim-report-2020> and ECO4 will be subject to an in-depth impact evaluation to assess whether it has met its stated policy goals.

## ■ Energy Price Guarantee: Personal Records

**Chi Onwurah:**

[90797]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November to Question 83815 on Energy Price Guarantee, what electricity and gas meter personal data is collected through the Energy Price Guarantee scheme.

**Graham Stuart:**

BEIS does not currently collect, hold or process any personal data through the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) scheme. The scope of the data required to support the EPG scheme and how regularly it is collected and processed is still being defined.

## ■ Energy: Infrastructure

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[94667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is taking steps to (a) increase grid infrastructure and (b) speed up the planning consent process for energy infrastructure in the context of the Government's renewable energy targets for 2030.

**Graham Stuart:**

Ofgem is responsible for regulating network companies, but the Government engages in and supports their work to increase grid infrastructure by speeding up approvals and bringing forward strategic investment through the price control process.

The Government will produce and publish revised National Policy Statements in due course, bring forward measures to improve the performance of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) planning process and accelerate development consent. The Government will publish a full NSIP Reform Action Plan, as well as consultations on national policy statements and on further regulatory and guidance changes to improve the operation of the system.

## ■ Energy: Prices

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[93508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support households who pay their energy bills through an intermediary during this winter fuel crisis.

**Graham Stuart:**

Energy suppliers are delivering the Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) to households with a domestic electricity contract in monthly instalments over six months from October. The Energy Prices Act 2022 includes provisions to require landlords and other intermediaries to pass this to end users.

Alternative Funding will provide a £400 discount off energy bills for the small percentage of households who are not reached through the main EBSS fund, including those who do not have a direct relationship with an electricity supplier. Further details on eligibility, timescales and method of delivery will be announced shortly.

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[93568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of decoupling the cost of renewable energy from gas prices.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) is considering how to reduce the role of gas as a price setter for electricity. This includes reforms for bringing

forward investment in low carbon generation, leading to less frequent use of gas, as well as options around wholesale market reform.

## ■ Energy: Technology

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[93532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help progress (a) Whitetail Clean Energy and (b) other energy projects that would help retain (i) supply chains and (ii) decarbonisation technologies within the UK.

**Graham Stuart:**

CCUS-enabled clusters will be the starting point for a new carbon capture industry, which could support up to 50,000 jobs in the UK in 2030. The Government took a significant step forward in the Cluster Sequencing process by announcing, in August, a shortlist of projects that represented a range of innovative CCUS technologies to progress to the due diligence stage for Track-1.

BEIS policy officials are engaging shortlisted projects to ensure they remain on track to support the delivery of 20-30Mt per annum of CO2 capture and storage by 2030.

## ■ Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme

**Stephen Crabb:** [\[90772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the role of the Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme funding in developing port infrastructure to support floating offshore wind power.

**Graham Stuart:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on several issues, including the Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme.

**Stephen Crabb:** [\[90773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to announce the allocation of Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme funding to support the development of floating offshore wind power.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government understands the importance of ports for the development of floating offshore wind to support the opportunities that this new industry offers the UK. The Government is engaging with stakeholders and analysing feedback following the launch of the Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme Request for Information earlier this year, and the next steps on the Scheme will be set out soon.

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[90824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the £160 million funding for Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme will be maintained.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government understands the importance of ports for the development of floating offshore wind to support the opportunities that this new industry offers the UK. The Government is engaging with stakeholders and analysing feedback following the launch of the Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme Request for Information earlier this year, and the next steps on the Scheme will be set out soon.

■ **Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme: Sefton Central**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[94740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes have been retrofitted as a result of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme in Sefton Central constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government estimates that 54 homes have been retrofitted in Sefton Central, under the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Schemes. This includes 28 homes through LAD Phase 2, 22 through LAD Phase 3, and 4 through HUG Phase 1. More information on these schemes is available [here](#).

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[93518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the report entitled Learning Lessons from the Green Home Grant Scheme, published by the Energy Efficiency Infrastructure Group in May 2021.

**Graham Stuart:**

Lessons learnt provide valuable insight into the challenges similar schemes face and will be used by senior officials when designing and planning future projects. An independent evaluation of the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme is being conducted with findings available in Summer 2023.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme: Sefton Central**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[93521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what was the average amount awarded to homeowners who made successful applications to the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme in Sefton Central constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

The official statistics published on Gov.uk on 13 October 2022 for the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme describe the status of applications up to 2 August 2022. The average Government contribution per household application in Sefton Central is £5,198.

**Bill Esterson:**[\[93522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications for the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme were successful in Sefton Central constituency.

**Graham Stuart:**

The official statistics published on Gov.uk on 13 October 2022 for the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme describe the status of applications up to 2 August 2022. Statistics include figures on measures installed and vouchers paid by geographic region. In Sefton Central, 80 households received measures, 53 of these households were low-income.

**Members: Correspondence****Rosie Cooper:**[\[90765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when plans to respond to the letter of 13 September 2022 from the Hon. Member for West Lancashire, reference ZA60601 relating to the rising prices of oil, liquid petroleum gas and solid fuel.

**Rosie Cooper:**[\[90770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans respond to the letter of 3 October 2022 from the Hon. Member for West Lancashire, reference ZA60665, relating to the cost of home heating oil.

**Graham Stuart:**

I wrote to the honourable Member on 21 November in response to the letters from 13 September and 3 October about rising fuel costs.

**Microgeneration: Smart Export Guarantee****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[93655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether a Microgeneration Scheme Certificate is required to access a Smart Energy Generation payment.

**Graham Stuart:**

Under the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG), generators using solar, wind and micro-combined heat and power (CHP) installations up to 50kW are required to demonstrate that their installation and installer are suitably certified to be eligible to receive SEG payments from a supplier. This may be a Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) certificate, but the SEG also recognises that other schemes may be equivalent to MCS. Further details about the SEG eligibility requirements can be



found at <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/smart-export-guarantee-guidance-generators>

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

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

**[94677]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November to Question 78634, when he will make an announcement in relation to eligibility, time scales and method of delivery.

**Graham Stuart:**

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to Question [78634](#).

The Department will make an announcement as soon as possible.

### ■ **Postal Services: Standards**

**Holly Lynch:**

**[89859]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with Royal Mail Group on six-day letter deliveries.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Department has regular discussions with Royal Mail on a wide range of issues.

The Government's objective continues to be ensuring the provision of a sustainable, accessible, and affordable universal postal service. The Government has no current plans to change the statutory minimum requirements of the universal postal service which are set out in the Postal Services Act 2011.

### ■ **Shipping: Minimum Wage**

**Angela Rayner:**

**[90817]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on the potential impact of the proposals in the Seafarers Wages Bill on the enforcement of the national minimum wage law by HMRC in the maritime sector.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

Officials from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Low Pay Commission (LPC) speak to a wide range of stakeholders in relation to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and its enforcement.

Almost all workers in the UK are entitled to be paid at least the NMW. This includes seafarers who ordinarily work within the UK and its territorial waters. HMRC takes a risk-based approach to enforcement, which means they can flex their resources to tackle an emerging threat or issue, including for seafarers working in the shipping industry.

HMRC will continue to enforce the NMW with this approach.

**■ Sizewell C Power Station****Dan Carden:** [\[90876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he will announce the investment decision on Sizewell C.

**Graham Stuart:**

As announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the Autumn Statement on 17<sup>th</sup> November, the Government intends to proceed with developing a new nuclear power plant at Sizewell C, backing the project with £700 million.

The Government aims to reach a conclusion on negotiations this month, subject to final approvals for the investment. Further details will be announced in due course.

**■ Small Businesses: Billing****Seema Malhotra:** [\[93545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has had recent discussions with relevant stakeholders on tackling late invoice payments to small and medium sized enterprises.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Government recognises the impact late invoice payments have on small and medium businesses and engages with a range of businesses to understand these challenges as well as explore ways to mitigate them.

We are tackling the culture of late payments, which is still affecting too many small businesses, through a range of measures, including the Small Business Commissioner, Payment Practices Reporting and Prompt Payment Code. The Code was last reviewed and changes made in 2021, we will keep these measures under review and bring forward further changes where necessary.

**■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund: Sefton Central****Bill Esterson:** [\[90785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the number of homes that have been retrofitted through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund in Sefton Central constituency since the introduction of that fund.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[90789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many successful projects have been carried out through the Government's Social Decarbonization Fund in Sefton Central constituency as of 18 November 2022.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2022]:* Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1 awarded around £179m of grant funding, delivering from 2022 into 2023, of

which £11m was awarded to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority consortium, including housing associations in Sefton, to retrofit around 1,250 homes. The SHDF Wave 2.1 competition, which closed on 18th November 2022, will allocate up to £800m of grant funding, with successful projects likely to be notified in March 2023.

#### ■ **Tidal Power: Finance**

**Virginia Crosbie:**

[\[94922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he will include ringfenced tidal energy in the upcoming AR5 contracts for difference auction.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department is currently developing Allocation Round (AR) 5 auction parameters for all technologies, including for tidal stream, taking into account evidence from stakeholders. Full parameters will be published in the Budget Notice in March 2023.

#### ■ **Warm Home Discount Scheme: Disability Living Allowance**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[94734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons the Government changed the Warm Home Discount eligibility criteria to exclude 290,000 disability benefit claimants.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Government has expanded and reformed the Warm Home Discount scheme in England and Wales to target fuel poverty, provide most rebates automatically and standardise the eligibility across energy suppliers.

Households in receipt of means-tested benefits with high energy costs based on certain characteristics of their property are eligible for the rebate. Around 62% of Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance recipients receive a means-tested benefit; those with high energy costs are eligible.

As a result of expanding and reforming the scheme 160,000 more households where a person has a disability or long-term illness will receive a rebate.

#### ■ **Working Hours: Conditions of Employment**

**Peter Dowd:**

[\[94781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to provide additional statutory protections for night shift workers, in the context of the potential health risks associated with night shift work.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

The Working Time Regulations provide extensive protections to night workers. Before someone starts working at night, they must be offered a free health assessment to see if they are fit to work nights before they become a night worker and on a regular basis after that. A record of this must be kept by the employer. Employers must also

make sure that night time workers do not work more than an average of 8 hours in a 24-hour period. Employers can make collective or workforce agreements to change or exclude this limit.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Civil Servants

**Jessica Morden:** [\[94720\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with representatives of civil service staff networks on the government reform strategy.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I have not yet met with civil service staff networks, but I look forward to doing so.

This government is committed to working closely with our brilliant civil servants to ensure we deliver for the public. 14,000 civil servants responded to a 2020 survey that helped inform the Declaration on Government Reform and new vision for A Modern Civil Service. Since then, a network of Reform Champions from across grades, professions and locations have been regularly giving their views on our plans for reform and helping to make change happen where they work.

### ■ Conflict, Stability and Security Fund

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[94880\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Minister in his Department is responsible for the Conflict Stability and Security Fund.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Minister of State Baroness Neville-Rolfe is responsible for the Conflict Stability and Security Fund.

### ■ Future of Work Review

**Peter Dowd:** [\[94780\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government plans to take in response to the Future of Work Review, published on 1 September 2022.

**Jeremy Quin:**

On 12 May, the former Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, asked Matt Warman MP to lead a review into how the government can best support a thriving future UK labour market. Matt Warman MP's response was published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) on 1 September 2022.

In line with departmental responsibilities, this work is being followed up across government through collaboration between departments including the Cabinet Office, HM Treasury, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Education.

## ■ Government Communication Service

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[94881\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Minister in his Department is responsible for the Government Communications Service.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon Jeremy Quin MP, is responsible for the Government Communications Service, supported by Parliamentary Secretary Alex Burghart MP.

## ■ Government Property Agency

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[94878\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Minister in his Department is responsible for the Government Property Agency.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon Jeremy Quin MP, is responsible for the Government Property Agency, supported by Parliamentary Secretary Alex Burghart MP.

## ■ Government Property Agency: Contracts

**Chris Stephens:** [R] [\[94791\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government Property Agency's new Facilities Management contracts under its Workplace Transformation Programme will be let; and when the new companies will start to provide the contracted services.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The GPA's Workplace Services Transformation Programme (WSTP) continues to progress the new Facilities Management contracts, with all Tender processes now complete and bid responses received across all Lots of the procurement exercise. There will now follow a due diligence process of evaluating the bids received on Quality and Price. The GPA remains on track to let the new contracts from April 2023, with the mobilisation of the new contractors taking up to six months to complete. A proposed final hand-over date is scheduled for October 2023.

## ■ Places for Growth Programme

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[94879\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Minister in his Department is responsible for Places for Growth.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Minister of State Baroness Neville-Rolfe is responsible for Places for Growth.

## DEFENCE

■ **Air Force: Alternative Fuels****Sir Greg Knight:**[\[94693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with aircraft manufactures about the safe use of (a) sustainable and (b) synthetic fuels in the RAF.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has discussed the use of sustainable and synthetic fuels in air platforms over a number of years. These discussions enabled the Royal Air Force (RAF) to fly the UK's first military air transport flight using 100% sustainable aviation fuel on one of their operational Voyager aircraft. This was a joint endeavour between the MOD and industry partners, Airbus, AirTanker and Rolls-Royce, with the fuel supplied by Air BP.

■ **Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pensions: Inflation****John Healey:**[\[93461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to parliamentary question 89733 on Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pensions: Inflation, how much and by what proportion his Department increased payments under the (a) Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and (b) War Pensions Scheme, in each financial year since 2009-10.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The table below details the percentage increase in rates payable under both the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pensions Scheme since Financial Year(FY) 2009-10. From 2011-12 the inflation index changed from RPI to CPI.

FY	% INCREASE	INFLATION INDEX
2009-10	5.0%	RPI
2010-11	0.0%	RPI
2011-12	3.1%	CPI
2012-13	5.2%	CPI
2013-14	2.2%	CPI
2014-15	2.7%	CPI
2015-16	1.2%	CPI
2016-17	0.0%	CPI
2017-18	1.0%	CPI

FY	% INCREASE	INFLATION INDEX
2018-19	3.0%	CPI
2019-20	2.4%	CPI
2020-21	1.7%	CPI
2021-22	0.5%	CPI
2022-23	10.1%	CPI

### ■ Armed Forces: Health

**John Healey:**

[\[90747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what percentage of Armed Forces personnel were classed as medically (a) non deployable and (b) limited deployable, in each year since 2010.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The following table provides the number and percentages of UK Armed Forces personnel with a Medical Deployability Standard of Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) and Medically Non Deployable (MND), as at 1 April of each year from 2010 to 2022.

DATE	MLD PERSONNEL		MND PERSONNEL	
	Number	%	Number	%
1 April 2010	18,101	10.2%	13,615	7.7%
1 April 2011	18,828	10.6%	13,800	7.8%
1 April 2012	17,666	10.4%	14,211	8.4%
1 April 2013	15,464	9.6%	14,352	8.9%
1 April 2014	13,811	9.2%	14,396	9.5%
1 April 2015	13,401	9.3%	14,547	10.1%
1 April 2016	13,551	9.6%	14,822	10.6%
1 April 2017	13,860	10.0%	13,916	10.0%
1 April 2018	13,989	10.2%	12,990	9.5%
1 April 2019	14,248	10.6%	13,046	9.7%
1 April 2020	14,023	10.6%	13,272	10.0%

DATE	MLD PERSONNEL		MND PERSONNEL	
1 April 2021	13,732	10.1%	12,801	9.4%
1 April 2022	14,152	10.3%	14,763	10.8%

The figures provided are for full time trained (Royal Navy and RAF), trade trained (Army) and serving against requirement personnel in service. This includes Reserve Forces personnel filling Regular posts whilst serving on Full Time Reserve Service. The figures do not include other Reserve, civilian, foreign service or non-UK military personnel.

### ■ Army

**Hywel Williams:** [\[94700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average career length is for an infantry soldier who joins aged (a) under 18 and (b) 18 or above, including time spent in training.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The average career length on outflow for Trade Trained Regular Army infantry soldiers who join aged 18 and under is nine years. For those who join aged 18 and above, the average career length is seven years. These figures have been rounded to the nearest completed year and are subject to available data.

### ■ Army: Recruitment

**Hywel Williams:** [\[94699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many infantry enlistees were (a) aged 16, (b) aged 17, and (c) aged 18 or above, between 2001 and 2020, and how many individuals joined the infantry as officer cadets over the period.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The data requested by the hon. Member can be found below:

AGE OF INFANTRY ENLISTEE*	INFANTRY ENLISTEE FIGURES
16	13,035
17	12,670
18+	42,686
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,391</b>

\*Figures relate to the Regular Army



2,634 Officer Cadets joined the infantry during this time period. Due to how the data was captured historically, data from the years 2005-06 and 2006-07 is not held centrally. Therefore, the data above is comprised of years 2001-2005 and 2007-2020.

## ■ Defence: Loans

**John Healey:**

[\[89724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much revenue his Department has generated from interest rate payments from small and medium-sized enterprises for loans to fund defence projects in each year since 2015.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Defence has a single loan arrangement that has generated interest rate payments This has only been in place since August 2021 and generated the payments outlined below. There have been no other loans that have generated interest payments since 2015.

FINANCIAL YEAR	2021-22	2022-23 (AS AT 31 OCT 22)
Working Capital Facility (WCF) Agreement with Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited - Commitment Fees/Interest	£139,429.26	£84,923.16

## ■ Fleet Solid Support Ships

**John Healey:**

[\[90733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to create a steering board for the Fleet Solid Support Ships programme.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Defence will establish governance structures for the Fleet Solid Support ship programme at both the contractual and programmatic levels, ensuring appropriate levels of governance for the programme.

## ■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Contracts

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[94703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department provided an indication of its preferred bidder for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract before 9 November 2022.

**Alex Chalk:**

No, it did not.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[94704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many jobs will be created by Harland & Wolff in (a) Appledore and (b) Belfast as a result of the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Alex Chalk:**

I refer the right. hon Member to the answer I gave on 25 November 2022 to Question 89766.

**Attachments:**

1. Fleet Solid Support Ships: Employment [89766 - Fleet Solid Support Ships.docx]

**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[94715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract, which team within his Department will be responsible for ensuring that Team Resolute delivers the UK content obligations stipulated in that contract.

**Alex Chalk:**

Defence Equipment and Support, as the Contracting Authority, will hold the contractor to account for all of its obligations.

**■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Employment****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[94702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November to Question 89756 on Fleet Solid Support Ships: Employment, whether the prime contractor for this contract is responsible for the number of UK jobs created by the contract.

**Alex Chalk:**

The precise distribution of these jobs between UK sites throughout the duration of the Fleet Solid Support ship contract is a matter for the respective companies. The increased investment from the programme will provide the companies with the means to create new jobs and reinvigorate the shipbuilding sector.

**■ Veterans Welfare Service: Cost of Living****John Healey:**[\[90744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how the Veterans Welfare Service helps veterans with the cost of living crisis.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) provides bespoke advice and assistance following a holistic assessment of need which is tailored to each individual's specific circumstances. An individual maybe referred to the VWS for one issue and financial pressures become evident during the holistic assessment. Where financial assistance is required by Veterans the VWS can assist with benefits checks, completion of application forms and signposting. The VWS is part of Veterans UK which processes the Disability Cost of Living payment for eligible veterans whose only Government-paid income is from a War Disablement Pension.

## ■ Veterans Welfare Service: Finance

**John Healey:** [\[90739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual budget for the Veterans Welfare Service was in each year since 2010.

**John Healey:** [\[90740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many staff members the Veterans Welfare Service had in each year since 2010.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Veterans Welfare Service forms part of Defence Business Services (DBS), and is not an independent entity.

Budgets and staff numbers are allocated within DBS at the delivery of veterans' services level referred to publicly as Veterans UK, and includes the administration of compensation claims, veterans' welfare services, pensions, some support to serving personnel and the running of Ilford Park Polish Home. It is not possible to break this information down to only the veterans' welfare service.

The following tables update the figures for Veterans Services as a whole provided by the then Minister for Defence People, Leo Docherty, in answer to Questions 105353 and 105354 tabled on 17 January 2022.

Table 1 shows the average Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of DBS staff working on the delivery of Veterans services (based on staff in post at the start and end of the year). Note that vacancies and staff turnover mean these figures are lower than the Manpower Control Totals allocated to delivery of Veterans Services.

Table 1

FINANCIAL YEAR	AVERAGE FTE
2016-17	407.8
2017-18	395.8
2018-19	419.8
2019-20	439.8
2020-21	431.8
2021-22	426.4
2022-23	422.3

Table 2 shows the annual Budget allocated to the administration of Veterans services for each financial year. This includes the administration of Compensation Claims, Welfare Services, Pensions, some support to serving personnel and the running of

Iford Park Polish Home, but excludes the Veterans UK helpline which is included in other DBS budgets and is not separately held. Data prior to 2015 is not held.

Table 2.

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL DEL (£MILLION)
2022-23	18.112
2021-22	17.620
2022-21	19.795
2019-20	17.220
2018-19	16.644
2017-18	15.607
2016-17	16.095
2015-16	19.052
2014-15	18.964

- Control Total is as at the end of the Financial Year
- Control Total is Near Cash (now known as Total DEL)
- FY 2022-23's control total is as at AP07

#### ■ Veterans Welfare Service: Telephone Services

**John Healey:** [\[90741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many calls the Veterans Welfare Service has received in each of the last 12 months.

**John Healey:** [\[90742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many calls the Veterans Welfare Service has (a) answered and (b) not answered in each of the last 12 months.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The table below details the total telephony interactions with Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) over the last 12 calendar months.

The VWS telephony system records phone call interactions, which includes outgoing calls as well as incoming. Information about how many calls have or have not been answered is not held. Callers are able to leave an answer phone message and will be called back.

MONTH / YEAR	INCOMING AND OUTGOING CALLS
Oct-21	2,167
Nov-21	2,231
Dec-21	1,691
Jan-22	1,912
Feb-22	2,167
Mar-22	2,260
Apr-22	1,662
May-22	1,932
Jun-22	2,055
Jul-22	1,857
Aug-22	1,824
Sep-22	1,780

**John Healey:**

**[90743]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many calls the Veterans Welfare Service received in each year since 2010.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The table below details the total number of client interactions in calendar years since the system was put in place. Please note that in 2010 only 11 months' of data is available.

YEAR	INCOMING AND OUTGOING CALL
Feb – Dec 2010	19,567
Jan - Dec 2011	30,844
Jan – Dec 2012	37,779
Jan – Dec 2013	50,926
Jan – Dec 2014	46,700
Jan – Dec 2015	40,628
Jan – Dec 2016	39,088
Jan – Dec 2017	35,216

YEAR	INCOMING AND OUTGOING CALL
Jan – Dec 2018	31,043
Jan – Dec 2019	29,507
Jan – Dec 2020	21,820
Jan – Dec 2021	25,513

### ■ Veterans Welfare Service: Universal Credit

**John Healey:** [\[90745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many calls on applying for universal credit the Veterans Welfare Service received in the last 12 months.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The number of calls that led to assistance with applying for Universal Credit is not centrally held centrally and could only be determined by interrogating each individual case file at disproportionate cost.

### ■ Veterans: Energy

**John Healey:** [\[90749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department is taking steps with Cabinet colleagues to help provide extra financial support for veterans with higher energy needs due to injuries and disabilities.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

In addition to rising goods and energy prices, inflation and cost of living pressures after the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, disabled people often have additional costs arising from extra heating, water, personal care and special equipment. That is why the Government is providing specific support for disabled people this autumn through the Disability Cost of Living payment.

Veterans are civilians and are entitled to the same cost of living support offered by the National, Local, and Devolved Governments wherever they reside, in common with the general population. This includes the Energy Price Guarantee, Cost of Living payments, and Council Tax rebate as applicable to their location and personal circumstances. In addition, officials at Veterans UK have processed Disability Cost of Living payment for eligible veterans whose only government-paid income is from a War Disablement Pension. Veterans may also receive financial support targeted at them as a distinct group from their Regimental Associations or Service Benevolent Funds, and additional support is also available from the wider Armed Forces charitable sector.

Through its Veterans' Welfare Service, Veterans UK provides one-to-one welfare support and advice to veterans or anyone supporting a veteran, their families and

dependants. Any veteran struggling with their finances should contact Veterans UK in the first instance, who can then advise on appropriate avenues of support:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>

## ■ Veterans: Identity Cards

**John Healey:**

[90746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how the Veterans ID cards help veterans with the cost of living crisis.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Veterans Recognition Card provides a memento of Service and maintains a tangible link to the Armed Forces. It is also one of the ways that veterans can verify their service to help access public and charitable sector services and support, but possession of a card is not a prerequisite to do so.

Veterans are civilians and are entitled to the same cost of living support offered by the National, Local, and Devolved Governments wherever they reside, in common with the general population. This includes the Energy Price Guarantee, Cost of Living payments, and Council Tax rebate as applicable to their location and personal circumstances. Veterans may also receive financial support targeted at them as a distinct group from their Regimental Associations or Service Benevolent Funds, and additional support is also available from the wider Armed Forces charitable sector.

In terms of support provided by the Ministry of Defence, Veterans UK has processed Disability Cost of Living payments for eligible veterans whose only government-paid income is from a War Disablement Pension. It also provides, through its Veterans' Welfare Service, one-to-one welfare support and advice to veterans or anyone supporting a veteran, their families and dependants:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>. Any veteran struggling with their finances should contact Veterans UK in the first instance, who can then advise on appropriate avenues of support.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Broadband: Rural Areas

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[94696]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to further support remote rural businesses by increasing the roll-out speed of broadband in rural areas; and what discussions she has had with mobile phone networks on improving their coverage in rural areas.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government is investing £5 billion through Project Gigabit to deliver lightning-fast, reliable broadband in areas across the UK. We have already launched procurements with a value of over £700 million to bring gigabit connections to rural

and hard-to-reach homes and businesses, and we recently signed our first contracts in North Dorset, Teesdale and North Northumberland.

As part of Project Gigabit the government is investing up to £210 million in the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme to support rural businesses and homes with the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections. To date, we have issued over 106,000 vouchers to homes and businesses through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme and previous iterations. Further information is available on the gigabit voucher [website](#) including eligibility criteria and how to apply for the scheme.

We also understand the impact of poor mobile coverage on rural areas which is why we agreed a £1 billion deal with the mobile operators to deliver the Shared Rural Network. The programme will deliver 4G coverage to 95% of the UK, enabling rural businesses and communities to thrive.

### ■ **Football: Antisemitism**

**Fabian Hamilton:** [\[90756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Premier League on reports of antisemitic chanting and acts at football matches.

**Stuart Andrew:**

The Government has always been clear that racism, including any form of anti semitism, has no place in football, sport, or society at large. This is why the government and its arm's length bodies, Sport England and UK Sport, have worked closely with football authorities and the sector to ensure there is continued action to tackle all forms of racism at football matches.

This includes actions targeted at and around football grounds, such as improving reporting systems, providing better training and support for referees and stewards, and improving the quality of CCTV around stadia.

I will continue to meet with the Premier League and other football authorities to ensure that tackling all forms of racism remains a priority.

### ■ **Gambling Act 2005 Review**

**Martyn Day:** [\[92284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2022 to Question 61996 on Gambling Act 2005 Review, what further steps her Department plans to take to prepare for publication the response to that Review.

**Paul Scully:**

The Gambling Act Review is an extensive evidence-led review, which aims to ensure regulation is fit for the digital age. We will publish a White Paper setting out our conclusions and next steps in the coming weeks, following normal processes for agreeing and publishing government policy.



## ■ Gendered Intelligence

**Miriam Cates:**

[\[90903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has provided funding to the charity Gendered Intelligence (a) directly and (b) through associated bodies since 2009.

**Stuart Andrew:**

DCMS has records of grant funding provided to the charity Gendered Intelligence from September 2017, either directly by the Department or through Arm's Length Bodies or other delivery partners.

Gendered Intelligence has received funds directly from DCMS as a supplier of training on one occasion.

The National Lottery Community Fund has funded Gendered Intelligence to support young transgender people and their families through peer support sessions, mental health support and to reduce isolation.

Funding from Sport England enabled Gendered Intelligence to deliver capacity building training to national governing bodies; this was delivered through the Sport England's Trans Inclusion Project.

Funding from the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP), as part of the financial support for voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to respond to coronavirus (COVID-19), was intended to support those hardest hit by the coronavirus outbreak.

## ■ Musicians: Austria

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[93410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what bilateral arrangements are in place for UK musicians seeking to tour in Austria.

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[93411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the Austrian Government to agree bespoke bilateral arrangements for UK musicians seeking to tour in Austria without restrictions.

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[93412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what bilateral arrangements are in place for UK musicians seeking to tour in Belgium.

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[93413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the Belgian Government to agree bespoke bilateral arrangements for UK musicians seeking to tour in Belgium without restrictions.

**Julia Lopez:**

This Government is committed to supporting the UK's creative industries, including musicians, to adapt to new arrangements with the EU.

We have worked extensively with the sector and directly with EU Member States, including Austria and Belgium, to clarify arrangements on the movement of people, goods and haulage. We have worked across government and with industry to develop guidance including ' [landing pages](#) ' on GOV.UK specifically for touring musicians and other creative sectors.

Visa and work permit requirements vary from Member State to Member State, and travellers should always check what requirements they need to fulfil with the EU Member State they are travelling to. That is why we have worked with Member States to ensure their guidance is clear and accessible, and why we have published general [business traveller summaries](#) for each Member State on GOV.UK.

More broadly, we have confirmed that:

- Nearly all Member States offer visa and work permit free routes for musicians and creative performers.
- Portable musical instruments, carried or in a vehicle, can be transported cost-free and should not require ATA Carnets; and
- Small 'splitter vans' are not subject to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement limits around haulage for the creative sectors and 'cross trade'. In addition, the Government has introduced dual registration to support specialist hauliers, meaning they can benefit from more generous market access arrangements in Great Britain and the EU.

**■ Sports: Internet****Matt Vickers:****[94910]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that fans can watch major sporting events online.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government believes that certain sporting events of national interest should be shown on free-to-air television so that they can be enjoyed by as wide an audience as possible.

We want to ensure that as viewing habits change and technology evolves the regulatory framework remains fit for purpose.

Our Broadcasting White Paper confirmed our intention to undertake a review to look at whether the scope of the listed events regime should be extended to include digital rights. The Government is speaking to stakeholders to look at whether in the face of technological change, the objectives of the existing regime are still being met and whether digital rights should be included in the regime. The review will need to balance the ability for audiences to watch national sporting events at no additional

cost with the ability for sporting organisations to generate revenues from sports rights to re-invest in their sports at all levels.

The Terms of Reference for the review can be found [here](#).

## ■ Technology: Ethnic Groups

**Chi Onwurah:** **[90802]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the British Computer Society report The experiences of black women in the information technology industry, published in October 2022, what recent steps her Department has taken to encourage individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds to pursue careers in the tech industry.

**Chi Onwurah:** **[90803]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the British Computer Society report The experiences of black women in the information technology industry, published in October 2022, what recent steps her Department has taken to encourage black women to pursue careers in the tech industry.

**Paul Scully:**

We recognise that the Tech Sector, including the Information Technology industry, can only reach its true potential if it is fully representative of society. This Government is committed to this mission, which is why we have supported the Tech Talent Charter since 2016. They are leading the movement by gathering data and reporting on diversity statistics from 741 organisations across all sectors, fostering collaboration and innovation to create a more inclusive and diverse tech workforce. TTC's annual diversity in tech report is a key resource that encourages businesses to hire diverse talent, as well as sharing the best D&I practices across the sector.

We recognise that digital skills are fundamental to ensuring everyone can make the most of a digital future. As the department that leads on digital skills, we are focusing on broadening and deepening the pool of talent. The Digital Skills Council convenes stakeholders from across the sector to deliver industry led action on driving the growth of the digital workforce, including widening the skills pipelines, and ensuring Tech roles are accessible for all. One of the council's objectives is to promote mechanisms to provide increasingly diverse access to digital roles and digitally enabled roles.

The Office for AI has also set up the AI and Data Science Conversion Course programmes to provide a Masters degree in AI and Data Science. The first scholarships were announced in 2019, and earlier this year, the government announced a further 2,000 scholarships. These will support underrepresented groups from non-STEM backgrounds to develop new digital and AI skills, and secure employment in the UK's cutting-edge sectors. To date, 57% of these scholarships have been awarded to those from an ethnic minority background, and 38% of these scholarships have been awarded to Black students. Emerging findings also indicate that the scholarships are driving increased diversity in the cohort on these conversion

courses compared to traditional Masters' provision in the sector. 76% of the scholarships were awarded to women, leading to a 32% increase of women on the courses, against comparable benchmarks.

DCMS also launched Cyber Explorers, which supports 11-14 year-olds, and looks to boost their understanding and interest in a cyber career. The programme has prioritised representation on the platform, including characters from a range of diverse backgrounds and careers. This has focused on amplifying reach in population areas with high ethnic minority densities and areas with multiple indices of deprivation. This is alongside our work to support the CyberFirst Girls Competition, which opened its latest intake last month.

With DCMS funding, Tech Nation developed its Libra growth programme in 2021. The programme offers targeted support to minority ethnic tech founders in their scaling journey. Tech Nation has also developed a publicly available Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit, which supports scaling companies in implementing diversity and inclusion strategies in order to make the tech sector as a whole more accessible for those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Apprentices: Taxation

**Sarah Olney:** [\[94830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the Apprenticeship Levy has been spent in each of the last five years.

**Sarah Olney:** [\[94831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what were the total funds raised through the Apprenticeship Levy that was reinvested in apprentice training in each of the last five years.

**Robert Halfon:**

The apprenticeship levy is an important part of the government's reforms to create a high-quality, employer-led apprenticeships system, and it supports employers of all sizes to invest in high-quality apprenticeship training

The apprenticeships budget is used to fund training and assessment for new apprenticeship starts in levy and non-levy paying employers, and to cover the ongoing costs of apprentices already in training and any additional payments made to employers and providers. The annual apprenticeship budget is set by HM Treasury (HMT) and although closely linked, it is distinct from the total levy income collected. The table below shows the Department for Education's ring-fence apprenticeships budget against the ring-fenced apprenticeships spend (set by HMT) for the last five years.

	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>DfE Ring-fence Apprenticeships Budget</b>	2,010	2,231	2,469	2,467	2,466
<b>Total Ring-fence Apprenticeships Spend</b>	1,586	1,738	1,919	1,863	2,455

The department does not anticipate that all employers who pay the levy will need or want to use all the funds available to them, but they are able to if they wish. As is usual practice, any underspends in overall departmental budgets by the end of the financial year are first returned to HMT as per the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance.

## ■ Career Development

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[94732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to publish a new careers strategy for England.

**Robert Halfon:**

The careers strategy, published in 2017, set out the department's long-term plan to achieve a high-functioning national careers system that is available to all, regardless of background. The subsequent careers measures announced in the 2021 Skills for Jobs and 2022 Schools white papers focus on continuing to meet these goals.

The department will set out future priorities for the careers system in England as part of our response to the conclusions of the current Education Select Committee inquiry into careers, which is due to report in 2023.

## ■ Carers

**Aaron Bell:**

[\[90897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has taken recent steps to help support kinship carers.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department is supporting the Kinship charity to deliver up to 100 peer-to-peer support groups across England to support kinship carers.

The recently published Independent Review of Children's Social Care set out recommendations on how the government can support kinship families. The department is now considering these recommendations. We are working up a comprehensive response to the recommendations in the Review, which will set out how the department intends to support kinship families.

## ■ Engineering: Qualifications

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[94729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to help increase the number of young people starting (a) level two and (b) level three engineering related qualifications.

**Robert Halfon:**

Students are able to take small academic qualifications in engineering alongside A levels to progress to higher education. Our reforms to level 2 will improve the quality of qualifications on offer and the support for those who need it, including qualifications supporting progression directly into employment, and transition support to progress to level 3. This includes the T Level Transition Programme which already provides a high-quality route onto T Levels for those who need it. It also includes our pilot of an Academic Progression Programme, supporting students who may not be able to progress to level 3 academic study straight away, but could do after some further preparation.

The introduction of T Levels, alongside technical education reforms, will boost access to high quality technical qualifications for thousands of young people. This September the department launched three T Levels in Engineering and Manufacturing in further education providers across the country, giving young people the skills employers need.

## ■ Pupils: Dyslexia

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[92078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure an early diagnosis of dyslexia in school.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department is taking actions to improve early identification and intervention for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), such as dyslexia, through the reforms outlined in the Schools White Paper and SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper. These build on measures already in place to identify pupils who are facing challenges, including with literacy and reading, and to help teachers understand how best to support them. There are a number of standardised assessments that schools carry out which measure progress and help teachers identify where pupils may require additional support, such as the Phonics Screening Check and end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 statutory assessments.

The department's SEND Code of Practice is clear that meeting the needs of a child with dyslexia is not dependent on a diagnostic label or test. Instead, the department expect teachers to monitor the progress of all pupils and put support in place where needed. To support teachers in doing this the department has launched the English Hubs programme, introduced a new National Professional Qualification for Leading Literacy, and updated the list of high-quality phonics programmes for schools.

## ■ Research: EU Countries

**Richard Thomson:**

[\[902447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the UK's participation in (a) Horizon Europe and (b) other European research projects.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department has regular discussions with colleagues on a range of topics, and fully support colleagues in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on their work in this area. Our preference remains association to Horizon Europe, with international collaboration in science, research and development being a key priority.

## ■ Rural Areas: Vocational Education

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[902445\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to promote rural vocational educational courses.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department wants all students to have access to high-quality vocational and technical learning wherever they are based. That is why the department is reforming technical education to ensure that all post-16 students have access to high-quality technical options that support progression and meet employer needs.

This includes the introduction of T Levels which are substantial, rigorous, and focused on high quality learning and include a substantial industry placement element of around 9 weeks. They will provide the knowledge and experience needed for skilled employment, further study (including higher education) or a higher apprenticeship.

We will have 23 T Levels available from 2023 and the major providers of vocational education, many of whom operate in very rural areas, are already fully engaged with T Level planning and delivery, with over 200 schools also either planning or already offering T Levels.

We are also working closely with employers and employer groups nationally to build their awareness about T Levels and the importance of vocational education and to encourage them to offer industry placements as we know that this will be one of the big challenges in rural areas.

Apprenticeships are a core part of the government's skills agenda, helping to drive economic growth by improving the skills pipeline. They give employees high-quality, hands-on training to start and progress in work and give employers the skills they need to grow, helping them fill their vacancies and train their workforces to address industry skills gaps. They offer a high-quality route into more than 650 occupations, from entry-level to expert roles, spanning Levels 2 to 7. To support more employers across the country to access apprenticeships, including in rural areas, we are

increasing funding for apprenticeships in England to £2.7 billion by 2024/25 financial year.

The department has introduced Skills Bootcamps which offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and the offer of a job interview with an employer. They are currently available across the country and deliver training in key areas such as digital, technical (including engineering and manufacturing), construction, logistics and green skills. Bootcamps are available both in rural areas and delivering skills for rural economies

The free Courses for Jobs offer allows eligible adults to access over 400 Level 3 qualifications (A level equivalent) for free in a wide range of sector subject areas that can support the rural economy, including Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care. Free Courses for Jobs are delivered through colleges and training providers across the country, including those that serve learners in rural areas.

We fund and support land-based colleges in rural locations and which specialise in education and training in the skills needed for rural economies. There are 12 designated land based colleges across the country. In addition, land-based provision is delivered by a number of and providers with land-based status across the country.

Further education providers, including those in rural areas, are able to deliver provision to 16-19 year old learners by combining both time in the classroom with remote delivery, having regard to funding regulations for 16-19 provision. For Adult learners, providers decide upon the mode of delivery for Adult Education Budget funded courses, to best meet learners' needs and this can include on-line delivery.

The department recognises that the cost and availability of transport can be difficult for some students in rural areas. It is the responsibility of local authorities to put in place transport arrangements to help young people aged 16 to 18 to access education or training.

Many young people in rural areas have access to a discount or concession on local bus or train travel, either from their local authority or local transport providers. The government also supports local bus travel, including in rural areas, through the Bus Service Operators Grant.

## ■ School Leaving: Training

**Lia Nici:**

[\[902449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to improve vocational skills among school and college leavers.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department wants all students to have access to high quality vocational and technical learning. That is why the department is reforming technical education to ensure that all post-16 students have access to high quality technical options that support progression and meet employer needs.



This includes the introduction of T Levels which are substantial, rigorous and focused on high quality learning, and include a substantial industry placement element of around nine weeks. They will provide the knowledge and experience needed for skilled employment, further study (including higher education) or a higher apprenticeship.

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We are also working closely with employers and employer groups nationally to build their awareness about T Levels and the importance of vocational education and to encourage them to offer industry placements.

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We have introduced Skills Bootcamps which offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and the offer of a job interview with an employer. They are currently available across the country and deliver training in key areas such as digital, technical (including engineering and manufacturing), construction, logistics and green skills.

The free Courses for Jobs offer allows eligible adults to access over 400 Level 3 qualifications (A level equivalent) for free, in subject areas including engineering, construction, health and social care and accounting, which can support them to gain higher wages or a better job.

## ■ Schools: Music

**Duncan Baker:**

[\[902443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of funding for music lessons in state schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government remains committed to continued support for music education. The Government published the National Plan for Music Education in June 2022 which sets out the vision for 'all children and young people to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally'. At the heart of the new plan is the Model Music Curriculum published in March 2021, which sets out how schools can deliver an excellent music education.

The Government recognises the vital importance of every child accessing instruments and equipment they need to make progress with music, including technology and adaptive instruments where needed for pupils with SEND. We therefore also announced £25 million of new funding for musical instruments alongside the Plan. This funding will increase the existing stock available to all children and young people. We will work with schools, hubs, Arts Council England and the wider sector to focus on best practice in managing access to instruments and equipment. We will publish further details in due course.

The Department committed £79 million per year for the Music Hubs programme over three years up to and including 2024-25, which was confirmed with the publication of the Plan. Music Hubs are groups of organisations, such as local authorities, schools, art organisations, community, or voluntary organisations, that work together to create joined-up music education provision and provide specialist music education services to around 90% of state-funded schools. This includes whole class and group ensemble teaching, and individual instrument tuition.

Hubs also ensure that progression routes are clear and affordable, and some hubs provide instrument loans to children and young people to achieve this.

#### ■ Schools: Sports

**Paul Howell:**

[\[902450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether funding for the PE and sport premium will continue at current levels for the 2023-24 school year.

**Nick Gibb:**

Improving school sport and physical education (PE) is a key priority. The Department recognises the important role the PE and sport premium plays in helping schools ensure that children and young people play sport and keep fit.

We are considering arrangements for the Primary PE and sport premium for the 2023/24 academic year and beyond and will confirm the position as early as possible.

#### ■ Special Educational Needs

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[94877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Independent Provider of Special Education Advice's submissions to the SEND review: right support, right place, right time, if he will publish a response to that organisation's questions and recommendations on the SEND Green Paper.

**Claire Coutinho:**

The department is aware of the submission from the Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA) and the recommendations it sets out for the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system, including strengthening accountability measures to ensure that every child and young person has access to support that meets their needs.

The SEND and alternative provision (AP) green paper set out our proposals for how the department will improve the SEND system, so that it delivers better outcomes, improved experiences, and financial sustainability.

The department received extensive feedback on these proposals during the consultation period and we will publish a SEND and AP Improvement Plan that will set out the consultation feedback and our next steps.

## ■ STEM Subjects

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[94733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a STEM education strategy.

**Robert Halfon:**

Several government strategies are already in place to support our STEM ambitions, including the 2021 UK Innovation Strategy, the 2021 National AI Strategy, and the 2022 UK Digital Strategy. They set out how the department will strengthen its reserves of talent and skills in order to drive success.

The department is focused on delivery. We are encouraging more students to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects across all key stages, from primary school to further and higher education, ensuring a strong pipeline of qualified students for STEM careers. By developing employer-centred skills programmes such as apprenticeships, T Levels, and Higher Technical Qualifications, the department is empowering industry to shape our training offers to meet their needs and create more routes into skilled STEM roles.

We are investing in programmes that support science, technology, and digital skills, such as programmes that support teachers to improve the quality of science teaching. From autumn 2022, early careers teachers can claim a levelling up premium of £3,000 tax free per year for up to three years, to teach mathematics, physics, chemistry, or computing in state funded secondary schools that have been identified as having a high need for teachers.

Alongside this, the department is investing in Institutes of Technology, which are leaders in the provision of high quality, higher level technical education and training across a range of STEM occupations and industries.

Additionally, the department is investing in STEM in higher education, delivering a 12% increase in grant funding for strategically important, high-cost subjects such as medicine, engineering, and computing.

The government cannot achieve its ambition to be a science and technology superpower alone, and so efforts to work closely with businesses, including through the new Digital Skills Council, are being made to drive forward industry led action to address current and future demand for digital skills.

**■ Students: Finance****Sir Stephen Timms:**[\[902446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to launch Alternative Student Finance for Muslim students.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department understands the concerns held by some Muslim students and their families about student finance. We want all learners with the potential to benefit from higher education to be able to do so. The department remains committed to delivering an alternative student finance (ASF) product for Muslim students.

Going forward, the department is introducing a Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) that will significantly change the ways students can access learning and financial support.

The department's consultation on the detail and scope of the LLE closed in May 2022. In this consultation, the department sought views on what barriers learners with protected characteristics might face in accessing or drawing on their LLE, noting that answers to this question could include consideration of an ASF product for students whose faith has resulted in concerns about traditional loans. We are currently considering if and how ASF can be delivered as part of the LLE.

We will provide a further update on ASF as part of the government response to the LLE consultation.

**■ Teachers: Hampshire****Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**[\[90850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made an assessment of the impact of the rising cost of living on teachers in north Hampshire; and whether he plans for the Education and Skills Funding Agency to conduct a review of the areas classed as London fringe.

**Nick Gibb:**

Schools will benefit from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. This will reduce how much schools need to spend on their energy, and give schools greater certainty over their budgets through the winter months. The Department knows that every 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.

The 2022/23 pay awards should be viewed in parallel with the Government's £37 billion package of support for the Cost of Living, which is targeted to those most in need. The Government has also taken action to limit energy bills for households through the Energy Price Guarantee. The typical household, which had been facing forecast bills of £6,000, can now expect to pay £2,500 per year for average usage.

Decisions on pay ranges are based on recommendations by the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB), the independent body that advises on teachers' pay and conditions.

The geographical areas covered by the different ranges were defined some years ago to reflect a practical approach to compensate teachers working in London, and the STRB has not recommended any changes since then, although the Department will consider these issues in the future.

Pay awards must strike a careful balance, recognising the vital importance of teachers and other public sector workers, whilst delivering value for the taxpayer. The Department has implemented the STRB's recommendation of an 8.9% uplift to starting salaries outside London in the 2022/23 academic year, keeping the Department on track for delivering its manifesto commitment of a £30,000 starting salary. The Department has implemented the STRB's recommendation of a 5% pay uplift for experienced teachers and leaders in the 2022/23 academic year. This award constituted the highest pay award for experienced teachers in 30 years.

### ■ Teachers: Workplace Pensions

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[93408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) independent and (b) state schools have left the Teachers' Pension Scheme in the last five years.

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[93409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) independent and (b) state schools have joined the Teachers' Pension Scheme in the last five years.

**Nick Gibb:**

324 independent schools have left the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) between August 2019, when this information started to be compiled, and November 2022. 22 independent schools have joined the Scheme between January 2018 and November 2022.

State schools and academies cannot choose to leave the TPS. The records show that 1,008 academies have ceased to be registered as scheme employers and 4,383 new academy employers have been registered in the TPS between January 2018 and November 2022. This is a result of state schools converting to academies and some single academy trusts joining multi-academy trusts.

### ■ T-levels

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[94731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to work with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to develop progression maps for T Level students and employers.

**Robert Halfon:**

The department is supporting the development of Progression Profiles by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). IfATE has been working with employers, providers, and industry experts to identify the progression options for a

learner following the completion of a T Level. Profiles are being developed to capture these options, including apprenticeships, skilled employment and higher education.

Profiles for T Levels in Education & Childcare, Construction and Digital have been published at: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/qualifications/t-levels/t-level-progression-profiles/>, and will eventually embed into the revised occupational maps. Profiles for the wave 3 T Levels will be published early next year and wave 4 T Level profiles will be published next summer.

### ■ T-levels: Small Businesses

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

**[94730]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment has her Department made of the potential impact of the £1,000 financial incentive per T-Level industry placement for small and medium enterprises on placement numbers; and whether she plans to reintroduce this incentive.

**Robert Halfon:**

As part of the department's response to the impact of the pandemic, in May 2021 the department launched a short-term employer incentive fund to support employers to deliver T Level industry placements where they received £1,000 for every placement delivered. The majority of incentive funds were paid to small and medium size enterprises and impacted their ability to offer a number of high-quality industry placements.

The incentive fund ended on the 31 July 2022, and there is currently no intention to implement a further employer incentive fund, as it was always designed to be short-term. The department recognises that some employers may continue to incur costs when providing placement opportunities, and is considering what further support might need to be put in place to support the delivery of high-quality industry placements as we continue to rollout T Levels.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Agricultural Products: Northern Ireland

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**

**[92113]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the scope of costs recoverable under the Movement Assistance Scheme have been constrained by state aid provisions applicable to Northern Ireland under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**Mark Spencer:**

The Movement Assistance Scheme only supports trade in agri-food goods within the UK internal market; this is the main factor determining whether costs can be included in scope of the scheme. The scheme therefore avoids constraints arising from the state aid provisions in the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[92114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total cost to the public purse has been of establishing and administering the Scheme for Temporary Agri-Food Movements to Northern Ireland (STAMNI) as of 21 November 2022.

**Mark Spencer:**

The information requested is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[92117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress his Department has made on developing the Digital Assistance Scheme to support the movement of agri-food goods and live animals from Great Britain to Northern Ireland in line with the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[92118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether certification under the proposed Digital Assistance Scheme will include (a) customs and (b) sanitary and phytosanitary declarations.

**Mark Spencer:**

We are currently in the process of phased testing for the first stage of the delivery of the Digital Assistance Scheme (DAS). It will include sanitary and phytosanitary declarations. We expect the first phase of DAS involving Export Health Certificates for Products of Animal Origin to be delivered next year. Additional development phases of DAS are planned to include the movement of live animals, phytosanitary certifications and interfaces with customs systems in order to achieve a simplified process for generating documentation. The DAS is a Government-funded programme that aims to simplify the process for movement of goods to Northern Ireland or onward to the Republic of Ireland that require certification.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[92119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total cost to the public purse has been of developing the Digital Assistance Scheme to support the movement of agri-food goods and live animals from Great Britain to Northern Ireland as of 21 November 2022.

**Mark Spencer:**

A total of £27.66m, as detailed in the table below, has been spent to date on development of the Digital Assistance Scheme.

TYPE OF SPEND	FY 2020-21 £M	FY 2021-22 £M	FY 2022-23* £M	TOTAL
DAS Programme and Staff Costs	0.25	5.94	7.36	13.55
DAS Capital	3.20	7.79	3.12	14.11

TYPE OF SPEND	FY 2020-21 £M	FY 2021-22 £M	FY 2022-23* £M	TOTAL
Costs				
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>13.73</b>	<b>10.48</b>	<b>27.66</b>

\*Spend to October 2022. A number of actuals remain outstanding.

#### ■ **Animal Housing: Avian Influenza**

**Cat Smith:** [\[92251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in the context of the avian influenza outbreak, if she will hold discussions with her counterparts in devolved governments to encourage the expansion of mandatory housing measures to all poultry and captive birds in Great Britain.

**Mark Spencer:**

Disease control is a devolved matter, and it is for the devolved administrations to assess their disease risks and respond accordingly. However, the UK Government works with the devolved administrations to seek a coordinated response wherever possible to control disease. All four administrations are an integral part of the UK-wide decision-making processes for animal disease outbreaks.

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

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[90861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill will be brought back to Parliament.

**Mark Spencer:**

The Bill will progress when Parliamentary time allows. The date for the remaining stages in the Commons will be announced in the usual way.

#### ■ **Big Nature Impact Fund: Saltmarshes**

**Siobhan Baillie:** [\[89918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the seed finance made available through the Big Nature Impact Fund will be used to fund saltmarshes.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Big Nature Impact Fund (BNIF) will be a private sector vehicle and could invest in projects involving saltmarsh habitats that meet its criteria for investment.



**■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Civil Servants****Philip Davies:**[\[84837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the civil service headcount for their Department was on (a) 15 November 2022 and (b) 1 February 2020.

**Mark Spencer:**

The Core Defra civil service headcount was (a) 6,469 and (b) 4,965.

**■ Farms: Tenants****Tim Farron:**[\[90775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to meet with Baroness Kate Rock to discuss the recommendations of her Tenancy Working Group Report.

**Tim Farron:**[\[90776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to publish her full response to the recommendations made by Baroness Kate Rock in her Tenancy Working Group Report.

**Tim Farron:**[\[90777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to meet with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to discuss the recommendations on taxation made by Baroness Kate Rock in her Tenancy Working Group Report.

**Tim Farron:**[\[90778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Rock Review: summary and recommendations published 13 October 2022, what steps his Department is taking to help framers on Farm Business Tenancy agreements access to all new Environmental Land Management Schemes.

**Mark Spencer:**

A diverse and vibrant tenanted sector is vital to the future of agriculture, and we want all types of farmers and other land managers, including tenants, to get involved with the new schemes. I therefore welcome the recommendations in the Rock Review and will be meeting with Baroness Rock to discuss those very soon. We have already implemented some of the recommendations, including designing the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme to be accessible to tenants, including those with shorter term agreements. The Government is considering the further recommendations made in the Rock Review, including those on taxation and the new Environmental Land Management schemes, and will publish a formal response in due course.

**■ Food: Animal Welfare****Ruth Jones:** [\[89018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if the Welfare at Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 are applicable for animals killed for food in private homes.

**Mark Spencer:**

The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 implement and enforce retained Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. There are specific legislative protections in these regulations concerning the killing of animals, including invertebrates, bred or kept for the production of food, wool, skin, fur, or other products when killed by their owner for the owner's private domestic consumption. It is an offence to cause or permit such an animal to sustain any avoidable pain, distress or suffering in their restraint, stunning, and killing. Anyone restraining, stunning, or killing such an animal must have the knowledge and skill to do so humanely.

**■ Food: Energy****Daniel Zeichner:** [\[94777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department has taken recent steps to help ensure the continuity of food and drink supply in the event of energy shortages.

**Mark Spencer:**

The UK has a high level of food security built on diverse and robust supply chains, from strong domestic production and trade with a range of stable sources. The food industry is experienced in dealing with disruptions to food supply.

The UK also has a secure and diverse energy system. We have plans to protect households and businesses in the full range of scenarios this winter, in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Unlike Europe, the UK is not dependent on Russian energy imports. The UK is at a strategic advantage through access to our own North Sea gas reserves and steady imports from reliable partners like Norway, the second largest Liquefied Natural Gas port infrastructure in Europe. Our gas supply is also underpinned by robust legal contracts, and massive investment in clean energy sources.

The Government and industry have long-standing, publicly available plans in place if there is ever a gas or electricity supply emergency, called [National Emergency Plan for Downstream Gas and Electricity](#). In the event of an electricity supply emergency, the Electricity Supply Emergency Code (ESEC) ensures that pre-designated Protected Sites maintain supplies for as long as possible. Further information is published on gov.uk. For a critical site or service to be placed on the Protected Sites List, the site must meet the high thresholds set out in [the ESEC guidance](#) and apply to their local Distribution Network Operator.

## ■ Food: Wholesale Trade

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[94776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the inclusion of the food and drink wholesale sector within Protected Site List of the Electricity Supply Emergency Code.

**Mark Spencer:**

We have been working closely with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on a range of business resilience matters, including on energy supply. Under the Electricity Supply Emergency Code (ESEC), a site or service may qualify to be placed on the Protected Sites List if it meets the criteria set out explicitly in the publicly-available guidance. Applications for sites to be included in this list are made directly to their local Distribution Network Operator. We engage regularly with the food and drink sector, including with wholesalers, to understand their resilience.

## ■ Litter Innovation Fund

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[92164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has provided guidance to local authorities in England following the establishment of the Litter Innovation Fund.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Reports and outputs from projects funded through the Litter Innovation Fund have been published on the Waste and Resources Action Programme's website.

Guidance has been provided to local authorities on other matters, including on the provision of litter bins. In support of this guidance, we have provided nearly £1 million across 44 councils to help them purchase new bins.

We have also published improved guidance to councils and others on the use of their fixed penalty powers for littering and related offences. Our position was further laid out in June this year when a letter was sent from a Defra minister to councils regarding the use of enforcement powers to tackle litter.

## ■ Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances: Seas and Oceans

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[90863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps has she taken to reduce the amount of poly-fluorinated alkyl entering our oceans.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Action has already been taken to ban or highly restrict specific PFAS both domestically and internationally, including perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Data collected for Defra shows that levels of PFOS are declining in harbour porpoise. However, PFAS represent a very diverse group of

chemicals with a wide range of uses for which safer and more sustainable alternatives are not yet available - making this a very challenging issue to tackle.

Work is underway across government to help us assess levels of PFAS occurring in the environment, their sources, and potential risks to inform future policy and regulatory approaches. In the UK REACH Work Programme for 2021-22, Defra asked the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive to examine the risks posed by PFAS and develop a 'Regulatory Management Options Analysis' (RMOA). The RMOA will be published in early 2023 and will make recommendations for risk management measures, building on the commitment in the 25 Year Environment Plan to tackle chemicals of concern. Defra and the Devolved Administrations will carefully consider the RMOA recommendations to inform future PFAS policy.

We have also recently launched a working group on PFAS under the UK Chemicals Stakeholder Forum. This is aimed at fostering constructive dialogue on policy options, including on how HM Government can accelerate leadership by industry in moving away from PFAS.

#### ■ **Plastics: Packaging**

**Andrea Leadsom:**

[\[92199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department are taking to reduce the use of single-use plastics in packaging; and if she will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

As set out in our manifesto, we will introduce Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (EPR) in 2024, which will move the full cost of dealing with packaging waste produced by households to the packaging producers (applying the 'polluter-pays principle'). This places responsibility on producers for the cost of managing their packaging once it reaches its end of life and will encourage businesses to reduce how much packaging they use, to design and use packaging that is easily recyclable, and encourage use of reusable and refillable packaging, as a large proportion of plastic packaging is single use.

#### ■ **Plastics: Pollution Control**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[90868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact on the environment of introducing mandatory corporate reporting on plastic reduction.

**Rebecca Pow:**

No formal assessment has been made of the potential merits of implementing a mandatory corporate reporting on plastic reduction to assist in working towards eliminating single-use plastics.

However, members of the UK Plastics Pact (UKPP), run by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and supported by HM Government, have already voluntarily committed to reducing plastic waste, which the UKPP reports on annually. UKPP members are responsible for the majority of plastic packaging sold through UK supermarkets and approximately two thirds of all plastic packaging placed on the UK market. This reporting includes UKPP member progress towards eliminating a number of single-use plastic applications. Their most recent progress report can be found here: <https://wrap.org.uk/resources/report/uk-plastics-pact-annual-report-2020-21>

Under packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR), packaging producers will also be required to report the weight of materials they have supplied each year, which will include how much plastic they have used in their packaging. This will form part of the evidence trail used to determine each producer's recycling obligation and help track the weight of materials, including plastic, used and recycled each year. pEPR will place fees on packaging producers based on the amount and type of packaging they produce each year, thereby discouraging them from using excessive packaging and benefiting those who use reusable packaging.

#### ■ **Plastics: Waste**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[90869]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to introduce a target on the reduction of single-use plastic usage.

**Rebecca Pow:**

There are no current plans to set a target on the reduction of single-use plastic. We consulted earlier this year on a target for reducing all residual waste excluding major mineral waste and will publish the response to this consultation soon.

#### ■ **River Tame: Plastics**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[92143]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimate she has made of the levels of microplastic pollution in the River Tame.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Manchester University led research is currently ongoing to investigate the microplastic load taken on by fish in the River Tame. The Environment Agency issued a permit to a PhD student in October 2022 to take samples of minnow, which will be analysed alongside sediment, water and macroinvertebrates, to better understand the mechanisms of uptake.

Under the Natural Course Project, the Environment Agency, United Utilities and Greater Manchester Combined Authority are jointly funding a study to further understand loading of microplastics in a variety of flow conditions.

## ■ Sewers: Waste Disposal

**Alan Brown:**

[\[89857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of a developer's right to connect to sewers on the volume of sewer overflow discharges.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In August 2021 the Government announced a review of the implementation of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. If implemented, this schedule makes connection to public sewers conditional of approval that the drainage system meets the national standards. These standards will ensure the most effective drainage system is delivered that will help to alleviate pressures on the sewer network, reduce flood risk, as well as improve water quality, amenity, biodiversity, and harvest rainwater. We have been working on this review and will confirm the outcomes in due course.

This would apply to England only.

## ■ Squirrels

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[89010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 to permit grey squirrels to be released by vet practices and wildlife rescue centres.

**Trudy Harrison:**

It is the Government's position that the release of rehabilitated grey squirrels is not a harmless act and would actively work against efforts to manage this species. Grey squirrels negatively impact forestry and infrastructure, causing at least £37m pa. worth of damage to trees in England and Wales. Grey squirrels also have a disastrous impact on the native red squirrel population due to competition and the fatal transmission of squirrel pox virus. This has contributed to red squirrel populations reducing to approximately 38,900 from an estimated 3.5m.

The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 (the Order) implements the retained EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation. The retained Regulation establishes a list of species of special concern and provides for restrictions on these species so they cannot be intentionally brought into GB, kept, bred, transported, sold, used or exchanged, allowed to reproduce, grown or cultivated, or released into the environment. In advance of the Order coming into force, a full public consultation was run in summer of 2019 seeking views on the management measures being considered by Defra for the widely spread 'species of special concern', which includes grey squirrel.

In June 2020 HMG published their response to the public consultation on 'Invasive Alien Species: Management Measures for Widely Spread Species in England and

Wales'. This confirmed the Government's view that there is no provision under the retained Regulation which would enable the Government to allow the species concerned to be taken in from the wild, rehabilitated and released back into the wild.

### ■ **Veterinary Services: Recruitment and Training**

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[92115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total cost to the public purse has been of recruiting and training veterinarians to fulfil the requirements of the Northern Ireland Protocol since 1 January 2020.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[92116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total cost to the public purse was of developing points of entry for agri-food goods in Northern Ireland (a) between 1 January 2020 and 1 January 2021 and (b) between 1 January 2021 and 21 November 2022.

**Mark Spencer:**

DAERA reported in August 2022 that a total of £15.3 million capital, £16.4 million resource and £1.7 million depreciation has been expended on the provision of the infrastructure, IT systems and personnel for the work necessary to carry out the required SPS checks at Northern Ireland's Points of Entry as a result of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ **Christianity: Oppression**

**Julian Sturdy:** [\[90790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to help support persecuted Christians across the world.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

On 23 November the FCDO marked Red Wednesday by lighting up our UK buildings in solidarity with Christians around the world who are persecuted for their beliefs. The Government is committed to promoting and defending the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for everyone, everywhere. This includes ensuring that progress made in implementing the Bishop of Truro's recommendations for an enhanced response to the plight of persecuted Christians, and people persecuted for holding other religions, beliefs, or no religious belief, is embedded and that FoRB is central to our wider human rights work.

### ■ **Eritrea: Peace Negotiations**

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[88010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking in Eritrea to help support the (a) rebuilding of schools,

hospitals and water and sanitation services and (b) peace building work by local organisations in that country.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

UK Aid to Eritrea is provided through UN agencies not directly. That assistance through UN agencies has funded life-saving humanitarian assistance work in Eritrea since 2011. £700,000 has been committed through the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2022/23 to help treat and prevent malnutrition in children and women, aiming to reach more than 200,000 civilians. We also supported the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and a local Non-Governmental Organisation during 2021/22 with a total of £180,000 funding to deliver small projects on renewable energy, biodiversity and girls' education. Although the number of humanitarian organisations able to work in Eritrea is limited and access restricted, the UK has an established partnership with UNICEF through which it is able to support vulnerable populations.

■ **Syria: Development Aid**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[90856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his international counterparts on taking steps to renew the UN resolution on cross-border aid delivery into Syria.

**David Rutley:**

The UK continues to press for continued aid access into Syria, including using our position at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). When the UNSC most recently discussed the humanitarian situation in Syria on 25 October and 21 November, the UK urged Council Members to unite and renew the existing resolution on cross-border aid. Officials and ministers make similar representations in their bilateral engagements with UN Member States. The UK remains the third largest bilateral donor to the Syrian crisis, having committed over £3.8 billion in aid since 2012.

■ **Zimbabwe: Sanctions**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[93702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of economic sanctions on (a) healthcare and (b) energy security in Zimbabwe.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

The UK does not have economic sanctions on Zimbabwe. The UK has targeted sanctions on five Zimbabwean individuals to hold them to account for serious human rights violations and corruption. These sanctions do not target, and specifically seek to avoid impact on, the wider economy and the people of Zimbabwe. Therefore we assess that UK sanctions do not impact the healthcare sector or energy security in Zimbabwe.



**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Autism: Assistance Animals****James Grundy:**[\[90899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to support a funded pilot project aimed to create a national blueprint for the provision of Autism Assistance Dogs.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department of Health and Social Care has no current plans to fund a pilot project aimed to create a national blueprint for the provision of Autism Assistance Dogs.

It is for local commissioners to ensure that the appropriate provision is available to meet the health and care needs of the local population, including considering whether they provide Autism Assistance Dogs as part of their provision. NHS England is developing a framework of best practice to assist commissioners to improve outcomes for autistic people.

Integrated care boards and National Health Service trusts should have due regard to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines 'Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: support and management' and 'Autism spectrum disorder in adults: diagnosis and management'. These evidenced guidelines set out how health and social care professionals can provide support for autistic people.

**■ Blood: Contamination****Christopher Pincher:**[\[93526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of children affected by the infected blood scandal; and if he expand the scope of compensation related to that scandal to the children of those affected.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department does not currently hold the information requested. The Infected Blood Inquiry is reviewing the support provided to those infected and affected. It is expected to report in 2023 and we will consider its recommendations.

**■ Cancer: Health Services****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[92157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of capacity in the NHS to treat cancer.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2022]:* Between 2016 and 2021, there was an increase of over 4,300 full-time equivalent staff across cancer related professions. Health Education England is investing an additional £50 million in 2022/23 to further expand the cancer and diagnostics workforce.

**■ Cancer: Medical Treatments****Feryal Clark:** [\[93709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how his Department will ensure that the delegation of specialised commissioning functions does not distort access to innovative cancer treatments.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England is currently reviewing which specialised services could be delegated to direct management by integrated care boards (ICBs), which will be subject to local system and service readiness. By April 2023, we expect that some ICBs will have delegated commissioning responsibility for a portion of specialised services. NHS England retains overall accountability for specialised services delegated to ICBs.

**■ Cancer: Radiotherapy****Feryal Clark:** [\[93706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department's 10-Year Cancer Plan will include measures to improve regional access to (a) radioligand therapy and (b) other targeted molecular radiotherapies.

**Helen Whately:**

Following a call for evidence for a new cancer plan earlier this year, we are currently analysing the responses received.

**■ Cancer: Waiting Lists****Jim Shannon:** [\[92210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department provides to Integrated care systems to help tackle backlogs in cancer care.

**Helen Whately:**

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, including cancer services. The autumn statement has also provided a further £3.3 billion in 2023/24 and £3.3 billion in 2024/5 to NHS England. The '2022/23 priorities and operational planning guidance' support integrated care systems on the objectives for restoring services and reducing backlogs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including cancer services.

**Wes Streeting:** [\[92288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he expects the number of people waiting more than 62 days on the cancer waiting list to be at or lower than 14,500 by March 2023.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2022]:* The Department is working with NHS England on its plans to support local systems to address the waiting list for cancer services. In September 2022, data on cancer treatment was above pre-pandemic levels. In September, there were approximately 12,000 urgent general practitioner referrals per working day for suspected cancer.

■ **Care Homes****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[92169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help provide additional bed capacity in the social care sector.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government is making available an additional £2.8 billion in 2023/24 and £4.7 billion in 2024/25 for social care. We are also allocating £500 million in winter 2022/23 to support local areas to accelerate safe discharge from hospital to appropriate settings, including social care.

■ **Care Homes: Closures****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[92167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) care homes and (b) beds in care homes that have closed in England in each of the last three years.

**Helen Whately:**

The Care Quality Commission records care homes which have closed as 'deactivated'. The following table shows the number of 'deactivated' care homes in England from 1 November to 31 October in each year since 2020. These locations exclude care homes where the provider continues to operate under a new, separate registration, which may be due to a change in legal entity or provider.

1 NOVEMBER 2019 TO 31 OCTOBER 2020	487
1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021	463
1 November 2021 to 31 October 2022	487

■ **Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients: Coronavirus****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[93467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of reduced access to community mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic on the numbers of people detained under the Mental Health Act.

**Maria Caulfield:**

In 2020/21, the number of detentions under the Mental Health Act 1983 increased by an estimated 4.5% compared to the previous year. While in 'Monitoring the Mental Health Act 2020/21', the Care Quality Commission suggested that reduced access to community mental health services may have caused this increase, the extent has not been confirmed. It is estimated that there were 5.7% fewer detentions under the Act in 2021/22.

**Coronavirus: Vaccination****Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[93438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will respond to the invitation from the Hon. Member from Christchurch, dated 2 November 2022, in his capacity as chair of the APPG on covid-19 vaccine damage to meet representatives of victims of vaccine damage.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2022]:* We will respond to the hon. Member in due course.

**Dementia****Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[94680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the new Dementia Taskforce announced on 14 August will be established.

**Helen Whately:**

Officials are working with stakeholders to establish the Mission and the Department is currently recruiting its Chair.

**Dementia: Rural Areas****Alicia Kearns:**[\[92380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve dementia care in rural areas.

**Helen Whately:**

Integrated care boards (ICBs) are responsible for the provision of dementia care services. NHS England expects ICBs to commission services based on local population needs.

**Dentistry: Misconduct****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[94723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many General Dental Council investigations into potential malpractice have not been completed within (a) three, (b) five and (c) seven years of that council becoming aware of an original concern;

and what assessment she has made of the implications for patient safety of dentists under investigation.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information requested is not held centrally. The General Dental Council is the independent regulator of dentists and dental care professionals in the United Kingdom and is responsible for investigating concerns about treatment or the conduct of its registrants.

■ **Gender Recognition: Health Services**

**Philip Davies:**

[\[83573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much NHS England has spent on gender identification services in each of the last five years.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The following table outlines the total NHS England expenditure on gender identity services in each of the last five years. It provides a break down by services provided to children and adolescents versus services provided to adults.

YEAR	GENDER IDENTITY		TOTAL (£M)
	DEVELOPMENT SERVICE FOR CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS (£M)	GENDER IDENTITY SERVICES FOR ADULTS (£M)	
2021/22	n/a	n/a	n/a
2020/21	n/a	n/a	n/a
2019/20	8.0	26.4	34.4
2018/19	6.1	25.5	31.6
2017/18	6.8	21.6	28.4

The total expenditure for 2020/21 or 2021/22 is not held due to the financial arrangements that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ **Health Services: Females**

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[93649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle waiting times for menstrual health care; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2022]:* 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 gynaecological 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, including services which address menstrual health.

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[93651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Women's Health Hubs (a) address access to services and (b) reduce health inequalities for women's health conditions.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2022]:* The Women's Health Strategy encourages local commissioners and providers to consider adopting women's health hubs to ensure equitable access to and experience of services and reduce disparities in outcomes. To support this expansion, we have commissioned the National Institute for Health and Care Research-funded Birmingham, RAND Europe and Cambridge Rapid Evaluation Centre to undertake scoping work for an evaluation of existing women's health hubs. This is expected to conclude in early 2023.

#### ■ Health: Disadvantaged

**Peter Dowd:**

[\[93565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities has made of the adequacy of existing measures to mitigate health inequalities for night shift workers.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2022]:* No specific assessment has been made.

#### ■ Healthy Start Scheme: Ethnic Groups and Greater London

**Sir Stephen Timms:**

[\[93419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish updated data on the levels of uptake of the Healthy Start Scheme in (a) London boroughs and (b) different ethnicity groups.

**Neil O'Brien:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2022]:* We continue to work with the NHS Business Services Authority and the Department for Work and Pensions to obtain data on the uptake of the Healthy Start scheme. We aim to have the data available by the end of the year. However, data on the ethnicity of Healthy Start beneficiaries is not collected.

#### ■ Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination

**Martyn Day:**

[\[89867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to increase the level uptake of the HPV vaccination in boys.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is offered to all school-aged children predominantly by school-based providers, with alternative sites available for those not in mainstream education. NHS England provides catch-up opportunities for anyone who may have missed their vaccination offer and NHS England and the UK Health Security Agency deliver annual communication campaigns to promote the HPV vaccine via general practitioners and universities. A HPV awareness campaign is planned for 2023 and will include a focus on the protective benefits of the HPV vaccine for boys.

**Huntington's Disease: North Staffordshire****Aaron Bell:**[\[90898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the support available for people who have Huntington's Disease in North Staffordshire.

**Helen Whately:**

There are no plans to make a specific assessment. Integrated care boards are responsible for working with local communities to understand the needs of the population and commission services to meet those needs, including support for Huntington's disease.

**Mechanical Thrombectomy****Rachael Maskell:**[\[94807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to (a) provide funding and (b) establish a national network for the provision of mechanical thrombectomy.

**Helen Whately:**

From 2017/18 to 2021/22, total revenue investment in thrombectomy will be £57.8 million, of which £52 million is recurrent. NHS England is developing financial plans following the autumn statement and has committed to supplement local capital investment for the continued expansion of thrombectomy services over the next three years. Thrombectomy is available in 24 centres in England, with two non-neuroscience centres under development to improve access.

**Non-tuberculous Mycobacteria: Health Services****Geraint Davies:**[\[93417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps her Department is taking to offer support people with non-tuberculosis mycobacteria during winter 2022-23.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2022]:* Patients with non-tuberculous mycobacteria will continue to be managed in primary and secondary care settings and treated with guideline based therapy, as recommended by the British Thoracic Society. The

Society's 'Guideline for Long Term Macrolide Use' suggests that those patients able to expectorate should be considered for testing for non-tuberculous mycobacteria prior to starting long term macrolide therapy.

## ■ Pancreatic Cancer: Birmingham

**Steve McCabe:** [92079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help improve the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer in Birmingham.

**Helen Whately:**

The National Health Service is implementing non-specific symptom (NSS) pathways for patients presenting with vague and non-site specific symptoms which do not clearly align to a tumour type, which may include pancreatic cancer. There are currently 96 NSS pathways in operation in England, which will support the NHS to meet the new Faster Diagnosis Standard for all patients referred for the investigation of suspected cancer to receive an outcome within 28 days.

Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB) is ensuring all urgent cancer referral pathways are aligned with national recommendations. It has implemented a new two week wait urgent cancer referral form for upper gastro-intestinal services, which directs patients to diagnostic tests where appropriate. The ICB has increased straight to test endoscopy and imaging capacity to ensure rapid diagnoses and introduced a diagnostic pathway for patients with non-specific symptoms.

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Animal Experiments

**Drew Hendry:** [88917]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has had recent discussions with regulators on the adequacy of the rules on enforcement action set out in the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

The Regulator's published Compliance Policy is aligned with the requirements defined in the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

The policy explains how the Regulator identifies and investigates potential incidents of non-compliance and decides on appropriate and proportionate measures aimed to minimise the risk of recurrence. It can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-testing-and-research-compliance-with-aspa>

## ■ Asylum: Hotels

**Rachael Maskell:** [90843]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has taken recent steps with the NHS to help ensure that (a) hotel block bookings made by her Department



do not displace (i) nurses and (ii) other public sector workers and (b) suitable alternative accommodation is found for workers who are affected by hotel block bookings.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Due to the unprecedented number of small boats arrivals and the historical pressure from COVID-19 measures on the asylum system, it has been necessary to continue to use hotels to accommodate some asylum seekers to meet our immediate statutory obligations.

Community cohesion is an important aspect of using contingency sites successfully and we actively engage and collaborate with relevant stakeholders including NHS and local authority partners to understand and act on any concerns appropriately, addressing these on a case-by-case basis.

■ **Asylum: Housing**

**Brandon Lewis:**

[\[93510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with representatives of the OYO hotel group on housing for asylum seekers (a) in Great Yarmouth constituency and (b) nationwide.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Minister for Immigration set out in his recent "Dear Colleague" letter we are committed to engaging in advance with Local Authorities when we need to set up a contingency accommodation

Our Providers work with a number of providers of accommodation and discussions in relation to the provision of accommodation, including price, would be commercially sensitive. We would therefore be unable to disclose the details of such discussions.

■ **Crime: Rural Areas**

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[94698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce rural crime in (a) East Yorkshire and (b) England.

**Chris Philp:**

Our manifesto committed us to use police resources to tackle rural crime. As well as recruiting 20,000 additional police officers, we are also taking steps to address issues that we know affect rural communities. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act empowers and equips the police and courts with the powers they need to combat hare coursing. The Government is also providing funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

As at 30 September 2022, Humberside Police has recruited 263 additional uplift officers against a total three year allocation of 322 officers. As of the same date, 15,343 additional uplift officers have been recruited in England and Wales through the Police Uplift Programme, 77% of the target of 20,000 additional officers by March

2023. The deployment of these officers is an operational decision for Chief Constables.

### ■ Immigration: Detainees

**Layla Moran:** [\[94848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many judicial reviews were launched against her Department for potentially illegal detention of individuals detained at Campsfield House in each year from 2010 to 2017.

**Robert Jenrick:**

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

### ■ Members: Correspondence

**David Linden:** [\[94844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to correspondence sent by email on 28 September 2022 and again on 26 October 2022 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL13063.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office responded to the correspondence on 24 November 2022.

### ■ Police Custody: Children

**Janet Daby:** [\[93637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the statistics published by her Department entitled Police powers and procedures, published on 17 November 2022, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the proportion of children detained overnight in police custody in (a) London region and (b) England and Wales.

**Janet Daby:** [\[93638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the statistics published by her Department entitled Police powers and procedures, published on 17 November 2022, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the frequency with which an Appropriate Adult was called for a child detained overnight in police custody in (a) London region and (b) England and Wales.

**Janet Daby:** [\[93639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the statistics published by her Department entitled Police powers and procedures, published on 17 November 2022, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the proportion of vulnerable adults detained in police custody for whom an appropriate adult was called in (a) London region and (b) England and Wales.

**Chris Philp:**

The collection and publication of this data will bring additional transparency and accountability to police custody in England and Wales and help us better understand how and why police powers and procedures are used within the custody process. The Home Office only received data from a subset of forces so the findings should be interpreted with caution as it is partial and not representative of the national picture. We will work with police forces and the NPCC to improve data quality in the future and use the data published on 17 November to inform conversations with the police and other stakeholders to promote wider policy development.

Children who are charged and denied bail must be transferred to local authority accommodation unless it is impracticable to do so. We expect forces and local authorities to work together to facilitate this in line with the provisions of the Concordat on Children in Custody.

We are pleased to note that in 99% of cases an appropriate adult was called for a child detained in police custody but concerns remain that only in 41% cases was an appropriate adult called for a vulnerable adult. We acknowledge that appropriate adult provision for vulnerable adults needs to improve and will look towards both the police and local authorities to work together to improve in this area.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility for the provision of appropriate adults for children who must be provided an appropriate adult when detained in police custody.

Adults identified as vulnerable must be supported in custody by an Appropriate Adult. The 2018 PCC-Local Authority Partnership was introduced to improve the planning and delivery of appropriate adult services.

**■ Refugees: Afghanistan****Rachael Maskell:**[\[90845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made for when all people who have come to the UK through the (a) Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and (b) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and are in hotel accommodation will be provided with residential accommodation.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The UK Government undertook the biggest and fastest emergency evacuation in recent history, helping over 15,000 people to safety from Afghanistan. Due to the scale and pace of the evacuation we were not able to source appropriate accommodation in the normal way, so we have had to use hotels as a temporary measure. There is a huge effort underway to support the families into permanent homes as soon as we can so they can settle and rebuild their lives. We remain committed to matching evacuees to suitable settled accommodation and continue to work collaboratively alongside around 350 local authorities, government departments and other partners to meet the demand for housing.

In addition, many families have, in recent months, taken steps to secure their own accommodation through the Find Your Own Accommodation scheme which opened on 29 June and empowers Afghan families to source their own accommodation. We are also looking at ways to make more suitable homes available in the private rented sector and exploring alternatives to hotels for families who may have to remain in bridging accommodation for long periods.

## ■ Refugees: Employment

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[90846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he has made an assessment of the potential merits of creating employment option for refugees, in the context of labour shortages.

**Robert Jenrick:**

Those granted refugee status or humanitarian protection, including those who are resettled to the UK, have immediate and unrestricted access to the labour market.

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, which is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

## ■ Refugees: Temporary Accommodation

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[90844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to identify long-term solutions for the provision of accommodation for refugees, in the context of increasing use of hotel accommodation.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Government is working with local authorities across the UK to meet the demand for housing.

We have been working as fast as possible to support Afghan families into homes of their own, so that they can settle into their local communities and independent and rebuild their lives in the UK

Local Authorities who support people through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) or the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) will receive £20,520 per person, over 3 years, for resettlement and integration costs. They have the flexibility to use this funding to contribute towards renting accommodation, including deposit, letting fees and necessary furnishings.

Once an asylum seeker has received refugee status, they are eligible to work, receive mainstream benefits and accommodation which should be provided by the local authority.

For other resettlement schemes the first 12 months of a refugee's resettlement costs are funded by central government.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Rachel Maclean:**

[\[90881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether legal measures were introduced in the Nationality and Borders Act to enable law enforcement and Border Force to turn back small boats in the English Channel.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 includes legal measures to enable law enforcement agencies and Border Force to turn back small boats in the English Channel. However, the circumstances in which turnaround tactics may be deployed are limited due to the priority to maintain safety of life at sea.

Although the turnaround policy and procedures are currently withdrawn, the Government has not made any concessions as to the legality of the policy. There are no current plans for the turnaround tactic to be reintroduced under Defence primacy.

**Rachel Maclean:**

[\[90882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the compatibility of potential plans to turn back small boats in the English Channel with international legal frameworks to which the UK is committed.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Government considers all safe and legal options to stop unnecessary journeys to the UK including turning small boats around in the English Channel.

This approach fully complies with both the domestic and international legal frameworks to which the UK is committed. However, there are limited circumstances in which small boats can be turned around safely in the English Channel. In view of this, the policy is currently withdrawn and there are no current plans for the turnaround tactics to be reintroduced under Defence primacy.

**Rachel Maclean:**

[\[90884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the potential number of migrants that will be prevented from entering the UK through small boats in the English Channel as a result of her intelligence sharing and policing agreement with France.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The department does not publish modelling of small boats controls.

This year our joint work with the French authorities has prevented more than 30,000 crossing attempts

The new arrangements builds on this by embedding UK officers within French operations for the first time.

**Darren Henry:**

[90889]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help reduce the number of small boats crossing the channel.

**Robert Jenrick:**

We are more determined than ever to end the vile business model of people smugglers and are working with our international partners to stop people putting their lives at risk through dangerous and illegal journeys. The most recent arrangement between the UK and France means UK officers will be embedded with French counterparts, in French-led control rooms and on the ground with counterparts to stop crossings and dismantle the people smuggling gangs.

### ■ **Visas: Overseas Students**

**Matt Western:**

[90860]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 79326 on Visas: Overseas Students, whether her Department holds any data on the number of recipients of international student visas that are accompanied by five or six dependents.

**Robert Jenrick:**

The Home Office does not routinely publish data on the number of recipients of international student visas who are accompanied by dependants.

Information on our immigration routes is available as part of our transparency data and can be found at: [Visas and Citizenship data: Q2 2022](#)

## JUSTICE

### ■ **Bill of Rights: Northern Ireland**

**Peter Kyle:**

[94820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many meetings he has had with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on the Bill of Rights bill.

**Mike Freer:**

The Secretary of State has written to Alyson Kilpatrick, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, about the Bill of Rights twice in the last year, in addition to which my predecessor Lord Wolfson met representatives of the Commission in March this year in the context of the Government's consultation. Departmental officials have also met representatives of the Commission on a number of occasions in the past year to discuss work on the Bill of Rights.

We will continue to work closely with key stakeholders in Northern Ireland on the Bill of Rights, including the Human Rights Commission, to ensure that any reforms will work in, and for the benefit of, the whole of the UK

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Complaints

**Steve Reed:**

[94771]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the complaints process within his Department without an independent ethics advisor.

**Mike Freer:**

The Ministry of Justice has both a Grievance Policy and Raising a Concern Policy. Both policies and processes are reviewed routinely in line with normal practices.

Where a Civil Servant, or employee of an Arm's-Length Body, has a concern they may raise this using normal departmental procedures. Civil Service guidance on raising a grievance, and a concern can be found at [Raise a grievance at work: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/raise-a-grievance-at-work) and [Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/whistleblowing-for-employees-what-is-a-whistleblower).

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Email

**Sir Oliver Heald:**

[92066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to respond to an email from Lesley Taunton dated 18 October 2022.

**Mike Freer:**

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) have assured me that they will be providing a response to both Sir Oliver's correspondence to OPG dated 18 October, and Ms Taunton's correspondence by 28 November.

I apologise for the delay in full responses to their correspondence being provided. OPG is currently experiencing backlogs in processing Lasting Power of Attorneys (LPAs) and the corresponding increase in correspondence has had an impact on OPG's ability to respond to complaints within the target. OPG understands the importance of customers receiving timely responses to complaints. To improve the service OPG is recruiting more staff to process LPAs and to respond to complaints, carrying out overtime and making improvements to internal processes. We are pressing ahead with plans to digitise LPA applications, making the process simpler and quicker for customers.

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Public Expenditure

**Steve Reed:**

[94774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment has he of the implications for his Department of the budget set for his Department by the Autumn Statement 2022.

**Mike Freer:**

MoJ is engaging with the Treasury as part of the Efficiency and Savings Review announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 17 November and will announce more details in due course.

## ■ Prisons

**Steve Reed:**

[\[94760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of what the capacity of the prison estate will be for (a) male prisoners, (b) female prisoners and (c) young offenders in each of the next five years.

**Damian Hinds:**

Over the next ten years, additional capacity will begin to come in to use through new build prison accommodation, existing accommodation returning to use following the completion of refurbishments, essential maintenance or places coming into use following a change in function.

We are delivering 20,000 additional, modern prison places, the biggest prison build programme in a century, ensuring the right conditions are in place to rehabilitate prisoners, helping to cut crime and protect the public. These places include the completed HMP Five Wells, the completion of our ongoing prison build HMP Fosse Way at Glen Parva, the construction of 4 new prisons, the expansion and refurbishment of the existing estate as well as temporary accommodation, of which we have already delivered around 3,100 additional prison places.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Rachel Maclean:**

[\[90883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to introduce provisions in the Bill of Rights to help (a) control the UK's borders and (b) deter people entering the county in breach of immigration laws through Channel crossings.

**Mike Freer:**

The Home Office and Ministry of Justice are working together to deliver the Government's strategy to tackle illegal migration by deterring illegal entry into the UK whilst breaking the business model of people smugglers, and removing more easily those with no right to be in the UK.

The Bill of Rights will support the Government's work on illegal migration. The Bill will empower UK courts to apply human rights in a UK context, affirming the Supreme Court's independence from the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. It will make explicit that the UK Supreme Court is the ultimate judicial arbiter of the meaning and effect of rights in domestic law. The Bill will also affirm that interim measures of the European Court of Human Rights do not have any domestic legal effect, and will prevent UK courts from having any regard to an interim measure indicated by the Strasbourg Court when deciding whether to grant relief.



## ■ Unpaid Fines: Arrest Warrants

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[94678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many arrest warrants for non-payment of fines have been issued by the courts in England in the last year for which information is available.

**Mike Freer:**

The department does not hold verifiable centralised records on the number of arrest warrants issued for non-payment of fines, and it would incur disproportionate costs to answer this question using local records.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Buildings: Change of Use

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[93582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether she is taking steps to ensure that buildings designed to host offices are not repurposed as short term holiday lets.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[93583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps is he taking to ensure that any redevelopment of city centre office space for residential use, is used for (a) accommodation and (b) not Short Term Holiday Lets.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government recognises that high levels of short-term holiday lets can have an adverse impact on some areas, including in city centres as well as tourism hotspots such as Cornwall, Devon and the Lake District.

We are working with members across Parliament, including the honourable member for North Devon, to look at policy options within the planning system. The Department for Culture Media and Sport recently consulted on proposals for the introduction of a Tourist Accommodation Registration Scheme and licensing of holiday homes. We are now analysing the responses received, which will further inform the Government's possible next steps.

On the redeployment of city centre offices specifically, permitted development rights support housing supply by allowing change of use to residential use. This route has provided over 82,000 housing units in the last six years. It will be for the local planning authority to then determine whether there has been a material change of use requiring planning permission if the property is sought to be used for short term holiday lets. Where that is the case, they will determine any application for planning permission in line with the local plan.

**■ Buildings: Insulation****Stephen Hammond:** [\[90900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in the context of the ongoing Grenfell Tower Inquiry, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward further legislative proposals to (a) hold to account and (b) ensure compensation for victims from those responsible for the installation of defective building materials.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Government brought forward extensive protections for leaseholders through the Building Safety Act 2022, enabling those responsible for historical safety defects to be pursued and held to account. It also provides for leaseholders and other interested persons to seek to recover costs already paid in relation to the remediation of historical safety defects via a remediation contribution order. The department will continue to monitor compliance with the Act's provisions and allow the new regime to bed in before deciding whether further legislation should be brought forward.

**Stephen Hammond:** [\[90901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Building Safety Fund guidance for new applications 2022, published on 28 July 2022, when he will introduce the fund to mitigate against life safety fire risks associated with cladding on mid-rise residential buildings that are 11-18m in height.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Government is launching a new 11-18 metre cladding remediation scheme to fund work on buildings where a responsible developer cannot be identified. Details of the Fund will be announced as soon as they are ready.

**■ Business Rates: Birmingham****Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[90858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the revaluation of business rates on local authority finances in Birmingham.

**Lee Rowley:**

Further to the information already published [here](#), the Government will make an adjustment to the business rates retention system to strip-out as far as practicable impacts on local authority income. Individual figures will be published at the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, however the Government's proposed methodology for the revaluation adjustment for the 2023-24 financial year was set out in this [consultation](#).

## ■ Capital Investment

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[90812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to paragraph 5.70 in the Autumn Statement, CP751, published on 17 November 2022, what indicators will be used to identify high potential clusters; and if he will publish the criteria for selection of Investment Zones.

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[90813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to paragraph 5.70 in the Autumn Statement, CP751, published on 17 November 2022, whether local authorities which have previously expressed an interest in Investment Zones but were unsuccessful will be able to reuse their applications.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[90859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many expressions of interest his Department received for Investment Zones.

**Lee Rowley:**

As the Chancellor's statement made clear, further details will be published in due course.

## ■ Council Tax: Christchurch

**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[93437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Answer to the hon. Member for Christchurch of 21 November 2022, Official Report, column 18, for what reason he feels more sorry for people outside the Christchurch constituency than he does for people within that constituency who are in council tax poverty; and for what reason he feels less sorry for people who are relatively older than those who are not.

**Lee Rowley:**

Further to the answer given by the Secretary of State, local councils are responsible for setting their own council tax levels. The Government maintains referendum principles to protect all households from excessive council tax increases. The Government has announced our intention to set referendum principles for 2023-24 at 3%, with an additional 2% flexibility for councils with adult social care responsibilities. For those on low incomes, council tax support is available from their council, and the nationally set Pensioner scheme maintains support at the levels of the former Council Tax Benefit, including reductions of up to 100%.

## ■ Credit Rating: Private Rented Housing

**Aaron Bell:**

[\[90896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has taken recent steps to help support people with poor credit ratings to apply for private rental properties.

**Felicity Buchan:**

The Government encourages private rented sector landlords and agents to assess the suitability of potential and existing tenants on an individual basis.

Private renters who need help towards their rental payments may be eligible for a range of support through the welfare system. Local Housing Allowance rates have been maintained at their increased levels in 2022-23, following investment of nearly £1 billion in April 2020. For those most in need, support is available through Discretionary Housing Payments to help meet a shortfall in housing costs.

Local authorities may offer rent deposit, bond and guarantee schemes to help people on low incomes or at risk of homelessness. These schemes may give money to help with rent in advance and a deposit or act as a guarantor service and cover unpaid rent or damage up to a certain amount.

## ■ First Time Buyers

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[90890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what percentage of first-time buyers purchase a property for more than £300,000.

**Lucy Frazer:**

This data is owned by UK Finance and is not able to be shared.

## ■ Homelessness

**Paula Barker:**

[\[94899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact on workforce recruitment and retention in the homelessness support sector of not uprating commissioned contracts in that sector in line with inflation.

**Felicity Buchan:**

This Department is aware of the increasing concerns people are facing as a result of inflation and continues to monitor its effects. Local authorities have received £316 million through the Homelessness Prevention Grant in 2022/23. This is part of the £2 billion of funding committed to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years.

## ■ Homelessness: Government Assistance

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[90888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to offer additional funding to organisations supporting the homeless, in the context of the rising cost of living.

**Felicity Buchan:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN [84910](#), on 21 November 2022.

## ■ Housing First: Mental Health Services

**Paula Barker:**

[\[90895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what trauma-related mental health support is available to clients on the three Housing First pilots in England.

**Felicity Buchan:**

Each client on the Housing First pilots has access to wrap-around support as appropriate, including mental health, and drugs and alcohol misuse support.

## ■ Housing Supply

**Gareth Bacon:**

[\[89049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his policy is housing formulas and 5-year housing supply; and if he will make a statement.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government is actively reviewing the approach to housing formulas and 5-year housing supply. As the Secretary of State set out at the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee on 21 November, there is an ongoing debate on how housing need is assessed and we want to make sure we deliver the right approach, including making sure that a greater proportion of housing is delivered in urban areas and on brownfield sites.

On 5-year housing supply, the Government announced in May that it is our intention to abolish the requirement for authorities to have a rolling five-year land supply, where their plan is up to date. We want a system where, if a local authority has a plan in place and keeps it up to date, the local area can feel confident that they will not see unwanted development based on 'speculative development' and 'planning by appeal.'

We will publish a consultation shortly on the future direction of national planning policy, including on the approach to housing formulas and 5-year housing supply.

**■ Housing: Repairs and Maintenance****Rachael Maskell:** [90847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will commit to a target date for all children and adults to live in damp free homes in (a) Council Housing, (b) residential social landlord housing and (c) privately rented housing.

**Felicity Buchan:**

The Secretary of State has recently written to all local authority Chief Executives and providers of social housing regarding the issue of damp and mould. Those letters are available on GOV.UK.

**■ Housing: Standards****Rachael Maskell:** [90848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure that all living accommodation is (a) no longer damp, (b) meets the category C energy efficiency standard and (c) is retrofitted to meet all current housing standards.

**Felicity Buchan:**

The Levelling Up White Paper introduced the Government's Housing Quality Mission, which set a clear target of reducing non-decency by 50% in all rented homes by 2030, with the biggest improvements in the worst performing areas.

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities recently wrote to all local authorities regarding poor housing conditions and damp and mould in particular. The letter is available [here](#).

**■ Levelling Up Fund: Birmingham****Preet Kaur Gill:** [90855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to allocate grants from the second round of the Levelling Up Fund this calendar year; and if he will support all five of Birmingham's Levelling Up Fund bids, in the context of the city recently hosting the Commonwealth Games.

**Dehenna Davison:**

It was a great honour to have the City of Birmingham host the fantastic 2022 Commonwealth Games which showcased some of the best athletic talent in the world and the fantastic city of Birmingham.

All bids submitted to the second round of the Levelling Up Fund, including the bids submitted by Birmingham, have been assessed in line with the published assessment framework. I cannot discuss individual bids during this period of competition, but we will announce the results of round two this year.

## ■ Planning Permission

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[93493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make an estimate of the number of planning permissions that lapsed without construction commencing in each of the last five years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We do not have readily available statistics on the number of those permissions which lapse.

## ■ Planning Permission: Nature Conservation

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[89800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if his Department will take steps to ensure that his policy on [the deregulation of planning laws] will protect biodiversity in areas of natural importance.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The planning reforms in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will give communities more control over what is built, where it is built, fostering better environmental outcomes and protecting the areas in which people live.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) already makes clear that planning policies and decisions should minimise the impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains. The Environment Act 2021 also contains substantial provisions to strengthen the duty on public authorities to have regard to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. It introduces requirements for mandatory biodiversity net gain on new developments, which is to be implemented next year, which will go to ensure that biodiversity is protected in areas of natural importance.

Furthermore, the Environment Act requires that public authorities must have regard to any relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs), Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Site Strategies as part of their strategic assessment of their functions.

## ■ Supported Housing: Standards

**Matthew Pennycook:**

[\[90853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which local authorities have been granted funds from the Supported Housing Improvement Programme in November.

**Felicity Buchan:**

Details of funding awarded to local authorities through the Programme are available [here](#).

**SCOTLAND****■ Fireworks: Scotland**

**Beth Winter:** [\[93689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether his Department has held discussions with representatives of the Scottish Government on the impact of recent Scottish legislation on firework sales.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Scottish Parliament passed its Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022 in June 2022 and it received Royal Assent in August 2022. Fireworks policy covers both devolved and reserved areas of competence. My department and the Home Office regularly engage with the Scottish Government on matters relating to public safety.

**TRANSPORT****■ A46: Repairs and Maintenance**

**Sir Greg Knight:** [\[94697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Westbound carriageway of the A46 between Lincoln and Newark was last inspected for defects; when he expects this stretch of highway to be resurfaced; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

This section of the A46 was last inspected on Thursday 24 November.

**■ Air Force: Alternative Fuels**

**Sir Greg Knight:** [\[94694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the capacity of the UK to produce (a) sustainable and (b) synthetic fuel to power RAF flights.

**Jesse Norman:**

Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) is a key technology to achieve Jet Zero, being supported by three key policy pillars: the SAF mandate; the capital grant programmes; and considerations on support for longer-term commercialisation. The MoD is proactively engaged in the Jet Zero Strategy and the proposed UK SAF Mandate strategy.

The MoD will use increasingly greater aviation fuel SAF blends (which are currently limited to 50% blends) as they become more commercially available and cost effective, are supplied in the aviation fuel supply chain via SAF mandates, equal or enhance operational output and tasks, and support wider government requirements. DfT, MoD and UK civil aviation stakeholders are developing options to increase UK SAF production capacity.



## ■ Belfast-Dublin Railway Line

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[94921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of providing UK Government funding for the development of a 60 minute fast train link between Belfast and Dublin.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Responsibility for the railway network in Northern Ireland is devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive.

Lord Peter Hendy's independent Union Connectivity Review, published in 2021, considered transport connectivity across the UK. We are considering his recommendations and will publish our response as soon as practicable.

## ■ Blue Badge Scheme

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[\[94865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Personal Independence Payment appeals found in favour of the claimant that confirm mobility restrictions are accepted as evidence for blue badge applications.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Department for Transport has issued clear non-statutory guidance to local authorities who are solely responsible for administering the scheme at a local level. It is for each local authority to assess on a case-by-case basis to decide whether applicants meet the conditions of eligibility. Local authorities must determine and implement assessment procedures which they believe are in accordance with the governing legislation.

## ■ Driving Licences: Disability

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[94809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of disabled people currently hold a driving licence.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Data from the National Travel Survey show that in 2020, 60% of disabled people aged 17 and over in England held a full car driving licence, compared with 83% of those with no disability. Data are not available on the number of disabled people who hold a driving licence, as the proportions above are derived from a sample and are therefore estimates rather than precise figures.

Updated figures will follow in the next release of the disability statistics publication.

**■ Ferries: Crew****Mike Kane:** [R] [\[92224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 80719 on Ferries: Crew, how many meetings officials in his Department have had with representatives of the ferry industry at which roster patterns were discussed since 1 March 2022.

**Mike Kane:** [\[92225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2022 to Question 80719, on Ferries: Crew, how many meetings officials in his Department have had since 1 March 2022 with representatives of (a) the International Labour Organisation and (b) the International Maritime Organisation at which (i) roster patterns and (ii) minimum crewing levels in the short sea shipping industry were discussed.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

Officials meet with representatives from the maritime industry on a regular basis to discuss progress with the seafarer protections nine-point plan, including on matters such as roster patterns and the Seafarers' Wages Bill.

In parallel to this engagement, officials have also met with relevant multilateral institutions, including the International Labour Organization, to ensure seafarer protections remains on the global agenda.

**■ P&O Ferries: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme****Angela Rayner:** [\[92231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2022 to Question 73004 on P&O Ferries: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, whether his Department has had any discussions with representatives of P&O Ferries about the return of furlough funding since 25 October 2022.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

The Department has not had recent discussions with P&O Ferries' representatives on the repayment of furlough funding. As per the response of 4 July 2022, the government has repeatedly called for P&O Ferries to repay its furlough funding, and we have emphasised this at every opportunity.

**■ Roads: Belper****Mrs Pauline Latham:** [\[94737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government provides financial support for the maintenance of the roads surrounding the Cluster Houses World Heritage Site in Belper.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

During the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 the Government is providing over £23.6 million to Derbyshire County Council towards the maintenance of the local public road

network in their area including Belper. It is up to Derbyshire how best to spend this funding to fulfil their statutory duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. The Department encourages good practice in highway maintenance through channels such as the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice produced by the UK Roads Leadership Group (UKRLG).

## ■ **Taxis: Disability**

**Janet Daby:**

[\[93635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to introduce mandatory disability awareness training for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

In its 2019 response to the report of the Chair of the Task and Finish Group on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Licensing, the Department committed to requiring drivers to complete disability awareness training, when Parliamentary time allows. This remains our intention.

## TREASURY

## ■ **Air Passenger Duty**

**Martin Vickers:**

[\[89785\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of the domestic Air Passenger Duty band announced on 22 July 2022 on the number of passengers travelling by train between UK cities.

**James Cartlidge:**

At Autumn Budget 2021, the Government announced that, from April 2023, it will introduce a new reduced domestic band of Air Passenger Duty (APD) set at £6.50 for economy passengers. The new domestic band will cover flights between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in order to support connectivity across the UK. As a result, around 9 million passengers will pay lower rates of APD in 2023-24.

The Government will also introduce a new ultra long-haul band, which will ensure that those who fly furthest, and have the greatest environmental impact, will pay the most.

The announcement of these reforms to APD followed the 2021 consultation on aviation tax reform, full details of which can be found on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-aviation-tax-reform>. On 20 July 2022, the legislation and tax information and impact note (TIIN) was published in draft on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-passenger-duty-banding-reforms-from-april-2023>. The TIIN provides a summary of impacts.

During the COVID-19 pandemic rail ridership fluctuated widely, with the Government providing more than £16 billion of funding for rail passenger services from when it started until now. This is in addition to over £35 billion of capital investment over the

Spending Review period including High Speed Two, rail enhancements and vital renewals to boost connectivity across the country – focusing on the Midlands and the North.

## ■ Bank Services

**Zarah Sultana:**

[94876]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Financial Services and Markets Bill on (a) preventing the loss of local access to cash and banking services, (b) support for local communities to create banking hubs and (c) protecting free access to cash and in-person banking services.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The way consumers and businesses make payments and interact with their banking continues to develop at pace, bringing significant benefits to those who choose to opt for the convenience, security, and speed of digital payments and banking.

The government is currently taking legislation through Parliament as part of the Financial Services and Markets Bill to protect access to cash. The Bill will establish the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) as the lead regulator for access to cash and provide it with appropriate powers to seek to ensure reasonable provision of withdrawal and deposit facilities. These powers will allow the FCA to take account of factors it considers appropriate, which could include cost for end users and accessibility.

Following the government's commitment to legislate, industry is working together to develop new initiatives to provide shared access to cash services. As a result, communities can request an assessment of access to cash in their area by LINK: <https://www.link.co.uk/consumers/request-access-to-cash/>

The government has welcomed industry's commitments and, in recognition of these developments, the Bill grants HM Treasury powers to bring the operators of cash coordination arrangements under the FCA's oversight.

In terms of access to banking services, the government believes that all customers, wherever they live, should have appropriate access to banking services. However, decisions on opening and closing branches are a commercial issue for banks and building societies. The government does not intervene in these decisions or make direct assessments of these branch networks.

Guidance from the FCA sets out its expectation of firms when they are taking decisions relating to the closure of their branches or free-to-use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of planned branch closures on the everyday banking and cash access needs of their customers and possible alternative access arrangements. This ensures that the implementation of closure decisions is undertaken in a way that treats customers fairly. The FCA expects firms to exercise particular care with vulnerable customers, such as those who are elderly or disabled, and the guidance has recently been strengthened to enhance protections for consumers that rely on branch services.

Alternative options for access can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking, and the Post Office. Furthermore, industry has committed to new shared bank hubs in 27 locations across the UK to date, in addition to two existing pilot sites. These hubs provide basic banking services, including cash withdrawals and deposits, and a dedicated space where community bankers from participating banks can meet customers of that bank.

## ■ Business: Taxation

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[94738\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the average increase in the cost in tax for businesses in Sefton Central constituency following the freeze to National Insurance announced in the Autumn Statement 2022.

**Victoria Atkins:**

HMRC does not hold or publish this data.

## ■ Cost Effectiveness

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[90839\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.23 of the Autumn Statement, CP 751 published on 17 November 2022, what amount of efficiency savings he expects each Department to make.

**John Glen:**

The Efficiency and Savings Review will keep spending focused on the government's priorities and help manage pressures from higher inflation. Government departments will continue to identify efficiency savings in day-to-day budgets. We need to be ambitious as a government in finding ways of working even more efficiently and focus spending where it delivers the greatest value for the taxpayer. The government will report on progress in the Spring.

## ■ Cost of Living

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[93676\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of increases in the cost of living on (a) women, (b) ethnic minorities, (c) disabled people, (d) single parents and (e) women with no recourse to public funds.

**John Glen:**

The government understands that people are worried about the cost of living challenges ahead.

That's why the government has announced support worth £26 billion for 2023-24, designed to target the most vulnerable households. The Energy Price Guarantee will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24. This is in addition to benefits uprating, which is worth £11 billion to working age households and people with disabilities. The support includes £1 billion of new funding to enable a further twelve-

month extension to the Household Support Fund, which helps Local Authorities assist those who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

Support is already in place to support households this winter. In addition to the Energy Price Guarantee, the government has announced £37 billion of support for the cost of living in 2022-23.

The Treasury carefully considers the equality impacts of the individual measures announced at fiscal events on those sharing protected characteristics, including gender, ethnicity and disability – in line with both its legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and its strong commitment to equality issues.

### ■ Electricity Generation: Taxation

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[94668\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Electricity Generator Levy on the financial viability of (a) solar projects already in operation and (b) solar projects under planning consideration; and what assessment he has made of the impact this will have on reaching the solar ambitions set out in the British Energy Security Strategy.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[94669\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how solar feed-in tariff projects and the pre-determined revenue streams they deliver will be considered under the Electricity Generator Levy.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[94670\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to exempt from the Energy Generator Levy the revenues collected from new solar assets that start operating from January 2023.

**Victoria Atkins:**

From January 2023, a 45 per cent tax will be levied on extraordinary returns being realised from non-carbon electricity generators, including solar generators, in the UK. The measure will raise around £14.2 billion over the scorecard and help fund support for households and businesses with their energy bills as well as vital public services.

The levy will only be applied to a measure of extraordinary returns defined as returns from selling electricity for a period at an average price of more than £75/MWh. This is approximately 1.5 times the average price of electricity over the last decade. The Government considers this to be a proportionate approach to recovering a proportion of the extraordinary profits electricity generators are receiving whilst leaving them with a sufficient level of return to incentivise investment required to transition to net zero.

The levy will be limited, through a de minimis threshold, to those groups generating more than 100 Gigawatt-hours per annum of electricity from in scope generation assets in a qualifying period and will only be applied on extraordinary profits in

excess of £10m for the group. This means smaller generators will not be within scope of the levy.

## ■ Energy: Taxation

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[90840\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason he decided not to introduce a higher windfall tax levy on oil and gas companies as part of the Autumn Statement 2022.

**James Cartlidge:**

At Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that the rate of the Energy Profits Levy will increase by ten percentage points, taking it from 25% to 35%, effective from 1 January 2023. This is on top of the 40% tax rate under the permanent regime bringing the combined headline tax rate for the sector to 75%. In addition, the levy has been extended until 31 March 2028.

The government has always sought to balance delivering a fair return for the UK from the use of its resources while providing the right conditions to attract investment in the North Sea that is key to support domestic jobs and the nation's energy security.

The Office for Budget Responsibility's most recent published forecast, provided for Autumn Statement 2022, estimates revenues from the levy are expected to be £41.6 billion between 2022-23 and 2027-28.

## ■ Environment Protection: Taxation

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[92378\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2022 to Question 19715, when he will launch the consultation on the Technical Screening Criteria which underpin the UK Taxonomy.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The UK Green Taxonomy Consultation is under review and the Government will be setting out next steps in due course.

## ■ Fossil Fuels: Investment

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[94725\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of anti-trust and competition legislation on the work of the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero to limit investment in fossil fuels; and if he will take steps to help ensure that (a) anti-trust and competition and (b) other legislation does not prevent divestment from fossil fuels by the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero; and if he will make a statement.

**Andrew Griffith:**

The UK COP26 Presidency and UN Race to Zero Campaign launched the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ) to unite firms from the leading net zero initiatives across the global financial system to accelerate the transition to net zero

emissions. It is now a fully independent organisation representing its members and is coordinated by a dedicated secretariat.

To support companies to adapt as the world transitions towards a low carbon economy we also launched the Transition Plan Taskforce (TPT) in May. This brings together the best of British industry and academia with regulators and the third sector to develop a 'gold standard' for transition plans. The Government does not advocate divestment strategies believing transition plans have more impact.

## ■ Maternity Pay

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[93666\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the impact of the cost of living crisis on the finances of families in receipt of maternity pay.

**John Glen:**

The Government understands that people across the UK are worried about the cost of living as they spend more on energy bills and essentials.

The Government has acted to bring down the cost of energy, and support all households with their bills this winter, including families in receipt of maternity pay. This includes the Energy Price Guarantee, which limits the unit price for electricity and gas, as well as the £400 discount through the Energy Bills Support Scheme. Furthermore, those in receipt of means tested benefits received a one-off Cost of Living Payment of £650, and additional support was provided for disabled people and pensioners, meaning that millions of the most vulnerable households will have received at least £1,200 of one-off support this year.

The action taken on energy support at the Autumn Statement will continue to protect the most vulnerable in society. The EPG will continue into next year and will be adjusted so that the typical household pays £3000 per annum from April 2023 until April 2024, saving the average household £500. Furthermore, the government will be making additional £900 Cost of Living Payments to households on means-tested benefits; £300 to pensioner households; and £150 to households on disability benefits in 2023-24.

It was also confirmed that Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance will be uprated in line with the September rate of inflation in April 2023.

## ■ Mortgages

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[94802\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential impact on the economy of someone losing their home due to being able to afford the cost of mortgage payments.

**Andrew Griffith:**

Arrears and repossession levels remain low: according to UK Finance data, 700 residential mortgaged properties were repossessed in Q3 2022, compared to 1,070 in



Q1 2020 (pre-pandemic). The Government of course remains watchful of any emerging trends in this space.

It is worth noting though that around 75% of residential mortgage borrowers are on fixed-rate deals and therefore shielded from interest rate rises in the near term. If mortgage borrowers do fall into financial difficulty, Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) guidance requires firms to provide support through tailored forbearance options. The Government has also taken a number of measures aimed at helping people to avoid repossession, including Support for Mortgage Interest loans for those in receipt of an income-related benefit, and protection in the courts through the Pre-Action Protocol, which makes clear that repossession must always be the last resort for lenders.

More broadly, the Government has taken decisive action to support households across the UK through the cost-of-living challenges ahead, whilst remaining fiscally responsible. In addition to the £37 billion of support for the cost of living already announced for 2022-23, the Government has announced further support for next year designed to target the most vulnerable households. This cost-of-living support is worth £26 billion in 2023-24, in addition to benefits uprating, which is worth £11 billion to working age households and people with disabilities. The Government is also continuing to provide support to all households through the Energy Price Guarantee, which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24.

## ■ Oil: Russia

**Chris Bryant:**

[\[92127\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value is of oil originating in the Russian Federation and imported through other countries and accepted in British ports in each of the last six months.

**Victoria Atkins:**

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

The published statistics show that there were no imports of crude oil (falling under commodity code 2709 0090 00) originating from the Russian Federation imported into the UK via another country in the last 6 months.

In the same period, the value of such goods imported direct from the Russian Federation was £58,532,668 (in April 2022).

## ■ Pensions

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[94701\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will issue guidance to pension providers on whether changes to the Protected Pension Age will allow an unqualified right to access tax-privileged pension savings at a younger age than the increase to NMPA from 2028.

**Andrew Griffith:**

Members of pension schemes which gave an unqualified right to access their pension benefits before age 57 will receive a protected pension age when the normal minimum pension age increases from 55 to 57 in April 2028. HMRC has published guidance on this protection regime in The Pensions Tax Manual.

## ■ Personal Income: Birmingham

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[93602\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the potential fall in real household disposable income in Birmingham in the (a) 2022-23 and (b) 2023-24 financial years.

**Andrew Griffith:**

HM Treasury does not prepare formal forecasts for household income or the outlook for the UK economy, which are the responsibility of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The OBR does not forecast household income for different UK regions.

Prior to recent support announcements, the OBR forecast UK wide real household disposable income per person to fall by 4.3% in 2022/23 and 2.8% in 2023/24, and to start recovering from Q4 2023.

The government has announced further support for next year designed to target the most vulnerable households. This cost of living support is worth £26 billion in 2023-24, in addition to benefits uprating, which is worth £11 billion to working age households and people with disabilities. This support for 2023-24 is in addition to the generous support already in place to support households this winter. In addition to the Energy Price Guarantee, the government has announced £37 billion of support for the cost of living in 2022-23.

The OBR estimated that government support helps offsets half of the fall in RHDH per person that would have otherwise occurred in 2022/23, and around a quarter of the cumulative fall between 2021/22 and 2023/24.

## ■ Public Expenditure: Equality

**Apsana Begum:** [\[93677\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an equality impact assessment of the Autumn Statement 2022 on (a) women, (b) Black, Asian, and ethnic minority people and (c) disabled people.

**John Glen:**

In developing proposals for fiscal events, such as the Autumn Statement on 17 November, the Treasury takes care to ensure compliance with legal requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the Equality Act 2010, to consider the impact of its decisions on those sharing protected characteristics.

This is in line with both our legal obligations to pay “due regard” to equality impacts; and with our strong commitment to promoting fairness.

In the interests of transparency, and going beyond legal requirements, HMRC publishes a summary of equality impacts for tax measures within the Tax Information and Impact Notes (TIINs) alongside the associated legislation.

**Remote Working****Sir Greg Knight:**[\[94692\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and proportion of people were working from home (a) one, (b) two, (c) three, (d) four and (e) five days a week (i) as of 16 November 2022 and (ii) in November 2021; if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of trends in the number of people working from home on the economy; and if he will make a statement.

**James Cartlidge:**

According to ONS Annual Population Survey and Opinions and Lifestyle Survey data, the pandemic resulted in an increase in the proportion of workers that worked at least partially from home: from an average of 19 per cent of workers across 2019 to a peak of around 50 per cent in June 2020. This proportion fell to 30 per cent in November 2021. The latest data indicates that 38 per cent of workers were working at least partly from home in the period between 26 October and 6 November 2022. The long-term economic impacts of greater remote working are still highly uncertain. The Government is committed to supporting individuals and businesses to work flexibly.

**Research: Tax Allowances****Chi Onwurah:**[\[90808\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 5.52 in the Autumn Statement, CP751, published on 17 November 2022, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of decreasing the SME credit rate from 14.5% to 10% on the number of SMEs conducting R&D.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The reform announced at Autumn Statement will ensure taxpayer’s money is spent as effectively as possible, it also improves the competitiveness of the RDEC scheme, and is a step towards a simplified, single scheme for all.

The reliefs are forecast to support £60 billion of R&D by businesses in 2027-28, a 60 per cent increase from 2020-21.

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Darren Jones:** [\[94842\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue the Loan Charge is estimated to raise, separate from other measures.

**Darren Jones:** [\[94843\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people seeking refunds due to the changes made by the Morse Review have been refunded by HMRC.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Loan Charge was announced at Budget 2016 as part of a package of measures to tackle Disguised Remuneration (DR) tax avoidance which was costed as a whole. At Spring Statement 2022, this package was estimated to bring in an estimated overall Exchequer yield of £3.4 billion. The changes resulting from the 2019 independent review of the Loan Charge are estimated to reduce the Exchequer yield by £620 million.

Following Lord Morse's Independent Loan Charge Review in 2019, HMRC established the DR Repayment Scheme 2020 to repay voluntary payments that taxpayers had agreed to make as part of settlements concluded before changes were made to the scope of the Loan Charge. Individuals and employers had until 30 September 2021 to apply to HMRC for a refund or waiver.

HMRC repays amounts that were paid in DR scheme settlements, and/or waives amounts of instalments due that have not yet been paid if certain conditions are met.

As of 28 October 2022, HMRC had processed over 2350 applications, of which over 1350 had received either a repayment, a waiver, or both. Over 1000 of the applications processed at that date were either invalid or ineligible.

## ■ Taxation: Rebates

**Naz Shah:** [\[92246\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his planned timetable is for the publication of responses to the consultation entitled Raising standards in tax advice: protecting customers claiming tax repayments, published on 22 June 2022.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The consultation referred to ran for 12 weeks and closed on 14 September 2022. The Government will publish a response in due course.

## ■ Tobacco: Smuggling

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[94724\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to include Trading Standards officers in the HMRC with the power to fine retailers for selling illicit tobacco products.

**James Cartlidge:**

Trading Standards officers are not part of HMRC. They are a separate local government service.

However, HMRC works very closely with TS to tackle illicit tobacco. HMRC introduced legislation for tougher sanctions to tackle illicit tobacco sales in Finance Act 2022 including a new civil penalty of up to £10,000 for serious breaches. The new sanctions will take the innovative approach of HMRC and Trading Standards (TS) both working together to enforce them. Secondary legislation will be introduced next year setting out the detail on how the sanctions will operate.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Employment Services: Disability****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[94811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many disability employment advisers have been in post in each of the last five years.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Disability Employment Advisers work alongside Work Coaches in Job Centres to provide specialist support to disabled people. During the pandemic, Universal Credit caseload sizes doubled, leading to all job roles expanding in terms of headcount. Please find below the number of Disability Employment Advisers (full time equivalent) in post in each of the last five years:

DATE	FTE
Oct-22	810
Oct-21	870
Oct-20	490
Oct-19	560
Oct-18	450

Source: Activity Based Model (ABM)

Notes:

- The data is correct as of October 2022 and has been rounded to the nearest 10.
- Figures for Disability Employment Advisers were derived from the department's Activity Based Model (ABM), which provides full time equivalent (FTE) figures of Disability Employment Advisers and is a point in time estimate by line managers.
- The number of Disability Employment Advisers is unpublished management information, collected and intended for internal departmental use and has not been

quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. As the department holds the information, we have released it.

### ■ Local Housing Allowance: Inflation

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[93713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to increase the Local Housing Allowance from April 2023 to reflect the rate of inflation.

**Mims Davies:**

In April 2020 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were raised to the 30th percentile, a significant investment of almost £1 billion, we have maintained the rates in cash terms since then ensuring claimants continue to benefit from the significant increase.

On the 17 November the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions confirmed in his Written Ministerial Statement that LHA rates will be maintained at those increased levels for 2023-24.

For those who need additional support with housing costs, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available from local authorities. Since 2011 we have provided almost £1.5 billion in DHPs.

To ensure stability and certainty for households, in the Autumn Statement the Government has announced £26bn in cost of living support for 2023/24. This includes Cost of Living Payments for the most vulnerable. In 2023/24, households on eligible means-tested benefits will get up to a further £900 in Cost of Living Payments. A £300 payment will be made to pensioner households and individuals in receipt of eligible disability benefits will receive a £150 payment. Also included is the amended Energy Price Guarantee which will save the average UK household £500 in 2023-24 and raising the benefit cap by 10.1% in line with inflation.

For those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion of funding, including Barnett impact, to enable the extension of the Household Support Fund in England in the next financial year. This is on top of what we have already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £2.5 billion. It will be for the devolved administrations to decide how to allocate their additional Barnett funding.

In addition, we are uprating benefits for working age households and disabled people, as well as the basic and new State Pensions, all by 10.1%.

### ■ Pension Credit: Applications

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[90783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) new staff and (b) staff moved from other responsibilities have his Department deployed to process the increase in Pension Credit applications.

**Laura Trott:**

We have reassigned the full time equivalent of 100.27 colleagues and recruited 85 temporary staff to process the increased levels of Pension Credit Claims following the successful Pension Credit Campaign.

**■ Personal Independence Payment: Chronic Illnesses****Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[94863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department issues to help ensure that Personal Independence Payment claimants with degenerative conditions are identified and recorded for the purposes of scheduling future reassessments.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Personal Independence Payment Assessment Guide (PIPAG) contains guidance for health professionals carrying out PIP assessments. The PIP assessment is not a medical assessment to diagnose a condition, its severity, or recommend treatment options. Rather it is assessed on the basis of the needs arising from a health condition or disability and, as such, regular reviews are a key feature of PIP, to ensure that payments accurately match the current needs of claimants.

When recommending an appropriate review period, assessors are asked to consider when a significant change in functional needs is likely, giving due regard to the expected progression of a condition and whether it is likely to improve, stay the same, or worsen. It may be appropriate to set a specific review period for a claimant with a degenerative condition as, if the condition is likely to deteriorate over time, the claimant may become entitled to a higher rate of PIP. However, claimants with very high levels of functional impairment who are on the highest PIP awards, and whose needs are only likely to increase, should receive an ongoing award of PIP, with a light-touch review at the 10-year point.

**Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[94864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Personal Independence Payment claimants with degenerative conditions have been reassessed within (a) 10, (b) five and (c) three years of their original award.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Information on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants with degenerative conditions is not available. While the department holds data on a range of conditions, these are not collected centrally in a way that defines them as degenerative or not.

Detailed statistics on PIP can be found on [Stat-Xplore](#). In particular, the PIP datasets on Award Reviews list the disability categories recorded on PIP. These cover over 500 conditions, but none are grouped or marked in any way as being degenerative. You can also view the disability categories [here](#).

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found [here](#). An account is not required to use Stat- Xplore; the 'Guest Login' feature gives instant access to the main functions.

**■ Poverty: Children****Fleur Anderson:**[\[93667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps the Government has taken to address child poverty.

**Mims Davies:**

The Government is committed to reducing child poverty and supporting low-income families. We will spend over £242bn through the welfare system in 2022/23 including £108bn on people of working age and over £134 billion on pensioners. Of the total amount, around £64 billion will be spent on supporting disabled people and people with health conditions in Great Britain.

From 10 April 2023 we are uprating benefits for working age households and disabled people, as well as the basic and new State Pensions, all by 10.1%. In order to increase the number of households who can benefit from these uprating decisions the benefit cap will also be increased by 10.1%.

With over 1.22 million job vacancies across the UK, our focus remains firmly on supporting parents to move into, and progress in work, an approach which is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment - particularly where it is full-time - in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for families and children.

To help people into work, including parents, our Plan for Jobs is providing broad ranging support for all Jobseekers with our Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP), Job Entry Targeted Support and Restart scheme. We are also extending the support Jobcentres provide to people in work and on low incomes. Through a staged roll-out, which started in April 2022, around 2.1 million low-paid benefit claimants will be eligible for support to progress into higher-paid work.

The government is also increasing the National Living Wage by 9.7% to £10.42 an hour from April 2023, representing an increase of over £1,600 to the annual earnings of a full-time worker on the National living wage, benefitting over 2 million low paid workers.

**■ Poverty: York****Rachael Maskell:**[\[92274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the York Cost of Living Summit, held on 31 October 2022, what recent steps her Department has taken to reduce levels of poverty in York in the context of the City of York Council estimating that up to 14,700 households in York could be experience poverty this year.

**Mims Davies:**

The Government is committed to reducing poverty and supporting low-income families. We will spend over £242bn through the welfare system in 2022/23 including £108bn on people of working age and over £134 billion on pensioners. Of the total



amount, around £64 billion will be spent on supporting disabled people and people with health conditions in Great Britain.

From 10 April 2023 we are uprating benefits for working age households and disabled people, as well as the basic and new State Pensions, all by 10.1%. In order to increase the number of households who can benefit from these uprating decisions the benefit cap will also be increased by 10.1%.

With over 1.22 million job vacancies across the UK, our focus remains firmly on supporting people to move into, and progress in work, an approach which is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment - particularly where it is full-time - in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. The government is increasing the National Living Wage by 9.7% to £10.42 an hour from April 2023, representing an increase of over £1,600 to the annual earnings of a full-time worker on the National living wage, benefitting over 2 million low paid workers.

For those who require additional support the current Household Support Fund in England, running from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, is providing £421m of funding for those most in need. York City council has been allocated £1,037,906.47 for this period.

#### ■ Retirement: Age

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[93669]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the retirement age of 66 years old on the (a) financial situation, (b) mental health and (c) overall wellbeing of people aged 60-66.

**Laura Trott:**

Successive government have given due consideration to the impact of the proposals made in the Pensions Acts of 1995, 2007 and 2011 that made changes to the State Pension age.

The Pensions Act 1995 legislated to equalise men and women's SPa at 65, over a 10 year period between 2010 and 2020. Standardised impact assessments had not been introduced at the time, but an overview of the options and evidence considered when developing the policy is provided in the 1993 white paper 'Equality in State Pension age' -

<https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/283975/response/692460/attach/html/3/Equality%20in%20State%20Pension%20age%201993.pdf.html>

The Pensions Act 2007 legislated to introduce a timetable for the increase of SPa to 66, 67 and 68, so that these rises took place by 2026, 2036 and 2046.

The impact assessment for the Pensions Act 2007 can be found here:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121204130650/http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/pensions-bill-ria.pdf>

The Pensions Act 2011 brought forward the equalisation of the male and female State Pension age at 65 by 18 months, so that it takes place by November 2018

rather than April 2020. It also brought forward the increase from 65 to 66 by five and a half years, so that it takes place by October 2020 rather than March 2026.

The impact assessment for the Pensions Act 2011 can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/181462/pensions-bill-2011-ia-annexa.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181462/pensions-bill-2011-ia-annexa.pdf) ”

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Debts

**Christopher Pincher:**

[93529]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will introduce a standardised assessment of affordability of debt repayments for people on benefits.

**Tom Pursglove:**

DWP remains committed to working with anyone who is struggling with their repayment terms.

The department has a well-established process for working with individuals to support them to manage their debts. Our agents will always look to negotiate affordable and sustainable repayment plans.

This includes working with individuals to review their financial circumstances and, in most instances, a temporary reduction in their rate of repayment can also be agreed.

There is no minimum amount that a claimant has to pay, and we have recently extended the time period for any reduced repayment to remain in place.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

**Amy Callaghan:**

[92349]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of his Department's communications on changes to the State Pension age for women born in the 1950s.

**Amy Callaghan:**

[92350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's reports on the Women's State Pension age, whether he is taking steps to improve communications processes in his Department.

**Laura Trott:**

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's investigation into the communication of changes to women's State Pension age is ongoing. Section 7(2) of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 states that Ombudsman investigations "shall be conducted in private".

It would be inappropriate to comment whilst the investigation is ongoing.

**Amy Callaghan:**

[92351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's reports on the Women's State Pension age, if he will

hold discussions with representatives of Women Against State Pension Inequality on the Ombudsman's fundings.

**Laura Trott:**

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman has not completed his investigation into communication of changes to women's state pension. It would be inappropriate to discuss the investigation whilst it is ongoing. Section 7(2) of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 states that Ombudsman investigations "shall be conducted in private".

The Department is cooperating fully with the PHSO in their investigation.

■ **Support for Mortgage Interest**

**Bob Stewart:**

[93495]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to increase Support for Mortgage Payments to reflect interest rate rises.

**Mims Davies:**

Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) is calculated using a standard interest rate that is based on the Bank of England's monthly published average mortgage rate.

Any increase in SMI payments will occur when the Bank of England's average monthly mortgage rate differs from the standard rate by 0.5 percentage points or more.

■ **Unemployment: Birmingham**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[90857]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an estimate of what the levels of unemployment will be in Birmingham in the financial years (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24 and (c) 2024-25.

**Guy Opperman:**

No estimate has been made.

Official forecasts for national unemployment were published by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility, as part of its Economic and Fiscal Outlook and are available: [Economic and Fiscal Outlook - November 2022 \(obr.uk\)](https://obr.uk/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-november-2022/)

■ **Universal Credit: Employment**

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[94754]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 32 of the Autumn Statement 2022, CP 751, published on 17 November 2022, what assessment he has made of the (a) demographic and (b) socio-economic characteristics of the 600,000 additional in-work Universal Credit claimants who will be required to meet with a work coach from September 2023.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[94756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 32 of the Autumn Statement 2022, CP 751, published on 17 November 2022, if she will publish a breakdown of the number of people who will be newly required to meet with work coaches in each (a) region and (b) nation of the UK.

**Guy Opperman:**

No specific assessment has yet been made for the Autumn Statement announcement.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[94757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 32 of the Autumn Statement 2022, CP 751, published on 17 November 2022, what her timeline is of the rollout from September 2023 onwards of the requirement that 600,000 additional in-work Universal Credit claimants are required to meet with work coaches.

**Guy Opperman:**

We are currently developing our phased plan for the new offer and will set out the details in due course.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[94758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 32 of the Autumn Statement 2022, CP 751, published on 17 November 2022, whether the requirement for 600,000 additional in-work Universal Credit claimants to meet with work coaches will include a rise in the Administrative Earnings Threshold.

**Guy Opperman:**

There are currently no plans to raise the Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET) beyond the equivalent of 15 hours at the national living wage (NLW).

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative Strategy

**Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (James Cleverly):**

[\[HCWS390\]](#)

Today we have presented our vision for ending the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). With this strategy, the UK is stepping up our ambition: we will deliver a step change in the international response, working with our partners to support survivors, hold perpetrators to account and put an end to these heinous acts for good.

Progress has been made to support survivors and strengthen accountability but sexual violence continues to be widely used in conflict, demonstrated by the appalling reports from Ukraine. We need a stronger international response for all those affected.

The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Strategy will support the delivery of the International Development Strategy and the Integrated Review. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon is the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

There are significant challenges including reliable data collection, gathering evidence on what works, securing justice and providing holistic survivor support.

This strategy will seek to change this by delivering four key objectives:

1. Strengthening the global response to CRSV;
2. Preventing CRSV, including by addressing root causes such as harmful gender norms;
3. Improving justice for all survivors and holding perpetrators to account;
4. Enhancing support for survivors and children born of sexual violence in conflict, including tackling the stigma they face within their communities.

We will strive to deliver these objectives by showing UK leadership to strengthen the global response. This will include working with partners to deliver the commitments made at the PSVI International Conference and the Political Declaration launched there. We have launched a new initiative on accountability that will strengthen the ability of national authorities to end impunity for CRSV. This aims to bring together expertise and best practice, build capacity, improve national implementation in focus countries, and increase support to survivors.

We will drive concerted action on the Crimes Against Humanity Convention to strengthen international law in this area, including on some forms of CRSV.

Key policy initiatives:

- o The Call to Action to Ensure the Rights and Wellbeing of Children Born of Sexual Violence in Conflict;

- o The Murad Code, a global code of conduct to ensure that the documentation of the experiences of CRSV survivors is effective and upholds survivors' rights;
- o The Declaration of Humanity, a faith and belief-based call for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict that denounces the stigma faced by survivors and children born of rape; and
- o Increasing the UK's focus on conflict and atrocity prevention to tackle the drivers of conflict before violence becomes widespread.

We will use our development budget to deliver change, including through:

- o The £67.5 million committed to the *What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale* programme, which pioneers and rigorously evaluates scalable solutions to prevent gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual violence in conflict settings;
- o Up to £12.5 million of new funding that the PSVI team will use over the next three years to tackle CRSV. This funding will be complemented by wider CRSV programming across FCDO. The £12.5 million will include:
  - a contribution of up to £5.15 million to the Global Survivors Fund, which aims to enhance CRSV survivors' access to reparations, including through the provision financial support, livelihood assistance, education, and health care; and
  - continued funding to the UK's PSVI Team of Experts, a group of independent specialists deployed to support the work of national and international bodies and NGOs to strengthen their response to CRSV.
- o Delivering on our commitments under the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies, including working with our operational partners to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV, including CRSV, from the earliest stages of a humanitarian crisis.

We will continue to work closely with international and UK partners to put an end to the scourge of sexual violence in conflict.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (1st March to 31st May 2022 and 1st June to 31st August 2022)

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman):**  
[\[HCWS389\]](#)

Section 19(1) of the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIM) Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of every relevant three-month period on the exercise of her TPIM powers under the Act during that period.

The level of information provided will always be subject to slight variations based on operational advice.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31 May 2022:

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TPIM NOTICES IN FORCE (AS OF 31 MAY 2022)	2
Number of new TPIM notices served (during this period)	0
TPIM notices in respect of British citizens (as of 31 May 2022)	2
TPIM notices extended (during the reporting period)	2
TPIM notices revoked (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices expired (during reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revived (during the reporting period)	0
Variations made to measures specified in TPIM notices (during the reporting period)	3
Applications to vary measures specified in TPIM notices refused (during the reporting period)	0
The number of subjects relocated under TPIM legislation (during this the reporting period)	1

The TPIM Review Group (TRG) keeps every TPIM notice under regular and formal review. The second quarter TRG meetings were held on 5 and 7 July 2022.

On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 one individual was found guilty on four counts of breaching the monitoring measure of the TPIM notice. The individual was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment.

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 one individual pleaded guilty to 5 breaches of the electronic communication device measure of the TPIM notice. The individual was sentenced to eight months imprisonment plus a 12-month separate period on licence upon release.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> June to 31 August 2022:

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TPIM NOTICES IN FORCE (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2022)	1
Number of new TPIM notices served (during this period)	0
TPIM notices in respect of British citizens (as of 31 August 2022)	1

TPIM NOTICES IN FORCE (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2022)	1
TPIM notices extended (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revoked (during the reporting period)	1
TPIM notices expired (during reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revived (during the reporting period)	0
Variations made to measures specified in TPIM notices (during the reporting period)	1
Applications to vary measures specified in TPIM notices refused (during the reporting period)	2
The number of subjects relocated under TPIM legislation (during this the reporting period)	1

The third quarter TRG meetings were held on 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

In this quarter one individual was charged with a breach of the residence measure. No trial date has yet been set.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Trade Update: CPTPP and Mexico

**Secretary of State for International Trade (Kemi Badenoch):**

[\[HCWS391\]](#)

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has made good progress on two key trade negotiations. This statement provides Parliament with an update on the UK's trade negotiations with Mexico and negotiations towards accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

*Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTTP)*

The UK has taken part in further discussions to negotiate accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). The latest round of talks took place in Sydney from 10 - 13 October 2022. Negotiations covered market access on trade in goods, services and investment, financial services, government procurement, temporary entry of businesspersons and legal and institutional issues. UK negotiators made good progress across the areas of discussion and talks are set to continue during the rest of the year.



Joining CPTPP will help UK businesses trade more easily across borders and will help keep critical supply chains open and predictable. Embracing closer trading links and breaking down barriers to trade with a diverse group of trading partners could support businesses in diversifying their supply chains promoting greater resilience.

Ahead of the UK's Accession Working Group, the CPTPP Commission convened for its 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on 8 October 2022. In a concluding Joint Ministerial Statement, the Commission announced that it 'look(s) forward to further progress on the accession process with the commitment of both the CPTPP membership and the United Kingdom.'

Separately, Malaysia has now announced its completion of the ratification process to enter CPTPP into force. The Ministry for Trade and Industry have announced that they deposited the instrument of ratification in early October. The agreement will enter into force for the country on 29 November 2022. This could provide the UK with significantly better access to the Malaysian market, which is home to over 32 million consumers. UK's accession to CPTPP will support the UK and Malaysia's shared ambitions to remove barriers to trade and create new opportunities for businesses and investors.

#### *UK- Mexico Trade Negotiations*

Round two of UK-Mexico trade negotiations took place from 31 October to 11 November 2022 in a virtual format across 29 policy areas over 35 separate sessions.

During the round, the UK set out its policy positions having exchanged draft chapter text with Mexico across most policy areas before the round. A key objective at this early stage was to continue to build a firm understanding of Mexico's trade policy positions and priorities. As expected at this stage, areas of convergence and divergence were identified. However, discussions remained positive. Both negotiation teams took actions to consider each other's positions and identify opportunities to move closer together ahead of round three.

The negotiations continue to reflect a shared ambition to negotiate a comprehensive agreement which is better suited for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and one which strengthens our trading relationship, already worth over £4.2 billion in 2021. Both countries agree that this is an opportunity to add value and complement the UK's accession to the CPTPP.

His Majesty's Government remains clear that any deal we sign will be in the best interests of the British people and the United Kingdom economy. We will not compromise on our high environmental and labour protections, public health, animal welfare and food standards, and we will maintain our right to regulate in the public interest. We are also clear that during these negotiations, the NHS and the services it provides is not on the table.

His Majesty's Government will continue to work closely with CPTPP Parties and Mexico to ensure negotiations proceeds at pace and takes place on terms that are right for the UK.